

THE SCRAP BOOK is not restricted to the Months of one year, but is a reference to the Months generally; and besides noticing incidents and customs peculiar to the Months, it comprises instructive and entertaining Pieces, well suited to excite in youth a relish for useful reading.

THE MONTHLY SCRAP BOOK; FOR DECEMBER.

All Nature feels the renovating force
Of Winter; only to the thoughtless eye
In ruin seen. The frost-cooled globe
Draws in abundant vegetable soul,
And gathers vigour for the coming year.

CONTENTS.

An Acrostic,	2
The Ostrich,	3
The Whale; a Zetland Story, concluded,	5
Description of the Tea Plant,	8
Scots Baptists,	12
Highland Christmas,	19
The Seaman and the Rattle-Snake,	21
Garden Work in December,	24



DUNFERMLINE:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN MILLER.

ACROSTIC.

DECEMBER, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND
THIRTY-TWO.

DEPARTING Time is closely on the wing :
Employ it well, that good it forth may bring.
Compare this year with former years, you'll find
Employment much to occupy the mind.
Much has, indeed, this year been brought about,
Beyond what has in former years turn'd out.
Ev'n had our civil rights restor'd us in
REFORM, which we had striven much to win.
Expect not all at once this to your mind ;
It by degrees must come, as you will find.
Get forward, then, with perseverance, and
Have patience, too, you'll much this way command.
The PRESS with all its FREEDOMS powerful is :
Employ'd with skill, 'twill forward you in this ;
Engage a Parliamenter, too, that will
Not fail, herein, to use his utmost skill.
How many by a Plague this year have died ?
Unknown before, which cannot be denied,
Nam'd CHOLERA, which o'er most towns has past ;
DUNFERMLINE, too, it visited, at last.
Removing many to a hasty grave ;
Ev'n though the best of skill them tried to save.
Deported now it has from us, however ;
And now we wish it may again come never :
No doubt it caus'd not few to mourn and weep,
Depriv'd of relatives in sorrow deep ;
The chief supports of those they've left behind
Have much ado, and little comfort find ;
In Him let such rely who can and will
Relief bestow on those that trust Him still.
The time's fast hastening on, the season's near,
You wishing all a Happy Good New Year !
To strict sobriety attention pay,
Withdraw from those that would you lead astray,
On which success the more will speed your way.

THE
MONTHLY SCRAP BOOK.

THE OSTRICH.

“ Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacock,
Or wings and feathers to the *ostrich*.”

OSTRICHES are tamed with very little trouble ; and in their domestic state few animals may be rendered more useful : for the valuable feathers which they cast, and the eggs which they lay ; their skins are used by the Arabians as a substitute for leather ; and they are even sometimes made to serve the purposes of horses.

Mr Adamson informs us, that during his residence at a French factory on the south bank of the river Niger, two ostriches, which had been about two years in the factory, afforded him a sight of a very extraordinary nature. These gigantic birds, though young, were of nearly the full size. “ They were,” says he, “ so tame that two little blacks mounted both together on the back of the largest. No sooner did he feel their weight, than he began to run as fast as possible, and carried them several times round the village ; as it was impossible to stop him, otherwise than by obstructing the passage. This sight pleased me so much that I wished it to be repeated ; and, to try their strength, directed a full-negro to mount the smallest, and two others the largest. This burthen did not seem at all disproportioned to their strength. At first they went

at a pretty sharp trot; but when they became heated a little, they expanded their wings, as though to catch the wind, and moved with such fleetness that they scarcely seemed to touch the ground. Most people have, one time or other, seen a partridge run; and consequently must know that a man is able to keep up with it: and it is easy to imagine, that if this bird had a longer step, its speed would be considerably augmented. The ostrich moves like the partridge, with this advantage; and I am satisfied that those I am speaking of would have distanced the fleetest race horse that were ever bred in England. It is true, they would not hold out so long as a horse; but they would undoubtedly be able to go over the space in less time. I have frequently beheld this sight which is capable of giving one an idea of the prodigious strength of the ostrich, and of showing what use it might be of, had we but the method of breaking and managing it as we do a horse."

In a tame state, these birds may be frequently seen playing and frisking about with the utmost vivacity: and in the heat of the day they are particularly fond of strutting along the sunny side of a house, fanning themselves with their expanded wings, and seeming at every turn to admire and be enamoured of their own shadows. In hot climates, indeed, their wings are almost continually in a kind of vibrating or quivering motion, as if designed to assuage the heat.

THE WHALE;

A ZETLAND STORY.

(Concluded from our last.)

The three boats destined for this perilous service, now approached the dark mass, which lay like an islet, in the deepest part of the voe, and suffered them to approach, without shewing any sign of animation. Silently, and with such precaution as the extreme delicacy of the operation required, the intrepid adventurers, after the failure of their first attempt, and the expenditure of considerable time, succeeded in casting a cable around the body of the voracious monster, and in carrying the ends of it ashore, where an hundred hands were instantly employed in securing them. But ere this was accomplished, the tide began to make fast, and the whaler informed his assistants, that either the fish must be killed, or at least greatly wounded, ere the depth of water on the bar was sufficient to float him; or that he was not unlikely to escape from their joint prowess.

“Wherefore,” said he, “we must set to work, and the factor shall have the honour to make the first throw.”

The valiant Triptolemus caught the word; and it is necessary to say that the patience of the whale, in suffering himself to be noosed without resistance, had abated his terrors, and very much lowered the creature in his opinion. He protested the fish had no more wit, and scarcely more activity, than a black snail; and, influenced by this undue contempt of the adversary, he waited neither for a further signal, nor a better weapon, nor a more suitable

position, but, rising in his energy, hurled his grapple with all his force against the unfortunate monster. The boats had not yet retreated from him, to the distance necessary to ensure safety; when this injudicious-commencement of the war took place.

Magnus Troil, who had only jested with the factor, and had reserved the launching the first spear against the whale to some much more skilful hand, had just time to exclaim, "Mind yourselves lads, or we are all swamped" when the monster roused at once from inactivity by the blow of the factor's missile, blew, with a noise resembling the explosion of a steam-engine, a huge shower of water into the air, and at the same time began to lash the waves with its tail in every direction. The boat in which Magnus presided received the shower of brine which the animal spouted into the air; and the adventurous Triptolemus, who had a full share of the immersion, was so much astonished and terrified by the consequences of his own valorous deed, that he tumbled backwards amongst the feet of the people, who, too busy to attend to him, were actively engaged in getting the boat into shoal water, out of the whale's reach. Here he lay for some minutes, trampled on by the feet of the boatmen, until they lay on their oars to bale, when the Udaller ordered them to pull to shore, and landed this spare hand, who had commenced the fishing so inauspiciously.

While this was doing, the other boats had also pulled off to safer distance, and now, from these as well as from the shore, the unfortunate native of the deep was overwhelmed by all kinds of missiles;

—harpoons and spears flew against him on all sides—guns were fired, and each various means of annoyance plied which could excite him to exhaust his strength in useless rage. When the animal found that he was locked in by shallows on all sides, and became sensible, at the same time, of the strain of the cable on his body, the convulsive efforts which he made to escape, accompanied with sounds resembling deep and loud groans, would have moved the compassion of all but a practised whale-fisher. The repeated showers which he spouted into the air began now to be mingled with blood, and the waves which surrounded him assumed the same crimson appearance. Meantime the attempts of the assailants were redoubled; but Mordaunt and Cleveland, in particular, exerted themselves to the uttermost, contending who should display most courage in approaching the monster, so tremendous in its agonies, and should inflict the most deep and deadly wound upon its huge bulk.

The contest seemed at last pretty well over; for although the animal continued from time to time to make frantic exertions for liberty, yet its strength appeared so much exhausted, that, even with assistance of the tide, which had now risen considerably, it was thought it could scarce extricate itself.

Magnus gave the signal to venture upon the whale more nearly, calling out at the same time, "Close in, lads, she is not half so mad now—Now, Mr Factor, look for a winter's oil for the two lamps at Harfra—Pull close in lads."

Ere his orders could be obeyed, the other two boats had anticipated his purpose; and Mordant Merton, eager to distinguish himself above Cleveland, had, with the whole strength he possessed, plunged a half-pike into the body of the animal. But the leviathan, like a nation whose resources appear totally exhausted by previous losses and calamities, collected his whole remaining force for an effort, which proved at once desperate and successful. The wound last received, had probably reached through his external defences of blubber and attained some very sensitive part of the system, for he roared aloud, as he sent to the sky a mingled sheet of brine and blood, and snapping the strong cable like a twig, 'overset Merton's boat with a blow of his tail, shot himself, by a mighty effort over the bar, upon which the tide had now risen considerably, and made out to sea, carrying with him a whole grove of the implements which had been planted in his body, and leaving behind him on the waters, a dark red trace of his course.

"There goes to sea your cruise of oil, Master Yellowley," said Magnus, and now you must consume mutton suet, or go to bed in the dark."

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEA PLANT

THE *black* Teas usually exported by Europeans from Canton are as follows, beginning with the lowest qualities:—Bohea, Congou, Souchong, and Pekoe. The *green* teas are Twankay, Hyson skin, young Hyson, Hyson, Imperial, and Gunpowder. All the black teas exported (with the exception of a part of the bohea, grown in Woping,

district of Canton,) are grown in Fokien, a hilly maritime, populous, and industrious province, bordering to the north-east on Canton. Owing to the peculiar nature of the Chinese laws as to inheritance, and probably, also, in some degree to the despotic genius of the government, landed property is much subdivided throughout the empire; so that tea is generally grown in gardens or plantations of no great extent. The plant comes to maturity and yields a crop in from two to three years. The leaves are picked by the cultivator's family, and immediately conveyed to market; where a class of persons, who make it their particular business, purchase and collect them in quantities, and manufacture them in part; that is, expose them to be dried under a shed. A second class of persons, commonly known in the Canton market as "the tea merchants," repair to the districts where the tea is produced, and purchase it in its half prepared state from the first class, and complete the manufacture by garbling the different qualities; in which operation, women and children are chiefly employed. A final drying is then given, and the tea packed in chests, and divided, according to quality, into parcels of from 100 to 600 chests each. These parcels are stamped with the name of the district, grower, or manufacturer, exactly as is practised with the wines of Bourdeaux and Burgundy, the indigo of Bengal, and many other commodities; and, from this circumstance, get the name of *chops*, the Chinese term for a seal or signet. Some of the leaf buds of the finest black tea plants are picked early in the spring, before

they expand. These constitute pekoe, or black tea of the highest quality; sometimes called "white-blossom" tea, from their being intermixed with it, to give it a higher perfume, a few blossoms of a species of olive (*olea fragrans*), a native of China. A second crop is taken from the same plants in the beginning of May, a third about the middle of June, and a fourth in August; which last, consisting of large and old leaves, is of very inferior flavour and value. The younger the leaf the more high flavoured, and consequently the more valuable is the tea. With some of the congous and souchongs are occasionally mixed a little pekoe, to enhance their flavour; and hence the distinction, among the London tea dealers, of these sorts of tea, into the ordinary kinds and those of "Pekoe flavour." Bohea, or the lowest black tea, is partly composed of the lower grades; that is, of the fourth crop of the teas of Fokien, left unsold in the market of Canton after the season of exportation has passed; and partly of the teas of the district of Woping in Canton. The green teas are grown and selected in the same manner as the black, to which the description now given more particularly refers; and the different qualities arise from the same causes. The gunpowder here stands in the place of the pekoe; being composed of the unopened buds of the spring crop. Imperial, hyson, and young hyson consist of the second and third crops. The light and inferior leaves, separated from the hyson by a winnowing machine, constitute hyson-skin,—an article in considerable demand amongst the Americans. The process of

drying the green teas differs from that of the black ; the first being dried in iron pots or vases over a fire, the operator continually stirring the leaves with his naked hand. The operation is one of considerable nicety, particularly with the finer teas ; and is performed by persons who make it their exclusive business.

The late rise and present magnitude of the British tea trade are among the most extraordinary phenomena in the history of commerce. Tea was wholly unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and even to our ancestors previously to the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century. It seems to have been originally imported in small quantities by the Dutch ; but was hardly known in this country till after 1650. In 1660, however, it began to be used in coffee-houses ; for, in an act passed that year, a duty of 3d is laid on every gallon of "coffee, chocolate, sherbet, and tea," made and sold. But it is abundantly evident that it was then only beginning to be introduced. The following entry appears in the Diary of Mr Pepys, secretary to the admiralty :—
"September 25, 1661. I sent for a cup of tea (a China drink), of which I had never drunk before." In 1664, the East India Company brought two lbs two oz. of tea as a present for his Majesty. In 1667, they issued the first order to import tea, directed to their agent at Bantam, to the effect that he should send home 100 lbs of the best tea he could get ! Since then, the consumption seems to have gone on regularly though slowly increasing. In 1689, instead of charging

a duty on the decoction made from the leaves, an excise duty of 5s. per lb. was laid on the tea itself. — *M'Culloch's Dictionary of Commerce.*

SCOTS BAPTISTS.

IT was in the year 1381, that the “damnable heretic, JOHN WYCKLIFF, (denominated in modern times, the morning-star of the Reformation), received the cursed opinions of Berengarius,” one of which undoubtedly was the denial of infant baptism. The Baptist profession, however, did not assume a visible appearance in England, by the formation of churches in a state of separation from the world, and also from their fellow-Christians of the Pædobaptist persuasion, earlier than the reign of James I., A. D. 1600; but at this time they began to obtain public notice, and were “a sect every where spoken against,” and greatly persecuted. In the year 1646, there was printed in London, “A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations, or Churches of Christ in London, which are commonly, but unjustly called Anabaptists; published for the Vindication of the Truth, and Information of the Ignorant; likewise for the taking off of those Aspersions; which are frequently, both in pulpit and print, unjustly cast upon them.”

In Scotland the Baptist profession did not make a visible appearance until more than a century after the publication of this Confession. In the year 1653, a fourth edition of the Confession, with a preface prefixed to it by some Baptists at Leith, was published there, intimating that they were of the same faith and order with the London churches.

Whatever these Baptists; resident in the northern metropolis, were, as to number, whether few or many; whether constituting one church or more, their history cannot be traced; and their union appears to have been dissolved, and the church, or churches, scattered, before the end of that century. It was not known in the year 1763, that there existed a single Baptist in Scotland.

The present race of Scotch Baptists set out with adopting Christ's good confession before Pilate,—“My kingdom is not of this world”; and the Commission which he gave his disciples,* they conceive, furnishes them with a most comprehensive basis for the manner in which disciples are to be gathered together as the subjects of his kingdom in the world. In accordance with this commission, they preach the gospel, baptize the disciples,† and collect them into folds and flocks, as at the beginning, commending them to God, and the word of his grace. They had nothing to do, with colleges or academies; but when any appeared among them, by the exercise of their gifts in the church, to be qualified, according to the rules laid down by the apostles in their writings, they set them apart by prayer and fasting, to the elder's office;—and deacons also in the same way. The church in Edinburgh, at its first establishment, 1767, did not consist of more than ten or a dozen members. It now numbers between three and four hundred. Dundee followed, and was set in order in 1769. In the same year a church was formed in Glasgow; and in the following year another at Montrose; and

* Mat. xxvii. 19. † Acts viii. 16, and 12. Rom. vi. 4.

in all these places they had a plurality of pastors to labour in the word and doctrine, and administer the ordinances of the Lord's house. Many distressing circumstances rose up from time to time, to disturb their peace, and call for the exercise of discipline, in order to reduce matters to the scripture standard; but they never, for a moment, dreamed of dispensing with any of the appointments of Christ's house for the sake of pleasing men—but strictly adhered to the rule prescribed by divine wisdom, and followed out the path of duty wherever it might lead.

As to their *principles*, they refer us to no human system as the unexceptionable standard of their faith. They think our Lord and his apostles used great plainness of speech in telling us what we should believe and practice: and hence they are led to understand many things more literally and strictly than those who seek to make the religion of Jesus correspond with the fashion of the times, or the decent course of the world. They believe that the salvation of guilty, helpless sinners is first and last of sovereign free grace, and not of him that willeth or runneth.—That *Jesus* is the Saviour of his people from their sins—*the Christ*, or anointed prophet, priest and king of his church—*the Son of God*, or the word made flesh, God manifested in the flesh, the first-begotten of the dead, and constituted heir of all things.—That by his life, death, resurrection, and ascension into the heavenly, holy place, with his own blood, he hath obtained eternal redemption for his people from the guilt, power, and all the consequences of sin, and procured for them everlasting life with

himself from the dead.—That men are justified freely by divine grace, without works of any kind, but solely through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whenever they really believe, or credit the testimony of God concerning his Son; which belief is not of themselves, but the gift of God.—That all who believe and are justified, have immediate peace with God in proportion to the degree of their faith; and joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom they have now received the reconciliation — That the belief of the truth will work by love to God who hath first loved us, and to those who are of the truth for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in them; it will overcome the world, with all the allurements and tribulations thereof; and purify the heart, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from worldly lusts, such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, i. e. sensuality, covetousness, and ambition (which to a certain degree, they say, are considered as virtues in the Christian world, and even by many serious professors.)—That in proportion as we hold fast the faith, and are influenced by it to love God and keep his commandments, we shall have an increasing evidence of our interest in Christ, additional to what we had on our first believing, and therefore ought to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, and to show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. Though they hold the doctrine of particular election, — of God's unchangeable and everlasting love, — and of the perseverance of the saints; yet they think it dangerous to comfort people by these con-

siderations when they are evidently in a backsliding state. In this case, they think the scripture motives to fear are most useful, and ought to have their full force, even the fear of falling away, and of coming short of the heavenly rest. They think it also unsafe in such a case, to draw comfort from the reflection of our having *once believed*, it being their opinion, that we must be reduced to the mere mercy of God, through the atonement which gave us relief at first. These appear to be their views of the leading doctrines of the gospel, and of Christian experience.

Their *church order* is strictly congregational, and, so far as they can discern, upon the apostolic plan, which is the only rule they profess to follow. The nature of their union requires that they should be strict and impartial in discipline, both to preserve purity of communion, and to keep clear the channels of brotherly love, that it may circulate freely throughout the body. They continue steadfastly every first day of the week *in the apostles' doctrine*, i. e. in hearing the scriptures read and preached—and *in the fellowship*, or contribution—and *in breaking of bread*, or the Lord's Supper—and *in prayer*, and singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.* The prayers and exhortations of the brethren are also admitted in their public meetings,† They observe the love-feast; and, upon certain occasions the kiss of charity, ‡ and also wash one another's feet when it is really serviceable as an act of hospitality.§ They abstain from eating blood and things strangled,

* Acts ii. 41. † Heb. x. 24. ‡ Rom. xvi. 16. § John xiii. 14.

i. e. flesh with the blood thereof; because these were not only forbidden to Noah and his posterity, when the grant of animal food was first made to man, but also under the gospel they are most solemnly prohibited the believing Gentiles, along with fornication and things offered to idols.* They think that a gaudy external appearance in either sex, be their station what it may, is a sure indication of the pride and vanity of the heart: that women professing godliness are not to adorn themselves with plaited or brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but with *modest* outward apparel, as well as with the inward ornaments of the mind; † also, that it is a shame for a man to have long hair, however sanctioned by the fashion. As to marriage, though they do not think that either of the parties being an unbeliever dissolves that relation, when once entered into, yet they hold it to be the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. They also consider gaming, attending plays, routs, balls, and some other fashionable diversions, as unbecoming the gravity and sobriety of the Christian profession.

As to their political sentiments, they consider themselves bound to be *subject to the powers that be* in lawful matters; to honour them, pray for them, and pay them tribute; and rather to suffer patiently for a good conscience, than in any case to resist them by force. ‡ At the same time, they are friendly to the rational and just liberties of

* Gen. ix. 4. Lev. vii. 26. Acts xv. 20. † 1 Peter iii. 1.

‡ Rom. xiii. 1.

mankind, and think themselves warranted to plead, in a respectful manner, for any just and legal rights and privileges which they are entitled to, whether of a civil or religious nature.*

It will be seen from the preceding summary statement of their principles, that the Baptists strictly take the Scriptures for their rule; and consider it wrong to reason upon any of the commands of their Lord, or of his apostles who spoke and acted by his Spirit, with a view of ascertaining how such a doctrine or practice would affect their popularity with the world, whether religious or profane. It is quite sufficient for them to know what HE has taught and enjoined: and were it in the power of any of the sage doctors of the present day to demonstrate that a particular doctrine was contrary to reason, or an approved practice altogether unsuitable to the refined taste of the present day, it would have no influence whatever upon them; because they know that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and that "what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in his sight." They well know that his religion is intended to promote a system of nonconformity to this world—the friendship of which is enmity with God. They are, therefore, no way solicitous to accommodate matters to the reigning taste of the age, but simply to believe as they are taught by the holy apostles and prophets, and practise as they are lidden, or as they find the first Christians did.

*Acts xvi. 37.

HIGHLAND CHRISTMAS.

As soon as the brightening glow of the eastern sky warms the anxious housemaid of the approach of Christmas-day, she rises full of anxiety at the prospect of her morning labours. The meal, which was steeped in the *sowans-bowie* a fortnight ago, to make the *Prehdachan sour*, or *sour scones*, is the first object of her attention. The gridiron is put on the fire, and the *sour scones* are soon followed by hard cakes, soft cakes, buttered cakes, branched bannocks, and pannich perm. The baking being once over, the *sowans pot* succeeds the gridiron; full of new *sowans*, which are to be given to the family, agreeably to custom, this day in their beds. The *sowans* are boiled into the consistence of molasses, when the *Lagan-le-vrich*, or yeast-bread; to distinguish it from boiled *sowans*, is ready. It is then poured into as many bickers as there are individuals to partake of it, and presently served to the whole, old and young. It would suit well the pen of a Burns, or the pencil of a Hogarth, to paint the scene which follows. The ambrosial food is despatched in aspiring draughts by the family, who soon give evident proofs of the enlivening effects of the *Lagan-le-vrich*. As soon as each despatches his bicker, he jumps out of bed—the elder branches to examine the ominous signs of the day,* and the younger to enter on its amusements. Flocking to the swing, a favourite amusement on this occasion, the youngest of the family get the first “*shouder*,” and

* A black Christmas makes a fat kirk-yard. A windy Christmas and a calm Candlemas are signs of a good year.

the next oldest to him in regular succession. In order to add the more to the spirit of the exercise, it is a common practice with the person appointed to swing him, to enter into a very warm and humorous altercation. As the swung person approaches the swinger, he exclaims *Ei mi tu chal*, "I'll eat your kail." To this the swinger replies, with a violent shove *Cha ni u mu chal*, "You shan't eat my kail." These threats and repulses are sometimes carried to such a height, as to break down or capsize the threatener, which generally puts an end to the quarrel.

As the day advances, those minor amusements are terminated at the report of the gun, or the rattle of the ball-clubs—the gun inviting the marksman to the "*Kiavamuchd*," or prize-shooting, and the latter to "*Iuchd-vouil*," or the ball combatants—both the principal sports of the day. Tired at length of the active amusements of the field, they exchange them for the substantial entertainments of the table. Groaning under the "*sonsy haggis*,"* and many other savoury dainties, unseen for twelve months before, the relish communicated to the company, by the appearance of the festive board, is more easily conceived than described. The dinner once despatched, the flowing bowl succeeds, and the sparkling glass flies to and fro like a weaver's shuttle. As it continues its rounds, the spirits of the company become the more jovial and happy. Animated by its cheering

* The "savoury haggis" (from *hag* to chop) is a dish commonly made in a sheep's maw, of its lungs, heart, and liver, mixed with suet, onions, salt, and pepper; or of oatmeal mixed with the latter, without any animal food.

influence, even old decrepitude no longer feels his habitual pains—the fire of youth is in his eye, as he details to the company the exploits which distinguished him in the days of “*auld langsyne* ;” while the young, with hearts inflamed with “*love and glory*,” long to mingle in the more lively scenes of mirth, to display their prowess and agility. Leaving the patriarchs to finish those professions of friendship for each other, in which they are so devoutly engaged, the younger part of the company will shape their course to the ball-room, or the card-table, as their individual inclinations suggest ; and the remainder of the evening is spent with the greatest pleasure of which human nature is susceptible.

THE SEAMAN AND THE RATTLE-SNAKE.

THE ship *Prosperity*, from London, reached one of the West India islands in May, 1806. One of the seamen, named Jervas, having left the vessel, wandered about the island on a sultry day, such as are frequent in that part of the globe. Being oppressed by the intense heat, and fatigued with previous exertions, he inconsiderately laid himself down to sleep, reclining his head on a small hillock, opposite a rock about ten feet high. He lay on his back, and his eyes, after he had slept a little, were directed, as the first object that met them, to the perpendicular height before him. What was his horror to discover, on the top of it an enormous rattle-snake, with part of its body coiled up, and the other projecting considerably over the precipice, with its keen and beautiful, yet

malignant eyes, steadily fixed on him! He felt as if charmed to the spot. The witchery of the serpent's eyes so irresistibly rooted him to the ground, that, for the moment, he did not wish to remove from his formidable opponent. The huge reptile gradually and slowly uncoiled its body, all the while steadily keeping its eyes fixed on those of its intended victim.

Jervas, now cried out, without being able to move, "He'll bite me! take him away! take him away!"

The snake began to writhe its body down a fissure in the rock, keeping its head elevated more than a foot from the ground. Its rattle made very little noise. It every moment darted out its forked tongue, its eyes became reddish and inflamed, and it moved rather quicker than at first. It was now within two yards of its intended victim, who by some means had dissipated the charm, and, roused by a sense of his awful danger, determined to stand on the defensive. To run away from it, he knew would be impracticable, as the snake would instantly dart his whole body after him. He therefore resolutely stood up, and put a strong glove on his right hand, which he happened to have with him. He stretched out his arm; the snake approached slowly and cautiously towards him, darting out its tongue still more frequently. Jervas recommended himself fervently to the protection of Heaven. The snake, when about a yard distant, made a violent spring. Jervas caught it in his right hand, directly under its head, and squeezed it with all his power. Its eyes almost

started out of its head ; it lashed its body on the ground, at the same time rattling loudly. He watched an opportunity, and suddenly holding the animal's head, while for a moment it drew in its forked tongue, with his left hand, he, by a violent contraction of all the muscles in his hand, contrived to close effectually its jaws !

Much was now done, but much more was to be done. He had avoided much danger, but he was still in very perilous circumstances. If he moved his right hand from its neck for a moment, the snake, by avoiding suffocation, could easily muster sufficient power to force its head out of his hand ; and, if he withdrew his hand from its jaws, he would be fatally in the power of its most dreaded fangs. He retained, therefore, his hold with both his hands. He drew its body between his thighs, in order to aid the compression, and hasten suffocation. Suddenly, the snake, which had remained quiescent for a few moments, brought up its tail, bit him violently on the head, and then darted its body several times very tightly round his waist. Now was the very acme of his danger. Thinking, therefore, that he had sufficient power over its body, he withdrew his right hand from its neck, and took (the work of a moment) his large sailor's knife out of his hat. He bent his head on his knee, and, again recommending himself fervently to Heaven, cut its head from its body, throwing the head to a great distance. The blood spouted violently in his face ; the snake compressed its body still tighter, and Jervas growing black in the face, thought he should be suffocated on the spot, and

laid himself down. The snake again rattled its tail, and lashed his feet with it. Gradually, however, he found the animal relax its hold; it soon fell slack around him, and untwisting it, and throwing it from him as far as he was able, he sank down and swooned upon the bank. Some of the natives coming by, and seeing the snake, but not noticing its head was cut off, and Jervas motionless, concluded he was killed. However, they saw at last the condition of the snake, and that Jervas was recovering a little; they gave him a little rum, unbuttoned his shirt, and by friendly aid, in a very short time he recovered and returned to the vessel, fervently praising the Almighty for his wondrous deliverance.

GARDEN WORK IN DECEMBER.

In mild weather continue to sow pease and beans for Succession. Cover your Artichokes with loose dung, to keep the roots from frost, if omitted last month. Prune gooseberries, currants, and thin out rasps. Dig and dung all spare ground; and dung and prepare borders on walls for young fruit trees in March, if omitted to be planted last month. Fasten young fruit trees with stakes. Gather all rubbish and burn it; and in frost carry out dung.

DECEMBER 1st.		DECEMBER 31st.	
h.	m.	h.	m.
Day breaks,.....	5 33	Day-breaks,.. ..	5 59
Sun rises,.....	7 56	Sun rises,.....	8 5
—sets,.....	4 4	—sets,.....	3 55
Twilight ends,.....	6 7	Twilight ends.....	6 1