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THE INSTRUCTOR.

No. III.]

MONTRÉAL, MAY 13, 1835.

[PRICE 2D.

NATURAL HISTORY.



THE OWL.

Owls are birds of prey, distinguishable by their round head, a circular arrangement of feathers round each eye, the bill being hooked, and the nostrils being covered with bristly feathers.

These birds are of great service to farmers, by devouring mice and other small animals: the uninterrupted increase of which would be extremely injurious to the fruits of the harvest. The Rev. Gilbert White states, that he had paid considerable attention to the manner of life of a pair of white owls, which constantly bred under the eaves of the church. He says that, generally, about an hour before sunset they sallied forth in quest of mice; that he has often minuted the birds with his watch for an hour together, and found that the one or the other of them returned to the nest about once in five minutes, with a mouse in its claws.

Though serviceable in thus destroying mice, these birds also destroy young rabbits, hares, partridges, &c., for which they are execrated by sportsmen; and they sometimes enter pigeon-houses, where their ravenous propensities cause them to commit great devastations.

HORNED OWL.

It is during the placid serenity of a beautiful summer night, when the current of the water moves silently along, reflecting from the

smooth surface the silver radiance of the moon, and whence all else of animated nature seems sunk in repose, that the great horned owl, one of the Nimrods of the feathered tribes of our forest, may be sailing silently and rapidly on, intent on the destruction of the objects designed to form his food. The lone steersman on the descending boat observes the nocturnal hunter gliding on extended pinions across the river, sailing over one hill and then another, or suddenly sweeping downwards and again rising in the air like a moving shadow, now distinctly seen, and again mingling with the sombre shades of the surrounding woods, fading into obscurity. The bark has now floated to some distance, and is opposite the newly cleared patch of ground—the result of a quarter's first attempt at cultivation, in a place lately shaded by the trees of the forest.

The moon shone brightly on his hut, his slight fence, the newly planted orchard, and a tree, which, spared by the axe, serves as a roosting place for the scanty stock of poultry which the new comer has procured from some neighbour. Among them rests a turkey-hen, covering her offspring with extended wings. The great owl, with eyes as keen as those of a falcon, is now seen hovering above the place. He has already espied the quarry, and is sailing in wide circles meditating his plan of attack. The turkey-hen, which at another time might be sound asleep, is now, however, so intent on the care of her young brood, that she rises on her legs and purs so loudly, as she opens her wings and spreads her tail, that she rouses her neighbours, the hens, together with their protector.

The cacklings which they at first emit soon become a general clamour. The squatter hears the uproar, and on his feet in an instant, rifle

in hand; the priming examined, he gently pushes open his half closed door, and peeps out cautiously, to ascertain the cause by which his repose had been disturbed. He observes the murderous owl just alight on the dead branch of a tall tree, when, raising his never failing rifle, he takes aim, touches the trigger, and the next instant sees the foe falling dead to the ground. The bird is unworthy his farther attention, and is left a prey to some prowling opossum or other carnivorous quadruped. Again all around is tranquility. In this manner falls many a great owl on our frontiers, where the species abound.

RELIGIOUS.

MORAL INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Few men suspect, perhaps no man comprehends the extent of the support given by religion to every virtue. No man, perhaps, is aware how much our moral and social sentiments are fed from this fountain; how powerless conscience would become without the belief of a God; how palsied would be human benevolence to quicken and sustain it; how suddenly the whole social fabric would quake, and, with a fearful crash, sink into hopeless ruin—were the ideas of a Supreme Being, of accountability, and of a future life, to be utterly erased from every mind. Once let men thoroughly believe that they are the work and sport of chance; that no superior intelligence concerns itself in human affairs; that all their improvements perish for ever at death; that the weak have no guardian and the poor no avenger; that an oath is unheard in heaven; that secret crimes have no witness but the perpetrator; that human existence has no purpose, and human virtue no unfailing friend; that this brief life is every thing to us, and death is total, everlasting extinction—once let men thoroughly abandon religion, and who can conceive or describe the extent of the desolation which would follow? We hope, perhaps, that human laws and natural sympathy would hold society together. As reason-

ably might we believe that were the sun quenched in the heavens, our torches could illuminate and our fires quicken and fertilise the creation. What is there in human nature to awaken respect and tenderness, if man is the unprotected insect of the day? And what is he more, if Atheism be true? Erase all thoughts and fear of God from a community, and selfishness and sensuality would absorb the whole man. Appetite, knowing no restraint, and poverty and suffering having no solace or hope, would trample in scorn on the restraints of human laws. Virtue, duty, principle, would be mocked and spurned as unmeaning sound. A sordid self-interest would supplant every other feeling: and man would become, in fact, what the theory of Atheism declares him to be—a companion for brutes.—CHANNING.

TRUTH IS POWER.

Some men say that 'wealth is power,' and some that 'talent is power,' and some that 'knowledge is power,' and others that 'authority is power;' but there is an apothecary that I would place on high above them all, when I would assert that 'truth is power.' Wealth cannot purchase—talent cannot—knowledge cannot overreach—authority cannot silence her; they all, like Felix, tremble at her presence. Fling her in the most tremendous billows of popular commotion; cast her into the sevenfold heated furnace of the tyrant's wrath: she mounts aloft in the ark upon the summit of the deluge—she wades, with the Son of God, untouched through the conflagration. She is the ministering spirit who sheds on man that bright and indestructible principle of life, light and glory, which is given by his Mighty Author, to animate, to illumine and inspire the immortal soul, and which, like himself, 'is the same yesterday, today and forever.' When the mould has long been heaped on all the pride of wealth, and talent, and knowledge, and authority—when earth and heaven itself shall have passed away—truth shall rise, like the angel of Ma-

noah's sacrifice, upon the flame of nature's funeral pyre, and ascend to her source, her heaven and her home—the bosom of the holy and eternal God.

ON POVERTY.

Poverty is a creature of the fancy. He is not the poorest that has the least, but he that wanteth most.

Poverty is not a mark of God's hatred, no more than riches are a mark of his love.

It is sin, and not poverty, that God hates.

Poverty is no disgrace,
If sin does not your life deface :
He that, though poor, loves God on high,
Shall dwell with him eternally.

God will not cast away a man in adversity, that kept close to him in prosperity.

Dread sin more than poverty—for if sin does not cast you out of the favour of God, poverty will not:

It matters not what our lot or condition is in this world, so that we are but rich in grace and heirs of heaven.

Great pains and travail have poor men that want all things, but much more have rich men that are content with nothing.

Poverty should not drive us from God, but draw us nearer to him.

Poverty may pinch us, but it is only sin that can destroy us:

Though poverty sit at your door, let a good conscience keep your house, and the Lord of glory will make you content at your table.

Though you be penniless, you need not be comfortless—for God is a present help in every time of trouble.

If you be poor, and truly pious, you shall one day be rich and shine in glory.

It is much better to have sanctified poverty than ensnaring prosperity.

The poor and holy are heirs of glory.

Virtue maketh men on the earth famous—in their graves, illustrious—in the heavens, immortal.

CHILLO.

It is not a bad memory that forgets injuries.

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

THE LOST ONE.

A 'Live-oaker,' employed on the St. John's River, in East Florida, left his cabin, situated on the banks of that stream, and, with his axe on his shoulder, proceeded towards the swamp in which he had several times before plied his trade of felling and squaring the giant trees that afforded the most valuable timber for naval architecture and other purposes.

At the season which is the best for this kind of labour, heavy fogs not unfrequently cover the country, so as to render it difficult for one to see farther than thirty or forty yards in any direction. The woods, too, present so little variety, that every tree seems the mere counterpart of each other; and the grass, when it has not been burnt, is so tall that a man of ordinary stature cannot see over it—whence it is necessary for him to proceed with great caution, lest he should unwillingly deviate from the ill-defined trail which he follows. Under such circumstances, the best woodmen are not unfrequently bewildered for a while; and I well remember that such an occurrence happened to myself, at a time when I had imprudently ventured to pursue a wounded quadruped, which led me some distance from the track.

The Live-oaker had been jogging onwards for several hours, and became aware that he must have travelled considerably more than the distance between his cabin and the 'hammock' which he desired to reach. To his alarm, at the moment when the fog dispersed, he saw the sun at its meridian height, and could not recognise a single object around him.

Young, healthy and active, he imagined that he had walked with more than usual speed, and had passed the place to which he was bound. He accordingly turned his back upon the sun, and pursued a different route, guided by a small trail. Time passed, and the sun headed his course; he saw it gradually descend in the west; but all around him continued as if enveloped with mystery. The huge grey

trees spread their giant boughs over him, the rank grass extended on all sides, not a living being crossed his path, all was silent and still, and the scene was like a dull and dreary dream of the land of oblivion.

The sun was now setting with a fiery aspect, and by degrees it sunk in its full circular form, as if giving warning of a sultry morrow. Myriads of insects, delighted at its departure, now filled the air on buzzing wings. Each piping frog arose from the muddy pool in which it had concealed itself; the squirrel retired to its hole, the crow to its roost, and, far above, the harsh croaking voice of the heron announced that, full of anxiety, it was wending its way to the miry interior of some distant swamp. Now the woods began to resound to the shrill cries of the owl; and the breeze, as it swept among the columnar steps of the forest trees, came laden with heavy and chilling dews. Alas! no moon with her silvery light shone on the dreary scene; and the Lost One, wearied and vexed, laid himself down on the damp ground. Prayer is always consolatory to man in every difficulty or danger, and the woodsman fervently prayed to his Maker, wished his family a happier night than it was his lot to experience, and, with a feverish anxiety, waited the return of day.

You may imagine the length of that cold, dull, moonless night. The poor man started on his feet, and, with a sorrowful heart, pursued a course which he thought might lead him to some familiar object, although, indeed, he scarcely knew what he was doing. No longer had he the trace of a track to guide him, and, yet, as the sun rose, he calculated the many hours of daylight he had before him, and the farther he went continued to walk the faster. But in vain were all his hopes; that day was spent in fruitless endeavours to regain the path that led to his house; and when night again approached, the terror that had been gradually spreading over his mind, together with the nervous debility induced by fatigue, anxiety and hunger, rendered him

almost frantic. He told me, that at this moment he beat his breast, tore his hair, and, had it not been for the piety with which his parents had in early life imbued his mind, and which had become habitual, would have cursed his existence. Famished as he now was, he laid himself on the ground, and fed on the weeds and grass that grew around him. That night was spent in the greatest agony and terror. 'I knew my situation,' he said to me. 'I was fully aware that unless Almighty God came to my assistance, I must perish in these uninhabited woods. I knew that I walked more than fifty miles, although I had not met with a brook, from which I could quench my thirst, or even allay the burning heat of my parched lips and blood-shot eyes. I knew that if I should not meet with some stream I must die. My axe was my only weapon, and although deer and bears now and then started up within a few yards, and even feet of me, not one of them could I kill; and although I was in the midst of abundance, not a mouthful did I expect to procure, to satisfy the cravings of my empty stomach. Sir, may God preserve you from ever feeling as I did the whole of that day!'

For several days after, no one can imagine the condition in which he was; for when he related to me this painful adventure, he assured me that he had lost all recollection of what had happened. 'God,' he continued, 'must have taken pity on me one day, for, as I ran wildly through those dreadful pine barrens, I met with a tortoise. I gazed upon it with amazement and delight, and, although I knew that were I to follow it undisturbed, it would lead me to some water, my hunger and thirst would not allow me to refrain from satisfying both, by eating its flesh and drinking its blood. With one stroke of my axe the beast was cut in two, and in a few moments I despatched all but the shell. Oh, sir, how much I thanked God, whose kindness had put the tortoise in my way. I felt greatly renewed. I sat down at the foot of a pine, gazed on the heavens, thought of my poor wife and children, and

again and again, thanked God for my life, for now I felt less distracted in mind, and more assured that before long I must recover my way, and get back to my home.'

The Lost One remained and passed the night at the foot of the same tree under which his repast had been made. Refreshed by a sound sleep, he started at dawn to resume his weary march. The sun rose bright, and he followed the direction of the shadows. Still the dreariness of the woods was the same, and he was on the point of giving up in despair, when he observed a raccoon lying squatted in the grass. Raising his axe, he drove it with such violence through the helpless animal, that it expired without a struggle. What he had done with the tortoise, he now did with the raccoon, the greater part of which he actually devoured at one meal. With more comfortable feelings, he then resumed his wanderings—his journey I cannot say—for, although in the possession of his faculties, and in broad daylight, he was worse off than a lame man groping his way in the dark out of a dungeon, of which he knew not where the door stood.

Days, one after another, passed—nay, weeks in succession. He fed now on cabbage trees, then on frogs and snakes. All that fell in his way was welcome and savoury. Yet he became daily more emaciated, until at length he could scarcely crawl. Forty days had elapsed, by his own reckoning, when he at last reached the banks of the river. His clothes in tatters, his once bright axe dimmed with rust, his face begrimed with beard, his hair matted, and his feeble frame little better than a skeleton covered with parchment, there he laid himself down to die. Amid the perturbed dreams of his fevered fancy, he thought he heard the noise of oars far away on the silent water. He listened, but the sounds died away on his ear. It was indeed a dream, the last glimmer of expiring hope.—The sound of oars awoke him from his lethargy. He listened so eagerly that the hum of a fly could not have escaped his ear. They were indeed the measured beats of oars, and now

joy to the forlorn soul! The sound of human voices thrilled to his heart, and awoke the tumultuous pulses of returning hope. On his knees did the eye of God see that poor man by the broad sill stream that glittered in the sunbeams, and human eyes soon saw him too, for round that headland covered with tangled brushwood boldly advances the little boat, propelled by its lusty rowers. The Lost One raises his feeble voice on high—it was a loud shrill scream of joy and fear. The rowers pause, and look around. Another, but feebler scream, and they observe him. It comes—his heart flutters, his sight is dimmed—his brain reels, he gasps for breath. It comes—it has run upon the beach, and the Lost One is found.

This is no tale of fiction, but the relation of an actual occurrence, which might be embellished, no doubt, but which is better in the plain garb of truth. The notes by which I recorded it were written in the cabin of the once lost Live-oaker, about four years after the painful incident occurred. His amiable wife and loving children were present on the recital, and never shall I forget the tears that flowed from their eyes as they listened to it; albeit, it had long been more familiar to them than a tale thrice told. Sincerely do I wish, good reader, that neither you nor I may ever elicit such sufferings, although, no doubt, such sympathy would be a rich recompense for them.

It only remains for me to say, that the distance between the cabin and the live oak hammock, to which the woodsman was bound, scarcely exceeded eight miles, while the part of the river at which he was found was thirty eight miles from his house. Calculating his daily wanderings at ten miles, we may believe that they amounted in all to four hundred. He must, therefore, have rambled in a circuitous direction, which people generally do in such circumstances. Nothing but the great strength of his constitution, and the merciful aid of his Maker, could have supported him for so long a time.

TRAVELS.

JERUSALEM.

By moonlight next morning we were on the way to the sacred city. For about three hours it led over the plain, and then ascending the hills became excessively disagreeable; in some parts so narrow that one horse only could proceed at a time, and that not always with safety, as the rains had made the rocky paths much worse than usual. At the end of nine hours, however, as we proceeded over the summit of a rugged hill, we beheld Jerusalem at a small distance before us. Its aspect certainly was not magnificent or inspiring, but sad and dreary.

On the east of the city runs the valley or glen of Jehoshaphat; that of Hinnom, which bounds the city on the south and west; and into these descend the steep sides of Mount Zion, on whose surface the city stands. To the north extends the plain of Jeremiah, the only level space around; it is covered partly with olive trees. It does not appear possible for the ancient city to have covered a larger space than the present, except by stretching to the north, along the plain of Jeremiah, because the modern walls are built nearly on the brink of the declivities of Zion and the adjoining hill. But the height of this hill is very small, for Jerusalem is on every side, except towards the north, overlooked by hills higher than the one whereon it stands. When about midway up Mount Olivet, you are on a level with the city walls, and the disparity towards the south is still greater. The form of the town is more like that of a square than any other, and its walls are lofty and strong.—There are five or six gates; the golden gate, the gates of Damascus, St. Stephen and Zion, and that of Bethlehem. Close to the latter is the tower of David, a place of considerable strength.

On reaching the gate of Bethlehem, we were speedily admitted, and after some research procured a lodging in the house of a native, not far from the walls and near the tower of

David. We had had enough of convents, and a traveller will find himself much more agreeably situated, and more at his ease, in living orientally than confined within the walls, and obliged to conform to the hours of a monastery. However, there is no avoiding one's fate. I had my divan and coffee, excellent wine, and music in the evening, and wished only to remain in peace. But in a day or two repeated messengers came from the superior of the convent urging my entry into it; it was so unusual for a traveller to lodge without, and so unsafe in those times, and he would come himself to remonstrate with me; so that I was fain to comply. They put me there into a little cold cell, with a single chair and table in it, and a small flock bed, as if I came to perform a pilgrimage. Here, however, it was my good fortune to meet with a most amiable traveller, a Mr. G., an Irish gentleman, whose companion had just left him for Europe.

The morning after my arrival was a very lovely one; and though it was in February, perfectly warm. I passed out of the gate of Bethlehem, and traversing part of the ravine beneath, ascended the mount of Judgment, on the south side of the city. How interesting was her aspect, beheld over the rocky valley of Hinnom! her gloomy walls encompassing mount Zion on every side; and as yet there was no sound to disturb the silence of the scene. The beautiful mount of Olives was on its right, and at its feet the valley of Jehoshaphat, amidst whose great rocks and trees stood the tomb of Zacharias, the last of the prophets that was slain; the only stream visible flowed from the fountain of Siloam, on the side of Zion opposite. It is true, the city beloved of God has disappeared, and with it all the hallowed spots once contained within its walls; and keen must be the faith that can now embrace their identity. Yet the face of nature still endures; the rocks, the mountains, lakes and valleys, are unchanged, save that loneliness and wildness are now where once were luxury and every joy; and though

their glory is departed, a high and mournful beauty still rests on many of these silent and romantic scenes. Amidst them a stranger will ever delight to wander, for there his imagination can seldom be at fault—the naked mountain, the untrodden plain, and the voiceless shore, will kindle into life around him, and his every step be filled with those deeds, through which guilt and sorrow passed away, and “life and immortality were brought to light.”

(To be continued)

MISCELLANEOUS.

EPITAPHS AND CHURCH-YARDS.

Who does not love to wander among the habitations of the dead, and read their varied inscriptions? Volumes of instruction and of curious information may be gleaned from grave-stones; but it is melancholy to observe the little care that is taken in our own country to preserve these, perchance the only memorials of the deceased. Our church-yards are, indeed, enclosed by ornamental and substantial palings—“the grass waves green and luxuriant above the ground, unprofaned by the footstep of the brute creation; but where is the pious hand to protect the tomb itself from the ravages of time, the vicissitudes of the seasons, and the dilapidations by accident. Where do we behold any of those simple, yet touching tributes of affection, which, in other countries, are paid at the shrine of departed genius or worth? It is a cold, cold philosophy that teaches to neglect such acts as useless and unavailing—that demonstrates that the body is but the prison-house of the soul—that when she quits this curious workmanship, and life no longer animates it, that then should cease all those feelings of veneration and respect with which before we were wont to regard it. If such be the effect—and we fear it is so—of modern philosophy—then may we well question our boasted superiority over the ancients—for they thought it not unworthy of the departed soul to embalm the body in which had

dwelt that soul, and to preserve it in splendid mausoleums as the once sacred deposit of a precious treasure.—(American paper)

EARLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION:

“I was the only surviving child of my parents. I was too young when they died to retain any distinct remembrance of the pious instructions they had given me, though, from the following circumstances, I am convinced that such instructions were given: that all my ideas of religion, though apparently recent in later life, seem always, in some indescribable manner, to connect themselves with the earliest scenes of my childhood: The very tent in which Abraham dwelt, in the plain of Mamre, is always pitched, in my imagination, in a wide field which was in view of my father's house; and Paradise, with all the blooming charms of Eden, are somehow strangely associated. in my fancy, with the smiling and fruitful garden of the little rectory. In addition to this—the pale, sweet face of my beloved mother always offers itself, whenever I think of a dying saint; and even amid the darkest days of my youth, I used to think of my father with anguish, whenever I had done any thing amiss.”—MRS. CRAWLEY.

MARRIED LIFE.

Married life is the source of unnumbered advantages. To attend to the nursing, and at least to the early instruction of children, and rear a healthy progeny in the ways of piety and usefulness; to preside over the family, and regulate the income allotted to its maintenance; to make home the sweet refuge to a husband fatigued by intercourse with a jarring world; to be his enlightened companion, and the chosen friend of his heart; these are woman's duties, and delightful ones they are, if, happily, she be wedded to a man whose soul can duly estimate her worth, and who will bring his share to the common stock of felicity.

The late bishop Heber, in the narrative of his journey through the upper province of his diocese, relates that one of his boatmen every day set apart a certain portion of his rice, and bestowed it on the birds, saying, "It is not I, but my child that feeds you." He had lost an only son some years before; and the boy having been in the custom of feeding the birds in this way, the parent never omitted doing so at sunset in his name.

POETRY.

THE DYING BOY.

I knew a boy, whose infant feet had trod
Upon the blossoms of some seven springs,
And when the eighth came round, and called
him out
To revel in its light, he turned away,
And sought his chamber, to lie down and die.
'Twas night—he summoned his accustomed
friends,
And, in this wise, bestowed his last bequest :
" Mother—I'm dying now !
There is deep suffocation in my breast,
As if some heavy hand my bosom pressed ;
And on my brow

I feel the cold sweat stand ;
My lips grow dry and tremulous, and my breath
Comes feebly up. O tell me is this death ?
Mother, your hand—

Here lay it on my wrist,
And place the other thus beneath my head,
And say, sweet mother say, when I am dead
Shall I be missed ?

Never beside your knee
Shall I kneel down again at night to pray,
Nor with morning wake and sing the lay
You taught to me.

Oh, at the time of prayer,
When you look round and see a vacant seat,
You will not wait then for my coming feet :
You'll miss me there."

" Father, I'm going home !
To the good home you spake of, that blest land
Where it is one summer always, and
Storms do not come.

I must be happy then ;
From pain and death you say I shall be free,
That sickness never enters there, and we
Shall meet again !"

" Brother—the little spot
I used to call my garden, where long hours

We've staved to watch the budding things and
flowers,
Forget it not !

Plant there some box or pine.
Something that lives in winter, and will be
A verdant offering to my memory,
And call it mine !"

" Sister—my young rose tree,
That all the spring has been my pleasant care,
Just putting forth its leaves so green and fair,
I give to thee.

And when the roses bloom,
I shall be gone away, my short life done ;
But will you not bestow a single one
Upon my tomb ?"

Now, mother, sing the tune
You sang last night: I'm weary and must
sleep.

Who was it called my name ? Nay, do not
weep.

You'll all come soon !

Morning spread over earth her rosy wings—
And that meek sufferer, cold and ivory pale,
Lay on his couch asleep. The gentle air
Came through the open window, freighted
with

The savoury labours of the early spring—
It marred not his slumbers. He was dead !

NOTICES.

We have received an anonymous poetical
effusion, entitled " Death of the youngest
child," but we cannot insert it until we hear
from the author. We take this opportunity
of requesting that correspondents will send
their names with all communications intended
for insertion in the Instructor.

Those who intend patronising this work,
and who have not yet given their names, will
much oblige us by doing so with as little delay
as possible. Lists remain at the Union De-
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