rules which repeated trials would enable him to discover. A delicate ear perceives every difference which change of place produces in the ſame sound ; and if a perſon possessed of ſuch an ear have ſufficient command over his organs of ſpeech, to produce by them a sound in all respects ſimilar to another proceeding from any diſtant object, it is evident that to the audience the sound which he utters muſt appear to proceed from that object. If this be the true theory of ventriloquiſm, it does not ſeem to be poſſible for the most expert ventriloquiſt to ſpeak in his uſual tones of converſation, and at the ſame time make the voice appear to come from a diſtance ; for theſe tones muſt be ſuppoſed familiar to his audience, and to be in their minds associated with the ideas of his figure, place, and diſtance. Hence the ventri­loquiſt whom we ſaw appeared to ſpeak from various places only in the tones of the ſqueaking child, while Louis Bra­bant and M. St Gille, in their great seats, imitated the voices of ghoſts, to which no man could be familiar, and where terror would greatly contribute to the deception. There can, however, be no doubt, but that if, by a pecu­liar modification of the organs of ſpeech, a sound of any kind can be produced, which in faintneſs, tone, body, and in ſhort every other ſenſible quality, perfectly reſembles a sound delivered from the roof of an oppoſite houſe ; the ear will naturally, without examination, refer it to that situation and diſtance, the found which the perſon hears being only a ſign, which he has from his infancy been conſtantly accuſtomed, by experience, to associate with the idea of a perſon ſpeaking from a houſe-top. It is evident too, that when there is no particular ground of ſuſpicion, any ſmall disparity between the two sounds will not be perceptible. But if our theory be just, that experience or habit which miſleads a perſon who has ſeldom heard the ventriloquiſt, and is a ſtranger to his powers, at length ſets another person right who is acquainted with them, and has been a fre­quent witneſs of their effects. This was actually the caſe of Μ. de la Chapelle, with whom the illuſion at length ceaſed, in conſequence of repeated viſits to M. St Gille : ſo that while others, ignorant of his talent, and possessed only of their old or habitual experience with regard to articulate sounds, conſidered his voice as coming from the top of a tree, or from a deep cellar under ground ; our author, well acquainted with the powers of the ventriloquiſt, and having acquired a new kind of experience, at once referred it direct­ly to the mouth of the ſpeaker.

VENUS, in Pagan worſhip, the goddeſs of love and beauty. Cicero mentions two other deities of this name. Venus, ſtyled *Urania* and *Celestis ;* and the *Venus Pande­mos* or *Popularis,* the wife of Vulcan, and the goddeſs of wanton and effeminate love. To the firſt the Pagans ascribed no attributes but ſuch as were agreeable to the ſtricteſt chaſtity and virtue ; and of this deity they admitted no cor­poreal reſemblance, ſhe being only repreſented by the form of a globe, ending conically. Her ſacrifices were termed *nephalia,* on account of their ſobriety. To her honey and wine were offered, and no animal except the heifer ; and on her altars the wood of figs, vines, or mulberries, were not ſuffered to be burnt. The Romans dedicated a temple to this goddeſs, to whom they gave the name of *Verticordia ;* becauſe ſhe turned the hearts of lewd women, and inſpired modeſty and virtue.

But the moſt famous of theſe goddesses is the wife of Vulcan ; who is repreſented as ſpringing from the froth rai­sed by the genitals of Saturn, when cut off by Jupiter and thrown into the ſea. As soon as ſhe was formed, ſhe was laid in a beautiful ſhell embellished with pearl, and wafted by gentle zephyrs to the iſle of Cytherea, whence ſhe sailed to Cyprus. At her landing, flowers roſe beneath her feet; ſhe was received by the Hours, who braided her hair with golden fillets ; and then wafted her to heaven, where her charms appeared ſo attractive, that moſt of the gods deſired her in marriage ; but Vulcan, by the advice of Jupiter, gained poſſeſſion by putting poppies into her nectar. As Venus was the goddeſs of love and pleaſure, the poets have, been laviſh in the deſcription of her beauties ; and the pain­ters and ſtatuaries have endeavoured to give her the moſt lovely form. Sometimes ſhe is repreſented clothed in purple, glittering with gems, her head crowned with roſes, and drawn in an ivory car by ſwans, doves, or ſparrows ; at others ſhe ſtands attended by the Graces; but in all poſitions, her son Cupid is her inſeparable companion. She was honoured as the mother of Hymeneus, Cupid, Æneas, and the Graces, and was paſſionately fond of Adonis and Anchiſes.

This goddeſs was principally worſhipped at Paphos and Cyprus ; and the ſacrifices offered to her were white goats and ſwine, with libations of wine, milk, and honey. Her victims were crowned with flowers, or wreaths of myrtle.

Venus, in aſtronomy. See Astronomy-Index, and Pneu­matics, n⁰ 237.

*Venus’s Fly-trap.* See *Dionæa Muſcipula.*

Venus, in zoology, a genus of insects belonging to the order of vermes teſtacea. This animal is a tethys : the ſhell is bivalve ; the hinge with three teeth near each other, one placed longitudinally and bent inwards. There are a great many ſpecies ; of which the moſt remarkable is the *merenaria,* or commercial, with a ſtrong, thick, weighty ſhell, co­vered with a brown epidermis ; pure white within ; slightly ſtriated tranſversely. Circumference above 11 inches.— Theſe are called in North America *clams ;* they differ from other ſpecies only in having a purple tinge within. Wam­pum, or Indian money, is made of them.

VEPRECULÆ, diminutive from *vepres,* “ a briar or bramble ; the name of the 31st order in Linnæus’s Frag­ments of a Natural Method. See Botany, Sect. 6.

VERA-Cruz, a ſea port town of North America, in New Spain, with a very ſecure and commodious harbour, defended by a fort. Here the Flotilla annually arrives from Spain to receive the produce of the gold and ſilver mines of Mexico ; and at the ſame time a fair is held here for all manner of rich merchandiſe brought from China and the Eaſt Indies by way of the South Sea, and for the mer­chandiſe of Europe by the way of the Atlantic Ocean. This town is not two miles in circumference ; and about it there is a wall of no great ſtrength on the land-ſide. The air is unwholesome ; and there are very few Spaniards here unleſs when the Flotilla arrives, and then it is crowded with people from all parts of Spaniſh America. It is 200 miles ſouth-eaſt of Mexico. W. Long. 37. 25. N. Lat. 19. 12.

VERAGUA, a province of New Spain, bounded on the eaſt by that of Coſta Rica, on the west by Panama, on the north by Darien and the Gulf of Mexico, and on the south by the South Sea. It is about 125 miles in length from eaſt to west, and 60 in breadth from north to south. It is a mountainous barren country ; but has plenty of gold and ſilver. Conception is the capital town.

VERATRUM, in botany : A genus of plants of the claſs of *polygamia,* and order of *monœcia;* and in the natural ſyſtem arranged under the 10th order, *Coronariae.* There is no calyx; the corolla has six petals ; there are six ſtamina: the hermaphrodite flowers have three piſtils and three capſules. There are three ſpecies, none of which are natives of Britain.

The moſt important is the *album,* or hellebore, the root of which is perennial, about an inch thick, externally brown, internally white, and beſet with many ſtrong fibres ; the