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THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

"To please the fancy—and improve the mind."

Vol. I.]

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1835.

No. 19.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE TAILOR BIRD.

The tailor warbler, a native of Ceylon, is a minute species, measuring but three inches and a half long; its general plumage is pale olive, throat yellow. The tailor bird makes a nest in a manner truly curious. Its outside is made of two leaves, the one is generally dead, which the bird fixes at the end of some branch to the side of a living one, by sewing both together, with little filaments or threads. Thus it makes a sort of pouch or purse to receive the nest. In doing this, the bill of the bird serves as a needle. Sometimes, instead of a dead leaf and a living one, two living ones are sewed together. Nobody would believe that this was the work of a bird. Indeed it is impossible for any one to look at what are called the works of nature, without seeing that they are in truth the works of a great and gracious Providence. We see this more particularly in what appears to us somewhat curious, but the same may be seen in creatures the most common, though we overlook them, because they are every day before us, and attract therefore but little attention.

THE HUMMING-BIRD'S NEST.—The humming-bird usually builds her nest on the upper side of a horizontal limb of a tree; not among the twigs, but on the body of the limb itself. In the woods it very often chooses a small white oak to build upon, but in the garden or orchard, it selects an apple or pear tree. The branch on which it builds is seldom more than ten feet from the ground. The nest is about an inch in diameter, and as much in depth. Though they usually build on trees, their nests have occasionally been found on the stalks of rank weeds, or even wheat. But this is uncommon.

Viewed from the ground, a humming-bird's nest appears like a small knot or protuberance of the limb. It is formed of a kind of grey moss, well cemented by the saliva of the bird and well lined with the down of the mullein. They lay two purely white eggs, equally large at each end, like a cranberry bean, but not quite so large. On approaching their nests they dart around one's head with a humming sound; and what is not very common with birds, if their young are newly hatched, they will seat themselves on the nest when you are within a few feet of it.

ACCOUNT OF THE BANIAN TREE.—This is a tree which grows in India, and in some of the West India islands. It is some-

times called the Indian Fig, and its fruit is indeed a sort of fig, which, when ripe, is of a bright scarlet colour. The great curiosity of this tree is that it throws out from every branch a number of small fibres, which hang down, and in time grow so long as to reach the ground; then they take root, and, by degrees, become the stems of fresh trees, which again throw out fresh branches, and these branches produce fresh fibres, which again take root and become new stems; thus there seems to be no end to the size or the duration of this tree. Every tree is indeed itself a grove. The stems are like pillars, and the walk amongst them delightfully shady and cool, and particularly agreeable in the hot countries where it grows. Its branches afford a retreat, and its fruit supplies nourishment for monkeys, squirrels, peacocks, and a great many different sorts of birds. An ancient writer mentions a tree of this kind which covered five acres of ground, and says that ten thousand men might easily find shelter under it.

There is now in India a Banian tree, which is nearly two thousand feet in circumference, measured round the stems; the overhanging branches cover a much larger space. It is said that there are three hundred and fifty large stems of this tree, and more than three thousand of the smaller ones; and these are constantly increasing. This tree is famed throughout Hindostan, and we are told that the Indian armies encamp around it, and it is held in great reverence as a sort of sacred tree. It is said that seven thousand men may find shelter under this extraordinary tree. The British residents in India, whilst on their hunting and shooting parties, form encampments, and spend weeks together under this noble shade. It affords a retreat for travellers, and is particularly frequented by the religious tribes of the Hindoos. It is curious to observe the monkeys shewing off their entertaining tricks, and teaching their young ones to select their food, and to jump from branch to branch, beginning with little attempts at first, till they teach them in time to be as nimble and active as themselves.—Those who live in hot climates can alone judge of the great delight of having such trees as these amongst them.

BIOGRAPHY.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS was born in Italy about the year 1447. When he was quite a boy, he thought he should like to be a sailor, and sail all round the world.

When Columbus became a man, and

had sailed over many parts of the world, he began to think that there must be some other great country beside those that were already known.

Europe, Asia, and Africa were then only known; and, as Columbus knew that the world was round like an orange, he thought it very unlikely that half of it should have so much land on it, and the other half nothing but water; for the land side he thought would be too heavy for a proper balance. Besides this, he heard that a man who had sailed a very great way to the west had taken up a piece of timber curiously carved; and, as the wind was blowing from the west, he concluded that this must have come from some country to the westward.

Columbus went to live in Portugal, and he begged the king of that country to assist him in his attempts to discover the new continent; but, as the king of Portugal refused this, he then applied to the king and queen of Spain; and, after several years delay, he had three ships granted him and was allowed to try what he could do. These ships were not much larger than good sized boats, and he had only ninety men altogether.

On the 3d of August, 1492, Columbus set sail a little before sun-rise. Before they had gone far, they found that the ships were in very bad repair, and the men began to grumble at being sent on such an expedition in such crazy ships. They steered due westward. They encountered many difficulties, and had at different times dreadful doubts and fears, but they continued their course. At length they saw some sea-weeds, which gave them hopes that land was not very far distant. Then they saw several birds, and they were cheered still more.—After a time, however, these things disappeared, and the men began to despair; and they begged that Columbus would take them back again to their own country, for they were quite tired of seeing only sea and no land. The officers joined with the sailors, and there was nothing but tumult and complaints. At length Columbus told them, that if they would be patient for three days, if they did not see land in that time, he would go back with them to Spain.

Soon after this, they saw more flocks of birds, and they found a piece of cane newly cut, and likewise a piece of timber curiously carved, and the branch of a tree with red berries upon it. Columbus now felt sure that land was near. About midnight he saw a light; there was soon a joyful shout from one of the ships of "land, land!" In the morning an island was seen,

the fields of which were green; and it was well stored with wood, and watered with many rivulets. When they came near the coast, they saw a number of people, who showed the greatest marks of wonder and delight. The poor people were greatly surprised at the fine appearance of the Spaniards; and, when they heard their guns fired, they thought the noise was thunder. After this discovery, Columbus returned to Spain, and was received by the king and queen with every mark of honor and distinction. Then a fleet was fitted out to go in search of more countries. In this second voyage, other islands were found; and, in a third voyage, the great continent of America was discovered. This was on the 1st day of August, 1498.

Columbus had many enemies, who spoke against him to the king of Spain, and he was at one time brought back to Spain in chains. But he proved his innocence, and was sent back to seek for more lands; and, after many perils by land and by water, he came back again to Spain, and was much honoured there, till he died, three or four years after his return.

THE PRIMROSE AND THE BRAMBLE.

A Fable.

*When nature wore her loveliest bloom,
And fields and hedges breathed perfume,
And every painted child of Spring,
Flutter'd in air its little wing.
Pleased a I ranged a verdant field,
(Each scene can some instruction yield,)
Beneath a hedge within my view,
A Bramble and a Primrose grew.
Fancy, that all-creative power,
Can give a tongue to every flower;
And thus, as I pursued my walk,
To fancy's ear they seem'd to talk.*

*The Bramble rear'd his thorny head,
And to his humble neighbor said,—
"Alas! thou poor unhappy thing,
Unblest with either thorn or sting.
What shall protect, if this lone shade,
The traveller's trampling feet invade?
We should be dare to touch, with speed
He shall repent the audacious deed;
Such insolence I'll soon repay,
And send him bleeding hence away."*

*His boast the primrose meekly bears,
Nor felt from thence uneasy fears;
Since thorns she deem'd a less defence
Than unoffending innocence.*

*Ere long, to shun the noon-tide rays,
Close to the hedge a traveller strays;
The Bramble did as he had plann'd,
And deeply scratch'd the traveller's hand.
The man, resentful of the deed,
Soon rooted up the worthless weed,
Indignant toss'd it from his sight,
That none might suffer from its spite;
While undisturb'd the primrose blooms,
And all admire her sweet perfumes.*

*My dearest girls, the tale attend,
And learn this maxim from a friend,
This maxim often taught in vain,—
Ill-nature still produces pain:
At others though she aims her dart,
It turns und pierces her own heart;
While meekness does the soul engage,
Admired, beloved, in youth and age.*

LIZZY M'CALLUM.

I remember my mother telling me of a poor woman, a neighbour of her's, who lived in the same village at the foot of the Grampians, and whose husband having died, left her with six children, the youngest only a few months old. "For many months (said my mother), this worthy creature supported herself and her six innocents by spinning literally almost day and night; and yet, with all this exertion, she could only procure them the scantiest supply of the poorest fare. Barley porridge, without milk, twice a-day, with perhaps the luxury of potatoes and herrings to dinner once or twice a week, formed their whole sustenance for months together, so small was the remuneration for that kind of labour which the mother alone could work at. But during all this time, no one ever heard a complaint from Lizzy M'Callum; and although her children's wan looks told that their fare was none of the best, still they were scrupulously neat and clean in their clothes—a feature which seldom characterized their neighbours. Being gentle, good-natured children, they were always welcome playmates to you and your sisters. In the winter evenings, they participated in your pastimes of hunt the slipper and blindman's buff; and in the fine days of summer, the young M'Callums were equally necessary and important allies in chasing butterflies over the knowes, plaiting swords and caps of rushes in the meadow, or catching minnows in the mill-burn. One day (continued my mother, with a sigh, the tears coursing down her venerable cheeks at the recollection)—I remember as if it had been yesterday—two of Lizzy's little girl's were at play with you and your sister Harriet in our front parlour. You were then both just about the same age, namely, five and seven years; and as I chanced to be dealing out to Harriet and you your customary forenoon slice of bread and butter, I offered a slice each to Mary and Jessy M'Callum. The latter, a mere infant, at first involuntarily held out her little hand with avidity, looked wistfully for a moment at the tempting morsel, then suddenly withdrawing her hand, as if a serpent had stung her, and reddening like scarlet, timidly said, 'No, I thank ye, mem.' 'Come, Mary,' said I to her sister, 'I am sure you will not be so shy; you shall have both slices.' 'I am much obliged to ye, mem,' replied the sweet child, blushing like crimson; 'but my mither says we mauna take pieces ex-

cept in our ain house.' Such were the lessons of self-denial and decent pride implanted by their worthy parent in the minds of these innocent children of adversity.

Not satisfied with providing for the more animal wants of her children, Lizzy M'Callum endeavoured, with the most untiring assiduity and affection, so far as her own humble acquirements went, to cultivate the minds and improve the manners of those helpless and endearing charges which had been entrusted to her sole care. One always sat by her side and read while she was engaged in spinning, and in this way she taught the four eldest to read the Bible very accurately. Psalms and questions from the Shorter Catechism accompanied these instructions; and when these duties were over, if any of the juniors began to grow impatient or clamorous for food, she would occasionally resort to the innocent expedient of lifting the tune of 'Little what ye wha's coming,' and making them dance to it, while she plied the task which was to procure them the next meal.

The neighbour gossips often wondered how Lizzy M'Callum found time to keep her cottage so trim, and her 'bairns sae 'wysse-like,' for, excepting on Sunday, she was always found at her wheel; and yet, although her labour seemed without end, and her privations almost too much for human fortitude to sustain, still Lizzy's open countenance ever wore the same calm good-humoured smile, and her answer to any whose benevolence prompted them to offer her pecuniary aid, was, 'I am obliged to ye—greatly obliged I'm sure, but I need naething, and the bairns ha'e aye a bite an' a brat (i. e. food and clothes)—thanks to the Giver. Every good result did indeed follow this excellent and humble-minded woman, and her singular exertions in so worthy a cause were not without their reward: for as her children grew up, they went to service among the farmers in the neighbourhood, to whom their good conduct soon recommended them; and so much were the M'Callums respected and beloved, that they invariably received higher wages than was usually given to servants in their station in that part of the country. But none, save those who have been similarly circumstanced, can fully comprehend the delight of the widowed mother, when, on the forenoon of the term day, her rosy, open-countenanced boys and girls—some of whom were grown almost men and women one after another dropped into their dear mother's humble cottage, and with tears in their eyes, and looks glowing with happiness and affection, placed in her lap 'their sair-won penny fee.' Then would each, in his or her turn, receive the mother's kiss, and her solemn blessing; and ere the tears of pleasure and filial love were well-dry on their cheeks, they would commence making

affectionate inquiries respecting each other's health and welfare; and while the young men gravely discussed the merits of their respective masters' farms, and learnedly descanted on the most proper rotation of crops, the breeding of cattle, and the latest improvements in husbandry, the maidens would as earnestly enlarge on the best modes of dairy management, their several achievements in spinning linen yarn (an accomplishment in which all young females, whether mistress or servant, were generally proficient at that period), the most approved method of steeping and drying lint (flax), and who was the best carder of wool; with many equally interesting and harmless topics, which frequently lasted till far in the afternoon, when, after partaking of a social cup of tea, which at that period was an article used by the lower classes on special occasions only, this virtuous family would take an affectionate leave of their mother, and then the three brothers would each escort his sister to their respective homes.

By a few years' saving and industry, the two eldest sons, James and Alexander, had educated themselves as far as to be able, by the assistance of some kind friends, to begin business as grocers in a handsome shop in the most central part of the village. Here their industry and attention to business, no less than the uniform probity of their dealings, soon acquired them trade; and in a few months the shop of the M'Callums was frequently crowded with customers, while those of their neighbours were quite empty. By and bye, their business, which hitherto had been confined to the village, gradually extended to the surrounding neighbourhood; and finally they attained the honour and profit of supplying the small dealers in the country round about with teas and groceries. When I last heard of them," continued my mother, "Lizzy was living in a nice little cottage in the outskirts of the village, built by her sons expressly for her accommodation. James and Alexander were both happily married; and Andrew, the youngest son, who had become a mason, was now a builder of great respectability in E—, with his youngest sister Jessy acting as his housekeeper. The two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary, had been married some years before, one to a farmer in an adjacent parish, and the other to a dissenting minister belonging to the village. Both marriages proved fortunate in the extreme, and my informant mentioned, that when he last visited Lizzy M'Callum, two of her grandchildren—fine chubby, rosy-cheeked, flax-haired, little rogues—were receiving each a piece and jelly on't from granny, because they had been *quid bairns*, and had said their questions without missing a single word."

I cannot conclude this simple narrative without remarking the vital importance

which parental instruction and parental example have in forming the character and tempers of children, and how much the very humblest class of society can achieve in instilling into the minds of their infant offspring principles of piety, rectitude of conduct, and benevolence of heart. None can be so poor, or so engrossed, as to have no spare moment for the performance of this delightful and momentous duty: none so ignorant as to be incapable of communicating to their children something respecting the supreme ruler of the universe, and the duties of his creatures—something illustrative of the beauty of truth, gentleness, and integrity, and the utter shame and unworthiness of falsehood, deceit, and all angry passions. Were subjects of this nature habitually impressed upon the ductile minds of children. It would materially assist in subduing those evil and unruly propensities to which poor humanity is so prone; and if to such precepts were added the *good example* of parents, the result would in all probability be the same as is exhibited in the simple story above related.

DECISION OF CHARACTER.

"I hardly know what to do." "I have a great mind to go." "I have a great mind not to go." "I should never have done it, if I had not been over-persuaded." "All these and many such like sayings, are the expressions of weak minds: people who, without intending ill, are almost sure to act ill, for want of decision of character. To avoid such folly and weakness, make up your mind as to what is right, and let no persuasion induce you to swerve from it, against your better judgment.

"To be infirm of purpose, is to be at the mercy of the artful, or at the disposal of accident. Look around, and count the numbers who have, within your own knowledge, failed from want of firmness. An excellent and wise mother gave the following excellent advice to her son, with her dying breath, 'My son, early learn how to say, No.'

A failure in this particular is one of the most common faults of mankind, from the highest to the lowest classes of society, and is alike productive of mischief and misery in all. The following sketch is from humble life; recorded by a worthy clergyman.

"How many of our misfortunes might be prevented if we could each of us learn to say the little word, No! I remember when I was a boy, an incident took place, which serves to show the importance of the above little word. In our village there lived a very fine young fellow, named Jones; he was one of those who never could say, No. It happened that a recruiting serjeant came there to enlist soldiers, and being pleased with the appearance of Jones, he invited him into the public house where he was drinking. Jones did not like to say No,

but went in. Though a sober lad, not being able to say No. He soon got tipsy.—He then enlisted and went abroad. Not being able to say No, he fell into bad company, and got connected with them in their crimes. The last I heard of him was, that he was in jail, under sentence of death, for sheep-stealing, but through the influence of his friends, his sentence was mitigated to transportation for life. Before his reprieve arrived, he spoke to some friends who visited him, to the following effect:—'My ruin has been that I never had resolution enough to say No. All my crimes might have been avoided could I have answered, No, to the first invitation to do wrong; but, not being able to say No to a merry companion, even when he invited me to commit a crime, I thus became his accomplice.'

Reader, doubt not the truth of this story, but learn from it to take courage to say No.

WEEKLY MIRROR.

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1835.

Since our last, London dates to the 15th April have been received.

Addresses in favor of Sir Robert Peel's Administration continue to be voted in all parts of the Kingdom, some of them addressed to his Majesty, some to Sir Robert Peel. They all breathe a spirit of the most devoted attachment to the Constitution, consisting of King, Lords, and Commons, and they pray for the continuance and lament the resignation of Sir Robert Peel and his Colleagues, as the persons most capable of carrying on Reform with safety to the institutions of the country.—*N. F. paper.*

A London paper states that there had been a severe engagement between H. M. Ship Canopus, commanded by the Hon. Capt. Percy, and three Russian Men of War, who attempted to pass the Dardanelles, and were most gallantly opposed by the Canopus. It is stated that she was nearly cut to pieces, had 3 men killed and a great many wounded.

FOREIGN.—The indemnity question was taken up in the French Chambers on the 9th ult. and underwent a long discussion, but no decision had been come to.

The Constitutor frigate had arrived at Havre. Mr. Livingston's correspondence with his government, published in the American papers, had reached Paris and such was the excitement created by it that he had considered it prudent to retire to Holland and wait the course of events.

NEW PAPER.—A prospectus has just been issued of a Religious Paper to be published at Lunenburg, N. S. once a fortnight, to be called the *Colonial Churchman*. To be conducted by a Society of Gentlemen.—Terms 10s. per annum.

THE BOY WITHOUT A GENIUS.

Mr. Wiseman the schoolmaster, at the end of his summer vacation, received a new scholar with the following letter:

Sir,—This will be delivered to you by my son Samuel, whom I beg leave to commit to your care, hoping that, by your well known skill and attention, you will be able to make something of him, which I am sorry to say, none of his masters have hitherto done. He is now eleven, and yet can do nothing but read his mother tongue, and that but indifferently. We sent him at seven to a grammar school in our neighbourhood; but his master soon found that his genius was not turned to learning languages. He was then put to writing, but he set about it so awkwardly that he made nothing of it. He was tried at accounts, but it appeared that he had no genius for that either. He could do nothing in geography for want of memory. In short, if he has any genius at all, it does not yet show itself. But I trust to your experience, in cases of this nature, to discover what he is fit for, and to instruct him accordingly. I beg to be favoured shortly with your opinion about him, and remain, sir, Your most obedient servant,

HUMPHREY ACRES.

When Mr. Wiseman had read this letter, he shook his head, and said to his assistant, A pretty subject they have sent us here! a lad that has a great genius for nothing at all. But perhaps my friend Mr. Acres expects that a boy should show a genius for a thing before he knows anything about it—no uncommon error! Let us see, however, what the youth looks like. I suppose he is a human creature at least.

Master Samuel Acres was now called in. He came hanging down his head, and looking as if he was going to be flogged.

Come hither, my dear! said Mr. Wiseman. Stand by me, and do not be afraid. Nobody will hurt you. How old are you?—Eleven last May, sir.

A well-grown boy, of your age, indeed. You love play, I dare say?—Yes, sir.

What, are you a good hand at marbles? Pretty good, sir.

And can spin a top and drive a hoop, I suppose?—Yes, sir.

Then you have the full use of your hands and fingers?—Yes, sir.

Can you write, Samuel?—I learned a little, sir, but I left it off again.

And why so?—Because I could not make the letters.

No! Why, how do you think other boys do? Have they more fingers than you?—No, sir.

Are you not able to hold a pen as well as a marble?—Samuel was silent.

Let me look at your hand.—Samuel held out both his paws, like a dancing bear.

I see nothing here to hinder you from

writing as well as any boy in the school. You can read, I suppose?—Yes, sir.

Tell me then what is written over the school-room door.—Samuel with some hesitation read, *WHATEVER MAN HAS DONE MAN MAY DO.*

Pray how did you learn to read? Was it not with taking pains?—Yes, Sir.

Well—taking more pains will enable you to read better. Do you know any thing of the Latin Grammar?—No, sir.

Have you never learned it?—I tried, sir, but I could not get it by heart.

Why, you can say some things by heart. I dare say you can tell me the names of the days of the week in their order.—Yes, sir, I know them.

And the months in the year, perhaps.—Yes, sir.

And you could probably repeat the names of your brothers and sisters, and all your father's servants, and half the people in the village besides.—I believe I could, sir.

Well—and is *hic, hæc, hoc* more difficult to remember than these?—Samuel was silent.

Have you learned any thing of accounts? I went into addition, sir, but I did not go on with it.

Why so?—I could not do it, sir.

How many marbles can you buy for a penny?—Twelve new ones, sir.

And how many for a half-penny?—Six.

And how many for two-pence?—Twenty-four.

If you were to have a penny a day, what would that make in a week?—Seven-pence.

But if you paid two-pence out of that, what would you have left?—Samuel studied awhile, and then said, Five-pence.

Right. Why, here you have been practising the four great rules of arithmetic,—addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Learning accounts is no more than this. Well, Samuel, I see what you are fit for. I shall set you about nothing but what you are able to do; but observe you *must* do it. We have no *I can't* here. Now go among your school-fellows. Samuel went away, glad that his examination was over, and with more confidence in his powers than he felt before.

The next day he began business. A boy less than himself was called out to set him a copy of letters, and another was appointed to hear him in grammar. He read a few sentences in English, that he could perfectly understand, to the master himself. Thus by going on steadily and slowly, he made a sensible progress. He had already joined his letters, got all the declensions perfectly, and half the multiplication table, when Mr. Wiseman thought it time to answer his father's letter; which he did as follows:

Sir, I now think it right to give you some information concerning your son. You perhaps expected it sooner, but I always wish to avoid hasty judgments. You men-

tioned in your letter that it had not yet been discovered which way his genius pointed.—If by *genius* you meant such a decided bent of mind to any one pursuit as will lead to excel with little or no labour or instruction, I must say that I have not met with such a quality in more than three or four boys in my life, and your son is certainly not among the number. But if you mean only the *ability* to do some of those things which the greater part of mankind can do when properly taught, I can affirm that I find in him no peculiar deficiency. And, whether you choose to bring him up to a trade or to some practical profession, I see no reason to doubt that he may in time become sufficiently qualified for it. It is my favourite maxim, sir, that every thing most valuable in this life may generally be acquired by taking pains for it. Your son has already lost much time in the fruitless expectation of finding out what he would take up of his own accord. Believe me, sir, few boys will take up any thing of their own accord but a top or a marble. I will take care, while he is with me, that he loses no more time this way, but is employed about things that are fit for him, not doubting that we shall find him fit for them.

I am, sir, yours, &c.

SOLOM WISEMAN.

Though the doctrine of this letter did not perfectly agree with Mr. Acres' notions, yet, being convinced that Mr. Wiseman was more likely to make something of his son than any of his former preceptors, he continued him at his school for some years, and had the satisfaction to find him going on in a steady course of gradual improvement. It due time a profession was chosen for him, which seemed to suit his temper and talents, but for which he had no *particular turn*, having never thought at all about it. He made a respectable figure in it, and went through the world with credit and usefulness, though *without a genius*.

MRS. BARBAULD.

*As virtues grace the worst of men,
And vices taint the best,
They ne'er to hastily should be,
Or censur'd or carest.*

*Too oft with undistinguish'd zeal,
We censure or commend;
With too much ire pursue a foe,
With too much love a friend.*

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TERMS.

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