

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE MOUNTAIN OF THE BELL.

EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON.

A PAPER was read before the Royal Asiatic Society, by Lieut. NEWBOLD, of the Madras army, containing a narrative of a visit made by himself, in June last, to the Gibel Nakus, or Mountain of the Bell, on the Peninsula of Mount Sinai,—of which the following is the substance:—

This curious hill has been long celebrated for the extraordinary musical tones elicited from it, which have generally been compared to the deep booming of a church bell. Of the cause of the phenomenon many opinions have been broached. The Arabs in the neighbourhood, with their ordinary propensity to a belief in the marvellous, attribute it to the real bells of a subterranean convent swallowed by some convulsion of nature; and the Christian monks of Mount Sinai countenance the belief, by the idle story that the sound was heard after the destruction of one of their convents in its vicinity. The ideas of European travellers on the matter have been sometimes scarcely more reasonable. Some have supposed the sounds to be caused by the dropping of sand into the cavities of the rocks; others, by its motion over hollow rocks; others, again, have attributed them to subterranean volcanoes; and a few have supposed that the action of the wind upon the elastic plates of mica, which is a component part of granite, may have been the origin of the sound.

Lieutenant Newbold seems to have proved that the opinion of Captain Wellsted is correct, that the sound is produced by the rolling down of the sand put in motion by the wind, or by persons walking on its surface. Lieut. Newbold left Wadi Tor, on his visit to the Mountain of the Bell, on the 10th of last June. After two hours' riding, and a short walk of half an hour, he reached the place, which he described as a bell-shaped hill, from 350 to 400 feet in height. On its western side, which faces the Red Sea, is a slope of about eighty feet, covered with a very fine quartzose sand, varying in depth from five or six inches to as many feet, according to the form of the sandstone rock which it covers. This is the spot from whence the mysterious sounds issue. Not the slightest noise was heard; but their Arab guide, desiring them to wait still at the bottom of the slope, began to ascend the slope, sinking to his knees at every step. The travellers soon heard a faint sound resembling the lower string of a violoncello slightly touched; and being disappointed at the result, determined to ascend themselves, in spite of the intense heat of the sun, and extreme fineness of the sand. On reaching the summit, they sat down to observe the effect. The particles of sand set in motion, agitated not only those below them, but, though in a less degree, those all around them, like the surface of water disturbed by a stone. In about two minutes they heard a rustling sound; and then the musical tone above alluded to, which gradually increased to that of a deep mellow church-bell, so loud that it rivalled the rumbling of distant thunder. This occurred when the whole surface was in motion; and the effect upon themselves the travellers compared to what they supposed might be felt by persons seated upon some enormous stringed instrument, while a bow was slowly drawn over the chords. They descended while the sound was at its height; and soon after it began to lessen with the motion of the sand, until, at the end of a quarter of an hour, all was perfectly still again.

Lieut. Newbold remarked that the surface of the sand was in every part traversed by waves, or furrows, from one to two inches in height; and, from the triangular form of the face of the slope, increasing in length as they got nearer the earth; he also noticed that the sand in motion, when near the top, produced shriller notes than when lower down, and, consequently, that the lowest notes were heard at the bottom. He appears, from this, to draw some analogy between the increasing length of the waves and that of the chords of a stringed instrument. While the experiment was making, there was a steady breeze from the west blowing against the surface of the sand; and this he considers essential to the pro-

duction of the sound, it having been found that the sounds are much fainter in still weather, or even quite inaudible. When the weather is wet, no sounds are produced, because the sand is then agglomerated, and will not slide at all.

The paper concluded with a remark by Lieut. Newbold on the singularity of the phenomenon, observing, that he had seen in Spain, Arabia, and Egypt, many localities where loom-sand had accumulated under circumstances apparently similar to those of Gibel Nakus, but where nothing has been heard of a similar nature; at the same time he regretted that leisure and opportunity did not admit of an examination of localities sufficiently minute to put the matter beyond doubt.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON'S CREED.

THE Supreme Being governs all things, not as a soul of the world, but as Lord of the Universe; and upon account of his dominion, he is called the Lord God, supreme over all. The Supreme God is an eternal, infinite, absolutely perfect Being; but a being, how perfect soever, without dominion, is not Lord God. The term God very properly signifies Lord; but every Lord is not God. The dominion of a spiritual Being constitutes him God; true dominion, true God; supreme dominion, supreme God; imaginary dominion, imaginary God. He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite. He is not duration and space, but his duration of existence is present, and by existing always and every where, he constitutes duration and space—eternity and infinity. Since every part of space, and every indivisible moment of duration, is every where; certainly the Maker and Lord of all things, cannot be said to be in no time, and no place. He is omnipresent, not by his power only, but in his very substance; for power cannot subsist without substance. God is not at all affected by the motions of bodies, neither do they find any resistance from the omnipresence of God. He necessarily exists, and by the same necessity he exists always and every where. Whence also it follows, that he is all similar—all eye, all ear, all brain, all arm, all sensation, all understanding, all active power; but this is not in a human, or corporeal sense, but in a manner wholly unknown to us,—therefore, not to be worshipped under a corporeal representation.

KING GEORGE THE THIRD'S OPINION OF DISSENTERS.

WHEN the Christian Prince Ratafa, of Madagascar, was in England, in 1823, he was surprised to find that some of the Christian friends he met with there were not members of the Church of England, and wished to be informed on a subject so important to him, from the highest authority. He waited on His Majesty, stated the wonderful and happy effects of Missionary exertions in Madagascar, and expressed his surprise at finding that these ministers were not members of the established Church of England.

The King said—"Be assured, Prince, that they are not the less good men; they may differ in smaller matters, but on every important point of the Christian faith, they most perfectly and cordially agree; and permit me to add, that every instance of attention, kindness, and protection, experienced by these men in your country, shall be esteemed and acknowledged by me, as if done to myself."

ORIGIN OF TEMPLES.

IN memory of "the mighty dead," long before there were any such edifices as temples, the simple sepulchral head was raised, and this became the altar upon which sacrifices were offered. Hence, the most ancient heathen structures for offerings to the gods were always erected either upon tombs, or in their immediate vicinity. The discussion, which has been founded upon a question, "Whether the Egyptian pyramids were tombs or temples?" seems altogether nugatory—for being the one, they were necessarily the other. On this account, ancient authors employ such words for the temples of their gods; as in their original and proper signification imply nothing more than a tomb or a sepulchre.—*Clarke's Travels.*

PULPITS.

ORIGINALLY all pulpits faced the west, that the eyes of the congregation might see all acts of devotion, and look towards the east, whence the Sun of Righteousness arose. The first deviations from this rule were introduced by the Puritans; and the first chapel erected south and north was the chapel of Emanuel College, Cambridge, founded by Sir Walter Mildmay, a distinguished leader of that sect.

HOME AFFECTION.

THE heart has memories that cannot die. They are memories of home, early home. There is magic in the very sound. There is the old tree under which the light-hearted boy swung in many a summer day—yonder river in which he learned to swim—there the house in which he knew a parent's love, and found a parent's protection—nay, there is the room in which he romped with brother or sister, long since, alas! laid in the yard in which he must soon be gathered, overshadowed by yon old church, whither, with a joyous troop like himself, he has often followed his parents to worship with, and hear the good old man who gave him to God in baptism. Why, even the very school-house in youthful days, with thoughts of ferule and tasks, now come back, to bring pleasant remembrances of many an attachment there formed—many an occasion that called forth some generous exhibitions of the noblest traits of human nature. There he learned to feel some of his best emotions. There, perchance, he first met her who, by her love and tenderness in after life, had made a home for himself, happier even than that which childhood knew. There are certain feelings of humanity, and those too among the best, that can find an appropriate place for their exercise only by one's own fireside. There is a sacredness in the privacy of that spot which it were a species of desecration to violate. He who seeks wantonly to invade it, is neither more nor less than a villain; and hence there exists no surer test of the debasement of morals in a community, than the disposition to tolerate, in any mode, the man who disregards the sanctities of private life. In the turmoil of the world, let there be one spot where the poor man may find affection that is disinterested—where we may indulge a confidence that is not likely to be abused.

THE PIRATE AND THE DOVE.

THE following interesting fact is related by Audubon in his Ornithological Biography. In speaking of the Zenaida dove, he says:—

"A man who was a pirate assured me that several times, while at certain wells dug in the burning, shelly sands of a well known bay, which must be here nameless, the soft and melancholy cry of the doves awoke in his breast feelings which had long slumbered, melted his heart to repentance, and caused him to linger at the spot in a state of mind which he only who compares the wretchedness of guilt within him with the happiness of former innocence, can truly feel. He said he never left the place without increasing fears of futurity, associated as he was, although I believe by force, with a band of the most desperate villains that ever annoyed the navigation of the Florida coast. So deeply moved was he by the notes of any bird, and especially by those of a dove, the only soothing sounds he ever heard during his life of horrors, that through these plaintive notes, and they alone, he was induced to escape from his vessel, abandon his turbulent companions, and return to a family deploring his absence. After paying a parting visit to those wells, and listening once more to the cooings of the Zenaida dove, he poured out his soul in supplication for mercy, and once more became what one has said to be "the noblest work of God," an honest man. His escape was effected amidst difficulties and dangers; but no danger seemed to him to be comparable with the danger of one living in the violation of human and divine laws; and now he lives in peace in the midst of his friends."

WHEN a man feels an inward, and nameless satisfaction at the sight of suffering or danger from which he is himself exempt, be assured selfishness is sweetening the aliment upon which his soul is feeding. Let such a man examine himself: for there must be something wrong within.