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THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

“To please the fancy—and improve the mind.”

VOL. I.]

HALIFAX, N. S. JUNE 26, 1835.

[No. 24]

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE SPIDER.

The spider has many enemies; and hence its web is always in danger of being deranged and damaged; to meet this inconvenience, nature has furnished the insect with a magazine of materials for occasional repairs, and which, although frequently exhausted, still continues to be replenished: this reservoir, however, is drained in time. When spiders grow old, their supply of gum is dried up; but even when this calamity happens, the cunning creature is not altogether destitute of resources which avail it for some time longer. A crafty old spider, having no longer the means of securing a subsistence, seeks out a young one, to which it communicates its wants and necessities; on which the other, either out of respect for old age, or from a dread of old pinners, resigns its place, and spins a new web in another situation. But if the old spider can find none of its species which will, either from love or fear, resign its net, it must then perish for want of subsistence.

The water spider spins no web to catch its prey; but, nevertheless, offers one of the most singular objects of contemplation. If we possessed no other evidence that the world had been planned and created by the intelligent Being, the habits, proceedings, and instincts of this little creature would alone be sufficient to prove the fact. As soon as it has caught its prey on the shore, it dives to the bottom of the waters, and there devours its booty. It is, therefore, an amphibious animal; although it appears more fitted to live in contact with the atmosphere than with the water. The diving bell is a modern invention; and few facts excite our wonder more than the possibility of a man's being enabled to live and move at the bottom of the ocean. This triumph of reason over the unfriendly element, however, was anticipated by an insect—the spider in question. This creature spins some loose threads, which it attaches to the leaves of aquatic plants; it then varnishes them with glutinous secretion, which resembles liquid glass, and is so elastic as to admit of considerable distention and contraction; it next lays a coating of this same substance over its own body, and underneath this coating introduces a bubble of air. Naturalists conjecture it has the power of drawing this air in at the anus from the atmosphere at the surface of the pool; but the precise mode which it is separated from the body of the atmosphere, and introduced under the pellicle covering the insect's body, has not been

clearly ascertained. Thus clothed, and shining like a ball of quicksilver, it darts through the waters to the spot in which it has fixed its habitation, and disengaging the bubble from under the pellicle, it dexterously introduces it into a web formed at the bottom of the water, and at each journey filling its habitation with a fresh bubble of air, at length the lighter completely expels the heavier fluid, and the insect takes possession of an aerial habitation, commodious and dry, finished in the very midst of the waters. It is about the size and shape of half a pigeon's egg. From this curious chamber the spider hunts, searching sometimes the waters and sometimes the land for its prey, which, when obtained, is transported to this sub-aquatic mansion, and devoured at leisure.—*Family Library.*

MORAL SCIENCE.

The law of love is to a moral universe what the law of gravitation is to a material creation. Each must be as extensive as the kingdom it governs. Gravitation governs not only systems, but atoms of matter.—Love to God and our neighbor must govern not only nations and individuals, but every thought, motive, design, feeling and emotion of every individual.

The law of gravitation cannot be violated without disturbance in matter. The law of love cannot be violated, without still greater disturbance, and absolute suffering among moral beings.

The whole material universe, every system, sun, planet, and the minutest atom of matter, all that can be brought within the view of the telescope, or the microscope, yields implicit and constant obedience to the law of gravitation. There are hence, order, regularity, harmony, beauty and grandeur among systems and atoms of matter.

In the moral creation there is almost a universal and constant violation of the law of love—of doing as we would be done by—of doing good to our neighbor, making our neighbor the whole intelligent and animate universe. For the law of love or benevolence, is substituted the law of selfishness; and selfishness begets ambition, envy, hatred, revenge; and they produce disturbance, commotions, contentions, war, disease, ruin and death.

When the fundamental law of all moral science, and the only law, which can regulate a moral creation, receives the same implicit and constant obedience, which matter renders to its law, the order, regularity, beauty, harmony and sublimity in the moral

universe, will infinitely surpass any and all the operations, which ever were or ever can be carried on, among atoms, worlds, planets, suns or systems of matter. Then will be the millennium.—*Family Lyceum.*

A CATASTROPHE AT CHURCH.

A taste for music, as is often the case, was conjoined with the talent of Robert Douglas for drawing; and among other modes of indulging it, he had joined an amateur choir of gentlemen who sung the service every Sunday in a certain church.—That church was the one at which Mr. Evesham officiated—where cousin Sydney was to preach on the coming Sunday, and though his natural feelings prompted him to fly as far as possible from the place, he resolved to command them, and to appear in the orchestra as usual—though the effort was so great that he heard the beating of his heart, as distinctly as the treading of his feet, when he entered the church-yard. He was not aware of a party entering the holy precincts by an opposite gate and about two stones throw further from the church than he was. These were Mrs. Furnival and all her family.—Mr. Evesham in his canonicals, cousin Sydney and Captain Cronie; in short, the group of all others, that he would have least wished to have encountered. Mrs. Furnival, with Alice leaning upon her arm, walked the first, between the two clergymen, a little hurried by the breeze, which, however, to compensate for its boisterousness, did full justice to the well-turned ankle and neat boots. “Yes, cousin,” said she, “this is a fine old church: the tower is one of the very few remains of antiquity.—” “Not at this door to-day,” said Mr. Evesham, we have just time to enjoy the sea view—and will go in through the baptistery. Ah! yonder is Douglas with his psalm book Almighty God!—look!—look!—

All eyes followed his finger, as, rigid with horror, he stood rooted to the spot, pointing towards the building. The tower, which had resisted so many gales and the safety whereof was in no wise lessened, (so knowing people had said) by its swinging to and fro, whenever the full peal of bells was rung—seemed for one instant to lean over the body of the church, a hand's length further than it was wont;—so far as to be beyond the possibility of recovering its balance. The compact stone work began to tremble, as if agitated by some inward convulsion—the unconscious fingers within applied all their strength to the ropes—then the outer side of the spire was sent with a sudden gash; and, with a long deafening sound, its whole

length fell at once upon the roof of the church, which gave way beneath it, like a cobweb under a stone. A stifled shriek from those within the building—a piercing cry of agony and horror, from those collected in the church yard—and one or two persons rushing madly out, maimed and bloody—and the catastrophe seemed complete! So sudden had it been, that its spectators could hardly trust the evidence of their senses; and, sick with the excitement of the moment, reeled wildly to and fro, like men drunk with wine! It was a blessing, for which the congregation could never be sufficiently thankful, that this calamity happened before the service began. One or two old persons and a body of children belonging to some charity school had, indeed, been seen to enter.—Immediately, as soon as the horror of the moment had subsided, a crowd of able-bodied men, (for the church-yard was presently filled with a multitude of people,) made their way into the building through the chancel doors. They found that only that part of the roof, which had covered the south aisle, was left entire:—and that so overloaded that it was momentarily expected to crash down upon their heads. The rest of the interior of the church was filled with a confused mass of rubbish; blue sky above. Heedless of the warning of falling plaster from the small sound portion which yet remained, they began to force their way among the ruins and to encourage with assurances of help those who, it was hoped, might yet be spared. In the north aisle, which was almost entirely choaked with beams, slates and enormous stones, they heard the weak cry of a child, and a groan which suddenly died away:—to that point the labourers turned the full force of their exertions. Meanwhile the windows were covered with the faces of those who had clambered up from without and were watching their proceedings with agonized interest. At last, a strong man, a mason by trade, was seen to insinuate himself between two perilous looking masses of ruin, in the hope of finding some clear space within, or some means of delivering those who might be there buried alive. It was in vain—he encountered a mass of destruction, to remove which would require the labour of hours; he had fallen upon some crushed thing, for he came out with his clothes and hands stained with blood! A shriek burst from the crowd that filled the windows; and many a miserable woman knelt down upon the tomb-stones and prayed, in the bitterness of anguish, that her child might not be counted among the slain; but, alas! it was soon ascertained that one detachment of the charity children had entered the church a few moments before the spire fell, and of these only three or four came forth alive! Mr. Evesham was the first to remember that Robert Douglas had been seen to go in at the belfry-door, and that he had never re-

turned. Nothing could prevent this excellent man from forcing his way into the thickest of the ruin, calling upon his friend to answer,—if he were yet alive. Capt. Crovie was by his side; as for the rest of the party, they had been escorted home in fits by the considerate cousin Sydney, who judged wisely that “it was no place for ladies,” and led them from the spot. Meanwhile, as every instant narrowed, so did it also deepen the interest of survivors. Gradually it became known, among the crowd, who must yet be among the ruins. One or two who had been extricated, had been carried home in the midst of their weeping families, too much awe-stricken to rejoice at their preservation;—it became too, more certain that those who had not been drawn or dug out, must have perished; and Mr. Evesham was on the point of leaving the building, with the most miserable fears for the fate of poor Robert,—when, on again venturing into the corner of the south aisle to which a roof still remained,—a low dull sound, as of a voice trying to make itself heard through many stones, reached his ear. He listened again, in an agony of attention—it was repeated. “Hither! hither!” shouted he to the masons, “there is some one alive in this corner.” They obeyed his summons, and Martin, the strong man already mentioned, broke in the baptistery door, by throwing himself against it with all his weight, crying out in his loudest voice, “Help at hand!—who is within there?” and listening acutely for an answer, whilst he watched with an upward eye, the roof above, which was now perceptibly bulging downwards.—The same voice as before, answered,—but they could distinguish no words. The space within the baptistery door was entirely filled with enormous fragments of stone work and mortar. The men held an anxious consultation. “It is as much as any one’s life is worth to attempt to pull them down,—but, poor fellow! there must be some one jammed upon the belfry stairs, and we must get him out at all events.” But how to get him out was the question. It was feared that their very attempt to deliver him who was immured, might itself hasten his destruction: for to remove one stone, was to incur the risk of bringing twenty after it. Nevertheless, as this was their only chance, they resolved to try it. Mr. Evesham took a pickaxe and crow-bar, and worked among them: and in the course of an hour, they had with cautious exertion, penetrated one of the layers of the ruin, behind which they supposed their victim to be imprisoned. They were rewarded for their labour, by receiving an audible answer from the object of their search, that Robert Douglas was within, and as yet unhurt; though so hemmed in that he could hardly move, and that he feared any further attempt on their parts might end in crushing

him to death. Mr. Evesham turned deadly faint on hearing these words:—the risk and peril had now reached their most critical point. “Indeed, Sir,” cried Martin, “you can do no good here! you had better go out into the air, while we endeavour—.” He was interrupted by the sudden falling of a shower of dust.—“Lord have mercy upon us! we are all dead men!” cried one of the masons; but with true English stout heartedness, they refused to abandon their work of mercy. It was well,—for the cause of this new alarm was presently evident; through a narrow cranny of the ruin, a damp clammy hand was suddenly forced. “Is Mr. Evesham there?” said the same voice within; “I fancied I heard him speak.” “It is I—Robert—I am here—we are at work to deliver you.” “You cannot,” replied the other faintly, but firmly, “I hear already something giving away. Shake hands, Sir! for the last time; let me have your blessing, and I pray of you all to leave me, for charity’s sake!” “Leave you!” cried the men, encouraged by hearing him speak, so near them, “that we will not—till we have brought you out. Gregory—that bar here! Allan, help Mr. Evesham, he is fainting like!” The clergyman was now in that state of excitement which rendered his presence dangerous in their present imminent peril. He grasped Robert’s hand eagerly. “Bless—bless”—he sobbed out. “Come away, Sir! come away!” shouted Martin, “you must go! some one is calling you without; and you, inside there, draw in your hand. Now, boys! death or deliverance!” Unable to endure the tumult of his feelings any longer, the divine suffered himself to be pushed back through the crevice, and was, in another second, in the open air.—He was awaited by a no less moving scene than the one he had just quitted. The crowd eagerly calling him by name, made way for him to pass to the spot to which old Douglas had been brought. He had heard of the accident, and, crawled from his sick chamber, and dressed in his house garments, made his way thither to ascertain the fate of his son. He had scarcely entered the gates, when, wearied by so extraordinary an exertion, he fell to the ground. Some compassionate persons supported him, and a chair was brought from a neighbouring house,—for he resisted every attempt to remove him, with a violence even more dangerous than his exposure to the open air; and sat, with his eyes strained towards the church, ejaculating such broken sentences of anguish—for he durst not pray—as made those who surrounded him tremble. As soon as Mr. Evesham approached him he seized him convulsively by both hands. Miss Annesly, who had lingered behind the rest of the party, was supporting his head,—for his exhaustion was momentarily increasing, and he cried out vehemently, shedding torrents

of tears—"Pray for me! pray for me!—will he be saved?" Mr. Evesham, summoning all his self-command, could not frame one sentence of comfort; but he mingled his tears with those of the miserable old man, who grew more tremulous and incoherent every moment, accusing himself in the moist poignant language of severity and injustice; calling upon his son, and promising him the fullest forgiveness and affection if he only yet lived! At length a low murmur ran through the crowd; it gave way,—some one staggered forwards. Mr. Evesham dared hardly look—but it was Robert Douglas—alive, and unwounded, though as pale and as ghastly as if he had been entombed for a month. In an instant, he was on his knees before his father; in another, the old man, so tremulously stricken by remorse and anguish, "fell upon his neck and kissed him," but *could not speak*. He was borne home and laid upon his own bed; but the conflict had been too strong for feeble nature to struggle through. He never spoke again, and expired quietly that night in the arms of his son!—*Sketches of a Sea Port Town.*

A VISIT TO THE INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.

New-York, 15th June 1835.

"Saturday was a beautiful day—warm, balmy, and mellow. On the afternoon we made a visit, in company with a manager, to this institution, one of the most interesting in the city."

"A little beyond the place of the late Mr. Eckford, on the eighth avenue, we reached the Institution for the blind, a beautiful situation on a gentle elevation between the two avenues, and at a short distance from the North River. We passed through the grounds and garden, and reached the house. Here we found sixteen or seventeen—there are thirty-two in all—blind young persons, from 5 to 15, all as happy as princes, employed in various occupations, industrious, virtuous, pious, and practising all the humane virtues. Their musical teacher, accompanied with their voices, played several beautiful pieces of s. red and other music. The little girls and boys sung with wonderful precision and harmony—even far beyond what can be heard in many of our churches.—It is remarkable what a fine ear the blind readily acquire for music. It seems as if the Almighty, in taking away one sense, bestows on them a larger portion of another, to balance accounts."

"I observed with interest several of the blind boys sporting and playing on the green swarth." Saturday afternoon is a play day, and they enjoy it much. They seemed to know every nook and corner of the grounds to perfection. They would walk about, turn corners, wind round the walks, as if they could smell their way over the labyrinth."

"Come," said my benevolent conductor,

(who seemed to take as much pride in the Institution as a father would in his family,) 'come, I must show you our work shop.' We descended into the work shop. Two of the blind, full grown persons were briskly at work, and disputing at the same time with great earnestness the question of slavery: the rest were listening. They did not discover us at our first entrance, but they soon smelled us out, and ceased instantly. 'All right,' said our conductor, 'let free inquiry have full scope,—discuss everything, and hold fast what is right and good.' We then examined their several occupations: here one was weaving mats, there another carpeting. In one corner, several were engaged in preparing canes for making wicker baskets; in another, the baskets themselves were taking shape under their hands. All sorts of industry were in motion. Every thing looked comfortable and happy.—'Come,' said my conductor, 'let us go to the store room.' We did so. It was full of mats, baskets, and all sorts of curious domestic articles, the fruits of their industry."

"We then entered the school-room. Here were the several desks, there the benches. 'Look at this book.' I looked, it was one of the books printed especially for the blind—The Gospel according to St. John.' Its letters are raised on one side, and their form somewhat different from the Roman character."

"To enumerate and describe all the apartments of the Institution—the various employments of the pupils—their several comforts—their particular occupations, would exceed our limits. It is only a sketch that we can give."

"Come" said my companion again 'let us see the bathing house.' We descended to the right, crossed the yard, and entered a small house. The basins and towels were all regularly ranged in their places, and the water supplied from a pump close by. Every thing looked neat. 'Do you see that boy?' asked my companion. 'The small one.' Yes. 'That is our mathematician—put any question to him—recollect he is only about nine years of years,' I put a question—'if a house,' said I, 'has thirty-five windows, and in each window twelve pains of glass, how many panes of glass are there in the whole house?'—'420,' said the little fellow, as quick as lightning. 'Suppose,' said my conductor, 'a pole is 11 feet 9 inches in the water—13 feet 6 inches in the mud under the water, and 17 feet 8 inches above the water, how long is it?'—'42 feet 11 inches,' said he. We tried him in Geography—he was equally prompt and accurate. 'Where is London?' 'In England,' said he—'Where is Dublin?' 'on both sides of the Liffy'—what is the course to Constantinople?' 'You sail,' said he 'across the Atlantic, then south to the Straits of Gibraltar, then up the Mediterranean to the

Archipelago; then pass the Dardanelles, then up the sea of Marmora, then into the Golden Horn on your right, and you are at Constantinople.' 'Very well,' said I, 'for so little a fellow.'

"The Institution is one of the most valuable, interesting and useful, in the city of New York. It is indebted altogether to private benevolence. The building and grounds were the gift of Mr. Boerman, of the firm of Boerman & Johnson. They are worth 50,000 dollars. Its locality is one of the most delightful on the Island, high, airy, and pure."—*Herald.*

INDUSTRY REWARDED.—A violent Welch squire having taken offence at a poor curate, who employed his leisure hours in mending clocks and watches, applied to the Bishop of St. Asaph with a formal complaint against him for impiously carrying on a trade contrary to the statute. His lordship having heard the complaint, told the squire he might depend upon the strictest justice being done in the case; accordingly the mechanic divine was sent for a few days after, when the Bishop asked him "How he dared to disgrace the diocese by becoming a mender of clocks and watches?"

The other, with all humility, answered, "To satisfy the wants of a wife and ten children."

"That won't do with me;" rejoined the prelate, "I will inflict such a punishment upon you as shall make you leave off your pitiful tale, I promise you;" and immediately called in his secretary, ordered him to make out a presentation for the astonished curate to a living of at least one hundred and fifty pounds per annum.

WEEKLY MIRROR.

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 1835.

Arrivals from the United States since our last have brought London dates to the 15th and Paris to the 13th May.

Respecting the Constitution, we find the following paragraph in the Liverpool Chronicle of the 15th.

The late ambassador from the United States to France, Mr. Livingston is sojourning for a few days with his family at Plymouth. His Excellency arrived here on Wednesday, in the Constitution, American frigate, 50 guns, 460 men, Capt. Elliot, bound to the United States from Havre. The frigate fired a salute, which was answered by the San Josef guard ship, Capt. Falcon, C. B. the Commander, having previously gone along side the Constitution. A royal salute was also fired from the batteries of the Citadel in compliment to the American ambassador.

In England, the Journals appear to be wholly occupied on the subject of recent elections. Parliament re-assembled on 12th May.

POETRY.

THE VOICE OF SPRING.

By Mary Howitt.

I am coming little maiden,
With the pleasant sunshine laden;
With the honey for the bee;
With the blossom for the tree;
With the flower and with the leaf;
Till I come the time is brief.

I am coming, I am coming!
Hark, the little bee is humming,
See, the lark is soaring high
In the bright and sunny sky,
And the gnats are on the wing;
Little maiden, now is Spring!

See the yellow catkins cover
All the slender willows over;
And on mossy banks so green
Star-like primroses are seen;
Every little stream is bright;
All the orchard trees are white.

Hark! the little lambs are bleating,
And the cawing rooks are meeting
In the elms,—a noisy crowd;
And all birds are singing loud;
And the first white butterfly,
In the sun goes flitting by.

Turn thy eyes to earth and heaven!
God for thee the Spring has given,
Taught the birds their melodies,
Clothed the earth, and clear'd the skies,
For thy pleasure or thy food,
Pour thy soul in gratitude!

ROAD TO KNOWLEDGE.

There are a thousand ways to gain instruction. God has given us teachers all along our pathway in life. We can obtain it from the humble flower as well as in the quiet school-room; from the warm sunshine, as from the page of history. When every thing thus produces for us happiness, then we are obeying the highest law of our nature, and progressing onward to entire perfection.

But many men, as well as children, seem to have a mistaken notion of education.—They talk of it as being something which is completed before it is scarcely begun. They tell you it is ended in our youthful days, when we escape from the confined school, and have attained the size of a man. But a more absurd idea can never be conceived.—Education is the work of a life; aye, and I may add, of another life beyond the present. But you will ask, *how* we may learn from all these things,—those objects which have neither life nor the power of speech, can they be teachers? But you mistake, my friends. I would hope to lead you along (by slow degrees it is true,) so that those very things may become your most eloquent and powerful teachers. Then these beautiful works of the Creator will appear to

you in a new light. You will never be solitary or alone, for you can learn to converse with all God's works, and thus be led to adore the Maker of them every hour you live.

I would teach you by a simple story how children have made themselves, by the aid of a kind parent, familiar with those subjects which not only interested but instructed them, so that they were always happy; for the inquisitive mind, when directed properly, feeling its wants, learns *when* and *how* they may be applied. I hope you will follow me in my story, that you may be thus benefited.—*Juv. Rep.*

THOMAS JENKINS.

Thomas Jenkins was the son of an African king on the coast of Guinea, who took it into his head to send his son to England for his education. The British captain to whom the king consigned him, and who gave him the name of Thomas Jenkins, died soon after he returned home, and Jenkins was thrown destitute upon the world. A farmer who was a very distant relative of the captain, at length took him home with him, and employed him in rocking the cradle, looking after the poultry, pigs, &c. He was successively advanced to the offices of cowherd and teamster. When he went to live with the farmer, he could hardly understand a word of English, but he very soon acquired a good knowledge of the common dialect.

After he became a 'stout boy,' he was transferred to another gentleman, where he became a sort of Jack-of-all trades. He was cowherd, stable boy, errand boy, or anything else convenient. He was soon found to have a taste for learning, and to have actually made some progress. How he acquired his first lesson nobody ever knew. Perhaps it was through the medium of the servants.

The lady of the house was surprised to find that he had a strange fondness for candle ends. Every scrap of wick and tallow that he fell in with, was secreted and taken away to his loft above the stable; and unpleasant suspicions began to be raised against him. On watching him, at one time, after he had retired to his den, it was found to the great astonishment of all, that he was engaged with a book and slate, in making rude imitations of the letters of the alphabet. It was also found that he kept an old fiddle by him; and that it cost the horses many sleepless nights.

His master now put him to an evening school, where he made such progress as astonished all who knew it; and though constantly occupied, still, during the day, he soon began to instruct himself in Latin and Greek. A boy in the neighbourhood lent him many books; and the family and others favoured him. Without the means of any regular instruction, he soon gained a toler-

able knowledge of Latin and Greek, and began the study of Mathematics.

His eye now turned toward a dictionary; and going one night to an auction, he (with the assistance of another boy, and about a shilling from a gentleman who stood by,) bid off one.

When he was twenty years of age, a vacancy occurring in a small parish school, among other candidates for the office, Jenkins, with a heap of books under his arm, made his appearance. The committee were surprised, but on examining him, and the testimonials of his character he brought, his knowledge was found so thorough, and his morals so correct, that he was received in preference to the other candidates. The Presbytery, however, in prejudice voted him out again; but the circumstances produced so much excitement that an 'opposition school' was soon got up, and Jenkins was placed at the head of it.

The result was most happy. In his method of communicating knowledge and of governing his school, he was excellent; and he was beloved by all his pupils. No teacher ever possessed a kinder disposition or better temper. Five days of every week were spent in the school, and the sixth he occupied in walking four or five miles, and reciting his own lessons to another teacher.

By conducting the school one or two years, he was able to save nearly a hundred dollars. Now it was that he began to think of spending a winter at the college. Many were surprised at this, and among the rest the professors, most of whom generously relinquished their fees. One gentleman perceiving what the bent of his mind was, gave him a draft upon a merchant in the city for whatever money he wanted. Having spent the winter in Edinburgh, he returned, once more, to his professional duties.

The sequel of his history is not very well known. It appears, however, that he was deputed by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, as a missionary to Mauritius, and that he still resides there. He entered this field of labor about ten years ago. It were greatly to be wished he had been restored by some benevolent society to his native friends and country, where his influence in civilizing and instructing his fellow men would probably have been much greater than in Mauritius.

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