

# THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

No. 48. Vol. 1.]

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 11, 1835.

[ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM.]

## NATURAL HISTORY.

### THE SHEEP.

In its domestic state, the sheep is of all animals the most defenceless and inoffensive. With its liberty it seems to have been deprived of its swiftness and cunning; and what in the ass might rather be called patience, in the sheep appears to be stupidity. With no one quality to fit it for self-preservation, it makes vain efforts at all. Without swiftness it endeavors to fly; and without strength sometimes offers to oppose. In its wild state, however, it is a noble and active animal, and is every way fitted to defend itself against the numerous dangers by which it is surrounded.

Of the Syrian sheep, there are two varieties: the one called the Bedouin sheep, which differ in no respect from the larger kinds of Sheep in Britain, except that their tails are something longer and thicker; the others are those often mentioned by travellers on account of their extraordinary tails. The latter species is by far the most numerous. The tail of one of these animals is very broad and large, terminating in a small appendage, that turns back upon it. It is of a substance between fat and marrow, and is not eaten separately, but mixed with the lean meat of many of the Arab dishes; and is often used instead of butter. A common sheep of this sort, without the head, feet, skin, and entrails, weighs from sixty to eighty pounds, of which the tail itself is usually fifteen pounds or upwards; but such as are of the largest breed, and have been fattened, will sometimes weigh above one hundred and fifty pounds; and the tail, alone, fifty: a thing to some scarcely credible. To preserve these tails from being torn, the Arabs fix a piece of thin board to the under part, where they are not covered with thick wool: some have small wheels to facilitate the dragging of this board after them; whence, with a little exaggeration, the story of having carts to carry their tails.

In a domesticated state, the sheep, as already suggested, is a weak and defenceless animal, and is, therefore, altogether dependent upon its keeper for protection as well as support. To this trait in its character, there are several beautiful allusions in the sacred writings. Thus, Micah describes the destitute condition of the Jews, as a flock 'scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd,' (1 Kings xxii. 7. See also Matt. ix. 36); and Zechariah prophesied that when the good shepherd should be smitten and removed from his flock, the sheep should be scattered, Zech. xiii. 7. To the disposition of these animals to wander from the fold, and thus abandon themselves to danger, and destruction, there

are also several allusions made by the inspired writers. David confesses that he had imitated their foolish conduct: 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep;' and conscious that, like them, he was only disposed to wander still further from the fold, he adds, 'seek thy servant,' Psalm cxix. 176. Nor was this disposition to abandon the paternal care of God peculiar to David; for the prophet adopts similar language to depict the dangerous and awful condition of the entire species: 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way,' Isaiah liii. 6. It was to seek these 'lost sheep,' scattered abroad, and having no shepherd, that the blessed Redeemer came into the world. He is 'the good shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep.'

### A SENTIMENTAL PIGEON.

A man, set to watch a field of peas which had been much preyed upon by pigeons, shot an old cock pigeon who had long been an inhabitant of the farm. His mate, around whom he had for many a year cooed, and nourished from his own crop, and assisted in rearing numerous young ones immediately settled on the ground by his side, and showed her grief in the most expressive manner. The laborer took up the dead bird, and tied it to a short stake, thinking that it would frighten the other depredators. In this situation, however, his partner did not forsake him, but continued day after day walking round the stick. The kind-hearted wife of the bailiff of the farm at last heard of the circumstance, and immediately went off to afford what relief she could to the poor bird. She told me that, on arriving at the spot, she found the hen bird much exhausted, and that she had made a circular beaten track around the dead pigeon, making now and then a little spring toward him. On the removal of the dead bird, the hen returned to the dove cot.—*Jesse's Gleanings in Natural History.*

### THE VILLAGE GIRL.

I sat, lost in thought, on the bank of a little rivulet that came murmuring down the hill side, and flowed away to the broad river that spread its blue surface beyond the plain towards the setting sun. A dew drop, scarcely perceptible to the human eye, faintly sparkled on the leaf that bent from an overhanging bough. And in my half waking, half dreaming reverie, I thought I saw myriads of these little drops collecting and descending on the hills and in the valleys, forming the bubbling rivulets that flowed, one after another, until their united streams swelled into mighty rivers, and the rivers sweeping on through the deep valleys

of the land, hundreds of miles, and terminating in fathomless oceans that rolled their resistless currents round the world.

From amid the mist that rose above the mingling of the waters, there came to my sight an old and venerable man, wrapped in a sage-green cloak, and while with one hand he pressed the moisture from his flowing hair, with the other he held to my eye a curiously wrought tube of glassy transparency, and bid me mark the lesson it would unfold.

I looked, and beheld before me a pleasant village in the midst of a rich teeming landscape, in the sweet and mellow season of June. The bells are ringing, and groups of children are gathering to the school house—it is the Sabbath, and that the Sabbath school. Yonder, at the end of the lane, is a village girl—she stops to look a moment at some boys at play—she approaches, hesitates, turns away, and then again approaches. Now she speaks to a little ragged boy, that has quarrelled with his playmates, and picked up all the marbles—they are going to fight, and he swears horrid oaths. She takes him by the hand—see how earnestly she talks to him—she points towards the beautiful blue summer sky, and a tear glistens on her sweet cheek.

Now she has said something which has made an impression on that rude and ruined boy, and he has turned and walked away with her. They go towards the school; he stops a moment at the door—but she persuaded him in.

Just then the old man touched a hidden key,—and the scene changed. Another slowly followed.

There at the foot of a ragged and barren mountain is an old and miserable log dwelling—the windows are broken—the chimney has partly fallen down—the wretchedness of hopeless poverty is in every feature of the scene—a lean, half famished dog sits by the door, and gives a faint and melancholy recognition to his master, who comes staggering up the glen, intoxicated, and in rags.

But yonder through the opening vista in the far distance, is seen the outline of the lovely village we have left, and there coming slowly up the path I see the very boy who was led to the Sunday school in the morning by the village girl. He has a book in his hand. He is reading it as he walks. It is the Bible.—a present from his young friend the teacher.

The scene shifts like a moving panorama. The shades of night fall upon the scene—and now the bright morning breaks over the mountain top, and the birds sing in the trees. The family are gathered in a group in the cottage, and that little boy is reading from his book. They all listen, but still the scene is shifting and shifting. Days and