

THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

No. 41. Vol. 1]

HALIFAX, OCTOBER 23, 1835.

[ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM.]

NATURAL HISTORY.

A singular fact in Natural History.—In the western part of Virginia are dens, where the rattlesnakes and other serpents retire on the approach of cold weather, into winter quarters, and where, in a torpid state, like others of the serpent tribe, they while away that dreary season, in a state of cold and hunger. In the spring, when the genial influence of the sun quickens them into life, they crawl forth from their brumal retreats, and enjoy the pleasure of a renovated existence in their own peculiar manner. In their travels through the woods and fields, they generally wend their serpentine way along the paths, previously made, and there not unfrequently meet with travellers of a character and species very different from themselves.—Among the members of the animal kingdom, that frequent that district of the country is the wild deer, between whom and the rattlesnake there appears to subsist a most inveterate, instinctive hatred. When the deer, in the elevated pride of his character, moves gracefully along the path where the rattlesnake is travelling, they both instantaneously halt in their course, and prepare for a combat which is to terminate in the death of one or the other of the combatants. The snake immediately coils and prepares for the fatal spring, the deer slowly recedes, and coming up with lofty but graduated bounds, leaps with as much precision as is possible, with his hard and horny feet, upon the serpent; and if he miss him, passes rapidly on, and returning, renews the contest, and attempts to spring upon him again.—The serpent on seeing the deer moving towards him, patiently awaits his approach; and as soon as he conceives him to be within striking distance, darts with the most venomous intent upon him; and, if not disabled when the deer approaches him a second and third time, the rattlesnake repeats his springs; and, if he strikes the deer the latter is soon put *hors de combat*, and swells and dies. On the contrary, if the deer strikes the rattlesnake with his hoofs, the latter has his back bone broken, and discomfited, expires.—And it is a fact, well known to many, that those two hostile animals never separate, after they meet, until one of them dies.—This fact is derived orally, from a former Reverend President of a College, whose reputation for knowledge and veracity, is of too lofty a character to be impeached.—*New York Sun.*

The Outa Snake—Before we quitted Chunar, our dandies, who had kindled a fire on the bank of the river, were dressing their rice and curry, when a small snake approaching the place where they were seated

one of them arose and dispatched it with a piece of bamboo. It was about twenty-five inches long, entirely white, except at the top of the head, which was a deep shining black. This particular species is called by the natives the Outa Snake. It is very rare and of peculiar habits. These creatures always go in pairs, and it is remarkable, that if either one is killed by man or beast, the survivor will follow, until it is destroyed or obtains its revenge by biting the author of its bereavement. It has been known under such circumstances, to keep up the pursuit with the most patient perseverance for upwards of 300 miles. The little creature, whose mate was killed by one of our boatmen, was seen after we had pushed from the shore, gliding along the bank of the stream in a direct line with the boat, and when we reached Cawnpoor, there we found it ready to deal its vengeance upon the wanton destroyer of its conjugal felicity. It was dispatched before it could put its evil intention into execution.—*Oriental Annual.*

THINGS IN ENGLAND:

Extracts from Brooke's Letters.

(Continued.)

The "coachman" of an English coach is almost always a fat man. Ours happens to be not over fat, but he is the only lean one I have seen. We have eleven passengers outside, and four in. Four or five outside are ladies, and ladies by the way, ride on the outside as well as in. The quantity of baggage—they never say *baggage* in England, every thing is *luggage*—is immense. A coach on our roads would upset in a very short time with such a load. Nor could an English coachman drive an American coach on an American road. He would break the necks of all his passengers in a very short time; for such furious driving as will answer over a Macadamized road here, would be ruin over our roads. I have been often amused to see the wheel put in an iron shoe to go down a little hill, that an American driver would never think of at all. The inside seats of a coach cost nearly double the sum that the outside seats costs,—and they are not half so pleasant, unless it be in a shower; but this is another invention to keep a certain class of people from all possible approach to another class. This classification is indeed amusing all over Great Britain. In some of the steamboats they have three cabins, graduating the price accordingly. On some railroads they have three classes of cars. These are little things, as specimens of many others more important. One sees this legal classification as it were, so novel to us, the moment he enters England; and it is visible in almost every thing—so nume-

rous and strong are the barriers that aristocracy girts itself with. English coaches are all licensed—which is an excellent plan,—to carry so many passengers, and no more."

The mail coaches all leave London at 8 o'clock in the evening (all in Ireland leave Dublin in the same manner), for all parts of the kingdom:—and it is a pleasant sight to see them, as they all start at the same moment from the General Post Office, the guards in their red coats all sounding their horns, and driving at once for the different roads all over England and Scotland. They drive about twelve miles an hour, and average ten miles, including all stoppages. Indeed in any part of England, you can count upon the arrival of a coach for a certainty, within five minutes of time allowed. As this furious driving would be somewhat dangerous in many parts of London, light carts with a single horse take many of the mails to the suburbs. The number of their passengers is limited. In this admirable arrangement there are many hints for our coach proprietors, though upon our roads there can be no such certainty of movement as there is in England.

For miles and miles out of London, there is as it were, almost a succession of houses. At last I could see the black cloud of smoke that hovers over this immense hive of human beings. I stretched my eyes long before I came to the Thames, or the *Tems* as they call it here, (but these English do not speak English, as I shall prove by and by, rascals as they are for abusing us for our Yankeeisms)—the far famed Thames,—to see this river; and when I first saw it, and that not far from London, it was a pretty little rivulet, as we should call it, with low banks, that the Penobscot would take in at a gulp; and this was the Thames, the renowned Thames, bearing on its little bosom all the commerce of the richest, and, Pekin except, the greatest city of the world! Then Windsor Castle was in sight—the residence of the King and the royal family, with the British flag floating over it to denote the presence of the King, as our flag floats over our capital, when Congress is in session.

But all my eyes were for London. Anon we were engulfed in this whirlwind of human beings, swallowed up in the mighty vortex,—in the city of the growth of centuries, where man has been dying for hundreds and hundreds of years, and other men have filled the reservoir, where battles and the plague had strived to see which should work direst havoc with human life,—where the great dead had thronged, and the mighty living were thronging,—and here I am one solitary man knowing not a human being among one million and a half like myself!