

NEW BOOKS.

THE NATURALIST'S LIBRARY—CONDUCTED BY SIR WM. JARDINE.

THIS excellent, interesting and elegant work, the publication of which commenced in 1834, has now reached the thirty-second volume. The neat perspicuity, and intimate acquaintance with the various subjects, which are displayed in its pages, render it valuable, not merely to the man who dips casually into science for general information, but even to the zoologist and the ornithologist, or whoever has made the phenomena of any branch of this great philosophy the objects of lengthy study and close enquiry. At the same time, the clear and simple style uniformly employed, the interesting facts, anecdotes and observations which are interspersed with the more technical and profound portions, show that the intention has been to lay open its pages to the less cultivated reader,—and that even he who seeks only for amusement in books, may be attracted by its more entertaining parts, and imbibe, perhaps, unwittingly, the information which he is too indolent or unintelligent to seek. We had intended to select our extracts from the portion of the work last published: but on looking over some of the former volumes, and reflecting that, in all likelihood, our readers generally have not had access to them, we determined to notice these as well,—and shall therefore offer in the first place, from vol. 16, what must be interesting to Nova Scotians, viz :—an account of the method of conducting the

SOUTH SEA FISHERY.

“The method of conducting the southern fishery differs in several particulars from that followed in the north, and these differences we shall now endeavour to point out. Some of the ships are fitted out solely for fishing the Sperm Whale, whilst others keep a sharp look-out for the mysticetus

also; and others, it would appear, in lack of these, hesitate not to attack almost any kind of Whale that comes within their reach.

When a whale appears in view, the signal is given, and the boats hanging at the ship's side, and completely ready for the attack, are instantly lowered. These boats are supplied with a mast and sail, and plenty fresh water, with headsman, steersman, and rowers; with harpoons two of which are attached to the lines, with lances and a buoy to which a signal is attached, &c. The boats steer so as to approach the animal from behind, and if there be more than one in view, each boat fastens to a distinct fish, and each crew kill their own. Some times the first stroke of the harpoon is mortal, but generally it is otherwise, and the harpooner on the instant, rapid like lightning, darts his second harpoon. On this the animal, irritated by the pain, plunges into the deep; and this movement, which the fishers call “sounding,” requires the greatest attention lest the line be entangled. When the line is exhausted, the buoy with its flag is attached to the extremity, and thrown into the sea. This buoy, carried along with the animal, is the compass which guides the boats till they again seize the end of the line, when the victim is encircled, and its speed diminished by the loss of blood. So soon as its energy is relaxed, the line is carried round the bollard, and all the resistance is offered that can safely be employed. When the animal requires again to come to the surface, the boat pulls upon the line, approaches the fast fish as rapidly as possible and renews the contest. On thrusting or darting his lance, the headsman calls out “stern-all,” when the boat immediately recedes. Upon feeling the