

# THE WEEKLY MIRROR.



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## The Weekly Mirror,

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## NATURAL HISTORY.

### THE VULTURE.

This bird is larger than the Eagle, and differs from it both in spirit and appearance. The Eagle is a noble creature, but the vulture is mean and disgusting. Its head and neck are bare of feathers, its beak is partly crooked and partly straight; its eyes are large and very dark, and its talons are strong and extended. Its colour is generally a dingy white. It flies very high in the air, and at night perches on some lofty rock or high tree, where it roosts with its wings partly extended.

As Vultures prey chiefly on dead bodies in a putrid state, their appearance is extremely filthy; and they eat to such an excess, as frequently to become unable to fly away. The inhabitants of eastern countries are thankful to Providence for supplying them with these birds, which, in a hot climate, are very useful in cleansing away the filth and putridity occasioned by dead bodies, which might otherwise prove injurious to the living.

"In Palestine," says Mr. Bingley, "they are of infinite service in destroying vast multitudes of rats and mice which breed in the fields, and which, without their assistance, would devour the whole fruits of the ground. They also frequent the deserts, and there devour the bodies of men and animals which perish in those desolate regions. They every year follow the caravan from Egypt to Mecca, in order to feast upon the flesh of slaughtered beasts, and the carcasses of the camels which die on their journey."

No wonder that a bird so disgusting as the Vulture should be pronounced unclean by the ceremonial law—Lev. xi. 14. Why then should such creatures be formed? We should never forget that every work of the Almighty has its peculiar utility, and this

observation will apply with strict propriety to the vulture. After some great battles in the East, where numbers of men, horses, and elephants had been killed, we are informed that Vultures flocked in considerable numbers to devour the dead carcasses. In allusion to this the prophet says, "The Lord hath a great slaughter in the land of Idumea." Isaiah xxxiv. 6. And at the 15th verse he says, "There shall the Vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate."

Let us again admire the wisdom and goodness of the Lord, who, in the midst of wrath, remembers mercy! Does he send the destructive sword to punish a guilty nation, and in his anger fill their places with heaps of dead bodies? And is a country so visited liable to a plague or pestilence, by reason of the corrupt effluvia that rises from the dead carcasses? In mercy to the living, the Vultures have been created with the nature that renders them eager to devour and clear away the corrupt dead bodies from the plains of slaughter. Here we observe another remarkable instance that God has created nothing in vain.

## BIOGRAPHY.

### VIRGIL.

Publius Virgilius Maro, prince of the Latin poets, was born at Andes, near Mantua, about 70 years B. C. His first years were spent at Cremona, from whence he removed to Rome, when his country was partitioned out among the soldiers after the battle of Phillippi. There, by means of his friend Mecenas, he was introduced to Augustus, who restored to him his estate. On this occasion he wrote his first Eclogue; and on completing the *Bucolics*, he undertook the *Georgics*. After these were finished, and had been read by Augustus, he began the *Æneid*, at the request of the emperor. This great poem has left the palm of superiority undecided between Homer and Virgil. The poet was engaged eleven years upon this immortal work, but died, without revising it, at Brundisium, B. C. 19, and in the 51st year of his age. He left the greatest part of his property to Mecæna, Tusca, and Augustus. His remains were interred on the road leading from Naples to Puteoli. The best editions of Virgil are Baskerville's, 4to, Birmingham, 1757; the Variorum, 8vo. 1661; and Glasgow, 12mo. 1758. This poet has been well translated into English by Dryden, Pitt, and Warton.

## GRATITUDE.

### OR, THE TWO OFFICERS.

One act that from a thankful heart proceeds,  
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds,

There is hardly any disposition of the mind which appears in a more amiable or more advantageous point of view than gratitude. Generosity frequently operates as an incentive to the bestowment of favors, and gratitude produces in the breast a sense of the favors received, by which the possessor is excited to make all the returns of love and service in his power. Gratitude is the powerful re-action of a well-disposed mind, upon which benevolence has conferred some important good. It is compounded of love placed upon the good communicated, affection for the donor, and joy at the reception. Thus it has goodness for its object, and the most pleasing, perhaps unexpected exertions of goodness for its immediate cause.

Oh! how amiable is gratitude! especially when it has the Supreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude as the most exalted principle that can animate the heart of man. It has something nobly disinterested, and, if I may be allowed the term, generously devout. Repentance indicates our nature fallen, and prayer turns chiefly upon a regard to one's self, but the exercise of gratitude subsisted in paradise, when there was no fault to deplore, and will be perpetuated in heaven, when "God shall be all in all." The language of this sweet temper is, "I am unspeakably obliged, what return shall I make?"

Man's obligation's infinite, of course  
His life should prove that he perceives their force,  
His utmost he can render is but small—  
The principle and motive, all in all.

As I wish my readers to possess, and to exhibit the best principles of religion and virtue, I will present them with the following instance of Turkish gratitude, taken from a respectable periodical work.

"A Bimbassi, (colonel in rank), had been taken prisoner in the beginning of the last campaign, near Varna. He was extremely well used, particularly by a Russian officer, who from compassion allowed him to escape. The bimbassi was subsequently ordered to return to Constantinople, and to wait on the person of the sultan, he being one of his favorites. Sometime afterwards, his benefactor was taken prisoner, and sent to Constantinople with some others of his countrymen. On the day of their embarka-