

# JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

"Torquet ab obscuris jam nunc sermonibus aurem."

No. 29.

Pictou, N. S. Wednesday Morning, February 15, 1832.

Vol. 1.

## JUVENILE ENTERTAINER

Printed and Published every Wednesday Morning, at the Colonial Patriot Office, by W. MILNE

### CONDITIONS.

Five shillings per Annum, delivered in Town, and three shillings and three pence, when sent to the country by mail, half-yearly in advance.

When not paid half yearly in advance, seven shillings and six pence will be charged.

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## BIOGRAPHY.

### The Progress of Genius

ON OBSCURE AND LOW SITUATIONS, TO EXCELLENCE AND CELEBRITY.

Genius is that gift of God which learning cannot confer, which no disadvantages of birth or education can wholly obscure.

#### SHOVEL, (SIR CLOUDESLEY)

A brave English Admiral, was born of mean parents, and went early to sea. From being a cabin boy rose to the first honours of his profession, before his fortunate shipwreck, (in which he lost his life,) on the rocks of Sicily.

#### THOMAS SIMPSON.

An eminent professor of mathematics, was placed young at the loom as a weaver, by his parents. As he was too poor to give him an education. By means of a travelling pedlar he gained some knowledge of Arithmetic, but he employed his leisure hours in study, and so great was his progress, that he published at the age of 27, that excellent treatise on Fluxions, which brought him into notice. He also wrote on Annuities, Algebra; and besides his professorship at Woolwich, was elected a fellow of the Royal Society and member of the Academy of Sciences at Paris.

## LITERATURE.

### CURIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEMPLATION ON THE CHANGES OF MATTER.

#### Concluded.

It is safer to transfer the argument to myself. These limbs of mine, Therina, owe themselves entirely to the animal or vegetable food, the roots or the stalks, to the leaves or the fruit of plants, or to the flesh of brute creatures which have passed through my mouth for these years, or the mouths of my parents before me: This hand would have been worn to a mere skeleton, my arms had been dry bones, and my neck and ribs the statue of death, had they not received perpetual recruits from the field. These lips which now address you are of the same materials, and they were once growing the grass of the earth. This very flesh which I call mine now, did belong to the sheep or the ox, before it was a part of me; and it would cloath their bones before it covered

mine. You know, Theron, you are a gentleman who delight in rural sports when you reside at your country seat, and you love to feast on the game that you have pursued. Did you ever suppose that any part of yourself was once hurried through the air in the breast of a frightened partridge, which came before night into your net? or that any piece of you was ever driven through the fields before the full mouthed hounds on the legs of a hunted hare, which was the next day prepared for your table? Had you ever as strange a thought as this is? And can you believe it now? or upon a survey of my argument, can you tell how to deny it? And what are hares and partridges made of but growing herbage or shattered corn?

It is true, you have sometimes tasted of fish, either from the sea or the rivers, but even these in their original also are a sort of grass; they have been fed partly by sea-woods, and partly by lesser fish which they have devoured, whose prime and natural nourishment was from some vegetable matter in the watry world. In short, Sir, I am free to declare, that whether I have eaten cheese or butter, bread or milk; whether I have fed on the ox or the sheep, or the fowls of the air, or the fish of the sea, I am certain that this body, and these limbs of mine, even to my teeth and nails, and the hairs of my head, are all borrowed originally from the vegetable creation. Every thing of me that is not a thinking power, that is not mind or spirit, was once growing like grass on the ground, or was made of the roots which supported some green herbage.

And now, Theron, what think you of all these paradoxes? which of them do you cavil at? which leaves you room for doubt or question? Is not philosophy an entertaining study, that teaches us our original, and those astonishing operations of Divine wisdom and providence? But it teaches us also to have humble thoughts of ourselves, and to remember whence we came.

Theron, to conclude the discourse, confessed his surprise and conviction; he acknowledged the justice of Crito's whole argument, gave him hearty thanks for his instructive lecture, and resolved to remember these amazing scenes of the operations of Nature, and the adorable wisdom of God his maker: Nor shall I ever forget, said he, the unsuspected dependance of man on all the meaner parts of the creation. I am convinced that pride was never made for man, when I see how much a kin his body is to the fowls of the air and brutes of the earth: And I think, said he, I am more indebted to my tenants than I could have imagined; nor will I cast such a scornful eye again on the grazier and the farmer, since this flesh and blood of mine, as well as the furniture of my house, and the clothes I wear, were once growing in the fields or the woods under their care or cultivation; and I find I am nearer a-kin to them, since this self of mine, with all the finery that covers it, was made originally of the same materials with them and their coarser coverings.

### ON THE ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

"If from society we learn to live.  
'Tis solitude must teach us how to die;  
It hath no flatterers, vanity can give  
No hollow aid alone!"

That man's state of mind is deserving of compassion, who, when the labours of the day are over, and its duties, toils, and concomitant anxieties, have ceased to engross the attention, cannot look forward in the evening to the pleasure of spending an hour or two, secluded from society, and following the train of his own reflections, enjoy that peculiar gratification which solitude, when so spent, can alone afford. He must, indeed, be possessed of an uncommonly strong and independent mind, who can daily mingle with society, and not receive a very powerful impulse from its influence; and, whatever be the natural disposition and bent of the mind, there are few who do not imperceptibly imbibe the tone and manner of thinking of the society with which they are habitually conversant.

The tendency of the youthful mind to receive impressions from, and assimilate itself to, the society with which it is surrounded, is very apparent; and the formation of future character frequently depends on these very impressions. It becomes, then a matter of the highest importance to consider the effects which the associations that, from various causes, we are obliged to form, have upon our character; and this can only be done by withdrawing occasionally from them entirely, when released from the engagements of secular pursuits.

To a reflective mind what satisfaction does it not afford, to emerge occasionally from the vortex of worldly pursuits, and disengaged from the stream of social existence, down which we are hurried with increasing velocity, to repose on its banks, and contemplate as spectators the beings and objects that pass before us in such rapid succession. So much impressed have men in all ages been with the importance of solitude, that thousands have withdrawn themselves altogether from society, from a deep conviction of the transitory and unsatisfactory nature of all human pursuits, and from the persuasion that true happiness was only to be found away from the cares, vexations, and, so frequently overwhelming calamities, interwoven with social connexions. Even misanthropy has assumed the sacred title of religion, and cloisters have been filled by men who, under the garb of a sanctity too pure to be sullied by intercourse with human frailty, have resigned themselves entirely to a state of sloth as worthy of the contempt as of the pity of every generous mind.

To say nothing of the glaring impiety of this proceeding, their conduct is just as irrational as that of the man who, from a consideration of the benefits which he derives from a few hours' sleep, should retire to his dormitory, and there, except when roused by the calls of nature, should spend his whole time in a constant lethargy.