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NATURAL HISTORY

THE MOLE.

This curious little quadruped seems formed to live wholly under the earth, as if the Supreme Being meant that no place should be left wholly untenanted. Were we, from our own sensations to pronounce upon the life of an animal that was never to appear above ground, but be always condemned to hunt for its prey underneath, and obliged, whenever it removed from one place to another, to bore its way through a resisting body, we should be apt to assert that such an existence must be the most frightful and solitary in nature. In the mole, however, though condemned to all these seeming inconveniences, we discover no signs of wretchedness or distress. No quadruped is fatter, none has a more sleek or glossy skin; and though denied many advantages that most animals enjoy, it is more liberally possessed of others, which they have in a more scanty proportion.

The size of the mole is between that of the rat and the mouse; but it in no way resembles either, being an animal entirely of a singular kind, and perfectly unlike any other quadruped whatever. Its nose is long and pointed, resembling that of a hog, but much longer. Its eyes are so small that it is scarcely possible to discern them; and instead of ears it has only holes in the place. Its neck is so short that the head seems stuck upon the shoulders. The body is thick and round, terminating by a very small short tail, and its legs also are short, that the animal seems to lie flat on its belly. Thus it appears to us, at first view, as a mass of flesh covered with a fine shining black skin, with a little head, and scarce any eyes, legs or tail. The ancients and some of the moderns were of opinion, that the mole was utterly blind; but Derham, by the help of a microscope, plainly discovered all parts of the eye that are known in other animals. The smallness of its eyes, which induced the ancients to think it blind, is to the animal a peculiar advantage. A small degree of vision is sufficient for a creature that is destined to live in darkness: a more extensive sight would only have served to show the horrors of its prison, while nature had denied it the means of escape. Had this organ been larger, it would have been perpetually liable to injuries, by the falling of the earth into it; but nature, to prevent that inconvenience, has not only made them very small, but has also covered them with hair. Besides these advantages, anatomists mention another, that contributes to its security; namely, a certain muscle, by which the animal can draw back

the eye whenever it is necessary, or in danger. Indeed, the whole figure and formation of the mole is most admirably adapted to its manner of living, and strikingly illustrates the wisdom and skill of the Almighty Creator.

THE TORPEDO

This fish is remarkable for its shape and character. It is distinguished by its short and somewhat fleshy tail, and a head nearly as large as its body. Its teeth are small and very sharp. It attains a very large size, and is said sometimes to weigh nearly 100 pounds. Fishermen call it the *numb fish* or *cramp-fish*. They are not very numerous, at least, they are not often taken. Those few are usually caught by the hook and line, in fishing for cod. They frequent sandy coasts, and are found both in Europe and America.

The electrical apparatus, which gives this fish the power of shocking or benumbing the animal it touches, consists of small membranous tubes, disposed like honey-comb, and divided by horizontal partitions, into small cells, which are filled by mucous substance. They are situated between the gills and the forward fins.

The power of the torpedo, to benumb animals, enables it not only to secure its food, but to defend itself against enemies. Whoever attempts to lay hold of it receives a sudden, paralyzing shock in his arms, and small fishes, it is said, are completely stunned by it.

Not only the torpedo, and the electrical eel possess this electrical faculty: it is stated by naturalists, that the African eelish and several other fishes have the same power, though in a much smaller degree.

COMMON THINGS

NO. 2.—COMBUSTION

The first time an infant witnesses the burning of a candle or the fire, he views it with intense interest, and is not satisfied with seeing, but is eager to learn its nature by feeling. Putting the finger into a candle is a chemical experiment we have probably all tried, and learned from it an important lesson. It is only because combustion is common, that it is ever viewed with indifference.

The uses of combustion, like those of evaporation, are too numerous to admit, and too common to need enumeration. We witness and experience them, every time we dispel from our dwellings, the darkness of night or the frost of winter. The thousands of steamboats accommodating almost mil-

lions of passengers, are moved by its power. Mechanics resort to it daily, and some of them constantly. Our hot coffee, roasted beet and rich puddings remind us of it.

A half century ago, the process of combustion, although so interesting and so important, was misunderstood, and the theory respecting it exactly wrong, or opposite to truth. And though it is now well understood and perfectly familiar and simple, the present occasion will not admit of an explanation. It may be given hereafter.

OXYGEN

This is not perhaps a very common name, but the thing is more common than any other, with the exception of heat. It forms a large, and by far the most interesting part of our atmosphere, much the greatest part of water, a portion of every vegetable from the oak to the mould upon bread, is essential to animal matter, is a part of every mountain and every particle of dust, is combined with most metals in their ores, gives pungency to acids, and an opposite power to alkalis.

In the atmosphere, it supports life, carries on combustion, changes metals into rust and paints, gives the beautiful colours to our dyes, bleaches our linens, carries on fermentation in yeast, in bread, in beer and in wine, aids the farmer in preparing his soil, and performs innumerable other services for him, and every other living thing.

HYDROGEN

Another uncommon name, but a very common thing. Except the substance last mentioned, it is the only ingredient which composes water, and is an essential ingredient in every animal, and vegetable substance. That and oxygen are almost the sole agents in producing a blaze, in the wood or coal fire, the candle, the lamp and the gas light. Although an ingredient in water, the common destroyer of combustion, when separated from its oxygen, it is itself highly combustible, and produces the combustion, by again uniting with its oxygen. It is the lightest of all known substances, and is hence used for raising balloons.

The process of separating hydrogen from the oxygen, which together compose water, is simple and easy. It is done by passing the vapor of water through a red hot iron tube, or easier by putting iron filings into water, and adding a little sulphuric acid.

NITROGEN

What uncommon names for common things, and there is so much gas mixed with them—oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen—and it would seem for a temperance society too much gin. But it is a very temperate kind

of gin; especially the nitrogen, for its principal use in the atmosphere, of which it forms almost four fifths, is to temper down the oxygen, and prevent the violence and universal ruin which, but for its associate, it would produce to our earth.

Nitrogen not only constitutes the greater part of the air we breathe, but it is an essential ingredient in all animal substances.

CARBON.

I have heard of Mount Carbon, in the coal regions in Pennsylvania. I suppose some chemist gave it that name, because the combustible substance in the anthracite coal, is almost entirely carbon. The bituminous coals contain a great deal of hydrogen, which you have just heard is combustible, and is almost always present where you witness a blaze. It is the addition of hydrogen that constitutes the principal difference between the bituminous and anthracite coals, which two classes comprehend all, or nearly all the mineral coals in use.

It has already been said, that oxygen, and hydrogen enter into all vegetable and animal substances; and to the latter, nitrogen is added. The other ingredient, which enters into both, is carbon. This constitutes a considerable part of wood, in all its forms, and when reduced to coal or deprived of its hydrogen, and a part of its oxygen, carbon is the principal ingredient. Carbon sometimes forms a part of rocks, and is one ingredient of all the limestone mountains, and every particle of limestone upon the earth.

You see, then, that four of the most common things in the world, have rather uncommon names; and still it is highly desirable, and even necessary, amidst the present diffusion of knowledge, to become acquainted and familiar with them. Perhaps one reason why the names of these four elementary substances are not more common, is because they are seldom found separate, but almost always combined, and in so many different forms and proportions as to produce all the variety of animal and vegetable substances found in nature or the arts.

Sugar and starch, for example, are not only composed of the same ingredients, viz. oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon, but in very nearly the same proportions. Hence the process of changing starch into sugar is not only practicable but easy, and is now carried on with great success.

These four substances, together with the metals, are so elementary, and constitute so large a part of the material universe, that they almost deserve to be called the alphabet of science. And certainly until those are familiar, we can hardly consider ourselves as having read the first letters in the great volume of nature.

Industry invigorates both the body and the mind, and is the spring of prosperity to families and to nations.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BRAVE BOBBY.

There was an American ship called the Washington, bound for China, filled with passengers, and a valuable cargo. Among the passengers on board this ship was an officer of the army and his wife, with their only child, a little boy of five years of age, and a large Newfoundland dog, called Bobby.

Bobby was a great favourite of all the people in the ship, because he was so brave, so good tempered, and so funny and playful. Sailors as well as passengers all liked brave Bobby. He would rompon the deck with any body that chose. Sometimes when the wind was calm, and the ship was going slow, he would jump overboard, and dash through the sea after a biscuit, or any thing else, that might be thrown in for him.

But his constant playmate was the little boy, the son of his master. This boy was a merry little fellow, and as fond of Bobby as Bobby was fond of him. They used to make a fine noise in their droll games of play, rolling over and over each other like a couple of young porpoises. And though the little boy was sometimes rather rough in his frolics with Bobby, and hit him on the head and back, yet Bobby was always gentle as a lamb to him.

The voyage had been very safe and pleasant until within three days sail of the Cape of Good Hope. Evening was coming on—the sun was setting in dark clouds, so that the dusk had commenced unusually early.—The night watch of the ship had been set and the wind had risen so that the ship was sailing very fast. The boy and the dog were romping together, tugging each other, when on a sudden the ship gave a heavy roll and the child fell overboard splash into the deep sea!

It had by this time become so dark that objects could not be distinguished many yards distant. A general cry of 'A hand over! a hand over! a hand over!' was made by the men on deck who saw the boy fall. Two or three men ran heaving down lines, and a stray coop that was found lying near the capstan, while the officer of the watch sang out to stop the ship. 'Bring the ship too,' cried he, or the boy is lost!

This order was scarcely given, when Bobby, now for the first time missing the child, gave a loud bark, and seemed to guess what had happened, cleared the taffrail like a shot; and the captain and the boy's parents with the other passengers, who had come on deck to learn the cause of the outcry and bustle, saw the dog swimming away like a mad creature in the direction of the stern.

It was too dark to see him distinctly, however he was dimly perceived to dive, and then dimly appear again above water, and snatch at something. It was however, too

dusky for any body on deck to be quite sure what it was that he really saw. The dog was now out of sight, and nothing was visible but the surface of the water. The mother covered her eyes with her hand, and not daring to look out, fearful lest she should see the corpse of her darling child floating on the waves; while the father equally unhappy, jumped into the jolly boat which the men in all haste had been getting ready, that he might spare no effort to recover his beloved son.

It was many minutes before the jolly-boat could be lowered and manned, for the Washington being a merchantman had not many hands to spare. But when the boat was lowered and manned, the men rowed with all their might in the direction they had seen the dog take at first. The darkness however, had so much increased, that the sailors could hardly see, and began to give the child up for lost.

The father, in great misery, sat at the head of the boat, trying to see through the surrounding gloom, and listening anxiously to every sound. 'Hear a splash on the larboard quarter,' cried he, starting up; 'pull on, be quick, it must be my child.'

The helmsman turned the tiller, the men pulled with redoubled force, and in a moment, Bobby with the child in his mouth was along side! Poor creatures. They were nearly spent when they were hauled into the boat. The father took the child in his arms, and the faithful Bobby sank down to the bottom of the boat, panting and almost lifeless.

The men then rowed back to the ship.—Great, indeed, was the mother's joy when she saw her child, that she thought was gone for ever, in the arms of his father, and good Bobby with him also. They all got safe on board the ship again; and the father thanking the sailors for helping him recover his son, went down into the cabin with the mother, child, and dog. Every remedy was used that the doctor of the ship advised, to make the half drowned boy quite well again.

Bobby, after he had shaken the water from his thick shaggy coat, could not be persuaded to leave the child's side. There he stood licking one of his little hands till the child became so much better as to be able to stroke and hug him as usual. Brave Bobby seemed as happy as any body, when both the father and mother hugged and praised him too. And when the boy could speak again, they made a happy little party in the cabin, where, but a few minutes before, all had been so sad.

After this circumstance of saving the child's life in so brave a manner, there was not a man on board that ship but loved the dog as a father might love his child, and well did Bobby deserve it.

At the Cape of Good Hope some of the

passengers were to be landed, and among others, the master of Bobby, with his wife and child. All those who remained in the ship were very sorry to part with good Bobby.

The boats were prepared for the passengers and their luggage. All those who were to leave had got into the boats, the little boy was in his mother's lap, and Bobby, whom the sailors was holding, to put and take a kind leave of, was just going to leap into the boat after his master, when the officer stood up, and told the sailors to hold him tight by the collar, until the boats should have rowed some ways towards the shore. 'You will see what a strong swimmer Bobby is,' said he; 'let us start before him and he will soon overtake us. When I hold up my handkerchief let him go.'

'Aye! aye!' cried the sailors, and two of them held Bobby tight by the collar. Poor fellow he thought he was to be left behind and he did not like it. He tugged, and hauled, and yelled, and barked, to get to his friends, but it was of no use. The boats put off without him.

When the boats were within a few strokes of the shore, the officer raised the signal, and some of the sailors called out 'yeo-ho, halloo.' The men on board the ship who held Bobby, loosed their hold, and dash went the fine creature, barking and splashing at a great rate, and swimming nobly and happily through the water after the boats. His quick swim was quite beautiful and wonderful.

All the people in the boats, as well as those on board the ship, were eyeing Bobby with delight; and he had just reached midway, between the ship and the boats, when the creature set up a loud shrill howl, and threw himself half out of the water. Every body thought that he had got the cramp; but, oh, no! the flash of white that glanced like lightning close against him the next minute, told the truth; and 'A shark! a shark!' sounded from boats to ship, and from ships to boats in one loud cry. All stood trembling, with their eyes fixed upon the unfortunate dog. The boat stayed still for an instant, the men resting upon their oars as if panic struck. But, again, in another instant, one of the boats was seen putting back, the men rowing with all their might.

Poor Bobby! he kept swimming away right and left, now diving, now doubling as if he knew his danger, while every now and then he gave a short fierce howl, and showed his grinders, never giving the vile shark time to turn on its back, which it must do before it can give the deadly bite.

The poor dog swam and dodged with a skill and speed, and maintained the unequal contest in a manner that surprised every body, but it was evident that his strength was nearly exhausted, when the boat, which had put back, came sufficiently near for

him to hear himself called, and encouraged to hold out a little longer. In this boat were his master, and the little boy, whose life the poor dog had saved three days before.—They could now plainly perceive the great black fins and back of the shark, as he rose every minute to the surface of the water, pursuing and trying to gripe the dog. The poor dog swam with all his might towards the boat that was coming to save him.

Just as he nearly reached the boat, and could hear and see his master calling out 'Here, Bob! here,' the shark turned on his back and opened its horrid jaws—'Poor Bobby, dear Bobby!' shrieked the little boy; and a lad, who stood at the head of the boat, hoping to save the dog, threw a handspike that he held at the ravenous monster. But the lad was in such a flurry, from terror and anxiety, that he missed the shark, and the spike fell into the water.

At this failure the child screamed aloud with agony of fright and sorrow, 'Oh! save poor Bobby! save my dear, dear Bobby!' and every body thought poor Bobby was gone, when the father of the child, who, ever since the boat had come within gunshot of the shark, had been watching for the proper opportunity to save the faithful dog, fired. The gun levelled with so true an aim, that he shot the cruel shark through the head, and splintered those horrid jaws that were opened ready to devour poor Bobby. The shark sank, the sea became tinged with blood, and the officer throwing down his gun, stretched out his arms, and pulled the dog, exhausted with fatigue and terror, into the boat, before the shark who was not quite dead, could again rise to the surface of the water. The child threw his little arms round the dog's neck: the sailors in the ship, who were all intently on the watch, and the men in the boats, set up one loud shout of joy! 'Hurra! hurra! joy, joy! Bobby is safe, the shark is killed: hurra! hurra!

FOR THE MIRROR.

THE MONTHS.—No. III.

MARCH.—The spring month of the Saxons was originally the first month of the Romans, and by them dedicated to Mars. From this licentious demon, March derives its name. The Jewish year formerly began in autumn, at which period it was supposed that the world was created; it now commences with the new moon in March, agreeable to the divine command: And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."

The English year began at one time in March, but by an act of Parliament passed in 1752, it was determined that the year henceforth commence on the first January.

This alteration of the style occasions some difficulty in ascertaining the precise date of events between the first Jan. and the 25th of March, before 1752. Hence in old writings two days are often put, as February 10th 1748-49, or 1748-9; meaning Feb. 10th 1749, if the year be reckoned to begin on the 1st Jan. or 1748, if on the 25th of March. In the former case, February is considered, the second month of the new year; in the latter, the eleventh month of the old.

The "vernal equinox," or the spring tide passage of the sun across the equator, occurs about the 21st of this month, making the day and night of equal length throughout the world,—and from his vertical position reflecting no shadows from any object beneath the "line." The influence of the sun on the atmosphere and ocean at this period is mysterious and surprising; swelling the tides to unusual fulness, and imparting to the atmospheric currents a degree of rapidity and force which is felt to the extremities of the earth. The equinoctial gales are often ministers of vengeance, scattering desolation on sea and land. By them the sturdy oak is uprooted and shivered, the lofty edifice is laid prostrate in an instant, the stately ship with riven sails is dashed on the rock, or stranded on the shore. Their fury is however, restrained by 'Him,' who ruleth in the Heavens, or all nature would be destroyed.

FOR THE MIRROR

Youth is decidedly the best season for study.—the young are free from the cares and vexations which harass those engaged in the mazes of business; hence, the impressions made upon the mind at this period, remain more or less strongly stamped upon it, through life. How necessary then is it, that the young embrace every opportunity afforded them of storing up such a stock of knowledge, as will be valuable to them, in whatever stations of life, they may hereafter be placed.

The studies of the young ought to be directed into a proper channel by their parents or tutors, and while engaged in this important duty, care should be taken to proportion a due amount of the "sweet with the useful." I do not approve of the method of choking a boy with education,—a medium may be prescribed in this, as well as every thing else.—The young require to have a part of their spare hours for exercise and amusement.

I would recommend that attention be paid to the quantity, as well as the quality of the daily tasks, required of children, and if this principle be kept in view, the result, I think, will be gratifying to the teacher and beneficial to the learner. Q.

"MENTOR'S," explanation of festivals and fasts, as observed by the church, was received too late for insertion this week.

"PRECOCITY" is received.

POETRY.

ADDRESS OF A CHILD'S DEPARTED
SPIRIT TO HIS PARENTS.

Kind parents! why those tears?
And why those bursting sighs?
No weeping here bequies
Your little ——'s eyes

The shades of eve you knew
Were hast'ning along,
When my freed spirit left
To soar the stars among.

Yet long before the night
Had drawn her veil around,
The home I left below,
A better had I found

So rapidly the soul,
Unbodied, takes its flight,
That scarce earth's scenery tail'd
When Heaven's broke on my sight.

Did not you, mother, see
That bright celestial band
That smil'd and beckon'd me,
And held the inviting hand?

They let me stay a while
To hear my mother pray,
And see her close the eyes
And kiss the unconscious clay.

And then to Heaven we flew
The cherubs led the way;
But my rapt spirit smil'd
As joyously as they.

Father! I never knew
'Twas such a place as this.
That Heaven you told me of
Was quite so full of bliss.

Oh! there is music here!
The softest, sweetest strains
Float constantly along
O'er these ethereal plains.

List, Mother! Father! list!
A harp to me is given,
And when I touch the strings,
'Tis heard all over Heaven

And little sister's here;
She has a cherub's wing,
Can reach their loftiest flights,
Their noblest anthems sing.

Dear parents! weep no more
For those you lov'd so well;
For glories here are ours,
And joys we may not tell

Oh! live and serve the Lord,
The dear Redeemer love;
Then, when you've done with earth,
We'll welcome you above.

*It is a false idea to suppose that men are
happy in proportion as they are rich.*

*Do not expect to meet with every thing
to your mind; rather, accommodate your
mind to every thing as you meet it*

SCENES IN GREECE.

NO. V

"You pay tube of mint, and anise, and cummin,
and have omitted the weightier matters of the law,
judgment, mercy and faith"—Matthew xxiii 23

Wherever Great Britain extends her conquests, beneficial effects are generally seen. And where the British flag waves, and Britain's power is felt, it is right that mankind should feel her mercy, and be made acquainted with her religion.

I can bear witness to the improvements which have taken place in the Ionian Isles. Wherever I go, I see new roads made, bridges built, wells dug, water conducted to towns from a distance, quays erected, and moles thrown out into the sea, that ships may be protected in stormy weather.

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But among many other advantages, I would particularly mention the protection of the lives and property of individuals. When these islands were under the Venetian government, it was a common inquiry every morning in Zante, "Who has been killed during the last night?" Hired villains used to prowl about the streets, and wait for victims marked out for slaughter in family disputes. In many cases the persons intended were not killed, but some relation; and this again called for revenge from the other party. The chiefs of the town could not walk out without twenty or more armed men with them, to preserve them from assaults. But it is not so now: the British flag protects the citizen; at all hours of the night he can return with safety to his dwelling. For when the law is violated, justice takes its course, and the guilty is punished without respect of persons.

I have been informed, from very excellent authority, of a case that occurred in this place when superstition and murder went hand in hand, and exemplified the motto at the beginning of these observations.

On a Friday evening, one of the chiefs of the place determined on the death of a person who was obnoxious to him; and sent for a hired murderer to do his work. The assassin came to the house of the chief; and the servant informed his master that he was in the kitchen, waiting his orders. "Give him his supper," said the chief. "I offered it to him," replied the servant, "but there is nothing we have that he will eat; for it is the fast-day, in which meat, cheese, and eggs are forbidden; and he refuses to take them." "Tell him to come hither," said the chief. He entered; and the following dialogue took place:—"Why will you not eat your supper? Do you not know that you are to commit an act more dreadful than eating meat?" "I know why you have sent for me," said the villain; and I am ready to obey you, as my master; but the Church forbids meat, cheese, and eggs to be eaten to-day; and I will by no means offend the Church."

SELF TAUGHT MECHANIST

A boy of the name of John Young, now (1820) residing at Newton-upon-Ayre, in Scotland, constructed a singular piece of mechanism, which attracted much notice among the ingenious and scientific. A box about three feet long by two broad, and six or eight inches deep, had a frame and paper covering erected on it, in the form of a house. On the upper part of the box are a number of wooden figures, about two or three inches high, representing people employed in those trades or sciences with which the boy is familiar. The whole are put in motion at the same time, by machinery within the box, acted upon by a handle like that of a hand organ. A weaver upon his loom with a fly-shuttle, uses his hands and feet, and keeps his eye upon the shuttle as it passes across the web. A soldier sitting with a sailor at a public house table, fills a glass, drinks it off, and then knocks upon the table, upon which an old woman opens a door, makes her appearance and they retire. Two shoemakers upon their stools are seen, the one beating leather, the other stitching a shoe. A cloth-dresser, a stone-cutter, a cooper, a tailor, a woman churning, and one teasing wool, are all at work. There is also a carpenter sawing a piece of wood, and two blacksmith's beating a piece of iron, the one using a sledge, and the other a small hammer; a boy turning a grindstone, while a man grinds an instrument upon it; and a barber shaving a man whom he holds fast by the nose with one hand.

The boy was only about seventeen years of age when he completed this curious work; and since the bent of his mind could be first marked, his only amusement was that of working with a knife, and making little mechanical figures; this is the more extraordinary, as he has no opportunity whatever of seeing any person employed in a similar way. He was bred a weaver, with his father; and since he could be employed at the trade, had no time for his favourite study, except after the work ceased, or during the intervals; and the only tool he had to assist him was a pocket-knife. In his earlier years he produced several curiosities on a similar scale, but the one now described is his greatest work, to which he devoted all his spare time during two years.

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