

and his abilities invigorated by the necessity of exerting them in short intervals, as the force of a current is increased by the contraction of its channel.

From some cause like this it has probably proceeded, that among those who have contributed to the advancement of learning, many have risen to eminence, in opposition to all the obstacles which external circumstances could place in their way, amidst the tumult of business, the distresses of poverty, or the dissipations of a wandering and unsettled state.

A great part of the life of Erasmus was one continual peregrination: ill supplied with the gifts of fortune, and led from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom, by the hopes of patrons and preferment, hopes which always flattered and always deceived him; yet he found means, by unshaken constancy, and a vigilant improvement of those hours, which, in the midst of the most restless activity, will remain unengaged, to write more than another in the same condition would have hoped to read. Compelled by want to attendance and solicitation, and so much versed in common life, that he has transmitted to us the most perfect delineation of the manners of his age, he joined to his knowledge of the world such application to books, that he will stand for ever in the first rank of literary heroes. How this proficiency was obtained, he sufficiently discovers, by informing us, that the Praise of Folly, one of his most celebrated performances, was composed by him on the road to Italy; *ne totum illud tempus quo equo fuit insidendum, illiteratis fabulis tereretur*, lest the hours which he was obliged to spend on horseback should be tattled away without regard to literature.

An Italian philosopher expressed in his motto, *that time was his estate*; an estate, indeed, which will produce nothing without cultivation, but will always abundantly repay the labours of industry, and satisfy the most extensive desires, if no part of it be suffered to lie waste by negligence, to be overrun with noxious plants, or laid out for show rather than for use.—*Rambler*.

EXTRAORDINARY INSTANCE OF SELF-TAUGHT GENIUS.

On the 3d of April 1819, died at Alyth, in Perthshire, James Sandy, generally distinguished by this appellation.—“the celebrated mechanic of Alyth.”

The originality of genius and eccentricity of character which distinguished this remarkable person, were perhaps never surpassed. Deprived, at an early period of life, of the use of his legs, he contrived, by dint of ingenuity, not only to pass his time agreeably, but to render himself a useful member of society. He soon displayed a taste for mechanical pursuits, and contrived, as a workshop for his operations, a sort of circular bed, the sides of which being raised about 18 inches above the clothes, were employed as a platform for turning lathes, tables, vices, and cases of tools, of all kinds. His genius for practical mechanics was universal. He was skilled in all kinds of turning, and constructed several very curious lathes, as well as clocks, and musical instruments of every description, no less admired for the sweetness of their tone, than the elegance of their execution. He excelled, too, in the construction of optical instruments; and made some reflecting telescopes, the specula of which were not inferior to those finished by the most eminent London artists. He suggested some important improvements in the machinery for spinning flax; and we believe he was the first who made the wooden-jointed snuff-boxes, generally called Lawrence Kirk boxes, some of which, fabricated by this self-taught artist, were purchased, and sent as presents to the Royal Family.

To his other endowments, he added an accurate knowledge of drawing and engraving, and, in both these arts, produced specimens of the highest excellence. For upwards of 50 years he quitted his bed only three times, and on these occasions his house was either inundated with water, or threatened with danger from fire.

His curiosity, which was unbounded, prompted him to hatch different kinds of birds' eggs by the natural warmth of his body, and he afterwards reared the molting broods with all the tenderness of a parent, so that on visiting him it was no unusual thing to see various singing birds, to which he may

be said to have given birth, perched on his head, and warbling the artificial notes he had taught them.

Naturally possessed of a good constitution, and an active, cheerful turn of mind, his house was the general coffee-room of the village, where the affairs both of church and state were discussed with the utmost freedom. In consequence of long confinement, his countenance was rather a sickly cast, but it was remarkably expressive, and would have afforded a fine subject for the pencil of Wilkie, particularly when he was surrounded by his country friends. This singular man had acquired, by his ingenuity and industry, an honourable independence, and he died possessed of considerable property.—He was married only about three weeks before his death.

A TURKISH ANECDOTE.

Some years ago, a French frigate being at Bood-see, the commander expressed a great desire to see the murres in the fortress; but the then governor absolutely refused to admit him, without direct orders from the Porte. The commander had interest: the ambassador was set to work; and in a short time the frigate returned bearing the necessary firman. The governor put it to his forehead, in acknowledgement of its authority, and declared his readiness to proceed. Arrived at the outergate, “*Essendi*,” said the governor, “the orders of my Imperial master must be implicitly obeyed.” “Let me in then,” exclaimed the impatient captain. “Undoubtedly,” replied the Turk, “for so I am enjoined to do by the firman: but as it contains no directions about your coming out again, you will perhaps forgive this momentary pause, before we pass the drawbridge.” The French commandant, not chusing to put such hazardous irony to the test, departed.

PLAIN OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

In addition to its unlimited agricultural capacities, this great plain abounds in mineral resources; its coal field would cover half of Europe, and is 1500 by 600 miles in extent. We enter upon this bituminous coal in Pennsylvania, on the western waters of the Susquehanna, and travel upon it through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and to the very sand plains of the west, a distance of more than 1500 miles; and from the Cumberland mountains in Kentucky and Tennessee, to the plains of Arkansas, a distance of 600 miles. The coal is pure, lies above the river channels, and to quarry it, costs about 20 cents a ton. Iron ore abounds generally, but in Missouri there is a mass of this ore, forming a hill 300 feet in height and 5 miles in extent, which yields 75 per cent. of fine malleable iron. The lead districts of Missouri and Illinois, would cover 200 miles square, and seem to be the richest region of that metal on earth.—Twelve millions of pounds were smelted in the year 1823, and it is confidently expected to furnish twenty millions for market in the year 1829. Salt water is found over the whole extent of this region, yielding from one eighth to one twelfth of its weight in pure muriate of soda. This salt water in many places breaks out in the shape of springs and fountains; but more frequently the inhabitants bore from 300 to 600 feet into solid rock, and when they strike the veins it generally rises to the surface; and so general is the distribution of this indispensable article, that no doubt exists of its meeting the wants of the population in all ages. Gypsum and saltpetre are found in abundance, and most of the clays and earths useful in the arts. Here indeed will every road support its man; for of such a region, without barren heath mountain, waste or slope, and where all is fertile and healthful; where no timber lands need be left for fuel; with mineral resources enough to stimulate all the arts and contribute to all wants; who can say what is the limit of its future population; Europe could seat all her nations comfortably on this plain.

The monotony of the mighty tract is broken by the long sweep of beautiful prairies, with their rich pasturage, which skirt its western side, and some times intrude themselves to the very valley of the Ohio. The wide oceanic views, the long drawn vistas, and rich variety of meadow and woods, the happy blending of the massy forests with the

luxuriant passage, and waving lines of narrow wood which mark the courses of the streams, give to its western part an original richness of landscape infinitely more interesting than the confined workings of art, and excite more pleasing associations than the holder and more rough views of mountain scenery.

American Quarterly Review.

HIGHLAND SOLDIERS.

Dr. Waugh, with his well known talent for pleasing narration, at a Missionary Meeting endeavoured to open the hearts and hands of those present, by relating the following anecdote:—“When Mr Campbell went upon his first Mission to Africa, the Bible Society sent along with him a number of Bibles, to be distributed to a Highland regiment stationed at the Cape of Good Hope. Arrived there, the regiment was drawn out in order to receive the Bibles; the box which contained them, and Mr. C. were placed in the centre; and on his presenting the first Bible to one of the men, he took out of his pocket *four shillings and sixpence* for the Bible, saying, ‘I enlisted to serve my king and country, and I have been well and regularly paid, and will not accept of a Bible as a present when I can pay for it.’ His example was instantly followed by all the regiment.”—Reader, if thou hast not a Bible, if any such there be in highly-favoured England, go and do likewise, rather than spend thy hard-earned money in the ale-house, or in any of the waiks of dissipation.

WELSH ANECDOTE.

On the support of the Ministry.—A Welsh Clergyman, invited to assist in the ordination of a minister in some part of England, was appointed to deliver the address to the church and congregation; and having been informed that their previous minister had suffered much from pecuniary embarrassment, although the church was fully able to support him comfortably—took the following singular method of administering reproof.

In his address to the church, he remarked—“you have been praying, no doubt, that God would send you a man after his own heart, to be your pastor. You have done well. God, we hope has heard your prayer, and given you such a minister as he approves, who will go in and out, before you, and feed you with the bread of life. But now you have prayed for a minister, and God has given you one to your mind, you have something more to do—you must take care of him; and in order to his being happy amongst you I have been thinking you have need to pray again. ‘Pray again! What should we pray again for?’ Well—I think you have need to pray again. ‘But for what?’ Why I’ll tell you. Pray that God would put Jacob’s ladder down to the earth again. ‘Jacob’s ladder! Jacob’s ladder! What has Jacob’s ladder to do with our minister?’ Why I think if God would put Jacob’s ladder down, that your minister could go up into heaven on the Sabbath evening, after preaching, and remain all the week; then he could come down every Sabbath morning so spiritually minded, and so full of heaven, that he would preach to you almost like an angel. ‘O yes, that may all be very well, and if it were possible we should like it, but when we need our minister with us during the week, to attend prayer meetings, visit the sick, hear experience, give advice, &c. &c. and therefore must have him always with us; we want the whole of his time and attention.’ That may be, and I will admit the necessity of his daily attentions of your concerns; but then you will remember, that if he remains here, he must have bread and cheese; and I have been informed that your former minister was wanting the necessaries of life, while many of you can enjoy its luxuries; and therefore, I thought if God would put Jacob’s ladder down, your minister might preach to you on the Sabbath, and by going up to heaven after the services of the day, save you the painful necessity of supporting him.”

SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER IN HEAVEN?—The wife of an aged minister in Wales, thinking on the knowledge that christians have of each other in heaven, went into her husband’s study, where the gentleman appeared deeply engaged in thought, surrounded with his books, and looking over his shoulder, she says, “John, do you think we shall