

heights above his village, not to be found in the chronicles.

“If you are travelling in Germany, you may hear an account of the general rising for the War of Independence, when old and young went out against the invader; and you may get a recital of hardships and details of family life, given with all the minuteness of a Dutch picture, affording a better notion of the horrors, the privations and the spirit of that time, than the most eloquent description in the pages of the historian. A living man, who relates to you what he has heard again and again from his parents’ lips, what he himself remembers indistinctly,—the scenes of anguish and terror in which he, as yet a child, was an unconscious actor,—he is the real historian, his recital is the most valuable history. In the narratives of a co-actor or spectator there are life-like touches, and bits of detail which at once bring the scene described before one, and, like the studies of an artist, have freshness and reality which make a more elaborate work seem tame in comparison.”

Mr. Boner’s intimate acquaintance with the habits of the wild creatures of the forest enabled him to be of use to many learned naturalists, and he always imparted information with pleasure. In looking over his letters and papers nothing excites more surprise than the number of subjects which engaged his attention. Many of his observations,

revealing entirely new facts and varieties in animal life, were received with gratitude by Mr. Darwin, who thus acknowledges them :

“I have just received your two works, and have made some use of them for my present book ; and I should have made more use of them had I received them earlier. You describe the grand scenery of the Tyrol most graphically, and it makes me long to be strong and young again to ramble over the mountains. My next book will not be ready for a considerable time, though part is finished.

“I am very much obliged to you for your very interesting letter, and especially glad to hear about the co-existence of varieties in the wild state. The fact relating to the variation of the wild boar is quite new to me. I hope I shall get your book soon, and with my best thanks, I remain, dear sir, &c.,

CHARLES DARWIN.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am very much obliged for your extremely kind note and the really valuable present of your work on Transylvania. I do not think I ever read a word about that country, and I am ashamed to confess that I had to look at a map

to be sure where it lay. Therefore, as soon as I have finished some books which I have in hand, I will begin your volume. You must, indeed, feel most acutely your present state of health, which I am truly sorry to hear of. My own health has been failing for so many years that I can hardly imagine the sense of vigour and the power of endurance. I must be content to enjoy the glorious scenes of nature, as described by you and others.

With every hope that you may perfectly recover your health and observe the habits of wild animals again,

I beg leave to remain, yours, &c., &c.,

CHARLES DARWIN.

LETTERS FROM THE REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN.

To Charles Boner, Esq.,
St. Emeran, Ratisbon.

Dundee, 27th February, 1855.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your poem with its kind accompanying note came last night. I read the poem at a sitting. When I remembered that Gesner, Coleridge, and Byron had all handled the same theme, I felt a little concerned at the choice of the subject. I found, however, that your treatment of it was, on the whole, new, and in many parts felicitous. Some of