

completion of it merely accidental ; or whether he was really endowed with supernatural powers, the narrator left to the judgment of his readers ; whose conclusions, he supposes, varied according as the mental faculties of each were disposed to admit or reject facts that cannot be accounted for by natural causes.

The story of the rattlesnake was related to him by a French gentleman of undoubted veracity ; and were the readers of this work as thoroughly acquainted with the sagacity, and instinctive proceedings of that animal, as he is, they would be as well assured of the truth of it. It is well known that those snakes which have survived through the summer the accidents reptiles are liable to, periodically retire to the woods, at the approach of winter ; where each (as curious observers have remarked) takes possession of the cavity it had occupied the preceding year. As soon as the season is propitious, invigorated by the invigorating rays of the sun, they leave these retreats, and make their way to the same spot, though ever so distant, on which they before had found subsistence, and the means of propagating their species. Does it then require any extraordinary exertions of the mind to believe, that one of these regular creatures, after having been badly treated by its master, should return to the box, in which it had usually been supplied with food, and had met with a comfortable abode, and that nearly about the time the Indian, from former experiments, was able to guess at ? It certainly does not ; nor will the liberal and ingenuous doubt the truth of a story so well authenticated, because the circumstances appear extraordinary in a country where the subject of it is scarcely known.

These explanations the author hopes will suffice to convince his readers, that he has not, as travellers are sometimes supposed to do, amused them with improbable tales, or wished to acquire importance by making his adventures favor of the marvellous.

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