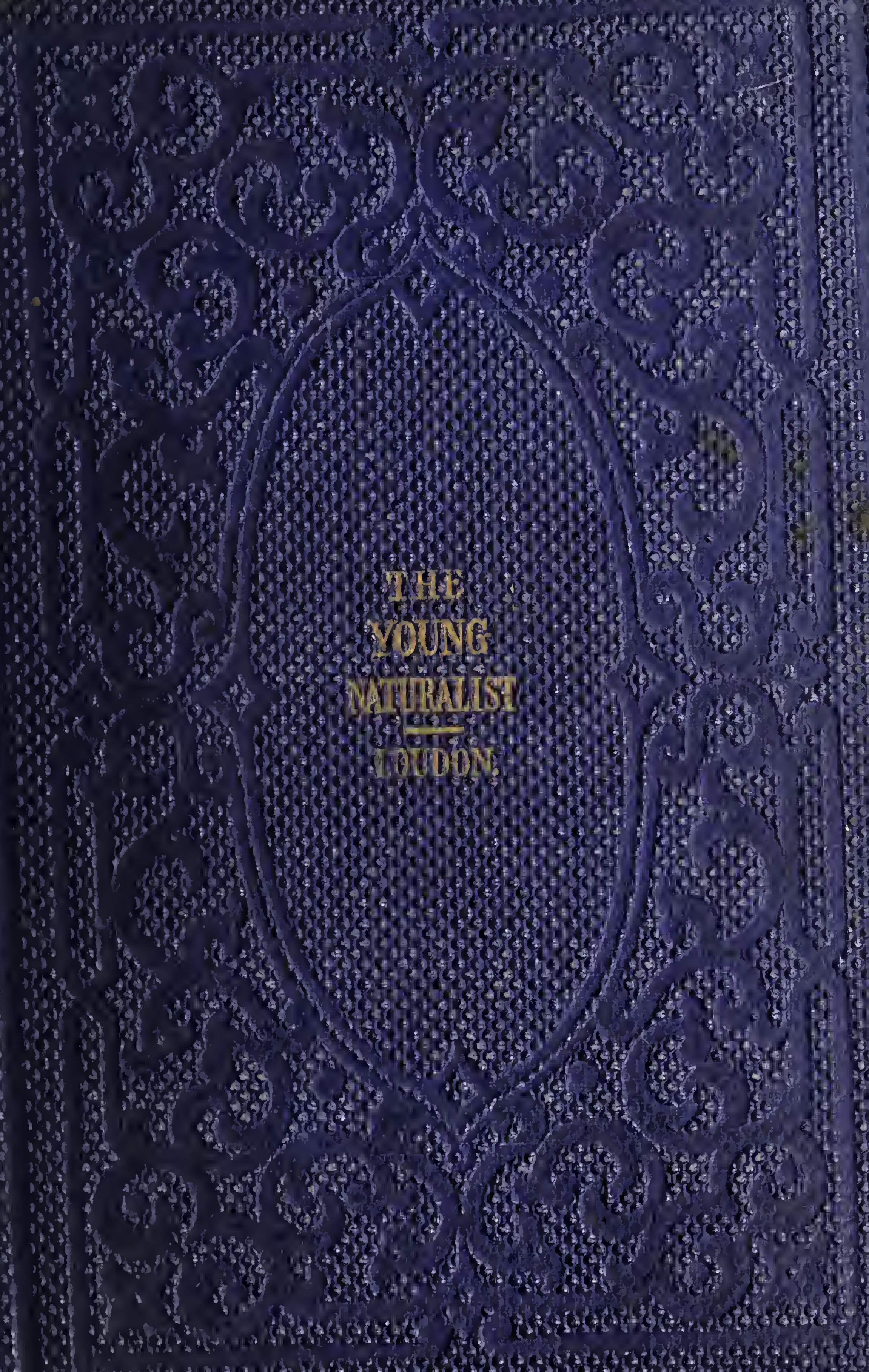

THE YOUNG NATURALIST

LOUDON.

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THIS BOOK WAS AWARDED

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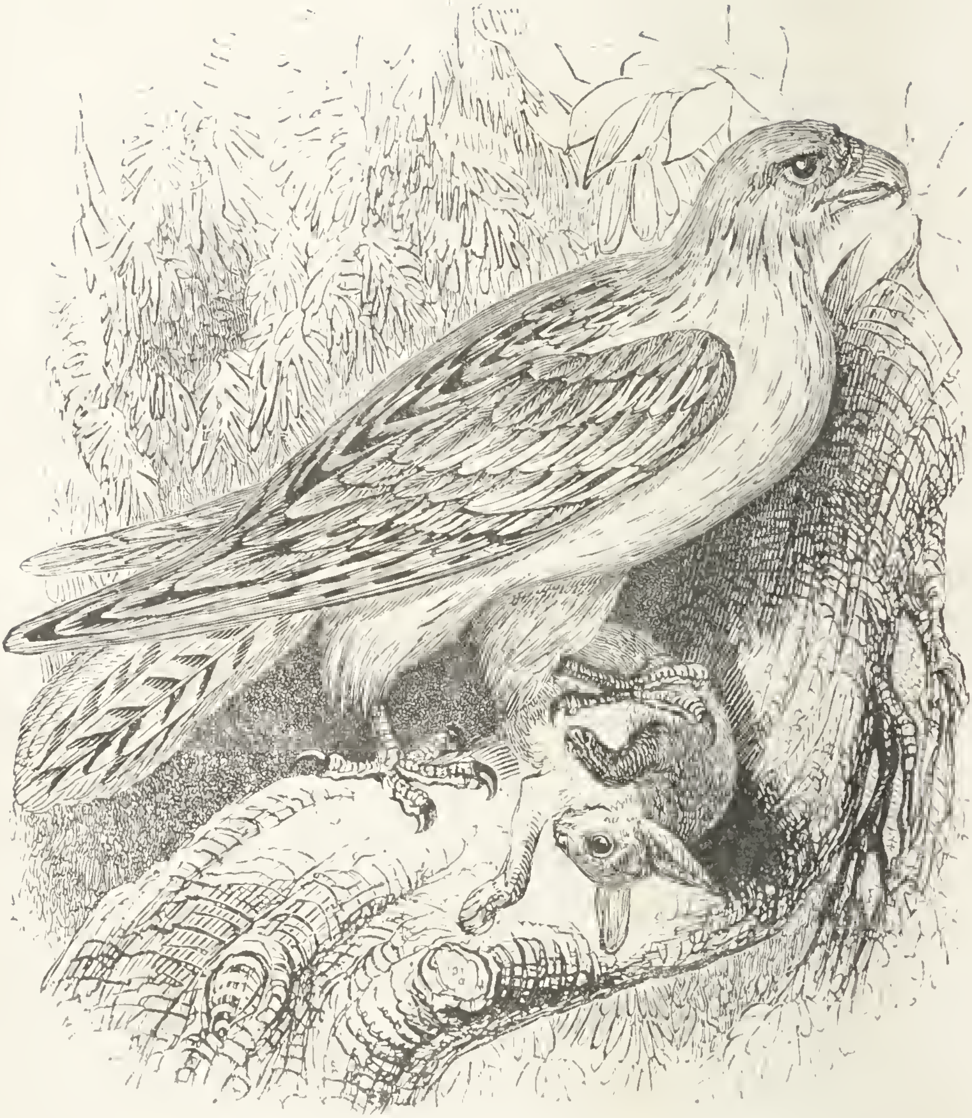
for Geography & Arithmetic

in the First Class

June 1860

A. A. Ferris



The Ger-falcon.

P. 36.

THE
YOUNG NATURALIST;
OR,
THE TRAVELS OF AGNES MERTON AND HER MAMMA.

BY MRS. LOUDON,

AUTHOR OF "THE LADIES' FLOWER GARDEN," "THE LADY'S COUNTRY COMPANION," ETC.

Third Edition, Revised and Corrected.

WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Natural History has always appeared to me a particularly suitable study for young people; as it excites the youthful mind to the contemplation of the infinite wisdom which has been shown in making all creatures form one vast whole; every part of which is in some way connected with, and dependent on, the rest. Nothing has been made in vain. Earth, air, and sea, are all peopled with living things, suited to the different situations in which they are to exist, and to the functions which they are destined to fulfil. The mole, for example, was intended to live underground; and how wisely and how wonderfully it is suited for this purpose! Its long snout pierces into and loosens the earth, which its paws, armed as they are with strong nails, scrape away; it has no visible eyes—for eyes would be useless in the narrow cell which serves for its habitation; and its thick velvety coat, while its softness, joined to the tapering form of the body, enables the mole to glide through the long galleries in which it resides, prevents it from being hurt by any stones or hard substances which it may meet with in its way. The animals of very hot and of very cold climates are both generally covered with a thick coating of hair or fur, which protects them alike from extreme heat or extreme cold, by preventing them from being sensibly affected by the atmospheric temperature. The birds which are intended to live principally in the air, are gifted with extraordinary strength of pinion, while their legs are short, so as not to impede their flying; their bodies are also of extraordinary lightness, and they are furnished with long slender claws to enable them to grasp the branch on which they perch. The duck, on the contrary, has broad webbed feet, which act as paddles in the water to assist its swimming; and the ostrich has long strong legs, each armed with a single toe in front, to enable it to make its way through deserts of moving sand. When the works of man are long and closely examined, some trifling fault or error never fails to be discovered in them; but with the works of God, the longest and most minute examinations only convince us more and more of their excellence and perfection.

Feelings of the above nature having often arisen in my mind when I have been turning over the volumes of the *Magazine of Natural History*, the idea struck me, that many of the papers contained in the earlier volumes of that work (while it was under the superintendence of my late husband) might, if stripped of their technicalities, be rendered both interesting and amusing to children. This was the origin of the present work; though the papers taken from the *Magazine of Natural History* have been so changed in fitting them for the comprehension of children, that, in most cases, it would be difficult for those who may have read them before to recognise them. The adaptation of them has, indeed, cost me quite as much time and labour as the writing of an entirely new work; and the principal advantage I have reaped from the *Magazine*, is the power it affords me of assuring my young readers that all the anecdotes here related of the animals are strictly true; though the incidents of the journey, and the persons introduced, are partly imaginary.

Some alterations have been made in the present edition; but they are only such as have appeared to me necessary to bring the work down to the present time.

J. W. L.

Bayswater, Dec. 17th, 1850.

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THE
YOUNG NATURALIST.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAMOZEET MONKEY, AND THE MANGOUSTE.

Agnes Merton's mamma having to make a long journey through several of the counties of England, determined to take with her her little girl, who was then about seven years old, and who was very fond of travelling. The first place they were to go to was Birmingham, and as Mrs. Merton had decided on travelling by the railroad, she and her little daughter went on the appointed day to the terminus in Euston-square.

Agnes, who had never travelled by a railroad before, was very much struck with, and almost frightened at, the number of carriages; and still more so at the crowd of people who bustled about, all eager to secure their places, and all seeming in the greatest hurry and confusion; while the porters passed to and fro, each with a kind of wheelbarrow, loaded with almost innumerable trunks and carpet-bags. Agnes clung close to her mamma, and was very glad when one of the men showed them a carriage in which there was room for them. They had scarcely taken their places when a lady came on the platform, followed by a servant carrying a Mamozeet monkey, and Agnes soon became quite absorbed in watching the antics of this curious little animal. The monkey was very small, not larger than a squirrel, and it was quite as active as one of those nimble little creatures. It was never still a moment; one instant it was peeping under the servant's arm, then it was on his shoulder, and then twisting round his body; the servant, during all these movements, keeping fast hold of a chain which was attached to a black-leather belt, fastened round the animal's body. Agnes was delighted with watching this monkey, which was, indeed, a very curious little creature. It was covered with long light brown hair, edged with grey, which made it look as though it were striped: its tail was very long, and distinctly marked with black and white rings; and its face was one of the sharpest and most cunning-looking that can possibly be conceived. Its little twinkling black eyes were set off by a tuft of long white hair behind each; and its ears, which were very large, went flapping up and down among this hair, as if it were listening to everything that was said. The lady appeared a long time in doubt where to go, but at last, to Agnes's great delight, the porter opened the door of the carriage in which they sat, and the lady having entered it, the servant gave her the monkey and retired.

"Did you ever see a monkey like this before?" asked the lady of Agnes, as soon as she had seated herself, observing how intently the little girl was watching the antics of her pet.

"Never," said Agnes. "He looks just like a little old man."

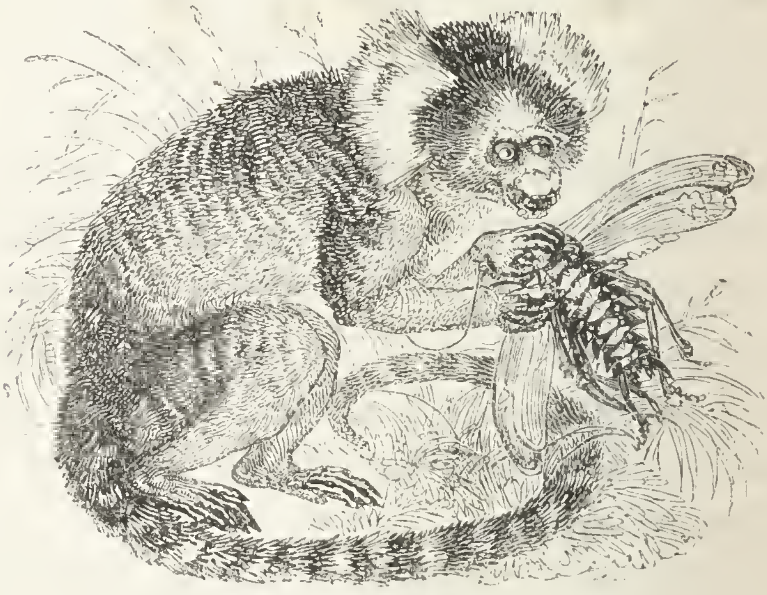
"That," said the lady, "is what the sailors called him on board the ship in which we brought him from his native country, Brazil. His curious tricks made him the favourite of everybody on board."

"Oh! how I should like to hear all about them," cried Agnes.

"With your mamma's permission," returned the lady, "I will tell you all I remember."

Mrs. Merton gladly consented, and thanked the lady, who began as follows:—

"I had long wished for a Mamozeet monkey, but though they are generally common enough in Brazil, they happened to be scarce when we were there, and we did not succeed in getting one till a few days before we sailed for England. One day, however, my husband happened to go into the market-place in Bahia, the town in which we resided, and there he saw a slave offering this monkey, and several other wild animals, for sale."



THE MAMOZEET MONKEY.

"What, was this monkey ever wild?" asked Agnes.

"Yes," returned the lady. "There are a great many monkeys wild in the woods in Brazil; and many persons make the catching of them a kind of trade."

"Then I suppose the monkey was frightened at you at first, and would not let you stroke him as he does now?"

"He would not let me touch him; but I had not much time to try, for he was taken on board the very day after we bought him. The monkey, never having seen a ship before, was very much terrified at everything, and was at first so wild and fierce that everybody was afraid of going near him. He had a nice little kennel made on purpose for him, and placed on the deck; but he would never remain still in it a single moment. By degrees, however, our little old man, as the sailors called him, became less savage, though he never lost his activity and wildness. Even when he was being fed or caressed, if he saw a cockroach, he would dart away after it like lightning, whisking his long tail about, and springing from side to side, like a cat at a fly, till he had caught his prey. The ship abounded with cockroaches, and some of them were above two inches long. When the little old man had caught one of these large insects, he would glance his keen little eyes about from side to side, and if he was satisfied that he was not observed, he would sit down and begin to prepare the cockroach for his meal. He was very particular in his manner of doing this: first, he bit the head off; then he drew out the inside, and threw it on one side; then he carefully stripped the insect of its wings, its wing-cases, and its legs, which are covered with short stiff bristles; and at last finished by devouring the body with every appearance of satisfaction."

"I think he could not have been very hungry," said Agnes, "to take so much time in preparing such a little creature as a cockroach. He would have hardly anything left to eat when he had done."

"You forget," said the lady, "that I told you some of the cockroaches were very large; and it was with these only that he took so much trouble. With the smaller cockroaches he was not so particular, and his appetite for them was so keen, that he would frequently eat a score or two of them in a day. Nothing could exceed the vigilance and activity of this Mamozeet as long as he remained in a warm climate. When he sat on the deck, his little head was turning incessantly from side to side, his keen sparkling eyes were always on the watch, and his large ears were raised so as to catch the slightest sound. Whenever he saw any stranger approaching him he would dart off, uttering those shrill disagreeable cries which have procured for this monkey, in Brazil, the name of Ouistiti."

"What a frightful name!" said Agnes.

"It is at any rate an expressive one," said Mrs. Merton; and then, turning to the lady, she asked what they fed the monkey with on board the ship?

"His ordinary food," replied the lady, "consisted of oranges, bananas, mangoes, and Indian corn; but as the supply of these articles was limited, he was fed, during the latter part of the voyage, with milk, sugar, raisins, and crumbs of bread. As the ship approached England, and the climate grew colder, the poor Mamozeet seemed to suffer exceedingly. The cockroaches were now unheeded, and their once indefatigable and active enemy kept constantly in his kennel, muffled up in a piece of flannel which had been put in to keep him warm, and in which he rolled himself, only venturing out when the sun shone brightly enough for him to bask in its beams; and hurrying back to his den at the first breath of cold wind."

"Poor little fellow!" said Agnes.

"When our little old man arrived in England, and was put into a warm room," continued the lady, "he gradually recovered some of his former liveliness, and would run about, dragging his kennel after him. He did not like, however, to be noticed, and was very indignant when any one attempted to touch or caress him; and he never recovered his appetite for cockroaches. I then began to feed him myself, and found that he was particularly fond of jelly and ripe fruit; I also gave him so much milk and crumbs of bread, that he soon became plump and healthy. He grew tolerably tame, and he was so fond of me that he would eat out of my hand, and would come to me when I called him; but he was still very violent with strangers. Even after he had been long domesticated, if any one attempted to handle or play with him, his eyes sparkled, the long white hairs on each side of his face stood erect, his nostrils dilated, and he grinned and showed his teeth, while his little wrinkled features assumed a most ludicrous expression of rage. He was, however, very fond of playing with the cat, which is very remarkable, as these monkeys are generally said to be great enemies to cats."

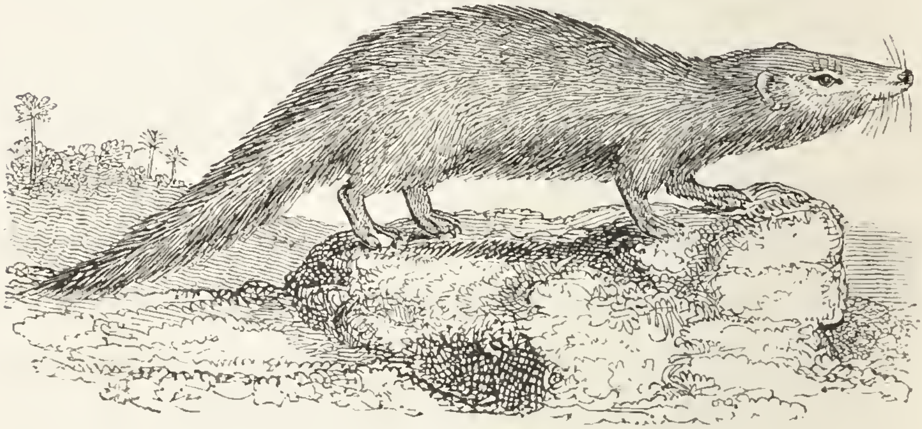
"That is very remarkable, indeed," said Mrs. Merton; "but animals in a domesticated state often appear to lose their natural antipathies. Do you think it safe to allow my little girl to touch your monkey?" continued she, observing that Agnes wished very much to stroke it.

"Oh!" replied the lady, "there is not the slightest danger. Since my husband's death, Jacopo has been my constant companion, and he is very fond of children."

"I remember to have read," observed Mrs. Merton, "that these monkeys are very attentive to their young. A pair of them, which were kept in Paris, had three young ones, which I believe were the first born in Europe. The mother was rather careless, and seemed soon to get tired of carrying them about; and when this was the case, she would hold out the little creatures to their father, or would playfully put them on his back. The male monkey generally took them in his hands and nursed and played with them, till they became restless for food, when he gave them back to their mother."

"How delighted I should have been to see them!" exclaimed Agnes.

"As your daughter seems so pleased with what I have been able to tell her about my monkey," said the lady, addressing Mrs. Merton, "perhaps she will like to hear something of another very curious animal, called a Mangouste, that my brother brought over from the East Indies, some years since, and that he still keeps, and is very fond of."



THE MANGOUSTE.

"I should, indeed," replied Agnes; "though I don't exactly know what a Mangouste is."

"The Mangouste," said the lady, "is a ferret-like looking animal, about two feet long, a native of the East Indies, but covered with as thick a coating of shaggy hair as though it came from a cold country. The one I allude to, which is a female, was brought to England from Madras. Her colour is apparently a silvery grey, but on a nearer inspection every one of her hairs (which are long and coarse) will be found to be marked with bars of black, brown, and white, like the quills of a porcupine; her head is small; her legs are short and strong; and her tail is long and very thick near the body, but tapering at the end."

"Is she intelligent?" asked Agnes.

"She is very inquisitive," replied the lady; "and she runs about the house of her master searching into every corner and devouring all the insects she can find. She is very light and active, and after she has examined every part of the floor, she jumps upon the chairs and tables, springing lightly from chair to chair, and poking her nose into the pockets of those who are sitting upon them. She uses her fore-paws like hands, and with great dexterity pulls clothes and other things about, turning them over and seeming to be examining them. Her tail seems to assist her in leaping and turning; and in so doing, she frequently strikes it against hard objects with such force as to make it bleed at the extremity."

"Does the Mangouste play with the cat like your little Jacopo?" inquired Mrs. Merton.

"No," replied the lady; "but she has formed an acquaintance with the dog. When she was first brought to my brother's cottage, she growled, and set up her hair, as a cat does, at the sight of the dog kept there. They had afterwards a slight contest; but after the Mangouste had given the dog a bite on the face, they became good friends, and have continued so ever since. The Mangouste possesses great strength and activity, and she is as playful as a kitten, twisting her long body about into the most curious attitudes, one of the most remarkable of which is, her standing upon her tail and hind legs, and leaping like a kangaroo."

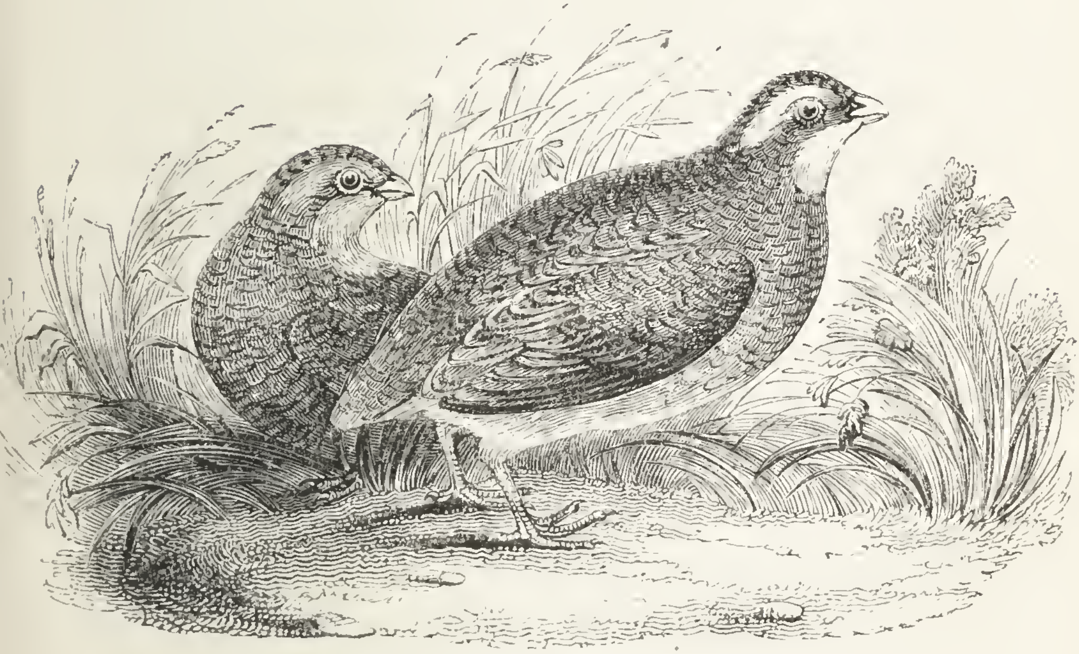
"I suppose this creature is too cat-like to live on bread and milk?" said Mrs. Merton.

"You are quite right," returned the lady, "in calling the Mangouste cat-like; for the change that takes place in her when she is fed is very striking. At other times she is mild and docile, but the moment she sees food, especially if a live bird be given to her, she becomes fierce and ravenous; her eyes glare, she utters a low, savage growl, and, if any one approaches, gnashes her teeth and attempts to bite. One day a basin of water was offered to her, in which was an egg; when she eagerly dived for it, up to her shoulders, as she did when some minnows were substituted for the egg; but when a larger vessel was presented to her, the water seemed to deprive her of sight; and after a few ineffectual attempts to dive for the minnows, she contented herself with sitting close to the edge of the tub, and watching till they came to the surface, when she pounced upon them. She was very fond of birds, and used to climb dexterously into bushes in search of them. She was also very fond of mice, rats, lizards, and frogs, playing with them a long time before killing them, and only giving their *coup-de-grace* when there appeared some chance of their making their escape."

CHAPTER II.

THE VIRGINIAN PARTRIDGES, AND THE FLYING SQUIRRELS.

THE conversation of the lady to whom the Mamozeet belonged was so very interesting, and the antics of the monkey itself so droll, that both Mrs. Merton and her daughter were sorry when they arrived at Birmingham, and found that they must part, as the lady was going on to Liverpool. Mrs. Merton and Agnes then proceeded to the house of Mr. Linton, Mrs. Merton's cousin, where she intended to spend two or three days. Mr. and Mrs. Linton lived at Edgbaston, a short distance from the town, where they had a large garden; and Mrs. Merton and Agnes had no sooner arrived there, than George and Harriet Linton dragged their cousin into the garden to show her a pair of beautiful Virginian partridges that their papa had lately had sent to him from America. The children were so long admiring these birds and feeding them, that their parents began to be uneasy, and came in search of them; when Agnes ran instantly to her mamma, and begged her to tell them if she knew anything of the history and habits of the birds.



VIRGINIAN PARTRIDGES.

"These beautiful birds," said Mrs. Merton, "though generally called partridges, are, in fact, quails. They are natives of North America throughout nearly its whole extent; being found from the north of Canada to the south of Florida. They generally appear in flocks, or coveys, like the partridge of Europe. The Virginian partridges are easily domesticated, and even in a wild state they will occasionally approach the farm-houses, and mix with the barn-door fowls to feed. When alarmed, they take shelter in the woods, perching on the branches of the trees, or hiding themselves among the underwood. They begin to build early in May, and form their nests on the ground, but with great care. They usually choose a thick tuft of grass for a foundation, and make their nest of leaves and dry grass, covering it over above, and leaving an opening on one side for an entrance. The female is very careful of her young, and counterfeits lameness to lead sportsmen away from her nest, in the same way as the common English partridge. These partridges are often reared in America by placing the eggs under a common hen; but though, when thus reared, they appear very tame for a little time, as soon as they have attained their full growth they fly off to the woods."

"Our birds," said Mr. Linton, "have laid eggs and hatched their young here. Last spring we had in some pea-sticks, which were deposited, till wanted, in the yard where the partridges were kept. Towards the latter end of May, I perceived the male bird carrying straws about in his bill, and twisting them about over his head in the most conceited manner, as though he were doing something that he was very proud of. I watched him, and saw him deliver the straws to the female, who was sitting among the pea-sticks; and I soon found that they were about to build a nest. Both male and female worked very hard at this nest, and it was, indeed, very neatly made. It was, as you described their nests generally, arched over at the top, and with a hole on the side for the birds to go in and out, just like a wren's nest; and when it was finished, the hen laid in it several eggs, which, at the proper time, she sat on, with as much assiduity as the common hen. When I thought it was time for the eggs to be hatched, I examined the nest, and found it deserted; though some egg-shells, which had evidently contained young birds, were lying about. Much pleased with this circumstance, I cautiously looked about to try to find the mother with her little brood; and, after searching a considerable time, I succeeded, though the first intimation I had of her presence was her flying in my face with great agitation, just as a common hen would have done under similar circumstances. I then saw the young ones, nine in number, collect under the wings of their mother, whose attention to them was unremitting, and who reared them all with very little trouble. When they had moulted and assumed their adult plumage, from some cause which I could never ascertain, they began to droop one after another, and before Christmas all the young birds died. Though I examined the stomachs and gizzards of most of them, yet I never could find out the cause of their deaths; but I think it probable that so extraordinary a mortality must have been occasioned by some deleterious substance that they picked up in the place into which I put them when I separated them from the old ones, as the old birds escaped uninjured."

"Did the male bird assist the female in sitting?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"No," returned Mr. Linton. "I have heard of many birds, of which the male and female sit alternately; but that was not the case with our partridges. The male bird confined his politeness to assisting his lady to build, and to serenading while she was sitting; which he did with the harshest and most singular notes I ever heard, some of which were very similar to the mewing of a cat. He had also the peculiarity of constantly running round in a circle, till the ground on which he performed his evolutions was worn as bare as a road, and the turf trodden down much in the same way as it is by the ruff in the fens during the hatching season. After the young birds were hatched, nothing could be more cordial and harmonious than this happy family. When evening approached, they crowded together in a circle on the ground, and prepared for the slumbers of the night by placing their tails all together, with their pretty mottled chins facing to the front, in a watchful round-robin."

"Was the male bird as kind to the young ones as the mother?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Oh yes," returned her cousin. "When their food, which consisted of wheat, barley, and a little bread, was thrown in to them, the male would not eat anything till he had called all his family around him to partake of it; and he did this with much tossing of his head, and strutting, and spreading out of his wings and tail."

They had walked on while they were talking, and had now reached the further end of the court-yard, where there was a kind of cage, something like a rabbit-hutch, in which there appeared some remarkably active little animals.

"What are you keeping here?" asked Mrs. Merton.

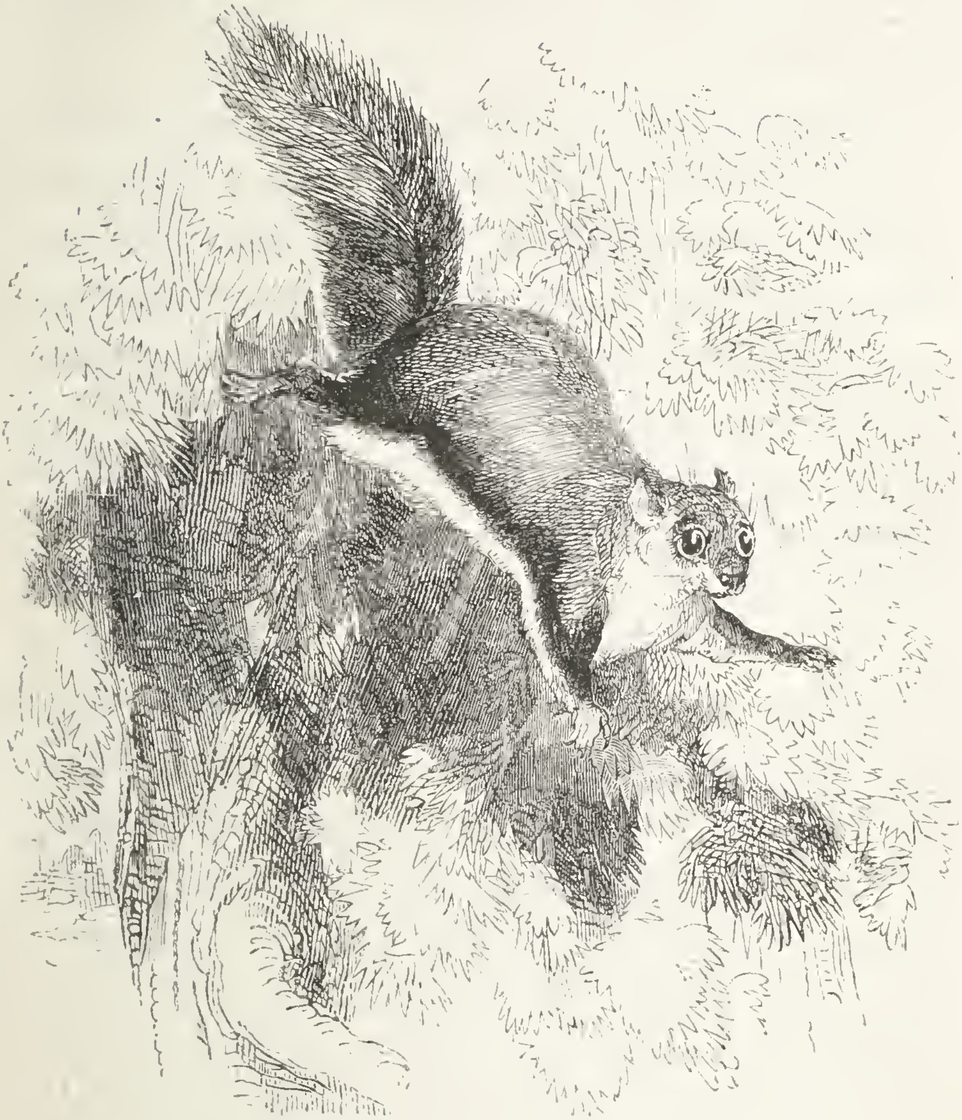
"Some flying squirrels," answered Mr. Linton, "which were sent to me from America at the same time as the partridges."

"Are they tame?" inquired Mrs. Merton.

"Perfectly so," replied Mr. Linton; "and when we first had them, we used to amuse ourselves in the evenings by letting them play about the room in which we were sitting."

"I should think they would be too tired to play much in the evening," said Agnes.

"On the contrary," said Mr. Linton, "they are almost always asleep during the day, lying curled round, with their tails covering their noses; but in the evenings, and through the whole night, they are in constant motion. At the time I speak of, the moment I opened the door of their cage, they jumped upon me, and generally crept into my waistcoat or coat-pocket: indeed, more than once, after I have roused and fed them in the day-time, I have found, to my great surprise, some hours



THE FLYING SQUIRREL.

afterwards, that I had been carrying one about with me in my pocket-handkerchief. Sometimes, even when on horseback, on putting my hand into my pocket I have felt a squirrel."

"I can't say that I should have liked that," said Mrs. Merton.

"Neither did I," replied Mr. Linton; "and in the end, it led to their being shut up here. But while we kept them in the house, we used, as I before observed, to let them out every evening to run about; and we had constant opportunities of seeing them jump, or (as it has been called) fly across the room; though there is, in fact, no flying motion of the expansion of skin from the fore to the hind legs."

"How do they, then, contrive to move?"

"When about to spring, they jerk their heads up and down three or four times, as if to take their distance, and increase the power of rising; they then generally spring from some height downwards, on some object which they appear to have previously selected to reach. Their power of rising appears to be very limited; as, indeed, will be obvious when it is recollected that the expansion of skin only acts as a parachute. They gradually fall, forming a curve in the air, the body being kept in a perfectly horizontal position; and they never descend headlong or sideways, as Landseer's spirited etching in the *Fauna Borealis* would lead one to suppose. When they descend, their legs are stretched out, and the under part of the body appears a little hollowed, like the palm of the hand with the fingers nearly expanded."

"I remember the print you allude to," said Mrs. Merton; "and I have so often admired its beauty, that I am quite sorry to find that it is incorrect."

"I do not mean to assert," replied Mr. Linton, "that in a wild state they never descend except horizontally; but they generally do not do so in a general way. I have seen my squirrel come down from the cornice of the room (twelve feet high) upon the table; and in his descent, finding that if he continued in the direction in which he started, he would fall upon the lighted candle, he has suddenly thrown his body sideways, and thus turned about a foot out of the first direction; but he never appeared to have the power of turning much more than that. I can, however, easily conceive that, in a wild state, descending from a great height from some tree, they may, in some measure, guide themselves by this power of turning sideways, and be carried to great distances by the force of the wind, and appear, as Bewick says, like numerous falling leaves."

"Squirrels are generally very fond of hiding things," observed Mrs. Merton. "Have these little creatures the same propensity?"

"Yes; like all the squirrel tribe, they are in the habit of hiding all the food they do not immediately want to eat; and I have had many opportunities of observing their recollection of the places in which they had concealed their nuts and other things. One evening they amused themselves with hiding the nuts we had given them in my wife's cap; and four days afterwards, when they were let out of their cage again, they went directly to my wife, and carefully examined all the trimmings of her cap in search of their hidden treasures. I found that whenever they were abundantly supplied with food, they were not satisfied with the same quantity as what they had been accustomed to take, but would continue to fetch and hide what they could not eat till all had disappeared."

"Our friends," said Mrs. Linton, "were often amused with watching the squirrels sitting quietly on the cornice of the room over the curtain, till tea was brought in; when, down they would come, one after the other, either upon my head or upon the table, and steal lumps of sugar so quickly that we could seldom catch them. We were often obliged to place a saucer on the top of the sugar-basin, to keep any sugar for ourselves. They would then watch their opportunity, and take small pieces of toast or cake, which they carried to the cornice, and ran round the room till they thought they had found a secure place to hide their stolen treasures in; when they used to scratch with their fore-feet till they had made a little opening, when they would push the food into it with their mouths and noses, and then stamp upon it."

"I remember on one occasion," observed Mr. Linton, "when our usual sitting-room was repainted, we found eighteen pieces of sugar, besides toast and pieces of cake, in the corners of the cornice. Of course, during the painting, the squirrels were not permitted to have their evening run; but after three weeks' or a month's confinement, they were allowed to come out again; and we were much amused at their constantly running round, and the anxiety they were in, when they found their stores gone. As soon as tea was brought in, they again stole the sugar, but hid it in the corners of the room, under the carpet and behind the books, as though they had sense enough to discover that their former hiding-place was insecure."

"Did they ever have any young ones?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Yes," said Mr. Linton; "in March of the second year, I found, one day, just after the squirrel's cage had been cleaned, one young one, which we reared. I had soon afterwards an opportunity of procuring two more pairs, which, after some fighting, lived at last very contentedly all together; but as the family was now too large to be allowed to run about the room, I removed them to their present cage. After this the squirrels had several young ones, but I never saw more than two at a time. I found they were generally born in March or April, and that they were always blind for three weeks after their birth."

"If, on any occasion," said Mrs. Linton, "we disturbed the young in their nest, the mother immediately afterwards removed them to another part of the cage. The common squirrel of this country is said to remove her young in the same manner if disturbed. Finding this the case, we often took the young squirrels out of their nest for the purpose of watching the mother carry them away, which she did by doubling the little one up under her body with her fore-feet and mouth till she could take hold of the hind-thigh and the neck, when she would jump away so fast that it was difficult to see whether she was carrying her young one or not. As the young increased in size (which they soon did), and of course in weight, this undertaking became more difficult. We then saw the mother turn the young one on its back, and while she still held the thigh in her mouth, the fore-legs of the young one were clasped round her neck. Sometimes, when she was attempting to jump upon some earthen pots which I had placed in the cage, she was overbalanced, and fell with her young one; but as soon as she was near the ground, she would drop the young squirrel, so as to prevent her own weight from crushing it, which would have been the case if they had fallen together. I have seen the young ones carried in this manner till they were half-grown."

"Poor thing!" cried Agnes; "how very fond of her young ones she must have been!"

"We often see cats carrying about their young," said Mrs. Merton. "But pray go on," continued she, addressing Mr. Linton, "and tell us anything else you can recollect about these squirrels."

"I have little else to say," resumed Mr. Linton, "except that we feed our squirrels on milk, sugar, nuts, and any kind of grain; and also that they require to be let out occasionally, as, like some kinds of monkey, they are very apt to lose their tails if kept in very close confinement."

"And pray do not forget," added his wife, "that squirrels require to be kept scrupulously clean. We give ours a little fresh hay, or short grass, every day; and even when they have straw, it should be changed twice or three times a week."

CHAPTER III.

FALCONS AND FALCONRY.

After spending a few days very agreeably in Birmingham, Mrs. Merton and her daughter went to visit Sir Edward Peregrine, an old gentleman who lived on a fine estate which he possessed in Somersetshire, and who piqued himself on preserving as much as possible the customs of his ancestors. Among other things Sir Edward had a fine heronry on his estate, and he kept a number of hawks and falcons, which he occasionally flew at these birds, imitating as closely as possible, when so doing, the manner in which similar amusements had been conducted by his ancestors for centuries.

The day after Mrs. Merton's arrival, the baronet's sister, Miss Peregrine, who lived with him, and kept his house, as his wife was dead, begged her visitor not to refuse being present at a hawking-match, should Sir Edward propose it. Mrs. Merton answered that her only objection was on account of Agnes, as she thought it would pain her to witness the sufferings of the poor birds struck down by the hawks. However, when Miss Peregrine informed her that the birds were generally killed at one blow, and consequently could not suffer much, she promised to comply.

Miss Peregrine had judged rightly of her brother; for as soon as he supposed his guests to be sufficiently refreshed from the fatigues of their journey, he proposed to them to fix a day for what he called this noble diversion, and he was delighted with Mrs. Merton's ready compliance with his wishes; while his only son, a very fine youth of about seventeen, began in high spirits to talk to Mrs. Merton and Agnes, to try to give them some idea of the sport. Agnes listened with great attention to all that was said; but, not quite understanding it, she at last ventured to ask what was meant by hawking.

"The noble art of Falconry, or Hawking, as it is now called," said Sir Edward, "was formerly so highly in repute, that no person of high rank was thought properly qualified for his exalted station who was ignorant of it. The length of time that was required to train a falcon, and the consequent expense of procuring one when trained, confined the sport to the wealthy; and not only noblemen, but kings and bishops, were devoted to it. Even ladies partook of it; and we often see in old pictures a lady on her palfrey, followed by her falconer bearing her favourite hawk upon his wrist, or carrying it herself."

"The birds used for this kind of sport," observed Miss Peregrine, "all belong to the division which is now called Raptores, from *raptor*, a robber or plunderer; but by Linnæus they were distinguished by the term Accipitres, from *accipio*, to take; and in the language of falconry they are known by the general name of Hawks. The kinds most commonly used are the Peregrine or common falcon, the Ger-falcon, the Hobby, the Merlin, the Goshawk, and the Fishing-hawk. Of these the Peregrine falcon and the Ger-falcon were used for the nobler kinds of game; the Hobby and the Merlin for the smaller birds; the Goshawk for the particular kind of hawking called raking, which consists in the bird taking its prey sideways, and not by pouncing upon it; and the Osprey for fishing."

"Still," said Agnes, looking timidly at her mother, "I scarcely know what hawking means. What do the birds do?"

"Hawking, my love," said her mother, "is a means of hunting birds in the air by other birds, as hares and foxes are hunted over the ground by dogs. The hawks are carried out by the falconer; and when a bird is seen that the falconer wishes to kill, he lets loose one of his hawks. The hawk rises very high in the air, and then darts down upon the poor bird, which it kills with a blow of its beak, and brings down to its master in its talons. There are, as Miss Peregrine has kindly told you, several kinds of birds employed in this sport, most of which you will see to-morrow."

"She may see them now, if you please," said Miss Peregrine, taking Agnes by the hand. "If you will walk with me, I will show her all my brother's birds; and if my nephew Frederick will accompany us, he and I will tell her a few particulars of each."

Mrs. Merton and Mr. Frederick gladly assented, and they all proceeded together to visit the falcons.

"That bird which looks at us so keenly," said Miss Peregrine, "is the common falcon. It is one of what are termed the noble birds of prey, and though not very large in body, it has, from the length of its wings, and the expression of its eyes, a very grave and dignified air. It is a native of the continent of Europe and the islands of the Mediterranean, and it is always found in rocky and mountainous places. It is perhaps the most courageous of all birds for its size; and when it attacks its prey, it first soars to a great height and then drops perpendicularly upon it; rising again majestically straight up to nearly as great a height with its prey in its claws as it had soared before to strike it. When the prey is too heavy for this, the falcon tears it to pieces, and devours it on the spot."

"The nest, or eyrie, of the falcon," observed Mr. Frederick, "is built in the cliffs of the most rugged rocks exposed to the south, and the female lays three or four eggs, which are of a reddish yellow with brown spots. As soon as the young are able to procure their own food, the parent birds drive them not only from the nest, but force them to quit that particular district which they reserve exclusively for themselves."

"How cruel and how selfish!" cried Agnes.

“You forget,” said her mother, smiling, “how often I have told you we must not find fault with animals for cruelty, as they act solely from the dictates of instinct. It is only a creature possessed of reason, and will, that can be cruel. But we are interrupting Miss Peregrine, who, I hope, will tell us something more about the falcons.”

“This kind of falcon,” continued Miss Peregrine, “is known to live to a very great age. One was taken at the Cape of Good Hope, in 1793, which had a gold collar round its neck, on which was engraved the name of James I. king of England, with the date of 1610. This bird must consequently have been nearly two hundred years old, and it was yet apparently healthy and vigorous.”

“But the most curious thing about the hawks,” said Frederick, “is the care that is taken in training them. The young birds are taken before they leave the nest, and are kept in darkness and without food for several days. They are then fed by the falconer, and are taught to know his voice, and to leap on his hand when they are called. They are afterwards exercised in the open air, and are first flown at a pigeon tied by a string. If they tear this to pieces when they have killed it, they are beaten; but if they bring it uninjured to the falconer, they are caressed and fed with raw beef, which is a food that they are very fond of. At last the falcon's education is completed, and it is ready to be flown at wild game."

"Did you ever see that curious work on hawking called the *Booke of St. Albans?*" asked Miss Peregrine, addressing herself to Mrs. Merton.

"Never; though I have often heard of it, and thought what a strange subject it was for a lady and an abbess to write upon."

"We have the book," said Miss Peregrine; "and I suppose Dame Juliana Berners wrote it to show her gentle blood; for in those days hawking was a sport confined entirely to the higher classes. In this book we are told that the different kinds of hawks were reserved for different ranks in society, and that the common falcon was never flown by any one below the rank of a prince."

"How droll!" said Agnes, laughing. "What bird did they give to the king?"

"The Ger-falcon," said Miss Peregrine; "that noble bird which is now eyeing you so keenly, and which is considered equal, if not superior, to the common falcon for the purpose of falconry; it is, however, much fiercer and less docile than that bird, and consequently requires more care in training. When taken from the nest, this bird is kept on low diet and in darkness for about six weeks. The falconer then ties down one of the bird's wings with a thread, and throws water over its body with a sponge. The head is then patted without removing the hood, and the beak rubbed with a pigeon's wing. If the bird bears this quietly, the hood is loosened and the eyes are gradually uncovered, the beak being kept muzzled. By degrees, the Ger-falcon is accustomed to obey its keeper's voice and to leap upon his hand; but it generally takes two or three months before it is sufficiently tame to be left unmuzzled. When the bird is thought sufficiently docile, a pigeon's wing covered with blood is presented to it, on which it falls eagerly, tearing it to pieces with the greatest fury. After this, the Ger-falcon is gradually trained to take herons and other kinds of game; and when properly educated, it is supposed to afford finer sport than any other kind of falcon. In former times, the king of Denmark is said to have sent a vessel annually to Iceland to obtain the true Iceland Gerfalcons, which were thought superior to all others. These birds were afterwards sent as presents to the different sovereigns of Europe; and some of them were in the royal hawking establishment of France so late as the time of Louis XVI."

"Have you any other kinds of hawks?" asked Agnes.

"Yes," replied Frederick, "we have a Hobby. This bird is common in the northern parts of Europe; but it is said to leave England and some of the colder places in winter for a milder climate. It is generally found in woods, and makes its nest on high trees. The eggs are whitish and spotted. The Hobby is not particularly docile; and it is used in falconry principally for taking larks, quails, and snipes. It is very fierce, and has been known to dash through an open window into a room to attack a bird in a cage."

"We have also a Merlin," said Miss Peregrine, "which, though a small bird, possesses great courage, and being also of rapid flight, ranks high in the scale of falcons. Dame Juliana Berners, indeed, gives it as one of the hawks for an emperor; though in later times, it was so generally used by ladies, that it was called the lady's hawk.

The Merlin is so excellent a bird for hawking, that one not weighing more than six ounces has been seen to strike and kill a partridge more than twice its own weight; but this bird is so tenacious of its prey, that it is very difficult to make it quit anything that it has taken. The Merlin builds its nest upon the ground, and the eggs are mottled all over with a reddish brown."

"I have heard," said Mrs. Merton, "that the plumage of the full-grown bird is very beautiful. Lewis has celebrated

'The Merlin's wing,
With its pinions of glossy blue.'

"I believe it is called in France and Germany the Stone Falcon, from its habit of sitting on a bare stone or rock. It is said to remain in England only during the winter; and though it is met with in various places on the Continent, it appears not to be very common anywhere."

"The Merlin," observed Frederick, "is the most docile of all the different kinds of hawks. When it is being tamed, or, in the language of falconry, 'reclaimed,' it is not necessary to cover its eyes with a hood. When the falconer has carried it occasionally on his hand, and enticed it with little bits of meat, it will fly to him the moment it sees him. It is easily taught to take the game and return to its master's wrist at the first call. The Merlin is employed to take larks, blackbirds, partridges, and quails."

"Have you a Goshawk?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Yes," said Frederick, "here it is; but we seldom use it, as my father does not like its manner of flying. It is, indeed, one of the most lazy of birds; and instead of boldly soaring into the air and descending on its prey like the falcons, it glides through the air on a line with it, and seizes it stealthily, as you might suppose a robber to do who crept behind the man he wanted to murder before he knocked him down. It is also soon discouraged, and if it does not catch its prey at the first attempt it gives up the pursuit, and, perching on a bough, waits till some new game presents itself, or till the old game which had taken cover is forced by hunger to move. The flight of the Goshawk is low, and it always takes its prey near the ground."

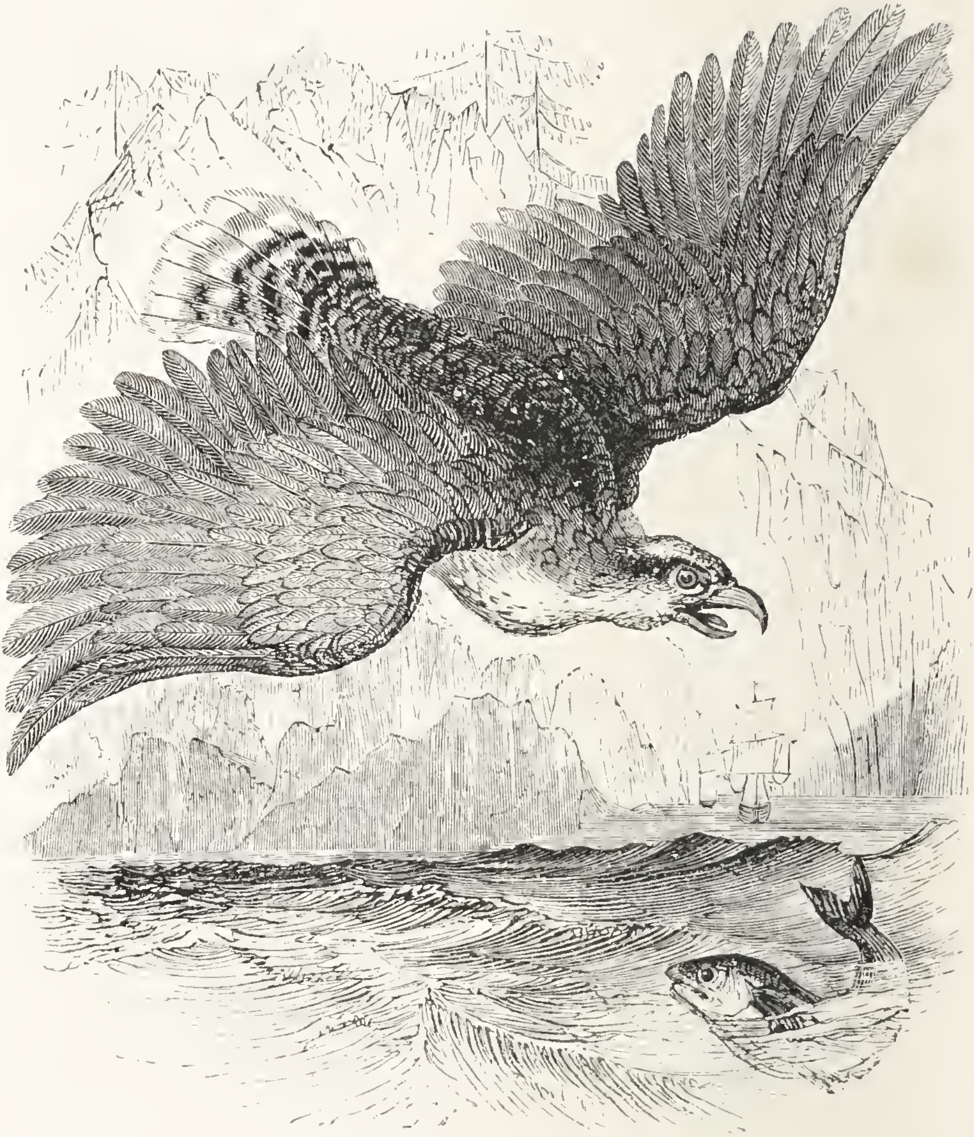
"In Hewitson's work on the *Eggs of British Birds*," said Miss Peregrine, "it is stated that the Goshawk, if undisturbed in possession, will frequently occupy the same nest for several years, making the necessary repairs. This nest is placed on some high tree on the outskirts of the forest, and is rarely found in the interior, except in those parts that are open and free from timber. The female bird lays only three or four eggs, which are of a very pale blue without any marks, and which are frequently hatched by the middle of May."

"The Goshawk is a cowardly fellow, also, in its training," said Frederick; "as, though it is apt to be sullen when it is first caught, it no sooner suffers from hunger than it will feed greedily and be perfectly obedient to any one who will give it food. Particular care, must, however, be taken in training this bird, not to feed it with fowls or pigeons; as, if it were once to taste these birds, it would soon thin all the poultry-yards and dove-cots in the neighbourhood."

"I can't bear that Goshawk," cried Agnes.

"I remember when I was in Scotland," said Mrs. Merton, "seeing a bird that I think was called an Osprey, or fishing-eagle. Have you one of those birds here?"

"No," said Miss Peregrine; "though I mentioned it when we first began to talk on the subject



The Osprey.

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under the name of the Fishing-hawk. It is a large and rather elegant bird. It lives on fish, but as it can neither swim nor dive, it only takes its prey when it rises to the surface of the water. Thus, when in search of food, the Osprey may be seen hovering over the waves, and darting upon any unfortunate fish that may rise in sight. Should the fish perceive its danger and dive into deep water, the Osprey stops suddenly in its descent, and hovers a few seconds in the air, like a kite or kestrel, suspending itself in the same spot by a quick flapping of its wings; it then makes a second dart upon its prey, and, if again unsuccessful, it regains its former altitude by an elegant spiral flight. When it seizes the fish, it is with its claws; sometimes scarcely appearing to dip its feet in the water, and at other times plunging under the surface with force sufficient to throw up a considerable spray. It never goes to any depth, however, for, as was before observed, it can neither dive nor swim.

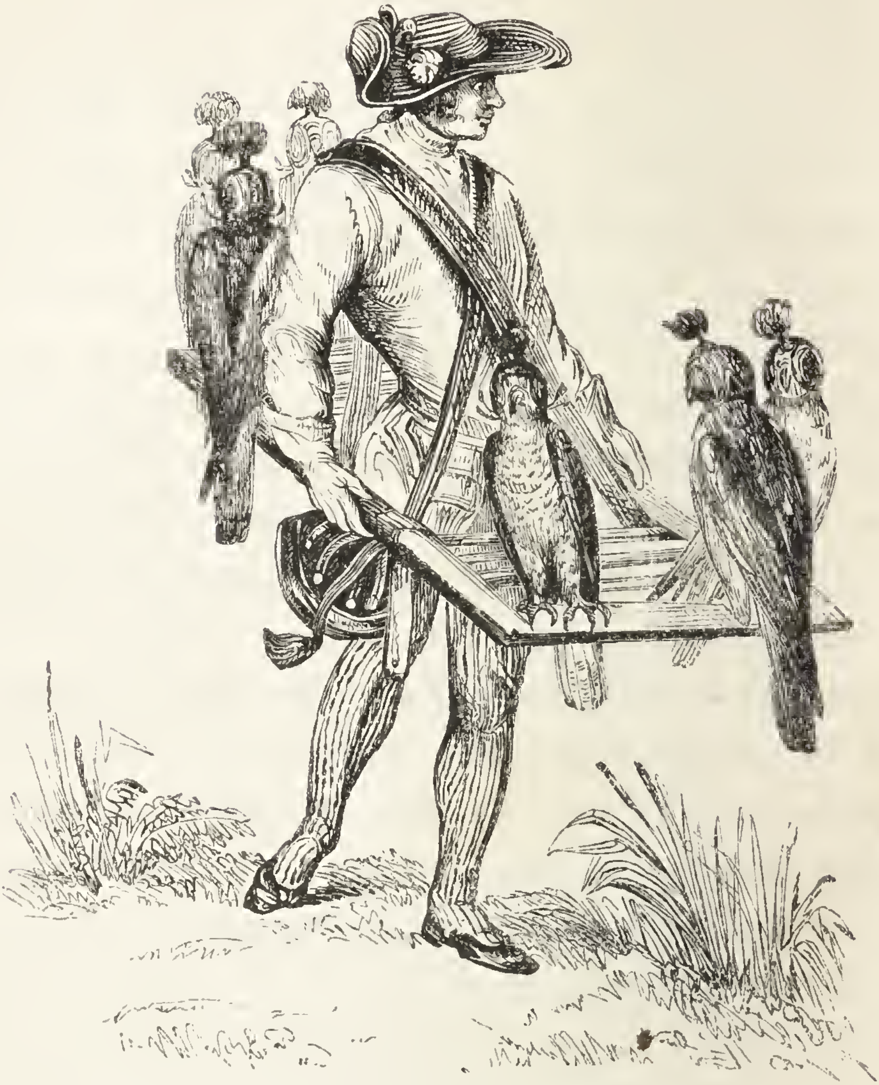
"'With broad unmoving wing, and circling slow,
The sailing Osprey high is seen to soar;
It marks a straggler from the deep below,
Sweeps down like lightning, plunges with a roar,
And bears its struggling victim to the shore!'"

"The Osprey," said Frederick, "builds its nest on a rock, or in some old ruins near the sea. While the female is sitting, the male hovers near her, catching fish for her, and bringing everything she wants to the nest. The parent birds are also much more affectionate to their young than the falcons; for they not only do not drive them away as soon as they can fly, but have been seen to supply them with fish long after they have left the nest, and even when they were both flying about on the wing together."

CHAPTER IV.

FALCONS AND FALCONRY CONCLUDED.

THE morning of the day appointed for the hawking expedition was as bright and fine as could be wished by the most anxious of the party; and even Mrs. Merton could not help feeling in some measure excited by the scene. First a man appeared in the great court of the castle, carrying an oblong frame padded with leather, on which four couple of falcons were perched, each bird being fastened to the perch by a thong of leather. Each bird had also a small bell on one leg; and a leathern hood, with an oblong piece of scarlet cloth stitched into it, over each eye, surmounted by an elegant plume of various-coloured feathers, which waved gracefully to and fro as the bird moved its head. Next came four men, each wearing a large pocket or bag tied round his waist, in which he carried a live pigeon, called a lure, which was attached to a long string that the man held in



FALCONER, WITH FRAME AND FALCONS.

his hand and kept twisted round his arm: these men were all dressed in green. Then came a number of gentlemen, and among them Sir Edward and his son, some on foot and others on horseback, and most of them carrying bags and lures; while behind was an elegant little pony-carriage for the ladies.

When all was ready, they proceeded to the ground appointed for the sport; the falconer walking in the centre of his frame, which was suspended by straps that he carried over his shoulders, and the bells worn by the falcons jingling as he went along. The gentlemen followed, some on horseback and some on foot, but all dressed in green, and all with long brown leather gloves or gauntlets on their hands, drawn half way up the arm over the sleeve of the coat, and looking like what we often see in old pictures. The sun shone brightly, and as the pony-carriage moved along Miss Peregrine pointed out a grove of fine old oaks, which she said was the heronry. At length they arrived on the ground, which was a piece of common-like land lying between the grove of oaks already mentioned, and a piece of marshy ground bordering a river, which there spread out into a kind of lake, and on the banks of which stood a crane-like looking bird, with one leg tucked up, and its head drawn in between its shoulders, apparently asleep. The moment, however, that the cavalcade appeared in sight the bird uttered a shrill cry, and, rising to an immense height, flapping its long heavy wings, it flew or rather sailed to the oak grove.

"Look, Agnes! look!" cried Miss Peregrine, "that is a heron."

Agnes looked, and saw the falconer set down his frame on four wooden legs with which it was provided; and then take the falcons one at a time from their perch and tether them, as it is called, to the ground, by fastening their leathern thongs to some bushes which shaded them from the sun. Then there was a cry that several herons were in sight, and each falconer took a bird upon his glove, holding the leathern thong in the other hand. The birds sat with great dignity on the gloved hands of their masters, nodding their plumed heads and jingling their bells. Then there was a cry of "Hoods off;" and Agnes saw two of the falconers who were on horseback take the hoods off their birds, and then gallop towards a spot where several herons had just appeared in sight. The falconers just let the birds see their prey, and then, letting go the thongs, they shook the falcons from their wrists. Instantly the noble birds rose in the air to an astonishing height, and made towards the herons. At this moment a crow happened to fly across, and one of the falcons, darting at it like lightning, struck it into a neighbouring plantation, where they both fell among the trees. The other falcon had in the meantime overtaken one of the herons (which in its terror dropped two or three fishes which it was carrying), and after flying in circles round and round for a short time, suddenly soared above its terrified victim, and darting down upon him, struck him violently on the back, and they both came tumbling down together from what appeared an exceedingly great height. The heron was quite dead before they reached the ground; and as soon as the huntsman perceived that this was the case, he threw out the lure, that is, the pigeon, across the body of the heron; and the falcon no sooner saw the pigeon than he darted at that, and left the more valuable bird, which was instantly drawn away, when the falcon was suffered to tear the pigeon to pieces and devour it. In the meantime the other falcon, having disengaged itself from the crow, which escaped, attacked another heron, which, however, it did not succeed in bringing to the ground. Other falcons were afterwards flown, though without much success, as, though several rooks and crows were killed, only one heron more was brought to the ground; and no more lures were wanted, as the falcons were suffered to devour their meaner prey without obstruction.

On the whole, though neither Agnes nor her mamma liked to see the struggles of the poor birds, the scene was brilliant and animating; and once, when the second heron was attacked, and it seemed to be fighting with the falcon in the air, and to be alternately rising and falling, while the horsemen galloped backwards and forwards according to the movements of the birds, and shouted as one bird or the other seemed to be getting the better, Agnes stood up in the carriage watching them with the most intense anxiety. Suddenly, a louder shout than before announced that the contest was ended, and Agnes, seeing the late combatants falling together from the sky, shuddered as she turned away and sat down. This was the last of the sport, the hoods were put again on the falcons, and the birds were replaced on their frame; while Miss Peregrine proposed driving by the heronry on their road home, that she might show it to Agnes. The carriage had scarcely begun to move when it was stopped by Sir Edward, who asked the ladies if they could make room for him, as he was much tired.

"I am not quite so young as I was," said he, taking his seat; "but it is a comfort to see that I have a son to succeed me whose tastes are like mine, and who will keep up everything just the same as it is now after I am gone."

Agnes, who understood that he alluded to the hawking, could not help thinking it rather singular that he should rejoice in his son appearing fond of so cruel a pursuit; but of course she did not speak, and in a few minutes afterwards they arrived at the heronry. After looking at the birds flying about among the trees for some time, Sir Edward asked Agnes what she thought of his heronry.

"It appears to me," said she, timidly, "very much like the rookery that I have seen at Shenstone."

"There is, in fact, very little difference," observed Miss Peregrine; "and some years ago there was a deadly feud between some rooks and some herons in West-orchard for the possession of some trees. Some fine old oaks, which had been occupied as a heronry for centuries, having been felled, the herons assembled in a body and went to attack a neighbouring rookery. The rooks, who were certainly most unjustly invaded, endeavoured to defend themselves, and a succession of battles ensued, in the course of which many of the combatants were slain, but in which the herons were generally victors. In the end a truce was concluded between the contending parties, the result of which was, the herons took one half of the trees, and the rooks the other; and the two kinds of birds have continued to inhabit the grove between them ever since."

"This is certainly very curious," said Mrs. Merton; "as it seems to imply not only that the birds had some means of holding converse with each other, but almost that they were reasonable beings."

At this moment the old baronet called Agnes to look at a branch of one of the trees which had been broken off by the wind, and which had fallen without displacing a nest which had been built in it. The nest, which was large and flat, was formed of sticks and lined with moss, and it contained four or five dull-looking bluish-green eggs.

"Are the eggs all spoiled?" asked Miss Peregrine. "If not," she continued, "I should like to take one home and try to hatch it."

"I have heard of herons being tamed," observed Mrs. Merton, "but never of any being hatched under a hen, though I do not know why they should not."

Miss Peregrine was not, however, fated to try the experiment, for on examining the eggs they were all found to be addled; so, having satisfied their curiosity, they again seated themselves in the carriage and were driven homewards.

"Why are you looking so serious, Agnes?" asked Mrs. Merton, after a short pause.

"I was wondering, mamma," returned the little girl, "why the herons are killed, and what they are good for. Is their flesh eaten?"

"It was formerly," said Miss Peregrine, "and was a favourite dish at the tables of the great; but now the only part of the bird that is valued is the plume of feathers at the breast, which is sold at a high price."

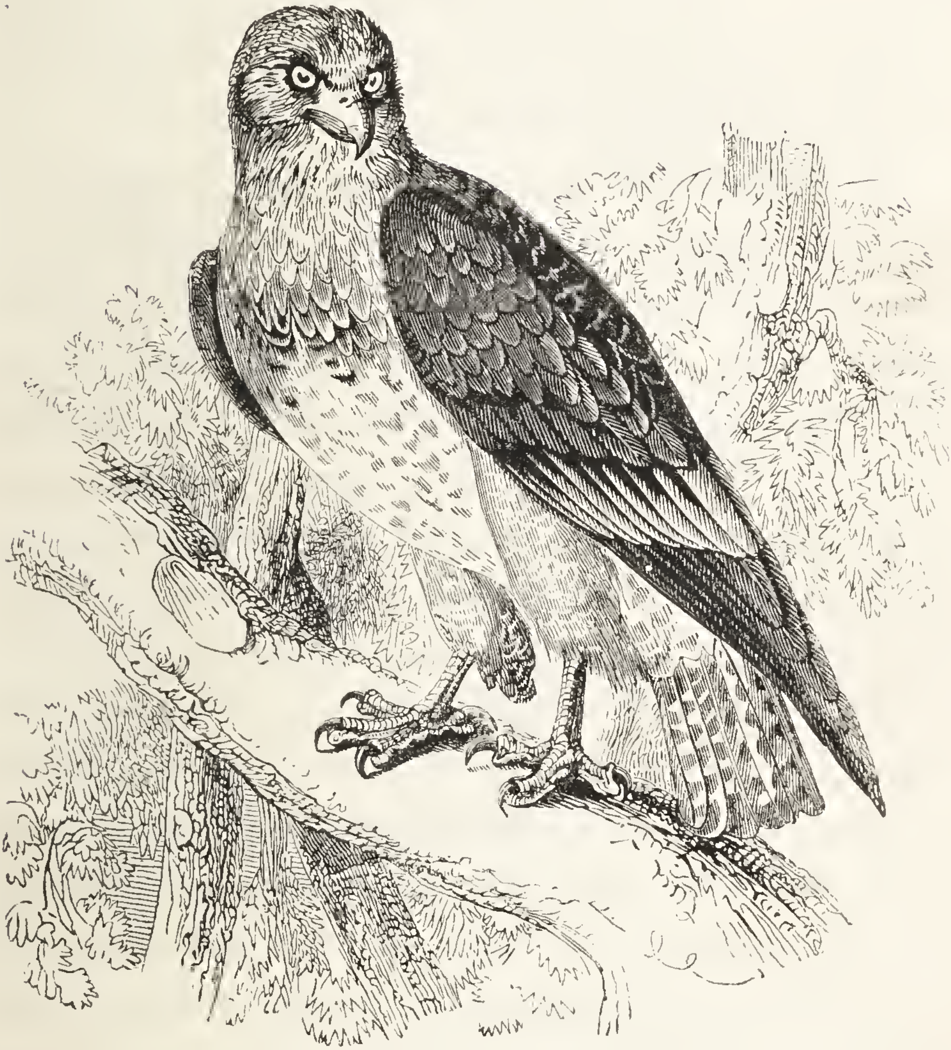
"I remember eating part of a heron in my youth," said Sir Edward, "and it was very good, though it had somewhat of a fishy flavour. But heron-shawes are frequently mentioned in the records which have been handed down to us of the feasts of our ancestors."

"Ah! that word heron-shaw," cried Miss Peregrine, "which means a fat heron, reminds me of the old adage, 'he does not know a hawk from a hand-saw,' which is often used in old plays to express extreme ignorance. The true reading is, no doubt 'he does not know a hawk from a heron-shaw.'"

"That is very likely," said Mrs. Merton; and then, to give a turn to the conversation, which she thought would be more interesting to her little daughter, she asked Miss Peregrine if there were not some other birds used in falconry besides those she had already told them of.

"There are some others," replied Miss Peregrine, "but they are reckoned so inferior to the proper falcons, that they are called the ignoble birds of prey. The principal of these birds are the buzzard, the hen-harrier, and the kite."

"The buzzard," said Sir Edward, "is easily distinguished at first sight from the falcon, by the smallness of its head, and from the kite by the evenness of its tail; its wings are also very long in proportion to its body. It is considered one of the most cowardly of birds; but its sight is so delicate that it cannot see well by daylight, and



THE BUZZARD.

this imperfection gives it an appearance of timidity which does not really belong to it. However, I suppose it really is timid, as it never attacks any animals that are not much smaller and weaker than itself; and even then it does not pursue by flight, but prefers waiting for hours together, sitting upon the branch of a tree, till some unfortunate animal comes within reach."

"From the character of the buzzard," continued Miss Peregrine, "it is evident that it can be of little use in falconry, except for what is called raking, which means gliding sideways to seize its prey, instead of soaring above it, and then darting down, like the falcons. The buzzard is, however, generally considered a friend to the farmer, as it destroys moles, mice, frogs, grasshoppers, and other vermin. Young buzzards, also, when tamed, may be employed in the destruction of worms and hurtful insects in a garden; but they will also kill all the singing birds. The buzzard may sometimes be seen hovering heavily over woods and plantations to discover any of the smaller birds; but in open places, as my brother told you, it fixes itself on a tree or a bush, or even on a clump of earth, to watch for its prey, which it darts upon the moment it comes within reach. It constructs its eyrie or nest generally on a lofty tree, and composes it of small branches, which it lines with wool or some other soft material; or it often takes possession of the nest of a crow, which it enlarges.

"There are seldom more than two or three eggs, which are white with yellow spots. The buzzard nurses its young for a longer time than any of the other birds of prey; and if the mother be killed, the male will take care of the young birds till they can fly. When the latter first take their flight, they are heard perpetually sending forth sharp and plaintive cries."

"I remember," observed Mrs. Merton, "reading the other day, in Yarrell's *British Birds*, a curious instance of the fondness of the hen buzzard for hatching and rearing young. A female buzzard, kept in the garden of the Chequers Inn, at Uxbridge, showing an inclination to sit, by collecting and bending all the loose sticks she could find, her owner supplied her with materials, and she made a nest, into which, as she had no eggs of her own, two hen's eggs were put, which she hatched, and afterwards reared the chickens. After that, she hatched a brood of chickens every year; though one summer, when, in order to save her the fatigue of sitting, some young chickens just hatched were put to her, she destroyed them all."

"The common buzzard," said Miss Peregrine, "is found wild in most parts of Europe, and even I believe in Barbary; but the Honey-buzzard is found principally in France, and is not common even in that country; while it is very rare in all the other parts of Europe. It is usually found in flat countries, sitting on trees and bushes; and its flight is low and of short duration. It is said, however, without the assistance of its wings, to be able to run as fast as a dog. Its food consists of field-mice, lizards, frogs, and insects; and its nest is composed of interlaced twigs, covered with wool or some similar material. It feeds its young with the larvæ of wasps, and with pieces of comb from the wasp's nest, whence it takes its name of the honey-buzzard."

"Is there not a bird called the Moor-buzzard?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Yes," returned Miss Peregrine, "and it is known also as the Marsh-harrier, the Duck-hawk, and the Harpy. It is the largest British falcon, and requires a greater length of time than any other before the birds come to a state of maturity.

The male birds assume a grey plumage when full grown; but the females always retain their reddish-brown tinge. The name of the Marsh-harrier is given to this bird because it is generally found on low and level lands, or uncultivated heaths and moors, and because it flies near the ground, as though hunting its prey, like a harrier at fault, and trying to recover the scent of a hare. The name of moor-buzzard alludes to the bird roosting on the ground, and preferring a bush of gorse, or a stone, to sit on, while it is watching for its prey, to a tree."

"I once observed," said Sir Edward, "one of these birds, late in the afternoon, take its station, in its usual heavy listless manner, on an old ash tree, which commanded a good view of a large moor, where there were abundance of snipes; but when it saw me, not liking the appearance of a gun, it went off. The next morning, happening to be near the same spot, I saw it rise from a thick patch of sedges; and, being at a considerable distance, I was in hopes it was a bittern, a patch of sedges being a much more likely place for that bird than for a bird of prey. The buzzard had, however, no doubt, been led to the spot in search of snipes; for I have remarked, that wherever a marsh, or moor, is frequented by snipes, there are sure to be several buzzards in the neighbourhood; though I have often heard it asserted, that they seldom succeed in taking any birds but those which have been wounded by a sportsman, and escaped."

"I have just had a letter about a moor-buzzard from a friend of mine, in Monmouthshire," said young Peregrine, who had now joined them, and was walking his horse by the side of the carriage, as it ascended a hill; "and my friend's experience proves, that though this bird may be indolent in taking its prey, it retains it with extraordinary tenacity when it has once obtained it. A neighbour of my friend's, who was a keen sportsman, was sitting one day by his kitchen-fire, when he heard a great clattering in his poultry-yard. Suspecting that the uproar was caused by some bird of prey, he immediately started up, and seizing his gun, determined to be revenged upon the aggressor. When he reached the yard, he observed a moor-buzzard, just clearing the top of one of his barley-ricks, with a chicken in his claws. The buzzard was immediately fired at, and wounded severely; notwithstanding which, he escaped with his prey. The following day, however, the buzzard was found dead, in a field at a considerable distance; and the poor little chicken, which he had carried away with him, was running about in the field unhurt by its aërial voyage, and wondering, no doubt, where it was. Though this buzzard, in dying, had released his prey, my friend adds, that he has known similar instances, in which the captive has been totally unable to escape; and where the sportsman has actually been obliged to open the claws of the dead bird, to set the prey at liberty."

"Is it not the buzzard," said Mrs. Merton, "that has such a singular fondness for whipping off the red caps of the French peasants, and hiding them in trees and bushes?"

"Yes," said Miss Peregrine: "I think it is Buffon who mentions that odd propensity; and he tells some anecdotes of a buzzard that used to steal the old men's wigs in the same manner."

"There is another bird very much like the moor-buzzard," said young Peregrine, "which is sometimes called the hen-harrier, and sometimes the blue or dove hawk, or the ring-tail. It inhabits marshy situations, and commons partially covered with furze. It is particularly destructive to poultry-yards, whence its name of hen-harrier. It strikes its prey on the ground; and though not so large as the buzzard, having more courage, it will kill a partridge, a red grouse, or even a pheasant."

"Of all the birds we have spoken of," said Sir Edward, "there is, however, none more injurious to our poultry-yards than the kite. This bird is readily distinguished from all the falcons by its forked tail. It is a native of Europe, Asia, and the north of Africa. The kite is the most cowardly of all birds; and it adds to this, extraordinary greediness. It is as voracious as the crow; and yet, though much more powerful than that bird, it will suffer itself to be driven away and pursued by it. It will eat any kind of food, even dead fish that are floating on the surface of the water. It also approaches human habitations, to pick up any offal that the cook may have thrown out, and to attack young chickens; but if the hen perceives it in time, her cries and resistance are almost always sufficient to drive it away."

"Yes, I can vouch for that," said Mrs. Merton; "for when I was a child I saw a battle between a kite and a common hen, in a farm-yard in Worcestershire, which will never be effaced from my memory. The kite had seized a chicken, and was carrying it away; but he was forced to drop it by the daring conduct of the hen, who flew up at the ravisher with her wings extended, her feathers ruffled, and her whole appearance denoting the greatest fury. The poor chicken was very much injured by the claws of the kite, but by careful nursing it recovered; and it had its life spared from the usual fate of chickens, in consequence of its adventure."

"The kite does not pounce upon its prey like the falcon," said Miss Peregrine; "but when, by means of its piercing sight, it discovers a quarry, as the falconers call it, it glides down to attack it, as though it were sliding down an inclined plane, so gently, that the motion of its wings is not perceptible. It is this habit of gliding upon its prey, which procured it its Saxon name of Glead; a name yet preserved in many parts of England. The kite was formerly also called the puttock, as it still is in Hertfordshire and Essex and as the buzzard is in some other parts of the country. Shakespeare alludes to this when he says,

> ‘Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest,
> But may imagine how the bird was dead,
> Although the kite soar with unblooded beak.’ ”

“The kite is a native of Britain,” said young Peregrine, “as well as of most other parts of Europe; but it is not equally abundant in every part of the country. My Monmouthshire friend has often told me, that though he believes it to be a very local bird, it is plentiful in his neighbourhood,—the extensive woods in that county furnishing the bird with a secure retreat. The great size and brilliant markings of this bird render it an object of considerable beauty when dead; but I admire much more its calm circuitous flight, as it wheels aloft in endless mazes, until it vanishes from sight.”

“I have observed that myself,” said Sir Edward, “and have heard it, on a bright summer's day, make the air resound with its mewings. The power of flight which this bird possesses is amazing; I have frequently watched it wheeling round and round and round, till my eye has been completely fatigued, and yet not a feather has appeared to be in motion, except those of the forked tail."

"The kite," said Miss Peregrine, "is sometimes called the Royal Kite, in old English books, as it still is Milan Royal by the French, from its having been employed by Louis XVI. as an object of pursuit to the large falcons, called Lanners. The kite had been occasionally used in falconry, before it was thus treated; but the French monarch observing that, from its cowardly disposition, and the great length and consequent weakness of its legs, it was unable to do much service in securing game, conceived the idea of making it the victim instead of the pursuer. It is still occasionally used in falconry; and only a few years ago, Sir John Sebright tells us, that kites were flown at game by the Earl of Orford, in the neighbourhood of Alconbury Hill. In the second volume of the *Magazine of Zoology and Botany*, an account is given of two kites, that were taken from the nest in Argyleshire, in the summer of 1833, and rendered so perfectly tame by training, that though they were allowed every morning to take a flight, they never flew far; but after soaring in repeated circles to a great height in the air, and thus displaying their peculiar and graceful flight, they always returned as soon as they were called, either to the barn or to the fist."

"The nest of the kite," said Sir Edward, "is usually built in a hollow tree, or in some crevice of the rock. It is very large, and is constructed of small branches, curiously interlaced with dry grass and herbs. The eggs are white, with some spots of yellowish red. A variety of this species, called the Black Kite, is common at the Cape of Good Hope, where it is called the Kuyden Dief; literally, the Chicken Thief. This bird is so fierce, that it will seize raw flesh, even if in the hands of a human being; it will plunge into the water to catch fish; and it will fight with crows for a piece of carrion, and force them to let it go. It builds its nest in marshy ground among reeds."

The party had now arrived at the castle; and a few days afterwards, Mrs. Merton and Agnes, to their great regret, took leave of their kind and hospitable friends.

CHAPTER V.

FISHES.

From Somersetshire Mrs. Merton and her daughter went to visit a widow lady, named Wilson, who resided in a beautiful cottage, on the banks of the Dart, near Dartmouth. Here quite a new scene presented itself to Agnes, who had, till then, never beheld the sea, and who thought, at first, that she should never be tired of watching it. It is strange that the sea, which presents so few objects to the eye, should generally be considered so much more interesting than the land, which presents so many; yet so it is, and probably the true cause is its incessant motion, which continually gives the idea of something new, while the principal objects on land remain fixed. Be this as it may, Agnes was delighted with the sea, and she enjoyed exceedingly wandering on the beach to collect shells, or to see the fishermen mending their nets.

One day Mrs. Wilson, having a few friends to dinner, had a fish served at table, which appeared to Agnes to have a very curious name, and she asked her mamma why any fish could be called John Dory?

"I can really hardly tell you, my dear," said Mrs. Merton, "nor why it is called in Italy the fish of St. Peter."

"The name of St. Peter's fish," said Mrs. Wilson, "is supposed to allude to a black mark like that of a thumb, on the side of the fish, similar to that on a haddock; and hence they have been both said to be the fish mentioned in the *New Testament*, as bearing the tribute-money. Have you never heard the legend, Dr. Simpson?" continued the lady, addressing one of her guests, who had travelled through great part of Italy.

"I have, madam," returned Dr. Simpson; "and also that the name of John Dory is a corruption of *il janitore*, the Italian for a door-keeper, in allusion to the Roman Catholic legend of St. Peter keeping the gates of heaven."

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilson; "and the Popes, who consider themselves as the successors of St. Peter, still wear the semblance of two large keys, embroidered on their robes, as emblematical of their patron-saint's office."

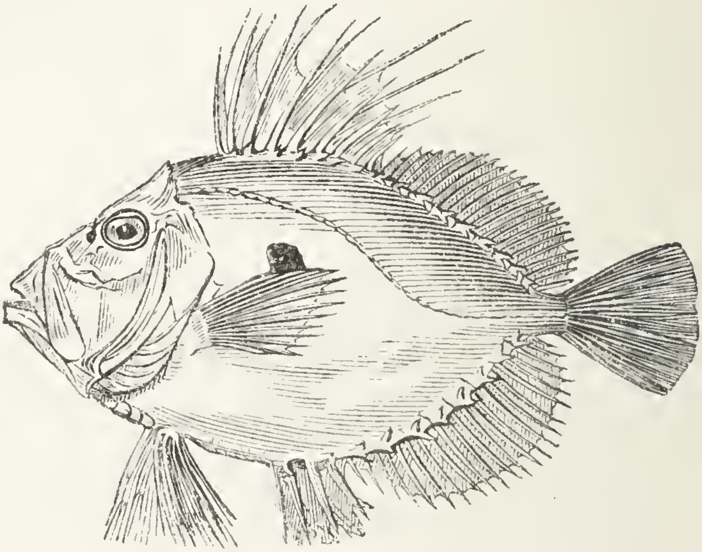
"I have heard," said Captain Seymour, "another legend which says, that the black spots on the sides of this fish are the marks of St. Christopher, who caught a dory, when he was wading across an arm of the sea bearing our Saviour; whence his Greek name of Christophcros, literally Christ-bearer. According to this legend, the name of the fish is derived from the French word *adoré.*"

"A much more simple and more probable explanation," said an old gentleman, who had not yet spoken, "is, that John Dory is a corruption of the French name for the fish *Jaune Dorée*, that is, yellow gilt; a very expressive name, as the colour of the fish, when freshly caught, is actually of a brownish yellow, with a brilliant tinge of gold."

"Whatever may be the origin of the modern name of the fish," said Dr. Simpson, "the ancients held it in very high esteem, since they called it Zeus, which was one of their names for Jupiter."

"I do not know what the ancients thought of it," said the old gentleman, "but in modern times, no one thought of eating it, till that prince of epicures, Quin, found out its merits, and brought it into notice."

"Apropos of Quin," cried Dr. Simpson, "did you ever hear the story of his coming down to Plymouth, purposely to get a John Dory?"



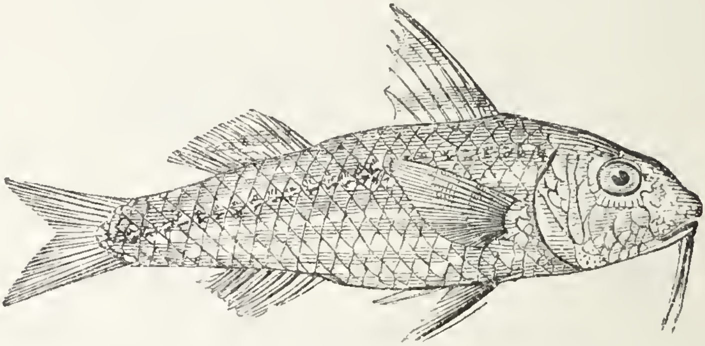
THE JOHN DORY.

"Never," said Mrs. Wilson; and the whole company expressing a wish to hear the story, the doctor began as follows:—

"Quin, who, as you probably all know, was an excellent comedian who lived about the middle of the last century, was not more celebrated on the stage, than he was as a lover of good eating; and being exceedingly fond of this fish, he resolved to make a journey from Bath to Plymouth, where it is generally caught, on purpose to obtain one in perfection. On his arriving at Plymouth, after examining a great number of John Dorys, and giving himself a great deal of trouble, at last he found one which fully realized his most anxious wishes. As the cooks at Plymouth were not thought worthy to dress it, and as the Dory is a fish which will keep a day or two without injury, Quin, having had it carefully packed up, and having provided himself with a barrel of salt water (for the fish ought to be boiled in salt water), returned to Bath. The barrel of salt water was a most uncomfortable companion in a post-chaise; and as it rolled about, Quin, who loved his ease more than anything else, except his eating, and who was, moreover, troubled with the gout, was twenty times tempted to throw it out of the window. The tempting thought of the delicious John Dory, however, restrained him, and he bore his troubles with the patience of a martyr. At length he arrived at Bath, the dinner was ordered, the carriage was unpacked, the barrel of salt water was taken out, and the fish searched for,—but alas! in vain. It had been left behind—and all poor Quin obtained for his long journey and unspeakable annoyance, was the barrel of salt water, which he kicked over in the first transports of his rage and disappointment."

"He was rightly punished for his gluttony," cried Agnes, forgetting in the feeling of the moment the number of strangers by whom she was surrounded.

The company smiled, and Mrs. Merton, to turn the general attention from her blushing little daughter, observed, "that she believed the dory was considered one of the most delicious of fishes, except, perhaps, the red mullet."



THE RED MULLET.

"The Red Mullet," said Dr. Simpson, "has long been considered a great delicacy for the table. It was highly esteemed by the Romans, and is frequently mentioned by their poets, particularly by Juvenal and Horace. The prices for which these fish sold in ancient Rome were so high as to be scarcely credible. A mullet, weighing six pounds, was sold for 48*l.* sterling; one still larger, for 64*l.*; and three, of remarkable size, for 240*l.* It must be observed, however, that the sizes mentioned show that the fish were extraordinary ones, as, at the present time, a mullet is rarely, if ever, found which weighs more than three or four pounds."

"The name of mullet," said Captain Seymour, "is said to be derived from the sandals of the Roman consuls, which were called mullens, and were of a bright scarlet, nearly resembling the colour of this fish. The mullet is common in the shops of the London fishmongers nearly throughout the year; but its best season is in May or June. The flesh is firm and white, and, being free from fat, is thought easy of digestion. The liver is the part most esteemed, but the whole fish is of good flavour, though not so exquisite as to account for the partiality of the Romans for it as a table delicacy."

The day after the party, Mrs. Merton and her daughter were wandering on the beach by themselves, when their attention was attracted by a crowd which had gathered round a fisherman, who had evidently caught something that his companions considered extraordinary. "What can it be?" passed from mouth to mouth. "I never saw anything like it!" said one. "There was only one in the net!" cried another. Agnes's expectation was forcibly excited by these words; but when an opening in the crowd allowed her mother and herself to see the object which had attracted so much attention, she was quite surprised to find it a very common-looking fish.

"What! can this be what they were so surprised at?" cried Agnes; "I have seen hundreds of fishes like that!"

"Indeed you have not, my little friend," said a voice behind her; and turning, she recognised the old gentleman who had dined with them the day before. She shrank back ashamed, when the old gentleman continued, in a milder voice, "This is, in fact, a rare fish in these seas, and it is called the Spanish Mackerel, though it is very different from the common fish of that name, and is of little value as food."

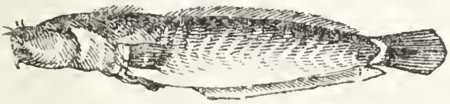
"Are the common mackerel ever caught here?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "they are caught on this coast, though not often at this season, and they are never so abundant here as at Brighton. The common mackerel was formerly supposed to be a migratory fish, that is, one which visited our coasts only at certain seasons of the year; but it has been lately discovered that it may be caught all the year round at a little distance from land in the British seas. At certain seasons, however, they approach the shore in immense shoals, particularly in May and June, in which months they are sometimes so plentiful that they have been sold sixty for a shilling; and above ten thousand fish have been brought into one port in one day. Mackerel should always be eaten quite fresh; and it is on account of its keeping so badly that it is allowed to be cried on Sundays, when people are punishable for selling anything else. This custom has been established since 1698."

"I think I have heard," said Mrs. Merton, "of a wonderful cast which some fishermen made at Hastings for mackerel, a few years ago."

"It was in February, 1834," returned the old gentleman, "when a boat's crew cleared 100*l.* by the fish caught in a single night; and this was the more remarkable, as mackerel are seldom caught before April or May. The most common way of fishing for mackerel is by what are called drift-nets, which are fastened by means of a rope to the fishing-smacks, while to the other end of the net is affixed a large buoy. The vessel then puts out to sea, dragging the net after her, and the fish roving through the water get entangled during the night. When the net is hauled in in the morning they are found sticking in the meshes, and floundering and flapping themselves about in their struggles to get free. Mackerel are also caught with a rod and line, the hook being generally baited with a piece of scarlet cloth. Most mackerel are taken when the boat to which the net is attached moves rapidly along with a good deal of wind; and hence a smart breeze is termed a mackerel breeze."

"The smallest fish in the world," continued the old gentleman, apparently following the current of his own thoughts as he walked slowly by the side of Mrs. Merton and her daughter along the beach, "is probably the Mackerel Midge of Cornwall; at least, it is the smallest of British fishes. It is very slender, and seldom so much as an inch in length. It is as delicate in its habits as in its form: it never appears till the bright sun of May tempts it from its winter quarters in the deep, and even then it keeps near the surface, and appears to seek shelter from everything it finds floating on the water. This habit, however, frequently leads to its destruction, as it is drawn in with the corks of fishing-lines, weeds, &c.; and it is even sometimes thrown into boats by the breaking over them of a wave of the sea. It dies the moment it is taken out of the water.



THE MACKEREL MIDGE.

"I have often heard persons express their admiration of the monsters of creation," said Mrs. Merton; "but for my own part I never feel so deeply impressed with a sense of the wonderful power and goodness of our great Creator, as when I see little creatures like the midges you have been speaking of, constructed with all the same care and perfection as we find bestowed even on man himself."

"The midges," returned the gentleman, "are, indeed, wonderfully and beautifully made; though so minute in all their parts, that they require a microscope to examine them properly. From their minute size, and the multitudes in which they sometimes appear, they were supposed by the ancients to have been produced from the froth of the sea, or the putrefaction of marine substances. They make their first appearance about the middle of May; and through the summer, and particularly in fine weather, they are found in considerable numbers swimming near the surface, when they are followed by mackerel and other fish, which devour multitudes of them. When winter approaches the midges disappear, and go to bury themselves in the depths of the sea till spring."

Mrs. Merton and her daughter now walked on alone; and Agnes was so deeply lost in thought, that her mamma spoke to her twice without being heard. This was so unusual, that Mrs. Merton wished to know what her little girl was thinking of.

"Sticklebacks, mamma," said Agnes, in reply to her mother's question. "Is not the stickleback smaller than the mackerel midge?" asked she.

Mrs. Merton could not tell, unfortunately not knowing its exact dimensions. But the question occasioned the conversation to turn on sticklebacks; and Agnes felt a deep interest in these little fishes, because when she had been with her mamma at Godalming the previous summer, she had seen a stickleback make itself a kind of umbrella of duckweed. This fish was kept in a glass vase, like those used for gold fish, and he had a fresh supply of duckweed every day. When the sun shone warmly on his glass, he used to spread out his duckweed on the surface of the water, so as to form a screen; and when the sun went in, he contrived to gather his duckweed together at the bottom of the glass so as to serve as a bed.

Agnes had been so delighted with this little fish, that she had persuaded her mamma to let her keep some sticklebacks; but, unfortunately, she had put too many in one glass, and they had fought so furiously that most of them had been killed. All this, however, was very interesting to the little girl; and she was so busily talking to her mamma on the subject, and wondering whether it would not be possible to procure sticklebacks of a more amiable disposition, that she was not aware, till her mother called to her to mind where she was going, that she was very near stumbling over some large soles that were lying on the beach.

This turned the conversation to what are commonly called flat-fish, and Mrs. Merton desired Agnes to remark their very curious formation.

"Observe," she said, "what a want of symmetry there is in the form of the head: both the eyes are placed on the same side, and one is larger than the other. Look what a curious mouth there is; and, if you were to examine it closely, you would find that there are teeth in the jaws only on the lower side, that is, there are none on the same side as the eyes; and on the side where the teeth are, the skin is white instead of brown."

"Why are they formed in this extraordinary manner?" asked Agnes.

"It is supposed," returned her mother, "that, as they are unprovided with swimming bladders, they are designed to lie at the bottom of the sea, where they hide their bodies horizontally in the loose sand, with only the head slightly elevated. In this position it is evident that an eye on the under side of the head would be useless; and the whiteness on the lower part of the body is also easily accounted for, as it is entirely kept from the light, and we know that light is the great cause of colour."

"So that, in fact, mamma," said Agnes, "these fish, which appear at first sight almost grotesquely formed, are, in reality, admirably adapted to the station they are to fill."

"Yes," returned her mother; "and as you become better acquainted with Natural History, you will find the same admirable disposition of the means to the end in view carried throughout Creation. All nature is, in fact, in perfect harmony, everything being fitted for its proper position in one great scale; and whenever any natural object appears to us incongruous or unfitting, we may rest satisfied that the true fault is in our own want of perception."

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEMUR, AND THE CHAMELEON.

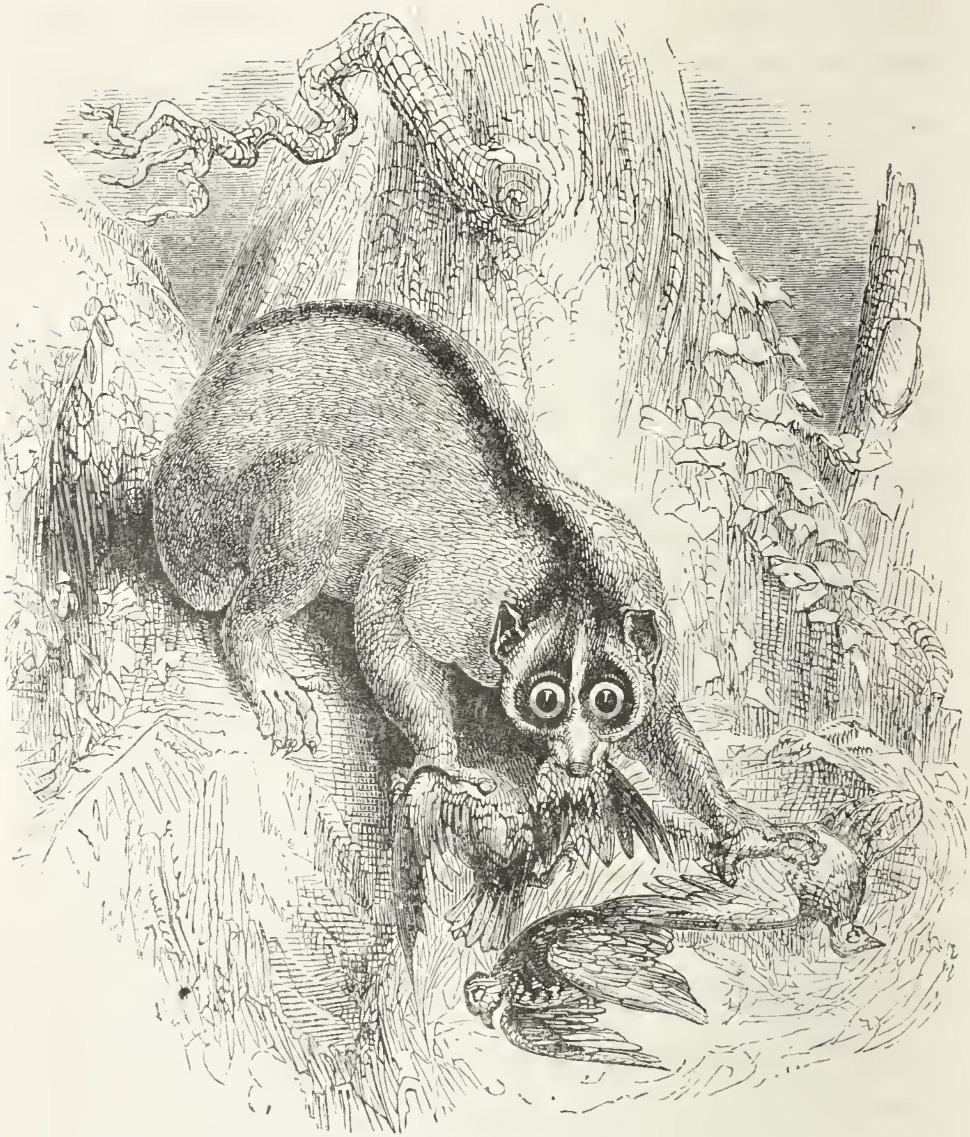
When Mrs. Merton and Agnes returned to the house of Mrs. Wilson, they told her how much they had been pleased with the conversation of Mr. Trelawney, for that was the name of the old gentleman.

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Wilson, "that you have never been to Mr. Trelawney's villa, where I must take you, as he has a collection of animals that would quite delight your little girl."

Agnes was delighted at the thought, and Mrs. Wilson immediately wrote a note to the old gentleman, begging permission to see his menagerie. No answer arrived that evening, and the following morning passed away without hearing from him; but just as Agnes was beginning to despair, he arrived himself to conduct them to his villa. On their arrival, he first took them into a court-yard, around which were a number of cages, or rather dens, containing animals; in one of which Agnes saw an animal, something like a monkey, sitting on the branch of a dead tree (which had been left standing in the ground when his den was built), and looking keenly at her.

"What creature is that?" cried Agnes.

"It is called the Slow Lemur, or Tail-less Monkey," said the gentleman, "and it is a native of the East Indies. It is, as you see, about the size of a cat, and is of a dusky-ash colour, with a streak of rich dark brown down the back. The fur is much thicker than it is generally on animals that are inhabitants of hot climates like the East Indies; but this warm clothing is beautifully adapted to the lemur, as from its sluggish habits, and want of activity, it is extremely susceptible of cold. Its eyes are round and shine brilliantly in the dark, especially when animated, glowing like heated furnaces. The eyelids are so situated, that when the animal closes them they appear to move obliquely, instead of upwards and downwards like those of other animals. The under or outer eyelid has also the greatest degree of motion; the upper or inner being nearly fixed. The index toe, or fore-finger of the hind foot, has a claw, but the



THE SLOW LEMUR.

other toes have nails like those of the human hand. The tongue of this animal is also very remarkable: beneath the proper tongue, which is somewhat like that of a cat, though not rough, is another tongue, white, narrow, and very sharp-pointed, which the creature projects whenever he eats or drinks, though he has the power of contracting it at pleasure.

"The habits of the lemur are very peculiar. It sleeps nearly all the day, unless it is disturbed, either rolled up on the floor of its cage, or more commonly suspended by its paws from the bars, with its body drawn together, and its head folded on its breast. Towards evening it arouses itself by degrees, and its first care on awaking is to make itself clean, which it does by rubbing itself with its paws, and licking its fur like a cat."

"That is the last thing I should have given it credit for," cried Agnes, laughing. "It does not look the least bit like a beau!"

"The Dutch in Ceylon are of your opinion," said the old gentleman, "for they call it Loris, that is, a clown; while the word Lemur, which signifies a ghost, is said to be derived from its shadowy resemblance to man."

"What does it live on?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"The food of mine," said Mr. Trelawney, "consists of mice and small birds; of the latter of which he is particularly fond: when they are put into his cage he kills them instantly, but plucks off all the feathers, with the skill of a poulterer, before he eats them, devouring the bones as well as the flesh. He will eat any kind of meat if it be quite fresh and raw, but will not touch it if it has been cooked. When food is given to him he seizes it eagerly with both hands, but generally holds it only with his left while he is eating. Very frequently he will grasp the upper bars of his cage with his hind feet, and hang with his head downwards while he is devouring his food, appearing to enjoy this position very much. He is exceedingly fond of oranges; but when they are at all hard, he seems very much puzzled how to extract the juice. On these occasions, he will lie at full length on his back at the bottom of the cage, and firmly grasping the piece of orange with both hands, will squeeze the juice into his mouth. He is exceedingly slow and heavy in his motions; and when he climbs a tree, he does it with the greatest deliberation and care. First he lays hold of a branch with one hand and then with the other; he then slowly draws up his feet, one at a time, and never loosens his hold of one branch till he has taken possession firmly of another. When he walks, he drags his limbs along in the same slow and methodical manner."

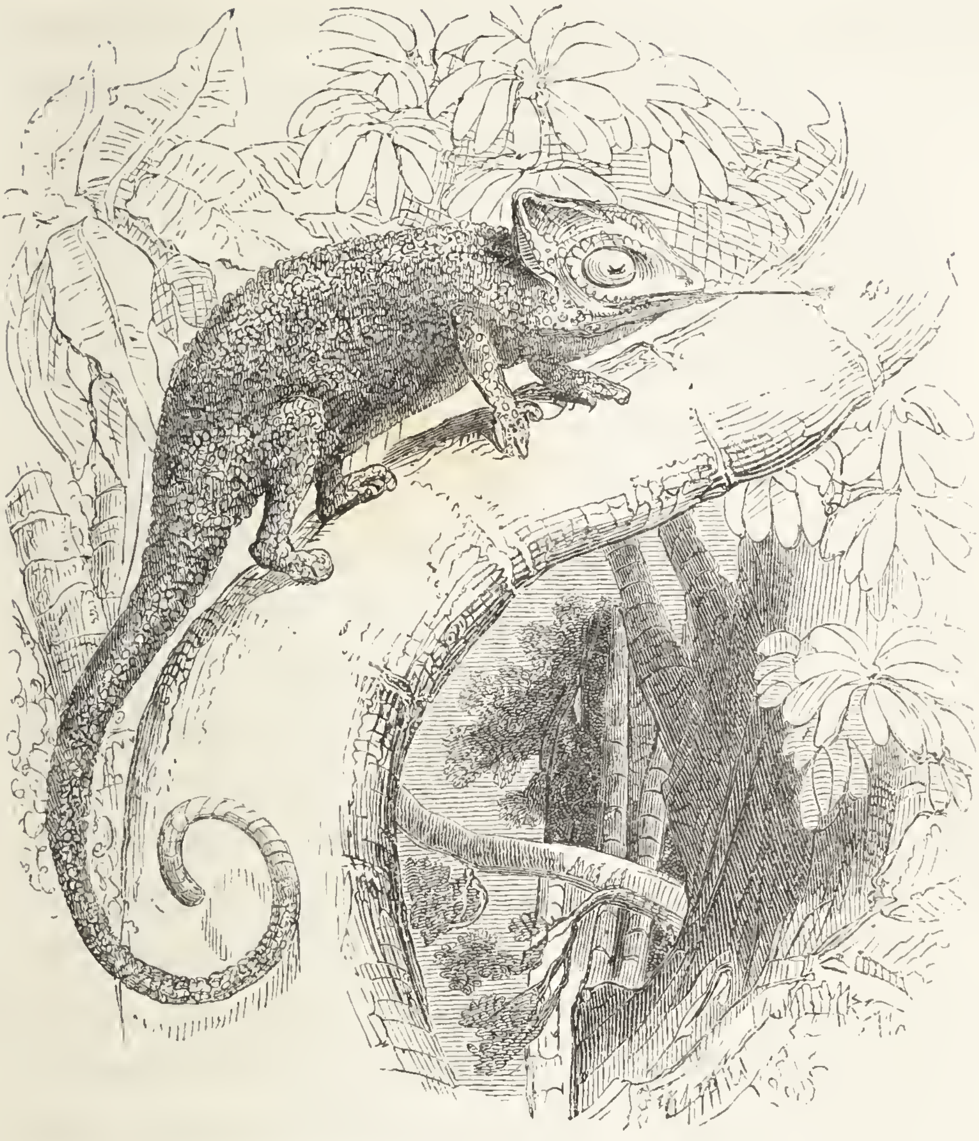
"Did you ever keep this creature in the house?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"I have not," replied Mr. Trelawney; "but a friend of mine in Edinburgh, who gave it to me, did. The lemur was, however, very shy and timid in company, and appeared well to merit the name which the Indians give to animals of this species, namely, the bashful ape. When touched, he uttered a shrill cry, sounding like, ai, ai, and bit sharply. When in China, he had agreed tolerably well with a little Chinese dog that was put into the same cage with him; but he could not endure my friend's cat. Puss, on the contrary, was very anxious to be on friendly terms with him; and when he was let out of his cage she used to follow him up and down, occasionally patting him with her paw. The lemur was very indignant at this treatment, and once bit her severely: this made pussy more careful, and she afterwards only amused herself by leaping over him whenever he lay down. The lemur disliked this even more than patting; but he was so slow in his movements that the cat leaped over him several times before he could get up, and then ran away without his being able to follow her; so that at last he contented himself with crying ai, ai, and gnashing his teeth at her whenever she approached him. His intellect appeared as inert as his body, and almost the only sign of intelligence he ever showed was, when he saw his own image reflected in a japanned tea-tray. He was very much struck with this, and first tried to grasp the figure he saw reflected, and finding it impossible, he deliberately walked round and peeped behind the tray to see if any one were there. He did the same with a looking-glass."

At this moment Agnes's attention was caught by a very strange-looking creature in the next cage, and she begged her mother to look at it.

"It is a Chameleon," said Mrs. Merton; "a creature of which many strange tales are told; as it is said to change its colour continually, and to live on air."

"It is, indeed, a very curious creature," said Mr. Trelawney; "and though technically classed with the Saurians or Lizards, it is yet very distinct from all the other animals belonging to that family. Its shape, it is true, somewhat resembles that of a lizard, but its skin is shagreened like that of a



THE CHAMELEON.

crocodile ; and its tail, which is used by the animal to retain a firm hold of the branches which serve it for a habitation, is round, strong, and flexible, like that of some kinds of monkeys. It has no visible external ear, and its skull is raised in a very remarkable and pyramidal form. The skeleton of the chameleon is, indeed, as curious as its external form, for it has no breast-bone, properly so called, but the ribs are continued all round its body, so as each to form an entire circle."

"But is it true," asked Agnes, "that the creature lives on air?"

"The lungs are very large," replied Mr. Trelawney, "so much so, indeed, that when they are filled with air, the body of the animal becomes nearly transparent; and it was this peculiarity which gave rise to the fable of the chameleon living on air. The enormous size of these lungs is also supposed by some naturalists to be the cause of the curious change of colour observable occasionally in this animal, as when full of air they constrain the blood to flow towards the skin, and even tinge it with a darker or paler hue according to the quantity of oxygen they have imbibed. The opinions of scientific men differ, however, very greatly on this subject; and from the uncertainty which prevails among them, it does not appear that the true cause of this curious change has yet been discovered, for it is one of the properties of truth to carry with it conviction."

"That is quite correct," observed Mrs. Merton.

"But to return to the chameleon," continued the old gentleman. "Its eyes are very remarkable; not only from their being large and projecting, but from their being covered with skin, except a little circle in the centre, and from their motions being quite independent of each other. The animal, when in search of prey, hangs from the branch of a tree by its flexible tail, its colour being green, or brown, according as it is nearest the leaves, or the bark; and it rolls its strange-looking eyes, one backward and the other forward, watching in two opposite directions at the same time. As soon as an insect appears, both the extraordinary eyeballs are rolled round so as to bring them to bear on the devoted victim; and as soon as it arrives within reach, the tongue is projected with unerring precision, and returns to the mouth with the prey adhering to it, the tongue being covered with a sticky juice. This tongue is fleshy and cylindrical, except at the tip, and the animal, by a curious mechanism, can project it above six inches. It is, indeed, the only part of the chameleon's body that it can move with swiftness; all its other movements being languid and sluggish in the extreme."

"Was the chameleon known to the ancients?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Oh yes," returned the gentleman; "and it was accurately described by Aristotle under the name of the little lion. The most common species is a native of Egypt, Barbary, and the south of Spain, and it has also been found in the East Indies. I had two chameleons once that were quite domesticated. The larger one was of a lightish sap-green colour; the smaller one much darker. They were kept in a wicker basket in the bay-window of the drawing-room, not confined; and slept many hours a day, lying on a projecting ridge of the wicker-work. During the sunshine, the animals rendered themselves flat, with a view to expose themselves as much as possible to the influence of the warmth; and they were at these times often of a greenish stone colour, and pale. If, however, they were disturbed, they contracted the abdomen, expanding the ribs, and often became instantaneously of a dark green, or even indigo-green colour. Sometimes only one side changed colour, and one side, especially of the larger one, was of a stone colour, while the other was of a blackish green. The changes were always very rapid, and accompanied with either elevation or depression of the ribs. The larger was apparently vigorous and in health; when awake, its eyes (of a dark colour and very lustrous) were constantly moving in every possible direction, the motions being by a kind of jerk and very rapid, as if in search of food, of which, however, it partook sparingly. Six or seven beetles or cockroaches were frequently put into a tin vessel and the chameleon placed on the edge, its head projecting over the brim, to which its forceps were generally so firmly attached that it was often difficult to remove them. After making a circle round some portion of the tin, the animal would distend the pouch beneath its jaws, expanding them two or three times in a trifling degree; and stretching forward its body on the fore-legs, it would suddenly dart out its tongue with such force as to make a very sensible ring or noise on the opposite side of the tin. It would then catch the beetle or cockroach on the trumpet-shaped extremity of the tongue and draw it back with the rapidity of lightning. In this manner it would take three or four insects from the vessel, one after the other; but it would never take them from the hand, nor would it eat them when its mouth was opened, and the cockroach introduced with the fingers; a mode which was had recourse to with a view to feed the smaller chameleon, which appeared languid, and died about two months after its arrival. The other chameleon would swallow the large flesh-fly, if introduced into its mouth, although there was some difficulty in opening the jaws contrary to the will of the animal. They slept generally on the top of the basket, their heads projecting over the edge and their tails curled round one of the small divisions of the wicker-work; and it was curious to observe the firm manner in which they attached themselves by this means. On going into the room with a candle, the creatures always appeared of a pale ashy stone colour, or a spectral blue, precisely similar in hue to the colour produced on the hand when held before a blue glass as seen in the windows of chemists. Their motions were exceedingly slow; and they always firmly attached themselves by one leg to whatever substance they could reach before they let go with the other. They did not eat more than once in three or four days; and they would never touch any beetles with a hard covering, many species of which were collected and exposed to them in the tin vessel. Several times when the chameleons were out, the family were afraid to step about the room, lest from their variety of colour they should be trodden on; but they were generally found in the folds of the curtains, always on the blue lining, and not on the chintz pattern. For these reasons, when one of my pets died, I removed the other to the cage where it now is."

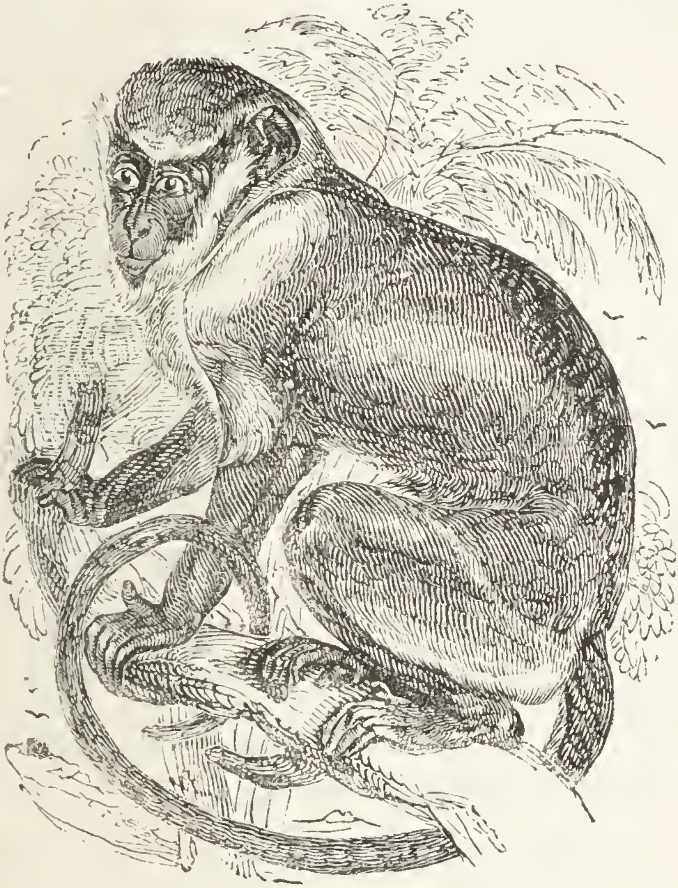
CHAPTER VII.

THE DIANA MONKEY, AND ANIMAL FRIENDSHIPS.

"As you have seen my tail-less monkey," said Mr. Trelawney, "I must now show you one that has a tail, and a very long one too; and I can also tell you a long tale about it, which I had from a lady who came over in the same ship in which a monkey of this species was brought to England. This is the animal I allude to," continued the old gentleman, pointing to a very beautiful monkey in the next cage.

"I have seen monkeys of this kind before," said Mrs. Merton, "though I don't think I ever saw a handsomer one than this, or one that looked more sagacious."

"It is quite as sensible as it looks," said the old gentleman. "You see," continued he, "that I have taken advantage of the trees that were standing on this piece of ground before I made it my menagerie, and that I have built my cages round them, so that the animals they contain may climb among the boughs and almost fancy themselves in their native forests. This kind of monkey had the name of Diana given to it by Linnæus, from the white crescent-shaped band on its forehead. It is generally about one foot, or one foot and a half, high, and its tail is much longer than its body.



THE DIANA MONKEY.

The body is of an ash colour, deepening almost into black on the back and at the extremities. The tail is darker than the body, and becomes quite black at the tip. It is a native of Africa, particularly of Guinea."

"What do you give it to eat?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Linnæus," replied Mr. Trelawney, "tells us that this monkey is fond of all kinds of vegetables, and will eat eggs and bread, but it does not like animal food. However, I have found it eat anything, though it is very particular in what it eats, examining everything very carefully, and smelling it before it puts the food into its mouth. It is very inquisitive, and turns over everything set before it that it sees for the first time. One day my cook having given it some bread and milk in a new basin, it actually upset the whole in its endeavours to find out what it was like below."

"Oh! do look at it," cried Agnes. "I declare it seems to be laughing at us; and see how it nods its head."

"That is its way of telling you how glad it is to see you. It is of a very lively and playful disposition, and will be very friendly as long as you are kind to it; but if you were to offend it, it woul directly try to bite. It likes warm weather, and shows its dislike of the cold by mournful and piercing cries. But I must read to you what Mrs. Bowdich says of its behaviour on board a ship. I have the paper here, for I put it in my pocket-book as soon as I read your letter, that I might be sure not to forget it."

So saying, the old gentleman opened his pocket-book, and taking out a piece of paper, unfolded it, and read as follows:—

"'This monkey,' says Mrs. Bowdich, 'had been purchased by the cook of the vessel in which I sailed from Africa, and was considered his exclusive property. Jack's place then was close to the caboose; but as his education progressed he was gradually allowed an increase of liberty, till at last he enjoyed the range of the whole ship, except the cabin. I had embarked with more than a mere womanly aversion to monkeys; it was absolute antipathy; and although I often laughed at Jack's freaks, still I kept out of the way, till a circumstance brought with it a closer acquaintance and cured me of my dislike. Our latitude was three degrees south, and we only proceeded by occasional tornadoes, the intervals of which were filled up by dead calms and bright weather. When these occurred during the day, the helm was frequently lashed, and all the watch went below. On one of these occasions I was sitting alone on the deck and reading intently, when, in an instant, something jumped upon my shoulders, twisted its tail round my neck, and screamed close to my ears. My immediate conviction that it was Jack scarcely relieved me; but there was no help; I dared not cry for assistance, because I was afraid of him; and dared not obey the next impulse, which was to thump him off, for the same reason; I, therefore, became civil from necessity, and from that moment Jack and I entered into an alliance. He gradually loosened his hold, looked at my face, examined my hands and rings with the most minute attention, and soon found the biscuit which lay by my side. When I liked him well enough to profit by his friendship, he became a constant source of amusement. Like all other nautical monkeys, he was fond of pulling off the men's caps as they slept and throwing them into the sea; of knocking over the parrots' cages to drink the water as it trickled along the deck, regardless of the occasional gripe he received from the offended birds; of taking the dried herbs out of the tin mugs in which the men were making tea of them; of dexterously picking out the pieces of biscuit which were toasting between the bars of the grate; of stealing the carpenter's tools; in short, of teasing everything and everybody: but he was also a first-rate equestrian. Whenever the pigs were let out to take a run on deck, he took his station behind a cask, whence he leaped on the back of one of his steeds as it passed; of course the speed was increased, and the nails he stuck in to keep himself on produced a squeaking; but Jack was never thrown, and became so fond of the exercise that he was obliged to be shut up whenever the pigs were at liberty. Confinement was the worst punishment he could receive, and whenever threatened with that, or any other, he would cling to me for protection. At night, when about to be sent to bed in an empty hen-coop, he generally hid himself under my shawl, and at last never suffered any one but myself to put him to rest. He was particularly jealous of the other monkeys on board, who were all smaller than himself, and contrived to drown two of them. The first instance of the kind was performed in my presence; he began by holding out his paw, and making a squeaking noise, which the other evidently considered as an invitation; the poor little thing crouched to him most humbly, but Jack seized him by the neck, hopped off to the side of the vessel, and threw him into the sea. We cast out a rope immediately, but the monkey was too much frightened to cling to it, and we were going too fast to save him by any other means. Of course, Jack was flogged and scolded, at which he appeared very penitent; but three days afterwards he murdered another monkey in the same way. Another time, the men had been painting the ship's side with a streak of white, and upon being summoned to dinner left their brushes and paint on deck. Unknown to Jack, I was seated behind the companion door, and saw the whole transaction: he called a little black monkey to him, who, like the others, immediately crouched to his superior, when he seized him by the nape of the neck with one paw, took the brush, dripping with paint, with the other, and covered him with white from head to foot. Both the man at the helm and myself burst into a laugh, upon which Jack dropped his victim and scampered up the rigging. The unhappy little beast began licking himself, but I called the steward, who washed him so well with turpentine that all injury was prevented; but during our bustle Jack was peeping with his black nose through the bars of the main-top apparently enjoying the confusion. For three days he persisted in remaining aloft; no one could catch him, he darted with such rapidity from rope to rope; at length, impelled by hunger, he dropped unexpectedly from some height on my knees, as if for refuge, and as he had thus confided in me I could not deliver him up to punishment.' "

"Well!" cried Agnes, "I am sure I should have acted quite differently from that lady; for I think such a wicked animal ought to have been hanged!"

"I quite agree with you, my dear," said Mrs. Merton; "I think so dangerous an animal ought to have been destroyed directly after he threw the first monkey overboard. Suppose a young child had been on board, it might have been drowned just like the monkey."

"When I was looking for this paper," said Mr. Trelawney, "I found another on a much more interesting subject. It is on animal attachments or rather friendships."

"I consider that an extremely interesting subject," said Mrs. Merton. "Much might, indeed, be written on the friendships, if we may call them so, which are sometimes formed between animals quite distinct in their nature and habits. Animals, as I have often told my daughter, are generally supposed to be guided by instinct alone; this instinct, though it prompts them to acts of extraordinary sagacity, in everything regarding the preservation of their lives, the care of their young, or their peculiar use to man, is usually considered to go no farther, and not to enable them to have the power of reasoning. The instances on record, therefore, of cases in which animals have acted contrary to instinct, and have formed a friendship with a creature that it is their nature to destroy, are very curious, and deserve to be recorded."

"I am glad to find your ideas coincide with mine on this subject," said the old gentleman; "and if you will walk into the house and rest yourselves, I will, while you are taking some refreshment, read you an account that was sent to me by a friend at Cheltenham, of a friendship of this kind which was formed between a terrier dog and a white rat; and which was the more remarkable, as terriers are usually employed to kill rats."

Mrs. Merton gladly consented, for she really felt tired; and as soon as she and Agnes were comfortably seated and had begun to eat some cake, the old gentleman read as follows:—

"'A white rat having been caught in some stables, and being from its colour considered a great curiosity, it was brought to me, as it was known that I felt a good deal of interest about animal curiosities. It was about three-parts grown, and exceedingly savage; and, when allowed to go at large in my sitting-room, it flew at me with great ferocity. I put it into a squirrel-cage with a turn-about-wheel, and for two or three days kept it on short allowance, and gave it no food but what it took out of my hands. At first it snapped at the food, and endeavoured to bite my fingers through the wires, but very soon it came out of the box on my approach, and evidently knew my voice.

"'By this time it began to feel the security of the box, and would not come out unless forced to do so. When I put my hand into the box to take it out, it bit me severely, and did so two or three times afterwards; but finding I took no notice of its attacks, and that it was always treated with kindness by me, it soon ceased to exhibit signs of anger, and lay perfectly passive when I opened the lid of the box to look at it.

" 'As I had no family, and sat the greater part of my time alone, occupied in reading or writing, I often turned the rat out of the box, and it soon became familiar on finding that I did not interfere with it (for I carefully avoided letting it know that it was watched), and would come to and cross over my feet with impunity to pick up crumbs, &c., which I purposely allowed to drop for it; so that in about a fortnight it would approach me when called, and take sugar or bread from my hand.

" 'At this time I had a small white terrier dog, called Flora, an excellent rat-killer and of great courage, who was always with me, and lay on the hearth-rug at my feet. When the rat was first brought into the room in the cage, Flora was very anxious to get at him; but the first time I took the rat in my hand I called Flora, and introduced her to my new acquaintance. With that sagacity for which dogs are so celebrated, she immediately comprehended my meaning, and never afterwards showed the slightest wish to assail the rat; on the contrary, they soon became very much attached; and when any stranger came in, the rat put himself under Flora's protection, by going into a corner of the room; while Flora stood sentry, growling and showing her teeth most furiously, until satisfied that no injury was meditated against her favourite.

"'A high wall surrounded my garden at the back of the house, and I frequently turned the rat and dog out to amuse themselves, which they did by playing at hide and seek amongst the flowers; but when my whistle was heard, they each endeavoured to outstrip the other in the race to be first to pay their respects to me.

"'Scugg, the rat, as soon as I took my place at table, would run up my leg, get on the table, and, if not vigilantly watched, would carry off the sugar, pastry, or cheese, of which it would nibble a little, and leave the rest to Flora; but if, which was sometimes the case, Flora was hungry, and anxious to have the first bite, Scugg kept her in order by striking her on the nose with his fore-paw, which

Flora never resented, but would sit quietly looking on until permitted to take her share. They lapped milk out of the same saucer, and Scugg slept between Flora's legs before the fire. The rat did not from the first, that I recollect, show any fear of the dog; which I account for by supposing that the novelty of his situation made him desperate, and insensible to fear.

" 'The presence of a stranger at the table did not prevent him from foraging; but he would not eat from any hand except mine. He was very much attached to me, and would lie for hours within my waistcoat, or, if I went out, in my pocket. Many persons supposed that the colour of the rat protected it, and that its being white was the cause of the dog not destroying it; but in November, 1824, another white rat was caught and brought to me one evening, whilst Scugg was at liberty and amusing himself with Flora in the room. I opened the trap and shook out the stranger to them: both the rats ran rapidly about pursued by the dog, and one of them was almost immediately caught, and as soon destroyed, to my great consternation, for the two rats were so much alike that I could not distinguish one from the other; great, therefore, was my joy and surprise to see Scugg run into the corner, and Flora at her post to protect him, where she remained so long as the man and the dead rat were in the room.

"'My white rat, in colour, was very like a white ferret; that is, slightly tinged with yellow, but not so much so as the ferret; its eyes were red, and its countenance mild and placid. The animal was also free from smell, and particularly clean in its habits; indeed, it was highly offended if its fur was wet or ruffled the wrong way. The only unpleasant thing connected with it was its tail, against which I never could overcome my repugnance; and when suddenly drawn across my face in the rat's frolicksome passages from one shoulder to the other, it always made me shudder.

"'When the farm, with the stables, kennel, &c. &c., in which my rat had been caught were removed, to make way for the Pittville pleasure-grounds, the colony of white rats were dispersed, and took up their quarters in various parts of the town; and I suspect were finally extirpated by the brown rats. Some of them, however, were more kindly received, and formed alliances with their brown neighbours; for, about two or three years afterwards, two or three party-coloured rats were caught; since which they have disappeared altogether. When the first white rat was caught, it was a matter of discussion whether it was a *lusus naturæ* or a distinct race: the question was set at rest by a man who had formerly served as a marine, exclaiming, on seeing the tame rat, "That's a Guinea!" He said they were common on the coast of Guinea. I have since been told, but I do not recollect on what authority, that they are met with in various parts of the globe. Some years since they were to be found in considerable numbers in Nelson-street, Bristol, brought there, probably, in some of the trading vessels; and thence it is likely they found their way to Cheltenham.

"'On my marriage I parted with my little friend; but he did not survive the separation above three or four weeks. Whether he grieved at parting, or whether he was not kept sufficiently clean, or was not allowed sufficient liberty, I cannot tell. I sent for him occasionally, to show him to some of the numerous inquirers after him; and, on the last occasion, I had great difficulty to take him from my bosom and put him into his cage. He drew himself up in a corner of his box, quite sulkily, and was found dead in the same position the next morning.' "

Mrs. Merton and Agnes now departed, promising to return another day to see the rest of the menagerie; and conversing as they returned home on the things which they had seen. Agnes was particularly struck with the idea of a rat being made a pet of, as she remembered once having seen a great number of dead rats that had been killed in a barn, and hearing the farmer call them "nasty brutes," and wish that there was not a rat left alive on his premises. "Don't you think he was very cruel?" said she, after reminding her mother of this.

"No," returned Mrs. Merton: "I think he was wrong to speak so vehemently on the subject; but I do not wonder at his wishing not to have any rats on his premises, for when rats get into a barn, they eat a great quantity of corn; and if the corn the farmer wishes to sell at market is eaten by the rats, of course he will not be able to pay his rent."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LUMINOSITY OF THE SEA.

When Mrs. Merton and Agnes returned to Mrs. Wilson's, they found with her Captain Seymour; and when they were expressing the delight they had experienced at Mr. Trelawney's, Captain Seymour inquired if Agnes had yet observed the luminosity of the sea.

"Oh yes!" she exclaimed; "we watched the course of a steam-boat, the very first night we came; and we saw the sea, like crests of silver, run off the pebbles and float away. I never saw anything more beautiful; and mamma told me it was occasioned by insects."

"In warmer climates," said Captain Seymour, "it is still more beautiful; as the sea looks like rolling waves of liquid gold; and in these situations it is impossible not to be struck with astonishment, wonder, and delight, at the scenes which are frequently exhibited to the eyes of those who traverse the broad seas in ships. On a serene and delightful evening, with a pleasant breeze just filling the sails, and the bow of the vessel throwing the water on each side as it gracefully parts the yielding waves; all around the ship, as far as the eye can reach, may be seen innumerable bright spots of light rising to the surface and again disappearing, like a host of small stars dancing and sparkling on the bosom of the sea, or, as the poet describes it,—

> " 'As though the lightnings there had spent their shafts,
> And left the fragments glittering on the field.'

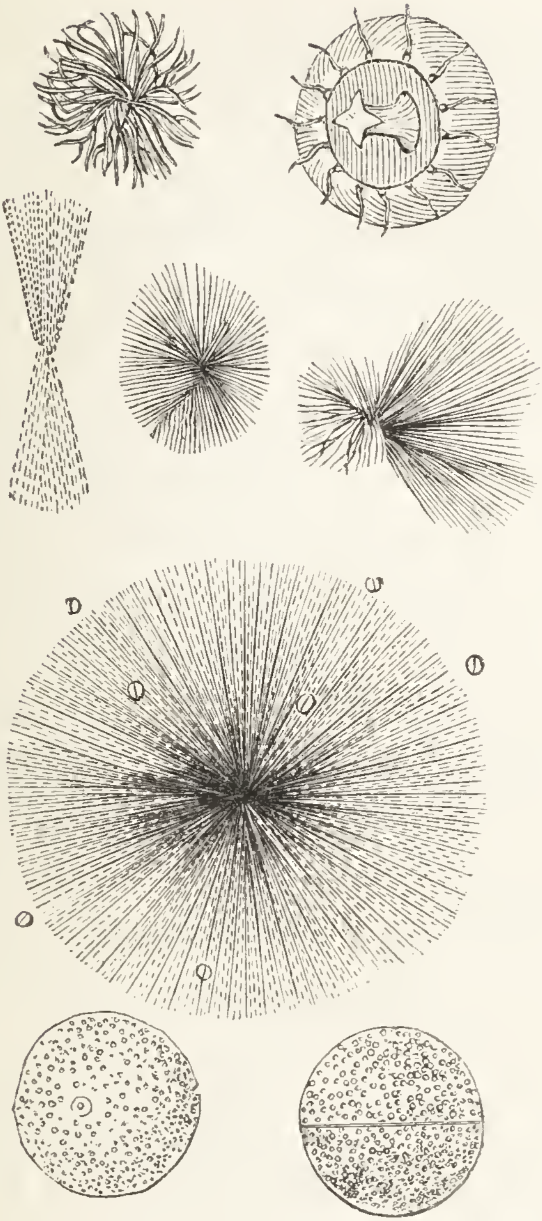
" At another time, when the night is dark and lowering, a fresh breeze urging the ship rapidly onwards through her pathless track, upon looking over her stern, in addition to the smaller specks just now mentioned, large globes of living fire may be seen wheeling and dancing in the smooth water in the wake of the rudder; now, at a great depth shining through the water, then rising rapidly to the surface, and as they reach the top of the wave, flashing bright sparks of light sufficient almost to dazzle the eyes of the beholder; and now again they may be traced floating majestically along till they gradually disappear in the darkness of the water in the distance. At other times, again, when light rain is falling, or perhaps previously to the rain coming on, when a dark cloud is overspreading the sky, upon the water being agitated by the ship passing through it, or curled up by a rope towing overboard in a bight, a beautiful general luminosity is diffused all round, bright enough to illuminate the whole ship's side, and the lower large sails which may be set at the time; and it is no unusual occurrence to have this appearance so bright that a person with little difficulty, and near the surface of the water, might be enabled to read a book by its aid."

"What is the cause of this singular appearance?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

"That is a question," returned Captain Seymour, "which it has often been attempted to solve, but which has, till lately, been generally attempted in vain. Formerly it was alleged by some authors that it was from the solar light, which the sea had absorbed during the day, being given out at night; by others, that the phenomenon was altogether electrical, and excited by the friction of the ship passing through the waves. One set of philosophers asserted that the waters of the sea were possessed of themselves of a phosphorescent nature, and that the appearance was purely phosphoric; and they sat down quite contented with having given it a name, without troubling themselves much about the proper meaning of that name; while another party, again, attributed the phenomenon to the putrefaction of sea-water, equally contented with the last-mentioned theorists, with assigning a cause which satisfied themselves, although it was only in other words confessing to the world their ignorance upon the subject. Nay, though the luminous bodies themselves had been examined by some naturalists, and their animal nature made obvious to their eyes, assisted by the microscope, the conclusions drawn from the examination were still wrong, and they were styled particles of an oily or bituminous nature, in order to coincide with the preconceived opinions of the observer. It was not, indeed, till lately that the real cause of this appearance was discovered, and that it was acknowledged by most authors that it proceeded from animalcules. This opinion has been slowly and gradually making its way, and, like others of this kind, has from that very circumstance only the more surely acquired strength and solidity. Every day's examination of the waters of the ocean establishes it the more, and already various species of these interesting little animals are known to naturalists."

"Then my mamma was quite right," cried Agnes, "in what she told me."

"It is useless," continued Captain Seymour, "to attempt to refute the other opinions, they are all vague and unsatisfactory, they are all unsupported by facts; while the true cause—the existence of animalcules—receives support and confirmation by every day's experience, and rests upon facts numerous and easily proved. Suffice it at present to say, that the animalcules have been caught in the very act of giving out the luminous appearance, and in vast numbers; and that in every instance where the water has been properly examined when luminous, great quantities of animalcules have been seen; and that, on the contrary, when the water has not been luminous, the animalcules have not been present; thus affording satisfactory proof that they are the cause of the light so given out. During a late voyage to India and China, I had various opportunities of observing the animals which produce this effect, and of a good many of these I made sketches as accurately as



LUMINOSITY OF THE SEA.

I could. Upon examining the sea-water at various times and in various parts of the ocean, I generally found that when the water was most luminous, there then was a greater abundance than at other times of small round globular bodies, of the size of grains of sand, or varying from that size to a very small pin's head. I drew several as they appeared when examined through a microscope. A number of little animalcules found near the Cape of Good Hope looked like grains of gold sand. They were like little balls, and were covered all over with innumerable small spots; they had also a larger dark circular spot in the centre, with a rim round it. This rim was rather opaque; the rest of the creature however, with the exception of the little round spots, was perfectly transparent. At times, instead of the circular spot in the centre, the animalcules had a dark streak running through them, throughout their whole breadth; and frequently I observed that they were enveloped, as it were, in a gelatinous-looking bag, very thin and transparent."

"I should like to see them in the large microscope at the Polytechnic Institution in Regent-street," said Agnes.

"These little bodies," continued the Captain, "were generally to be seen when the water was luminous, and at times were very abundant, especially in straits and near land. Their real size, I have already said, was about that of a grain of sand; but when seen shining in the water, they appeared much larger. Upon taking up a bucket full of water from the sea near the ship and pouring it upon the deck, innumerable spots might be seen about the size of small peas, which when taken upon the finger and carried to a light were scarcely discernible by the naked eye. Magnified thus by the refraction of the water, and their own light, when the countless millions of them are scattered about upon the surface of the sea, upon its being agitated and set in motion by the ship's way through it, the appearance then presented is beautiful in the extreme."

"Were all the animalcules like balls?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

"No," said the Captain; "some were very large, and radiated from the centre like stars. These occurred very frequently in straits and near land, and were most abundant at those times when the sea was very luminous. The natural size of these bodies is about half that of a pin's head; they seem to consist almost entirely of numerous tentacula, or arms, each one of which is composed of numerous joints. These apparently spring from a dark spot in the centre, which is, most probably, the body of the animal, though I could not make out distinctly any particular organs belonging to it. In general, when under the microscope, there were to be seen a considerable number of very small round bodies (invisible to the naked eye) attached to the tentacula, or swimming round about them, and which I only saw in company with this animal. They were wheel-shaped, transparent, with a dark streak running through the centre, and were always in motion, whirling round incessantly like little wheels. Another body, which evidently belongs to the same family as the last, occurred also very frequently in company with it. It is about the fourteenth of an inch in length, and apparently consists of tentacula alone, no central body being observable. Each of the tentacula is jointed numerously, and the whole were arranged somewhat in the form of an hour-glass, or like a bundle of faggots loosely tied in the middle and spreading out at each end. The tentacula evidently appeared to be connected in the centre, but were loose and unattached at the extremities.

These curious creatures occurred principally in the Straits of Malacca, but were also frequently seen in the open ocean. Along with these last, in the Straits of Malacca, two other kinds occurred in considerable abundance. The one was composed of short, thick, curved tentacula, disposed in a circular manner, all meeting in the centre, and entwining with each other like a bur. They were not jointed, differing materially in this respect from the two already described. The other was composed of short, straight tentacula, not jointed; sometimes disposed in a circular or oval shape, and at others appearing as it were double, as if one were attached to and growing out of the other. The size of one of these species scarcely exceeded that of a very small pin's point, but the other was as large as the head of a pin."

"Did you ever attempt to preserve any of these animalcules?" asked Mrs. Merton.

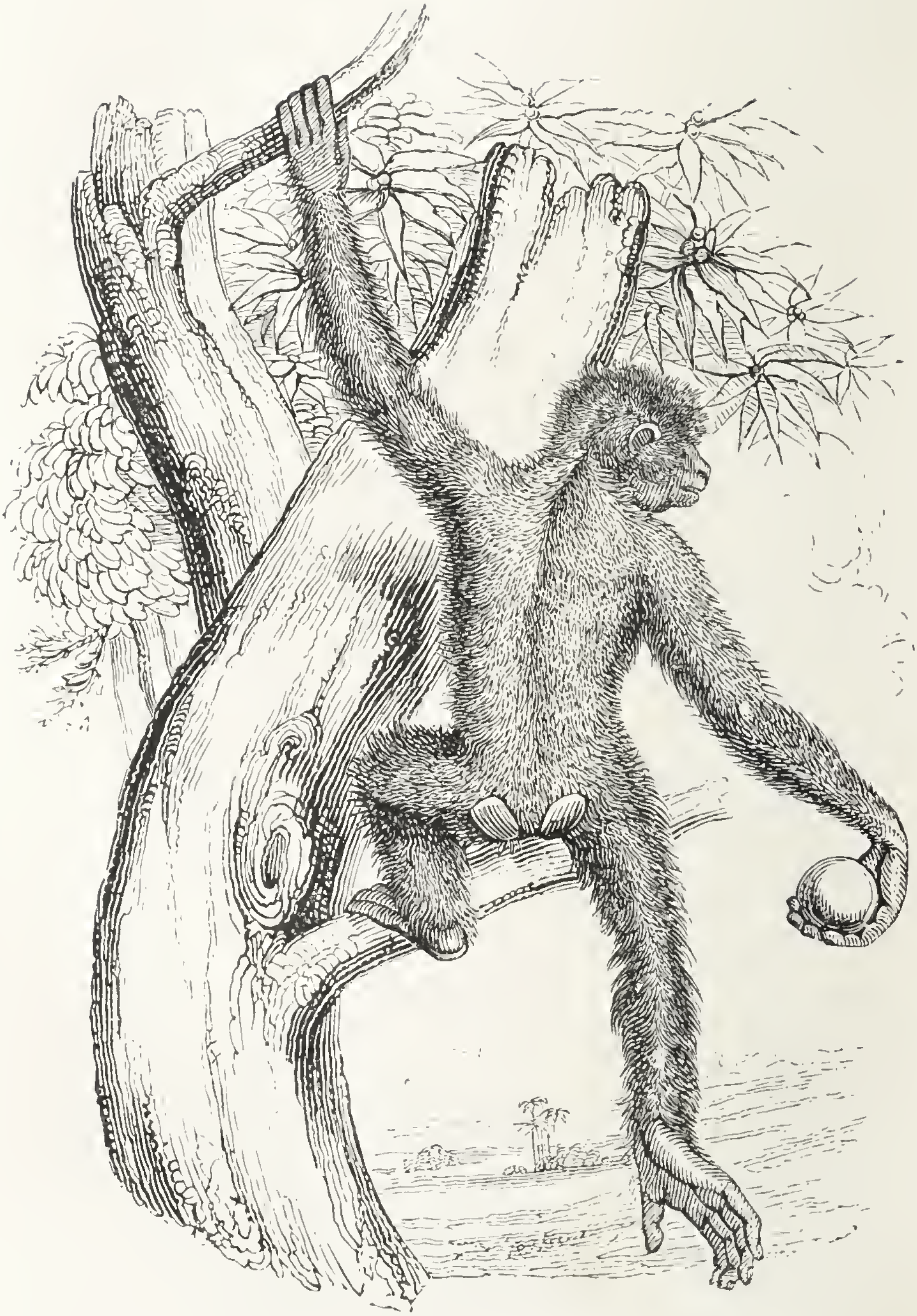
"I did once," said the Captain. "I found an exceedingly interesting little animal, a Medusa, in the Straits of Banca, which evidently possessed a luminous property. I only procured one specimen, and it was during the day. After examination it was removed into a wine-glass full of clear sea-water, and kept till evening. When taken into a dark place, the water, upon its surface being struck and agitated by the finger, immediately gave out several bright sparks. This luminousness, however, soon ceased when the agitation of the water was long continued; but when left undisturbed for some time, it seemed to recover its power, again emitting vivid flashes of light upon being struck smartly with the top of the finger. The animal itself, as seen by the microscope, appeared to consist of a hollow transparent gelatinous bag, open in the centre, and containing within it an elongated body, fixed, as it were, upon a pedestal, and divided at the summit into four lobes. The mouth of the bag was set all round with curved tentacula, somewhat resembling tadpoles, and attached by their largest extremity, in number about fourteen. The whole of these bodies during the time the animal was under the microscope were in constant motion, the edges of the bag contracting suddenly, and as quickly opening again; the central body and the tentacula also moving simultaneously. The natural size of this interesting little animal was about that of a small pin's head."

The Captain now left; but in the evening he sent sketches of the appearance, when magnified, of all the different curious little creatures he had described.

CHAPTER IX.

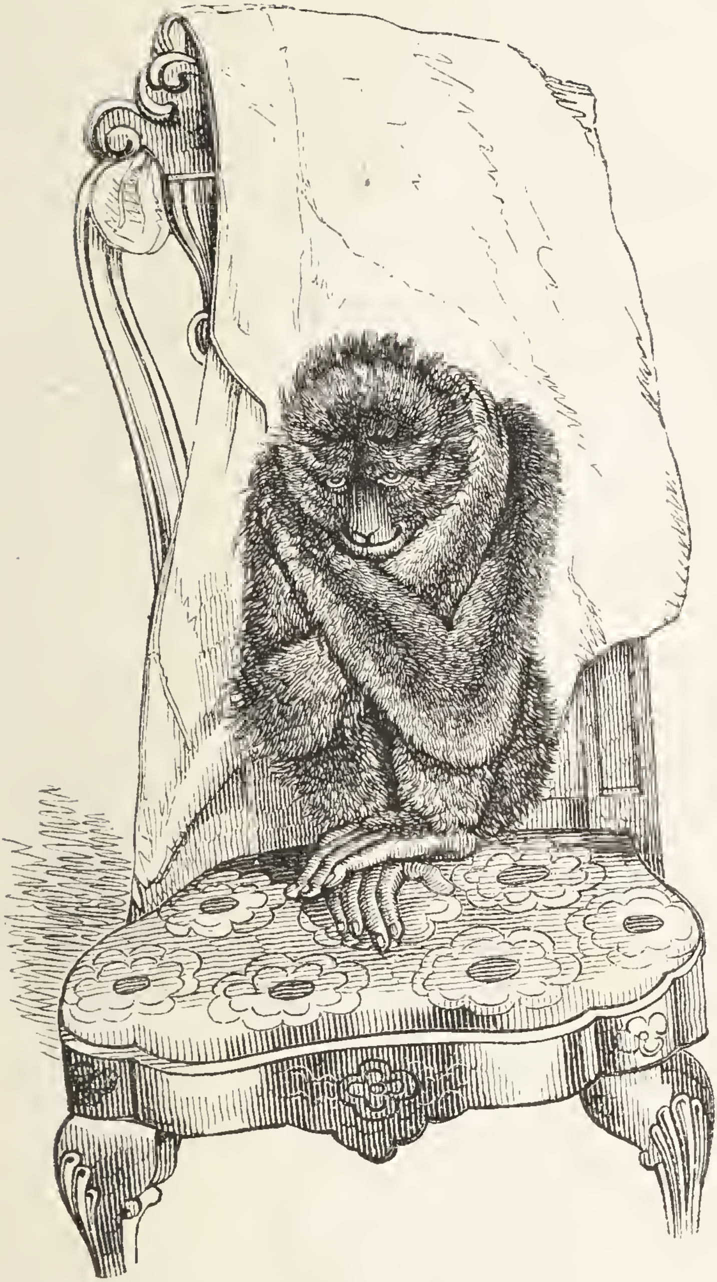
THE UNGKA APE OF SUMATRA, AND THE NUTHATCH.

THOUGH Captain Seymour had told them many curious, amusing, and instructive things, Agnes did not like him half so well as the "dear old gentleman," as she called Mr. Trelawney; and she was quite impatient for the next day to arrive, when they were to pay him another visit. The morning came, and Agnes had scarcely patience to wait till her mother thought it a proper time to make a visit: all the way, too, she had difficulty in constraining herself to walk, as she felt much more inclined to jump and run. The distance also appeared much greater than before; but they did arrive at last, and old Mr. Trelawney met them with a smiling countenance. He was, indeed, fond of Agnes, from the evident pleasure she showed in his society; and she was fond of him, from the kindness with which he treated her. When they entered the house, Mr. Trelawney conducted them



The Ungka Ape.

Plate 2, P. 122.



THE UNGKA APE.

first to the library; and Agnes was very much struck, almost as soon as she entered, with a curious-looking monkey sitting on a chair, with its arms folded across its breast, and its feet crossed over each other, looking at them as slyly as possible.

"Ungka," cried Mr. Trelawney, "is that the way you receive ladies when they come to see you? Pray get up directly, and make them a bow."

The ape instantly started off his chair, and, stretching himself out to the utmost, made the ladies a low bow. Ungka was about two feet and a half high, with very long arms—so long, indeed, that he could touch the ground without stooping; and these frightfully long arms he raised as high as possible above his head before he made his bow. His whole body was covered with rather stiff hair of a beautiful jet black. The face was, however, bare, except some enormous whiskers; and the hair stood out from the forehead as if it had been brushed up. The feet were just like hands.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Trelawney, when Ungka had made his obeisance to his visitors, "come and shake hands."

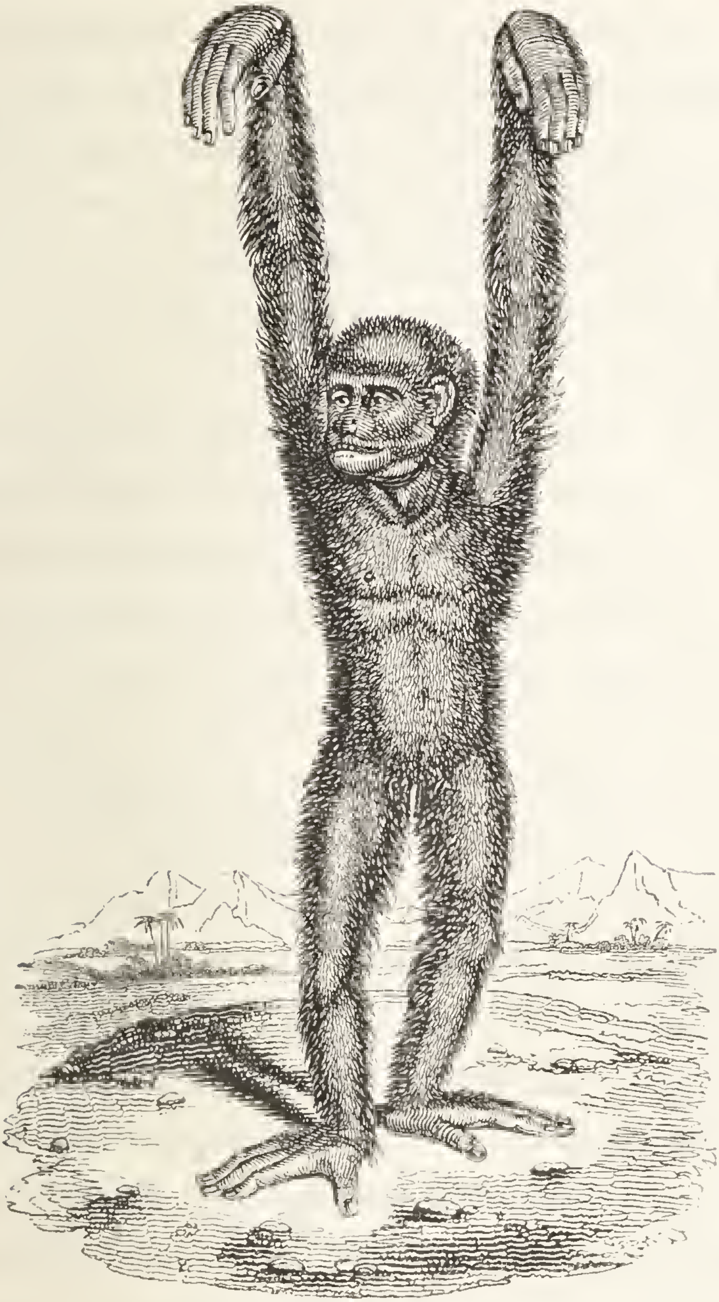
Ungka approached and offered his hand, which was smooth and covered with a shining black skin quite free from hairs, to Agnes. "Oh! oh!" said Mr. Trelawney, laughing; "what, you like the young lady best, do you?" and Ungka grinned and showed his white teeth as though he perfectly understood what his master was saying to him. "Now, sir, show your gloves," said Mr. Trelawney; and he made the ladies observe that the hair on the upper part of the arms ran downwards, while that of the lower part ran upwards, thus giving the ape the appearance of having on a pair of gloves. Ungka seemed much pleased at the delight his visitors expressed at seeing this, and he stroked his long arms with every appearance of satisfaction.

"He seems to like being noticed," observed Mrs. Merton.

"Oh yes," returned the old gentleman; "Ungka is rather vain, and he has some reason to be so. You see his hands are very handsome; his fingers are long and tapering, and his thumb is much shorter than the fingers, as in the human hand. His face, also, covered as it is with a clear shining black skin and adorned with large whiskers, is rather good-looking; while his ears are small, and resemble those of a human being. Both his fingers and toes have nails, and not claws; and he always walks upright. I am sorry, however, I cannot say anything in praise of his mode of walking, as it is certainly not the most graceful in the world. He has a curious way of twisting his legs and feet, that makes him walk as if he were bow-legged; while from his stepping on the whole flat surface of his foot at once, he makes a strange pattering noise on boards. In his native forests, however, there is no awkwardness, and he swings from branch to branch with inconceivable agility. His foot is as flexible as his hand, and he can hold a branch equally well with either."

"It is a beautiful exemplification of the Almighty wisdom," observed Mrs. Merton, "that we always find wild creatures provided with some means of protecting themselves. If they walk badly, they are gifted with powers of springing and climbing; and even those birds that have feeble powers of flying, can walk with extraordinary rapidity, like the ostrich."

"That is exactly the case with Ungka," returned his master. "He walks so badly, that he would soon be run down even by a man; but his powers of swinging and climbing are astonishing. Here is a sketch of him which was made by a gentleman who saw him in his native forests."



THE UNGKA APE.

"Was he very wild when first taken?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"I believe not. At least, he was tame from the first moment that the gentleman who gave him to me procured him. He had been caught by some Malays, and was sold by them to my friend. But I have some particulars about him, which, if you please, I will read to you before we go into the menagerie."

Mrs. Merton declared it would give her great pleasure to hear these particulars. Mr. Trelawney took some papers out of his desk and began to read; Ungka seating himself on a footstool, with his arms folded across his breast as they had first seen him, and resting his chin on the edge of the table as though he were eagerly listening to all that was said. Mr. Trelawney began as follows:—

"'On entering the yard in which Ungka was tied up one morning, I was not well pleased at observing him busily engaged in removing his belt and cord, at the same time whining and uttering a peculiar squeaking noise. When loose, he walked in his usual erect posture towards some Malays who were standing near the place; and after hugging the legs of several of the party, he went to a Malay lad, climbed upon his neck and hugged him closely, having an expression, in both the look and manner, of gratification at being once again in the arms of his former master. After this lad sold him, whenever the animal could get loose he would make for the water-side, the Malay lad being usually on board the prau in which they had arrived from Sumatra; and the animal was never taken until, having reached the water, he could proceed no farther. On sending him on board the ship in which we came to England, he, on arriving, after rewarding his conductor with a bite, escaped, and ascended the rigging; but towards the evening he came down on the deck and was readily secured.

" 'Ungka's food consisted chiefly of vegetables, and he was particularly fond of carrots; when he took animal food, he preferred fowl; but one day a lizard having been caught on board and given to him, he devoured it greedily. When sleeping, he used to lie generally on his side, resting his head on his hands, and always retiring to rest if possible at sunset: in the morning, however, he did not appear always ready to rise with the sun; and sometimes after he had been awakened, he would lie on his back, with his long arms stretched out and his eyes wide open, as though thinking whether he was ready to get up or not. When any friend approached him, he would utter a peculiar chirping kind of sound; but when angry or frightened, he made a hollow barking noise, which was followed by the loud guttural syllables, *ra*, *ra*, *ra*. He was not generally mischievous, but he had one singular propensity: he was very fond of ink, and whenever he could find an opportunity, he would drink all the ink in an inkstand and suck the pens. He soon knew the name of Ungka which had been given to him, and would come when called by that name.

" 'There was a little girl on board, a native of Erromango, one of the group of the New Hebrides among the South Sea Islands. This child Ungka was very much attached to, and she seemed equally fond of him. They would often sit together for hours near the capstan, the animal with its long arms round the child's neck, lovingly eating biscuit together; and at other times she would lead him about by one of his paws, like a child learning to dance. This was a very droll exhibition, as Ungka turned in his knees and toes instead of turning them out; and his broad flat foot pattered on the deck, when he attempted to dance, like that of a duck. They would also roll on the deck together, the animal pushing the child with his feet, and pretending to bite her; then, seizing a rope, he would swing round her, eluding all her attempts to catch him: when she turned on one side thinking he was there, he would suddenly swing round and pretend to bite her on the other; and then, when at last she stood quite bewildered, with both her arms raised, he would drop into them and cling round her neck. If an attempt, however, were made by the child to play with him when he had no inclination, or after he had sustained some disappointment, he usually made a slight impression with his teeth on her arm, just sufficient to act as a warning that no liberties were to be taken with his person; or to give her a hint, as the child would say, that "Ungka no like play now."

"'There were several small monkeys on board, with whom Ungka evidently wished to form a friendship; but they repelled his advances by chattering and various hostile movements. The little Man in Black, as the sailors used to call him, did not approve of this treatment; and the first time he could find an opportunity, he seized a rope, and swinging himself near the spot where they were all gathered together, he caught one of them by the tail with his left foot and ran up the rigging with him; the unfortunate monkey, who was carried along, dangling by his tail, and whisked about in a very awkward and uncomfortable manner, chattering and grinning all the time, in impotent rage at his tormentor. Ungka appeared to think the joke so good, that he afterwards treated several of the other monkeys in the same manner, and thus effectually punished them for their impertinence.' "

"Do look at Ungka, mamma!" cried Agnes. "He seems to understand every word Mr. Trelawney says, and to be quite amused at the recollection of his pranks."

Ungka did, indeed, look as if he understood and enjoyed every word; and when Agnes spoke, he stretched out one of his long arms to shake hands with her. Mr. Trelawney looked kindly at the ape, and, patting him, continued as follows:—

" 'There was a little pig on board that used to run about the deck, and that had a curly tail: this curly tail Ungka did not like, and he used to run after the pig and pull its tail to endeavour to make it straight; but, of course, all his efforts were in vain, though piggy did not at all resent his interference, and only grunted and gave himself a shake when the ape let go his tail, as though to put it all right again before he trotted away.

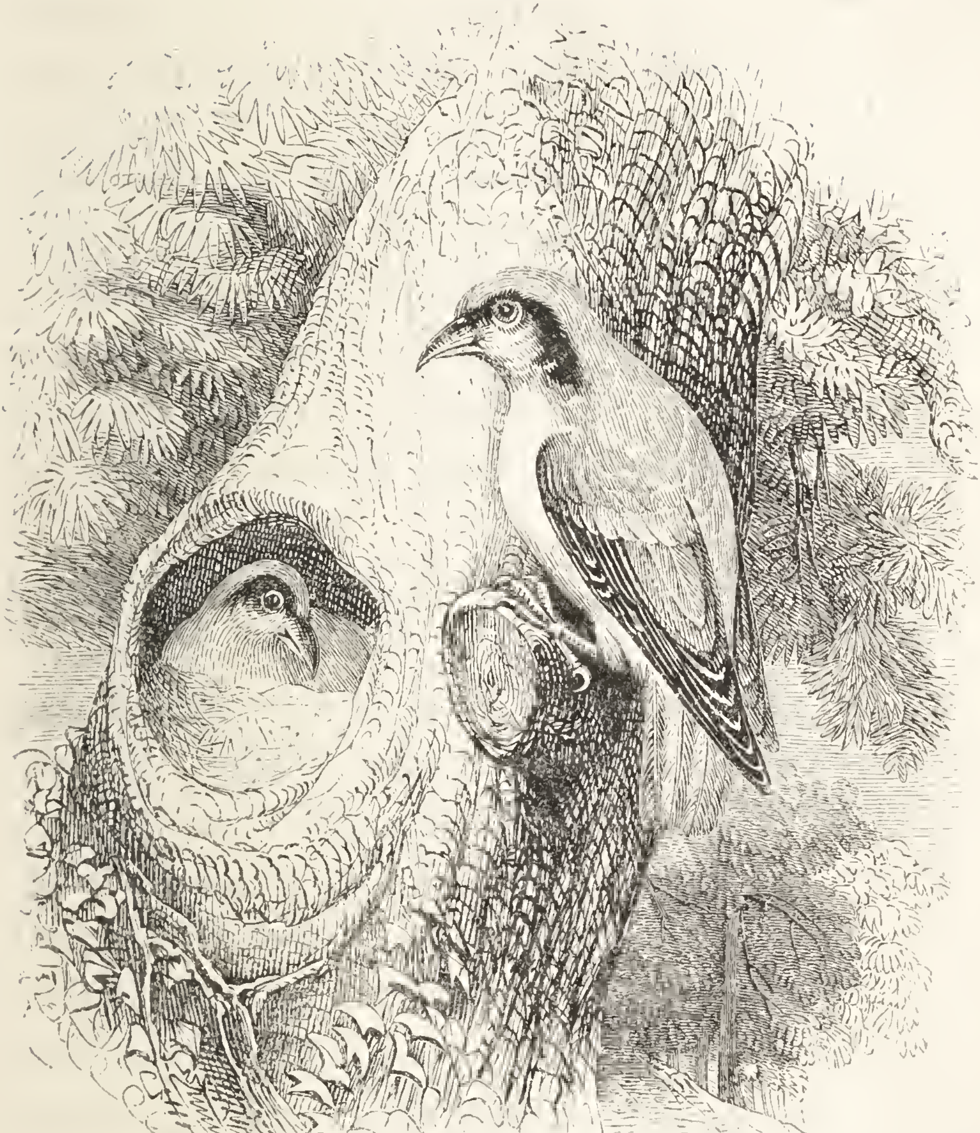
"'Ungka did not like to be laughed at, and one day, when he was at dinner, some persons looking at him and laughing, he ceased eating, uttered his peculiar barking noise, ending with the guttural notes *ra, ra, ra*, and inflated a large bag or pouch under his chin; he then fixed his eyes with a most serious and solemn look on the persons who had offended him, and did not resume his dinner till they had ceased laughing. He disliked confinement, or being left alone, and could not bear disappointment. He was very fond of sweet cakes, and when they were refused him, or he was shut up, or vexed in any way, he would give way to the most violent display of ill-temper. In these fits he rolled about on the deck, kicking and screaming *ra, ra, ra*, and dashing everything about that came within his reach. At sunset, when he wanted to go to rest, he would approach one of his friends, uttering his peculiar chirping note, as if beseeching to be taken into their arms; his request once acceded to, he was as difficult to remove as Sinbad's old man of the sea; any attempt to take him away being followed by violent screams, and his clinging still closer to the person in whose arms he was lodged, and whence it was almost impossible to remove him until he fell asleep.' "

At this part of Ungka's history, Agnes could not help looking at him, and shaking her head; and Ungka, as if very much ashamed, stretched out his long arm, and catching hold of a corner of one of the bookcases, he swung himself up to the top, knocking down a stuffed bird that stood in his way.

"Oh Ungka! Ungka!" cried his master, "see what you have done to the poor Nuthatch."

But there Ungka sat with his arms crossed on his breast, and looking not at all inclined to come down. In the mean time, Mrs. Merton had raised the Nuthatch, which was not at all injured; and had pointed out to Agnes the great strength of its beak.

"Yes," said Mr. Trelawney. "This curious little bird is about the size of a sparrow; its body is thick in proportion to its length, and its tail is short. Its beak is about three-quarters of an inch in length, and is very strong. The bird itself is not a songster, having only a few short notes, and



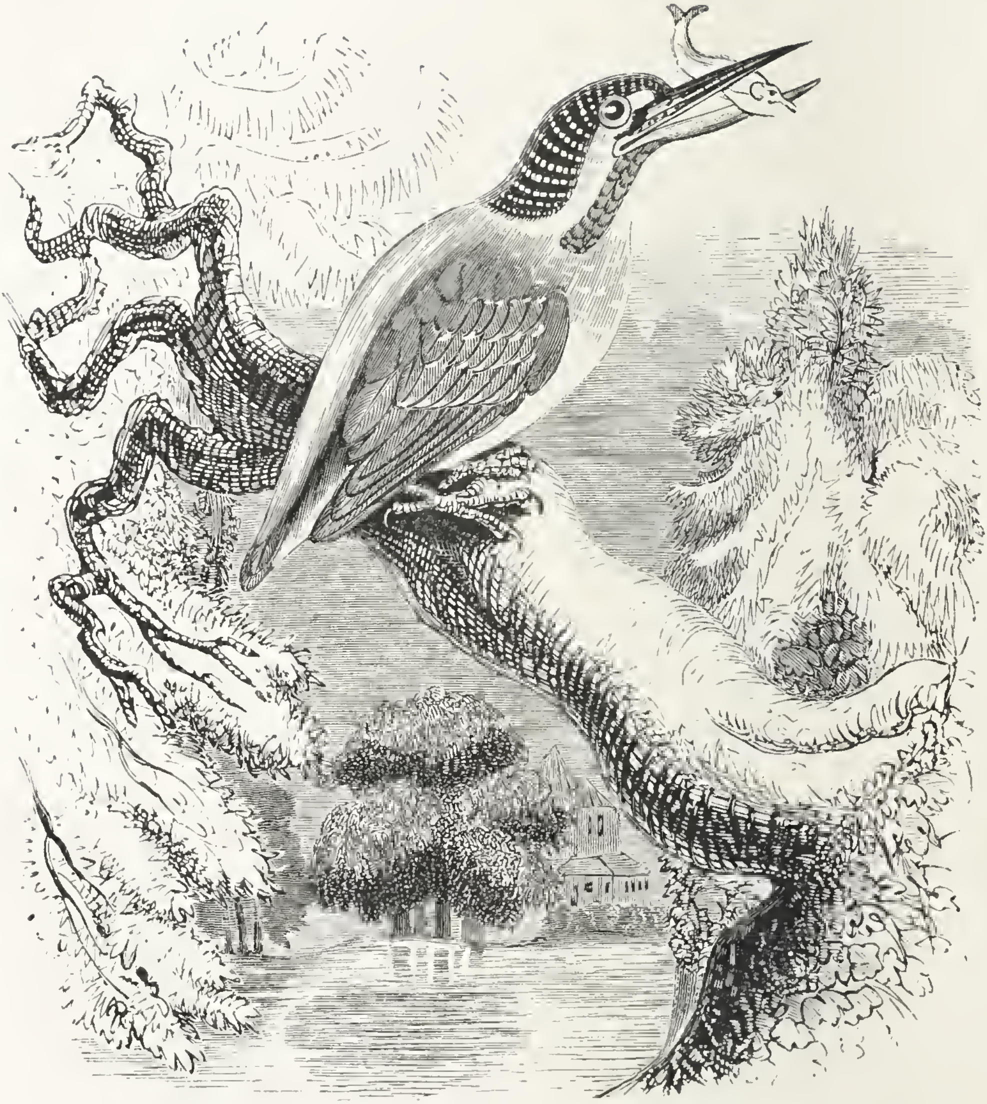
THE NUTHATCH.

none of them peculiar, though so loud, that they may be heard at a considerable distance. It is a busy and cheerful bird, particularly just before the breeding-time. It prefers nuts and tree-seeds to any other kind of food; and its manner of cracking them is very curious: it fixes the nut in a crevice in some old tree or post, and placing itself above it, head downwards, strikes with great force and rapidity with its strong wedge-shaped bill on the edge of the shell till it splits open. When the food of these birds is plentiful, sometimes as much as a peck of broken shells is found under one tree."

"The nest of the nuthatch," said Mrs. Merton, "is curiously constructed. The bird frequently chooses a hole in some old tree, or the deserted nest of a woodpecker, at the bottom of which it lays some thin bark from the branches of a Scotch pine, when it can be procured, and above it a quantity of dead leaves, generally those of the oak, heaped together without much appearance of order. The bird then closes the entrance with clay, leaving as small an opening as possible to allow itself to squeeze its body through."

"Why is the hole made so small?" asked Agnes.

"To prevent the attacks of the starlings," said Mr. Trelawney. "It is very curious to see how



The Kingfisher.

P. 137.

these birds, with their strong beaks, will attempt to break down the mud-wall of the nuthatch, and how hard the poor nuthatch will labour to repair it. Sometimes the nuthatch takes possession of the deserted nest of some other bird; altering and improving it to suit his particular fancy by adding a mud-wall."

"Is any particular interest connected with this stuffed bird?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Yes," said the old gentleman. "This bird was sent to me after its death, by one of my friends, with some anecdotes respecting it, which I will read to you;" and so saying, Mr. Trelawney again opened his desk, and taking out a paper, read the following letter from his friend:—

"'One day, as I was expecting the transit of some wood-pigeons under a beech-tree, with a gun in my hand, I observed a little ash-coloured bird squat himself on one of the large limbs of the tree above my head, and begin to tap loudly upon the wood, and then proceed round and round the branch, still tapping, it being clearly the same thing to him which side of his body was uppermost. I shot, and the bird fell; there was a lofty hedge between us, and when I had climbed over it, he was gone. It was some time before I secured him; and the manner he eluded me was characteristic of his cunning. He concealed himself in holes at the bottom of a ditch, attempting, whenever all seemed still, to scud away; but as his wing was broken it impeded his efforts, and I at last caught hold of him. He was small, but very fierce, and his bite would have made a child cry out. The elbow-joint of the wing being thoroughly shattered, and finding that he had no other wound, I cut off the dangling limb, and put him into a large cage with a common lark. The wound did not in the least diminish his activity, nor yet his pugnacity, for he instantly began to investigate all possible means of escape; he tried the bars, then tapped the wood-work of the cage, and produced a knocking sound which made the room re-echo; finding his efforts vain, he then turned upon the lark, and ran under him with his gaping beak to bite. I was consequently obliged to separate them, and I put the nuthatch into a smaller cage of plain oak wood and wire. Here he remained all night; and the next morning his knocking or tapping with his beak was the first sound I heard, though sleeping in an apartment divided from the other by a landing-place. He had food given to him—minced chicken and bread crumbs, and water. He ate and drank with the most perfect assurance, and the moment he had done, began again to work at battering his cage, which he did with such effect, that, though he only occupied the cage one day, the wood is pierced and worn like an old piece of worm-eaten timber. His hammering was peculiarly laborious, for he did not peck as other birds do, but grasping his hold with his immense feet, he turned upon them as upon a pivot, and struck the whole weight of his body, thus assuming the appearance, with his entire form, of the head of a hammer; or, as I have sometimes seen birds on mechanical clocks made to strike the hour by swinging on a wheel. We were in hopes when the sun went down that he would cease from his labours and be at rest; but, no! at the interval of every ten minutes, up to nine or ten o'clock at night, he resumed his knocking, and strongly reminded us of the coffin-maker's nightly and dreary occupation. It was said by one of us—"He is nailing his own coffin"—and so it proved. An awful fluttering in the cage, now covered with a handkerchief, announced that something was wrong: we found him at the bottom of his prison with his feathers ruffled, and nearly all turned back. He was taken out, and for some time he lingered amidst convulsions and occasional brightenings up; but at length he drew his last gasp.' "

"Poor thing!" cried Agnes; "how sorry I am it died."

"My friend was very sorry," said Mr. Trelawney. "And as he knew I was fond of preserving various things in my collection, he sent the body of the poor nuthatch to me, and I have had it stuffed. I keep the papers that are sent with the different animals composing my menagerie and museum; and I often amuse myself with reading them over to any friends who, like yourselves, may be interested in subjects of natural history."

"Have you a museum, then, as well as a menagerie?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "if a few stuffed birds, and a few other curiosities of different kinds, can be called so. My collection contains few objects of value; but everything in it is interesting to me from some circumstance connected with it. Here are some of my birds," continued he, opening the door of an adjoining apartment. But at this moment he was called out to see a person on business, and he was compelled to leave Mrs. Merton and Agnes to enter the museum by themselves.

CHAPTER X.

THE KINGFISHER, THE KESTREL, AND THE SPARROW-HAWK.

MRS. MERTON and Agnes were just about to enter Mr. Trelawney's museum, when Ungka, seeing the departure of his master, swung himself down from the top of the bookcase, where he had taken refuge, and put his long arms round Agnes, muttering *ra, ra, ra,* and rubbing his head against her.

"Poor Ungka!" said Mrs. Merton, patting him. "He takes you for his old playfellow, Agnes; and, knowing that he did wrong in knocking down the stuffed bird, he is come to ask you to intercede for him." Agnes smiled at this, and patted the ape, who, hearing a noise in the hall, immediately swung himself back to his old place. Agnes looked after him with regret; but finding that they could not tempt him to come down again, she and her mother went into the next room, and began to examine the stuffed birds. The first that attracted their attention was labelled the Kingfisher, and as Agnes had never seen one of these birds before, she begged her mother to tell her something about it.

"The kingfisher," said Mrs. Merton, "though not very elegant in shape, is beautiful from the brilliancy and variety of its colours. Its head is of a changeable olive-green, resembling a richly shot silk, streaked with bars of bright blue, and under the eye is a patch of orange-brown, passing on the neck into white; the breast is orange, deepening in some places almost into red; and in others, particularly towards the upper part of the neck, softening into yellow, and a yellowish white; the back is of a bright blue, shot with white; and varying in shade and richness, with every motion of the bird, as the light strikes it in a different manner; the tail is of a very dark blue; and the wings are of an olive-green, like the head: the beak is dark brown; and the eyes are orange-red. The bird is very active, and, on a fine day, may be seen hovering over a running stream; when, as it darts after its prey, with the rays of the sun flashing on its plumage, and reflected by the water, it looks like a flying gem. Its food consists of small fishes, slugs, and worms, and it appears very voracious. When about to feed, it is generally found on the border of a clear stream, alone, perched on the branch of a tree projecting over the water, where it sometimes remains motionless for hours, watching till a fish of suitable size glitters through the water: it then darts down, dives into the water, and brings up its prey with its beak; carries it to the shore, where it beats it to death, and swallows it entire, afterwards casting up the scales, bones, and other indigestible parts, generally in the form of balls."

"It has been remarked," said Mr. Trelawney, who now entered the room, and observed what bird they were looking at, "that the eggs of the kingfisher are almost transparent, and have a larger air-bag than those of any other British bird in proportion to their size. The kingfisher always chooses a hollow in a rock or bank to construct its nest in; and it frequently fixes upon an old rat-hole. This accounts, in some measure, for the delicacy of its eggs; for it has been observed that the eggs of all birds that build their nests on the ground, contain a larger quantity of air in the receptacle, than those of birds which build their nests upon trees; and the young of the former are invariably produced in a much more perfect state (supposed to be owing to the influence of a greater portion of oxygen) than the young of the latter, which remain helpless and naked for several days; while the young of the ground-nest bird are covered with down, and able to quit the nest with part of the shell on their backs."

"The kingfisher," said Mrs. Merton, "is supposed to have been the halcyon of the poets; and the halcyon days were so called, from the days on which the kingfisher is generally seen on the watch for his prey being particularly calm. The ancients believed that this bird built its nest on the ocean, and that its presence would quell the wildest storm. Whatever branch it perched on was supposed to become withered; its body after death was dried to preserve clothes from the moth; it was supposed to avert thunder, to augment hidden treasures, to preserve peace in families; and, more than all, to bestow grace and beauty on the person carrying it about him. Aristotle, Virgil, Ovid, Pliny, and many other ancient writers, relate these and numerous other extravagant stories of the halcyon. Even in modern times, several barbarous nations have strange superstitions about the kingfisher. The Tartars believe that if they cast the feathers on the water, and carefully preserve those that float, any woman they may touch with one of these feathers must fall in love with them. The Ostiaks carry the skin about their persons as an amulet to preserve them from every evil; and, so late as the last century, it was supposed by some that the body of a kingfisher, dried and hung up by a piece of string, would always turn its breast to the north, or to the point from which the wind blew. Mrs. Charlotte Smith mentions this last superstition, and informs us that she actually saw a stuffed Kingfisher hung up to the beam of a cottage, which the inhabitants assured her never failed to show every change in the wind, by turning its beak to the quarter whence it blew!"

"Another superstition respecting the kingfisher," said Mr. Trelawney, "is, that it hovers over the water in order to attract the fish by the brightness of its plumage; and another, that if it be dried after it is dead, and its body kept, it will renew its feathers every season at the usual period of moulting."

"All these superstitions," said Mrs. Merton, "are the relics of a barbarous age, and, as such, only resemble others that might be enumerated;

but why the kingfisher should be fixed upon as the subject of these extraordinary fancies, it would now be difficult to ascertain. It is probable, however, that its habit of poising itself in the air, in clear weather, gave rise to the first fables; and the extraordinary beauty and brilliancy of its plumage to the last."

Agnes's attention was now attracted by what appeared to her to be a stuffed hawk; and she eagerly pointed it out to her mother, as since their visit to Sir Edward Peregrine's, she had felt a particular interest in all kinds of hawks. Mr. Trelawney heard the exclamation, and observed, smilingly, that it was singular that she should have noticed this bird immediately after they had been speaking of the hovering of the kingfisher. "This hawk," continued he, "is one of the commonest of the British species, and consequently one of the best known. It is peculiarly graceful in its motions, and handsome in its shape; and it may be known, even at a considerable distance, by its habit of poising itself in the air, with its tail outspread, and its head pointing to the wind; from which it has acquired the name of Windhover. These birds sometimes soar to a great height, flying in circles like the kite, and every now and then pausing and balancing themselves in the air, as though to reconnoitre, and to ascertain if they had reached a proper elevation. While they are rising they utter frequently, and with a sharp sound, a cry resembling *pri, pri, pri!* and when they perceive their prey, they dart upon it with the directness and rapidity of an arrow."

"I have often seen one of these hawks in the country," observed Mrs. Merton, "sometimes hovering for a long time over one part of a field, and then taking a rapid sweep to another part, and hovering there for another long period, apparently immovable. This hawk is called a Kestrel in the county where I was born; and in many other parts of England."

"Some doubts," said Mr. Trelawney, "have arisen as to the food of this species. It is supposed by some naturalists to feed entirely on mice; but others say that it lives chiefly upon birds, though feathers are never found in its stomach. Some naturalists explain this by saying, that the kestrel plucks the small birds it catches, before it devours them. It is also said to be very fond of cockchafers; and Mr. Selby tells us, that he watched it with a glass, and saw it 'dart through a swarm of cockchafers, seize one in each claw, and eat them while flying.' "

"Is this bird ever used in falconry?" asked Agnes.

"But very seldom," replied Mr. Trelawney, "and it is, perhaps, in consequence of the comparatively harmless habits of this bird that it is said to be best for a priest to use in hawking, by Dame Juliana Berners, a lady who wrote on falconry in the 15th century."

"Oh," said Mrs. Merton, "we have heard of Dame Juliana before; and, I assure you, we are quite learned in everything relating to hawking. We had just left Sir Edward Peregrine's when we came into Devonshire; and, if you know that worthy gentleman, you must be aware that no one can be staying long in his house without becoming fond of hawking."

"That being the case," said Mr. Trelawney, "you will probably not only like to look at a stuffed sparrow-hawk which I have in my collection, but to hear some anecdotes of it when it was alive. You are no doubt aware," continued he, addressing Mrs. Merton, "how very seldom birds of prey are tamed; and so you will easily comprehend the interest I feel in the sparrow-hawk, which I am going to show you, and which was tamed completely. This is my poor pet!" and, as he spoke, he unlocked the door of one of the presses, which contained only this bird. Agnes looked at it eagerly, and then seemed about to speak, but checked herself.

"What do you think of my sparrow-hawk?" asked Mr. Trelawney.

"Is it not very like the Goshawk?" said Agnes, timidly, looking at her mother.

"Very much indeed, in appearance," said the old gentleman, smiling. "I see your eye is tolerably accurate already. And yet the character of the two birds is as different as possible. The goshawk, as no doubt you know, is a coward; but the sparrow-hawk is bold and active, the terror of all mice and small birds, and a dangerous enemy occasionally even to birds superior to itself in size and strength."

"As a proof of its activity and courage," said Mrs. Merton, "it has been known to dash at a group of fowls, while they were being fed in a farm-yard, and to carry off a chicken, in spite of the shrieks and cries of the astonished dairy-maid, or whoever else might have been feeding the fowls, and the cackling and commotion it has occasioned among the cocks and hens."

"The courage of the sparrow-hawk," resumed Mr. Trelawney, "would render it an admirable bird for falconry, were it able to fly against the wind. Its flight, though rapid, cannot be continued long; and thus it is only useful in taking small birds, or birds that fly low. The sparrow-hawk seldom takes the trouble to build a nest for itself, but generally takes possession of an old and deserted one belonging to some other bird; usually that of a crow. The eggs are of a pale bluish tint, blotched and spotted with a dark reddish brown. The parent birds take great care of their young, and certainly supply them abundantly with food, for Mr. Selby tells us that he found a nest with five young sparrow-hawks, which also contained a dead lapwing, two blackbirds, a thrush, and two green linnets, all recently killed, and partly divested of their feathers; and all, no doubt, provided by the parent birds for the nourishment of their young."

"The sparrow-hawk," said Mrs. Merton, "is not only a common bird in England, but it is found in almost every part of the world. In Egypt it is considered as a sacred bird; and seamen, in the Mediterranean, call it the Corsair, from its boldness and voracity. Falconers considered sparrow-hawks very difficult birds to train for the purposes of falconry; as, from their natural fierceness, their education takes more time, and even when it is completed, if not kept in constant training, they are apt to relapse. As an instance of their eagerness in pursuit of prey, it is said that they are taken on the shores of the Mediterranean by no other artifice than that of causing some small birds, attached to a cord, to flutter about under suspended nets, into which the imprudent hawk precipitates itself impetuously."

"A friend of mine," said the old gentleman, "told me that he once saw a sparrow-hawk in pursuit of a robin, and just on the point of catching it, when the robin flew abruptly round the angle of a building, and the hawk, missing it, flew with such force against the wall, that it absolutely dashed out its brains! And now," continued he, "having had so much conversation about the sparrow-hawk in its wild state, I will, if you please, read to you my friend's anecdotes of a tame one, which are very interesting, as they show how completely the habits, even of a bird of prey, may be altered by education."

Thus speaking, he led the way into the library, where they had scarcely seated themselves, when the ape Ungka, who had watched his opportunity, sprang down from his hiding-place, and nestling close up to Agnes, crouched in his favourite posture at her feet, unseen by Mr. Trelawney, who was busily searching for his anecdotes of the tame sparrow-hawk. At last he found the paper; and began to read as follows:—

"'About three years since, a young sparrow-hawk was purchased and brought up by a gentleman in Suffolk. This was rather hazardous, as he, at the same time, had a large stock of fancy pigeons, which, in consequence of their rarity and value, he greatly prized. It seems, however, that kindness and care had softened the nature of the hawk, or the regularity with which he was fed had rendered the usual habits of his family unnecessary to his happiness; for, as he increased in age and size, his familiarity increased also, leading him to form an intimate acquaintance with a set of friends who have been seldom seen in such society. Whenever the pigeons came to feed, which they did oftentimes, from the hand of their master, the hawk used also to accompany them. At first the pigeons were shy, of course; but, by degrees, they overcame their fears, and ate as confidently as if the ancient enemies of their race had sent no representative to the banquet. It was curious to observe the playfulness of the hawk, and his perfect good-nature during the entertainment; for he received his morsel of meat without any of that ferocity with which birds of prey usually take their food; and merely uttered a cry of lamentation when his feeder disappeared. He would then attend the pigeons in their flight round and round the house and gardens, and perch with them on the chimney-top or roof of the mansion; and this voyage he never failed to make early in the morning, when the pigeons always took their exercise. At night he retired with them to the dove-cot; and though for some days he was the sole occupant of the place, the pigeons not having relished this intrusion at first, he was afterwards merely a guest there; for he never disturbed his hospitable friends, even when their young ones, unfledged and helpless as they were, offered a strong temptation to his appetite. He seemed unhappy at any separation from the pigeons, and invariably returned to the dove-house, after a few days' intentional confinement in another abode, during which imprisonment he would utter most melancholy cries for deliverance; but those were changed to cries of joy on the arrival of any person with whom he was familiar. All the household were on terms of acquaintance with him; and there never was a bird who seemed to have won such general admiration. He was as playful as a kitten, and, literally, as loving as a dove.

" 'But that his nature was not altogether altered, and that, notwithstanding his education, which, as Ovid says,

> " Softens the mind, and cruelty subdues,"

he was still a hawk in spirit, was proved by a curious circumstance. One of the smaller horned-owls had been accidentally shot in the wing while it was flying in the midst of a covey of partridges; and, having been picked up alive, it was kept in a hen-coop till it was nearly well, when it was turned into the farm-yard. No sooner, however, was he there than he was attacked by the hawk; and from that instant, whenever they came in contact, a series of furious combats took place. The defence of the owl was admirably conducted: he would throw himself upon his back, and await the attack of his enemy with patience and preparation; and, by dint of biting and scratching, would sometimes win a positive, as he often did a negative, victory: but, I suppose he was in time tired out, for as soon as his wing had gained strength, taking advantage of a favourable opportunity, the owl decamped, leaving the hawk in possession of his territory.

" 'The successful combatant had not, however, much time for exultation; for he was shortly after found drowned in a butt of water, from which he had once or twice been extricated before, having summoned a deliverer to his assistance by cries that told he was in distress. There was great lamentation when he died, throughout the family; and it was observed by more than one person that the portion of the dove-cot in which he was wont to pass the night was for some time unoccupied by the pigeons, with whom he had lived so peaceably, even during his wars with the owl.'

"The dead body of the poor hawk," continued Mr. Trelawney, "was sent to me, and I had it stuffed as you now see it. Indeed, I value it highly."

CHAPTER XI.

THE SHRIKES, OR BUTCHER-BIRDS: THE FLY-CATCHER, AND THE SKELETONS.

"I THINK I know this bird," said Mrs. Merton, as they approached another case of stuffed birds. "Is it not the Butcher-bird?"

"Oh, mamma!" cried Agnes, "what can such a pretty-looking bird as this have done to deserve so frightful a name?"

"It is the butcher-bird," said Mr. Trelawney; "and I think even my little friend here will allow that it is well named when she hears what I have to say of it. There are several kinds of butcher-birds, all of which are also called Shrikes; and all which, from their great courage and ferocity, appear very nearly allied to the birds of prey, and, in fact, they were classed in the order Accipitres by Linnæus. Modern naturalists, however, who consider the tarsus, as naturalists call it, and the shape of the claws, as essential characteristics of the order to which a bird belongs, have removed the butcher-birds from the hawks on account of their slender tarsi, and long flexible talons, though they have not quite settled where to put them; for Cuvier has classed them with the Passeres, or sparrow-like birds, while still later naturalists, according to the modern quinary system, consider them to belong to the Insessores, or perching birds. The perching birds are again subdivided, and in the first of the subdivisions, namely, in the tribe Dentirostres, which resemble the birds of prey in their beaks, are placed the butcher-birds."

Agnes listened with great attention, but she evidently did not understand all the words that Mr. Trelawney used; and as he happened to glance at her inquiring face, he smiled, and said, "that he was afraid he had used too many scientific terms. For instance," he observed, "you probably do not know what is meant by the word *tarsus*."

"Is it the leg?" asked Agnes, timidly.

"Oh!" said Mr. Trelawney, "I see you do know something about it, for the tarsus is what is generally called the leg of the bird, though it is, more properly speaking, an elongated ancle. This part in birds of prey is generally very short and thick, as they want it very strong to enable them to hold their prey in one claw while they tear it to pieces with their beaks; and, in this respect, the shrikes do not resemble birds of prey, though they have very strong and crooked bills, and a great deal of courage and cruelty in their dispositions."

"But you have not told Agnes why they are called butcher-birds," said Mrs. Merton.

"It is," resumed Mr. Trelawney, "because they hang the small birds and mice which they kill, on thorns or bushes before they tear them to pieces and devour them, just as a butcher hangs up a calf or a sheep when he has killed it, before he cuts it up: this, as I was about to tell her, is probably on account of their slender tarsi, so wonderfully are the habits of all creatures suited to their construction. These birds are also called shrikes, from the piercing cries they utter when flying, which they always do unequally and precipitately, as if pursued; and their Latin name, *Lànius*, signifies to cut or tear to pieces. The shrikes are gregarious; that is, they live together in families, like rooks; they build their nests in trees, and they take great care of their young. The great grey shrike, a specimen of which I have here stuffed, is the largest of the genus. It is rare in Britain, and is only found here between autumn and spring; but it is much more common in France, where it remains the whole year. It feeds on small birds, mice, frogs, lizards, and large insects; and after having killed its prey, it hangs it upon a sharp thorn, or in a forked branch, in a very butcher-like manner, so that it may more readily tear pieces of meat from it."

"Can these birds ever be tamed?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"I have heard of one," replied Mr. Trelawney, "which a gentleman, a friend of mine, had in his possession nearly twelve months, and which became so very tame, that it would readily take its food from its master's hands. When a bird or a mouse was given to it, it would force part of it through the wires of the cage, and then pull at it. It always left what it could not eat hanging up on the sides of the cage. Falconers on the Continent use this bird to enable them to take hawks. The shrike is fastened to the ground, and when it sees a hawk, it utters its shrill and piercing cry, and thus apprises the falconer of the hawk's approach. It is on this account that the great grey shrike has received its Latin specific name of *excùbitor*, which signifies the sentinel."

"But still I do not understand how this enables the falconers to catch the hawks," said Mrs. Merton.

"I will read you what a friend of mine says on the subject," returned Mr. Trelawney, "and then you will know as much of it as I do myself."

So saying, he went into the library, and brought back with him a roll of papers, from one of which he read as follows :—

"'The village of Falconswaard, in North Brabant, has been long famed for its falconers; it formerly sent out men well practised in this art to every country in Europe; and the few efficient falconers still remaining (as this diversion has been of late years almost wholly laid aside on the Continent as well as in this country) are natives of the village of Falconswaard. The hawks are generally caught during the months of October and November, when they are on their passage towards the southern parts of Europe. The falconer constructs a low turf hut in an open part of the country, with a small opening on one side; at about a hundred yards' distance from the hut a light-coloured pigeon is placed in a hole in the ground covered with turf, with a string attached to it, which reaches to the hut; another pigeon is placed in a similar situation on the opposite side at the same distance. At ten yards' distance from each pigeon a small bow-net is fixed on the ground, so arranged as to be pulled quickly over by means of a small iron wire made fast to the net, and reaching to the hut; the string by which the pigeon is held passes through a hole in a piece of wood driven into the ground in the centre of the bow-net. The falconer has also a decoy pigeon in a string at a short distance from the hut, and several tame pigeons at liberty on the outside, which, on sight of a hawk, immediately take shelter within. The butcher-bird *(Lànius excùbitor)* is fastened by a leather thong on a hillock of turf, a yard in height and a few yards distant from the hut; a small hole is made, and a piece of turf laid over it, for a place of retreat in case of danger.

"'The falconer, employing himself in some sedentary occupation, observes every motion of his little watch, and it is almost incredible at how great a distance he will point a falcon in the air. If it approaches, he shows symptoms of alarm, drawing in his feathers, and fixing his eyes in the same direction; on a nearer approach, he screams aloud; the falcon being then perhaps not less than three or four hundred yards distant: on its closer approach he retreats under the turf, and quite conceals himself. It is then the falconer draws out the pigeons to where the nets are fixed, which, fluttering round, generally tempt the hawk to make a swoop at one of them, which if he takes he is inevitably ensnared. While the falcon is near, the shrike continues in his hiding-place, hardly daring to show his head at the entrance of his retreat; but should the falcon be taken, or pass over without attacking the pigeons, he cautiously creeps out, yet almost afraid to trust himself on his hillock, looking on every side, and does not during some time recover from his alarm. He is greatly terrified at the sight of the goshawk, screaming and endeavouring to escape; as this hawk would even seize him in his hiding-place, should he catch sight of him, which the falcon would not. He does not show much alarm at the sight of the kite and different species of buzzards, unless they are very near to him; so that, by the motions of the butcher-bird, the falconer can tell almost with certainty the species of hawk which is approaching him. Were it not for the penetrating eye of this watchful bird, the falconer would sit many dreary hours to no purpose, as he would not know when to pull his pigeons out to lure the hawk.'"

"Is this grey shrike the one that is often found in the neighbourhood of London?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"No," replied Mr. Trelawney; "that bird is called the red-backed shrike; and it is only found in England in the summer. The male birds of this species have occasionally a kind of song, and the French naturalists assert that they sometimes imitate the voice of small birds in order to decoy them. They kill their prey and hang it up like the grey shrike; they also impale insects on thorns, and frequently leave them there uneaten. The wood-chat is another kind of shrike, which generally builds its nest on trees, preferring the oak. The nest is placed in the fork of a projecting branch, and is composed of sticks mixed with white moss from the trunk of the tree, and lined with fine grass and wool. It lays four or five bluish eggs, generally encircled at the larger end with a band of rust-coloured spots. This bird often builds close to houses and public roads. It is abundant in some parts of the Netherlands, but, like the red shrike, only remains in England during the summer. M. Vieillot, a French naturalist, attributes rather an extraordinary degree of refinement to this bird, as he tells us that it always makes choice of sweet-smelling plants to build part of its nest."

Agnes and her mamma both laughed at this; as such delicacy seemed very unsuitable to the habits of a bird like the shrike. In the meantime, Mr. Trelawney had opened another case.

"This," said he, "is called Geoffroy's Shrike, and it is a very curious little bird. It is distinguished from the other shrikes by its straight and slender bill, and its long waving crest of recurved feathers. Its colour is a bluish black, curiously marked with a brilliant white. I have now only one more bird of this family to show you, and it is called the Pied Fly-catcher. The fly-catchers are very nearly allied to the shrikes, but are less powerful. They do not attack the smaller birds, but content themselves with flies and other insects; whence their name. The pied fly-catcher is rather a rare bird in England, and only stays with us during summer. It is most abundant near the Lakes in Westmoreland and Cumberland."

Agnes's attention was now attracted by some skeletons of birds, and she eagerly asked what they were.

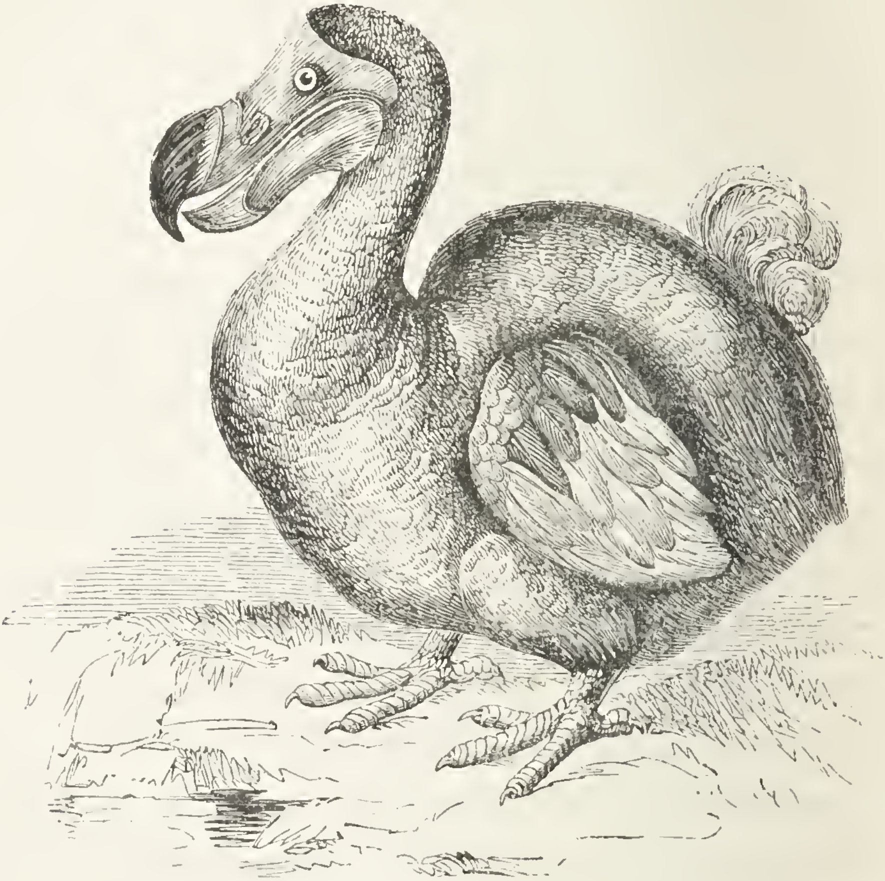
"They were sent to me by a friend," said Mr. Trelawney, "and were discovered in the church tower at Oswestry, in Shropshire, when it was found necessary to cut out a decayed portion of the pilaster of the frame of the clock. The pilaster did not accurately fit into the wall, so that there was room between for birds to find an entrance; and, indeed, it had been observed that the birds were constantly in the habit of resorting to it for building. When the decayed wood was cut out, a small chamber was laid open between the pilaster and the other frame-work, rather more than half a square foot in size, in which the workman discovered a great number of the skeletons of swallows and starlings. He took out fifty-seven: but as he did not remove the rubbish with any degree of care, or clear it quite out to the bottom, there were probably many more in the cavity. He did not find them separately in the chinks of the old wall, but all in the hollow place above described, between the wall and the frame of the clock, mixed up with a quantity of mortar-rubbish that had fallen into the cavity, and with loose bits of straw and feathers. The skeletons appeared to be those of different years; and among them were some dead birds with the feathers on in a tolerably perfect state. My friend happened to be confined to the house at the time by illness, and he did not become aware of the fact till some weeks afterwards; when only four of the specimens taken out could be found, all the rest having been lost. These four specimens which he sent to me are skeletons of swallows, and appear, as far as I am able to judge, to be those of full-grown birds. Indeed, I understand that all who saw the rest of the skeletons considered them to be those of old birds; and thus the old clock appears to have been a kind of cemetery for the patriarchs of the swallow family to retire to before they died."

CHAPTER XII.

THE DODO ;—AND CONCLUSION.

Mr. Trelawney now took down a picture which was hanging against the wall, and which he showed to his visitors, asking them if they knew what it was. Agnes thought it was a large turkey-cock; but Mrs. Merton asked if it was not a Dodo, a kind of bird now extinct.

"Yes," said Mr. Trelawney. "It is well known that some kinds of animals, which were once common, have become extinct; leaving traces of their existence, however, in the fossil skeletons and other remains which have been from time to time discovered. The period in which these animals lived is, generally speaking, so far removed from the present day, as to make their skeletons the only means we have of obtaining information respecting them. One animal, however, has become extinct almost within the memory of man, and this animal is the Dodo. This creature was a bird greatly resembling a turkey, but much larger, totally incapable of flying, and which, as it was



THE DODO.

well adapted for food, and so unwieldy as to be easily run down, evidently could not long continue to exist in any inhabited country. But I will read you some observations sent to me on the Dodo, by the friend who sent me the picture;" and so saying, the old gentleman took a paper from his desk and read as follows:—

" 'The Dodo was only found in those islands of the Indian Ocean which, on their first discovery by Europeans, were uninhabited or difficult of access to the nearest people. The group which is situated to the eastward of Madagascar, consisting of Bourbon, Mauritius, and Rodrigue, were almost the only islands of this description met with by the early circumnavigators of the Cape; and it is there that we find the last traces of this very remarkable bird, which disappeared, of course, from Bourbon and the Mauritius first, on account of their being more visited and finally colonised by the French; and lastly from Rodrigue, an island extremely difficult of access, and without any bay or safe anchorage for shipping.

" 'Of this island, we have an account in a work written by Leguat, who, with seven others, was left upon Rodrigue with a view to its colonization, in May 1691; and it appears that they must have been very much struck with the appearance of this singular bird, as Leguat has introduced figures of it into his frontispiece, his general chart of the island, and his plan of their little colony; in the latter, twelve, and in the former sixteen, individuals being distributed over their respective surfaces.

"'The island of Rodrigue, or Diego Ruys, although seen by several of the earlier voyagers, after the discovery of the route to India by the Cape, does not appear to have been visited anterior to the voyage of Leguat; from its unapproachable appearance, and the apparent continuity of the extensive madreporetic reef which everywhere surrounds it, and upon which the sea continually breaks, at a very considerable distance from the shore. The same causes still operate in repelling the tide of colonization; as at the time of our late conquest of the group to which it belongs, a single French family constituted the whole of its population. Leguat and his companions, then, may be presumed to have seen the island before it was inhabited, a circumstance which makes his narration doubly interesting, and shows not only the abundance of its animal productions, but the paradisiacal peace and amity which appeared to reign amongst them, and the little dread they seemed to possess at the presence of their destined destroyer. Of the dodo, the subject of this paper, he says:—

"'Of all the birds which inhabit this island, the most remarkable is that which has been called Solitaire (the solitary), because they are rarely seen in flocks, although there is abundance of them.

" 'The males have generally a greyish or brown plumage, the feet of the turkey-cock, as also the beak, but a little more hooked. They have hardly any tail, and their posterior, covered with feathers, is rounded like the croup of a horse. They stand higher than the turkey-cock, and have a straight neck, a little longer in proportion than it is in that bird when it raises its head. The eye is black and lively, and the head without any crest or tuft. They do not fly, their wings being too short to support the weight of their bodies; they only use them in beating their sides and in whirling round; when they wish to call one another, they make, with rapidity, twenty or thirty rounds in the same direction during the space of four or five minutes; the movement of their wings then makes a noise which approaches exceedingly that of a kestrel, and which is heard at more than two hundred paces distant. The bone of the false pinion is enlarged at its extremity, and forms, under the feathers, a little round mass like a musket bullet; this and their beak form the principal defence of this bird. It is extremely difficult to catch them in the woods; but as a man runs swifter than they, in the more open spots it is not very difficult to take them; sometimes they may even be approached very easily. From the month of March until September they are extremely fat, and of most excellent flavour, especially when young. The males may be found up to the weight of forty-five pounds, or even fifty pounds.

" 'The female is of admirable beauty. Some are nearly white, others of a brown colour. They have a kind of band, like the bandeaus of widows, above the beak, which is of a tan colour. One feather does not pass another over all their body, because they take great care to adjust and polish them with their beak. The feathers are rounded into a shell-like form, and, as they are very dense, produce a very agreeable effect. They walk with so much stateliness and grace combined, that it is impossible not to admire and feel compassion for them; so much so, that the appearance of one of these birds has often saved its life.

" 'Although these birds approach, at times, very familiarly when they are not chased, they are incapable of being tamed; as soon as caught, they drop tears, without making any noise, and refuse obstinately all kinds of nourishment, until at last they die. There is always found in their gizzard a brown stone, the size of a hen's egg; it is slightly tuberculated, flat on one side, and rounded on the other, very heavy and very hard. We imagined that this stone was born with them; because, however young they might be, they always had it and never more than one; and, besides this circumstance, the canal which passes from the crop to the gizzard, is by one-half too small to give passage to such a mass. We used them, in preference to any other stone, to sharpen our knives.

" 'When these birds set about building their nests, they choose a clear spot, and raise it a foot and a half off the ground, upon a heap of leaves of the palm-tree, which they collect together for the purpose. They only lay one egg, which is very much larger than that of a goose. The male and female sit by turns, and the egg does not hatch until after a period of seven weeks. During the whole period of incubation, or that they are rearing their young one, which is not capable of providing for itself until after several months, they will not suffer any bird of their own kind to approach within two hundred paces of their nest; and what is very singular is, that the male never chases away the females; only, when he perceives one, he makes, in whirling, his ordinary noise, to call his companion, who immediately comes and gives chase to the stranger, and which she does not quit until driven without their limits. The female does the same, and allows the males to be driven off by her mate. This is a circumstance that we so often witnessed, that I speak of it with certainty. These combats last sometimes for a long time, because the stranger only turns off, without going in a straight line from the nest; nevertheless, the others never quit unless they have chased him away.'*

"We have, in this last relation of Leguat, who resided in the midst of them for a considerable period, a detailed, though rude, description, and a natural history of the Dodo, probably the only one that was ever penned under such favourable circumstances. No doubt, this first colony, in so small an island, considerably reduced the number of the Dodos; but when they finally disappeared does not appear to have been anywhere recorded. From the nature and habits of the bird, it is clear that

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[*] *Voyage de François Leguat*, Gentilhomme, Bressau, 1708.

the duration of the species was wholly incompatible with the dominion of man: had it been capable of domestication, or had it possessed the swiftness of foot of the ostrich, or the aquatic habits of the penguin, to compensate its want of the power of flying, it might still have shared some of the possessions originally assigned to the race; or, even like the turkey-cock and goose, have administered to the wants of mankind, in every temperate region of the globe. Under existing circumstances, however, it appears to have been what may be truly termed a paradisiacal bird, and predestined to disappear at its proper time."

"This is very curious," said Mrs. Merton, "and it appears to me that the same circumstances which led to the extinction of the Dodo, are now tending towards that of the Kangaroo. The wild animals are continually sought after in the Australian settlements for food; and, as no attempt is made to tame them, or breed them in confinement, in time the race must become extinct. At present their numbers appear inexhaustible, but, if the present mode of hunting them be continued, they will gradually diminish; and, probably, in the course of two or three hundred years from the present time, some antiquarian naturalist will be collecting facts for writing a history of the extinct race of Kangaroos, in the same manner as the above facts have been collected, relating to the extinct race of the Dodo."

"Have no remains ever been found of the Dodo?" asked Agnes.

"The only remains in the world," returned Mr. Trelawney, "are a bill and foot in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and a foot in the British Museum, all of which I have seen."

"But is it quite certain that these remains belong to the Dodo?" asked Mrs. Merton.

"There appears very little doubt," returned Mr. Trelawney; "they exactly correspond with the drawing I have shown you, and which is copied from one taken from a living bird sent from the Mauritius to Holland, the Dutch having been the first colonists of that island. We also know, from the testimony of Ray and Willoughby, that a stuffed specimen of the entire bird existed in Tradescant's Museum at Lambeth. This Museum was afterwards removed to Oxford by Dr. Ashmole, and the stuffed Dodo is mentioned in a description of it published in 1700. However, in a Catalogue of the Museum published in 1755, it is stated that the numbers from 5 to 46, being decayed, had been ordered to be destroyed, and, unfortunately, No. 29 was the Dodo."

At this moment a servant entered the room with a letter for Mrs. Merton, which, as it was marked "immediate," had been sent after that lady by Mrs. Wilson; and Agnes saw her mother's countenance change as she opened and read it.

"No bad news, I hope?" said Mr. Trelawney.

"No other," returned Mrs. Merton, "than that I find I shall be obliged to return to town immediately."

"Oh that *is* bad news, mamma!" cried Agnes, "when we were all so happy and comfortable here; and we have not seen half Mr. Trelawney's museum, nor his menagerie. Oh, my dear mamma! are you really obliged to go?"

"I am, indeed," said Mrs. Merton, "and I hope, greatly as I know you will feel the disappointment, to see you bear it like a woman."

"A few disappointments in childhood," observed Mr. Trelawney, "have often a good effect in preparing our minds to meet the more serious evils of mature life; and thus, though I greatly regret your departure, I am partly reconciled to it, in the hope that the present disappointment may be of lasting service to my young friend. I hope, however, we shall meet again; and, in the meantime, I should be only too happy if there were anything that I could present to you, to retain a place for myself in your memory."

At this moment Ungka, who was tired of lying still, and who did not much like to see Mrs. Merton and Agnes going, uttered his peculiar cry, so as to attract his master's attention, and as much as to say, "Give me to them."

"Ah, Ungka," said the old gentleman, "are you there?" and then, turning to Mrs. Merton, he continued—"Will you let your little daughter accept this ape as a memorial of me? He seems to have taken quite a fancy to her; and he is an intelligent, faithful creature, and not at all vicious."

Agnes was inexpressibly delighted; she thanked the good old gentleman again and again; and her mamma having given her consent, Ungka was placed in the carriage that Mrs. Wilson had sent for them, and they bade Mr. Trelawney adieu, assuring him that they should never forget the pleasure they had experienced at his house.

The following day they returned to town, Ungka behaving extremely well during the whole journey; and, when they arrived at Bayswater, a little kennel was placed for him under the veranda, where he lived in summer, playing with Sandy, the cat, and both of them running races with Agnes round the garden, when she had finished her lessons. In winter he wore a little jacket, that Agnes had made for him, and generally sate in a corner in the library; where he behaved so well as seldom to disturb any one, so that neither Mrs. Merton nor Agnes had any reason, on his account, to repent having taken their journey.

THE END.

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

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