

JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

"Torquet ab obscuris jam nunc sermonibus aureum."

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JUVENILE ENTERTAINER

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BIOGRAPHY.

The Progress of Genius

OBSCURE AND LOW SITUATIONS, TO EMINENCE AND CELEBRITY.

Genius is that gift of God which learning cannot confer, which no disadvantages of birth or education wholly obscure.

ALEXANDER ANDERSON.

His mathematician was born at Aberdeen towards the end of the sixteenth century. He displayed a strong taste for the study of mathematics, and made such progress that in the beginning of the seventeenth century he was made Professor of Mathematics in the University of Paris. He published there several ingenious treatises. He was the first who was appointed to the professorship of mathematics, founded at Oxford, by Sir Henry Saville. His cousin-german of the above professor, David Anderson, of Finshaugh, was possessed of a singular turn for mathematical studies. His daughter was the mother of the celebrated James Gregory, inventor of the reflecting telescope. She observed in her son when a child, a strong propensity to mathematical studies, and she instructed him herself. From the same lady descended Dr Reid, of King's college, Aberdeen, and afterwards of Glasgow, who no less eminent for mathematics than for physical learning.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE EAGLE AND ITS AFFINITIES.

The golden eagle is the largest and noblest of the class of birds that bears the kingly name; and as the lion obtains pre-eminence amongst animals, so the eagle is allowed to possess it amongst birds: it weighs between twelve and thirteen pounds; and the wings, extended, are upwards of seven feet: the eye is of a light hazel, and both the sight and smelling are remarkably acute: the head and neck are clothed with narrow sharp-pointed feathers, of a deep brown colour; but those on the crown of the head, as the bird increases in age, become white:

the wings, when cloathed, reach to the end of the tail; the quill feathers are of a chocolate colour, and the shafts white; the tail is of a deep brown irregularly marred, and blotched with an obscure ash: the legs are yellow, short, and very strong, three inches in circumference, and feathered to the very feet: the toes are covered with large scales, and arrested with the most formidable claws, the middle of which are two inches in length.

The eagle, as has been observed, obtains pre-eminence amongst birds, from magnanimously disdain to take advantage of those animals, which, from their inferiority in strength and size, could easily become its prey; and it is not until having for a length of time, been provoked by the taunting cries of the rook and magpie, that this generous creature is induced to punish their temerity. The eagle likewise refuses to share the plunder of any other bird; and when once it has made a meal of any animal, it never returns to it again, but leaves it to be devoured by those rapacious birds whose appetites may be less delicate than his own.

The eagle is naturally a solitary animal; and it is as extraordinary to see two pair of eagles on the same mountain, as two lions in the same forest; both bred for war, they are enemies to society, and are alike fierce, proud, and incapable of being easily tamed. Great patience and perseverance are necessary to make this bird in any degree subservient to man; and after the utmost labour and assiduity on the part of the falconer, when carried into the field it too often defies controul, and either turns its force against the hand that restrained it, or takes its flight and never returns to him again.

Of all the animals that fly, the eagle is allowed to ascend the highest, and from that circumstance the ancients have called him the bird of heaven; yet, as he has but little suppleness in the joints of his legs, he finds some difficulty in rising from the ground, though his strength is so great, that he is able to carry off geese, cranes, hares, lambs, and kids; and even infants themselves, when left unattended, have fallen victims to their rapacity and strength. An instance is recorded in Scotland, of two children having been carried away by two eagles, who were pursued in their flight, and had only time to lodge them in their nests before they were overtaken; and the little innocents by that means were restored to the arms of their affrighted parents, without the least appearance of hurt.

Smith, in his history of Kerry, tells us, that a poor man in that county procured a comfortable subsistence for his family, during a season of scarcity, by robbing an eagle's nest of the food that had been provided for the support of the young; and, fortunately, he was never surprised by the old ones in the commission of this act of plunder and depredation, or the consequences must have been fatal to himself.

The eagle's nest is usually built in the most inaccessible cliff of a mountain or rock, and often shielded from the weather by some jutting crag

that hangs over its side. One of these was found in the Peak of Derbysboro, which Wiloughby describes in the following words: "It was made of great sticks, one end of which rested upon the rock, and the other upon two birch trees; upon these was laid a layer of rushes, and over them a layer of heath, and upon the heath another coat of rushes, upon which reposed a young one; and by its side lay an added egg, a hare, a lamb, and three heath-poults: the nest was about two yards square, and had no hollow in it."

The eagle is said to be a very long-lived animal, and though they often attain an hundred years, yet seldom die from age and infirmity, but from the beak turning inward upon the under mandible, by which they are prevented from taking any food.

"A Gentleman in Strathspay was not displeas- ed that a couple of eagles every summer built a nest on a rock in the hill, not far from his house. There was a stone within a few yards of it, about six feet long, and nearly as broad, and upon this stone, almost constantly, but always when they had young, the gentleman and his servants found a number of muir fowl, partridges, hares, rabbits, ducks, snipes, parmacans, rats, mice, &c. and sometimes kids, swans, and lambs. When the young eagles were able to hop the length of this stone, to which there was a narrow road, hanging over a dreadful precipice, as a cat brings live mice to her kittens, and teaches them to kill them, so the eagles I learned, often brought hares, rabbits, &c. alive, and placing them before their young, taught them to kill and tear them to pieces. Sometimes, it seems, hares, rabbits, rats, &c. not being sufficiently tamed, got off from the young ones while they were amusing themselves with them, and one day a rabbit got into a hole where the old eagle could not find it. The eagle one day brought to her young ones the cub of a fox, which, after it had bitten desperately some of the young ones, attempted to make its escape up the hill, and would in all probability have accomplished it, had not the shepherd who was watching the motion of the eagles, with a view to shoot them, (which they do with pellets, swan-shot not being able to penetrate their feathers,) prevented it. As the eagles kept what might be called an excellent larder, when any visitors surprised the gentleman, he was absolutely in the habit, as he told me himself, of sending his servant to see what their neighbours had to spare, and that they scarcely ever returned without something very good for the table. It is well enough known that game of all kinds is not the worse, but the better for being kept for a very considerable time. When the gentleman or his servants carried off things from the shelf, or table, near the nest, (for it was next to impossible to approach the nest itself,) the eagles were active in replenishing it, but when they did not take them away, the old ones loitered about inactive, amusing themselves with their young, till the stock were nearly exhausted. While the hen eagle