

JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

"Torquet ab obscænis jam nunc sermonibus aurem."

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THE JUVENILE ENTERTAINER

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BIOGRAPHY.

JOHN LEDYARD,

A celebrated traveller, was born at Groton, in
1711. He lost his father at an early age, and
his mother was left with but scanty means for
the education of four children. To her he was
debt for counsels that made an indelible and
salutary impression on his heart. At the
age of nineteen, he went to Dartmouth college,
order to qualify himself to become a mission-
ary among the Indians. At the college, he ac-
quired knowledge with ease, manifested more
activity than diligence, and had not been there
more than four months when he suddenly disappear-
ed without the knowledge of any one. He is
understood to have wandered to the borders of
Canada, and among the Six Nations, with whose
usage and manners he formed an acquaint-
ance, which was afterwards of much service to
him in his intercourse with savages in various
parts of the Globe. Nearly four months elapsed
before he returned to his college, and, soon
after, in consequence of some reproof for breach
of discipline, he resolved to escape altogether
from the margin of the Connecticut river, he fell
under a large tree, and fashioned its trunk into a
raft, in which he proceeded down the river to
Hartford, a distance of 140 miles, much of his
time lying through a wilderness, and, in seven
days, being obstructed by dangerous falls.
Ledyard then applied himself to the study of
mathematics, but failing in obtaining a license to
practise, he turned sailor. His first voyage was
to Gibraltar, where, being struck with a milita-
ry parade, he enlisted, "thinking the profession
of a soldier well suited to a man of honor and
enterprise." The British commanding officer
rescued his new recruit, who, at the expiration
of a year, came back to New London, but
soon afterwards embarked for England, in the
hope of obtaining assistance from some wealthy
relations there. After working his passage, as
a sailor, to Plymouth, he remained destitute of
means, and reached London by begging on the
street; but, having presented himself at the house
of Ledyard, as an American cousin, he was so-
lemnly received, that his dreams vanished, and

his pride prevented him from ever renewing the
attempt. Captain Cook was then preparing
for his third and last voyage round the world.
The idea of accompanying him struck Ledyard
with so much force, that he at once enlisted in
the British marine service, and soon contrived
to gain an introduction to captain Cook. "His
manly form," in the words of Mr Sparks, "mild
but animated and expressive eye, perfect self-
possession, a boldness not obtrusive, but show-
ing a consciousness of his proper dignity, an
independent spirit, and a glow of enthusiasm
giving life to his conversation and his whole de-
portment—these were traits which could not es-
cape so discriminating an eye as that of Cook.
They formed a rare combination, peculiarly
suited to the hardships and perils of his daring
enterprise. They gained the confidence of the
great navigator, who immediately took him into
his service, and promoted him to be a corporal
of marines." He embarked accordingly, and
performed the whole voyage, of which he pub-
lished an interesting account some time after-
wards at Hartford, in Connecticut. In this vo-
lume, he ascribes the murder of captain Cook,
in a great degree, to his rashness and injustice
towards the natives of Owhyhee. For two
years after the return of the expedition to Eng-
land, Ledyard remained in the British navy,
but nothing further is known of him, in that
situation, than that he refused to serve against
his country. In 1782, he made his way home
and took lodgings at Southold, with his mother,
who kept a boarding house, and by whom he
was not recognised, after an absence of eight
years. We find him soon afterwards at L'Or-
ient, whither he had gone in order to carry into
effect his plan of a voyage to the Pacific ocean.
At L'Orient, the principal merchants of the
place actually furnished him a vessel of 500 tons,
but when he was on the point of setting out, the
voyage was entirely abandoned by its patrons,
in consequence of some misunderstanding with
the government. He then went to Paris, where
he concerted a scheme with the famous Paul
Jones for accomplishing his object, which
was also frustrated, and, after making other an-
xious and fruitless efforts, he gave up altogether
the idea of reaching the North-west Coast by
sea, and applied to the empress Catharine of
Russia, through the medium of Mr. Jefferson,
then American minister in Paris, for permission
to pass through her dominions, having come to
the resolution of travelling by land through the
northern regions of Europe and Asia, crossing
over Behring's strait to the American continent,
and pursuing his route down the coast, and to
the interior. After waiting, however, for an
answer from the czarina for more than five
months, he accepted an invitation from London
to embark in an English ship, which was in readi-
ness to sail for the Pacific ocean, and of which
the owners undertook to have him set on shore
upon the North-west Coast. After forming his
plan, which was warmly entered into by sir Jo-
seph Banks and other distinguished men of

science, and which was to land at Nooka sound
thence strike directly into the interior, and pur-
sue his course to Virginia, he embarked with no
other equipment than two dogs, an Indian pipe,
and a hatchet. He now thought himself secure
of his object; but the vessel was not out of sight
of land before it was brought back by an order
from the government, and the voyage was final-
ly relinquished. Bearing up with wonderful
fortitude against these reverses, he next deter-
mined to make the tour of the globe, from Lon-
don east, on foot, and proceeded to St. Peters-
burg in the prosecution of this design, through
the most unfrequented parts of Finland. In
that city, his letters procured him eminent ac-
quaintances, among whom professor Palas and
count de Segur proved his chief patrons. After
waiting there nearly three months, he obtained
his passport for the prosecution of his journey
to Sibe. a. On his arrival at Yakutsk, he was
prevented, by the Russian commandant at the
place, from proceeding any further; and at
Irkutsk, whither he had returned, he was arrest-
ed as a French spy, by an order from the em-
press, hurried into a *kibitka* with two guards,
conducted with all speed to Moscow, and thence
to the frontiers of Poland, where he was releas-
ed, with an intimation, that if he returned again
to the dominions of the empress, he should be
hanged. After an absence of 15 months, he
once more appeared in the British metropolis, to
use his own words, "disappointed, ragged, pen-
nyless, but with a whole heart." He was now
37 years of age. Scarcely had he taken lodg-
ings in London, when sir Joseph Banks propos-
ed to him, on behalf of the African association,
an expedition into the interior of Africa. He
accordingly sought an immediate interview with
the secretary of the association, to whom sir Jo-
seph gave him a letter; and, on being asked by
him when he would set out, he answered, *To-
morrow morning*. The route traced for him, by
the association, was, from Alexandria to Grand
Cairo, from Cairo to Sennaar, and thence west-
ward, in the latitude and supposed direction of
the Niger. He reached Cairo, whence he was
on the point of proceeding on his journey after
three months of vexatious delay, when exposure
to the heat of the sun, and to other deleterious
influences of the climate, at the most unfavora-
ble season of the year, brought on a bilious at-
tack, which proved fatal towards the end of
November, 1788. Zeal, activity, courage,
honor and intelligence distinguished his short
but remarkable career.

Encyclopadia Americana.

NATURAL HISTORY.

KRAKEN KRAXEN.

Or as some call it, Krabben; that word, says
Pontoppidan, bishop of Bergen, being applied,
by way of eminence, to the fish otherwise called
horten, soe hortten, ancker troll and hreuzfisch,
"incontestably," as observes the same natura-
list (whose description of it we shall give in a
translation of his own words), "the largest sea-