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THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

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

VOL. I.]

HALIFAX, N. S. JULY 10, 1835.

[No. 26.]

NATURAL HISTORY.

[*Natural History*, or the study of the works of Nature as the Creator made them, embraces a great many subjects and things, whatever we know about reptiles, fishes, birds, beasts, men, plants, shrubs, trees, flowers, precious stones, fossils, metals, minerals, rivers, mountains, lakes, seas, caves and other natural curiosities, and many more subjects which might be named, is natural history. Philosophers have summed up all in 4 divisions or departments, 1. Geology—or the structure of the earth, and what it is made of; 2. Botany.—or the natural history of plants; 3. Zoology—or the natural history of animals, and 4. Anthropology—or the natural history of man—we intend to give our Juvenile readers some information on each of these subjects.]

SURFACE OF THE EARTH AND OCEAN.

To the physical knowledge of the earth belongs especially the consideration of its surface and interior. The earth's surface contains, as is said, 108,043,750 square miles, of which scarcely a third part is dry land; the remaining two thirds are water. The land is composed principally of two large masses or tracts, one of which comprehends the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa; the other comprehends the continent of America. Australia, which lies in the ocean in a southerly direction from Asia, is so extensive as to be entitled to the name and character of a fifth division. All the detached and smaller masses of land, called islands when taken together, are computed to contain as much land as the continent of Europe. In reference to maps of the earth, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia, with their islands, are distinguished as lying in the eastern hemisphere; while America, with the West Indies and other islands, are comprehended in the western hemisphere. The seas which encompass these extensive tracts of lands have locally various names; but the two principal expanses of water are the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans—the former separating Europe, Asia, and Africa, from America on the west, and the latter lying betwixt the western shores of America and the eastern shores of Asia. The extensive oceans surrounding the north and south poles are called the Polar Seas, which have not been explored sufficiently for us to be able to say whether any large tracts of land lie in these remote quarters of the globe. Great diversity of opinion prevails with respect to the depth of the ocean. By numerous in-

vestigations, it does not appear that the depth is any where much more than two or three miles, generally it is a great deal less; and it might be argued, that, notwithstanding the large surface of the ocean, the body of its waters can only be considered as lying like lakes in the hollows of the land; for the earth is eight thousand miles in diameter, and to that huge mass of dense matter the sea bears no proportion in its depth. While the surface of the land exhibits a variety of mountains ranges, hills, vales, and plains, so also is the bottom of the sea varied in its configuration, abounding in sand-banks, hills, rocks, and reefs, dangerous to the mariner; and the islands which rear their heads above the surface are only the tops of the highest hills and mountains in the sea. The waters of the ocean, as every one knows, are salt, to a greater or less degree—a quality which is considered necessary to preserve them from putridity; but how this saltness is produced, no one is yet able to tell correctly, although, as is generally conjectured, it must arise from the abundance of saline substances at the bottom of some parts of the ocean. The cause of springs on the land, from which rivers draw their sources, is also acknowledged to be still very doubtful. Some consider they originate from the rains which the earth has imbibed; some allege that they rise from subterranean lakes by means of capillary attraction; and others say that they are outlets for the water accumulated in higher parts of the country, which water has found its way through seams of rock, as if carried by pipes.

THE CORAL INSECT.

These animals vary from the size of a pin's head, or even less, to somewhat more than the bulk of a pea; and by the persevering efforts of creatures so insignificant, working in myriads, and working through ages, enormous structures are erected. Enormous we may well call them, when the great coral reef of New Holland alone is a thousand miles in length, and when its altitude, though yet scarcely fathomed in twenty places, cannot range to less than between one and two thousand feet! It is a mountain ridge that would reach almost three times from one extremity of England to the other, with the height of Ingleborough, or that of the ordinary and prevailing class of the Scottish mountains. And this is the work of insects, whose dimensions are less than those of a house-fly! The thought of it is perfectly overwhelming.

DANGERS OF A NOVA-SCOTIA FOG.

Concluded.

The captain who, through the whole scene, continued as composed as if nothing remarkable had occurred, now ordered the guns to be thrown overboard, but before one of them could be cast loose, or a breaching cut, the ship fell over so much that the men could not stand. It was, therefore, with great difficulty that a few guns were fired as signals of distress. In the same breath that this order was given, Captain Hickey desired the yard tackles to be hooked, in order that the pinnace might be hoisted out; but as the masts, deprived of their foundation, were tottering from side to side, the people were called down again. The quarter boats were then lowered into the water with some difficulty, but the jolly boat, which happened to be on the poop undergoing repairs, in being launched overboard, struck one of the stern davits, bilged, and went down.—The ship was now falling fast over on her beam ends; and directions were given to cut away her fore and main-mast. Fortunately, they fell without injuring the large boat on the booms—their grand hope. At the instant of this crash, the ship parted in two between the main and mizen-masts; and, within a few seconds afterwards, she again broke right across, between the fore and main-masts: so that the poor *Atalante* now formed a mere wreck, divided into three pieces, crumbling into smaller fragments at every send of the swell.

By this time a considerable crowd of men had got into the pinnace on the booms in hopes that she might float off as the ship sunk; but Captain Hickey, seeing that the boat was so loaded that she could never swim, desired some twenty men to quit her; and, what is particularly worthy of remark, his orders which were given with perfect coolness, were as promptly obeyed as ever. Throughout the whole of these trying moments, indeed, the discipline of the ship appears to have been maintained not only without the smallest trace of insubordination but with a degree of cheerfulness which is described as truly wonderful. Even when the masts fell, the sound of the crashing spars were drowned in the animating huzzars of the undaunted crew, though they were then clinging to the weather gunwale, with the sea, from time to time, making a clean breach over them, and when they were expecting every instant to be carried to the bottom!

As soon as the pinnace was relieved from the pressure of the crowd, she floated off the

booms or rather was knocked off by a sea, which turned her bottom upwards, and whelmed her into the surf amidst the fragments of the wreck. The people, however, imitating the gallant bearing of their captain, and keeping their eyes fixed upon him, never for one instant lost their self-possession. By dint of great exertions, they succeeded not only in righting the boat but disentangled her from the confused heap of spars, and the dash of the breakers, so as to place her at a little distance from the wreck where they waited for further orders from the captain, who with about forty men, still clung to the poor remains of the gay *Atalante* once so much admired!

An attempt was next made to construct a raft, as it was feared the three boats could not possibly carry all hands; but the violence of the waves prevented this, and it was resolved to trust to the boats alone, though they were already to all appearance quite full. It was now, however absolutely necessary to take to them, as the wreck was disappearing rapidly; and in order to pack close, most of the men were removed to the pinnace, where they laid flat in the bottom, like herrings in a barrel, while the small boats returned to pick off the rest. This was no easy matter in any case, while it was impossible in others; so that many men had to swim for it; others were dragged through the waves by ropes, and some were forked off by oars and other small spars.

Amongst the crew there was one famous merry fellow, a black fiddler, who was discovered at this critical juncture clinging to the main chains with his beloved *Cremona* squeezed tightly but delicately under his arm—a ludicrous picture of distress, and a subject of some joking amongst the men even at this moment. It soon became absolutely necessary that he should lose one of the two things his fiddle or his life. So, at last, after a painful struggle, the professor and his violin were obliged to part company!

The pinnace now contained seventy-nine men and one woman, the cutter forty-two and the gig eighteen, with which cargoes they barely floated. Captain Hickey was, of course, the last man who left the wreck; though such was the respect and affection felt for him by his crew, that those who stood along with him on this last vestige of the ship, evinced the greatest reluctance at leaving their commander in such a perilous predicament. So speedy indeed was the work of destruction, that by the time the Captain was fairly in the boat, the wreck had almost entirely 'melted into the yest of waves.' The crew, however, gave three hearty cheers as she went down, and then finally abandoned the scattered fragments, of what had been their house and home for nearly seven years.

The fog still continued as thick as ever; the binacles had both been washed over-

board, and no compass could be procured. As the wind was still light, there was great difficulty in steering in a straight line. Had there been a breeze, it would perhaps have been easier to have shaped a course. In this dilemma a resource was hit upon, which for a time answered pretty well to guide them. It being known loosely, before leaving the wreck, in what direction the land was situated, the three boats were placed in a row pointing that way. The sternmost boat then quitted her station in the rear, and pulled ahead till she came in a line with the other two boats, but took care not to go so far as to be lost in the fog; the boat which was now astern then rowed ahead, as the first had done, and so on doubling along one after the other. This tardy method of proceeding however answered only for a time; at length they were completely at loss which way to steer. Precisely at this moment of greatest need, an old quarter-master, Samuel Shanks by name, recollected that at the end of his watch chain there hung a small compass seal. This precious discovery was announced to the other boats by a joyous shout from the pinnace.

The compass being speedily handed into the gig, to the captain, was placed on top of the chronometer, which had been nobly saved by the clerk; and as this instrument worked on jimbles, the little needle remained upon it sufficiently steady for steering the boats within a few points.

This was enough to insure hitting land, from which they had been steering quite wide. Before reaching the shore, they fell in with an old fisherman, who piloted them to a place called Portuguese Cove, where they all landed in safety, at a distance of twenty miles from Halifax.—*Capt. Hall.*

YATES AND DOWNING.

An Indian Story.

Some of the adventures of our countrymen with the Indians of the west, are so striking, that, though true, they have the appearance of fiction.

In August —, two young men, near the Slate Creek Iron Works, in Kentucky, by the name of Yates and Downing, set out together in pursuit of a horse which had strayed into the woods. Towards evening they found themselves six or seven miles from home, and, at that time, exposed to danger from the Indians. Downing even began to fancy he heard the cracking of sticks in the bushes behind them, but Yates, who was somewhat experienced as a hunter, only laughed at his fears.

Downing, however, was not satisfied.—He still thought the Indians were following them, and at last determined to find out. Gradually slackening his pace, he allowed Yates to get several rods before him, and immediately after descending a little hill, he sprang aside and hid himself in a thick clus-

ter of whortlebury bushes. Yates was humming over a song just at the time, and did not think of Downing or the Indians any more for several minutes.

No sooner was he out of sight, than Downing saw two savages come out of a cane brake, and look cautiously after Yates.—Fearful they had also seen him secrete himself, he determined to fire on them, but his hand was so unsteady that he discharged his gun without taking aim, and then ran.—When he had run ten or twelve rods, he met Yates, who having heard the report of the gun was coming back, to inquire what was the matter. The Indians were now in full pursuit, and Yates was glad to run with Downing.

Just at this place the road divided, and at some distance farther on, came together again. Yates and Downing took one road, and the two Indians, probably to get ahead of them, took the other. The former, however, reached the junction of the two roads, first. But coming nearly at the same time to a deep gully, Downing fell into it, while the Indians who crossed it a little lower down, not observing his fall, kept on after Yates.

Here Downing had time to reload his gun, but he did not think of it; for he was busy in climbing up the banks of the ditch to learn the fate of his companion. To his surprise he saw one of the Indians returning to search for him. What should he do now? His gun was no longer of use, so he threw it aside, and again plied his heels, with the Indian after him.

Coming at length to a large poplar tree which had been blown up by the roots, he ran along the body of the tree upon one side, while the Indian followed on the other to meet him at the root. It happened, however, that a large she bear was suckling her cubs, in a bed she had made at the root of the tree, and as the Indian reached the spot a moment first, she sprang upon him, and a prodigious uproar took place. The Indian yelled, and stabbed with his knife; the bear growled, hugged him closely, and endeavoured to tear him, while Downing not anxious to stand long to see the end of the battle, took to his heels with new courage, and finally reached home in safety; where Yates, after a hot chase, had arrived some time before him.

On the next morning, they collected a party, and returned to the poplar tree to ascertain what had become of the Indian and bear, but could find no traces of either.—Both, they concluded, escaped with their lives, though not without injury.—*Sketches of Western Adventures.*

Those days are lost in which we do no good: those worse than lost, in which we do evil.

A modest youth may become a confident man, but never an impudent one.

PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE.

Life is short certainly; and a youth lost in idleness makes a fearful subtraction from its scanty sum: That wonderful scholar Sir William Jones, who in addition to great acquirements in various other departments of knowledge had made himself acquainted with no fewer than 28 different languages, was studying the grammars of several of the Oriental dialects up to within a week of his lamented death. It was by a persevering observance of a few simple maxims that Sir Wm. Jones was principally enabled to accomplish what he did. One of these was never to neglect an opportunity to improvement, another was, whatever had been attained, was attainable by him, and that therefore the real or supposed difficulties of any pursuit formed no reason why he should not engage in it, and with perfect confidence of success. "It was also," Lord Teignmouth tells us, "a fixed principal with him from which he never voluntarily deviated not to be deterred, by any difficulties which were surmountable, from prosecuting to a successful termination what he had once deliberately undertaken. But what appears to me, adds his Lordship more particularly to have enabled him to employ his talents so much to his own and the public advantage was the regular allotment of his time to particular occupations and a scrupulous adherence to the distribution which he had fixed: hence all his studies were pursued without interruption or confusion. Nor can I omit remarking the candour and complacency with which he gave his attention to all persons of whatever quality, talents or education: he justly concluded that curious or important information might be gained, even from the illiterate, and whatever it was to be attained he sought and seized it. By these means it was that he accumulated that vast mass of knowledge, and enabled himself to accomplish those profound and extended labours which remain even now that he is dead, for the benefit of us who yet live, and of those who come after us. This is truly to make a short life long—to exist, in spite of death for unnumbered generations.

DESTRUCTIVE TORNADO.

The city of New-Brunswick, N. J. was lately visited with a most desolating tornado, which swept over the western section, causing much destruction of property, and loss of life. It first made its appearance with a falling of ice in the township of Amwell, and taking a zig-zag course, spent its fury over State Island. Its first approach to N. B. was from the north-west, passing over Middlebush, about 3 miles from that place, when a dwelling house and barn were laid prostrate with the earth, it then passed over several farms unroofing and blowing down all the buildings in its course—when it reached an hill, where it remained appa-

rently fixed for a minute or two, presenting the appearance of a pillar of fire—its base resting on the earth, and its top reaching a mass of black clouds. It then took another direction tearing the roofs off of some, and making complete wrecks of other buildings, and either uprooting or twisting off the largest trees—in some instances carrying the latter 20 or 30 paces. Among the extraordinary occurrences, which took place on this melancholy occasion, the fate of the son of W. G. Dunham, (a small lad) was the most singular. He was taken of the piazza of the house, carried in the air a distance of 300 yards and landed on a wharf, having only sustained a slight injury in one of his arms. On being questioned as to his feelings, he said he recollected having passed through the top of a willow tree, and the sensation produced by being carried up in the whirlpool was like that of being pulled in contrary directions. A bedstead was taken from the third story of a house, and carried a distance of 200 yards—without having sustained the slightest injury. A carpet bag, and some bedding were carried nearly half a mile. A person who was an eye witness says:—"The first intimation I had of the tornado's approach, was the wind blowing in from both sides of the house where I was sitting. The cry of fire was raised—I ran to the corner of the street, and perceived in a westerly direction, at half a mile distance, a black column moving onward, which had the appearance of a smothered fire and was mistaken for it. I saw what it was, and ran into the house and closed all the windows before it reached us. The whole atmosphere was soon filled with fragments of timber, &c. in a moment the house opposite was unroofed, as if it had been covered with paper. The house in which I was, being at the edge of the current, escaped uninjured, save that a rafter from the roof of a house about half a mile distant, 30 feet long, struck the edge of the window, tearing away the brick work, and demolishing the sash, passed into the wall of the room. As near as we can ascertain, 50 dwelling houses are entirely destroyed, and a vast number much injured—4 persons were killed, and from 100 to 150 much injured.

THE MONTHS.—No. 7.

JULY is so called from Julius Cæsar, the celebrated Roman general and historian. On the third day of this month the "Dog-days" begin their course, and continue till the eleventh of August. This singular designation was given in consequence of Sirius, or the dog-star, rising and setting with the sun during this period.—The advancement of knowledge has dissipated the absurd notion formerly entertained, that on these days, "the sea boils, wine turns sour, dogs go mad," &c. &c. Sound philosophy ascribes effects to their true causes. Heat, and not the conjunction of planets, produces some of the effects described; the others are pure fictions.

The heat of July is often very intense, and requires caution. An unguarded exposure to the rays of the vertical sun in tropical climates, has often produced instantaneous death. The Shunamite's child appears to have been fatally smitten by the Sun, when he cried, "my head, my head!" 2 Kings, iv. 18, 20. The atmospheric changes of this month are numerous and important. Electricity is now exerting its powerful agency and giving proof of its energy, in the pealing thunder and vivid lightning. The approach of the thunder-storm is indicated by the sultry heat, the darkened sky, and the oppressive air. The swallow flies just above the earth in pursuit of insects whose upward flight is prevented by the state of the atmosphere. A profound stillness reigns. At length the moment arrives, the lightning flashes through the air, and the thunder rolls impetuously along the sky. Science may explain the causes of the thunder-storm, yet few persons can witness its awful phenomena without some emotion. The Bible professes not to be "a Book of the seasons," yet its individual and occasional notices of the changes and productions of the year, are just, simple, and sublime. The close of the 65th Psalm describes an English July as well as a Syrian May. "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness. The pastures are covered with flocks; the valleys also are covered with corn: they shout for joy, they also sing."

WEEKLY MIRROR.

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 1835.

The present, is the last number for the half year, and with it, we regret very much to add, ends our proprietorship of the MIRROR; this course we have been compelled to pursue, although we certainly should not have discontinued till the end of the year, had not a favourable opportunity offered of handing it over to a person every way competent—and who has promised to supply our subscribers, we doubt not much to his own credit, and their satisfaction.

By H. M. Packet Tyrian, which arrived on Tuesday, 31 days from Falmouth, London papers to the 4th, and Falmouth to the 6th June, were received, but they contain nothing of importance.

On the day appointed for celebrating the King's birth day, the usual observances were kept up. Her Majesty held a drawing room, which was numerously attended—among the presentations at the Levee, we noticed "Mr. Archibald, Attorney General of Nova Scotia, on his arrival." After the Levee the King gave audience to Lord Gosford, who has been appointed chief Commissioner to Lower Canada.

UNITED STATES.—*The Constitution Frigate, with Mr. Livingston on board, arrived at New York on the 23d June. With reference to the Indemnity question the Journal of Commerce says:—"We are glad to learn from the conversation of Mr. Livingston, that his return to the United States is not to be taken as an evil omen."*

POETRY.

PATRIOTIC SONG.

Before all lands in east or west,
I love my native land the best,
With God's best gifts 'tis teeming;
No gold nor jewels here are found,
Yet men of noble souls abound,
And eye's of joy are gleaming.

Before all tongues in east or west
I love my native tongue the best—
Though not so smoothly spoken,
Nor woven with Italian art;
Yet when it speaks from heart to heart
The word is never broken.

Before all people east or west
I love my countrymen the best,
A race of noble spirit:—
A sober-mind—a generous heart—
To virtue trained—yet free from art
They from their sires inherit.—

To all the world I give my hand—
My heart I give my native land—
I seek her good—her glory—
I honour every nation's name,
Respect their fortune and their fame,
But I love the land that bore me.

LOVE OF HOME.

"Home, home, sweet home,
There's no place like home."

In the pursuit of happiness, in which all are to a greater or less degree engaged, we not unfrequently overlook the source of the purest and most substantial of all earth's joys. We rove far, and toil hard, for that which may most easily be obtained at our own fire-sides. Home is the congenial soil of the purest affections, and the noblest virtues of the heart. If there be any thing that will soothe the agitating passions of the soul, which will calm that turbulence of feeling which the din and bustle of the world so frequently excite, it is the soothing influence of a cheerful fire-side. You can hardly find in the world an abandoned man, who has not abandoned the joys of domestic life. There is something in the very atmosphere which surrounds the family hearth, which will not allow vice to luxuriate there. If you wish to find the profligate, and the degraded, you must turn away from that holy sanctuary, and seek them in haunts of revelry. On the other hand, if you find a young man who does not love home, whose taste is formed for other joys, who can see no happiness in the serene enjoyment of the domestic circle, you may depend upon it he is not to be trusted.

There was a young man, a weather-beaten sailor, pursuing whales in the Pacific Ocean. A few years since, he was the child of indulgence, and in the elegant parties of his father's house, he saw the most refined company the country could afford. A few

months since, in one of the seaports of America, he entered a warehouse, and said to the clerks, while weeping like a child,—
"Can you not give me some work to do? I have spent all my wages, and am almost starved." The clerk accompanied him down upon the wharf, and gave him a few hours' work in rolling barrels of oil.

The clerk, who had known this young man under the very different circumstances of his former years, said to him, "What would your sister think if she should see you so dissipated and wretched?" He sternly replied, "Don't mention my sister's name to me. I cannot bear to go and see her; you ought not to mention her to such a wretch as I am." His heart, degraded by every scene of vice, was still sensitive at the recollection of a virtuous home; and this recollection was the only restraint he felt.

Shall we appeal to the testimony of those who have sought joy elsewhere? We have but one answer from them all—that the search has been fruitless. Who aspires to a loftier elevation of honour than that attained by Burke? And yet he says he would not give one peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame in the world. What is the declaration of Byron, after having drained the cup of earthly pleasure to its dregs? It is, that his life has been passed in wretchedness, and that he longs to rush into the thickest of the battle, that he may terminate his miserable existence by a sudden death.—And Chesterfield, with rank, wealth, talent, polish, and power, after having stood for half a century the brightest luminary in all the European circles of elegance and fashion, has left his most decisive testimony of the heartlessness and emptiness of all those joys he had so eagerly pursued. As we go through this world of trial and of change, we can find our only joy in a life of piety and domestic peace.

It is not essential to the happy home that there should be the luxury of the carpeted floor, the richly-cushioned sofa, the soft shade of the astral lamp. These elegancies gild the apartments, but reach not the heart. It is neatness, order, a cheerful heart, and mutual kindness, which make home that sweet paradise it is so often found to be.—There is joy as real, as heartfelt, by the cottage fire-side, as in the most splendid saloons of wealth and refinement. What a lovely picture has Burns given us of the return of the cottager to his home, after the labours of the day.

"At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree.
The expectant wee things, toddling, stagger through,
To meet their dad, with fluttering noise and glee.
His clean hearth-stone, his thrifite wife's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does all his weary, carking cares beguile,
And makes him quiet forget his labour and his toil."

It is narrated of a celebrated monarch, that he was one day galloping about the

room, upon all-fours, with one child upon his back, and chasing another little urchin, who was laughing at the top of her lungs at the gambols of her royal father. While thus engaged, one of his ministers was announced. "Come in," said the king, "you are a father, and so I will have my race out;" and he continued his sport with his children. We do not doubt that this moment was one of the happiest of the king's life. There was more real heartfelt joy in that undignified parlour frolic than he ever felt while seated upon his throne, glittering in splendid robes, and surrounded by all the pomp and pageantry of royalty. It is the influence of such scenes as these which softens the heart, and makes a man feel for his fellow men.

MOTHER'S TENDERNESS.

Alas! how little do we appreciate a Mother's tenderness while living! How heedless are we in youth, of all her anxieties and kindness.—But when she is dead and gone; when the cares and coldness of the world come withering to our hearts; when we find how hard it is to find true sympathy, how few loves us for ourselves, how few will befriend us in our misfortunes; then it is we think of the mother we have lost. It is true I had always loved my mother, even in my most heedless days; but I felt how inconsiderate and ineffectual had been my love.—My heart melted as I retraced the days of infancy, when I was led by a mother's hand, and rocked to sleep in a mother's arms, and was without care or sorrow.—
"Oh, my mother," exclaimed I, hurrying my face again in the grass of the grave.—
"Oh that I were once more by your side; sleeping never to wake again on the cares and troubles of this world!"

AXIOMS.

Every good principal in society, to do good effectually and generally, ought to be effectually and generally applied, and, therefore, to raise any society or nation to the highest degree, individual cultivation should be carried to the greatest practicable extent in all classes of society.

Knowledge is pleasure as well as power; and of any two individuals in society, whether rich or poor, the more highly cultivated, other circumstances being the same, will possess the greater share of happiness, and will be the more valuable member of society.

All human happiness, whether public or private, domestic or national, are founded on individual cultivation.

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