

correct lady among her contemporaries. And all this has happened merely because she had the bad fortune to marry a philosopher, who would not allow her even the luxury of contradiction. With any other man less wise than to neglect worldly comforts, and despise the adventitious charms of wealth, more human too than to preserve a constant mastery over his temper, she might, and would probably, have enjoyed a tolerable share of happiness. At any rate she would, as far as we can conjecture, have escaped the unmerited notoriety to which she has been condemned by prejudiced biographers and an undiscerning posterity.

THE BLIND SCHOOL AT PHILADELPHIA.

* * * There was no public exhibition, but a private visit, with an order from a superintendent, furnished us with a much more favourable view. When I think of those sightless orbs, I can hardly think that my name, which I now see so neatly printed, together with the watch-guard round my neck, in which I can detect no false stitch, is their work. After we entered, the teacher asked if I would like to have my name printed; on my answering in the affirmative, he called Mary Ann! A very pleasing looking girl of fifteen groped her way easily to the table, where the box of blocks was placed; the letters are pricked, not coloured. While Mary Ann was forming my name, she held a kind of converse with the blocks, now jesting, now scolding if the right letter did not meet her touch, but all in a low, pleasant tone. The name was completed without mistake in a few minutes. A little boy spelt at my request, and Mary Ann was next called to read a chapter from one of the Gospels in raised letters. She reads rapidly, but no oratorical tone has ever fallen with such power on my ears as the words of Jesus from the lips of that blind girl. The teacher then gave out arithmetical questions of great difficulty, which he himself worked on the black-board. Nothing could be more earnest or ambitious than the air with which they went to work to calculate, or the look of triumph assumed by those who were the quickest or the most successful.

At this period their music-master came. There was great eagerness and interest in their manner, and many a sly joke was whispered. They began with a German chorus, each part nobly sustained, the girls remaining in one room and the boys in the other. I had been carried along by the variety and interest of the scene up to this point, not a little aided by the vivacity, even drollery, which characterized the manners of many of the girls; but now that their countenances were fixed, their sightless orbs mostly turned upward, and their voices swelling in a rich concert of praise and thanksgiving, my tears could not be restrained; fortunately the air ceased, and one of Mary Ann's slyly whispered jokes restored me to self-possession. After the German followed several English airs, which were succeeded by instrumental music, combining violins, clarionets, flutes, horns, bassoon, bass-viol, forming in all a grand concert.

The music being over, the girls separated, and we visited the sewing apartment, where they began to collect, going unaided to their various occupations, making rugs, straw baskets, watch-guards, bead-bags, etc. etc. As we descended to another room, we found Mary Ann at an elegant harp, which has lately been presented to the Institution by a Philadelphian. She was very shy, but consented to give us her first tune; another young lady played on the piano-forte.—*Mrs. Gillman.*

HERAT, IN EASTERN PERSIA.—As, in all probability, the above city will shortly become the scene of stirring events, we deem no apology necessary for presenting its history to our readers.

Herat forms a distinct government, and is in little subjection to the general sway of the country, known by the appellation of Afghanistan, or Eastern Persia. It is one of the most renowned cities in the east, being the ancient Aria, or Artacoana, and capital of Ariana. It was formerly called Heri, and gave its name to an extensive province in the time of Alexander. It was long the capital of Tamerlane's empire. It has a spacious and magnificent mosque, and is surrounded by a broad ditch. It is situated in a spacious plain, surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains. This plain, which is thirty miles in length, and about fifteen in breadth, owes its fertility to the Herirood, which runs through the centre of it, being highly cultivated, and covered with villages and gardens.

The city embrace an area of four square miles, and is encircled with a lofty wall and wet ditch. The citadel is in the northern face, and is a small square castle, elevated on a mound, flanked with towers at the angles, and built of burnt brick. The city has a gate in each face, and two in that which fronts the north; and from each gate a spacious and well-supplied bazaar leads up towards the centre of the town. The principal street, from the south gate to the cattle-market opposite the citadel, is covered with a vaulted roof. Herat is admirably supplied with water, almost every house having a fountain, independent of the public ones on either side of the bazaars. The residence of the prince is, in appearance, a very mean building; a common gateway is all that is seen of it; within which is a wretched house, and in its front an open square, with the gallows in its centre. The Mesghed Jama,

or chief mosque, was once a noble edifice, enclosing an area of 800 square yards; but, having been much neglected, is now falling into decay. This fortunately, however, cannot be said of the other buildings of Herat; and no city perhaps, in the east, has so little ground unoccupied. It is computed to contain 100,000 inhabitants, of whom 10,000 are Patans; the remainder are Afghans, a few Jews and 600 Hindoos. The latter are here highly respected, and alone possess capital or credit. The Government is not insensible of their value, and, in consequence of their great commercial concerns, the Hindoos enjoy a distinguished influence. Herat, from extensive trade, has obtained the appellation of *bundar*, or port. It is the emporium of the commerce carried on between Cabul, Cashmere, Bockhara, Hindostan, and Persia. From the former they receive shawls, indigo, sugar, chintz, muslin, leather, and Tartary skins, which they export to Meshed, Yezd, Kerman, Isphahan, and Tehraun, receiving in return chiefly dollars, tea, chinaware, broad-cloth, copper, pepper, and sugar-candy; dates and shawls from Kerman, and carpets from Ghæn. The staple commodities of Herat are silk, saffron, and assafœtida, which are exported to Hindostan. The gardens are full of mulberry-trees, cultivated solely for the sake of the silkworm; and the plains and hills near the city, particularly those to the westward, produce assafœtida. The Hindoos and Billouches are fond of this plant, which they eat by roasting the stem in the ashes, and stewing the heads of it like other greens. The winters at Herat are, at times, extremely severe, and the cold often proves most hurtful to the crops; but nothing can exceed the fertility of the plain, the produce of which is immense, as well in wheat and barley, as in every kind of fruit known in Persia. The pistachio tree grows wild in the hills, and the pine is common in the plains. Cattle are small, and far from plentiful; but the broad-tailed sheep are abundant, and fuel, though brought from a distance, not dear. The revenue of the city is estimated at four lacs and a half of rupees; and raised by a tax levied on the caravanseras, shops, gardens, and a duty on exports and imports. The government is in the hands of Prince Hadjy Firoose, son of the late Ahmed Shah, King of Cabul, who pays a tribute to his Persian Majesty, of 50,000 rupees a-year. Herat is in latitude 34 12 N., longitude 63 14 E."

THE DELUGE.—Our attention has been directed to the following letter written by Robert Chambers, to the Editor of *The Times*, and inserted in its columns, Sept. 12, on the subject of *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*.

Sir,—I have just seen an article in your paper of the 4th instant, in which you use some discourteous language respecting the proprietors of *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*. Your grounds for using this language appear chiefly to rest on a paragraph extracted from the *Journal* of July 7, in which the flood which laid down the diluvium is spoken of as one long antecedent to the human creation. This paragraph you state to be a cool declaration that the Bible history is false.

I had thought, Sir, that every well-educated or well-informed person was aware that the flood or floods which deposited the diluvium were now generally regarded by geologists as quite apart from the deluge of scriptural history. If I could have supposed that any public writer, of a rank much below that of the leading journal of Europe, was likely to remain ignorant of this fact, I might perhaps, in writing the article, have taken some pains to make the case clear to him. But, unfortunately, I took it for granted that from the whole tenour of the article, none above even a humbler intellectual rank than those chiefly addressed in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* could have failed to perceive (if not already informed on the subject) that it could not be the Noachian deluge, or any thing of the kind, which wrought effects so tremendous. May I be allowed to hope that your generosity will not permit my brother and me to remain under an opprobrium which has only been incurred through a too high idea of the information and good sense of the class which acknowledges you as its head? If any other inducement can be wanted to prevail upon you to do my brother and me this justice, or at least all the poor justice which the retraction of a wantonly affixed calumny ever gives, I can safely assure you that for the future, in all my writings for the *Journal* and other works, I shall estimate the scientific knowledge and intellectual acumen of the newspaper press, and of *The Times* in particular, at a very different rate, so that there is not the least chance of the recurrence of any such stumbling-block for babes in our humble and unworthy pages.

I have the honour to rest Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

ROBERT CHAMBERS.

19, Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, Sept. 7.

BURNING OF WIDOWS.—We learn from Mrs. Postans that the abomination of the suttee, though forbidden in the British territories, still frequently occurs where the native powers are more influential. She gives the circumstances connected with one which lately took place in Cutch. The widow was of high caste, rich, young, and handsome; but burn herself she would, in spite of the entreaties of the Rao and the British resident.

"All further interference being useless, the ceremony proceeded. Accompanied by the officiating Brahmin, the widow walked seven times round the pyre, repeating the usual mantras, or prayers, strewing rice and curries on the ground, and sprinkling water from her hand over the bystanders, who believe this to be efficacious in preventing disease, and in expiating committed sins. She then removed her jewels, and presented them to her relations, saying a few words to each, with a calm soft smile of encouragement and hope. The Brahmins then presented her with a lighted torch, bearing which,

'Fresh as a flower just blown,

And warm with life her youthful pulses playing,'

she stepped through the fatal door, and sat within the pile. The body of her husband, wrapped in rich kinkab, was then carried seven times round the pile, and finally laid across her knees. Thorns and grass were piled over the door; and again it was insisted that free space should be left, as it was hoped the poor victim might yet relent, and rush from her fiery prison to the protection so freely offered. The command was readily obeyed; the strength of a child would have sufficed to burst the frail barrier which confined her, and a breathless pause succeeded; but the woman's constancy was faithful to the last; not a sigh broke the death-like silence of the crowd, until a slight smoke, curling from the summit of the pyre, and then a tongue of flame, darting with bright and lightning-like rapidity into the clear blue sky, told us that the sacrifice was completed. Fearlessly had this courageous woman fired the pile, and not a groan had betrayed to us the moment when her spirit fled. At sight of the flame a fiendish shout of exultation rent the air; the tom-toms sounded, the people clapped their hands with delight, as the evidence of their murderous work burst on their view; whilst the English spectators of this sad scene withdrew, bearing deep compassion in their hearts, to philosophise, as best they might, on a custom so fraught with horror, so incompatible with reason, and so revolting to human sympathy.

"The pile continued to burn for three hours; but, from its form, it is supposed that almost immediate suffocation must have terminated the sufferings of the unhappy victim. In producing this effect, the arrangement of the pyre I have described is far more merciful than that commonly used, which is a mere frame of bamboos covered with combustible matter in the form of a bed, on which the bodies are laid, the quick and the dead bound together in a last embrace. . . . I have before observed, that self-sacrifice has been benevolently forbidden in provinces which are under the British control, and is, therefore, less common on this side of India than in Bengal. However as the people have the power of travelling to those places which are still governed by native princes, the most zealous amongst them adopt this means of gratifying their wishes. I remember, while at Man davie, once having seen three women arrive, after seventeen days' voyage, from Bombay, for the purpose of performing suttee, and under peculiar circumstances they are permitted to do so, without the presence of the husband's body: according to the Puranas, 'if the husband die on a journey, or in a distant country, the widow, holding his sandals to her breast, may pass into the flames.' One of these women had come to perform suttee for her son, whom she stated to have been her husband in a former birth. This woman, who was advanced in years, went by in an open cart, triumphantly bearing a branch of the sacred tulsi, and surrounded by almost the whole population of Mandavie. I was not present at the ceremony, which took place at a distance of ten miles; but was afterwards assured that the three widows became 'sadhwee' with unshaken fortitude."—*From Mrs. Costan's new work On Western India.*

CUVIER AND GEOLOGY.—While our geologists were thus working in chains forged by a presumptuous theology, the unfettered genius of Cuvier was ranging over those primeval ages, when the primary rocks rose in insulated grandeur from the deep, and when the elements of life had not yet received their divine commission. From the age of solitude he passed to the busy age of life, when plants first decked the plains; when the majestic pine threw its picturesque shadows over the earth, and the tragic sounds of carnivorous life rung among her forests. But these plains were again to be desolated, and these sounds again to be hushed. The glories of organic life disappeared, and new forms of animal and vegetable being welcomed the dawn of a better circle. Thus did the great magician of the charnel-house survey from his pyramid of bones the successive ages of life and death—thus did he conjure up the spoils of pre-existing worlds—the noblest offering which reason ever laid upon the altar of its Sovereign. These grand views, however, did not meet with a ready reception in England. They encountered the same prejudices by which the Huttonian theory, had been assailed; and even the piety of their author, and his unquestioned devotion to the Christian faith, did not protect him from the malevolence of slander. It would lead us too far to trace the processes by which these great truths took root in our ungenial soil; but the reader may safely infer that their progress was slow, when we state the fact, that so late as 1823, when Dr. Buckland published his interesting volume, entitled *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*, he had not thrown off the incubus which had pressed so fatally upon