

These excerpts are enough to give the reader a clear idea of the nature and value of the forthcoming volumes and of the Venetian Ambassador's qualifications. For although after the disappearance of Alexander VI. from the scene, the dramatic interest of the despatches does in some degree diminish, yet it is undeniable that the character and reign of Julius II. have a still higher political importance. In the second half of the despatches we see the impetuous disposition of the new Pontiff gradually and ever more clearly manifesting itself. We see his deliberate intention of having recourse to the most extreme expedients in order to win back the territory which he considers unjustly wrested from the Church by the Venetians. In these despatches we see explained and rendered clear as day the first causes of the League of Cambrai; and the policy of all the Italian States and of the principal European potentates is submitted to the most acute analysis, and illustrated by a large number of authentic and extremely accurate details. By reference to many original documents, we have been able to ascertain that Giustiniani can always be depended upon, not merely as a faithful narrator of things that he has seen, but also as a cautious collector of news: it is the rarest occurrence for him to make a slip. In times of difficulty and danger he sees and foresees everything, and occasionally ventures to give advice, admirable for its prudence and sagacity. In short, we may safely affirm that these despatches offer an abundant harvest of exact and precious materials, principally for the history of Italy, but not unfrequently for that of all Europe.

LINDA MAZINI.

A LITERARY DUNG-FLY.

It is not often necessary to take public notice of so trivial a publication as *Evening Hours*, but an article in the current number, bearing the name of Mr. Broome, the Colonial Secretary of Natal, lately not unknown as a writer in an influential newspaper at home, seems to demand an indignant protest. From the safe distance of South Africa—since were he to walk down Pall Mall before his article is forgotten he would assuredly be horsewhipped—Mr. Broome rakes his memory for every fact he can remember about literary and artistic celebrities in London, and, when facts fail, retails the falsehoods of current small-talk and scandal.

The article in question is the most offensive specimen we have yet seen of a class too common in America, but from which (with the exception of the "Gossip" in two literary newspapers) our own country is comparatively free. Writers of such articles appear to think that because a man gives the best hours of his time and the best fruits of his brain to works which may delight his own generation and possibly live for the future, his whole life is therefore to be turned inside out, his manners canvassed, his confidential speeches to his friends made public property, his privacy violated, and his personal habits described. It is difficult to review such a paper without seeming in a degree to perpetuate the unseemly revelations of Mr. Broome, nor would we say a word about it, unless we were able to say at the same time that we have every reason to believe that the greater part of the revelations which were not already known to the literary world are as false as some that we know to be so. Mr. Broome boasts of his intimacy with Mr. Browning, Sir Henry Thompson, Mr. Hepworth Dixon, Mr. Millais, Mr. Westmacott, Dean Stanley, Mrs. William Grey, Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Ferguson, and others. Whether he beslabbers them with his praise, or bespatters them with his blame, he is equally offensive. We can only congratulate George Eliot sincerely on the fact recorded by Mr. Broome—"It is one of my regrets that I have never had the honour of taking her hand."

It is hard on the late Mr. Westmacott, the sculptor, that anecdotes of Sydney Smith and Holland House, which are known to everybody who has heard of either, should be fathered on him. It is somewhat too absurd that Mr. Broome considers himself the first to reveal the secret of the authorship of certain notorious articles in the *Saturday Review*. To reveal the agreements which Mr. Tennyson has made with his publishers would be unseemly were not the pretended revelation a flagrant untruth. We can hardly find an epithet for the habit of mind which induced him to quote sentences from the private letters of Messrs. Millais and Hepworth Dixon. We hope that Mr. Swinburne or some other whom Mr. Broome has libelled may make him find that a court of justice can yet protect the reputations even of literary men. It is somewhat comic to find that after his unsparing use of the names of many great men, Mr. Broome tells us how Mr. Froude went to see the pictures of the Academy with Mr. Ruskin, and apologises to the former for using his name without his permission.

We are not so vain as to suppose that a single article will do much to silence such persons as Mr. Broome or to make editors and publishers feel the responsibility which lies on them for articles issued under their protection and by their firms, but we may at least have done something towards stirring up our brethren of the Press to join in putting this sort of thing down.

LITERATURE.

GORILLA LAND.

Two Trips to Gorilla Land and the Cataracts of the Congo. By R. F. Burton. In Two Volumes. London: Sampson Low and Co.

Captain Burton is a great traveller, but not a great explorer. India, Arabia, the East and West Coasts of Africa, the Rocky Mountains, Iceland, Syria, and Brazil have all in turn been visited by him, and his name is connected with each as that of an accomplished, entertaining, and serviceable author. It is not hitherto associated with any memorable feat of enterprise, or any important geographical discovery directly attributable to himself. Captain Burton shines rather as a diligent amasser of information from all important quarters; a judicious estimator of its value, a sagacious critic of its discrepancies and incoherencies, and, finally, as skilful in presenting it to a cultivated public with the recommendations of an excellent arrangement and a piquant style. His present publication is a case in point. For the exploration of either the Gaboon or the Congo Captain Burton has personally done little, but he has mastered the extant literature on the subject, and at the same time obtained sufficient actual acquaintance with the region under review to invest his summary of it with an authority beyond the pretensions of any merely fireside geographer. His work fairly supercedes the less conscientious and accurate Du Chaillu, and will honourably occupy the ground until the expected advent of Lieutenant Cameron, or much longer, should this not take place.

Captain Burton's first volume is devoted to the Gaboon River, the second to the Congo. The Gaboon is the enormous estuary of several short rivers, rising in a coast range appropriately designated by Captain Burton, the West African Ghauts. To the south runs a more considerable river, supposed to have a much longer course, the Ogobé, which, branching out into a delta, makes a less conspicuous figure in the map. The greater volume and easier navigation of the Gaboon render it the commercial highway for this part of Africa, and the French have thought it worth while to establish a settlement at its mouth. Captain Burton, whose observations, it must be recollected, refer to more than ten years ago, gives an unfavourable account of this miniature colony. "The modern French appear fit to manage only garrisons and military posts. They will make everything official." It is admitted, however, that "Le Plateau" boasts a better landing-place than any English station in West Africa; that the French authorities, if fussy martinet, at all events keep order on the river, and that the natives, who have lately shown a disposition to encroach, "would hail with pleasure a transfer to masters who are not so uncommonly ready with their *gros canons*." These natives belong to the Mpongwe nation, a tribe of the great family to which the Kafirs and Bechuanas also appertain. They are apparently the most promising of any of the tribes upon the Western Coast, with the exception of those Northern ones which have come more or less under Mohammedan influence. Captain Burton, comparing his own observations with those of previous visitors, thinks he can discern signs of progress, and his testimony deserves particular attention from his being neither a negrophilist nor an enthusiast for human nature in the abstract. He gives a very interesting account of their social arrangements, with especial reference to slavery and polygamy, and their superstitions, a strong corroboration of the thesis that "all theology is anthropology." The language is surprisingly flexible, especially in the verbal inflections, which are not less than from 1,200 to 1,500. In the opinion of the missionary grammarian, "the genius of the language is such that new terms may be introduced in relation to ethics, metaphysics, and science." Though so nearly under the Equator and so level, the region's heat is not intolerable, rarely exceeding eighty-six degrees; its unhealthiness