

# THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

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## The Weekly Mirror,

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WHERE

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

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## NATURAL HISTORY.

### TORTOISE.

Tortoise; a genus of reptiles distinguished, as having no teeth, as subsisting on little food, as being tenacious of life, often passing months and even years without eating, and as living sometimes a week after the head is cut off. They are cased in a strong shell above and below. Some live on the land, and some in water. The Common Land Tortoise is about eight inches long; it lives on roots, fruits, insects, and worms, and lays its eggs in a hole in June, which are hatched in September; in autumn, it buries itself in the earth, lies torpid through the winter, and reappears in the spring. One of them has been known to live to the age of one hundred and twenty years, and then it died by accident. There are several other kinds of land Tortoise; there are also several species of fresh-water Tortoise, and several kinds of sea Tortoise. The most remarkable of the latter kind is the Green Turtle, so famous for making soup. It is found in many warm seas, and is often brought here from the West Indies, being taken on the sandy shores of those islands. The lubricated Tortoise resembles the preceding, and is found in the same places; it is famous for providing the shell of which combs are made. Its flesh is not good, but its eggs, like those of the green turtle, are excellent, and are often eaten. There are still other sea Tortoises, some of which weigh a thousand pounds.

## BIOGRAPHY.

### COPERNICUS NICHOLAS.

Copernicus Nicholas, a Prussian astronomer, and discoverer of the true system of the universe, was a native of Thorne in Prussia. In his twenty-third year he went into Italy in search of knowledge. After

some years absence and having in the mean time acted as professor of mathematics at Rome, he returned home. Here he began to apply his vast knowledge, to an examination of the different theories respecting the universe. The simplicity of the Pythagorean system pleased him best; and after twenty years of profound investigation, he removed from the machine of the universe, the cycles and epicycles of former astronomers, and placed the sun in the centre to illuminate and control the whole. This great discovery he kept concealed for more than thirty years, for fear of exciting against himself the ignorant persecuting spirit of bigotry. When at last he consented, through the importunities of his friends, to have his work published, and a copy of it was brought to him, he was a few hours afterwards seized with a violent effusion of blood, which terminated his life, 24th May, 1543, in his seventieth year.

ERASMUS, (Desiderius) was the most learned man of the age in which he lived, and contributed by his example and writings to the restoration of learning in Europe. He was somewhat of a wanderer, having occasionally resided in Italy, Switzerland, Holland, France and England. He was best pleased with the last of these countries, and there he met with the greatest encouragement from Henry VII., Sir Thomas More, and all the learned Englishmen of those days. He was the most correct and elegant Latin writer among the moderns. Rotterdam is to this day proud of having given birth to Erasmus. The house in which he was born is still marked out to the admiration of the traveller by a suitable inscription, and a beautiful copper statue was long since erected to his memory in an open part of the city. He died at Basil, July 12, 1536, aged 69.

From the New Haven Herald.

### ANNUAL METEORIC SHOWER.

Facts already ascertained leave no doubt of the recurrence of "the Meteoric Shower," on the morning of the 13th November. The preceding day had been rainy, and early the same night the sky was overcast; but before midnight the firmament became cloudless, and the stars shone with unwonted brilliancy.

About half past three o'clock, observing that the meteors began to appear in unusual numbers, I directed my attention towards

the eastern part of the heavens, whence they mostly proceeded, and closely watched the stars from the Great Bear on the north to Canis Major on the south, embracing in my field of view about one-third of the firmament.

It was soon discovered, that nearly all the meteors shot in directions which, on being traced back, met in one and the same point, near the Lion's Eye. For a quarter of an hour, from half past three o'clock, I counted twenty two meteors, of which all but three emanated from the above radiant point in Leo. Ten left luminous trains; twelve were without trains; and the three that did not conform to the general direction, moved perceptibly slower than the others. The greatest part shot off to the right and left of the radiant, a majority tending south, towards the heart of Hydra. The next fifteen minutes afforded but seven meteors, and the number gradually declined until day-light.

The exact position of the radiant was near a small star, forming the apex of a triangle with the two bright stars in the face of Leo. Its right ascension was 145 deg. and declination 25. Its place was therefore very nearly the same as in 1831; differing only half a degree in right ascension, and all the phenomena very much resembled those observed that year, except that they continued for a shorter period.

Although shooting stars occur at various seasons of the year, yet these *meteoric showers*, whether they occur on a larger or a smaller scale, are marked by several peculiarities:—(1) The meteors are much more frequent than usual, and sometimes are exceedingly numerous. (2) A larger proportion than common, leave *luminous trains*. (3) They mostly seem to radiate from a common centre, and several years past the radiant has been in nearly the same part of the heavens, namely in the Constellation Leo. It is also exceedingly remarkable that the shower is not only repeated on the same day of the year, but arrives at its maximum every where, and at every recurrence, at nearly the same hour of the morning—from 3 to 4 o'clock.

By a letter obligingly communicated to the writer of this article from Samuel Dunster, Esq. agent of the Franklin Iron Works at Springvale, (Maine,) it appears,