

# JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

"Forquet ab obscenis jam nunc sermonibus aurem."

Pictou, N. S. Wednesday Morning, May 30, 1832.

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## THE JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

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## BIOGRAPHY.

### BLAISE PASCAL.

Blaise Pascal, one of the sublimest geniuses the world ever produced, was born at Clermont, in Auvergne, in 1623. He never had any preceptor but his father.—So great a turn had he for the mathematics, that he learned, or rather invented, geometry when he was but twelve years old; for his father was unwilling to initiate him in that science early, for fear of its diverting him from the study of the languages. At sixteen, he composed a curious mathematical piece. About seventeen, he invented his machine of arithmetic which has been much admired by the learned. He afterwards employed himself assiduously in making experiments, according to the new philosophy, and particularly improved upon those of Toricellius. At the age of twenty-four, his mind took a different turn; for, all at once, he became as great a devotee as any age has ever produced, and gave himself up entirely to prayer and mortification.

## NATURAL HISTORY.

### THE WOODPECKER.

The woodpecker certainly does not injure the great trees by boring them full of holes. Those trees which are in a state of decay, chiefly from their old age, are the only ones which are paid attention to by the woodpecker; for these are the same in which its insect food is bred. The green thriving trees will not produce it a meal; indeed, it is too knowing ever to bother itself by alighting on such. It knows the trees that are likely to produce food even when on the wing—an excellent judge of timber infected with the dry rot. Now this bird not only selects trees infected by the worms, but by doing so promotes their decomposition, and so succeeds in clearing the forest of incumbrances. Without this bird, the trees running to decay, would not moulder so soon, for the rain gets into the holes, made by the bird. It is very voracious, eats away the whole day, and never seems to weary. Where it finds a fertile scump of worms, it will not leave it, but continue to dig in, until it is buried out of sight. Often have I witnessed its greediness carrying

it thus far, and cautiously creeping up, having succeeded in covering it with my hat, if it was too high up the tree, as it generally was. When inspecting a tree it hops down the trunk in perpendicular leaps of about four inches each. In this work it is much assisted by the feathers of the tail, which are kept turned into the tree, by which the feathers have all their soft down part at the top worn off, and the stems left very sharp. They act as sliding props, assist its holding by the sharp claws of the toes, and steady the bird in its laborious operations, where the standing ground does not afford a platform. This bird makes two distinct noises with its beak on the trees, the meaning of which is perfectly different, the one may be called tapping, the other drumming. The intention of the tapping is to bore through the bark of the trees, where the bark partly adheres to the tree; the other is beating or drumming furiously on the hollow bark, so that the insects behind are frightened, or fall down to where the bark adheres to the tree, where they are received by the bird. Now the reason of this is obvious; for if it tapped a hole where the bark was hollow, it would find no insects behind; they would hear their common enemy and scamper off, whereas it knows where to frighten, and where to catch them. This drumming of the woodpecker has often astonished me in the wild woods, and it cost me some consideration to discover the cause of it, but I found that where it drummed, there were no holes,—that these were farther down the tree, in belts, where the bark was in the situation I have stated.

The woodpecker is one of the most ingenious of birds; it is not every hole in the trees that it will build its nest in. Those standing erect, partly remote from the rest, very much decayed, with no top branches, are selected for the great purpose of breeding in. A hole is bored into the tree, about two yards from the top, sufficient to admit the birds to their nests; and immediately beneath this, for the same distance down the tree, it is picked into an inverted curve all around, the top of the tree resembling a sand glass; this is done in order to prevent the squirrels from visiting them. This quadruped seldom runs up trees which are in a state of rottenness, however, when it does, this ingenious curve puts an end to the ascent, as past that it is perfectly unable to go. Its claws will not hold so well in decayed wood as in fresh, and when it is partly obliged to move on, or back down, there is every likelihood that it will fall.—MacLaggart.

## HISTORY.

### HISTORY OF YOUNG RICHARD.

I was born and educated in a seaport town in the north of Scotland. My parents were pious, and did every thing in their power to train me up for God. They considered me a promising boy, for a long time. I pretended to have great pleasure in reading my Bible. In the morning, when I heard my mother coming to desire me

to get out of bed, I instantly snatched up my Bible, and appeared so busy reading, as not to notice her till just at my bed side. On seeing me so well employed, her heart leaped for joy, and instantly begged her heavenly Father to bless the Bible to her dear boy; and if any stranger was at breakfast that morning, my praises sounded round the table; and in all the houses I visited along with my parents, I was held up as an example to the younger branches of the family. I was greatly mortified upon one of these occasions by a boy breaking out into a fit of laughter when he heard them so highly extolling my character; trace, the boy's mother put him to the door, but he called after her that I had broken into Wallace's garden along with him, and carried off an immense quantity of apples. At first his accusation was not credited, but they soon perceived by my countenance, that I took guilt to me. On the questions from all corners of the room poured in upon me—whether Dick's charge was true? if it was really in the garden? and so on. As I knew there were more witnesses to the fact than Dick, I durst not deny. This affair blasted all my mother's kind hopes of me, and completely destroyed my fame. However, it did me much good. I saw the evil of bad company, and determined to associate with such boys no more. Next day, when Dick called upon me to accompany him on a fishing excursion, I bolted my room door, and did not appear, so he concluded I quite disapproved.

I now became a reader of books from inclination, and derive I much pleasure, and I think profit, from the books I peruse. The Pilgrim's Progress was my favourite book. I had many serious thoughts about the City of Destruction. I often talked of it at table; at one of these times my father expressed his wish that I was still dwelling in that city? I recollect of praying very fervently that night, that God would deliver me out of it; and for a long time after, I did not forget to pray both morning and evening.

I was now arrived at my twelfth year; and though I steered pretty clear of vicious and swearing children, yet the love of sin and folly remained on a dead in my heart. I was only prevented from strolling in the fields on the Sabbath day by the prohibition of my parents, not by the laws of Heaven. After returning from church, I would often look with a wistful eye to a neighbouring hill, where I saw many of my companions (whose parents were heathens) diverting themselves as if it had been a common day. My wretched heart considered my parents as cruel for detaining me, and their kind for allowing them such liberty on the Sabbath. Many times I longed to be a man, when I should act as I pleased. Little did I know that the liberty I desired was the direct road to ruin.

About my fourteenth year I began to read voyages and travels to foreign countries, and to entertain a fond desire to visit them. My mind only fixed on the curiosities I should see, never on the hardships I should encounter.

My parents at this time proposed putting me