

# THE WEEKLY MIRROR.



Vol. 2 ]

HALIFAX, MARCH 4, 1836.

No. 7.

## The Weekly Mirror,

Is Printed and Published every Friday,  
BY H. W. BLACKADAR,  
At his Office, head of Mr. M. G. Black's wharf.

WHERE  
All kinds of JOB PRINTING will be executed at  
a very cheap rate.

Terms of the Mirror Five Shillings per annum  
payable in advance.

### NATURAL HISTORY.

#### SOLAN GESE, OR GANNETS.

These are birds of passage. They are seen in great numbers, in some of the small islands near Scotland. In one of these islands, about a mile round, you may see, about the month of May or June, the whole surface of the ground so completely covered with nests, eggs, and young birds, that it is scarcely possible to walk without treading on them. The flocks of birds on the wing are so large that they darken the air like clouds, and their noise is so great that a man can hardly hear his neighbours voices. If you look down from the top of the precipice, you will see it on every side covered with an immense number of birds swimming about, and hunting for prey. When sailing round the island, if you look at the hanging cliffs, you will perceive every crag and fissure of the rock to be completely covered with these birds. The rocks of St. Kilda, abound with Gannets.

They form the chief food of the inhabitants, who are said to consume not less than twenty-two thousand six hundred young birds of this species every year, besides a great many of their eggs. When these geese come to the islands, the people then know that the herrings are coming. They live chiefly upon fish. They build their nests on the highest and steepest rocks they can find near the sea. They hover over a shoal of herrings or pilchards, as a kite does over its prey; then they drop head foremost like a stone, into the water, and never fail to bring up a fish.

So great is the number of these birds, that you may watch many hours in vain for some end to their long lines, which stream from all quarters along the surface of the water, as they steer their course home to their beds in the evening. This is a daily occurrence; and, whatever the weather may be, may even in the thickest fogs, their course is still straight to the mark. So certain is

their flight, that boatmen, unprovided with a compass, place perfect reliance on them, as it is said the Norwegians of old did on their ravens. In addition to this property, we cannot but admire the beautiful provision made by nature, to prevent them from being killed by the stroke of the water when they fall down from aloft, with such force on their prey. The skin is so nearly independent of the breast as to be held to it only by a few slight filaments or strings; and, the space between being blown out with air, they fall without being hurt, sinking to a depth of many feet. It is imagined by the fishermen that they fly out to feed in the morning, even to the southern parts of Britain, and return in the evening. This is scarcely possible, unless their flight be more rapid than that of the albatross, which is supposed to be 150 miles in an hour; but, when their strength and rapidity are considered, it is probable that they go to very great distances: as they are found every day on all the coasts, very far from their breeding places.

### BIOGRAPHY.

#### OLIVER GOLDSMITH,

Oliver Goldsmith, an eminent writer, was born, according to one account, 1731, at Pallas, in the county of Longford, in Ireland, and to another at Elphin, in 1729. His father was a clergyman, who gave him a good education, and sent him to Trinity college, Dublin, from whence he removed to Edinburgh, to study physic. At this place he became security for a fellow-student, on which account he was obliged to escape to England, but was arrested at Sunderland, and released by two college friends, whom he met with there. He then went to Holland, and travelled through Flanders and part of Germany on foot. At Louvain he took the degree of bachelor of physic, the highest degree he ever attained. After accompanying an English gentleman to Geneva, and the south of France, he arrived in England in 1768. Being reduced to a low state, he became usher in a school at Peckham; where, however, he did not remain long, but settled in London, and subsisted by writing for periodical publications. One of his first performances was an Enquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe; but he emerged from obscurity in 1765 by the publication of his poem, entitled, the Traveller, or a Prospect of Society, of which Dr. Johnson said, "that

there had not been so fine a poem since Pope's time." The year following appeared his beautiful novel of the Vicar of Wakefield. His circumstances were now respectable, and he took chambers in the Temple; but the liberality of his temper, and a propensity to gaming, involved him in frequent difficulties. In 1768 he brought out his comedy of the Good-Natured Man at Covent Garden, but its reception was not equal to its merits. In 1770 he published The Deserted Village, a poem, which in point of description and pathos, is above all praise. As a comic poet he appeared to great advantage in 1772, by the play of She Stoops to Conquer, or the Mistakes of a Night, which is still a favourite with the public. Besides these performances he produced a number of others:—as a History of England, in a Series of Letters from a nobleman to his Son, 2 vols. 12mo. This useful and pleasing work was for a long time attributed to lord Lyttleton. A History of England, 4 vols. 8 vo.; A Roman History 2 vols. 8 vo.; A Grecian History, 2 vols.; A History of the Earth and Animated Nature, 8 vols. 8 vo.; Chinese Letters, &c. He died by taking an extravagant dose of Jame's powder in 1774, and was buried in the Temple church-yard. A monument was erected to his memory in Westminster-abbey, with a beautiful Latin epitaph by Dr. Johnson.

### THE VILLAGE.—No. 4.

#### RICHARD AND BENJAMIN TAYLOR.

It is thought by many persons that there are so few events occur in a village, and that one day passes so much like another, that there is nothing worth recording. Now, I have always been of a different opinion, and am quite disposed to think, that wherever we are, and in whatever manner we may be occupied, there are always circumstances taking place around us from which we may derive instruction and advantage.

I have often been struck with the great variety with which it has pleased the Father of mercies to adorn the beautiful world we inhabit, and I love to point it out to young people. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork."

New seasons and new scenes are continually presented to our eyes. Think of the spring mornings, when every thing in nature seems to burst out into new life and energy; when a thousand fragrant flowerets, of all the colours of the rainbow, are opening to the day, and ten thousand happy insects are on the wing; when bird and beast have new energy; and when the command of the Almighty appears to go forth amid living creatures, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord." I could be almost angry with those who could gaze on such an animating scene