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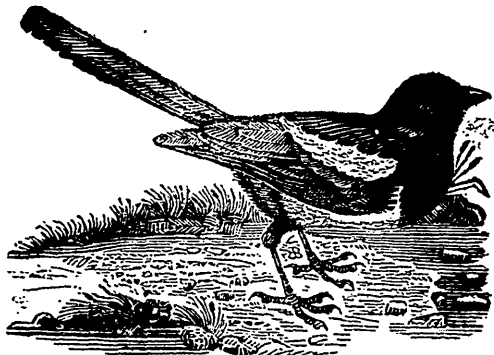
THE INSTRUCTOR.

No. XVII.]

MONTREAL, AUGUST 19, 1835.

[PRICE 2D.

NATURAL HISTORY.



THE MAGPIE.

The Magpie is too well known to need a description. Indeed, were its other accomplishments equal to its beauty, few birds could be put in competition. Its black, its white, its green and purple, with the rich and gilded combination of the glosses on its tail, are as fine as any that adorn the most beautiful of the feathered tribe. But it has too many of the qualities of a beau to deprecate these natural perfections: vain, restless, loud, and quarrelsome, it is an unwelcome intruder everywhere; and never misses an opportunity, when it finds one, of doing mischief.

A wounded lark, or a young chicken separated from the hen, are sure plunder; and the magpie will even sometimes set upon and strike a blackbird.

The same insolence prompts it to seize the largest animals when its insults can be offered with security. They often are seen perched upon the back of an ox or a sheep, pecking up the insects to be found there, chattering and

tormenting the poor animal at the same time, and stretching out their necks for combat, if the beast turns its head backward to apprehend them. They seek out also the nests of birds; and, if the parent escapes, the eggs make up for the deficiency: the thrush and the blackbird are but too frequently robbed by this assassin, and this in some measure causes their scarcity.

No food seems to come amiss to this bird; it shares with ravens in their carrion, with rooks in their grain, and with the cuckoo in their eggs: but it seems possessed of a providence seldom usual with gluttony; for when it is satisfied for the present, it lays up the remainder of the feast for another occasion. It will even in a tame state hide its food when it has done eating, and after a time return to the secret board with renewed appetite and voracity.

This bird, in its domestic state, preserves its natural character with strict propriety.

The same noisy, mischievous habits attend it to the cage that marked it in the woods; and being more cunning, so it is a more docile bird than any other taken into keeping. Those who are desirous of teaching it to speak have a foolish custom of cutting its tongue, which only puts the poor animal to pain, without improving its speech in the smallest degree. Its speaking is sometimes very distinct; but its sounds are too thin and sharp to be an exact imitation of the human voice, which the hoarse raven and parrot can counterfeit more exactly.

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

THE MURDERER'S CREEK.

The name of the Murderer's Creek is said to be derived from the following incidents.

Little more than a century ago, the beautiful region watered by this stream, was possessed by a small tribe of Indians, which has long since become extinct, or been incorporated with some other savage nations of the west. Three or four hundred yards from where the stream discharges itself into the Hudson, a white family of the name of Stacey had established itself in a log house, by tacit permission of the tribe, to whom Stacey had made himself useful by his skill in a variety of little arts highly estimated by the savages. In particular, a friendship subsisted between him and an old Indian called Naoman, who often came to his house and partook of his hospitality. The Indians never forgive injuries or forget benefits. The family consisted of Stacey, his wife, and two children, a boy and a girl, the former five, the latter three years old.

One day Naoman came to Stacey's log hut in his absence, lighted his pipe and sat down. He looked very serious, sometimes sighed deeply, but said not a word. Stacey's wife asked him what was the matter, and if he was sick. He shook his head, sighed, said nothing, and soon went away. The next day he came again, and behaved in the same manner. Stacey's wife began to think strange of this, and

related it to her husband, who advised her to urge the old man to an explanation the next time he came. Accordingly when he repeated his visit the day after, she was more importunate than usual. At last the old Indian said, 'I am a red man, and the pale faces are our enemies—why should I speak?' But my husband and I are your friends; you have eaten salt with us a thousand times, and my children have sat on your knee as often. If you have any thing on your mind tell it me. 'It will cost me my life if it is known, and the white-faced women are not good at keeping secrets,' replied Naoman. Try me and see. 'Will you swear by your Great Spirit, you will tell none but your husband?' I have none else to tell. 'But will you swear?' I do swear by our Great Spirit, I will tell none but my husband. Not if any of my tribe should kill you for not telling?' Not if your tribe should kill me for not telling.

Naoman then proceeded to tell her that owing to some encroachment of the white people below the mountains, his tribe had become irritated, and were resolved that night to massacre all the white settlers within their reach. That she must send for her husband, inform him of the danger, and as secretly and speedily as possible take their canoe, and paddle with all haste over the river to Fishkill for safety. 'Be quick, and do nothing that may excite suspicion,' said Naoman as he departed. The good wife sought her husband, who was down on the river fishing, told him the story, and as no time was to be lost, they proceeded to their boat which was unluckily filled with water. It took some time to clear it out, and meanwhile Stacey recollected his gun which had been left behind. He proceeded to the house and returned with it. All this took up considerable time, and precious time it proved to this poor family.

The daily visits of old Naoman, and his more than ordinary gravity, had excited suspicion in some of the tribe, who had accordingly paid particular attention to the movements of Stacey. One of the young Indians who had been kept on watch, seeing the whole family

about to take their boat, ran to the little Indian village, about a mile off, and gave the alarm. Five Indians collected, ran down to the river side where their canoes were moored, jumped in, and paddled after Stacey, who by this time had got some distance out into the stream. They gained on him so fast, that twice he dropt his paddle and took up his gun. But his wife prevented his shooting, by telling him, that if he fired, and they were afterwards overtaken, they would meet no mercy from the Indians. He accordingly refrained, and plied his paddle, till the sweat rolled in big drops down his forehead. All would not do; they were overtaken within a hundred yards of the shore, and carried back with shouts of yelling triumph.

When they got ashore, the Indians set fire to Stacey's house, and dragged himself, and his wife and children, to their village. Here the principal old men, and Naoman among the rest, assembled to deliberate on the affair. The chief among them stated, that some one of the tribe had undoubtedly been guilty of treason, in apprising Stacey, the white man, of the designs of the tribe, whereby they took the alarm, and had well nigh escaped. He proposed to examine the prisoners, as to who gave the information. The old men assented to this; and Naoman among the rest. Stacey was first interrogated by one of the old men, who spoke English, and interpreted to the others. Stacey refused to betray his informant. His wife was then questioned, while at the same moment two Indians stood threatening the two children with tomahawks, in case she did not confess. She attempted to evade the truth, by declaring that she had a dream the night before which had alarmed her, and that she had persuaded her husband to fly. "The Great Spirit never deigns to talk in dreams to a white face," said the old Indian: "Woman, thou hast two tongues and two faces. Speak the truth, or thy children shall surely die." The little boy and girl were then brought close to her, and the two savages stood over them, ready to execute their bloody orders.

"Wilt thou name," said the old Indian, "the red man who betrayed his tribe. I will ask thee three times." The mother answered not. "Wilt thou name the traitor? This is the second time." The poor mother looked at her husband, and then at her children, and stole a glance at Naoman, who sat smoking his pipe with invincible gravity. She wrung her hands and wept, but remained silent. "Wilt thou name the traitor? 'tis the third and last time." The agony of the mother waxed more bitter; again she sought the eye of Naoman, but it was cold and motionless; a pause of a moment awaited her reply, and the next moment the tomahawks were raised over the heads of the children, who besought their mother not to let them be murdered.

"Stop," cried Naoman. All eyes were turned upon him. "Stop," repeated he, in a tone of authority. "White woman, thou hast kept thy word with me to the last moment. I am the traitor. I have eaten of the salt, warmed myself at the fire, shared the kindness of these Christian white people, and it was I that told them of their danger. I am a withered, leafless, branchless trunk; cut me down if you will. I am ready." A yell of indignation sounded on all sides. Naoman descended from the little bank where he sat, shrodded his face with his mantle of skins, and submitted to his fate. He fell dead at the feet of the white woman by a blow of the tomahawk.

But the sacrifice of Naoman, and the firmness of the Christian white woman, did not suffice to save the lives of the other victims. They perished—how it is needless to say; and the memory of their fate has been preserved in the name of the pleasant stream on whose banks they lived and died, which to this day is called Murderer's Creek.

RELIGIOUS.

A MEDITATION ON THE WORKS OF NATURE.

O Father, Creator of the universe, and Preserver of every living creature; how great

is thy majesty. How many are the wonders which thou presentest to the eyes of man. It is thy hand which has spread out these heavens, and strewed them with stars.

To-day, I yet behold the sun coming forth in all his splendour to re-animate nature. To-morrow, it is possible I shall not enjoy the pleasure of hearing those birds which now cause the woods, vallies, and fields, to resound with their melodious notes. I feel that I am mortal, and my life withers like the grass of the fields: it fades as the flower cut off from the branch where it grew. Who can tell how soon that word of the Almighty shall reach my ear—Man, return to thy dust!

When the grave shall have swallowed me up, when silence & darkness shall have encompassed me about, when worms shall have fed on my mortal body; what will then remain of all my earthly possessions? shall not all be lost to me, though all had here succeeded to my wishes; and I had enjoyed unmixed happiness?

O how foolish should I be, were I to attach myself to the perishing good of this life! were I to aspire after great riches, or be ambitious of empty honors; or if permitting myself to be dazzled by vain splendour, envy and pride should find access to my heart!

If, too eager in my desires, I have pursued what I ought not to have aspired to, I humble myself before thee, O God;—Behold me, O my Maker; and let that which thy wisdom has appointed be done unto me.

Foolish man, who is led astray by pride, prescribes laws to his Creator. He dares to blame the purpose of Eternal Wisdom. And thou, Almighty Friend of Man, thou lovest him more than he loves himself, when thy goodness denies him those deceitful enjoyments which are the objects of his wishes.

When in the morning, on the green turf covered with dew, every thing presents itself in a pleasing form; when the wings of the night have cooled the sultry air of summer; Wisdom thus accosts me: O mortal, why dost thou torment thyself with anxious cares about the future? Why dost thou abandon thyself to

wretchedness? Is not God thy Father? Art thou not his child? Shall not he who formed thee, take care of his own work? The plan of thy existence is not limited by earth; it takes in eternity. Thy life is but a moment, and the longest earthly felicity is no more than a pleasing dream. O man, God has made thee immortal.

The contemplation of immortality elevates us above the earth, the universe, and time itself. Manifest thyself—manifest thyself in my heart, when, seduced by false views, I am ready to depart from the paths of virtue.

The roses which crown the head of the vicious, shall soon fade; his shameful enjoyments dishonour him, and repentance succeeds them. I am only a sojourner upon earth; and immortal joys alone are worth any pursuit.

O Thou, who delightest in dispensing blessings, give me a heart which loves nothing but goodness; a heart where virtue and holiness reign. Let others covet worldly prosperity; I ask of thee, my God, grace to be contented with my situation, to make me faithful in the discharge of my duty, and deserving the name of a wise man and a Christian.

PRAYER.

“Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw.”

How delightful the duty. By prayer, the mind is led from things of an earthly nature to those which are holy and heavenly. In prayer the Christian converses with his Redeemer, who knows all his wants and feelings. He is touched with the feeling of the sinner's infirmities; he knows how to succour those that are tempted. In our afflictions, he remembers we are but dust. How often are we tempted to neglect prayer, merely because it does not always afford immediate relief, and is not immediately answered. Let us ask ourselves, do we always pray aright?—are not our minds often led away by the vain things of this world? Do we consider the Being whom we address, and that he knows all our thoughts, and cannot be deceived? Are we humble in our intercessions at the throne of grace—Do

we plead as for a blessing—Is it our sincere desire that he would bless us? If we can answer in the affirmative, we are blessed indeed. Let us, then, always try to worship God in spirit and in truth—for such only worship him aright.

TRAVELS.

RUINS OF ANCIENT BABYLON.

(Continued from page 126)

Nov. 30, 1827. An hour's walk, indulged in intense reflection, brought me to the grandest and most gigantic northern mass, on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. It is called by the natives, El Mujelabah—the overturned. This solid mound, which I consider, from its situation and magnitude, to be the remains of the Tower of Babel—an opinion likewise adopted by that highly distinguished geographer, Major Rennell—is a vast oblong square, composed of kiln burnt and sun dried bricks, rising irregularly to the height of one hundred and thirty nine feet at the southwest, whence it slopes towards the northeast to a depth of a hundred and ten feet. Its sides face the four cardinal points. I measured them carefully; and the following is the full extent of each face:—That to the north, along the visible face, is two hundred and seventy-four yards, to the south two hundred and fifty-six yards, to the east two hundred and twenty-six yards, and to the west, two hundred and forty yards. The summit is an uneven flat, strewed with broken and unbroken bricks, the perfect ones measuring thirteen inches square, by three thick. Many exhibited the arrow headed character, which appeared remarkably fresh. Pottery, bitumen, vitrified and petrified brick, shells, and glass, were all equally abundant. The principal materials composing this ruin are, doubtless, mud bricks, baked in the sun, and mixed up with straw. Many of the ancient ruined cities of Persia are likewise described as being built of unburnt bricks, beaten up with straw or rush, perhaps to make the ingredients

adhere, and then baked in the sun. This mode of making bricks is of the greatest antiquity; for even in the days of the Egyptian bondage, I apprehend it to be alluded to, when Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, “Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves,” Exod. v, 7.

It is not difficult to trace brick work along each front, particularly at the southwest angle, which is faced by a wall, composed partly of kiln-burnt brick, that in shape exactly resembles a watch tower, or small turret.* On its summit there are still considerable traces of erect building. At the western end is a circular mass of solid brick work, sloping towards the top, and rising from a confused heap of rubbish. The chief material forming this fabric appeared to be a mixture of chopped straw, with slime used as cement; and regular layers of unbroken reeds between the horizontal courses of the bricks. The base is greatly injured by time and the elements; particularly to the southeast, where it is cloven into a deep furrow from the top to the bottom. The description of Moses agrees with these facts. “And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar,” Gen. xi, 3. The cement here mentioned, under the name of slime, was probably what the ancients called asphaltus, or bitumen. Assyria abounds with it. Herodotus and many ancient authors affirm, that the walls of Babylon were cemented with it. Arrian says, “The temple of Belus, in the midst of the city of Babylon, was made of brick, cemented with asphaltus.”

(To be continued.)

* Pietro Della Valle, a Roman traveller, visited Babylon in 1616. He says when speaking of this ruin, ‘Its situation and form correspond with that pyramid which Strabo calls the Tower of Belus.’ It is built with large and thick bricks, as I carefully observed, having caused excavations to be made for that purpose; but they do not appear to have been burned, but dried in the sun, which is extremely hot in those parts.’

MISCELLANEOUS.

PRISONER'S EVENING SERVICE,

A SCENE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.*

(By Mrs. Hemans.)

From their spheres

The stars of human glory are cast down ;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings,
Princes and emperors, and the crown and
palms

Of all the mighty, wither'd and consumed !
Nor is power given to lowliest Innocence
Long to protect her own. — WORDSWORTH.

SCENE—*Prison of the Luxembourg in Paris, during the reign of Terror.*

D'AUBIGNE, an aged Royalist.—BLANCHE, his daughter, a young girl.

BLANCHE. What was our doom, my father ?

In thine arms ;

I lay unconsciously thro' that drear

Tell me the sentence !—Could our judges
look,

Without relenting, on thy silvery hair ?

Was there not mercy, father ?—Will they
not

Hasten us to our home ?

D'AUBIGNE. Yes, my poor child !

They sent us home.

BLANCHE. Oh ! shall we gaze again
On the bright Loire ?—Will the old hamlet
spire,

And the gray turret of our own chateau.

Look forth to greet us thro' the dusky elms ?

Will the kind voices of our villagers,

The loving laughter in their children's eyes,

Welcome us back at last ?—But how is this ?

—Father ! thy glance is clouded—on thy
brow

There sits no joy !

* The last days of two prisoners in the Luxembourg, Sillery and La Souru, so affecting-ly described by Helen Maria Williams, in her Letters from France, gave rise to this little scene. These two victims had composed a little hymn, which they every night sung together in a low and restrained voice. It will appear in our next number.

D'AUBIGNE. Upon my brow, dear girl,
There sits, I trust, such deep and solemn
peace,

As may befit the Christian, who receives
And recognises, in submissive awe,
The summons of his God.

BLANCHE. Thou dost not mean—

—No, no ! it cannot be !—Didst thou not
say

They sent us home ?

D'AUBIGNE. Where is the spirit's
home ?—

Oh ! most of all, in these dark evil days,
Where should it be—but in that world
serene,

Beyond the sword's reach, and the tempest's
power—

Where, but in Heaven.

BLANCHE. My father !

D'AUBIGNE. We must die.

We must look up to God, and calmly die.

—Come to my heart, and weep there !—for
awhile

Give Nature's passion way, then brightly rise

In the still courage of a woman's heart !

Do I not know thee ?—Do I ask too much

From mine own noble BLANCHE ?

BLANCHE (falling on his bosom.) Oh, clasp
me fast !

Thy trembling child !—Hide, hide me in
thine arms—

Father !

D'AUBIGNE. Alas ! my flower, thou'rt
young to go,

Young, and so fair !—Yet were it worse,
methinks,

To leave thee where the gentle and the
brave,

The loyal hearted and the chivalrous,

And they that loved their God, have all
been swept

Like the serene leaves away. For them no
hearth

Through the wide land were left inviolate,
No altar holy ; therefore did they fall,

Rejoicing to depart. The soil is steep'd
In noble blood ; the temples are gone down

The voice of prayer is hush'd, or fearfully
Mutter'd, like sounds of guilt. Why who
would live ?

Who hath not panted, as a dove, to flee,
'To quit for ever the dishonour'd soil,
The burden'd air ? Our God upon the cross,
Our King upon the scaffold*—let us think
Of these—and fold endurance to our hearts,
And bravely die !

BLANCHE. A dark and fearful way !
An evil doom for thy dear honour'd head !
Oh ! thou, the kind, the gracious !—whom
all eyes

Bless'd as they look'd upon !—Speak yet
again—

Say, will they part us ?

D'AUBIGNE. No, my Blanche ; in
death

We shall not be divided.

BLANCHE. 'Thanks to God !
He by thy glance will aid me ;—I shall see
His light before me to the last—and when—
—Oh ! pardon these weak shrinkings of thy
child !

When shall the hour befall ?

D'AUBIGNE. Oh, swiftly now,
And suddenly, with brief dread interval,
Comes down the mortal stroke. But of
that hour

As yet I know not. Each low throbbing
pulse

Of the quick pendulum may usher in
Eternity ?

BLANCHE (kneeling before him.) My father !
lay thy hand

On thy poor Blanche's head, and once again
Bless her with thy deep voice of tenderness,
'Thus breathing saintly courage through
her soul,

Ere we are call'd.

D'AUBIGNE. If I may speak through
tears,

—Well may I bless thee, fondly, fervently,
Child of my heart !—thou who didst look
on me

With thy lost mother's angel-eyes of love !
Thou that hast been a brightness in my
path,

A guest of Heaven unto my lonely soul,
A stainless lily in my widow'd house,
There springing up—with soft light round
thee shed—

'For immortality !—Meek child of God !
I bless thee,—He will bless.—In his love
He calls thee now from this rude stormy
world,

To thy Redeemer's breast—And thou wilt
die,

As thou hast lived,—my dutious, holy
Blanche,

In trusting and serene submissiveness,
Humble, yet full of heaven.

BLANCHE (rising) Now is there strength
Infused through all my spirit—I can rise
And say—"Thy will be done."

D'AUBIGNE (pointing upwards.) Seest thou,
my child,

Yon faint light in the west ? The signal
star

Of our due vesper-service, gleaming in
Through the close dungeon grating—fear-
fully

It seems to quiver ; yet shall this night pass,
This night alone, without the lifted voice
Of adoration in our narrow cell,

As if unworthy Fear or wavering Faith
Silenced the strain ?—No ! let it waft to
Heaven

The Prayer, the Hope of poor Mortality,
In its dark hour once more.—And we will
sleep—

Yes—calmly sleep, when our last rite is
closed.

The Bible is a brief recital of all that is past,
and a certain prediction of all that is to come.

* A French royalist officer, dying upon a field of battle, and hearing some one near him uttering the most plaintive lamentations, turned towards the sufferer, and thus addressed him :—"My friend, whoever you may be, remember that your God expired upon the cross—your King upon the scaffold—and he who now speaks to you has had his limbs shot from under him.—Meet you fate as becomes a man."

POETRY.

(FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.)

LINES,

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. J. PRICE,
LATE OF MONTREAL.

Yes, loved brother, thou art dead,
Ended thy career below,
To the climes of glory fled,

And free from every woe—
Mingling with that glorious throng,
Joining in the immortal song.

'Mid tens of thousands thou,
Before the great white throne,
Bowing in adoration now,
Casting thy glittering crown
In rapt'rous joy at Jesu's feet,
His endless praises to repeat.

Call'd in thy prime away
To realms of pure delight,
To reign through endless day
In unobscured light—

Where gloom nor sorrow ne'er can come—
Those bright abodes thy happy home.

Montreal, August 17. E.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.

The following lines were written on the shipwreck of the children of Henry I., the account of which appeared in the 13th number of the Instructor—and are the production of a young lady of this city.

On England's lofty throne
Once sat a noble king,
His brow a golden crown
Encircling.

Just gain'd ambition's height,
Returning home in haste,
When lo a sudden blight
Laid waste

His brightest earthly joys,
His hope of future years;
'Ah me,' the father sighs,
And bursts in tears.

Three royal children's doom
The hapless monarch mourns,
He lonely wanders in the gloom
'Mid tombs—

But oh, they rest not there,
Their graves are in the deep,
The coral branch spreads where
They sleep.

The gallant bark sped swiftly o'er
'The swelling ocean's breast,
When all around, above, below,
Had sunk to rest.

Hark—a loud crash, a piercing cry—
The decks asunder part
Fill'd with despair and agony
Is every heart.

For help, on ruin's brink,
They hopelessly implore—
They now in awful terror sink
To rise no more.

In vain the seamen tried
The little boat to save—
"Ah, woe is me," the pilot cried,
And sank beneath the wave.

Montreal, August 17. E.

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