

ANECDOTES OF NATURAL HISTORY.

OLD BIRDS ARE NOT CAUGHT WITH STRAWS.—A cat, belonging to an elderly lady in Bath, was so attached to her mistress that she would pass the night in her bed-chamber, which was four stories high. Outside of the window was the parapet wall, on which the lady often strewed crumbs for the sparrows that came to partake of them. The lady always sleeping with her window open, the cat would pounce upon the birds and kill them. One morning, giving a "longing, lingering look," at the top of the wall, and seeing it free from crumbs, she was at a loss for an expedient to decoy the feathered tribe, when reconnoitering, she discovered a small bunch of wheat suspended in the room, which she sprang at, and succeeded in getting down. She then carried it to the favourite resort of the sparrows, and actually threshed the corn out by beating it on the wall, then hiding herself. After awhile the birds came, and she resumed her favourite sport of killing the dupes of her sagacity.

THE SPARROW PROTECTED.—M. Hecart, of Valenciennes, procured the kitten of a wild cat, which he so effectually tamed, that she became the friend and protector of a domesticated sparrow. M. Hecart always allowed the sparrow to fly about at perfect liberty. One day a cat, belonging to a neighbouring house, had seized upon this sparrow and was making off with it; but this wild cat, observing her at the very moment, flew at puss, and made her quit the bird, which she brought, bleeding and half dead to her master. She seemed, from her manner, really to sympathize very sincerely with the situation of the poor sparrow, and rejoiced when it recovered from the injury, and was again able to amuse itself with this wild grimaldin.

SINGULAR INTERPOSITION.—A lady had a tame bird which she was in the habit of letting out of its cage every day. One morning, as it was picking crumbs of bread off the carpet, her cat, who always before showed great kindness for the bird, seized it on a sudden, and jumped with it in her mouth upon a table. The lady was much alarmed for the safety of her favourite, but, on turning about, instantly discovered the cause. The door had been left open, and a strange cat had just come into the room. After turning it out, her own cat came down from her place of safety and dropped the bird, without doing it any injury.

EFFECT OF THE HUMAN EYE ON WILD BEASTS.—Mr. King, in his narrative of the journey performed under the command of Captain Back, to the shores of the Arctic Ocean, speaking of the great American wolves, says that their courage ceases with the gaze of man—a fact of which the Indians are quite aware, and frequently turn to a good use. "I am not only convinced," adds he, "that a courageous man, unless he becomes the aggressor, with very few exceptions is perfectly secure from the attacks of the brute creation in a wild state: but that they will invariably shun him if there is only space enough to admit of their escape. I have frequently, for experiment's sake, approached the rein-deer with closed eyes, without alarming them, when a single glance made them bound with fear."

A SINGULAR DEVICE.—A singular circumstance, exhibiting, in a remarkable degree, the reflecting faculties of a wolf, is related as having taken place at Signy-le-Petit, a small town on the borders of Champagne. A farmer one day, looking through the hedge of his garden, observed a wolf walking round about his mule, but unable to get at him, on account of the mule's constantly kicking with his hind legs. As the farmer perceived that his beast was so well able to defend itself, he considered it unnecessary to render him any assistance. After the attack and defence had lasted fully a quarter of an hour, the wolf ran off to a neighbouring ditch where he several times plunged into the water. The farmer imagined he did this to refresh himself after the fatigue he had sustained, and had no doubt that his mule had gained a complete victory; but in a few minutes the wolf returned to the charge, and approaching as near as he could to the head of the mule, shook himself, and spouted a quantity of water into the mule's eyes, which caused him immediately to shut them. That moment the wolf leaped upon him and killed the poor mule before the farmer could come to his assistance.

SENSITORS OF EARTHQUAKES.—The following anecdote of the sensibility of cats to approach from earthquakes, is well authenticated. In 1783, two cats, belonging to a merchant of Messina, Sicily, announced to him the approach of an earthquake. Before the first shock was felt, these two animals seemed anxiously to work their way through the door of a room in which they were. Their master, observing their fruitless efforts, opened the door for them. At a second and third door, which they likewise found shut, they repeated their efforts, and on being set completely at liberty, they ran straight through the street, and

out of the gate of the town. The merchant, whose curiosity was excited by this strange conduct of the cats, followed them into the fields, where he again saw them scratching and burrowing in the earth. Soon after, there was a violent shock of an earthquake, and many of the houses of the city fell down, of which number the merchant's was one; so that he was indebted for his life to the singular foresight of his cats.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—The stanzas of J. T. C. will appear in our next. We hope "A Sailor" will find "Nature" sufficiently fruitful to supply us with articles for some months to come.

THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1837.

INNOCENT PLEASURES FOR THE PEOPLE.—What a rich and exquisite gratification it is, to take up the work of some great master-spirit of the age! Such an intellectual feast we have enjoyed in the perusal of "an address on Temperance" by the celebrated Dr. Channing, and which has lately been issued from the American press. We know not whether most to admire the address for the beauty of its composition, or the originality and profundity of its views. Many publications on the all-absorbing question of temperance we have read, but one so profound, so rational in its views, has never fallen under our notice. We greatly mistake if the new light thrown on the subject and the original suggestions tendered by Dr. Channing, do not prove of inestimable service to the great temperance cause. From the pen of the worthy Doctor much was to be expected, and no person will be disappointed in his expectations who carefully reads his address: in his hand even the most common place idea is rendered brilliant by the mode of its conveyance—every thing he touches becomes pure gold. Here we have no horrifying descriptions of the bloated countenance of the drunkard—his trembling, palsied limbs—his desolate, cheerless home—his squalid children—his heart-broken wife—these surface evils are scarcely noticed, while the depths of the wretched man's misery are disclosed, and so vividly presented as to have a tenfold effect on the mind of the philanthropist and the Christian. This is as we like it—we have been fairly tired out with the incessant *ding dong* of purpled cheeks—tainted breath—inflamed lips—clouded intellect—wan and haggard countenance—emaciated wife—starved children—from Beecher down to the last penny tract—that we feel it refreshing to peruse a work in which the old cuckoo note remains unsung, while the essential evil of intemperance, the *voluntary extinction of reason*, is broadly and clearly depicted. Nay, these outward evils which have formed the Alpha and Omega of many a piece of declamation, the Doctor is wishful, should ever follow the commission of the sin of drunkenness. "It is to be desired," he remarks, "when a man lifts a suicidal arm against his highest life, when he quenches reason and conscience, that he and all others should receive solemn, startling warning of the greatness of his guilt; that terrible outward calamities should bear witness to the inward ruin which he is working; that the hand-writing of judgment and woe on his countenance, form, and whole condition, should declare what a fearful thing it is for a man, God's rational offspring, to renounce his reason and become a brute." We fully concur in these views: to look at the consequences of vice, and not at the vice itself, is the mark of a meagre and unchristian philosophy. On the causes of intemperance, the Doctor speaks like one, well acquainted with the movements of society and their various evils—the heavy burden of care and toil which is laid on a large multitude of men—the intellectual depression and the ignorance to which many are subjected—the general sensuality and earthliness of the community—the want of self-respect which the present state of society induces among the poor and laborious, and the love of excitement which distinguishes our times, are among the causes of intemperance enumerated in the address.—Two modes of action are then recommended for the suppression of this great evil. "To rescue men," observes the Doctor, "we must act on them inwardly or outwardly. We

must either give them strength within to withstand the temptations to intemperance, or we must remove these temptations without. We must increase the power of resistance, or diminish the pressure which is to be resisted. Both modes of influence are useful, but the first incontestably the most important." On the latter topic, the Doctor expatiates with his usual vigour and judgment. To many narrow minded persons, his remarks will be received with a burst of ignorant condemnation—but to others of more capacious intellect and enlightened judgment, they will be read with the attention their importance demands. We subjoin the following interesting passage:

"I have said, a people should be guarded against temptation to unlawful pleasures by furnishing the means of innocent ones. By innocent pleasures, I mean such as excite moderately; such as produce a cheerful frame of mind, not boisterous mirth; such as refresh, instead of exhausting the system; such as recur frequently, rather than continue long; such as send us back to our daily duties invigorated in body and in spirit; such as we can partake in the presence and society of respectable friends; such as consist with and are favourable to a grateful piety; such as are chastened by self-respect, and are accompanied with the consciousness, that life has a higher end than to be amused. In every community there must be pleasures, relaxations, and means of agreeable excitement; and if innocent ones are not furnished, resort will be had to criminal. Man was made to enjoy as well as to labour; and the state of society should be adapted to this principal of human nature. France, especially before the revolution, has been represented as a singularly temperate country; a fact to be explained, at least in part, by the constitutional cheerfulness of that people, and by the prevalence of simple and innocent gratifications, especially among the peasantry. Men drink to excess very often to shake off depression, or to satisfy the restless thirst for agreeable excitement; these motives are excluded in a cheerful community. A gloomy state of society, in which there are few innocent recreations, may be expected to abound in drunkenness, if opportunities are afforded. The savage drinks to excess, because his hours of sobriety are dull and unvaried; because, in losing the consciousness of his condition and his existence, he loses little which he wishes to retain. The labouring classes are most exposed to intemperance because they have at present few other pleasurable excitements. A man, who, after toil, has no resources to blameless recreation, is less tempted than other men to seek self-division. He has too many of the pleasures of a man to take up with those of a brute. Thus the encouragement of simple, innocent enjoyments is an important means of temperance."

Music is the first innocent enjoyment recommended by Dr. Channing. That this accomplishment would be of benefit to the cause of morals and religion, and that it might be made "a lightener of toil, a cheerer of society, a relief of loneliness, and a solace in the poorest dwellings," there can be but one opinion. On this subject we have the following excellent observations:

It is now proposed that this shall be made a regular branch in our schools, and every friend of the people must wish success to the experiment. I am not now called to speak of all the good influences of music, particularly of the strength which it may and ought to give to the religious sentiment, and to all pure and generous emotions. Regarded merely as a refined pleasure, it has a favourable bearing on public morals. Taste and art be spread among us, and every family will have a new resource; home will gain a new attraction; social intercourse will be more cheerful; and an innocent public amusement will be furnished to the community. Public amusements, bringing multitudes together to kindle with one emotion, to share the same innocent joy, have a humanizing influence; and among these bonds of society, perhaps no one produces so much unmingled good as music. What a fulness of enjoyment to our Creator placed within our reach, by surrounding us with an atmosphere which may be shaped into sweet sounds. Alas! yet this goodness is almost lost upon us, through want of culture of the organ by which this provision is to be enjoyed.

Having thus eulogized music as an elegant and useful accomplishment, the Doctor next touches on "the poetry of motion," dancing. For his notice of this healthful exercise, he will, doubtless, be branded by many well-meaning but miserably contracted people, as a *recoy with man*: whether these individuals by their blackening process of defamation, will exhibit themselves as *very righteous persons* is another and a very different question. Viewed in the light of the annexed extract, and strongly abjuring the dancing of the theatre and ball-room, we must say with the great and good Dr. Watts, "we confess we know no evil in it."

Dancing is an amusement which has been discouraged in our country by many of the best people, and not without reason. Dancing is associated in their minds with balls; and this is one of the worst forms of social pleasure. The time consumed in preparation for a ball, the waste of thought upon it, the extravagance of dress, the late hours, the exhaustion of strength, the exposure of health, and the languor of the succeeding day—these and other evils, connected with this amusement, are strong reasons for banishing it from the community.