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NATURAL HISTORY.

ANECDOTE OF A TURTLE.

A British officer on board of a ship which touched at the Island of Ascension on her way to England, informed me that he took in several large turtles, and amongst others, one which from accident, had only three fins. The sailors on board called it the "Lord Nelson," and it was taken in the usual way by having certain nails and numbers burnt upon its shell with a hot iron, which marks are never to be obliterated. Owing to various causes the ship was delayed on her voyage, many of the turtles died, and others became sick. This was the case of the "Lord Nelson," and it was so nearly dead when the ship arrived in the British Channel, that the sailors, with whom it was a favorite, threw it overboard, in order, as they said, to give it a chance. Its native element, however, appears to have revived it; for a few years afterwards the very same turtle was again found at its old haunts in the Island of Ascension. The proofs brought forward of the accuracy of the statements place the fact beyond doubt, and afford a wonderful instance of the instinct of this fish. When we consider the vast tract of waters which this turtle had to cross, and that the Island of Ascension is but a little speck in the mighty ocean, it is impossible not to reflect on that unexplained insunct with wonder, which is enabled so unyieldingly, and apparently so blind an animal to find its way back to a spot in the desert of waters.—*English Paper.*

THE MOVING PLANT.

The following interesting notice of the Moving Plant appears in No. 122 of Loudon's Botanic Garden, a work replete with information on such subjects. "This plant was, formerly, called *Hedysarum gyran*; and the peculiar property of continual motion which its ternate leaves possess, has interested naturalists ever since it was noticed by the younger Linnæus. In a letter to his friend Mutis, he says, 'I have raised a very wonderful plant this year, in my garden. It is a new species of *Hedysarum*, from Bengal. This plant has spontaneous motion in its foliage, which is almost voluntary. You are aware that various parts of the vegetable body, especially those subservient to impregnation, can be so stimulated by the touch as to exhibit some kind of movement. You know, also, the motions of some kinds of *Proserpinaca* and *Oxalis*, as well as of the *Conium maculatum*, arising from the touch

of any extraneous body, or from agitation of the wind. But the plant in question is not affected by either of these causes.— Whether in the open air, or in a close room, it spontaneously moves its leaflets, now one way, now another, one, two, or more of a time; not all at once, nor all in one direction and this takes place, whether the air be serene or rainy. It has not yet flowered, but I expect that event in the course of autumn. The plant requires great heat." Instances of incomprehensible action like this, can but awaken the attention of the most apathetic. The irritability of such plants is better known, especially that of *mimosa pudica*, or humble plant, whose leaves shrink from the touch, the culture of which may be recommended to the curious amongst our young friends.— Seeds are easily obtained, and an efficient hot bed during summer, in which the plants, should be constantly kept, will sufficiently mature them for the purpose of showing their sensitive peculiarities. This is a property which advances the vegetable towards the animal kingdom, just as instinct advances the brute towards the human species."

EVERY MAN HIS OWN FORTUNE TELLER.

There is a strong propensity in the human mind to look forward to distant years, and to penetrate the secrets of futurity. This desire in the minds of the vulgar and ignorant, has given rise to the foolish and wicked practice of consulting pretended fortune-tellers. In these enlightened days, I have little fear that any of my readers should wish to have recourse to such absurd and sinful means of information; and yet as it is very likely they may sometimes feel curiosity respecting their future destiny, they will I hope listen to the plan I have to propose; which without incurring either guilt or disgrace, will enable them, each for himself, to foretell with considerable accuracy, what they may have to expect in future life.

To prevent disappointment, I here candidly confess, that I do not pretend to enable them to divine the amount of their fortunes, — what connexions they may form, — in what parts they may reside, — nor at what period they will die: nor do I regret this; nor need they; since these are circumstances which it is better for us not to know beforehand: but, with regard to things of still greater importance than these, such as the degree of success and of happiness they may reasonably expect in their undertakings and situations in the world, they will find the proposed method may be depended on.

I shall, then, suppose myself to be consulted by a number of young persons, wish-

ing to be initiated in my secret; but they will not find me commencing my instructions with any mystical ceremony, nor pronouncing any unintelligible charm. I do not even wish to examine the palms of their hands; although I may perhaps take the liberty to notice the expression of their faces; all I require is, some insight into their present characters and past conduct.

Suppose one of them, for instance, should appear to be a lad of an indolent inactive disposition: to whom learning and exertion, whether of body or mind, was always irksome and burdensome, performed as a task, and by compulsion; he is looking forward anxiously to the time when coercion will cease, and when he shall be free from the necessity of exertion.— In this case, I do not hesitate to shake my knowing head, and in the technical language of my profession, to pronounce *bad luck to him*. I need not ask, nor can I guess, what may be his line of business, nor what the extent of his capital; but I can foretell, with great confidence, that he will be neither successful, respectable nor happy. That when restraints are removed, and he is thrown upon himself, life will be burthensome to him; and that it will, very probably, end in poverty and disgrace.

I shall suppose my next applicant to be a gay young lady, desirous of knowing how soon she shall be her own mistress, and how large her fortune will be; as she is in want of a thousand things that she is not allowed to purchase: she is very partial to jewels and laces, and to all that is showy and expensive; and wishes extremely to be able to gratify her desires. Here again, I could augur no good; so many husbands and fathers have been ruined by expensive wives and daughters, for "as poor Richard says, silks and satins put out the kitchen fire." that what could I see in her destiny, but bills and bailiffs, a husband in prison, children in want, and herself in indigence?

Another approaches with his pockets stuffed with gingerbread, and his hands full of macaroons; he professes himself to be so fond of good things that he spends the greater part of his pocket money at the pastry-cook's; his parents will allow him to partake of every dish that comes on table, and to stuff as long as he pleases; and he considers dinner time the best part of the day. I need not feel this young gentleman's pulse, in order to predict to him an impaired constitution, and an early decay of his mental powers. Complicated disease and premature old age are the invariable rewards of indulgence. These habits will increase with his years; a listless, burdensome life, and early death, is his probable destiny.