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NATURAL HISTORY.

THE LEOPARD.

The Hebrew name (Nimrah) of this animal is taken from its spotted color. By the English it is almost indiscriminately called the *Panther*, or *Leopard* of Senegal, where it is chiefly found. Its length is about four feet from the nose to the origin of the tail, which is about two feet long. The predominant color is yellowish, and the spots with which it is covered are black. The head is of a moderate length, the ears are pointed, the eyes are of a pale yellow, and its whole aspect is fierce and cruel. Its disposition is said nearly to resemble that of the tiger, yet it is generally considered to be the less fierce of the two. The manner in which the leopard siezes its prey is, however, similar to that of the lion; rushing from its concealment, it at once bounces on its victim, with a horrid roar. Its voice, at this time, is said to be hideous beyond conception.

The scripture references to this animal, are not numerous, but like all its other references they are founded on the strictest propriety. Jeremiah refers in one place to its spotted skin, (ch. xiii. 23), and in another (ch. v. 6.) to its artful ambuscades; a feature in its character to which Hosea also alludes, (ch. xiii. 7); 'as a leopard by the way will I observe them'—doubtless, to punish them for their flagrant and unrepented crimes. Habakkuk, describing the rapid march of the Chaldeans upon Jerusalem, compares the movement of their horses to the swiftness of this animal: 'Their horses also are swifter than leopards,' ch. i. 8. But the most beautiful allusion to this creature is in Isaiah's prophecy of the happy times of the Messiah's reign:—

*"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the
falling together;
And a little child shall lead them."*

How great and extraordinary must such a change appear, when it is recollected that the leopard never can be satiated with prey, and that man has never yet subdued the ferocity of his natural disposition!

It seems that these animals were numerous in Palestine, as there are places which bear names indicative of having been their haunts. In the tribe of Gad there was a town named Beth-Nimrah—*leopard's house*, (Numb. xxxii. 36; compare verse 3); Isa. and Jeremiah speak of the 'waters of Nimrah,' i. e. of the leopards—not far distant,

[Isa. xv. 6; Jer. xlviii. 34.] and Solomon strongly intimates that they were numerous on the mountains of Lebanon, Cant. iv. 8.

THE MYRTLE.

In our ungenial climate, the myrtle is a lowly shrub; but in other and more favourable countries, it sometimes grows to a small tree. It is a hard woody root, that sends forth a great number of small flexible branches, furnished with leaves like those of box, but much smaller, and more pointed: they are soft to the touch, shining, smooth, of a beautiful green, and have a smell. The flowers grow among the leaves, and consist of five white petals, disposed in the form of a rose: they have an agreeable perfume, and an ornamental appearance. They are succeeded by an oval, oblong berry, adorned with a sort of crown, made up of the segments of the calix: these are divided into three cells, containing the seeds.

The myrtle is, in scripture, sometimes classed with large trees, as the cedar and olive, compared with which it is, in point of size, very inconsiderable. But the seeming impropriety vanishes, when it is considered that the prophet intends to describe a scene of varied excellence and beauty: 'I will plant in the wilderness, the cedar and the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree' [Isaiah xli. 19]; that is, says Paxton, 'I will adorn the dreary and barren wilderness with trees famed for their stature, and the grandeur of their appearance; the beauty of their form, and the fragrance of their odor.' Again: 'Instead of the thorn shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off.' Isaiah lv. 13.

These quotations, continues the writer just quoted, refer to the effect of the gospel, or the reign of Christ, on the state of the world, and the dispositions of mankind.—They foretell the production of a moral paradise, by the creative power of Jehovah, where nothing but sin and misery reigned before.

Savary, in his letters on Greece, describing a scene at the end of the forest of Platanea, says, 'Myrtles intermixed with laurel roses, grow in the valleys, to the height of ten feet. Their snow-white flowers, bordered within with a purple edging, appear to peculiar advantage, under the verdant foliage. Each myrtle is loaded with them, and they emit perfumes more exquisite than of the rose itself: they enchant every one, and the soul is filled with the softest sensations.'

The original Jewish name of Esther is *hedgesch*, the feminine of *hedes*, a myrtle, Esther ii. 7. The note of the Chaldee Targum on the passage seems remarkable: 'They called her *hedgesch*, because she was just, and the just are those that are compared to myrtle.'

THE NUTMEG.

The nutmeg tree is a beautiful vegetable. The stem, with a smooth brown bark, rises perfectly straight. Its strong and numerous branches proceed regularly from it in an oblique direction upwards. They bear large oval leaves, pendulous from them, some a foot in length. The upper and outer surface of the leaf is smooth, and of a deep agreeable green. The under and inner surface is marked with a strong nerve in the middle of the leaf, from the forestalk to the point; and from this middle nerve, others proceed obliquely towards the point and edges of the leaf, but what distinguishes most the inner surface, is its uniform bright brown color, without the least intermixture of green, and as if strewn all over with a fine brown powder. The whole leaf is characterised by its frequent odor, sufficiently denoting the fruit which the tree produces.—This fruit, when fresh, is about the size of the common nectarine. It consists of one outward rind, between which and the inward shell is found a reticulated membrane, or divided skin, which, when dried is called *mace*. What is known by the name of nutmeg, is the kernel within the shell, and is soft in its original state.

JOINTS IN THE HUMAN FRAME.

The waggoner or the stage driver, has a mixture of tar, or perhaps tar and oil, some of which he often puts upon the axle of his carriage, where the wheel turns upon it.—If this were not done, the axletree would soon become very dry, and the wheel would wear it. If the carriage were driven very fast, it might happen that it would take fire; for rubbing dry wood together, as you know, will produce fire. More than one stage coach has been set on fire, in this way, within a few years.

Now what prevents the joints of the human body from wearing out rapidly, in the same manner, when we walk much, or run swiftly?

The Father of the Universe is the *Preserver* as well as the Creator of this "wondrous frame." Were there not something done to keep these joints oiled, if I may so call it, they would not last long. Take the