

THE NATURALIST;

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Kingdoms,

(TO BE CONTINUED MONTHLY),

WITH ENGRAVINGS BY EMINENT ARTISTS.

"Nothing can be unworthy of being investigated by Man, which was thought worthy of being created by God."—BOYLE.

EDITED

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THE NATURALIST.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE POPULARITY OF NATURAL HISTORY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

BY EDWIN LEES, F.L.S.

I FEEL disposed on the present occasion to assume the garb of "Dr. DRYASDUST," and to enter upon a dissertation wherein my opinions may, perhaps, meet with disapproval by some equally competent to form a judgment as myself, rather than to journey on at this moment, amidst scenes tenanted by birds, insects, and flowers, where there could be no jarring string. Good, however, is frequently effected by the disclosures an argument calls forth, just as a fossil unexpectedly appears in a rock one might be breaking-up without such an object in view. If, therefore, I should tempt any abler pen to take up this subject, I shall rejoice, even if my own ideas should appear to be unsustained.

Among the various oracular dicta that in this teeming age of useful and entertaining knowledge have resounded in the public ear, till they have been supposed unassailable truisms, the "popularity" of Natural History has surely appeared not the least prominent. It seems, indeed, almost treasonable to doubt it; but by what test are we to try the truth of this assumed popularity? If I am referred to the various societies formed professedly to promote the study of Natural History, I answer these are assemblages of its *votaries*, formed for the facility of communication with each other, and, the public being excluded, these (were they even more numerous than they are) would be by no means decisive of the universality of the taste for the pursuit in question. If I am referred to the numerous works published on the subject within the last few years, it must be distinctly shown, that all these have remunerated their authors and publishers before I shall feel satisfied that a case has been made out perfectly satisfactory as to the general approval of works of this description by a "discerning public." This point may, perhaps, be discussed hereafter.

But surely I think I hear it exclaimed, the objects embraced by Natural History *must* be "popular"—they are open to every one, the prince and the peasant, and present their charms alike to all. Assuredly! and I admit at once that *the objects* taken up by Natural History *are* popular; the most insensible ploughman puts his hand to his hat for a moment to mark the Lark rising to heaven's gate on the first vernal day—the most rigid votary of 'Change in the pent-up city, snuffs up with delight the scent of the first delicious odour of the

ORGAN OF THE COMMUNICATION OF IDEAS IN MAN.—Dr. ELLIOTSON suggests, in the second part of his *Physiology*, just published, that there may be a new organ, the function of which is to communicate ideas. Phrenologists have hitherto been accustomed to attribute taciturnity to a large development of Secretiveness, combined with ample Caution, and communativeness, on the contrary, to these organs being small. We, however, feel convinced that these qualities depend upon a separate faculty, named for the present Communication of Ideas. The fact of many persons having Secretiveness very large and yet being communicative to a remarkable degree, and *vice versâ*, indeed, clearly proves that Secretiveness is a much less active agent in the matter than commonly supposed. Some individuals are wholly unable to keep any idea whatever to themselves, and are instinctively and most powerfully impelled to communicate every trifling circumstance they hear to any person with whom they meet, whether or not the circumstances imparted are likely to be of interest to the friend thus instructed. This is the abuse of the faculty, which, uncontrolled, frequently leads to unpleasant, and not seldom to serious consequences. The same organ occasions the well-known proneness to gossiping amongst women of all classes, which we had before been unable to explain upon phrenological principles.

The locality of the faculty is not yet known, but it is an intellectual organ, and will probably range near Language.—ED.

HYBRIDS BETWEEN A LION AND A TIGER.—At page 489 of your Magazine the Rev. F. O. MORRIS notices that a specimen of a Lion-Tiger is preserved in the museum of Mr. REID, of Doncaster; and as many of your readers may not be aware that the Lion and Tiger breed together so frequently as they do, I send you the following account, for insertion in *The Naturalist*.

Mr. ATKINS, proprietor of the Liverpool Zoological Gardens, bred the first litter of Lion-Tigers at Windsor in 1824, and it is, perhaps, a fact worth mentioning that this brood was brought up by a terrier bitch, as the tigress did not evince the slightest affection for her progeny. They died when about a year old.

A second litter was born on Clapham Common, in 1824, but lived only a short time. In this instance, as well as the following, the tigress took to her progeny and suckled them; a third litter was born at Edinburgh in 1826, consisting of one male and two females. A fourth at Windsor in 1828, consisting also of one male and two females; a fifth at Kensington in 1831; and the last litter was born in the Liverpool Zoological Gardens in 1833, consisting of two males and one female. One of the males has since died, but the other two are still alive, and apparently very healthy.

The Gardens contain a very fine specimen of the Chetah or Hunting-leopard, which is, I believe, the only specimen alive in this country; also a specimen of the Indian Rhinoceros, which is rarely seen alive in England. It is said to

have cost Mr. ATKINS £1,000.—T. B. HALL, *Woodside, near Liverpool, Feb. 1, 1838.*

MODE OF KILLING INSECTS.—Mr. DALE, in his "Hints" (p. 81), has omitted mentioning Mr. HAWORTH's plan for killing large Moths, which I think deserves to be known and practised. "When large Moths must be killed," says Mr. H., "destroy them at once by the insertion of a strong red-hot needle into the thickest parts, beginning in front of the thorax. If this be properly done, instead of lingering through several days, they are dead in an instant."—PETER RYLANDS, *Bewsey House, Warrington, Feb. 3, 1838.*

CURIOUS LOCALITY FOR THE HEDGE ACCENTOR'S NEST.—Most authors agree that the place this bird selects for building is a compact hedge. As a departure from the common rule, it may be mentioned that in the early part of spring, 1836, a [pair of these birds built, and hatched their young, in a Fuchsia in Dr. MURRAY's garden, at Belle-Vue.—PATRICK HAWKRIDGE, *Scarborough, Aug. 7, 1837.*

THE VENEER, VANEAR, OR FINEAR (*Crambus*).—A variety of *C. argyreus* (?), Glanville's Wootton, Enborne, Berkshire, and Hurne, Hampshire, May 18 to July 9. Mr. HAWORTH mentioned in his letter 13 that he had added quite a new Finear (qu. *C. deceptor* ? BENTLEY's Cabinet) from Norfolk (Beachamwell ?), taken June 1823, by H. SCALES, Esq.—J. C. DALE, *Glanville's Wootton, Dorsetshire, July 9, 1837.*

ON PRESERVING OBJECTS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN SPIRITS OF WINE.—The following will be found an excellent preparation for covering over the corks of bottles in which the objects are preserved, and will effectually prevent the evaporation of the spirit :—

Common resin.

Red ochre, well pulverised.

Yellow wax.

Oil of turpentine.

The quantities of resin and oxide of iron, or of oil of turpentine and wax, must be regulated according to the degree of brittleness or elasticity that is required. The wax and resin must be first melted, and the ochre added in small quantities, at each addition being briskly stirred with a spatula ; when this mixture has boiled seven or eight minutes, the oil of turpentine may be added, well stirring it, and the whole boiled for a short period longer. It is necessary to be very careful that these substances do not take fire, and in case they do, it is as well to be provided with a lid to cover the vessel and extinguish the flame. The quality of the luting can be ascertained by putting a little from time to time upon a cold plate, by which means its degree of tenacity is easily ascertained.

After having carefully corked the bottles, and wiped them well with a dry