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THE INSTRUCTOR.

No. XVIII.]

MONTREAL, AUGUST 26, 1835.

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LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

THE KELP-GATHERER.

The stranger who wanders along the terrific masses of crag that overhang the green and foaming waters of the Atlantic, on the western coasts of Ireland, feels a melancholy interest excited in his mind, as he turns aside from the more impressive grandeur of the scene, and gazes on the small stone heaps that are scattered over the moss on which he treads. They are the graves of the nameless few whose bodies have been from time to time ejected from the bosom of the ocean, and cast upon those lonely crags to startle the fisherman with their ghastly and disfigured bulk. Here they meet, at the hands of the pitying mountaineer, the last offices of Christian charity—a grave in the nearest soft earth, with no other ceremonial than the humble peasant's prayer. Here they lie, uncoffined, unlamented, unclaimed by mourning friends, startling like sudden spectres of death from the depths of the ocean, to excite a wild fear, a passing thought of pity, a vain inquiry in the hamlet, and then sink into the earth in mystery and in silence, to be no more remembered on its surface.

The obscurity which envelopes the history of those unhappy strangers affords a subject to the speculative traveller, on which he may give free play to the wings of his imagination. Few, indeed, can pass these deserted sepulchres without endeavouring for a moment to penetrate in fancy the darkness which enshrouds the fate of their mouldering tenants; without beholding the progress of the ruin that struck from beneath the voyager's feet, the firm and lofty fabric to which he had confidently trusted his existence, without hearing the shrieks

of the despairing crew, and the stern and horrid burst of roused-up ocean, as it dealt the last stroke upon the groaning timbers of the wreck, and scattered the whole pile far and wide, in countless atoms, upon the boiling surface of the deep. And again, without turning in thought to the far away homes, at which the tale of the wanderers was never told—to the pale young widow that dreamed herself still a wife, and lived on, from morn to morn, in the fever of a vain suspense—to the helpless parent, that still hoped for the offices of filial kindness from the hand that was now mouldering in a distant grove; and to the social fire-side, over whose evening pastimes the long silence of an absent friend had thrown a gloom, that the certainty of woe or gladness could never remove.

Among those nameless tombs, within the space of the last few years, the widow of a fisherman, named Reason, was observed to spend a great portion of her time. Her husband had died young, perishing in a sudden storm, which swept his canoe from the coast side into the waste of the sea beyond it; and his wife was left to inhabit a small cottage near the crags, and to support, by the labour of her hands, an only child, who was destined to inherit little more than the blessing, the virtue, and the affections of his parent. The poor widow endeavoured to procure a subsistence for her boy and for herself, by gathering the kelp which was thrown upon the crags, and which was burned, for the purpose of manufacturing soap from its ashes: while the youth employed his yet unformed strength in tilling the small garden, that was confined by a quickset hedge, at their cottage side. They were fondly attached, and toiled incessantly to obtain the means of comfort, rather for ease

other than for themselves; but, with all their exertions, fortune left them in the rearward of her favour. The mother beheld, with a mother's agony, the youthful limbs and features of her boy exhibit the sickly effects of habitual privation, and habitual toil; while the son mourned to see the feebleness of a premature old age begin to steal upon the health and vigour of his parent.

In these difficulties, a prospect of certain advantage and probable good fortune, induced the young man to leave his mother and his native country for some years. The distresses and disturbances which agitated that unhappy land pressed so heavily upon the fortunes of many families of the middle, as well as the lower rank, that great numbers were found to embrace the opportunity of improvement, which the colonization of the new world held out for their advantage. Among those who emigrated, was the family under whom the Reardons held their little cottage; and with them it was, that the young man determined to try his fortune in a happier region. Having arranged their affairs so as to secure his widowed parent against absolute poverty, they separated with many tears, the mother blessing her son as she committed him to the guardianship of Providence, and the son pledging himself to return to her assistance so soon as he had obtained the means of providing her the comforts necessary for her old age.

His success, though gradual, was complete. The blessings of the young Tobias fell upon the work of his hands, and his industry, because well directed, was productive, even beyond his expectations. Instead of lingering, like many of his fellow exiles, in the seaport towns, where they were detained by idleness, and that open mouthed folly, which persuades men that fortune may be found without the pain of seeking, young Reardon proceeded at once into the new settlements, where human industry is one of the most valuable and valued commodities. In a little time he was enabled to remit a considerable portion of his earnings to his poor mother, and continued, from time

to time, to increase his contributions to her comfort, until at length the abundance of his prosperity was such, as to enable him to relinquish the pursuit of gain, and to fulfil the promise he had made at parting.

He did not return alone. With the full approbation of the poor widow, he had joined his fate to that of a young person in the settlement where he dwelt, whose dispositions were in every way analogous to his own, and who only excelled him in the superior ease and comfort of her circumstances. Previous to his return, he wrote to the poor widow, to inform her, that in less than two months from that time, with the blessing of Providence, her daughter in law, her two grand children, and her son, would meet beneath the roof of her ancient dwelling.

Fancy, if you can, the anxiety with which the poor widow looked out for this long expected time. The assistance which the affectionate exile had been able to afford her, was such as to raise her to a state of comparative affluence in her neighbourhood, and to render her independent of the hard and servile toil by which she had been accustomed to gain a livelihood. Her cottage was wholly changed in its appearance, and had the honour of being frequently selected for a night's lodging by her landlord's agent, and other great men, who passed through that lonely district. A few flowers sprang up in her sally fringed garden, which were not less tenderly cherished, than the seeds from which they grew were transmitted from the emigrant's garden in the other hemisphere. Her life up to the moment when she received this joyous letter, had been calmly happy. She looked forward with a serene feeling of mingled hope and resignation, to the day of her son's return, and never once suffered the eagerness of her affection to outstep her gratitude to Heaven, and her entire dependence upon the divine will.

But, forgive a mother's fondness!—There are few hearts in which the affections of the world and of nature are so entirely held under subjection by the strong hand of reason and

faith, that they cannot be moved to a momentary forgetfulness of duty, by a sudden and startling occasion. After the widow had heard the letter read, in which her son announced his approaching return, the quiet of her life was for a time disturbed. She thought of heaven indeed, and prayed even more fervently than before; but the burning fever that possessed her heart, showed that its confidence was qualified. In the hours of devotion, she often found her thoughts wandering from that Being whose breath could still or trouble the surface of the ocean, far over the wide waters themselves, to meet the vessel that was flying to her with the tidings of bliss. She shuddered as she went morn after morn, to the cliff-head, and cast her eyes on the graves of the shipwrecked voyagers, which were scattered along the turf mountains on which she trod. In the silence of the night, when she endeavoured to drown her anxieties in sleep, imagination did but overact the part with which it had terrified her waking. Stormy seas and adverse winds—a ship straining against the blast, her deck covered with pale and affrighted faces, among which she seemed to detect those of her son, and of his family—winds hissing through the creaking yards—and waves tossing their horrid heads aloft, and roaring for their prey. Such were the visions that beset the bed of the longing mother, and made the night ghastly to her eyes. When she lay awake the rustling of a sudden wind among the green boughs at her window, made her start and sit erect in her bed; nor would she again return to rest until she had opened the little casement, and satisfied herself, by waving her hand abroad in the night air, that her alarm was occasioned by one of its fairest and most favourable motions. So indeed it was. The Almighty, as though to convince her how far she was from conjecturing aright the quarter from which calamity might visit her, bade the winds blow, during the whole of that period, in the manner which, had they been in her own keeping, she would have desired. Her acquaintances and neighbours all seemed to

share in her anxiety. The fishermen, after they had drawn up their canoes at evening, were careful, on their way homeward, to drop in at the widow Reardon's door, and let her know what vessels had entered the neighbouring river in the course of the day, or had appeared in the offing. She was constantly cheered with the assurance that fairer weather for a homeward bound ship, or more likely to continue, was never known before. Still, nevertheless, the poor woman's heart was not at peace, and the days and nights lagged along with an unaccustomed heaviness.

(To be continued.)

TRAVELS.

RUINS OF ANCIENT BABYLON.

(Continued from page 133.)

The sides of the ruin exhibit hollows, worn partly by the weather, but more generally by the Arabs, who are incessantly digging for the bricks, and hunting for antiquities. Several of these excavations I entered, and have no reason to suppose that they are inhabited by such ferocious animals as the generality of travellers assert. There certainly was an offensive smell, and the caves were strowed with the bones of sheep and goats, devoured most probably by the jackalls that resort thither in great numbers: and thousands of bats and owls have filled many of these cavities; fulfilling to the very letter the following prediction of Jeremiah:—“Because of the wrath of the Lord, it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate; every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations. The wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the island, shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein; and it shall be no more inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom & Gomorrah, & the neighbouring cities thereof, saith the Lord; so shall no man abide there

neither shall any son of man dwell therein,' Jer. 1, 13, 23, 39, 40.

The natives are very reluctant to follow the visiter into these dens, and dislike remaining near the ruins after sunset, rather from the fear of evil spirits than from any attack of lions, or other wild beasts. Indeed, by their account, there are not half a dozen lions within thirty miles round Babel; though, about sixty miles below Hillah, on the banks of the river, in a considerable patch of brushwood, those animals were very numerous throughout the ruins.—This circumstance is an apt illustration of the prophecies of Jeremiah, 'And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and a hissing, without an inhabitant,' Jer. li. 37.

Ranwolff, a German traveller, passed these ruins in 1574. He speaks of a village which he named Elugo, occupying a part of Babylon. 'The village of Elugo,' says he, 'now lieth on the place where formerly old Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldea, was situated. Just below the village is the hill whereon the castle stood, and the ruins of its fortifications are still visible, though demolished and uninhabited.—Behind it and pretty near it did stand the tower of Babylon. It is still to be seen, and is half a league in diameter; but so ruinous and low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes.'

In the northwest face of this huge mound is a niche six feet high by three deep. It is particularly noticed by Mr. Rich, in his Memoir on Babylon. This recess is very clearly discernible to the distance of full two miles of approaching the ruin from the north; and being near the summit, it is a conspicuous spot. The natives call it serdaub, signifying a cellar, or vaulted chamber. This aperture is well worthy of the most minute examination from its being a place of sepulture.

Rich here discovered a wooden coffin, containing a skeleton in high preservation. Under the head of this coffin was a round pebble, attached to the coffin: On the outside was a brass bird, and in the inside an ornament of the same material, which had been suspended to some part of the skeleton: This places the antiquity of those remains beyond all dispute: and Rich adds, that the skeleton of a child was also found. These circumstances caused me to exert my utmost attention; and as far as my means went, I set men to work at a distance of twenty yards eastward of the niche.

(To be continued.)

RELIGIOUS.

DAVID'S LAMENTATION.

Let any man but read over that admirable ode which David penned on the death of Saul and Jonathan, than which there is nothing more elegant and passionate in all antiquity, and he will find all the marks of a generous grief, and the utmost decency and propriety in the expressions of it: In the encomiums respectively passed on them, there is nothing but what became the character of both, and suited the situation of him that gave them. Saul he celebrates for his former victories, and sheds a tear over him for his defeat and the indignities offered to him after his death, but without the least expression of sorrow for him upon his own account, and, what deserves to be mentioned to his honour, without a single reflection on his past injustice and cruelty towards himself. But as to Jonathan, his friend, how tender and passionate is the sorrow he expresses!

"O thou glory of Israel! slain upon thy mountains!

O how are the heroes fallen!

Tell it not in Gath,

Publish it not in the streets of Askalon;

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice—

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

O, ye mountains of Gilboa,

Let there be no dew nor rain fall on you ;
Nor on you, O ye fertile fields around them,
For the shields of the mighty men were con-
temptuously thrown away—

The shield of Saul,

The anointed of the Lord, is no more !

When Jonathan drew his bow, it never flew
back again,

Without being tinged with the blood of the
slain—

Without piercing the fat of the mighty men.

Nor did the sword of Saul return from the
blow without execution.

Saul and Jonathan were dear and delightful
to each other whilst they lived,

And in their death they were not divided ;

They were swifter than eagles—

They were stronger than lions. —

O, ye daughters of Israel, weep ye over Saul !

From the spoil of his enemies he clothed you
With scarlet and delicate ornaments,

And decorated your garments with gold.

O how are the heroes fallen in the midst of the
battle !

O how was Jonathan pierced through, O Gil-
boa, in thy high places !

I am distressed for thee, O Jonathan my
brother :

Thou wast exceedingly delightful and dear to
me ;

Thy affection to me was more wonderful and
constant

Than the love of wives to their husband.

O how are the heroes fallen !

How are the warlike weapons destroyed !”

He who can read this excellent composure without admiration and pleasure must be totally destitute of all true taste. The lamentation over the slain heroes of Israel, in the beginning, and several times repeated—the manner in which he expresses his anguish at the thought of defeats being published in the cities of the Philistines, and the triumphs of the daughters of the uncircumcised upon account of it—his passionately wishing that neither dews nor rains might ever fall on the mountains of Gilboa, and the fields surround-

ing them, in which the slaughter of the Israelites happened—his recounting the past victories of Saul and Jonathan, who never drew a bow, or brandished a sword, but it proved fatal to their enemies, to heighten the glory of their character, and set forth in a more lively manner the sad reverse of their condition—his comparing them, the one to an eagle for swiftness, the other to a lion for strength and valour—the honourable mention of their mutual affection whilst they lived, and dying bravely together in the field of battle—the exclamation to the daughters of Israel to mourn over Saul, and the reasons he gives for it—his celebrating the mutual tender friendship between himself and Jonathan: in a word, this elegy, in every part of it, both in sentiment and expression, hath all the charms with which the spirit of poetry can adorn it.

ASTRONOMY.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON'S OPINION OF COMETS.

“In the efforts by which the human mind labours after truth, it is curious to observe how often that desired object is stumbled upon by accident, or arrived at by reasoning which is false. One of Newton's conjectures respecting comets was, that they are ‘the aliment by which suns are sustained;’ and he therefore concluded, that these bodies were in a state of progressive decline upon the suns round which they respectively swept; and that into these suns they from time to time fell. This opinion appears to have been cherished by Newton to the latest hours of his life; he not only consigned it to his immortal writings, but, at the age of 83, a conversation took place between him and his nephew on this subject, which has come down to us. ‘I cannot say,’ said Newton, ‘when the comet of 1680 will fall into the sun; possibly after five or six revolutions; but whenever that time shall arrive, the heat of the sun will be raised by it to such a point, that our globe will be burned, and all the animals upon it will perish. The new stars observed by Hipparchus, Tycho

and Kepler, must have proceeded from such a cause, for it is impossible otherwise to explain their sudden splendour.' His nephew, upon this, asked him, 'Why, when he stated in his writings that comets would fall into the sun, did he not also state those vast fires which they must produce, as he supposed they had done in the stars?' 'Because,' replied the old man, 'the conflagrations of the sun concern us a little more directly. I have said, however, added he smiling, 'enough to enable the world to collect my opinion.'

This anecdote of Messier, surnamed by Louis XV., *La Furet de Cometes*, (Comet Ferret) is curious:—

“He was an excellent man, but had the simplicity of a child. At a time when he was in expectation of discovering a comet, his wife took ill and died. While attending upon her, being withdrawn from his observatory, *Montagne de Limoges* anticipated him by discovering the comet. Messier was in despair. A friend visiting him began to offer some consolation for the recent affliction he had suffered: Messier, thinking only of the comet, exclaimed,—‘I had discovered twelve. Alas, that I should now be robbed of the thirteenth by *Montagne!*’ and his eyes filled with tears. Then, remembering that it was necessary to mourn for his wife, whose remains were still in the house, he exclaimed.—‘*Ah! cette pauvre femme,*’ and again wept for his comet.’”

MISCELLANEOUS.

HOPE AND MEMORY.

A little babe lay in the cradle, and Hope came and kissed it. When its nurse gave it a cake, Hope promised another tomorrow; and when its young sister brought a flower over which it clapped its wings and crowed, Hope told of brighter ones, which it would gather for itself.

The babe grew to a child, and another friend came and kissed it. Her name was Memory. She said, ‘look behind thee, and tell me what

thou seest.’—The child answered, ‘I see a little book.’ And Memory said, ‘I will teach thee how to get honey from the book, that will be sweet to thee when thou art old.’

The child became a youth. Once when he went to his bed, Hope and Memory stood by the pillow. Hope sang a melodious song, and said, ‘Follow me, and every morning thou shalt awake with a smile, as sweet as the pretty lay I sung thee.’

But Memory said, ‘Hope, is there any need that we should contend? He shall be mine as well as thine. And we shall be to him as sisters all his life long.’

So he kissed Hope and Memory, as he was beloved of them both. While he slept peacefully they sat silently by his side, weaving rainbow tissues into dreams. When he awoke they came, with the lark, to bid him good morning, and he gave a hand to each.

He became a man. Every day Hope guided him to his labor, and every night he supped with Memory at the table of Knowledge.

But, at length Age found him and turned his temples gray. To his eye the world seemed altered.—Memory sat by his elbow chair, like an old and tried friend. He looked at her seriously and said, ‘Hast thou not lost something that I entrusted thee?’

And she answered, ‘I fear so, for the lock of my casket is worn. Sometimes I am weary and sleepy and Time purloins my key. But the gems that thou didst give me when life was new—I can account for all—see how bright they are.’

While they thus sadly conversed, Hope put forth a wing that she had not worn, folded under her garment, and tried its strength in a heavenward flight.

The old man laid down to die, and when his soul went forth from the body, the angels took it:—And Memory walked with it through the open gate of heaven. But Hope lay down at its threshold and gently expired, as a rose giveth out its last odors.

Her parting sigh was like the music of a seraph's harp. She breathed it into a glorious

form and said: 'Immortal happiness! I bring thee a soul that I have led through the world. It is now thine, Jesus hath redeemed it.'

If men are considered as travellers, and life a journey, we may add that the Christian traveller has the advantage of all others, in the following important points: The goodness of the road, the beauty of perspective, the excellency of company, and the great superiority of accommodation prepared for him, when arrived at his journey's end.

Ingratitude is a vice more repugnant, perhaps, than most others to the hearts of men. The ungrateful man seems better fitted for the society of demons, than for that of the human race, and the vice which has degraded him below the level of his species, appears rather as the depravity of a fiend than as the failing of a man.

Disappointments are to the mind, what ill health is to the body; the latter is certainly, in itself, a thing we must be desirous of shunning; yet, without it we could not feel half the enjoyment of health; the same observation will hold good as regards the former; for, if all our wishes were granted, and all our hopes fulfilled, man, restless as he is, and fond as he ever has been of change, would find but little pleasure in the instant accomplishment of his desires; and even happiness itself would be likely to become irksome.

POETRY.

PRISONERS' EVENING SERVICE.

(By Mrs. Hemans.)

PRISONERS' EVENING HYMN:

(Continued from page 135.)

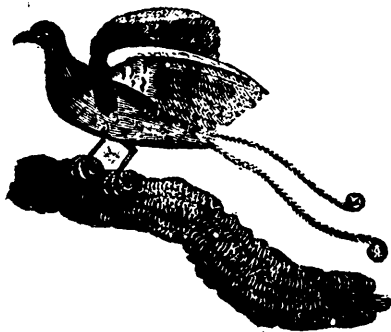
We see no more, in thy pure skies,
How soft, O God! the sunset dies;
How every coloured hill and wood
Seems melting in the golden flood;
Yet, by the precious memories won
From bright hours now for ever gone,

Father! o'er all thy works, we know,
Thou still art shedding Beauty's glow;
Still touching every cloud and tree
With glory, eloquent of Thee;
Still feeding all thy flowers with light,
Though Man hath barr'd it from our sight.
We know Thou reign'st, the Unchanging
One, th' All Just,
And bless Thee still with free and boundless
trust!

We read no more, O God! thy ways
On Earth, in these wild evil days.
The rod severe in th' oppressor's hand
Is ruler of the weeping land;
Fallen are the faithful and the pure,
No shrine is spared, no hearth secure.
Yet, by the deep voice from the Past,
Which tells us these things cannot last;
And by the Hope which finds no Ark,
Save in thy breast, when storms grow dark;
We trust Thee!—As the sailor knows
That in its place of bright repose
His pole-star burns, though mist and cloud
May veil it with a midnight shroud.
We know Thou reign'st!—All Holy One, All
Just!
And bless Thee still with Love's own bound-
less trust.

We feel no more that aid is nigh,
When our faint hearts within us die.
We suffer—and we know our doom
Must be one suffering till the tomb.
Yet, by the anguish of Thy Son,
When his last hour came darkly on;
By his dread cry, the air which rent
In terror of abandonment;
And by his parting word, which rose
Through Faith, victorious o'er all woes;
We know that 'Thou may'st wound, may'st
break
The Spirit, but will ne'er forsake!
Sad supplicants whom our brethren spurn,
In our deep need to Thee we turn;
To whom but Thee?—All Merciful, All Just!
In Life, in Death, we yield Thee boundless
trust!

NATURAL HISTORY.



THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

To the inhabitants of the islands of Aroo the birds of paradise have, for many centuries, been an important article of commerce; They are shot with blunt-headed arrows; or caught by birdlime or in snares. As soon as they are killed their legs are cut off, as, by that means, the skins are more easily preserved, and also the persons who purchase them prefer them thus. The entrails and breast bone are taken out, and they are dried with snoko and sulphur, for exportation to Banda and other commercial settlements.

They are in great demand both in Persia and India to adorn the turbans of persons of rank, and even the handles of sabres and the trappings of horses. Many of them are also sold to the Chinese; and, a few years ago, they were a very fashionable ornament for female head dress in England.

The appellation of birds of paradise has been given to these birds from a notion, formerly prevalent, that destitute of feet, they were constantly in flight, even during their sleep; or that, if they did rest, it was only for a few moments together, and then suspended to the branches of trees by the long feathers of their tail; that the female deposited her eggs in the hollow place on the back of the male, and there sat upon and hatched them, that they fed only on dew: that, destitute of stomach & intestines, the whole abdominal cavity

was filled with fat; and, lastly, that they never touched the earth until their death. It is somewhat difficult to account for the origin of notions so absurd, unless we are to suppose them in the inventions of persons who traded in the skins of these birds, and founded merely in the very extraordinary nature of their plumage, and the circumstance of such skins being always sold without the legs.

Birds of paradise generally associate in flocks of forty or fifty together. They form their nests in trees, and feed on fruit and insects. Their legs are so short that, when they alight upon the ground, they cannot, without difficulty, arise again into the air.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications intended for publication in the Instructor, must be accompanied with the names of the writers, in order to secure their insertion.

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