



Miscellaneous.

Extracted for the N. Y. Daily Advertiser.

THE GREENLAND BEAR.

The Polar, or Greenland Bear, the sovereign of arctic animals, is powerful and courageous; savage and sagacious; apparently clumsy, yet not inactive. His senses are extremely acute, especially his sight and smell. As he traverses extensive fields of ice, he mounts the hammocks and looks around for prey; on rearing his head and snuffing the breeze, he perceives the scent of the decayed whale at an immense distance. A piece of kreg thrown into a fire draws him to a ship from the distance of miles.—The kreg of the whale, however offensive to others, is to him a banquet. He seems to be equally at home on the ice as on land. He is found on field ice, above 200 miles from the shore. He can swim with the velocity of three miles an hour, and can accomplish some leagues without much inconvenience. He dives to a considerable depth, though not very frequently.

He may be captured in the water without much danger; but on the ice, he has such powers of resistance at command, that the experiment is hazardous. When pursued and attacked, he always turns upon his enemies. If struck with a lance he is apt to seize it in his mouth, and either bite it in two, or wrest it out of the hand. If shot with a ball, unless he is struck in the head, the heart, or in the shoulder, he is enraged rather than depressed, and falls with increased power upon his pursuers. When shot at a distance and able to escape, he has been observed to retire to the shelter of a hammock, and, as if conscious of the stypical of cold, apply snow with his paws to the wound.

Though possessed of courage and great means of defence, he always unless urged by hunger retreats before men. His general walk is slow and deliberate; but when impelled by danger or hunger, he proceeds by a galloping step; and upon ice, can easily outrun any man.

Bears, though they have been known to eat one another, are remarkably affectionate to their young. The female, which has generally two at a birth, defends them with such zeal, and watches over them with such anxiety, that she sometimes falls a sacrifice to her maternal attachment.—A pleasing and very extraordinary instance of sagacity in a mother bear was related to me by a credible and well informed person, who accompanied me in several voyages to the whale fisheries in the capacity of surgeon. This bear, with two cubs under its protection, was pursued across a field of ice, by a party of armed sailors. At first she seemed to urge the young ones to an increase of speed by running before them, turning round and manifesting by a peculiar action and voice her anxiety for their progress; but finding their pursuers gaining upon them, she carried or pushed, or pitched them alternately forward, until she effected their escape. In throwing them before her, the little creatures are said to have placed themselves across her path, to receive impulse; and when projected some yards in advance, they ran onwards until she overtook them, when they alternately adjusted themselves for a second throw.

Several instances of peculiar sagacity in these animals have been observed.

A seal, lying on the middle of a large field of ice, with a hole just before it, was marked out by a bear for its prey, and secured by the artifice of diving under the ice, and making its way to the hole by which the seal was prepared to retreat.—The seal, however, observed its approach and plunged into the water; but the bear instantly sprung upon it, and appeared, about a minute afterwards, with the seal in its mouth.

The capt. of one of the whalers being anxious to procure a bear, without wounding the skin, made trial of the stratagem of laying the noose of a rope in the snow, and placing a piece of kreg within it.—A bear ranging the neighboring ice, was soon enticed to the spot by the smell of burning meat. He perceived the bait, approached, and seized it in his mouth; but his foot, at the same moment by a jerk of the rope being entangled in the noose, he pushed it off with the adjoining paw, and deliberately retired. After having eaten the piece he carried away with him, he returned. The noose with another piece of kreg, being then replaced, he pushed the rope aside and again walked triumphantly off with the kreg. A third time the noose was laid, but, excited to caution by the evident observation of the bear, the sailors buried the rope beneath the snow, and laid the bait in a deep hole dug in the centre. The bear once more approached, and the sailors were assured of their success. But Bruin more sagacious than they expected, after snuffing about the place for a few moments, scraped the snow away with his paw, threw the rope aside, and again escaped unhurt with his prize.

In the month of June, 1812, a female bear, with two cubs, approached the ship I commanded, and was shot. The cubs not attempting to escape, were taken alive. These animals, though at first evidently very unhappy, became at length, in some measure reconciled to their situation, and being tolerably tame, were allowed occasionally to go at large about the deck.—While the ship was moored to a floe, a few days after they were taken, one of them, having a rope fastened round his neck, was thrown overboard. It immediately swam to the ice, got upon it and attempted to escape.—Finding itself, however, detained by the rope, it endeavored to disengage itself in the following ingenious way. Near the edge of the floe was a crack in the ice, of a considerable length, but only 18 inches or 2 feet wide, and 3 or 4 feet deep. At this spot the bear returned—and when, on crossing the chasm, the light of the rope fell into it, he placed him across the opening; then suspending himself by his hind feet, with a leg on each side, he dropped the most part of his body into the chasm; and with a foot applied to each side of the neck, attempted for some minutes to push the rope over his head.—Finding the scheme ineffectual, he removed to the main ice, and running with great impetuosity from the ship, gave a remarkable pull on the rope, then going backwards a few steps he repeated the jerk. At length after repeated attempts to escape in this way, every failure of which he announced by a significant growl, he yielded to his hard necessity, and lay down on the ice in angry and sullen silence.

A bear which was attacked by a ship's crew, in the Spitzbergen sea, made such a formidable resistance that it was enabled to climb the side

of the boat and take possession of it, while the intimidated crew fled for safety to the water, supporting themselves by the gunwale and rings of the boat, until by the assistance of another party from their ship, it was shot as it sat inoffensively in the stern. And, with regard to narrow escape, I shall only add, that a sailor, who was pursued on a field of ice by a bear, when at a considerable distance from assistance, preserved his life, by throwing down an article of clothing, whenever the bear gained upon him, on which it always suspended the pursuit until it had exhausted it, and thus gave him time to gain some advance. In this way, by means of a hat, jacket and a neck handkerchief, successively cast down, the progress of the bear was retarded, and the sailor escaped from the danger that threatened him in the refuge afforded him by the vessel.

Scoresby's Arctic Voyages.

From "Sketches of South America."
THE GROTTO OF GUACHARO.

The gulph of Capiaco is frequented by innumerable flocks of marine birds.

"When the natives wish to catch any of these wild fowl," says M. Lavaysse, "they go into the water, having their heads covered each with a calabash, in which they make two holes for seeing through. They thus swim towards the birds, throwing a handful of maize on the water from time to time, of which the grains scatter on the surface. The ducks and other birds approach to feed on the maize, and at that moment the swimmer seizes them by the feet, pulls them under water, and wrings their necks before they can make the least movement, or by their noise spread an alarm among the flock. The swimmer attaches those he has caught to his girdle; and he generally takes as many as are necessary for his family."

Amongst the natural curiosities of this neighbourhood, is a lake full of crocodiles and various other reptiles, one of which, if we are to believe a common tradition of the people, resembles the winged dragon of the poets. In going from Carapano to Guiria, our author passed through the "smiling valley" of Rio Caribe, watered by numerous streams, and which he calls the Temple and Compagna of Venezuela. Speaking of the celebrated Grotto of Guacharo, in the mountains of Bergantin, M. Lavaysse observes, "In every country the same causes have produced similar effects on the imagination of our species. The grotto of Guacharo is, in the opinion of the Indians, a place of trial and expiation: souls when departed from bodies, go to this cavern; those of men who die without reproach do not remain in it, and immediately ascend, to reside with the great Manitou in the dwelling of the blessed; those of the wicked are retained there eternally; and such men as have committed but slight faults of a venial nature, are kept there for a longer or shorter period, according to their crime."

"Immediately after the death of their parents and friends, the Indians proceed to the entrance of this cavern, to listen to their groans. If they think they hear their voices, they also lament, and address a prayer to the Great Spirit, and another to the devil Muboya; after which they drown their grief with intoxicating beverages. But if they do not hear the wished-for voices, they express their joy by dances and festivals. In all this there is but one

circumstance that creates surprise, it is that the Indian priests have not availed themselves of such credulity to augment their revenues. Many Indians, though otherwise converted to Christianity, have not ceased to believe in Guacharo; and to descend into Guacharo, is among them, synonymous with dying.

"Thus in the majestic forests of South America, as in the ancient civilization of Hindostan; under the harsh climates of the north of Europe and Canada, as in the burning regions of Africa, in all parts the man of every color is distinguished from other animals by this irresistible foreboding of a future life in which an Omnipotent Being recompenses the good, and punishes evil doers. Whatever may be the modifications, differences, or absurdities with which imaginations, ignorance, and greedy imposture have enveloped this belief, it appears to be one of the strongest moral proofs of the identity of our species, and to be a natural consequence of reflection."

THE CRITICAL OBSERVER.

"Look ere you leap, or else you'll play the fool!"

It was a fine morning in the month of May, when, in accordance with the cheerfulness of the season, a party of youngsters of whom I was one, were amusing themselves by all kinds of capers among the ruins of an old barn belonging to my uncle Bartholomew. The sport had continued for some time without interruption, when, just as I was about to perform some new feat of agility, my uncle unexpectedly made his appearance among us. "Dominic," said he "look ere you leap, or else you'll play the fool," and immediately left us. The advice was quaint, and, at any other time, might have been attended to; but at that moment, I was bent on following no one's advice except my own, and therefore looked upon the proverb of my uncle, as a very silly saying. I leaped, and as may well be surmised, "played the fool!" An old beam projected a good way from the wall, upon which we had leaped repeatedly in our gambols, with safety, but by the frequency of our weight falling on it, it had become very much loosened—this circumstance, I might easily have discovered, had I been inclined to follow the dictates of the proverb; but, as I said before, looking was entirely out of the question. I jumped upon the beam—it gave way, and I fell—and to end the matter, was carried into the house with my shoulder dislocated, besides being otherwise severely bruised. Here was a sad comment upon my uncle's text! Bitterly did I rue not following his advice; but repining at my ill conduct did not one jot abate the pain, and I bore it as patiently as possible, inwardly resolving to be more circumspect in future. But in the main, I had not much cause to regret the fall, for, when busily employed in "building castles in the air," which in my young days, was frequently the case—po! the proverb of my uncle rushed into my mind—the talisman was broken, and I returned to the paths of reason. It likewise furnished me with a store of advice for my fellow creatures.

When I see a young farmer possessed of a good farm, well stocked and in good condition; and by which he is rapidly increasing in wealth and respectability, get a whim into his head, that, by selling off and moving to a new country, where he is entirely unknown, he can do much better, then the proverb comes into

my head, and I whisper in his ear, "look ere you leap, or else you'll play the fool."

When I see a young tradesman, owning a small though sure stock, and gaining a good livelihood—disregarding small gains, and endeavoring to force that fickle minded jade, dame fortune, to bestow more copious gifts, by adventuring in lotteries, and incessantly besetting the banks, in order to engage in speculations, and thereby involving not only himself, but his friends, I cannot forbear crying out to him "look ere you leap, or most assuredly you'll play the fool."

When I observe a young dandy inheriting, besides a good figure and beautiful face, a considerable share of the "good things of this world," i. e. a fortune, continually "shopping," for the purpose of bedecking herself with gew-gaws and corsettes, thereby perverting nature's laws; and, after all, upon the point of bestowing her person and fortune upon some worthless rake, whose only merit lies in his following the fashions, and being dressed in the very "ton," then I cry out "in the very bitterness of anguish," for heaven's sake, my dear girl, "look ere you leap, or my word for it, you'll play the fool!"

[National Advocate.]

PATRICK HENRY.

An extract of a letter from a gentleman in Virginia, to his friend in Alexandria.

The writer of the letter mentions, that Mr. HENRY left in his will the following testimony in favor of the christian religion:

"I have now disposed of all my property to my family—there is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion.—If they had that, and I had not given them one shilling, they would be rich; and if they have not that, and I had given them all this world, they had been poor."

The writer adds, "I never knew a more devout man than Mr. HENRY was. The evening preceding his death, when he knew a mortification had taken place, and his pains had left him, his friend mentioned to him they hoped he was getting better—his reply was, that before this time comes to-morrow I shall be in heaven. His declaration was fulfilled; for before the time the next day, he was in eternity."

Society is the cement of human nature; by mutual kindness it softens asperity, and by emulation it promotes virtue. The heart of man created for delight, would pine in lassitude, or grow sour with misanthropy, if we were deprived of social intercourse. Our primeval parent himself, amidst the glories of new world, and the charms of Paradise, found himself not completely blest, till Heaven sent him his last best gift on earth, a companion to raise him to the summit of felicity. I know not which is the more blamable, the being who stoically affirms the enjoyment of life, or who only abuses them: both characters pervert the blessings bestowed by Providence for the alleviation of human care.

A preacher at Savannah, who was fond of uniting temporals with spirituals, and pursued the business of a cotton dealer six days in the week, and a preacher of the Gospel the seventh, gave out to his congregation five and forty hymns, long staph.