

## NATURAL HISTORY.

### ELECTRIC ANIMALS.

Amongst all the diversified faculties, powers, and organs with which Supreme Wisdom has gifted the members of the animal kingdom to defend themselves from their enemies, or to secure for themselves a due supply of food, none are more remarkable than those by which they can give them an electric shock, and arrests them in their course, whether they are assailants or fugitives. That God should arm certain fishes, in some sense, with the lightning of the clouds, and enable them thus to employ an element so potent and irresistible, as we do gunpowder, to astound, to smite, and stupify, and kill the inhabitants of the waters, is one of those wonders of an Almighty arm which no terrestrial animal is gifted to exhibit. For though some quadrupeds, as the cat, is known, at certain times, to accumulate the electric fluid in their fur, so as to give a slight shock to the hand that strokes them, it has never been clearly ascertained that they can employ it to arrest or bewilder their prey, so as to prevent their escape. Even man himself, though he can charge his batteries with this element, and again discharge them, has not yet so subjected it to his dominion as to use it independently of other substances, offensively and defensively, as the electric fishes do. The fishes hitherto ascertained to possess this power belong to the genera *Tetrodon*, *Trichinrus*, *Malapterurus*, *Gymnotus*, and *Raia*. The most remarkable are the three last. The faculty of the *Torpedo* to benumb its prey was known to Aristotle, and Pliny further states, that, conscious of its power, it hides itself in the mud, and benumbs the unsuspecting fishes that swim over it. The Arabians, when they cultivated the sciences so successfully, had observed this faculty both in the *Torpedo*, and the *Malapterurus*, and perceiving an affinity between the electric fluid of the heavens and that of these fishes, called them *Raash*, a name signifying *thunder*. It is singular that in three principal animals which Providence has signalized by this wonderful property, the organs of it should differ so much both in their number, situation, and other circumstances; but as there appears to be little other connexion between them, it was doubtless to accommodate them to the mode of life and general organization of the fishes so privileged.—*Bridgewater Treatise*.

*Fruits of the West-Indies.*—I don't think the fruits of the East are to be compared with those of the West-Indies. I doubt if the garden of the Hesperides could have boasted of such a profusion of golden tints,

and such a variety of delicious flavours. In the order of their excellence, let me regale your ladyship's fancy with their enumeration: the imperial shaddock, the grace and ornament of a dessert, of the West-Indies; the luscious granadilla, which none but Creole hands can duly prepare with sugar and Madeira; the melting avocada pear, which it is forbidden to eat without salt and pepper; the delicate anana, which must be tasted in the birth-place of the pine apple, to understand the benefit, that Ripley, the Jamaica planter, has conferred on the epicurean world; the mellifluous nabisberry, which, like the medlar, and some other fruits of precocious qualities in fashionable hot-beds, must be yellow at the core before it is mature; the full grown pomegranate must not be forgotten, teeming with liquid rubies, and reminding the Eastern epicurean of the golden fruit, which grows (on the authority of Mahomet) on that extraordinary tree *Tuba*, which grows in Paradise, close to the prophet's house, and is continually bending down its branches, to present the passers-by with grapes, dates, and pomegranates, 'of size and taste unknown to mortals;' and lastly, the blooming mango, whose exquisite hue is like the blush on the bashful cheek of a maiden of fifteen; and finally, indeed, *agro-dolce* admixture of the star-apple and orange, which stands not the proof of Seneca's test of wholesomeness, for the eating of the same may be a pleasant thing to-day, but by no means agreeable to-morrow. If it were not that I have a certain loving respect for beef-stakes and boded mutton, and a wholesome apprehension of all crude vegetable diet, I would daily breakfast, dine, and sup, on the fruits of the West-Indies.—*Madden's West Indies*.

*Passengers in the Susan.*—Messrs Macomber, Welch, Gray & Rayner's ship *Susan*, arrived yesterday from the Cape of Good Hope, bringing the following passengers: Two elephants, one large rhinoceros, eight full grown ostriches, three Bengal and three African leopards, six white vultures, five Secretary birds or serpent eaters, one Cassawary bird, three laughing hyenas, two strand or beach do, three spotted do, one Bengal or royal tiger, five porcupines, a full grown lion and honess, two young do do, two jackalls, one tiger cat, one Java poney, one mongoss, two Poonar or Hindostan bears, two white and one crested pelicans, two zebras, one large Coffa crane, and six minor animals.—*Boston Paper*.

### EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES ILLUSTRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE.

It is much to be regretted, that some one of competent abilities does not spend a short

time in Egypt, for the express purpose of illustrating the Scriptures. This regret came to me with peculiar force when examining the caves of the Beni Massan, the paintings in which are of the most interesting description. In one cave there are figures of wrestlers, in at least a hundred different attitudes, and various other games are represented in separate compartments. A number of females appear to be playing at the rough game of leap-frog, and others at ball. There are washermen beating the clothes against a stone, and others wringing them out; blacksmiths, hunters, and fishermen; houses, flowers, and musical instruments; men exciting bulls to fight, and driving cattle as if to market; children riding upon asses in panniers; the sacrificing of bulls and human beings; the various processes of ploughing, sowing, reaping, treading out the corn, and housing it in the granary; groups of cattle, antelopes, asses, and dogs; lions and tigers; men shooting at game with arrows; weighing in a balance, hauling boats, and rowing; marriage processions; in fact, a peep is given at most of the common transactions of life as they took place in the olden time, not after the crude imagination of a modern painter, but in all the force and fire of living truth. There are two harpers, with instruments of a form more simple, and, perhaps, more ancient, than those in the tombs of Bruce. The dresses, and the manner of carrying burdens, suspended from the end of a stick placed upon the shoulders, the way of guiding boats by an oar instead of a rudder, are exact representations of the present customs of India, proving the similarity of manners in the early ages, and the antiquity of the usages of India, where to say 'it is customary' is thought a sufficient excuse for acts in themselves the most absurd. The sooner a mission is commenced for the preservation of these and other relics of antiquity the better, as they would throw great light upon many passages of the Bible, and every succeeding day adds something to the destruction of these valuable records.

### THE WEARY FINDING REST.

The following affecting story was related by Mr. Dudley, an Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, at the twelfth anniversary of the Birmingham Sunday School Union;—

In the county of Kent lives, or lived, a clergyman and his lady, who took a very active part in the Sabbath School, connected with his church. They had in the school a boy, the only son of a widow, who was notoriously wicked, despising all the earnest prayers and admonitions of the clergyman, who, out of pity for his poor widowed mother, kept him in the school