AMERICAN LITERATURE.

WE believe it was M. l'Abbé Raynal who said that America had not yet produced a single man of genius. The productions now under our notice will do more to relieve her from this imputation than the reply of President Jefferson:

"When we have existed," said that gentleman, "so long as the Greeks did before they produced Homer, the Romans Virgil, the French a Racine and a Voltaire, the English a Shakspeare and a Milton, we shall inquire from what unfriendly causes it has proceeded that the other countries of Europe, and quarters of the earth, shall not have inscribed any poet of ours on the roll of fame."

The ingenuity of this defense is more apparent than its truth; for although the existence of America, as a separate nation, is comparatively recent, it must not be forgotten that the origin of her people is identical with that of our own. Their language is the same; they have always had advantages in regard of literature precisely similar to those which we now enjoy; they have free trade, and a little more, in all our best standard authors. There is, therefore, no analogy whatever between their condition and that of the other nations with whom the attempt has been made to contrast them. With a literature ready-made, as it were, to their hand, America had never to contend against any difficulties such as they encountered. Beyond the ballads of the Troubadours and Trouveres, France had no stock either of literature or of traditions to begin upon; the language of Rome was foreign to its people; Greece had but the sixteen letters of Cadmus; the literature of England struggled through the rude chaos of Anglo-Saxon, Norman, French, and monkish Latin. If these difficulties in pursuit of knowledge be compared with the advantages of America, we think it must be admitted that the president had the worst of the argument.

But although America enjoys all these advantages, it can not be denied that her social condition presents impediments of a formidable character toward the cultivation of the higher and more refined branches of literature. Liberty, equality, and fraternity are not quite so favorable to the cultivation of elegant tastes as might be imagined; where every kind of social rank is obliterated, the field of observation, which is the province of fiction, becomes proportionately narrow; and although human nature must be the same under every form of government, the liberty of a thorough democracy by no means compensates for its vulgarity. It might be supposed that the very obliteration of all grades of rank, and the consequent impossibility of acquiring social distinction, would have a direct tendency to turn the efforts of genius in directions where the acquisition of fame might be supposed to compensate for more substantial rewards; and when men could no longer win their way to a coronet, they would redouble their exertions to obtain the wreath. The history of literature, however, teaches us the reverse: its most brilliant lights have shone in dark and uncongenial times. Amid the clouds of bigotry and oppression, in the darkest days of tyranny and demoralization, their lustre has been the most brilliant. Under the luxurious tyranny of the empire, Virgil and Horace sang their immortal strains; the profligacy of Louis the Fourteenth produced a Voltaire and a Rosseau; amid the oppression of his country grew and flourished the gigantic intellect of Milton; Ireland, in the darkest times of her gloomy history, gave birth to the imperishable genius of Swift; it was less the liberty of Athens than the tyranny of Philip, which made Demosthenes an orator; and of the times which produced our great dramatists it is scarcely necessary to speak. The proofs, in short, are numberless. Be this, however, as it may, the character of American literature which has fallen under our notice must demonstrate to every intelligent mind, what immense advantages she has derived from those sources which the advocates of her claims would endeavor to repudiate. There is scarcely a page which does not contain evidence how largely she has availed herself of the learning and labors of others.

We do not blame her for this; far from it. We only say that, having reaped the benefit, it is unjust to deny the obligation; and that in discussing her literary pretensions, the plea which has been put forward in her behalf is untenable.—*Dublin University Magazine.*

MILKING IN AUSTRALIA.

THIS is a very serious operation. First, say at four o'clock in the morning, you drive the cows into the stock-yard, where the calves have been penned up all the previous night in a hutch in one corner. Then you have to commence a chase after the first cow, who, with a perversity common to Australian females, expects to be pursued two or three times round the yard, ankle deep in dust or mud, according to the season, with loud halloas and a thick stick. This done, she generally proceeds up to the *fail*, a kind of pillory, and permits her neck to be made fast. The cow safe in the fail, her near hind leg is stretched out to its full length, and tied to a convenient post with the universal cordage of Australia, a piece of green hide. At this stage, in ordinary cases, the milking commences; but it was one of the hobbies of Mr. Jumsorew, a practice I have never seen followed in any other part of the colony, that the cow's tail should be held tight during the operation. This arduous duty I conscientiously performed for some weeks, until it happened one day that a young heifer slipped her head out of an ill-fastened fail, upset milkman and milkpail, charged the head-stockman, who was unloosing the calves, to the serious damage of a new pair of fustians, and ended, in spite of all my efforts, in clearing the top rail of the stock-yard, leaving me flat and flabbergasted at the foot of the fence. —*From "Scenes in the Life of a Bushman" (Unpublished.)*