

his own country and what belongs to others. As the quadruped we have mentioned, however, frequently derives benefit from the obnoxious curb, and, when stumbling, may even be supposed inherently to recognise its utility, we are not without some lingering belief that Jonathan will ultimately see and acknowledge that the present nefarious system only enriches a few unscrupulous adventurers on either side, and is injurious equally to authors and to literature on both.

Even at the present day, the Americans may be considered to have made some approaches towards the establishment of a copyright, or at least granting some allowance to British authors. Ten years ago, this was so unheard of, that when a New York publisher gave twenty dollars for the last number of an English serial then in vogue, he was in danger of being tabooed, if not put down by the whole trade; and, like the Irish lawyer who was threatened with disbarment for taking a half-guinea fee, when a whole one was the regular price—but got off by declaring that it was the last sixpence the unhappy client had—was indebted for his escape solely to the confession that it was a stolen copy. He had not paid the author, he explained, for transmitting the sheets, but some imp or rogue in the printer's office for purloining them. The explanation was considered satisfactory, and held to reflect credit on his ingenuity; though he subsequently incurred such suspicion by paying fifty dollars *direct* to a British *litterateur* for translating a novel of Eugene Sue's, when, had he waited a few weeks, he might, in common with the whole trade, have "appropriated" the work from London for nothing, that he was obliged to emigrate to California to avoid the penalty. Now, however, matters are changed. Messrs. Harper of New York are recorded to have given Mr. Thackeray as much as ten dollars a page for the sheets of his recent work, in advance; and another well-known publishing firm in the same city, is said to have made an attempt upon that gentleman still more remarkable. According, we believe, to Mr. Thackeray himself, an emissary of the house was despatched for the purpose of waylaying him so soon as he embarked from Liverpool. Formerly it was the custom for enterprising American newsmen to board vessels on their arrival from Europe, and lay the passengers under contribution with wonderful pertinacity. But here was a manœuvre bolder still; and Mr. Thackeray, it is alleged, amid all the horrors of sea-sickness at the vessel's side, was interrupted by the indefatigable emissary in a like position, belching forth the information that he "would find the A—s liberal men to publish with."

Messrs. Blackwood, and the proprietors of some of the British quarterly Reviews, a few years ago adopted the expedient of securing copyright in America, by engaging some native to write an article or a few pages for their journals, and leaving his countrymen exposed to all the perils of a transatlantic law-suit if they infringed. American authors have, on the other hand, resorted to the manœuvre of coming over here, and obtaining protection until their works shall be published in America. But all measures against pirates on both

sides might more effectually be supplanted by the adoption of some such modification as a royalty on either side. Were some allowance, like a tenth, made by both parties, the claims of authors might be satisfied. But a compromise of this nature is improbable; the Americans have long since reprinted every novel of the slightest standing in British literature; and unscrupulous London publishers have stolen theirs not less unceremoniously, even when the works were of the most trashy description. Jonathan, therefore, at all times averse to restriction, is not likely now to consent to any legislative measure, and he assuredly will never concur in the demand that British authors should have the same protection in his country as they receive in their own.

Some enactment on both sides is, notwithstanding, at present desirable, and must every day become more so. Under existing circumstances, literature suffers equally in either country. In America, chiefly devoted to works of fiction, few authors receive aught beyond the most wretched recompense, while the productions of all British novelists are to be seized on gratuitously; and in England, works of a higher order in vain seek a mart, while those of transatlantic origin may be appropriated for nothing.

FUENTE DE SANGRE.

NEAR the little town of Virtud, in the extreme southern part of the department of Gracias, republic of Honduras, Central America, there exists what is known as the "Mine" or "Fountain of Blood." From the roof of a certain cavern there is continually oozing and dropping a red liquid, which, on falling, coagulates and exactly resembles the human vital fluid. Like blood, it speedily corrupts, and emits the usual odour of animal decay; insects deposit their larva in it, and dogs and carrion birds flock to the cavern to feast upon it. In a country like Central America, where scientific knowledge can hardly be said to exist, a *freak of Nature* of this extraordinary description could not fail to become an object of great and superstitious wonder, and many weird and marvellous stories are current concerning the "Fuente de Sangre."

Frequent attempts have been made to obtain a portion of this mysterious liquid, for the purposes of analysis, but in every case without success, in consequence of its rapid decomposition, whereby the bottles containing it were broken. By largely diluting it with water, Mr. E. G. Squier, formerly Charge d'Affaires from the United States to the Republics of Central America, succeeded in taking back with him to New York two bottles of the liquid, which were submitted to Professor B. Silliman for examination. It had, however, become exceedingly offensive, through having undergone decomposition, and a thick and fetid sediment was deposited, which contained abundant traces of original organic matter. The peculiarities of this liquid are doubtless attributable to the rapid generation in this cavern of some very prolific species of coloured infusoria.

One of the first accounts received of this singular

phenomenon is derived from the "Gaceta de Honduras," of February 20, 1853, which informs us that the grotto is the nightly haunt of multitudes of large bats, which feed on the natural blood continually dropping from the roof of the cavern. The rivulet on which this cave is situated is reddened by the continual flow of this strange fluid, which not only has the smell, but the taste of blood. A fearful odour is perceptible at a considerable distance from the cavern, and when it is reached, masses of apparent blood may be seen in a state of jellified coagulation. The late Don Rafael Osejo undertook to send some bottles of this mysterious compound to London for analysis, but within twenty-four hours his laudable intention failed by the bursting of the bottles.

A letter from J. L. Le Conte, M. D., of Philadelphia, gives us the impressions of an eye-witness, on visiting the "Fuente de Sangre." Dr. Le Conte's explanation of the phenomenon will in all probability be regarded as satisfactory by scientific men.

"Philadelphia, April 15th, 1858.

"In answer to your request for a brief account of my visit to the 'Fuente de Sangre,' in December last, I send you the following notes. We left our beasis on the side of the stream, which enters a *cañon* [or gorge] with perpendicular walls about forty feet high, while the thick brush which covers the hill forbids any passage above. I had to creep along the walls of this *cañon* barefooted for the distance of about three hundred yards, a walk which the frequent occurrence of *agave* and *cereus* rendered by no means pleasant. I then reached, by crossing the stream, the principal cave from which issues the Fuente de Sangre. Another is said to be situated lower down the stream, but the heat was so oppressive that I was willing to take its existence on hearsay.

"The principal cave is a fissure, about fifteen or twenty feet high, and five or six wide at the entrance; but it rapidly narrows, so that a man can only follow it for thirty or forty feet. It abounds with huge bats, which cling in masses from the narrower part of the fissure. The stench is strongly ammoniacal, and so intense that I was obliged to retire thrice, before I could procure from the innermost part that I could reach, a sufficient quantity of the material to fill the bottles of alcohol I had carried with me for the purpose.

"In the rainy season, a small current of red matter, like blood, flows from the cave into the stream; but in the dry season the water ceases to percolate through the roof and back of the cave, and the flow ceases. At my visit it had already stopped, but the floor of the cave was covered several inches deep with a jelly-like or pasty mass, which gave a blood-red colour when mixed with water. On the sides of the cave were clotted masses looking like dried blood, which had run down from above; and in the narrowest parts I could reach in the recess of the fissures, I collected with my knife some fresh semi-fluid matter that the insects had not attacked. Examined with a microscope on the spot, it exhibited no living particles, nor, in fact, anything but minute fragments of the digested

débris of insects. Opposite to the principal cave are two smaller ones, which contain the same material, and, not being fissure-like, enable the whole of their interior to be examined. I found the roof and back of these cavities entirely clean, so that it was evident that the material did not come through the rock, but consisted merely of the excrement of the bats which take refuge in the cave; the colouring matter is either peculiar to it, depending on the nature of the food, or perhaps developed by fermentation, as is the case, to a certain extent, with the well-known murioxide.

"From the tint of the red colour, I was at first inclined to believe that it might result from the generation of sulphocyanide of ammonium during the putrefaction of the animal excretions, and the reaction of that substance with a trace of iron in the water percolating through the sandstone. But Mr. W. T. Taylor, to whom I submitted some of the solid matter collected, as also the semi-fluid preserved in alcohol, writes me that he cannot detect any iron in the red solution, and that it appears to be entirely an organic colouring matter. The solid material consists of sulphates of ammonia and potash, and an insoluble black substance, thus being precisely similar to the inspissated, bitumen-like bat excrement, found by me in a cave near Las Piedras, but which, as the cave is dry, has there accumulated, forming a large bed, and which contains large and beautiful crystals of sulphate of potash and ammonia.

"The insoluble substance has been found by Dr. Leidy to consist chiefly of *chitine*, indigested fragments of insects, mingled with bats' hair and homogeneous granular matter."

We often read in the chronicles of the middle ages of showers of blood. On the ground, or in the water, after such showers, stains resembling blood have incontestably been discovered, and early superstition, of course, detected in these phenomena fearful portents of impending evil; examples of this ensanguined rain have recurred from time to time; but modern microscopic investigations have proved that these sudden colourings of shallow waters have originated from minute animalcular or vegetable agencies. It has also happened that a species of red dust has descended with the rain, containing certain inorganic principles, tinted by its junction with iron or the hydro-chlorate of cobalt.

Much has been said with regard to the phenomenon of red snow; De Saussure, Raimond, and other learned authorities have seen it, and submitted it to scientific inspection on the slopes of the Alps and Pyrenees. In Baffin's Bay, the arctic discoverer Ross occasionally found the snow penetrated to the depth of several inches by a colouring substance of a red tint. In the loftiest recesses of the Alps, indeed, this remarkable appearance is by no means unusual. The test of the microscope has discovered it to arise from the existence of a certain granular deposit, the exact nature of which has not yet been completely defined, though the colour has in most cases been attributed to the agency of iron. These freaks of nature, though well known comparatively, are very curious, and deserve brief

mention while upon this strange subject; but they all yield in interest to the newly-discovered and very remarkable, though disgusting phenomenon of the "Fountain of Blood," which exists in the republic of Honduras.

A DAY AT BEN DHRYPING.

PART II.

OUR pleasant entertainments in the drawing-room were cut short by the apparition of Tom at the door, summoning Mr. B— to have his afternoon bath, while the rest of us dispersed for similar purposes. Just before leaving the room, Wilcox said to me: "I'm to have a 'pack' this afternoon; will you come and talk to me after you have had your bath and walk?" Having promised to do so, I betook myself to the inquisitorial chamber, No. 60, where John administered to me a "dripping sheet," the sensation of which I cannot better describe than as resembling that of a huge toad jumping upon one's back, and seizing one in its cold, clammy embrace. As it still rained heavily, I proceeded forthwith to the racket court, where a brisk game with an experienced player, a convalescent clergyman, soon put me in a fine glow of heat. This building is invaluable in wet weather. It is distant only three minutes' run from the house, and its dimensions being good, there is ample accommodation for the ladies walking, as well as for various games and gymnastics. Being now sufficiently warm, I did not forget my friend in "pack," and hastened to his apartment.

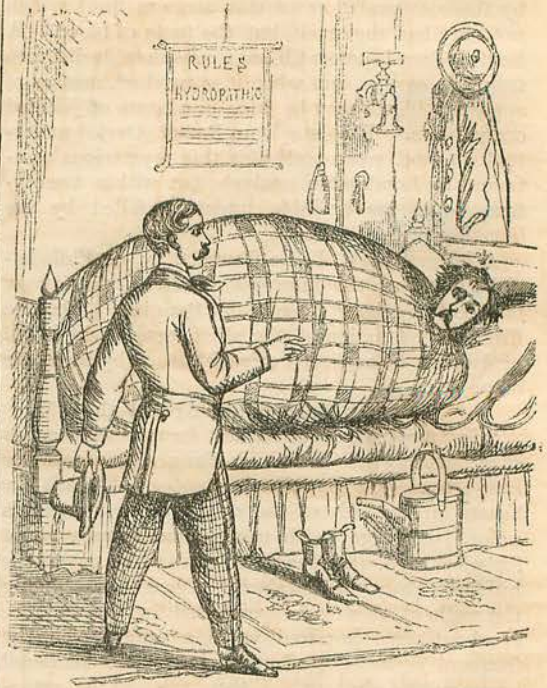
Anything more ludicrous than the appearance he presented, you can hardly conceive. As I entered the room, I looked towards the bed, where I expected to find him. I could at first discover nothing but what appeared an enormous pile of feather-beds. At one extremity, however, of this strange-looking erection, I caught sight of his pale face, with those huge black moustaches of his looking fiercer than ever. As he thus lay stretched out, no member of his body being capable of the slightest motion, he looked much more like a mummy than a gallant major of the Guards.

"Oh, Clarence," he groaned out, "are you come at last? For pity's sake, dash away this intolerable spider, which has been careering over my nose for the last half-hour, while I have not a finger or thumb to annihilate the horrid creature."

"Why, I thought you told me that to be in your present circumstances was little short of Elysium," said I, laughing heartily as I brushed away the creature; "it is well you had sufficient command over yourself to keep your mouth shut, or you might have had your ungainly visitor walking in at the inhospitable door."

The "pack," I may mention, is found very efficacious in cases of over-exhaustion, cold, rheumatism, etc. The patient remains in it for two hours, and those with whom it agrees describe the sensation as being very delicious and soothing. It is well, however, to have the bath-man, or some one, looking in occasionally, as a drop of water trickling down the face from the wet towel around

the head, or, as in the case of Wilcox, a long-legged spider incidentally perambulating across the nose, produces the most annoying and disquieting irritation, which the utter helplessness of the victim renders it impossible for him to remove. At the end of two hours' time the patient is unpacked, and



THE MAJOR IN "THE PACK."

plunged, while in a state of profuse perspiration, into a shallow bath, after which he is rubbed, and the operation is at an end.

At seven o'clock the whole party reassembled for the evening meal. This simply consists of tea and bread and butter. For this repast the company dress, and there is quite a display of beauty and fashion. One agreeable feature of such an establishment as this is, that there are but few who appear very delicate; those who feel unable for the excitement of mixing in so large a party preferring to remain in their private sitting-rooms.

I have often thought that a stranger, coming into the dining-room for the first time, and imagining he was to find himself among a set of invalids, must marvel at the amazing appetites around him; and I have been often reminded of the story of an old woman in Scotland, who was always complaining and declaring herself ill, but who invariably seemed to rally wonderfully at meal-time, and to eat more heartily than any around her. This peculiarity of her complaint having struck a gentleman who had observed her, he made a remark to that effect, when she characteristically replied, "Oo, sir, ony grain o' health I hae is aye at meal-time." So, "ony grain o' health" possessed by the inmates of Ben Dhrypping develops itself in unvarying force at the various repasts.

To-night, at tea, Wilcox, in his diversified attentions to the ladies, said to one who, with her brother, had arrived in the afternoon, "Now, you