

NATURAL HISTORY.

SCENE OFF THE CAPE.—The sea-birds held their holiday in the stormy gale. The lordly and graceful albatross, whose motion is a very melody, swept screaming by upon the blast. The smaller Cape pigeons followed as fast, passing and repassing across the vessel's track. At last one of them spies a fragment on the waters, which has been thrown overboard; a moment it hovers above, then plunges down. But the other birds have seen it too; and all, pouncing on the spot, move their wings confusedly, and seem to run along the waters with a rapid and eager motion. Now is there discord wild amongst them. A screaming and diving, swimming and running, mingled with a chattering noise. No sooner does one gain the morsel, than another tears it from him. Who will be the victor here? The albatross; for he sweeps triumphantly over all, swoops down, and with a scream, allures off the timid little multitude; whilst high above his head he holds his arched wings; and now in pride and beauty he sits upon the waters, and, drifting fast astern, gradually fades in the twilight.

What wonder that a sailor is superstitious! Separated in early youth from his home; ere he has forgotten the ghost stories of his childhood, and whilst the young and simple heart still loves to dwell upon the marvellous, he is placed in such scenes as these; in the dark night, amidst the din of waves and storms, he hears wild shrieks upon the air, and by him float huge forms, dim and mysterious, from which fancy is prone to build strange phantoms; and oft from aged sailors he gathers legends and wondrous tales suited to his calling; whilst the narrator's mysterious tone and earnest voice and manner attest how firmly he himself believes the story.

SAGACITY OF THE DOG.—A Correspondent at Cuddebackville, gives the following instance of the sagacity and attachment of the dog, which occurred a few days since in Delaware County, N. Y. :—

"A boy in sliding down hill was carried into the river, and conveyed by the current some distance below into a deep eddy. The eddy was frozen over with a thick body of ice. A number of neighbours collected and searched several days for the body, until, I think, the third day; being about to give up the search, one of them (Gen. Gregory) observed that a dog, belonging to the same family with the boy, had been almost constantly on the ice, and was always seen to lie down in a particular spot, and suggested it might be best to cut an opening in that place. It was done, and in a depth of four feet of water the body was found. Now, when we consider the depth of water, and the thickness and nature of the ice, (18 inches and very opaque,) the question naturally presents itself, by what sense did the dog discover the body of the child? It would be difficult to believe that any odour emanating from the body in that situation, could pass directly upwards through a current of four feet of water and eighteen inches of ice. The opacity of the latter would forbid the idea that it could have been discovered through the ice; and I can only conceive that the knowledge derived from some sense in these animals of which we have little conception."

THE FAMOUS RACER ECLIPSE.—Such is said to have been the bad temper of Eclipse, that at one time it was thought impossible to bring him to the post. On this account he was placed in the hands of a rough rider in the neighbourhood of Epsom, and who being likewise a notorious poncher, worked him almost off his legs; riding him about the country on business during the day, and frequently keeping him out all night on poaching excursions. This treatment, although it quieted him enough to enable him to race, still never entirely subdued his indomitable spirit; and accordingly Fitzpatrick and Oakley, who rode him in almost all his races, never attempted to hold him, contenting themselves with sitting quietly upon the saddle.—All the best six year old horses of the year having entered against Eclipse for the King's Plate at Newmarket, O'Kelly offered to take ten to one he posted them, which being betted to an

immense amount, and the captain called upon to declare, he pronounced—"Eclipse I and nothing else," for the rider of Eclipse having received private instructions to go off at score, double distanced the whole with the greatest ease, leaving himself without a competitor. And we believe that this was the last time any horse was seen to start against him, as he afterwards walked over the different courses for the King's Plates of the year without a single opponent.

CIRCISSIAN HORSES.—The Cubardian race is the most esteemed, and come of them would not disgrace a field day in Leicestershire. Ten pounds is the price paid here for a good horse, three to six for an ordinary one. The horses are, on the whole, a hardy and docile race, well adapted to the service in which they are employed, involving frequently, in forays and excursions, great privation and fatigue. The Circassians treat them with care, and even with affection; and though they are rarely seen to caress their children, they will kiss and fondle their horses; nor are they less solicitous about their winter stock than that of their families. They have all, to distinguish their pedigree, some marks on the haunches, a sabre, a horse-shoe, &c., and the proprietor of many a sorry hack exults himself by pointing to this evidence of its latent good qualities.—*Longworth's Year among the Circassians.*

INSTINCT OR REASON.—Mr. Colquhoun in his sporting volume "The Moor and the Loch," gives the following instance of the sagacity of a favourite retriever:—"Having a couple of long shots across a pretty broad stream, I stopped a mallard with each barrel; but both were only wounded. I sent him across for the birds: he first attempted to bring both, but one always fluttered out of his mouth: he then laid down one, intending to bring the other, but whenever he attempted to cross to me, the bird left fluttered into the water: he immediately returned, laid down the first on the shore, and recovered the other: the first one fluttered away, but he instantly secured it, and, standing over them both, seemed to cogitate for a moment; then, on any other occasion he never ruffles a feather, deliberately killed one, brought over the other, and then returned for the dead bird." This recital satisfactorily solves the question as to the reasoning faculties of the animal. Mere instinct would not account for such sagacity.—*Edinburgh Review.*

At the farm-stand of Mr. Douglas, of Kirkaldy, a hen lately took up her abode with a young pig. The hen, after sitting the usual period, walked out with the pig (she having as she seemed to assume, hatched him,) and she now goes about, cluck, clucking, with her four footed brood, and feeds him in the usual way a hen does her chickens. He lies at night with his head under her wing (being two or three times as big as herself,) and if any person attempts to touch him, she flies at them furiously. Sometimes, when going about the doors with her, he takes it in his head to waltz a dance, when she seems a little astonished, and runs backwards and forwards after him, trying to check his daffin, but in vain until it suits himself. He proves a most unruly and ungrateful fellow; for, notwithstanding all her care and attention, he goes off and leaves her sometimes, at which she appears to be very uneasy. She feeds out of the same trough with him, and when she gets a particularly good piece, she tick, ticks, until he comes and takes it from her.

CHINESE APHORISMS.—He who toils with pain will eat with pleasure.—No duns outside, no disease within.—Fortune is a domestic jewel.—Something is learned every time a book is opened.—To stop the hand is to stop the mouth.—Who aims at excellence will go above mediocrity: who aims at mediocrity will fall short of it.

THE SATURDAY EVENING VISITOR

Is printed and published by RICHARD NUGENT, at his Office, West Front of the Province Building, Halifax.—Terms—3s. 9d. per annum, in advance, or 1d. per copy. When sent by Mail, in all cases to be paid in advance.