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THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

No. 52. VOL. 1.]

HALIFAX, JANUARY 8, 1836.

[ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM.]

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE SALAMANDER.

Though the ancients have described a lizard bred by fire, and existing in flames, the moderns have discovered that it was a fabulous assertion, and that they have merely the offspring of a heated brain.

The salamander, which was once supposed to live upon that element which must inevitably prove the destruction of life, resembles a frog in the form of its body, though, like every species of the lizard, it has a long tail: like that animal its snout is rounded, and its eyes placed in the back of the head; the claws of its toes are short and feeble; and it is covered with a rough skin.

Not only the salamander, but every one of the lizard species are supposed to be of a venomous kind; but it appears to be the effect of prejudice or misconception, for they are destitute of fangs like the viper, and have very small teeth; as to the saliva, which has been supposed poisonous, no effects of that nature have ever been produced.

The salamander, which is best known in Europe, is generally from eight to eleven inches in length; when taken in the hands it imparts a chilling sensation, and appears to be incapable of supporting heat, as it always makes choice of a cool retreat. Like the frog, it seems to be a torpid animal, and in that instance differs from the rest of the lizard kind, as the generality of them are continually in motion, if we except the winter months, which are chiefly devoted to sleep: during that period the water lizard changes its skin every fortnight; but in the summer twice or thrice in that space.

FLOWERS.

Flowers are undoubtedly among the most exquisite pieces of nature's workmanship.—What beautiful tints do they display?—What lively colours do they unfold?—What variegated beauties do they discover?—and, what delightful perfumes do they emit! In view of these well might the poet exclaim:

—Who can paint

Like Nature! Can imagination boast
Amid its gay creation, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill
And loose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows?

But the skill of the architect is no less conspicuous in the general contrivance and delicate structure of their several parts, and beautiful harmony of the whole, than in the laying on of the colours by which they are embellished.

The diversity of shape, and form, and complexion, in those of different kinds is not more remarkable than that no two are to be

found exact, y^e alike, even of the same species and growing on the same stalk or knot.

Nor should the aromatic fragrance which those beautiful sons and daughters of nature send forth, more excite our gratitude, than that well ordered succession, by which, the pleasures we receive from these transitory visitants are lengthened out and protracted almost all the year round.

Before winter with his cloudy front has taken his departure, the early *Snow drop* boldly steps forth in his pure white robe,—the *Crocus* next, with an air of timidity peeps out, and as if afraid to venture, keeps close to the earth—then comes the *Violet* with her varied beauties, accompanied by the sparkling *Polyanthus*, and splendid *Auricula*—afterwards groves of *Tulips* display their rich and gaudy attire, followed by the *Anemone* in her spreading robe. Now the *Ranunculus* expands the richness of his foliage—the *Sun flower* shoots forth his golden rays and the beautiful *Carnation* with a numerous train bring up the rear, and close the procession,—Who can reflect upon this passing, yet protracted scene, without being forcibly struck with the wisdom and goodness of God manifested in it?

DAWN OF GENIUS.

KING ALFRED.

Alfred, more justly surnamed the Great than any of his predecessors was born in an age of the most profound ignorance, when learning was considered rather as a reproach than an honour to a prince. He was not taught to know one letter from another till he was about twelve years of age, when a book was put into his hands, more by accident than by previous design. The queen, his mother, one day being present with her four sons, of whom Alfred was the youngest, and having a book of Saxon poems in her hand, beautifully written and embellished, observed that the royal youths were charmed with its external appearance; upon this she said, "I will make a present of this book to him who shall first learn to read it." Alfred immediately took fire, and applied his mind with such ardour, that in a very little time he both read and repeated the poem to the queen and received it for his reward. From that moment he felt an insatiable thirst for knowledge; and reading and study became his chief delight. Such was his proficiency that he composed various poems, and apt stories; and translated from the Greek the fables of *Aesop*. He also gave Saxon translations of Gregory on the Pastoral Office, of the histories of *Crispin* and *Bede*, and of the *Consolation of Philosophy* by *Boethius*. The last literary work in which he engaged, was a translation of

the *Psalms of David* into Anglo-Saxon which however he did not live to finish.

Alfred came to the crown young, but found affairs in that state that he was obliged to seek refuge, in disguise, in the cottage of one of his herdsmen, whose wife ignorant of the quality of her guest, and observing him one day by the fireside, employed in trimming his bows and arrows, she desired him to take care of some cakes which were toasting, while she was employed in other domestic affairs. But Alfred, whose thoughts were otherwise engaged, neglected this injunction; and the good woman, on her return, finding her cakes burnt, rated the unknown king very severely, and upbraided him, that he was always ready enough to eat her warm cakes, though he was so negligent in toasting them.

EMINENT EARLY RISERS.

Dr Adam, the celebrated rector, of the high school of Edinburgh, whose long life, to its very close, was spent in an unremitting course of labour for the public good, was an early riser. It was his constant practice, for the whole summer, to rise at the hour of five and not unfrequently, when excited by any particular object, or any formidable difficulty, even at four in the morning. A proof how favourable the morning hours are for study, it may be mentioned that Dr. Adam frequently felt his patience worn out by the harassing exertions he made in the completion of his work on Roman Antiquities, and would rise from his desk, in the after part of the day, half determined to relinquish his task; yet notwithstanding these sallies, he would rise with the sun the next morning, to prosecute his task with renewed vigour.

A volume might, indeed, be filled with notices of early risers. Bishop Jewel rose regularly at four; Dr. Franklin was an early riser; Priestly was an early riser; the great and learned lawyer and pious Christian, Sir Matthew Hale, studied sixteen hours a day, and was an early riser; Dr. Parkhurst, the philologist, rose regularly at five in the summer and six in the winter, and in the latter season always made his own fire.—It is to the hours gained by early rising that the world is indebted for the numerous volumes which, within a few years, have issued from the pen of Sir Walter Scott. Among the ancients, the names of *Homer*, *Horace*, *Virgil*, and of numerous other poets may be inscribed upon the list of early risers.

WANTED,

At the Tin Plate Working Business, a smart active Boy, of about the age of 14 years. Noon need apply but such as can be well recommended. Enquire of

January 8. Wm. F. STAYNER.

POETRY.

The following verses were written on an incident which happened during the last campaign in Egypt.

THE DYING SOLDIER.

The tumult of battle had ceas'd—high in air
The standard of Britain triumphantly wav'd ;
And the remnant of foes had all fled in despair,
Whom night, intervening, from slaughter had sav'd ;

When a veteran was seen, by the light of his lamp,
Slow-pacing the bounds of the carcass-strewn plain ;
Not base his intent,—for he quitted his camp ;
'To comfort the dying—not plunder the slain.

'Though dauntless in war, at a story of woe
Down his age-furrow'd cheeks the warm tears often
ran ;
Alike proud to conquer, or spare a bravo foe,
He fought like a hero—" but felt like a man !"

As he counted the slain, "Oh, Conquest !" he cried,
"Thou art glorious indeed, but how dearly thou'rt
won !"

"Too dearly, alas !" a voice faintly replied—
It thrill'd through his heart, 'twas the voice of his Son !

He listen'd aghast ;—all was silent again ;
He search'd by the beams which his lamp feebly
shed,
And found his brave Son, amid hundreds of slain,
The corpse of a comrade supporting his head !

"My Henry !" the sorrowful parent exclaim'd,
"Has fate rudely wither'd thy laurels so soon ?"
The youth open'd his eyes, as he heard himself nam'd,
And awoke for a while from his death-bedding swoon.

He gaz'd on his Father, who knelt by his side,
And seizing his hand, press'd it close to his heart ;
"Thank Heaven, thou art here, my dear Father !"
he cried ;
"For soon ! ah, too soon we forever must part !

"Though death early calls me from all that I love,
From glory, from thee, yet perhaps 'twill be given
To meet thee again in your regions above"
His eyes beam'd with hope, he fix'd them on
heaven.

"Then—let not thy bosom with vain sorrow swell ;
Ah ! check, ere it rises, the heart-rending sigh !
I fought for my King, for my country ! I fell
In defence of their rights ; and I glory to die !"

VARIETIES.

A good character.—A good character is to the young man what a firm foundation is to the artist, who proposes to erect a building on it ; he can build with safety, and all who behold it will have confidence in its solidity, a helping hand will never be wanted—but let a single part of this bedefective and you go a hazard, amid doubting and distrust, and ten to one it will tumble down at last, and mingle all that was built on it in ruin. Without a good character, poverty is a curse—with it, it is scarcely an evil. Happiness cannot exist where a good character is not. All that is bright in the hope of youth, all that is calm and blissful in the sober scenes of life, all that is soothing in the vale

of years, centres in, and is derived from a good character.—Therefore acquire this as the first and most valuable good.

The great art of acquiring wealth consists in saving, and in sacrificing some present enjoyment for the sake of future ease.—Wasteful and extravagant people sometimes get rich, but the examples of success of such are the mere exceptions to a general rule.—We are not the advocates of a mean and parsimonious system of expenditure. There is one species of economy which no one should ever lose sight of, whether he be rich or poor, or in moderate circumstances. It is that *nothing shall be wanted that can be applied to use*. The late Stephen Girard was eminently remarkable for his attention to small matters. At his farm below the city which he used to visit every day in summer, not in a coach and four, but in an old shabby chaise with a rustic looking horse, all his arrangements were conducted with the strictest regard to economy. We are told that in the fall season, when he used to kill his cattle for making the beef with which he provisioned his ships, not a particle of the animal was lost. After salting the meat, and selling the hides to the tanners, the horns to the combmakers, the hoofs and the paunch to the venders of cowheels and tripe, he sold the blood to the sugar refiners. Many a gentleman farmer would have thought attention to such small matters beneath his notice, just as many a female housekeeper thinks it beneath her notice to see that her servants do not put more wood on the fire than is necessary to produce the degree of heat, that is required, or throw into the street meat, vegetables and bread, as is done in some families almost every day, enough to feed a small family.—*Philad. Gazette.*

OLD HUMPHREY ON FITS.

Though no doctor, I have by me some excellent prescriptions, and as I shall charge you nothing for them, you cannot grumble at the price.—We are most of us subject to fits ; I am visited with them myself ; and I dare say that you are also : now then for my prescriptions.

For a fit of passion, walk out in the open air ; you may speak your mind to the winds, without hurting any one, or proclaiming yourself to be a simpleton.

For a fit of idleness, count the tickings of a clock. Do this for one hour, and you will be glad to pull off your coat the next, and work like a negro.

For a fit of extravagance and folly, go to the work-house, or speak with the ragged and wretched inmates of the jail, and you will be convinced :

Who makes his bed of briar and thorn,
Must be content to lie forlorn.

For a fit of ambition, go into the church-yard, and read the grave-stones. They will

tell you the end of ambition. The grave will soon be your bedchamber, the earth your pillow, corruption your father, and the worm your mother and your sister.

For a fit of repining, look about for the halt and blind, and visit the bed-ridden and afflicted, and deranged, and they will make you ashamed of complaining of your lighter afflictions.

For fits of Despondency, look on the good things which God has given you in this world, and those which he has promised to his followers in the next. He who goes in his garden to look for cobwebs and spiders, no doubt will find them ; while he who looks for a flower, may return into his house with one blooming in his bosom.

For all fits of doubt, perplexity and fear, whether they respect the body or the mind ; whether they are a load to the shoulders, the head or the heart, the following is a radical cure which may be relied on, for I had it from the great Physician : "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee."

OLD HUMPHREY'S SHORT WAY WITH INFIDELS.

"In moving among mankind, I have now and then fallen in with infidels, who have not only declared their disbelief of the Bible, but endeavoured, also, to destroy the faith of others in that blessed book. The way in which they have always begun their attack, is to higggle and wriggle about some disputed point of little importance, with as much confidence as if they were on the very point of overturning the whole truth of scripture by their silly prattle. Just as soon would a poor blind mole tear up from the ground an oak of a hundred years growth, by burrowing under one of the least of its roots.

If ever you fall in with any of these unhappy beings, don't be drawn in to cavil with them about trifles, but boldly declare your opinion, leaving them to wrangle, if they like, by themselves.

Tell them that if there be any thing good and pure, and holy, and heavenly in the world, the Bible exhorts us to practice it ; and if there be any thing that is evil, and base, and vile in the world, the Bible commands us to avoid it. That will be a poser.

Tell them that the Bible contains more knowledge and wisdom than all the other books that were ever printed put together ; and that those who believe its promises, and obey its commandments, have peace, and hope, and joy in the cares of life, and the trying hour of death. That will be a poser too.

Tell them that the Bible has been believed in by the wisest and best of men from generation to generation, as the word of the living God, and that it makes known to a sinner the only way of salvation through the merits and death of a crucified Redeemer. That will be another poser.

And, then, ask them before they pull the book to pieces any more, to produce one

that has done a thousandth part as much good in making men happy on earth, and in guiding them in the way to heaven, and that will be the greatest poser of all to them.

Depend upon it this course will be better than wrangling and jangling about sticks and straws, losing your temper, and feeling yourself outwitted into the bargain by the borrowed conceits of silly coxcombs, whose hearts and whose head are equally empty."

MY MOTHER.—With reverential awe—with devout and holy affections, with feelings bordering on idolatry do I approach the image of my mother. I remember her kind attentions, her fostering care over me, her extreme anxiety for my welfare. How often at the close of a day when tired of the world and all its illusive charms have I approached her and reposed my weary head upon her bosom! what an unbounded influence did she have over my actions. I dared not disobey her just commands, I felt as if Heaven would afflict me if I went contrary to her wishes. My mother, there is music in the very word; she it was who taught me to bend my little knees in devotion and repeat the Saviour's prayer. Her smiles called into existence the first affections that sprung up in my youthful heart. She it was who watched over me like some guardian angel through all my helpless years, and now, though her body has mouldered to dust and her spirit is revelling in the joys and bliss of eternity, she lives in me—blesses me and governs me by the influence of her precepts, her examples, and her soothing matchless eloquence. What constitutes the centre of every home? *The mother.* Whither do our thoughts turn, when our feet are weary with wandering and our hearts sick with disappointment? *To the mother.* She is the sun of the domestic system, around which lesser planets of the domestic circle revolve and borrow their light and heat from her. If there be a tribunal where the sins and follies of a froward child may hope for pardon and forgiveness, this side of heaven, that tribunal is the heart of a fond and devoted mother. [*Ch. Intel.*]

INTEGRITY.—Integrity is a great and commendable virtue. A man of integrity is a true man, a bold man, and a steady man, he is to be trusted and relied upon. No bribes can corrupt him, no fear daunt him; his word is slow in coming, but sure. He shines brightest in the fire, and his friend hears of him most, when he most needs him. His courage grows with danger, and conquers opposition by constancy. As he cannot be flattered or frightened into that he dislikes, so he hates flattery and temporising in others. He runs with truth and not the times—with right, and not with might.

Controversy.—A man who is fond of disputing, will in time, have few friends to dispute with.

Specifics.—It is said that a dry bean will extract the poison from a wound made by a rusty nail. The bean must be split, and one half, the flower side applied to the wound, letting it remain until it drops off, when the poison will be extracted. Rubbing a wart with a green bean is said to be a certain cure for these ugly excrescences. The Newark Messenger avers that in both instances, the bean is much more potent than witchcraft, which we do not doubt.

Strength of Human Muscles.—Robert Francais Damiens, who attempted the assassination of Louis XV. in 1767, after suffering the most unheard of tortures, was sentenced to be drawn in quarters by four horses. But although they exerted their entire strength, by drawing in four directions upon his limbs, for *fifty minutes*, the muscles were not torn from their attachments; and being still alive, the executioners were obliged to cut the tendons with a knife, in order to answer the law, which was that the criminal's body should be drawn in quarters. Precisely the same course was resorted to in the case of Ravallac, who assassinated Henry the IV. the horses being unable to dismember the criminal's body.

PROSPECTUS. THE CHRISTIAN GLEANER, NEW SERIES,

Is intended like the former series, to be an independent religious periodical, having for its chief object in its selections—To investigate and enforce the truths of revelation as the Bible itself reveals them—and to discriminate and disentangle them from the speculations, and metaphysical subtleties of system makers of Theology, with which they are so often confounded and disfigured—To expose the evils of *sectarianism*—and to promote in its stead the union of all Christians upon a Scriptural foundation.—To incite to the knowledge, belief, and practice of the Apostles' doctrine.—The restoration of primitive christianity.

Among the variety of appeals on almost every subject of importance now continually teeming from the Press on both sides of the Atlantic, so strikingly marking the signs of the times, and the enquiring spirit of the age, few have been urged with more weight than have been many on the topics above alluded to—nor have any with juster pretensions, or with more imposing motives, claimed from any class of men an impartial hearing, than do some of those from Christians—whether we regard the superior importance of their subjects, or the number, scriptural knowledge, and acknowledged talents, and piety, of those engaged in their investigation—Party prejudice in some, indifference in others, unhappily concur with other causes to make these writings to be neglected by, or inaccessible to many in this country—and their sentiments and

merits liable to be misunderstood, or misrepresented, and their failings real or imagined to be magnified.

The design of this Miscellany as far as possible, exempts its conductors from any wish or temptation to prejudice or discountenance any inquiry as to what is truth.

The Gleaner therefore, selecting its materials irrespective of party creeds, or party motives, equally from any source—and referring its selections to the test—not of the systematic theology of any school, but to the Scriptures alone, to be approved, or condemned, adopted, or rejected according to its unerring decision—will embody in one volume much diversified information on subjects of all others the most important and interesting to men—and at a cheap and accessible rate, enable any (who do not believe that ignorance is the mother of devotion, and that to grow in grace is unconnected with growing in knowledge of the divine will;) to give these subjects an impartial consideration—and in reference to these, understandingly and justly to comply with the divine injunction contained in its motto—

"Prove all things—hold fast that which is good."

The Christian Gleaner, new series—will be published in monthly numbers each containing 24 pages, on good paper and of this type—twelve numbers to constitute a volume—The price of a volume will be Five Shillings payable at any time before the delivery of the second number, or 6s. if payment be delayed beyond that period.

Halifax, 10th Dec.

Subscriptions will be received at the Drug Store of Mr. Naylor, at the Stationary Store of Messrs. A. & W. Mackinlay, and at the Printing Office of H. W. Blackadar.

The ship John Porter arrived last evening in 30 days from Liverpool, bringing London Papers to the 5th and Liverpool to the 6th December.—She has made the passage from hence to Liverpool and back in 67 days.

The French Papers continue to speculate at considerable length, on the possibility of a general war, as a consequence of the differences with the U. States. Some of them persist in the belief that a treaty of political alliance between Russia and the U. States is on the eve of being signed, and they already calculate the amount of maritime force which the two Powers may put forth against France. This force they conceive, is likely to be increased by some ships of war that the King of Sardinia is said to have put in commission in the port of Genoa, and elsewhere, taking it for granted that his Sardinian Majesty will be prevailed upon to join in the commercial crusade against France. The King of Holland, it is supposed, could hardly resist the temptation of such a league.

The packet Star, Binney, sailed from Falmouth 7th Nov. for this port.

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