

RECORD OF THE MONTHS.

The Zincali: or an Account of the Gypsies of Spain; with an Original Collection of their Songs and Poetry. By GEORGE BORROW. Two Volumes in one. New York: Wiley & Putnam.

OUR list of tribes in America indigenous and imported wants the Gypsies, as the Flora of the western hemisphere wants the race of heaths. But as it is all one to the urchin of six years, whether the fine toys are to be found in his father's house or across the road at his grandfather's, so we have always domesticated the Gypsy in school-boy literature from the English tales and traditions. This reprinted London book is equally sure of being read here as in England, and is a most acceptable gift to the lovers of the wild and wonderful. There are twenty or thirty pages in it of fascinating romantic attraction, and the whole book, though somewhat rudely and miscellaneously put together, is animated, and tells us what we wish to know. Mr. Borrow visited the Gypsies in Spain and elsewhere, as an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and seems to have been commended to this employment by the rare accomplishment of a good acquaintance with the language of this singular people. How he acquired his knowledge of their speech, which seems to have opened their hearts to him, he does not inform us; and he appears to have prospered very indifferently in the religious objects of his mission; but to have really had that in his nature or education which gave him access to the gypsy gang, so that he has seen them, talked confidentially with them, and brought away something distinct enough from them.

He has given us sketches of their past and present manner of life and employments, in the different European states, collected a strange little magazine of their poetry, and added a vocabulary of their language. He has interspersed some anecdotes of life and manners, which are told with great spirit.

This book is very entertaining, and yet, out of mere love and respect to human nature, we must add that this account of the Gypsy race must be imperfect and very partial, and that the author never sees his object quite near enough. For, on the whole, the impression made by the book is dismal; the poverty, the employments, conversations, mutual behavior of the Gypsies, are dismal; the poetry is dismal. Men do not love to be dismal, and always have their own reliefs. If we take Mr. Borrow's story as final, here is a great people subsisting for cen-

turies unmixed with the surrounding population, like a bare and blasted heath in the midst of smiling plenty, yet cherishing their wretchedness, by rigorous usage and tradition, as if they loved it. It is an aristocracy of rags, and suffering, and vice, yet as exclusive as the patricians of wealth and power. We infer that the picture is false; that resources and compensation exist, which are not shown us. If Gypsies are pricked, we believe they will bleed; if wretched, they will jump at the first opportunity of bettering their condition. What unmakes man is essentially incredible. The air may be loaded with fogs or with fetid gases, and continue respirable; but if it be decomposed, it can no longer sustain life. The condition of the Gypsy may be bad enough, tried by the scale of English comfort, and yet appear tolerable and pleasant to the Gypsy, who finds attractions in his out-door way of living, his freedom, and sociability, which the Agent of the Bible Society does not reckon. And we think that a traveler of another way of thinking would not find the Gypsy so void of conscience as Mr. Borrow paints him, as the differences in that particular are universally exaggerated in daily conversation. And lastly, we suspect the walls of separation between the Gypsy and the surrounding population are less firm than we are here given to understand.