

of the belly and vent ; under tail coverts yellowish-white. The female is rather less in size, but otherwise does not vary much in the shades of plumage."

This work is much enriched by biographies of great Naturalists, one of which very appropriately introduces each volume; and we are thus presented, in succession, with the lives of Linnæus, Buffon, Banks and many others, all of which are pleasant and many of them highly interesting. We cannot do better than extract a memoir of the French Naturalist and Statesman, Lacépède, not omitting, wherever the original is from its length unsuitable, to throw the circumstances briefly before the reader.

MEMOIR OF THE COUNT DE LACEPÈDE.

"Bernard German Etienne De La Ville was born at Agen on December 26, 1756. He was descended from a long line of honourable ancestors, and his father, Jean Joseph De La Ville, was lieutenant-general of Senecchaussee. Lacépède, however, did not value himself on his extraction, but entered life with the determination of exhibiting his birth only in the urbanity of his manners and the uprightness of his conduct. This resolution he maintained with the most scrupulous uniformity throughout his chequered history ; his politeness was proverbial, whilst it was universally acknowledged that he was as obliging as he was polished, and that he did not more indulge in compliment than in rendering important services, and in bestowing substantial favours."

We are glad to learn this, as a large portion of mankind seem to imagine that a polished manner is a substitute for generosity, and a Frenchman is not the last man in the world to think so. Lacépède's education was superintended by his father, which was probably not a slight cause of the remarkable simplicity and purity which, we find, characterized his younger years, "the idea of a bad author or wicked man scarcely presenting itself to his mind." The works which he studied were those of Cornéille, Bossuet, Fenelon and the like; and the pure morals and amiable tendencies

thus imbibed gave him a great leaning to optimism, "so that he would scarcely believe that any one was actuated by bad feelings or intentions, or that any one wished to deceive ; and this prepossession had great influence over his conduct and writings as well as on his social habits." The life of such a man could scarcely be a miserable one. The next beautiful passage displays not only his early inclination to natural science but his sense of the beautiful, and consequent appreciation of one of the most poetical of philosophers.

"Buffon's Natural History was a book which was early put into his hands, and it instantly became a favourite ; it was the companion of his walks and that in one of the finest countries in the world. It was on the beautiful banks of the lovely valley of the Garonne, in the neighbourhood of those smiling hills which are so majestically terminated by the peaks of the Pyrennes, that he studied the eloquent pictures of this great writer : his passion for the beauties of nature thus originated at the same time with his admiration for that great painter who pointed them out to his contemplation, and these two sentiments always remained united in his mind. He took Buffon for his master and his model, and read him till he almost knew him by heart."

We are, of course, not surprised to find in such a man as Lacépède a deep love of music. A delightful taste for this science would seem inherent in the nature of the mind before described, and we find that he cultivated it until it "became a second language to him, which he could speak and write with equal facility." His compositions were much admired, and sufficiently well executed to lead to a correspondence with the celebrated Gluck. His proficiency in the art, and the solicitations of many of his friends that he should compose an opera, led him afterwards to devote himself to music with remarkable assiduity, for two years ; but the opera which was the fruit of this application, was never performed, some trifling cause having led to its suppression. To return, however, to that for which we chiefly search the pages of a philosopher's biography—the indications of his progress in science—we find that