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THE INSTRUCTOR.

No. XX.]

MONTREAL, SEPT. 9, 1835.

[PRICE 2s.]

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

FRANCIS MORIER,

A SKETCH.

“The ample proposition that hope makes,
In all thy designs begun on earth below,
Fails in the promised largeness.”

FRANCIS MORIER was born of poor parents, who died during his infancy, leaving him nothing but their blessing. But God was kind to the orphan, and his young years knew not the want of these dear friends, in the tender attentions of a pious uncle, who, though doomed to walk in the valley of life, and on scanty means to support a family of his own, was yet willing to labour the more diligently to provide for the wants of his brother's darling child.

The grandfather of the subject of this sketch was a man of considerable intelligence and worldly wealth, but the clouds of adversity gathered thick and dark around: some commercial speculations in which he embarked failed, and he was left a wreck; add to this, that the comfort of his home was cruelly broke in upon by the flagitious conduct of two of his sons, who, breaking through the bonds of moral obligation, sought a present aggrandisement at the expense of every thing honest and honourable. One of them had been apprehended, convicted, and condemned, for a house-breaking, attended with circumstances of atrocious aggravation: the other had in the meantime disappeared. It was in this situation of affairs, when broken in fortune, disgraced by the conduct of his family, and shunned by relations and pretended friends, that he determined to bury his disgrace and

sorrow in the humble retirement of some distant village. A settlement being obtained from his creditors, which left him about £200, he immediately put his scheme into execution. Having rented a small farm, he, his wife, and two remaining sons, settled in the beautiful hamlet of Læmeen. The old man did not long outlive this change, for ere three months were past the daisy was blooming on his grave. It was perhaps well it was so, for, whether arising from their new mode of life, the badness of the ground, or the badness of the season, the survivors were doomed to new misfortunes. Their crops failed and all went wrong—the wife soon followed the husband; and the brothers were left alone: bowing submissively to the will of providence, without murmuring, they doubled their diligence, and by indefatigable industry strove to keep themselves somewhat independent. But their praiseworthy exertions were vain—they had to abandon the farm, and seek for a dwelling elsewhere. Now used to an agricultural occupation, and having no other resource, they, with heavy hearts, were compelled to descend to the lower rank of cottars; but, while reduced to this alternative, the night before leaving their unpropitious abode, they kneeled down together in private, and, taking each other by the hand, thanked God, that while he was pleased to try them with affliction, ‘their bread had been given them, and their water had been sure.’

On the morrow they separated for the first time with many tears, the father of Francis Morier departing to a considerable distance, while the other took a neat cottage, not far from the unproductive farm. Although to men's eyes they seemed to be forsaking the blessings of life, it was far otherwise, and the truth began to be realized to its full extent in

their appearance. Happiness disdains not the poverty of the poor, but in love is found bestowing upon them her golden favours. The brothers married; labour was their inheritance but health and contentment smiled on their toil, and thankful for the good afforded here, they looked forward with the eye of hope to that better good in the land afar off; and pilgrims, from the snares of earth they sojourned in joy to their Father's house.

But we must return from the brothers to that son who was every way worthy such a relationship. Francis grew up as fair a flower as ever adorned the regions of poverty, his aptitude to learn was remarkable, and his sweetness of temper made him a universal favourite; these traits in his character became household words, and "as good and as clever as Frank Morier," was the highest commendation either teacher or parent could bestow upon the young. His uncle loved him as his own, and felt all a father's pride at the praise which he every where received. But it was not the will of heaven that he should see the promise of so fair a childhood fulfilled—the uncle was suddenly called from the scene below to his reward above, and had scarcely time to say "God bless and protect those I leave behind," ere the grim messenger took him away.

The struggles of the bereaved family were at first great, but by the exertions of the several members, and a blessing from on high, they were enabled to enjoy much of their usual comfort. Years sped on, and the pledge of childhood was redeemed in a youth whose piety and judgement gave reason to hope a yet brighter manhood.—He had borne when a child an unobtrusive and studious character, and he retained it now; instead of indulging in the pleasures natural to his age and situation, reading was his delight, and in addition to the very few books of his own, those of the minister and schoolmaster of the village were at all times at his service; and although collectively his resources were far from extensive, they aided in strengthening and expanding his mind far above the generality of those filling similar

stations. He might be seen on a summer's evening, after literally earning his bread 'by the sweat of his brow' wandering to some retired and beautiful spot, with a favourite author, and there, in the bosom of nature, communing with the 'mighty dead;' or, sitting in deep abstraction, wrapt in the mantle of his own thoughts. But his love of books was far from making him careless or indifferent to the interests or pleasures of the rest of the domestic circle; so far from it, he was ever ready to sacrifice his own will, to make himself either useful or agreeable. His cousins were his juniors by some years, and to cultivate their springing intellect, and give a proper direction to their enjoyment, afforded him very high gratification, and not unfrequently foregoing his own intentions, he might be observed with one or two of his little relations passing along the romantic avenue which led by the old church, while they, rejoicing in his company, seemed the glad representatives of happy unsophisticated innocence. But the most pleasing spectacle which one could wish to witness, was to see him on the Sabbath with his widowed aunt and her family proceeding to the house of God—there was something so tender, so affectionate in his manner, that all noticed, all spoke of it; and there was no one who did not breathe a silent aspiration for his welfare.

It is not at all wonderful that one possessing a character like that which we have been noticing, should entertain a desire of becoming a minister of the gospel, and for long Francis had nourished the hope that a favouring providence would give him the means of prosecuting an academical course of study; for to serve God in his church was his highest ambition—the burden of his earthly longings. Hitherto he had hid this wish 'in the secrecy of his own breast.' 'I will not,' he would say, 'make other feel by feeling with me—I will not sacrifice the peace and comfort of dear warm hearted relations; by letting their goodness know that I cherish so great a wish, without the possibility of its realization. No! no! this were vainly

cruel; the future is uncertain, and may have all in store.' These were the sentiments he indulged, and

'Thus he lingered to survey,
The promised joys of life's unmeasured way.'

But when he saw himself advancing in years, and no prospect of his speedily entering college appeared, a gloom, in spite of himself, began to settle on his brow, and although he endeavoured to hide his feelings, it was begun to be noted that Frank was not what he used to be. His sweetness of disposition was not changed—he was the same affable obliging being he had ever been—he had no complaint—but a melancholy in his words, and the paleness of his cheek told, alas! too plainly, the working of a secret sorrow. It was with deep regret and alarm, his friends began to observe this to them unaccountable change—every expedient which tenderness could suggest was had recourse to with no apparent effect. It was to no purpose that the surgeon of the hamlet assured them that this disease proceeded from inquietude of mind. The tenor of his life seemed to them a tale without incident, and they could fix on no circumstance as the cause; besides they had the word of Francis himself, who was not known to lie, that nothing extraordinary had happened to him. The surgeon, although satisfied in his mind that his skill was unavailing, prescribed some simple medicines, and withdrew; for who can

“—— minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidotes
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart.”

Time, which waits not the completion of our griefs, rolled silently on, and sadness was now the never failing companion of him who experienced in all its bitterness, how “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.”

When labouring under severe depression of spirits, a small sum of money which, by the strictest economy, he had contrived to save, was lost; a professedly needy friend had re-

ceived it in the hour of his alleged necessity on the solemn assurance of repayment by a certain day. He proved to be an impostor, and left the vicinity with more than one debt unaccounted for. By this shock his expectations were blasted at the very root, and thenceforward a more awful alteration than melancholy began to be visible; his words and actions occasionally betrayed a mind unhinged, and whisper gave birth to louder language, expressing that poor Francis Morier was sometimes insane.

(To be continued.)

ASTRONOMY.

THE APPROACHING COMET.

Alluding to the approaching comet, the Edinburgh Review says:

We must not expect to be revisited by that body of portentous aspect and gigantic magnitude which spread terror amongst the people of the fifteenth century. Happily the light of science has dissipated these vain superstitions. Since astronomy has passed from the hands of priests and historians into those of geometers, Nature, immutable in her laws, and grand in her simplicity, seems to have obeyed, in the succession of her phenomena, an habitual order, from which she never departs. That passion, in the excitement of which mankind so much delights, will still be stimulated, — not, however, as formerly, accompanied by vain terrors raised by a physical prodigy, but accompanied by sentiments of the highest admiration at these powers of thought, by the exercise of which the day is appointed at which a star shall return to us from such enormous distances, that, for three fourths of a century, it has transcended the limits of our system. It is doubtless not one of the miracles of science least to be admired, nor one of the proofs of the progress of the human mind least striking to behold this comet, formerly the terror of mankind, now waited for with impatience by the learned. And in these times, when information is so widely diffused, we may hope,

perchance, that men of the world themselves may partake in these high sentiments; and that, relying upon the assurances of the learned they may seize the opportunity which thus presents itself, to judge, by the evidence of their own eyes, of the actual state of astronomical science, and of the high degrees of perfection to which it has attained.

“ One of the circumstances, not the least surprising, connected with this comet, is the magnitude of its orbit. It is a very oblong oval, the total length of which is about thirty six times the earth's distance from the sun, and the greatest breadth about ten times that distance. The nearer extremity of the oval is, at a distance from the sun, equal to about half the earth's distance, and the more remote extremity at a distance equal to thirty five and a half times the earth's distance from the sun. The earth's distance from the sun is, in round numbers, one million of miles; the comet's least distance, then, will be fifty millions of miles, and its greatest distance three thousand five hundred and fifty millions of miles. Also since the heat and light supplied by the sun to bodies which surround it diminish in the same proportion as the square of the distance increases, it follows, that at the nearest distance of the comet, the heat and light of the sun will be four times the heat and light at the earth, and at the greatest distance they will be about twelve hundred times less. Also the heat and light at the more remote extremity of the orbit will be nearly five thousand times less than at the nearer extremity; so that while the sun seen from the comet will appear four times as large as it appears at the earth at the near extremity, it will be reduced to the magnitude of a star at the more remote extremity. The vicissitudes of temperature, not to mention those of light, consequent upon this change of position, will be sufficiently obvious. If the earth were transported to the more remote extremity of the comet's orbit, every liquid substance would become solid by congelation; and it is extremely probable that atmospheric air and other permanent gases might become

liquids. If the earth was, on the other hand, transferred to the nearer extremity of the comet's orbit, all the liquids upon it would be converted into vapour, would form permanent gases, and would either by their mixture constitute atmospheric air, or would arrange themselves in strata one above the other, according to their specific gravities. All the less refractory solids would be fused, and would form in the cavities of the nucleus oceans of liquid metal.

RELIGIOUS.

The quaintness of the following scrap from an unknown author, will remind the reader of an age long since gone by, in which it was customary for theological writers to vegetate among aphorisms. It is with all its singularity an excellent exposition, and will be read with pleasure and profit:—

August 30th.—Romans, 8th chapter, 35th and 37th verses.

Stars shine brightest in the darkest night. Torches are better for beating. Grapes come not to the press till they come to the press: Spices smell best when bruised. Young trees root the faster for shaking. Gold looks brighter for scouring. Juniper smells sweetest in the fire. The palm tree proves the better for pressing. Camomile the more you tread it the more you spread it. Such is the condition of all God's children. They are then most triumphant when most tempted; most glorious when most afflicted; most in favour with God when least in men's and least in their own. As their conflicts, so their conquests. As their tribulations, so their triumphs; true salamanders that live but in the fire of persecution. So that heavy afflictions are the best benefactors to heavenly affections. And where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest; and grace that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose leaves, is the most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out.

My life and all its comforts, too,
From God's abundant bounty flows.

How marvellous and entire is the change that a man undergoes who tears his affections from the gross and sensual vanities of life, and fixes them wholly and without hesitation upon the Saviour of man. As a moral and intellectual being, the circle of intelligence and sympathy widens around him, and he is, as it were, exhilarated with an atmosphere which he never before breathed. This is the secret of Montgomery's excellence, and that of Thompson, Cowper, White, Pollock, Milton, all of whose energies were roused and touched with holy fire. And if one would feel its true influence, let him see the deep traces in the writings and its powerful impulse on the minds of those poets who drank deeply of Siloam's springs. There is many a rich strain of deep, intense and fervid piety running through their Divine verse, without which their song would lose half its sublimity and beauty. Their song is not wholly wedded to this world, but seems to be more nearly allied to a better state of being, and to partake thereby of much of its purer and holier nature.

TRAVELS.

RUINS OF ANCIENT BABYLON.

(Continued.)

The very heart of this pile appears to be entirely of the finest furnace baked brick: a fact which strikingly distinguishes it from Mujellibah, where the sun dried material is predominant. On the top of this ruin, which is all that is left of the greater palace, are the remains of square piers, or buttresses, defying the destructive power of time. These columns measured from sixteen to eighteen feet in height, and nine in thickness. I found it utterly impossible to detach any of the bricks, so firmly did they adhere together. I imagine that this very circumstance is the cause of their extraordinary fresh appearance and excellent preservation: Their colour is a pale yellow; and several of these masses appear to lean from their centre, perhaps from some convulsion of nature.

The cuneiform, or Babylonian inscription, are very plainly discernible, after minute examination, on those bricks that project beyond the line of their original position. The observer must kneel down and look upwards; for the inscribed part of every single brick is placed downwards; evidently showing that the writing thereon was never intended to be seen or read. This is an extraordinary circumstance, and not easily accounted for.

It is astonishing that the thinnest layer of cement imaginable should hold the courses of brickwork so firmly and securely together. The natives appear to have entirely discontinued their work of havoc here, from the total impossibility of extracting a perfect brick. There are very conspicuous fragments of detached wall along the western and part of the northern face of the Kasr, which, as this part is the reputed site of the famous hanging gardens ascribed to Nebuchadnezzar, perhaps, supported the terraces attached thereto.

In one of the subterranean passages of a deeply furrowed ravine, I discovered a granite slab, fifteen feet long and five feet and a half wide, the surface of which exhibited bitumen, with an impression of woven matting, or straw apparently laid on in a perfect unbroken state; this circumstance may, in some degree, identify the site of the hanging gardens which, we learn from ancient authors, were raised on pillars by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to gratify his wife Amyctis, the daughter of Astyages, king of Media.

Quintus Curtius makes them equal in height to the walls of the city—fifty feet. They are said to have contained a square of four hundred feet on each side, and were carried up into the air in several terraces, laid above one another; and the ascent, from terrace to terrace, was by stairs ten feet wide. The pilasters (no trace of the arch being found throughout the ruins) sustaining the whole pile were raised one above another, and the fabric was strengthened by a wall, surrounding it on every side, of twenty-two feet in thickness.

The floors of each of the terraces were laid in the following manner—on the top of the pillars were first placed large flat stone, sixteen feet long and four broad; and over them was a layer of reed, mixed with a great quantity of bitumen, over which were two rows of bricks closely cemented together by plaster; and over all were thick sheets of lead: and, lastly, upon the lead was laid the mould of the garden. The mould was of such a depth as to admit the largest tree to take root and grow; and it was covered with various kinds of trees, plants, and flowers. In the upper terrace there was an aqueduct or engine, whereby water was drawn up out of the river for watering the garden.

(To be concluded in our next.)

MISCELLANEOUS.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR. ;

SIR,—Not far from this city there is now living a strange and wonderful prophet, whose generation was before Adam was created. He is not the wandering Jew, nor the son of Noah, nor the old Levite, nor John the Baptist; for, as some people think, he was certainly before them. The Scriptures make mention of him very particularly in Mark, Luke and John—so that we may believe he is no impostor—he knows not his parents; his beard is as red as vermilion, he goes bare-footed like a grave friar both winter and summer; he wears no hat, but may often be seen with a crown upon his head; his coat is neither knit nor spun, it is neither silk nor hair, linen nor woollen—yet it is of a beautiful colour. He drinks only water; he takes no money of a friend if offered him; he cares not for the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; he would rather live in a barn, than in a king's palace; he walks without a staff; he uses neither pistol nor gun; yet he hath such weapons to defend himself as no mortal man ever had.—He is valiant yet puts up with many injuries done to him, and marches boldly in the face of

his enemies—and he can if he will encounter the strongest of men—he is often abused by them yet he takes all in good part—he lets all men alone with their religion—he is neither Jew, Mahomedan, Protestant, nor Catholic, yet he eats no meat in Lent. He is very watchful—he sleeps not in bed, but sits all the night in a singular kind of chair with his clothes on—he cries out on this wicked world with outstretched arms—he is an excellent pattern to all mankind—he is loud and joyous, and his voice raiseth all men, declaring the day of the Lord is at hand—all his sayings and prophesies are true. Poor women have great reason to rejoice that such a prophet is come into this Island, to set before their drunken husbands a pattern of sobriety. He was with Noah in the ark, and was alive when Christ was crucified—he denieth not the articles of the christian faith—neither doth he withhold from any man his voice, which is so shrill and powerful that all the world heard him at one time. He once preached a sermon that convinced a man of his sins, and caused him to weep most bitterly for swearing and lying, and although he is content to sit down with wicked men, when the Lord comes to judge the world in righteousness he will not be charged with sin.

Now, Sir, I want to know from some of your correspondents who this prophet is, and by giving this an insertion in your Instructor, you will much oblige

Your's, &c.

J. S.

The low and scurrilous writers against revelation always carry their own condemnation with them. They are like an ill looking fellow who comes into court to give evidence, but carries the aspect, on the first glance, of a town bully, ready to swear to whatsoever shall be suggested to him.

A more glorious victory cannot be gained over another man than this, that when ill-jury began on his part, the kindness should be given to ours.

POETRY.

(FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.)

Sir,—By giving the following lines a place
in your interesting little work, you will much
oblige
Your obedient servant,

J. A****.

THE CHRISTIAN SKELETON'S SPEECH.

Start not, friend, at this form of mine,
"The ruins of a work divine."
This ghostly skull was once the spot
That gave birth to mysterious thought,
That rang'd, with freedom all its own,
Through earth, air, seas, and worlds un-
known—

But now the fount of life is gone,
The thoughts are with the spirit flown ;
Yet, they shall animate this skull again,
And soar triumphant o'er past scenes of pain.

In those two sockets, once did shine,
The sparkling eye as bright as thine,
Which through a sun-lit sky could rove
Or silent speak the tale of love,
Or shed the tear of sympathy,
As thine, perhaps, does now o'er me.
But Ah, nor Love nor Pity's tear
Hath left the least resemblance here—
Yet the lost eyes shall to their cells return,
And with immortal life shall sweetly burn.

Within this cavern once was hung
A pearl of price—a Christian's tongue,
A tongue that spoke its maker—God,
And spread His bount'ous love abroad ;
A tongue not fam'd for low dispute,
But where it could not praise was mute—
A tongue that spoke its distin'd end,
And pray'd for foe as well as friend,
Though now amongst the silent dead it lies,
Shall rise, and sing, above the starry skies.

These arms, these hands, tho' useless grown
Were us'd in days of yore, by one,
(As by the will of Heav'n design'd,)
To benefit the human kind ;
Extended to embrace, unfold,
As brothers, all th' Christian world ;

Were us'd to feed the humble poor,
Or turn the leaves of knowledge o'er,
Though now they are unseemly to your view,
They shall outvie the ones possess'd by you.

These feet were wont to tread the road
That leads to happiness, and God—
Were wont to bear me to the place
Where Jesus shows a smiling face—
To bear me to the sick man's bed,
With stores to raise his drooping head ;
But now they rest within this case,
And thine must find a resting place ;
Yet they shall soon with life immortal tread,
When the last trump awakes the sleeping dead.

Now pray, my friend, let me advise,
To raise thy thoughts, and lift thine eyes,
Above yon blue and sun-lit sky,
From earth and earthly vanity :
Employ thy tongue in pray'r, praise, love,
To Him who reigns in heaven above :
Thy hands to handle, feet to trace,
The paths of wisdom, and of peace,
Then shalt thou walk the golden streets on high
When death is swallow'd up in victory.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.

THE INVITATION

Come, guilty sinner, come and prove
The sweetness of a Saviour's love ;
He will thy every sin forgive,
Only by faith in him believe.

Although your crimes are crimson red
Dismiss your fears, be not afraid—
He ready is, he will forgive,
Only by simple faith believe.

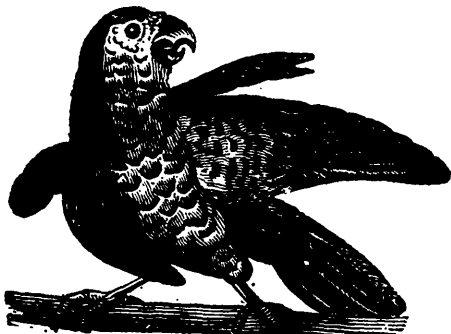
Haste, then, ah why do you delay ?
The dear Redeemer cries to-day ;
"If you will hear my voice I'll give
Salvation free that you may live."

Cast all thy care upon the Lord,
He cares for thee, he'll help afford ;
O, then accept the gift divine,
And Heaven Eternal shall be thine.

Sept. 7.

F. T.

NATURAL HISTORY.



THE GYR-FALCON.

In size this bird exceeds all other falcons, for he approaches nearly to the magnitude of the eagle. He is courageous and fierce, nor fears even the eagle himself; but he chiefly flies at the stork, the heron and the crane. He is most found in the colder regions of the north, but loses neither his strength nor his courage when brought into milder climates.

Falconry, which is now so much disused among us, was the principal amusement of our ancestors. A person of rank scarcely stirred out without his hawk on his hand, which in old paintings is the criterion of mobility. The expense which attended this sport was very great; among the old Welch princes the king's falconer was the fourth officer in the state; but, notwithstanding all his honors, he was forbidden to take more than three draughts of beer from his horn, lest he should get drunk and neglect his duty. In the reign of James I. Sir Thomas Monson is said to have given a thousand pounds for a cast of hawks - and such was their value in general, that it was made felony in the reign of Edward III. to steal a hawk. To take its eggs, even in a person's own ground, was punishable with imprisonment for a year and a day, together with a fine at the king's pleasure.

Of many of the ancient falcons used for this purpose, we at this time know only the

names. Of those in use at present, both here and in other countries, are the gyrfalcon, the falcon, the lanner, the sacre, the hobby, the kestrel, and the merlin. These are called the long winged hawks, to distinguish them from the goss hawk, the sparrow hawk, the kite and the buzzard, that are of shorter wing, and either too slow, too cowardly, too indolent, or too obstinate, to be serviceable in falconry.

The common falcon is a bird of such spirit, that, like a conqueror in a country, he keeps all birds in awe and in subjection to his prowess. When he is seen flying wild, the birds of every kind fly with screams at his most distant appearance.

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