

Appendix.

Page 16.—GEOGRAPHY OF HOMER.



AN interesting chapter on this subject will be found in the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's recent valuable contribution to Homeric literature, the "Juventus Mundi," from which we extract the following conclusions (pp. 488, 489):—

"The general arrangements of Homer show that he thought the Earth and Sea had a great extension northwards, but gave no idea of great distances in the longitudinal line, or from east to west. How far he carried it to the south, we have no means of judging. We know that the shield of Achilles represented the form of the earth, with the river Okeanos for its rim. Now a shield in general is sometimes compared with the moon by Homer, but he does not say the full moon; and the prevailing epithets for the shield would tend to show an oval form, or one adapted to cover the entire figure; the same form as that indicated in the formula of the Spartan mother for a soldier son—'Bring it, or be brought upon it.' The natural shape of the hide, of which the name is often applied to a shield, likewise seems to favour this belief. And such a form of the shield apparently agrees with the figure which the descriptions of the Outer Geography tend to give to the earth, in conjunction with the representation of the shield of Achilles.

"The noble conception of a great circumfluent river was probably founded on a combination of a double set of reports; the one, of great currents setting into the Thalassa, or Mediterranean Sea, and seeming to feed it, such as those of Yenikalè, the Bosphorus, Gibraltar; the other, of outer waters, such as the Caspian, the Persian Gulf, and probably the Red Sea."

Page 27.—THE EARTH'S DISTANCE FROM THE SUN.

The transit of Venus across the sun's disc in 1874 will afford our astronomers an opportunity of solving what Professor Airy has called "the noblest problem in astronomy," the sun's distance from the earth. In what way it will enable to attain so desirable a result has been so clearly explained by a writer in the "Saturday Review" (Aug. 14, 1869) that we cannot do better than reproduce his observations:—

"It is well known," he says, "that to find the distance of any object on the earth from us, it is not at all necessary to walk over and actually measure the interval; it suffices to mark out a much smaller distance, called a base line, and then from either end of this base