

celebrate and record them. He was supposed by most people, and almost by himself, to have gone crazy. If anything, at this day, is more incredible than the feat which he accomplished, it is the derision with which the public viewed his labors, decried his success, and sneered at the rags which betokened the honesty of his poverty. To every one who had brains capable of logic, he had demonstrated the feasibility of his visions. But no amount of even physical demonstration, then possible, could bring out the funds requisite to pecuniary profit, against the head-wind of public scorn. It whistled down his high hopes of fortune. At last, dropping the file and the hammer, he took the pen, determined, that, if others must get rich by his invention, he would at least save for himself the fame of it. The result of his literary labors was an autobiography of great frankness and detail, extending to several hundred pages, and embracing almost every conceivable violation of standard English orthography, with which he seems to have had very little acquaintance or sympathy. It was placed under seal in the Philadelphia Library, not to be opened for thirty years. At the expiration of that period, in 1823, the seal was broken, and the quaint old manuscript, with the stamp of honest truth on every word, stood ready to reveal what the world is but just beginning to "want to know" about John Fitch. He afterwards went to Europe to promote his steamboat interests,—to little purpose, —wandered about a few years, settled in Bardstown, Kentucky, made a model steamboat with a brass engine, drowned disappointment in the drink of that country, and at last departed by his own will, two years before the close of the last century. A life so full of truth that is stranger than fiction ought not to be treated in the Dry-as-dust style, quite so largely as Mr. Westcott has done it.

*Life Beneath the Waters; or, The Aquarium in America.* Illustrated by Plates and Wood-Cuts drawn from Life. By ARTHUR M. EDWARDS. New York: 1858.

THIS book has appeared since the notice in our July number of two English works on the Aquarium. Like so many books by which our literature is discredited, it

is a work got up hastily to meet a public demand, and is deficient in method, thoroughness, and accuracy. There is much repetition in it, and the observations of its author seem to have been limited to the waters around New York, and to have extended over but a short period. In spite of these and other minor defects, it may be recommended as containing much useful information for those just beginning an aquarium and forming an acquaintance with the sea.

We trust that a misprint in our former notice has not brought disappointment to any of our readers, by leading them to expose their aquaria to too much sunshine; for the sunshine should be "*not enough*" (and not, as it was printed, "*hot enough*") "to raise the water to a temperature above that of the outer air."

*The Exiles of Florida: or the Crimes committed by our Government against the Maroons, who fled from South Carolina and other Slave States, seeking Protection under Spanish Laws.* By JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS. Columbus, Ohio: Follett, Foster, & Co. 1853.

A CRUEL story this, Mr. Giddings tells us. Too cruel, but too true. It is full of pathetic and tragic interest, and melts and stirs the heart at once with pity for the sufferers, and with anger, that sins not, at their mean and ruthless oppressors. Every American citizen should read it; for it is an indictment which recites crimes which have been committed in his name, perpetrated by troops and officials in his service, and all done at his expense. The whole nation is responsible at the bar of the world and before the tribunal of posterity for these atrocities, devised by members of its Cabinet and its Congress, directed by its Presidents, and executed by its armies and its courts. The cruelties of Alva in the Netherlands, which make the pen of Motley glow as with fire as he tells them, the *dragonnades* which scorched over the fairest regions of France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, have a certain excuse, as being instigated by a sincere, though misguided religious zeal. For Philip II. and Louis XIV. had, at least, a fanatical belief that they were doing God service by those

holocausts of his children; while no motive inspired these massacres, tortures, and banishments, but the most sordid rapacity and avarice, the lowest and basest passions of the human breast.

And so carefully has the truth of this story been covered up with lies, that, probably, very few indeed of the people of the Free States have any just idea of the origin, character, and purposes of the Seminole Wars, or of the character of the race against which they were waged. And yet there is no episode in American history more full of romantic interest, of heroic struggles, and of moving griefs. We have been taught to believe that these wars were provoked by incursions of the savages of Florida on the frontier, and, if the truth could not be concealed, that an incidental motive of our war of extermination against them was to be found in the sanctuary which the fugitive slaves of the neighboring States found in their fastnesses. The general impression has been, that these were mainly runaways of recent date, who had made their escape from contemporary masters. How many of our readers know that for more than three quarters of a century before the purchase of Florida there had been a nation of negroes established there, enjoying the wild freedom they loved, mingling and gradually becoming identified with the Indians, who had made it their city of refuge from slavery also? For the slaveholders of Carolina had no scruples against enslaving Indians any more than Africans, until it was discovered that the untamable nature of the red man made him an unprofitable and a dangerous servant. These Indian slaves fled into the wilderness, which is now the State of Georgia, pushing their way even to the peninsula of Florida, and were followed, in their flight and to their asylum, by many of their black companions in bondage. For near seventy-five years this little nation lived happy and contented, till the State of Georgia commenced the series of piratical incursions into their country, then a Spanish dependency, from which they were never afterwards free; the nation at last taking up the slaveholders' quarrel and prosecuting it to the bitter and bloody end.

This whole story is told, and well told, by Mr. Giddings. And a most touching

picture it is. First, the original evasion of the slaves into that peninsular wilderness, which they reclaimed as far as the supply of their simple wants demanded. They planted, they hunted, they multiplied their cattle, they intermarried with their Indian friends and allies, their children and their children's children grew up around them, knowing of slavery only by traditionary legend. The original founders of the tribe passed away, and their sons and grandsons possessed their corn-fields and their hunting-grounds in peace. For many years no fears disturbed their security. Under the Spanish rule they were safe and happy. Then comes the gradual gathering of the cloud on the edges of their wilderness, its first fitful and irregular flashes, till it closes over their heads and bursts upon them in universal ruin and devastation. Their heroic resistance to the invasion of the United States troops follows, sublime from its very desperation. A more unequal contest was never fought. On one side one of the mightiest powers on earth, with endless stores of men and money at its beck,—and on the other a handful of outcasts fighting for their homes, and the liberties, in no metaphorical sense, of themselves, their wives, and their children, and protracting the fight for as many years as the American Revolution lasted.

Then succeeded the victory of Slavery, and the reduction to hopeless bondage of multitudes who had been for generations free, on claim of pretended descendants of imaginary owners, by the decision of petty government-officials, without trial or real examination. More than five hundred persons, some of them recent fugitives, but mostly men born free, were thus reduced to slavery at a cost to us all of forty millions of dollars, or eighty thousand dollars for each recovered slave! Then comes their removal to the Cherokee lands, west of Arkansas, under the pledge of the faith of the nation, plighted by General Jessup, its authorized agent, that they should be sent to the West, and settled in a village separate from the Seminole Indians, and that, in the mean time, they should be protected, should not be separated, "nor any of them be sold to white men or others." This, however, was not a legitimate issue of a war waged solely for the reduction

of these exiles to slavery; and so the doubts of President Polk as to the construction of this treaty were solved by Mr. John Y. Mason, of Virginia, who was sandwiched in between two Free-State Attorney-Generals for this single piece of dirty work, (of which transaction see a most curious account, pp. 328-9 of this book,) and who enlightened the Presidential mind by the information, that, though the exiles were entitled to their freedom, under the treaty, and had a right to remain in the towns assigned to them, "*the Executive could not in any manner interfere to protect them!*"

The bordering Creeks, who by long slave-holding had sunk to the level of the whites around them, longed to seize on these valuable neighbors, and, indeed, they claimed rights of property in them as fugitives in fact from themselves. The exiles were assured by the President that they "*had the right to remain in their villages, free from all interference or interruption from the Creeks.*" Trusting to the plighted word of the Head of the Nation, they built their huts and planted their ground, and began again their little industries and enjoyments.

But the sight of so many able-bodied negroes, belonging only to themselves, and setting an evil example to the slaves in the spectacle of an independent colony of blacks, was too tempting and too irritating to be resisted. A slave-dealer appeared amongst the Creeks and offered to pay one hundred dollars for every Floridian exile they would seize and deliver to him,—he taking the risk of the title. Two hundred armed Creek warriors made a foray into the colony and seized all they could secure. They were repulsed, but carried their prisoners with them and delivered them to the tempter, receiving the stipulated pieces of silver for their reward. The Seminole agent had the prisoners brought before the nearest Arkansas judge by Habeas Corpus, and the whole matter was reviewed by this infamous magistrate, who overruled the opinion of the Attorney-General as to their right to reside in their villages, overrode the decision of the President, repealed the treaty-stipulations, pronounced the title of the Creek Indians, and consequently that of their vendee, legal and perfect, and directed the kidnapped captives to be delivered up to the

claimant! We regret that Mr. Giddings has omitted the name of this wretch, and we hope that in a future edition he will tell the world how to catalogue this choice specimen in its collection of judicial monsters.

Then comes the last scene of this drama of exile. Finding that there was no rest for the sole of their foot in the United States, these peeled and hunted men resolved to turn their backs upon the country that had thus cruelly entreated them, and to seek a new home within the frontiers of Mexico. The sad procession began its march westward by night, the warriors keeping themselves always in readiness for an attack. The Creeks, finding that their prey had escaped them, went in pursuit, but were bravely repulsed and fled, leaving their dead upon the field,—the greatest disgrace that can befall, according to the code of Indian honor. The exiles then pursued their march into Mexico without further molestation. There, in a fertile and picturesque region, they have established themselves and resumed the pursuits of peaceful life. But they have not been permitted to live in peace even there. At least one marauding party, in 1853, was organized in Texas, and went in search of adventures towards the new settlement. Of the particulars of the expedition we have no account. Only, it is known that it returned without captives, and, as the Texan papers announcing the fact admitted, "*with slightly diminished numbers.*" How long they will be permitted to dwell unmolested in their new homes no one can say. Complaints are already abroad that the escape of slaves is promoted by the existence of this colony, which receives and protects them. And when the Government shall be ordered by its Slave-holding Directory to add another portion of Mexico to the Area of Freedom, these "outrages" will be sure to be found in the catalogue of grievances to be redressed. Then they will have to dislodge again and fly yet farther from before the face of their hereditary oppressors.

Mr. Giddings has done his task admirably well. It is worthy to be the crowning work of his long life of public service. His style is of that best kind which is never remarked upon, but serves as a clear medium through which the events he por-

trays are seen without distortion or exaggeration. He has done his country one more service in entire consistency with those that have filled up the whole course of his honorable and beneficent life. We have said that this is fit to be the crowning work of Mr. Giddings's life; but we trust that it is far from being the last that he will do for his country. A winter such as rounds his days is fuller of life and promise than a century of vulgar summers. He has won for himself an honorable and enduring place in the hearts and memories of men by the fidelity to principle and the

unflinching courage of his public course. Of the ignoble hundreds who have flitted through the Capitol, since he first took his place there,

"Heads without name, no more remembered,"

his is one of the two or three that are household words on the lips of the nation. And it will so remain and be familiar in the mouths of posterity, with a fame as pure as it is noble. The ear that hath *not* heard him shall bless him, and the eye that hath *not* seen him shall give witness to him.

## OBITUARY.

THE conductors of "The Atlantic" have the painful duty of announcing to their readers the death of CALVIN W. PHILLEO, author of "Akin by Marriage," published in the earlier numbers of this magazine. The plot of the story was sketched at length, and in the brain of the writer it was complete; but no hand save his own could give it life and form: it must remain an unfinished work. The mind of Mr. Philleo was singularly clear, his observation of nature and character sharp and discriminating, and his feeling for beauty, in its more placid forms, was intense and pervading. His previous work, "Twice Married," and the various sketches of New England life, with which the readers of magazine literature are familiar, are sufficient to give him a high place among novelists. He was warm in his friendships, pure in life, and his early death will be lamented by a wide circle of friends. *In pace!*