

Tenby: a Sea-side Holiday. By PHILIP HENRY GOSSE, A.L.S.
London, Van Voorst, 1856. 12mo.

Amongst the numerous caterers to the appetite for popular books on Natural History, which is rapidly, whether for good or ill, becoming a more and more fashionable craving, Mr. Gosse has undoubtedly taken a very leading position. This is due not only to the numerous works of this nature which owe their existence to his prolific pen, for in this respect he is certainly not without rivals, but to the intimate practical acquaintance which he possesses with those marine creatures with which he principally has to do, and to a second and still rarer quality, springing perhaps to a certain extent from the former, that of treating whatever comes under his hand in a style at once pleasant and elegant, intermixing so much of human interest with his descriptions of what in less skilful hands would furnish intolerably dry reading, at least to the masses, that the dry bones become clothed with flesh and endowed with an astonishing amount of life and vigour. As regards the positive effect of these works, and the policy of consigning original zoological observations to pages which may almost be regarded as addressed exclusively to the unlearned in such matters, there may be two opinions; but there can be no doubt, that those multitudes who at this particular period of the year are always meditating gravely upon the necessity of passing the next two or three months in some dreary watering-place, have good cause to be thankful to Mr. Gosse for his delightful productions, and to wish most heartily that there were more guides and instructors "like unto him."

"Tenby," Mr. Gosse's new sea-side book, does not fall short of its predecessors in general interest, although the amount of new matter for the student contained in it is perhaps rather less. It opens with an amusing account of the railway journey into Wales, and the first acquaintance with the semi-foreign natives of the Principality; the energetic struggles of the Tenby coachmen to secure customers are not forgotten, and the whole journey is described in a style which in these days of unromantic travel is quite refreshing. The first impressions of Tenby and the neighbouring scenery are also graphically described,—Saint Catherine's and its caverns stand out vividly in many pages, and the singularly rapid influx of the tide over the sands serves to introduce a humorous picture of the perplexity of three ladies, whom Mr. Gosse ungallantly describes as "middle-aged" and "somewhat heavy in person," who in their anxiety to view the beauties of the place were somewhat unpleasantly reminded of the fact that the old proverb, "Time and Tide wait for no man," applies with equal truth to the fairer portion of humanity. This and many other passages of a similar nature, including several excellent descriptions of scenery and pieces of local history, must be regarded by the scientific naturalist, however he may enjoy them, as coming parenthetically in the midst of his severer studies;—we shall therefore refer no farther to the lighter portion of Mr. Gosse's book.

We have already said that the number of new facts brought forward in the present volume seems to be less than in Mr. Gosse's

“Devonshire Coast.” On the other hand, several of the chapters (or Letters as our author calls them) contain excellent descriptions of things, which although previously well known to zoologists, will undoubtedly be exceedingly interesting to the general reader, in the elegant costume in which they are here presented to him. Amongst these we may notice the development of the Decapod Crustacea and Barnacles, of *Clavellina* and the *Echinida*. One chapter is devoted to the description of the *Pedicellariæ*, which Mr. Gosse, with the principal authorities of the present day, regards as component parts of the Echinoderms on whose surface they are found; our author gives a very full description of the structure of these curious bodies, and besides the three kinds or species described by Müller, notices a fourth form, to which he gives the name of *Pedicellaria stenophylla*. The *Actinæ* and their beauties naturally take up a good deal of Mr. Gosse’s attention,—they are frequently referred to in various parts of the work, and three new species are described in his last letter; whilst in an Appendix he gives some extracts from his paper on *Peachia hastata* in the Linnæan Transactions, in which he establishes the genera *Sagartia* and *Bunodes* at the expense of the old genus *Actinia*, and gives his views as to the nature and affinities of the family of the Sea Anemones.

Mr. Gosse is, however, by no means constant in his attachment to the sea, and two of his letters are devoted exclusively to the fresh-water *Rotifera*;—in one he describes the mode of capturing these little creatures, and in the second the way in which they are to be observed under the microscope, and the structure of several striking species.

Two circumstances must prevent our giving any extracts from this charming little book,—one of these is the difficulty of selection where so much is excellent, and the other the want of space. In taking leave of it, however, we cannot but feel that it will do much to open up new sources of delight to thousands who may visit not only Tenby but other watering-places, by awakening in their minds some little interest in the many apparently insignificant, but truly interesting creatures, which they would otherwise pass contemptuously in their objectless saunterings by the sea. We may add that the work is illustrated with twenty-four coloured lithographic plates, executed by the author, most of which are exceedingly good.

Manual of British Botany, containing the Flowering Plants and Ferns arranged according to the Natural Orders. By CHARLES CARDALE BABINGTON, M.A., F.R.S., F.L.S. &c. Fourth Edition, with many additions and corrections. London: Van Voorst, 1856, pp. 446.

An examination of Mr. Babington’s fourth edition suggests little that we have not already said, still less that we might not have said, respecting its predecessor. The countless silent rectifications of diagnosis, which give Mr. Babington’s writings their chief value, will hardly be appreciated except by assiduous use; but the marks of