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# THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

No. 50. VOL. 1 ]

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 25, 1835.

[ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM.]

## NATURAL HISTORY.

### REPTILES.

In the order of reptiles we have a new display of the wonders of creating art, and of the ease by which the Sovereign Lord of all can perform his will by instruments and means the most dissimilar.

These creatures are also endowed with the power of motion; but how differently do they move from any of the orders we have already considered. Deprived of the usual apparatus of legs or wings, the ponderous serpent issues from his concealment, and moves majestically along by means of his scales and strong muscular powers; and the slender worm draws and pushes himself forward by his rings and contortions. The wisdom in these contrivances must be immediately apparent, when we consider that

some of the former have their habitations assigned them in the most impenetrable thickets, where an elevated stature would expose them to many inconveniences; some take up their abode in the swampy banks of great rivers, or among the reeds in morasses, where the weight of their body, supported by legs, must have sunk them deeper in the mire; others wind their way among heaps of rubbish or crumbling ruins, where projecting appendages of any description would have been apt to retard their progress; and the naked and defenceless bodies of the latter are admirably adapted for those subterraneous passages which they form to themselves unseen in the bowels of the earth.

Snails are also a species of reptiles, but being encumbered in their movements with their shelly appendage, they are furnished with an instrument peculiar to themselves, in what long broad surface by which they pull themselves along, and by which, assisted by the glutinous substance they emit from their bodies, they are enabled to adhere, in any position, to the smoothest of surfaces.

The motion of caterpillars in their vermicular state is curiously performed by means of a number of little legs, the foremost of which are differently constructed from the hindmost, but all are formed in the most suitable manner for assisting in their progress on the leaves of plants.

Being deprived of those instruments of motion possessed by other animals, to carry them speedily forward in pursuit of their prey, serpents are necessitated to have recourse to the resources of artifice, and to lie in wait for it; and, to enable them to do this to the best possible advantage, nature has not only endowed them with the power of intertwining themselves in ambush around the trunks and among the branches of trees, by the slender make and flexibility

of their bodies, but, by a very particular and singular construction of the back-bone in serpents, they are enabled to coil themselves up in a very small compass; and if they are not furnished with the claws of the tiger to lay hold of their prey, the strong hooked bill and talons of the eagle to pull it to pieces, and the tusks of the boar to devour it, several of this species are furnished with a poisonous sting for instantaneously inflicting the mortal wound; others are soon enabled to extinguish the vital spark, by means of the conclusive energy of their enormous twistings; while the general conformation of the jaws, the width of the mouth, and yielding texture of the bodies of serpents are such, as to enable them to swallow prodigious morsels, and animals more bulky than themselves.

But the assistance which some of these creatures receive from their poison in the seizing of their prey, is not the only benefit they derive from it—it is also their most sure and effectual defence; and from the dread and horror which such an instrument as the sting of a serpent inspires (although only found in the possession of a few), it serves as it were for a safeguard to the whole species.

Mankind, indeed, cannot tread with too cautious steps the paths frequented by these creatures; for although none of the most venomous kinds will attack man except on the defensive, yet, without the power of discriminating, when accidentally trod upon, they will make the intruder feel the power of their vengeance. What a merciful provision, therefore, has Providence made for the safety of the American in the tail of the rattle snake: than which, there is not one of the serpent tribe perhaps more to be dreaded; yet the rattle in his tail, on the smallest motion, must give notice of his approach, or warn the traveller of the impending danger that lies concealed in his haunts.

## CHRISTMAS EVE.

### Concluded.

Think, think of me, think of the babes." "I do, I do," he hastily replied, "but I must not, I cannot refuse to go, I should be unworthy of you all if I did." The children joined their mother, and clung round his knees. "Speak, speak to them, father," said Thomas beseechingly. The old man was himself scarcely less distressed, and every limb shook with agitation. "Fanny," said he, with a faltering voice, which however gathered strength as he spoke, "let go your hold, it is his duty to go. He who has commanded him to assist his fellow-creatures, can protect him through danger, and restore him to you in safety;

yea, and he will. Go then, my son, and He who is mightier than the waves be with you." Thomas waited not another instant, and Fanny, awed by her father's words, sunk into a chair in silence. "We must ask," said the old man, "if we would receive, our prayers are the just due of those we love; and never can we express affection better, than when it rises in petitions to the throne of grace for the welfare, spiritual or bodily, of those we value. Let us kneel down and implore God's protection on your husband, and on those who are gone with him." Reverently they assembled round him and never did more fervent prayers ascend than those which were offered by the inhabitants of the cottage.

Three hours passed in a state of the utmost anxiety. The children overpowered with fatigue, soon sunk to sleep. Old Grant endeavoured to read, but in vain; and Fanny wandered backwards and forwards to the cliff in the vain hope of seeing her husband return. Almost in despair she at length seated herself by the baby's cradle, and covering her face with her apron wept bitterly.

The sound of approaching footsteps, however, roused her, but unable to stir, she sat listening with almost breathless anxiety. "He is safe!" exclaimed the old man, and raising his clasped hands to Heaven while tears of joy ran down his aged cheeks, he silently returned thanks to that God who had heard his supplications. "Get the bed ready," said Thomas to Fanny, "that we may put this stranger in it, and try if we can restore him." His companions now brought in the apparently lifeless body of a youth. Proper remedies were instantly applied, and happily with success. In the morning he awoke perfectly sensible, and though very much exhausted, all symptoms of danger had disappeared. But who shall describe the joy of his father, who, seated by his bed side, had watched the moment of his son's awaking. The vessel which was a home bound West India ship had been totally wrecked, and but for the activity and courage of Thomas and his companions all on board would have perished: at the imminent hazard of his life he had rescued the young man from a watery grave. "You have saved my life," cried the delighted father "in saving that of my son, and no recompense can be sufficient to express my gratitude. I know not what to offer you, but here is my purse; take it and if it is not enough I will double it." So saying, he held it to Thomas, who drawing back, said, while a deep colour spread itself over his cheek, "I am obliged to you, sir, for your kindness, but I must refuse accepting it. I cannot expose my life for money. I

have preserved your son, and I bless God for enabling me to do so. The thought that I have been of use to a fellow-creature, and done my duty, is reward enough for me." The merchant was for a moment too much surprised to reply. "Excellent man," said he, at length, "I will not again hurt you by offering what is not worthy of you. But you have laid me under an obligation, of which I must in some way or other relieve myself. Tell me then, is there any thing that I can do for you?" Nothing, sir," respectfully returned Thomas," with health, honest, though hard employment, the best of fathers, of wives and children, what can I desire that wealth and interest can procure? Some of my companions, however, are not so well off, they will be glad of your bounty; give therefore to them, if you please, instead of to me, and I shall be doubly rewarded." Thomas looked toward his father for his approbation. "You have done right, very right," said the latter, in a tone of honest exultation. "I am a happy old man," continued he, turning to the merchant, "the life of a son is dear, but the virtue of a son is dearer." "Dad," said Tom, who though unable fully to comprehend the nobleness of his father's conduct, felt in his heart that there was something much to admire in it, "I wish I was big enough to save a man." "And I too," said Robert, "Oh I am so happy! I said I liked Christmas-day better than any other day in the year, and so I always shall. Yes, let me live as long as I may, I shall never forget Christmas-eve." "Let it be the mercy then that you remember," said his grandfather, "not the distress that marked it, and let gratitude dwell in your hearts forever."

#### DESCRIPTION OF A WELCH LABORER'S COTTAGE.

It was one of those poor huts that are thinly sprinkled by the sides of the hills, inhabited by peaters and shepherds. As we approached, first one, and then two more fine children, almost in a state of nakedness, ran out to see what little Toby, the dog, could be so alarmed at. A stout fresh colored woman, with dark sparkling eyes and black hair, made her appearance; who seeing our condition, welcomed us, by the most inviting sounds in her language, to her cot. It was partly formed by a hollow in the slate rock, and partly by walls of mud, mixed with chopped rushes, covered with segs, and having a wattled, or basket-worked chimney; the entrance was at the gable end, facing the south east, which was defended during the night, or in very cold weather by a wattled hurdle; covered with rushes. A wall of turf for fuel, served as a partition for the bed-room, furnished with a bed of heath, and dried rushes in one corner. The furniture was such as necessity dictated; some loose stones formed the

grate; two large ones with a plank across, supplied the place of chairs; a kettle, with a backstone for baking oaten cakes, answered every purpose for cooking; and two coarse earthen pitchers stood by, for the preserving, or carrying water and dodgrifael, the usual beverage of the family. On our making some inquiries respecting the neighborhood, she expressed a wish that her husband had been at home, as he would have been able to have given us the desired information. "You have a husband, then?" said I. With a smile of approbation on her face, she replied. "Yes, blessed be God; he and his father before him, were born here; I am as happy as any of the great folks, for he loves me and his children, and works very hard, and we want for nothing that he can get for us. He is a peater, digging peat in the adjacent moors, and carrying it for sale." Asking what wages he might get, she said, "that depends upon the weather, sometimes six shillings in the week, and sometimes three or four; they had a little cow on the lease, and a few sheep on the hills." "What assistance do you yourself give?" said I. She observed, shaking her head at the time, "that she could do very little; her work was knitting, at which, with assistance of her two eldest girls, one five, and the other seven years old, if not interrupted, they could earn five pence a day, but that the younger children engrossed much of her time. Now, recollect they had to maintain a family of seven; a man, his wife, and five children! The mother looked in health, and the children though thinly clad, ruddy and smiling.

—What alas!  
Has o'er their little limbs its livery hung  
In many a tattered fold; yet still those limbs  
Areshapely; their rude locks start from their brow,  
Yet on that open brow, its dearest throne,  
Sits sweet simplicity!"

Indeed, there did not appear any thing like the misery and filth observable in the dwellings of many of the poor, whose weekly income is four or six times as great. Though the floor was formed of the native rock, it was regularly swept with a besom made of segs, bound with a band of the same, and the fuel, was as regularly piled as bread on a baker's shelves. All appeared in order; but the air of content apparent in the looks of this humble cottager and her family, put us all justly to the blush! and a multitude of superior blessings too often abused rushed instantly upon our recollection, at witnessing so much reason and gratitude in the habitation of strait poverty. If we had reason to be thankful that we were not constrained thus to earn our bread, and live secluded amidst these mountains, we had still more so for the education which had given us greater degrees of knowledge, and, if not lost to ourselves, of greater happiness.

We were anxious to know in what school this woman had learnt so important a lesson. "Sir," says she, "we regularly go to yonder church, (pointing to the hills,) where we hear that all we have is the gift of God; and that if we possess health and strength, we possess more than we deserve. If, sensible of our utter unworthiness, we sincerely believe in the Redeemer, and, following his example, perform the duties enjoined on us in his gospel, relying for assistance on his Holy Spirit, conducting ourselves with propriety in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call us, we shall, after death, change this poor uncertain life for a better, where we shall be for ever happy; and the frequent burial of our friends and neighbors informs us daily, that this event can be at no great distance." Astonished at so much good sense and piety, where I so little expected to find it, I exclaimed, "Just step into this humble cottage, ye rich and gay, and learn that happiness ye so earnestly seek in vain, a happiness which neither wealth nor pleasure can bestow."

**LEAP YEAR.**—The coming year, 1836, will be, what is denominated in the almanacks, bissextile or leap year, containing one day more than the ordinary years, by the addition of twenty-four hours to the second month, February. Leap year is a most important year to all unmarried people, inasmuch as during its continuance it is the especial prerogative of ladies to make love to the gentlemen, and the especial duty of gentlemen, under very severe penalties, to accept and reciprocate the proffers of love from the other sex. The authority for this regulation is found in an old volume, entitled "Courtship, Love, and Matrimony," printed in the year 1606, which has lately fallen into the possession of the editor of the New-York Transcript, and from which the annexed extract is made:

"Albeit, it is now become a part of the Common Law, in regard to the social relations of life, that as often as every bissextile year doth return, the ladies have the sole privilege during the time it continueth, of making love unto the men, which they may doe either by wordes or by lookes, as unto them it seemeth proper; and moreover, no man shall be entitled unto the benefit of Clergy who doth refuse to accept the offers of a ladye, or who doth in any wise treat her proposal with slight or contumely."

**Four Rules for Composition.**—Be certain first that you mean something. Then be certain what it is that you do mean. Be certain that what you have to say is worth saying; and then be certain that you have said it.—*N. E. Galaxy.*

*Reconciliation brought about by a dog.*—There were two friends, one living in London, and the other at Guildford. These friends were on terms of great intimacy; and for many years it had been the custom for the London family to pass the Christmas at Guildford, and their uniform practice was to arrive to dinner the day before Christmas day, and to be accompanied by a large spaniel, who was as great a favorite with the visited, as with the visitors. At the end of about seven years after this plan had been adhered to, the two families had an unfortunate misunderstanding, which occasioned an omission of the usual Christmas invitation. About an hour before dinner on the day before Christmas day, the Guildford gentleman, standing at his window, exclaimed to his wife, "well, my dear, the *Wags*'s have thought better of it, for I declare they are coming as usual, though we did not invite them; here comes *Cæsar* to announce them;" and the dog came trotting up to the door and was admitted as usual to the parlour.

The lady of the house gave orders to prepare beds, dinner waited an hour, but no guests arrived. *Cæsar* after staying the exact number of days he had been accustomed to, set off for home, and reached it in safety. The correspondence, which of necessity occurred, had the happy effect of renewing the intercourse of the estranged friends and as long as *Cæsar* lived he paid the annual visit, in company with his master and mistress.

### CHRISTMAS DAY.

Christmas day is appointed for the 25th, in commemoration of the birth of Jesus. The exact month, or week, or day of the advent of Christ is not known. Some writers have placed it in one month, and some in another. Some contend that it should be in autumn, and others in spring; but most protestants, and all Roman catholics, agree to keep it on the 25th of this month.

What an event was this incarnation! It awakened an interest in heaven, earth, and hell. Angels left their seats of bliss to announce the tidings to the shepherds, and to herald his approach: with their celestial music. But where is Jesus born, and who is his mother? What palace is honoured with his presence, and what mortal so favoured as to introduce him to the world? See the humble and devoted Mary in yonder stable, and you behold his mother. Examine that manger, and you see the babe of Bethlehem. Oh wondrous condescension! infinite and inexpressible! Shepherds, conducted by angels, pay him their adorations. Eastern magi, guided by an especial and miraculous luminary, present to him their magnificent offerings, and pay their devotion at his feet. His incarnation was only a means to an end. He was born that he

might obey, and suffer, and die. *Calvary* witnessed his expiring groans, and heard him exclaim. "It is finished!" The work was done; the law was obeyed; justice was honoured; and now, the way to the kingdom of heaven was thrown open to all believers.

This is a season of benevolence. More gifts of kindness are conferred now than at any period of the year. There is something pleasing and delightful in this fact, as serving to commemorate the disinterested kindness of our Redeemer, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich.

Christmas presents are interchanged amongst friends. Books are frequently given as testimonies of esteem, and memorials of friendship.

The last day is at hand. The last hour and minute of the year is rapidly approaching; and, ere long, the angel will lift up his hand, and swear by Him that liveth for ever, that "time shall be no longer."

A wful period! when eternity shall commence its career, and the destinies of mankind be settled for ever; when the righteous shall be exalted to heaven, and the wicked consigned to the regions of woe. May it be our unspeakable happiness to be stationed at the right hand of the Judge, and hear him pronounce on each and on all, the delightful sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

### MARRIED.

On the 20th instant, by Rev. J. Burton, Mr. John Thorburn, to Miss Esther Rude, both of Jedore.

At New-York, on the 1st November, by the Rev. Wm. G. Miller, Mr. Charles B. Naylor, to Miss Catherine, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Vreedenburgh, of that City.

At New-York, on the 12th ult. Charles W. Schmidt, Esq. to Sarah Ann, daughter of Mr. William Johnston, both of Halifax.

### DIED.

Tuesday evening, Charles, youngest son of Mr. James Bossom, aged 2 years, and eight months.

Wednesday evening, Mr. John W. Mad-den, of H. M. Customs, aged 37 years. Funeral on Sunday next, at 1 o'clock.

Yesterday morning, of Scarlet fever, Sarah Eliza, aged 13 years and 6 months, the sixth child of Mr Andrew T. Smith.

### PROSPECTUS.

#### THE CHRISTIAN GLEANER, NEW SERIES,

Is intended like the former series, to be an independent religious periodical, having for its chief object in its selections—To investigate and enforce the truths of revelation as the Bible itself reveals them—and to discriminate and disentangle them from the speculations, and metaphysical subtleties of

system makers of Theology, with which they are so often confounded and disfigured—To expose the evils of *sectarianism*—and to promote in its stead the union of all Christians upon a Scriptural foundation.—To inculcate to the knowledge, belief, and practice of the Apostles' doctrine.—The restoration of primitive christianity.

Among the variety of appeals on almost every subject of importance now continually teeming from the Press on both sides of the Atlantic, so strikingly marking the signs of the times, and the enquiring spirit of the age, few have been urged with more weight than have been many on the topics above alluded to—nor have any with juster pretensions, or with more imposing motives, claimed from any class of men an impartial hearing, than do some of those from Christians—whether we regard the superior importance of their subjects, or the number, scriptural knowledge, and acknowledged talents, and piety, of those engaged in their investigation—Party prejudice in some, indifference in others, unhappily concur with other causes to make these writings to be neglected by, or inaccessible to many in this country—and their sentiments and merits liable to be misunderstood, or misrepresented, and their failings real or imagined to be magnified.

The design of this Miscellany as far as possible, exempts its conductors from any wish or temptation to prejudice or discountenance any inquiry as to what is truth.

The Gleaner therefore, selecting its materials irrespective of party creeds, or party motives, equally from any source—and referring its selections to the test—not of the systematic theology of any school, but to the Scriptures alone, to be approved, or condemned, adopted, or rejected according to its unerring decision—will embody in one volume much diversified information on subjects of all others the most important and interesting to men—and at a cheap and accessible rate, enable any (who do not believe that ignorance is the mother of devotior, and that to grow in grace is unconnected with growing in knowledge of the divine will;) to give these subjects an impartial consideration—and in reference to these, understandingly and justly to comply with the divine injunction contained in its motto—

"Prove all things—hold fast that which is good."

The Christian Gleaner, new series—will be published in monthly numbers each containing 24 pages, on good paper and of this type—twelve numbers to constitute a volume—The price of a volume will be Five Shillings payable at any time before the delivery of the second number, or 6s. if payment be delayed beyond that period.

Halifax, 10th Dec. 1835.

Subscriptions will be received at the Drug Store of Mr. John Naylor, at the Stationary Store of Messrs. A. & W. MacKinlay, and at the Printing Office of H. W. Blackad r.

## POETRY.

## CHRISTMAS HYMNS.

## I.

*A multitude of the Heavenly host praising God.—Luke 2. 13.*

Whence those sounds symphonious ?  
Solemn, sweet, and raro,  
Music most harmonious,  
Filling all the air.  
Hark ! 'tis Angels singing,  
Singing here on Earth :  
Joyful tidings bringing  
Of the Saviour's birth.

In that region yonder,  
Where the angels sing,  
Bursts of joy and wonder  
Make the ear to ring :  
" Praise and adoration  
" Be to God above :  
" And to man, salvation,  
" Object of his love."

Now ye heavens, sing ye ;  
Earth break forth and cry :  
O ye mountains, ring ye,  
With the sound of joy ;  
For the Lord has done it ;  
His the victory.  
His own arm has won it ;  
Israel shall be free.

## II.

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to man.—Luke 2. 14.*

" Unto us a son is given ;"  
'Tis the promis'd Christ is meant ;  
Bands of angels come from heaven  
To announce the tidings sent,  
Fill'd with rapture,  
Celebrate the great event.

" Glory in the highest ! glory  
" Be to God, and peace on earth."  
Now proclaim the joyful story  
Of the mighty Saviour's birth :  
Let the tidings  
Fill the world with sacred mirth.

This is " the desire of nations"  
Promis'd to the Church so long ;  
Object of its expectations ;  
Burden of prophetic song ;  
Sing, ye people,  
Join with heav'n's angelic throng.

Lo, he comes, the Lord from heaven !  
" Lo, the mighty God appears !"  
" Unto us a Son is given ;"  
This is music in our ears ;  
Nothing sweeter,  
Mortal or immortal hears.

## VARIETIES.

*Machinery in the Human Frame.*—Very few, even mechanics, are aware, how much machinery there is in their own bodies. Not only are there joints and hinges in the bones, but there are valves in the veins, a forcing pump in the heart, and various other curi-

osities. One of the muscles of the eye, forms a real pulley.—The bones which support the body are made precisely in that form, which has been calculated by mathematicians, to be strongest for pillars and supporting columns : that of hollow cylinders.—This form combines the greatest lightness with the greatest strength. Of this form are the quills of bird's wings, where these requisits are necessary.

*Advice to Young Parents.*—Do not decorate your children with expensive finery. This is the grand foible into which most young parents fall ; and hence the adage, that " where you behold a father, a mother, and one child, you generally discover three fools in the house." It is a satire upon human nature to reflect, that the cradle and the coffin—our entrance and our exit—should be scenes of fantastic foppery of which neither subject can be conscious. The seeds of vanity are sometimes sown in the cradle by parents, who afterwards complain how difficult it is to weed them out.

*PRIDE.*—Pride is a vice that does not dwell exclusively in king's houses, wear only soft raiment, and feed sumptuously every day upon lofty titles, fame, or affluence : generated in the depravity of our nature, it accomodates itself to our circumstances, and adapts itself to our taste. It is found as often in the cottage as in the mansion ; and where it has never tasted the rich viands of loftier elevations, feeds with avidity upon the lowest distinctions which raise one man above another. Consciousness of superiority, whatever be the object of comparison, is the element of this most hateful disposition.

*POLITENESS* is that regulation of our conduct, which makes every thing decent, respectable, and becoming. It is more easily felt than understood.—It is not difficult to perceive and point it out in the characters of other people, as either to copy their pattern, or describe its beauties.

It flows from an evenness of soul, unruddled by the tempest of cares, unmoved by the tide of guilty pleasures, not injured by the bleak winds of envy and malignity, and unshattered by the storms of calamity.

It is the offspring of a renewed mind, which, in its degree, like charity, suffereth long, is kind, envicth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.

It makes every motion graceful, every look tender, every expression elegant, and every action generous. It renders instruction pleasant, takes off the edge of reproof, gives a sanction to its sentiments, reflects a lustre on the virtues of the persons who possess it, and makes them more accomplished as men, as Christians, and as philosophers.

*The vanity of Life.*—What is this life but a circulation of little mean actions ? We lie down and rise again, dress and undress, feed and wax hungry, work or play, and are weary, and then we lie down again, and the circle returns. We spend the day in trifles, and when the night comes we throw ourselves into the bed of folly, amongst dreams, and broken thoughts, and wild imaginations. Our reason lies asleep by us, and we are for the time as arrant brutes as those that sleep in the stalls or in the fields. Are not the capacities of man higher than these ? And ought not his ambition and expectations to be far greater ?

The frank man is an ardent friend, and an open undisguised enemy. He tells them personally of their treachery ; and those he dislikes, he scorns in secret to calumniate.

An upright posture is easier than a stooping one because it is more natural, and one part is better supported by another ; so it is easier to be an honest man than a knave.

Insults are seldom forgotten—benefits seldom remembered.

Gratitude is a feature much to be admired but rarely to be seen.

Abate three fourths of the reports you hear.

Make a slow answer to a hasty question. Be honest before thou art generous ; and just before thou givest away.

## JUST PUBLISHED,

And for sale at the Printing Office of the Subscriber, and at the Stationary Stores of Messrs A. & W. Mackinlay, and Mr. J. Munro,

## A Sheet Almanack,

FOR 1836.

Containing—the Rising and Setting of the Sun, do of the Moon, and time of high water for each day in the year ; a List of the Members of H. M. Council, and House of Assembly, Provincial Officers,—Arrivals and departures of the Mails—Merchants' Private Signals, and a variety of other useful matter.

H. W. BLACKADAR.

December 4.

## ENGRAVING.

THE Subscriber respectfully informs the Inhabitants of Halifax, that he has removed his Office immediately opposite Mr. Thomas Forrester's Store.

☞ Copperplate, Silver Ware, Arms and Crests, &c. neatly designed and engraved. Copperplate Printing neatly executed.

G. HOBSON.

November 20, 1835.

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