

THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

“To please the fancy—and improve the mind.”

VOL. I.]

HALIFAX, N. S. JUNE 26, 1835.

[No. 24]

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE SPIDER.

The spider has many enemies; and hence its web is always in danger of being deranged and damaged; to meet this inconvenience, nature has furnished the insect with a magazine of materials for occasional repairs, and which, although frequently exhausted, still continues to be replenished: this reservoir, however, is drained in time. When spiders grow old, their supply of gum is dried up; but even when this calamity happens, the cunning creature is not altogether destitute of resources which avail it for some time longer. A crafty old spider, having no longer the means of securing a subsistence, seeks out a young one, to which it communicates its wants and necessities; on which the other, either out of respect for old age, or from a dread of old pinners, resigns its place, and spins a new web in another situation. But if the old spider can find none of its species which will, either from love or fear, resign its net, it must then perish for want of subsistence.

The water spider spins no web to catch its prey; but, nevertheless, offers one of the most singular objects of contemplation. If we possessed no other evidence that the world had been planned and created by the intelligent Being, the habits, proceedings, and instincts of this little creature would alone be sufficient to prove the fact. As soon as it has caught its prey on the shore, it dives to the bottom of the waters, and there devours its booty. It is, therefore, an amphibious animal; although it appears more fitted to live in contact with the atmosphere than with the water. The diving bell is a modern invention; and few facts excite our wonder more than the possibility of a man's being enabled to live and move at the bottom of the ocean. This triumph of reason over the unfriendly element, however, was anticipated by an insect—the spider in question. This creature spins some loose threads, which it attaches to the leaves of aquatic plants; it then varnishes them with glutinous secretion, which resembles liquid glass, and is so elastic as to admit of considerable distention and contraction; it next lays a coating of this same substance over its own body, and underneath this coating introduces a bubble of air. Naturalists conjecture it has the power of drawing this air in at the anus from the atmosphere at the surface of the pool; but the precise mode which it is separated from the body of the atmosphere, and introduced under the pellicle covering the insect's body, has not been

clearly ascertained. Thus clothed, and shining like a ball of quicksilver, it darts through the waters to the spot in which it has fixed its habitation, and disengaging the bubble from under the pellicle, it dexterously introduces it into a web formed at the bottom of the water, and at each journey filling its habitation with a fresh bubble of air, at length the lighter completely expels the heavier fluid, and the insect takes possession of an aerial habitation, commodious and dry, finished in the very midst of the waters. It is about the size and shape of half a pigeon's egg. From this curious chamber the spider hunts, searching sometimes the waters and sometimes the land for its prey, which, when obtained, is transported to this sub-aquatic mansion, and devoured at leisure.—*Family Library.*

MORAL SCIENCE.

The law of love is to a moral universe what the law of gravitation is to a material creation. Each must be as extensive as the kingdom it governs. Gravitation governs not only systems, but atoms of matter.—Love to God and our neighbor must govern not only nations and individuals, but every thought, motive, design, feeling and emotion of every individual.

The law of gravitation cannot be violated without disturbance in matter. The law of love cannot be violated, without still greater disturbance, and absolute suffering among moral beings.

The whole material universe, every system, sun, planet, and the minutest atom of matter, all that can be brought within the view of the telescope, or the microscope, yields implicit and constant obedience to the law of gravitation. There are hence, order, regularity, harmony, beauty and grandeur among systems and atoms of matter.

In the moral creation there is almost a universal and constant violation of the law of love—of doing as we would be done by—of doing good to our neighbor, making our neighbor the whole intelligent and animate universe. For the law of love or benevolence, is substituted the law of selfishness; and selfishness begets ambition, envy, hatred, revenge; and they produce disturbance, commotions, contentions, war, disease, ruin and death.

When the fundamental law of all moral science, and the only law, which can regulate a moral creation, receives the same implicit and constant obedience, which matter renders to its law, the order, regularity, beauty, harmony and sublimity in the moral

universe, will infinitely surpass any and all the operations, which ever were or ever can be carried on, among atoms, worlds, planets, suns or systems of matter. Then will be the millennium.—*Family Lyceum.*

A CATASTROPHE AT CHURCH.

A taste for music, as is often the case, was conjoined with the talent of Robert Douglas for drawing; and among other modes of indulging it, he had joined an amateur choir of gentlemen who sung the service every Sunday in a certain church.—That church was the one at which Mr. Evesham officiated—where cousin Sydney was to preach on the coming Sunday, and though his natural feelings prompted him to fly as far as possible from the place, he resolved to command them, and to appear in the orchestra as usual—though the effort was so great that he heard the beating of his heart, as distinctly as the treading of his feet, when he entered the church-yard. He was not aware of a party entering the holy precincts by an opposite gate and about two stones throw further from the church than he was. These were Mrs. Furnival and all her family—Mr. Evesham in his canonicals, cousin Sydney and Captain Cronie; in short, the group of all others, that he would have least wished to have encountered. Mrs. Furnival, with Alice leaning upon her arm, walked the first, between the two clergymen, a little hurried by the breeze, which, however, to compensate for its boisterousness, did full justice to the well-turned ankle and neat boots. “Yes, cousin,” said she, “this is a fine old church: the tower is one of the very few remains of antiquity.—” “Not at this door to-day,” said Mr. Evesham, we have just time to enjoy the sea view—and will go in through the baptistery. Ah! yonder is Douglas with his psalm book Almighty God!—look!—look!—

All eyes followed his finger, as, rigid with horror, he stood rooted to the spot, pointing towards the building. The tower, which had resisted so many gales and the safety whereof was in no wise lessened, (so knowing people had said) by its swinging to and fro, whenever the full peal of bells was rung—seemed for one instant to lean over the body of the church, a hand's length further than it was wont;—so far as to be beyond the possibility of recovering its balance. The compact stone work began to tremble, as if agitated by some inward convulsion—the unconscious fingers within applied all their strength to the ropes—then the outer side of the spire was sent with a sudden gash; and, with a long deafening sound, its whole