

NATURAL HISTORY.

MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES.

In surveying the works of nature, in admiring their beauty, their order, their seasons, and the thousand attractions they possess, I sometimes think that the divine Author of our religion viewed them with corresponding feelings; and this reflection always affords me pleasure. He selected a garden, having a brook in it, as a place of frequent resort; and in a beautiful passage, we find him telling us to 'consider the lilies of the field, how they grow—they toil not!' he adds, 'neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' He delightfully reminds us, how seemly we may trust to his care and love, by desiring us to 'behold the fowls of the air, which neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns; and yet our Heavenly Father feedeth them.' Then, again, he tells us 'that we are his sheep, and that He is our shepherd.' And at another time he illustrates his kindness and compassion by referring to the care and protection afforded by a hen to her chickens; and further assures us, that not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without the knowledge of our beneficent Creator. These and other illustrations of our Saviour's precepts, were taken from objects of nature, which probably immediately surrounded him, and may be admitted as a proof of the justice of the observation I have hazarded on the subject.

Throughout the whole of the New Testament the images taken from nature leave a stronger impression on the mind than almost any others. And sure I am that the close contemplation of those which assure us of the ever wakeful care and kindness of our Maker will bring with them a peaceful serenity of mind, which would be envied, if it could be justly appreciated, by persons who have hitherto thought but little on the subject.

I was occupied the other day for a few moments, in reflecting on the benefits accruing to mankind, from a remarkable instinct impressed by the great Creator on that insignificant grub the silk-worm. What warmth and comfort does it afford us! How useful, convenient, and, I may add, elegant, is the clothing we derive from it! But this is not all. Let us, for one moment consider how many thousands of persons are absolutely indebted to it for almost their very existence, in consequence of the employment it affords in nearly every country of the known world.

There is, however, another striking and interesting peculiarity attending the silk-worm which I have not observed to have been hitherto noticed. It is the fact, that while the caterpillars of all the other tribes of moths and butterflies, when they have

arrived at a certain state of maturity, show a restless disposition, and wander about and hide themselves in a variety of places in order to spin their cocoons, preparatory to their making their escape as moths, &c; the caterpillar of the silk-worm, on the contrary, may almost be considered as a domestic insect, and is content to remain stationary in the open tray, or box, in which it may be placed. After consuming its immediate supply of mulberry leaves, it waits for a further quantity, and when the period is arrived for spinning its cocoon, instead of showing any migratory disposition, it seems to place itself with confidence under the care of man for the providing it with a suitable place for its convenience and protection. In the fly or moth state, the female is quite incapable of flight; and the male, although of a much lighter make, and more active, can fly but very imperfectly. This latter circumstance insures to us the eggs for the following season, thus completing the adaptation of the insect in its different stages to the purposes it is destined to fulfil for our advantage. To my mind this striking peculiarity in the habit of the silk-worm beautifully illustrates the care and kindness of the Almighty, in thus making an apparently insignificant reptile the means of conveying so many important benefits to man.

The migratory disposition of the common moths and butterflies is not however, without its use, though we may not so immediately profit by it. I have before observed, that the caterpillars hide themselves in a variety of places. These, in the pupae state, furnish food for our soft-billed birds during the winter, who search for and feed upon them. Without such a recourse many of them must perish during a severe frost. Numerous insects also lay their eggs in living caterpillars; who die before they change into pupae; so that the very existence, as it is well known, of some insects is perpetuated by the destruction of others.

In noticing these facts, it seems impossible to withhold at least that silent admiration, which the ways of Providence in the works of the creation claim from every one, by whom they are properly contemplated. Trifling as the relation may appear to some persons, it ought to carry the conviction with it, that we are under the care and guidance of an all-wise and bountiful Creator. Happy shall we be if this instructive lesson is not lost upon us.—*Jesse's Gleanings.*

A STRANGER IN LONDON.

(CONCLUDED.)

There is a tradition among certain classes of the people here, that the religion derived from the writings of their sacred books will

one day or other overspread the whole earth: at a notion so preposterous you are probably inclined to smile; and yet, though I make a great secret of it, there are movements connected with this design not unworthy of notice. For the last thirty years several savans have been solicited to exert their skill in translating the sacred writings of the Christians into other languages; and, if fame can be depended on, something of this sort has been done. Beside which, they have here some method of multiplying copies of a book with rapidity so great, that I would submit to your better judgment whether or not some demon does not lend them a hand. Connected with this ominous evil, there is another, quite as mischievous, if not more so. Nothing is more common here, than certain dangerous assemblies, called Missionary Societies, who may often be detected in evening conclave, and whose professed object is to advance the religion of their obscure sect, by supplanting the ancient system of theology, now in the ascendant. Of the suspicious doings in these ill-looking divans, it is impossible to speak in terms sufficiently strong. The most active, and therefore the most dangerous of the set are the followers of a celebrated old mandarin, whose name, if correctly handed to posterity, was John Wesley. The worst feature in this fraternity is, they are so dreadfully united. Gain the assent of one and you have the consent of all. This principle of adhesion, in a cause of that sort, must be assailed, or there is no foretelling the consequences. These people have already insinuated themselves into divers places; and I have been credibly informed that their emissaries are busily engaged, not only within the limits of Europe, which is a matter beneath our notice, but have approached the shores of India; though no petition, requesting permission to take such liberty, has ever been laid at the foot of the golden throne.

But in the midst of these vexatious proceedings there are some encouraging thoughts. The inhabitants of this country are but few in number, and the island itself is a mere speck, which, for aught I know, may some day fall into the ocean, from which it appears to have emerged. Besides which,—and this gives me the greatest delight,—on looking at the conduct of the principal persons who profess christianity, it is clear they only profess it: and I incline to believe, that although you may here and there find a Priest remarkably zealous in promoting christianity at home, the far greater number never trouble themselves with the moral condition of other countries. On the whole my fears are rather diminished; for though the Missionary people I have spoken of would circumnavigate the globe twice over,