

MORE OF MY FEATHERED

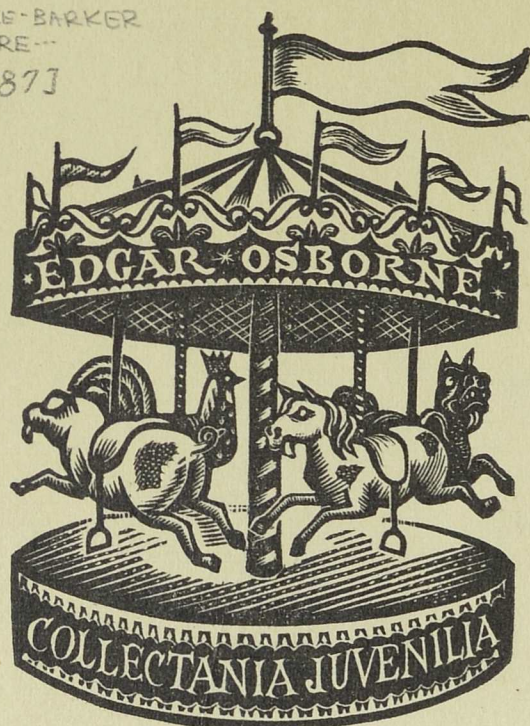
AND

FOURFOOTED

FRIENDS



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MORE OF
MY FEATHERED AND FOUR-FOOTED
FRIENDS

BY
MRS. SALE BARKER



*WITH FULL-PAGE PLATES BY J. B. ZWECKER, PRINTED IN COLOURS
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THE KINGFISHER.



N my last page I told my little friends about the gamekeeper's pet otter; now I am going to describe a pretty little bird.

The Kingfisher is an English bird; and I dare say those among you who live in the country, have often seen these birds sailing about through the air on a sunny day, or flitting over the surface of ponds, or of some river, on the look-out for small fish or water beetles. Sometimes you may see them glancing along with their bright green and gold wings, like a ray of light, under the shade of overhanging trees on the banks of some quiet stream. There are times, however, when they will remain quite still for hours, perched on a low branch or stone by the water side, watching for their prey. When the kingfisher catches a fish it beats it once or twice upon the ground to kill it; or sometimes it tosses the fish up into the air, catching it again in his beak, and then swallows it whole.

I was reading the other day an account of a kingfisher who was well punished for his greediness. He had caught a fish, which is called a bull-head or miller's-thumb, a large-headed fish, and when he tried to swallow it the head stuck in his throat; he could neither get it down nor up again, and so was choked. The kingfisher was found dead with

the fish, which was about as big as himself, sticking in that way in his throat. He must have been a very greedy bird; don't you think so?

The kingfisher is very pretty; its plumage is tinted with bright blue, green, and orange; but it has a harsh and ugly voice. It makes a nest in some hole near the water; and, as you see in the picture, when the mamma kingfisher has caught a fish, she calls her little ones to her from their nest in the hole, perches on a branch just above them, and feeds them with it.

Sometimes these funny, pretty little birds lay up a sort of storehouse of the fish they have caught. I was reading the other day of one that used to take all the fish too big for him to swallow at once, to his storehouse to keep. The place that this little miser kept his hoard in, was a crevice formed by the root of a tree, growing close to the water's edge. Sometimes he would have five or six fish hidden in this place, which was discovered by a human being, and one or two of the larger fish, evidently just caught, were carried off to be cooked and eaten. I wonder what the little miser thought when he got back to his storehouse? It was an unkind trick to serve him, but I think he deserved it.

Kingfishers are by no means timid birds, and take no pains to conceal their nests, even before their eggs are hatched: and when the baby birds make their appearance, they are so noisy, clamouring for food, with loud, angry

voices, that their home is very easily discovered. These birds often make journeys to the seaside in order to pick up young crabs, or shrimps, or sand hoppers, in fact they seem to be little creatures who think a great deal about eating.

I have heard that kingfishers are very fond of music, that is, if it is slow and solemn. I read that once upon a time there was an organ in a house, placed in a room looking towards a stream, where the kingfishers were in the habit of going, and it was observed, that, whenever the organ was played the kingfishers would directly make their appearance at the bottom of the garden, and remain, listening, as if quite delighted with the music. I told this story to a friend of mine, and as she was very fond of making pets of all kinds of birds, she determined to try and tame a kingfisher, and, do you know, she was successful, and this is how she did it.

She had no difficulty in finding a kingfisher's nest, and she boldly walked up to the hole in the bank, from whence she heard a great deal of chattering and quarrelling going on, and, thrusting in her hand, she took out a young baby kingfisher. She had some fish ready for him, and soon silenced all complaining by popping it into his little—or great, rather—wide-open beak. She took him home and put him in a basket with wool; he was quite fledged, and almost old enough to find food for himself, I must tell you—and she made her little brother go out fishing every day and bring home a good and fresh supply of food for her

little pet, and then, remembering this story of the kingfisher's love for slow music, she used to sit down to the piano and play away the most solemn airs she could think of.

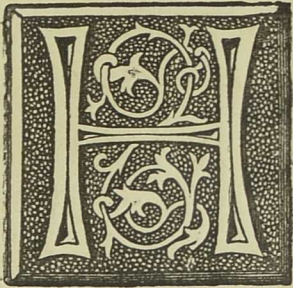
Master Kingfisher seemed quite to appreciate her attentions, took his food greedily from her hand, and would perch on the edge of his basket, with his head on one side, listening most intently to the mournful airs played for his particular satisfaction.

"I have tamed him!" exclaimed my friend with delight;
"Well," said her brother, "wait a bit and see."

She did wait a bit, and then one morning she got a wicker cage to put the little bird in, but she found that he moped and refused his fish that day, so the next she let him out to hop about, and let the door of the cage remain open so that he might perch and listen to the sad strains of music. The morning after that her kingfisher was gone: the window was opened for a moment, while his cage door was unfastened, and out flew Master Kingfisher, and never, never was he caught again. But my friend declared, that when she played soft and solemn airs upon the piano, a little kingfisher would fly to a branch of a tree near the window, and, with his little head on one side, would listen to her music, as her little pet bird had been in the habit of doing; therefore she declared it must be he.

For myself, I think it possible; but people very often have powerful imaginations upon such subjects.

BEARS.



HERE we have a picture, you see, of a large black bear and a little black bear, mother and daughter, I dare say. What are they about? They have actually climbed up a tree to find a beehive ; for in North America, where there are great numbers of black bears, the wild bees have no straw hives made for them, but just have to make them for themselves up in the branches of the trees in the forest. When the poor bees have laid up a fine store of honey for themselves, it often happens that the black bears find it out, climb up the tree, and as we see in the picture, fall to, and very soon eat up all the honey. What thieves they are ! Look at Mrs. Bear, how greedily she is devouring the delicious sweet honey, and see how the poor bees are swarming out of the hive, glad enough to escape with their lives. It is of no use that they try to sting the bear, and so revenge themselves upon her, for her coat is too shaggy, and her hide too thick, to be at all hurt by the stings of the angry bees. And there is naughty Miss Bear just following her mother's bad example, crouching with her mouth wide open under the hive, licking up the honey which drops from it and from the greedy old mother's mouth.

Black bears are found chiefly in North America, where

there are also what are called grizzly bears. But black bears are not only found in America; they are also found in Asia. When I was in India, some years ago, I often used to see small black bears about on the rocks near Bellary—the station where I was living; and I remember once looking on, from a distance, at a terrible fight between a black bear and a cheetah, or hunting leopard.

These two savage creatures, both, I imagine, very hungry, and seeking prey, were wandering about the great arid rocks which rise, pile upon pile, suddenly out of the plains in that part of India. As ill luck would have it, as far as they were concerned at least, the cheetah and black bear quite unexpectedly met each other face to face. Then began the most fearful growling and howling, and in a moment the fight had commenced. It was indeed horrible! but what surprised me was that the black bear got the best of it. The cheetah flew savagely, with open mouth and outstretched claws, at his antagonist, but the black bear stood, with arms extended, ready to squeeze his enemy in his deadly embrace. At last they both rolled over the rock together, and were dashed to pieces; but people who were better judges of the matter than I was, and who watched the battle with me, said that the black bear certainly had the best of it.

I can tell you another story of one of the black Indian bears. One day, when I was living in Bellary—which I don't think I told you was a station in the Madras Presi-



dency, about five hundred miles from the town of Madras—I was sitting in the verandah with my little girl, who was then about two years old; she was playing with her box of bricks, and I was reading. We were both very much taken up with our occupations, and we were equally surprised on looking up to see standing in the compound, under the great portico at the foot of the steps leading from the verandah, two natives, with very little clothing and no turbans, leading two black bears by ropes attached to rings in their noses.

I clapped my hands, whereupon two of my servants appeared; people clap their hands in India to save the trouble of ringing a bell.

“What *do* those men want?” I asked, while my little child crept close up to me, a good deal alarmed at the sight of the bears.

The men were now salaaming away as hard as they could, their noses nearly touching the ground each time. And the poor bears were alternately standing on their heads and on their feet, in order to show their respect, I suppose, as well as activity.

My butler grinned, and showed all his white teeth, as he said: “Dese plenty good people, Missis; just coming to show Missis and Missy Baba plenty clever tricks, dese bears do.”

“Oh,” I said, “they want to show off their performing bears!” Then I asked baby if she would be frightened; but, as she had climbed up into my lap by this time—a

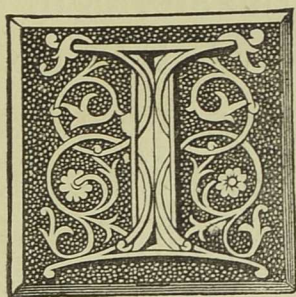
haven of refuge, in her eyes, from every danger—she smiled and said “No.” So I told the butler to let the men know we would see the bears do their tricks.

I can hardly tell you all the clever things the bears did; they danced, they marched, keeping step like soldiers; they presented arms, and went through their drill in the most marvellous way, and appeared extremely docile and obedient.

At the end of the performance, the two men, with many profound salaams, announced their intention of engaging in a wrestling match, each with his own particular bear—(this the butler interpreted to me)—and accordingly a most desperate struggle took place between the bears and their masters. They hugged one another, and twisted and turned and tumbled about in the most curious, and, to me, alarming manner.

I noticed that one of the bears had much longer claws than the other; but he seemed to manage not to hurt his master, and all appeared to end happily, when a dispute began between the two men, and they began to wrestle with the bears again, but this time choosing a new adversary. The bears were now not wrestling with their own masters, and to my horror, I discovered that the one with the long claws was making use of them in earnest now. The poor man was bleeding terribly! I had to make the servants rush out with sticks, to beat him off. However, at last his own master succeeded in making him let go. But it was only just in time, for the poor native had been most cruelly hugged.

THE STORK.



WONDER if any of you little people are as fond of hearing about curious birds and animals as I used to be when I was a little girl. I remember that I was particularly fond of hearing stories about storks, and when I was about five years old I tried to compose a piece of poetry to a stork. It began—

Stork, stork, funny old stork,
What nice long legs to take a walk !

I thought that sounded like poetry, but you see I was only five years old. The reason I liked storks so much was because I had heard they were kind to their little baby-storks. Once, I know, I had a good cry when my mamma told me a story of two storks, who had built their nest on the top of a farmhouse. Unfortunately, the farmhouse caught fire, and the poor little children storks, being too young to fly, could not escape. The papa and mamma flew screaming round and round the burning house ; at last they dashed wildly into the midst of the flames and were burnt with their little ones. Although I cried at this story, it will be wiser of you not to do so. One may be too tender-hearted. Besides, the sad event happened long ago—many years before I was a little girl.

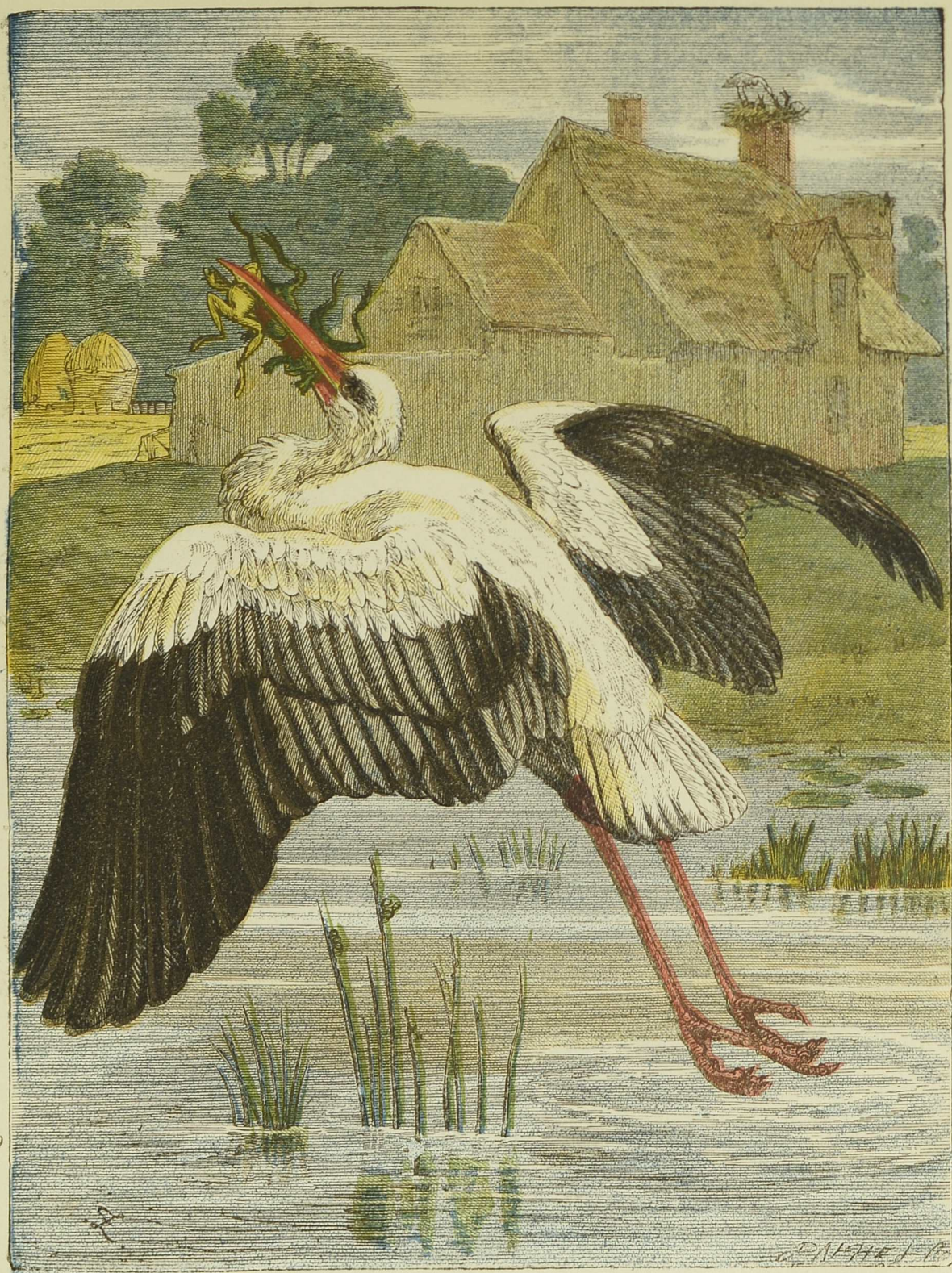
In most European countries storks are occasionally seen, but they are found principally in Holland. At the approach

of winter they fly off to Africa and return to cool climates in the spring. In Holland they are very kindly treated, for so many frogs live in the marshes there, that if the storks did not eat them, the people would hardly know what to do. The storks are very clever at catching the poor froggies; they snatch them up in their long bills, and go flying off, with their great wings spread and their long legs stretched out behind them, carrying away two or three frogs at once. They are so gentle that they sometimes play with children in Holland.

These birds regularly visit Holland, and are really looked upon there with a sort of reverence. People are so anxious that the storks should build on, or near their houses, that they often stick a half barrel in the branches of a tall tree, to make the storks take possession of it as a nest; and there is immense rejoicing in a Dutch family if a pair of these birds favour them with their presence.

Old Mr. Stork stands always on one leg at the edge of his large nest, keeping guard whilst his wife is sitting; and if he thinks danger is near he throws up his head and clatters his beak in a most terrible manner, making a noise like that of niggers playing the bones.

Not only are storks beloved in Holland, but they are equally well thought of in Germany. In the little city of Baden-Baden, near the river Rhine, the stork is thought much of, and as it is a very quiet town the storks think much of it, and are often to be seen there. The same birds, I



have read, often come back, year after year, to the same nest in that town.

Storks have whitish bodies, dark feathers in their wings, long, red legs, and a red bill, and a dark circle round their eyes. Storks' nests are generally made of coarse twigs, and are often built on the tops of chimneys. They walk in the tamest way about the streets and in the markets of the towns they frequent.

Now, I must tell you a story about a stork, which I think will amuse you, though I will not vouch for the truth of it.

Once upon a time an old woman lived in a country village. She was a very tidy and respectable old body, but her general knowledge was not great. She could sew and knit, and keep her cottage very tidy, but she could not read, and her knowledge of geography was extremely limited. For instance, if anyone said to her "I am going to Paris, to-morrow, Goody," or, "I'm going to Australia, to-morrow, Goody," she would have shaken her head, and said it was "a fine thing, a rare fine thing to travel," without having the least idea which was the farthest off, and would probably ask you to give her best love to her nephew, Jack, if you happened to meet him, he being just landed in New York.

Well, I must tell you that old Goody Martin was very fond of animals and birds; she was an old maid, and had, therefore, had no little children of her own to love, but she dearly loved her nephews and nieces, and particularly her nephew, Jack. Now, Jack knew of his aunt's love for birds,

and so forth, and, as he was a sailor, he had opportunities of gratifying her, and one day he assured her that he would bring her home a pretty bird from abroad. Well, Jack forgot his promise more than once, and when he was going abroad next time his old aunt begged of him to bring her home a foreign bird, meaning a parrot, of course.

"But," said Jack, "I ain't going to the Indies, Aunt, I'm only a-going to Rotterdam, and shall be home in a few weeks, and in Holland, you know, they hasn't only one kind of foreign bird, and I guess as you wouldn't care for that."

"Oh, yes, Jack, I should dearly!" cried old Goody. "So do'ee be sure and bring me home one of them."

Jack agreed; and in a few weeks, as he promised, he returned from his travels. Old Goody had been looking out for him most anxiously, and had told all her friends and acquaintances of the "beautiful foreign bird" her "nephew, Jack, was going to bring her, surely."

One evening, in autumn, Goody was sitting over the fire with one favourite gossip, both enjoying their cup of tea, when a knock came to the cottage door, and in came Jack, carrying an enormous basket.

"Oh! there be my foreign bird!" cried Goody, in delight, expecting a parrot to appear when Jack undid the basket.

You may be sure she was not a little surprised and alarmed when out stepped a young stork. Although she did not expect this strange pet, the story says that Goody and her stork got on very well together.

BEAVERS AT WORK.



F you look at the picture you will see three beavers; I dare say they are papa, mamma, and little son. They are wonderfully clever animals; and there is a great deal to be told about them, they have such curious, cunning ways.

Beavers are found chiefly in North America, but they are also seen in the South of France and in the islands of the Rhone, and they are plentiful in the North of Europe. But, in the latter countries, they do not seem to show such intelligence as in more desert places, for the fact of European countries being thickly inhabited prevents their collecting together, and working in large numbers, as they do in some parts of North America. It appears as though their cleverness is only fully developed when a great number act together, a proof, indeed, of the truth of the saying, that "union is strength."

Beavers are about three-and-a-half feet long, including the funny, flat, paddle-shaped tail, which is a foot in length. The long, shining hair that covers the back is chestnut coloured, while the fine, soft wool, which lies next the skin, is greyish brown. The tail is covered with scales, and the beaver uses it as a rudder to direct his course when swimming; his hind feet are webbed, and the toes of his fore

feet are separated like fingers, with which he takes up food to put into his mouth. The beaver appears to be the connecting link between quadrupeds and fishes, just as the bat does between quadrupeds and birds.

They build themselves most wonderful huts to live in, and make a great number close together, just like a town. These are built on the banks of rivers or lakes, for beavers swim much more easily than they walk, and always prefer moving about in the water. They form into large bodies in order to work together; they generally meet in the middle of summer, their number often amounting to two or three hundred. When they build on the bank of a running stream or river, they are in the habit of making a sort of wall (a dam it is called) across the stream for the purpose of keeping up the water to the height they wish. These dams are made of the branches of trees, stones and mud. They are sometimes two or three hundred yards in length, and are so cleverly constructed that they seem more like the work of a good engineer than of poor little dumb beasts.

If they find a large tree on the bank where they are beginning their dam, and they think it can be made to fall into the water, they begin by cutting it down, to form the most important part of their work. This tree will often be thicker than a man's body. Now, how do you little people suppose that these animals can cut a great tree down? Why, by gnawing at the foot of the tree with their four cutting teeth, as you see Mr. Beaver doing in the picture.



They manage this cutting work of theirs very quickly, and not only very quickly, but very cleverly, for they always make the tree fall across the river. They work all together and all seem to understand what they are to do; some are employed in gnawing the foot of the tree, others in cutting off the branches after it has fallen; others, again, go to a little distance, often across the stream, and cut down smaller trees, these they cut to a certain length, so as to make stakes of them, and then drag them to the edge of the water, and then swim with them to the place where the building is going on. These stakes they manage to sink and interweave the branches with the larger stakes. It is hardly to be believed, is it, that these little creatures can have sense and patience to overcome all the difficulties they must encounter? Fancy that one little beaver must hold up a stake in his mouth by the thick end while another little fellow has to dive to the bottom of the water and dig a hole with his paws for the thin end of the stake to be fixed in, while other little workmen swim to shore and bring earth in their mouths and forepaws; this they pat with their feet, and beat firm with their funny fish-like tails, and build a regular strong, solid wall. If by any chance this dam gets broken, then these clever little animals know at once how to repair it.

Their huts are built very much in the same manner as the dams, on piles near the water. They make two openings, one to the water and the other to the land. These houses

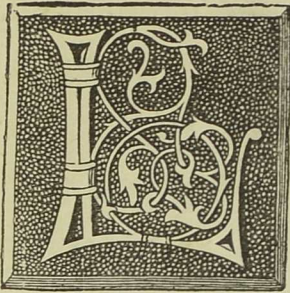
are generally round, some two or three stories high, and twenty or even thirty feet round; the walls are often two feet thick. You see large families often live in one house, and as I dare say little young beavers are inclined to have a romp sometimes, the old ones take care that their houses are too strongly built to be romped down. Besides, they take care that neither rain nor wind shall hurt them, for they build their houses so strongly that they resist both. The houses are neatly plastered with a sort of mortar which they make, and put on with their tails, which answer very well as trowels.

They peel off the bark from the wood they use in building and lay it up in store for winter food. Their chief food in summer, and, indeed, whenever they can get it, is fish.

I have heard but of one tame beaver, and that, although very gentle, did not seem happy in captivity. He was tame, but not loving, like a dog. He used to beg to be fed from his master's table, uttering little plaintive cries, and holding out his little paw when a piece of cake or bread or fruit were given to him. He used to run off with it, and hide it, to eat at his leisure. This little beaver would never touch meat, whether raw or roasted. He was very mischievous, and gnawed everything he could find, such as stuff, or wood; indeed he did much damage to the furniture.

I think I have told you as much about beavers as you would care to hear, my little friends; but when you get older, I dare say you will read more about them in larger books.

DEER.



LOOK at that fine stag in the picture, keeping guard while the does and fawns are feeding! How watchful he looks, with his head erect; and how grandly his antlers spread out, as we see them against the soft twilight sky! Deer in their wild state are timid creatures; at least, they are very much afraid of human beings; and it is difficult to approach them. Shooting the wild deer in the Highlands of Scotland is considered excellent sport: it is called deer-stalking. Large herds are to be found there among the mountains, but the greatest caution and skill are needed to get near enough to have a shot at them without being observed. Of course, the deer we see in parks are comparatively tame: they are generally fallow deer; while those of the Highlands are a larger and stronger species, called red deer.

I dare say many of you little people who read this have been to Richmond Park, and seen the herds of graceful fallow deer there. If you go up very gently to them, perhaps they will come and eat bread out of your hand. At least, I remember when I was a little girl, and passed a summer at Richmond, I succeeded once in making two young fawns come and share my biscuit with me. Shall I tell you how it happened?

One morning I had not learnt my lessons as well as usual; perhaps I had been watching the butterflies from the window flitting about in the sunshine, instead of looking at my book; at any rate, Miss Dobson, my governess, thought it necessary to punish me. Now, I was too big to be put into the corner, being nine years old; and the mode of punishment she always adopted was to avoid speaking to me for an hour or so, and at the same time to put on an expression of face at once severe and sorrowful.

After school hours we went out for our walk in the park as usual; and, as I was an affectionate and very talkative child, you may suppose that Miss Dobson's gloomy face and freezing silence made me very miserable. If I ventured upon a remark, the answer never extended beyond "Yes" or "No": sometimes not even that. We had two great dogs, which generally went out with us on our walk; but when I was under punishment, even their companionship was not allowed.

At last Miss Dobson seated herself under a great oak, and began to read a book she had brought out with her. Then I wandered a little way off, picking the pretty wild flowers that grew amongst the fern. The birds were singing in the sunshine, the bees were humming, everything with life seemed to enjoy that life but me. Some deer were lying under the shadow of the trees not far away; and I observed that two pretty little fawns, standing nearer to me than the rest, were watching me. I had some biscuit in my



pocket, intended for the dogs; and, taking a piece in my hand, I walked up very softly to the little creatures. They looked at me, as I approached, with a frightened glance from their great dark eyes; but I fancy there must have been a sad and subdued expression in my childish face which took away from my appearance what might have terrified them, and on consideration they decided to remain.

Holding out the biscuit, I dropped it near them; then up jumped Mrs. Doe, and came forward to see what it was I offered to her children. I threw her a piece also, which she took and munched gladly, and the little ones followed her example. I cannot describe to you what a comfort it was to me in my trouble to find that these pretty creatures were not afraid of me, and did not shun me. I no longer felt solitary; no longer without friends or companions. Presently they took the biscuit from my fingers, and when I had no more to give them, they still thrust their soft noses into my little hand, and let me stroke them.

But my pleasure did not last long. A fine stag, the leader of the herd, who was lying in the midst of them, and who, I suppose, had been half asleep, seemed suddenly to become conscious of my presence, and took alarm. Jumping up, he bounded away, followed by the rest of the herd, and my two little friends went after the others.

Looking at them as they fled away from me, I felt more forlorn and solitary than ever, and tears came into my eyes. Presently Miss Dobson came up to me; she had been

watching me from a distance, and now, finding that I was crying, her manner changed, and she was very kind. In fact, my punishment was over for the time, and I think she began to find that it was a kind of punishment which I felt more than she intended.

The red deer is now very uncommon in England, though that is the kind chiefly found in Scotland, and is what is hunted by the deer-stalker. The stags are magnificent creatures, with a perfect forest of horns upon their heads.

Formerly, any person who poached venison—that is, killed deer—belonging to another person was sentenced to death.

Stags are most formidable creatures when angry; they attack people with their fore feet, with as much force as with their horns; and the pointed hoofs of the animal are almost as dangerous. I read the other day of a gentleman who had been feeding a stag with pieces of grass, and was stroking his neck and shoulders, which caressing he seemed rather to approve of, when suddenly the stag reared up, and struck two blows with his fore-feet so quickly that, although the gentleman sprang back, the second stroke caught him on the finger, and hurt it so much that he could not use it for days.

Stags are wonderfully fleet, as we all know, I think; and they are capable of undergoing immense fatigue, and keeping it up for a long time. An instance has been known of a stag swimming for ten miles.

WOODPECKERS.



HERE we have a picture of woodpeckers. See how they cling to the bark of the tree with their claws, and how eager the two little ones seem for the prize their mother has just captured. The woodpecker is a bird of very singular habits. It lives upon the insects which exist in the bark of trees, and is remarkably adapted by nature for obtaining this kind of food. Its bill is long and sharp and powerful; and with its hooked claws it clings to the tree while it sways its body to and fro, to give force to the strokes of its bill. The object of these strokes is to shake the insects out of the tree, and they are given with wonderful force and in rapid succession. Then the bird thrusts its long tongue into the crevices, and the tongue being barbed at the end and covered with a sort of gum, it secures a vast number of insects as well as their eggs.

In the quiet of the woods the sound of the woodpecker tapping may be heard at a great distance. I remember once, when I was a little girl, being very much frightened by the noise: I will tell you how it happened.

The house where I lived in the country not only had a large garden, but beyond that was a little wood, which we called the shrubbery. This wood had a broad walk winding

through it, with seats placed here and there. One beautiful summer morning I and my brother, who was some years older than I was, were sitting together upon one of these seats under the shade of the trees. He was on his way to go out fishing, and was only stopping to do something to his fishing tackle. Wanting a pair of scissors, he sent me into the house to fetch them, ordering me about in the way in which big boys are apt to order their little brothers and sisters.

I soon returned with the scissors, but no longer found my brother where I had left him. The truth is he had gone off on his fishing expedition without waiting for my return. However, I looked about for him, and presently I heard a sound like somebody hitting a tree with a stick. "Ah, ah, so you are hiding, are you, Master Maurice?" thought I; and I looked behind different trees, one after another, thinking every moment to discover him. Then I began to fancy that the sound, although so clear and distinct, was some distance off; so I wandered on, still following it, and looking about as I went. Now and then the tapping ceased, but always went on again after a minute.

At last I began to be frightened, and called out:—"Maurice, dear Maurice, where are you? You are frightening me." The tapping ceased from that moment, but my alarm did not. That such a noise should have been made without anybody to make it seemed to me very like something supernatural. I began to cry, and at the same time



set off running towards home. I dared not look behind me as I ran, and when I reached the house was at first too frightened and excited even to explain what was the matter. I must tell you that I was only seven years old at that time.

I remember the old gardener said, when he heard the story, that he suspected that it was only a woodpecker tapping; but I refused to believe that a bird could make so loud a noise. It was not till long afterwards, when I happened to both hear and see one, that I became convinced the old gardener was right.

The woodpecker is a handsome bird, about the size of a pigeon, of a greenish colour, with black and white marks upon the wings, and a crimson stain upon the head. It is heard much oftener than seen, for, being very timid, it is ingenious in hiding itself. It does not build a nest like other birds, but seeks for a decayed place in the trunk of some tree, where it scoops out a hole. There Mr. and Mrs. Woodpecker establish their little home: there the eggs are laid, and the young ones are reared.

There is another handsomer kind of woodpecker which is a native of North America, and which is called the ivory-billed woodpecker. This bird is armed with a tremendous beak, long and strong, and sharp, and as white as ivory. The bird uses this great powerful beak as a means of obtaining food, or as a valuable weapon to be used against his enemies.

The woodpecker is a shy bird and must be looked for in

woods, rather than in gardens, though if it thinks that there is a garden with nice trees in it and plenty of insects, *and no* noisy little people to be inquisitive and disturb it, this curious bird will sometimes make its nest there, feeling, perhaps, more secure than it would be in a wood where there might be all sorts of wild enemies about.

There is another bird of the same species which is very curious; it is the nuthatch. It is the same shy bird in its habits as the woodpecker, though it will sometimes become bold, and be seen in gardens where nuts are grown. This bird also feeds upon insects which it procures from under the bark; and most likely it chiefly relishes in the nut the little maggot which is so often found inside. In order to get at the inside of a nut the nuthatch fixes the nut firmly in a crevice of the bark of a tree and then by dint of tremendous hammering with its beak it breaks a hole in the shell.

I have heard some people say that the woodpecker does not make the tapping noise which one is accustomed to suppose is made by them; but that it is invariably the nuthatch which hammers so loudly. Their reason being that the woodpecker selects in every case a soft wood to peck a hole in; and, therefore, it would not be likely to make a loud noise. The nuthatch will tap away loudly at some hard nut and make such a noise that you would almost fancy that someone was striking a tree with a hammer. This curious little bird will sometimes cut a filbert right in two, as clean as if it had been cut by a knife.

HARES.



THE picture on the opposite page shows us a family of hares enjoying themselves in a field of cabbages. How pretty, and yet how queer-looking they are ! I think that one standing up in the middle, with his ears so straight up, must be Mr. Hare, while the others are Mrs. Hare and the children. They are eating away as fast as they can, while the good papa looks on, and listens with those long ears of his for the sound of any approaching footsteps. If he hear any noise of a kind which he considers alarming, he will give notice to his wife and little ones ; then they will all scurry off so fast that they will soon be miles away from the spot where they have been frightened.

A hare never walks or trots, because the hind legs are so much longer than the front ones ; but it goes along in a succession of bounds. Hares can take great leaps, too, in height as well as in distance : they have been known, when pursued, to jump over very high hedges, and even walls of moderate size. One curious quality in a hare is that it never becomes fat, however rich the pasture may be on which it feeds ; consequently it can go very long distances without fatigue.

Though rabbits are easily domesticated, it is very unusual

to see a really tame hare ; and you will be surprised to hear that the only one I ever met with was in a house in London. I went one day to call upon a gentleman—an artist—who was very fond of animals : indeed, among other things, he often painted animals. I found him in his studio, working away at his picture, with three dogs and a cat and her kittens all in the room with him. I sat for some time talking and admiring his picture, when presently I heard an odd sort of knocking or rubbing at the door.

“ I hear someone at the door,” said I, after the noise had been going on for some time, thinking my friend did not hear it.

“ Oh, that’s only stupid old Tommy ; he is such a bother ; he never seems able to settle anywhere now he’s so old.”

“ Who is he ? ” I asked, thinking he was speaking of some stupid old person.

“ Would you like to see him ? ” said the artist ; “ he is not particularly handsome now, and he is dreadfully impudent.”

Walking to the door, he opened it, and who should come hopping and leaping into the room but a gigantic hare. He hopped past me first, and then, turning round, came quite close, and stood up on his hind legs. He made one long ear stick forward and the other backward, looking more comical than I can tell you ; and he twisted his curious, sensitive, moveable nose round and round, while he stared at me with his immense prominent eyes till I thought they were going to drop out.



"That isn't manners, Tommy," said my friend; "it's very rude to stare so: lie down." Whereupon good, obedient Tommy crouched down, with his nose between his two front paws; laid his ears back flat on his neck, and did his best, I am sure, not to stare—but that he could not help, by reason of the peculiar nature of his eyes.

I caressed him, and found him as tame and gentle as a little dog. Indeed, my friend had had him from the time he was a very tiny creature.

I dare say you all, or most of you, if you have lived in the country, have had tame rabbits in hutches; but I wonder if any of you have ever had a tame rabbit running about the house like the hare that I have been telling you of. I know some children who have; and do you know that my own children very nearly had one; and I dare say you little people would like to know how it was they nearly had it, and yet did not; so I will tell you all about it.

We live in London, you must know; and one morning my housemaid came to me and said, "If you please, ma'am, my sister was so surprised this morning to find a large black and white rabbit sitting on her scullery window-sill."

"I do not wonder at her being surprised," said I. "Who can it belong to?"

I must tell you that my housemaid's sister lives as cook in a house in a street close to us; and the back of the house where she lives looks on to the back of the houses that our house faces. I suggested that the rabbit must have escaped

from one of those houses ; but it was supposed impossible, as rather a high wall ran between the gardens.

“ My sister don’t know what to do with it, ma’am,” said my housemaid. “ Her ladies is away, and she don’t want to keep it.”

“ She had better let the tradespeople know,” I said.

Some hours passed, and nobody appeared to own the rabbit ; and the cook said it was lying down in the kitchen by the side of the cat, as tame as possible.

Whereupon the children cried, “ Oh, mamma, *do* let us have it, and we can give it up if anyone claims it.” And so we did have it. The children and I made it a hutch out of a box. How hard we worked ! But when Master Bunny came, he refused to stay in the hutch. Directly we put him in, he tried to squeeze himself through the bars ; so we let him out, and he ran about the room just like a dog or cat. He eat out of our hands, and was a perfect darling of a rabbit ! Alas ! though, he only stayed with us one day ; for the next morning his little mistress—who did live in one of the houses nearly opposite to us—arrived, and asked for her rabbit ; and I cannot tell you what an affectionate meeting they had. I do not know which was the most delighted of the two. It appeared that the rabbit had managed to jump over the wall, and then had lost himself. His little mistress ran off with him, cuddled up in her arms, across the road, as happy as possible ; and my children were left feeling quite sad at the loss of the new pet.

GROUSE.



LOOK, there is a nice little family of grouse, consisting of papa, mamma, and four children, all taking a pleasant walk among the heath and fern. At the same time, the old birds are searching for the wild berries, the buds of the heath, and the seeds which form their principal food. Look how eager the young ones are to have their share of some nice berries, which Mamma Grouse has just found !

These birds are only met with on moors or wild heaths, and chiefly in mountainous countries ; indeed, Scotland is the country where they are now principally found, and people often go there on purpose for the grouse-shooting. I dare say some of my little readers already know that grouse-shooting begins on the 12th of August, a great day for sportsmen. From the way in which game is now preserved in England, partridge-shooting has come to be a tamer sport than it used to be. Many brace of partridges may sometimes be brought down during a short walk over cultivated fields ; and such sport seems less manly than taking long fatiguing walks over breezy moors, as sportsmen have to do in search of grouse.

The grouse is a very wild and shy bird ; and both skill and caution are required in approaching them ; they live in

flocks, called "packs," and form their nests, as partridges do, upon the ground. Their plumage is a rich brown, mottled with paler spots; the tail is black, with the exception of four of the feathers, which have red marks on them: over the eye, also, is a rough, bare red spot.

I once made the acquaintance of a tame grouse—one, at least, that had been domesticated. The gentleman it belonged to had picked it up out of its nest when a tiny thing on the moors in Scotland; and being a great bird-fancier, and having a collection, he had brought it in a cage to his house in Kent. When I saw Peter—that was the name given the grouse—he was quite tame, but very ill-tempered. You might take him up if you pleased, but he always pecked the hand that did so. Peter was supposed to live habitually in a wicker cage, but in truth he had pretty well the run of the house. More than once he had taken flight beyond the premises, but had returned for his food. One day, however, he was missed, and never came back. His fate may be surmised from the fact that about the same time a party of gentlemen in the neighbourhood, being out shooting—it was September—were surprised to find a grouse among the game they had killed.

Although I have never known but one tame grouse, I have made the acquaintance of more than one tame partridge and pheasant also. Indeed, I once had a tame partridge myself, and I will tell you how it came into my possession. One day in Spring I was walking across some fields with



my governess, and I suddenly came upon a partridge nest. It lay on the ground—a roughly arranged bundle of dried grass—and in it were nearly a dozen young partridges, only just hatched. “What are they?” I asked of my governess. “What funny, pretty little things!”

“Those are young partridges,” said she; “take care you don’t hurt them, or your papa would be very angry; we are on his property, I think.”

“Yes,” said I, “this field is papa’s. Of course, I won’t hurt them, but how I should like to take one home to pet. They are so young, I’m sure they would be easily tamed. May I carry one off, Miss Mayfield?”

“Very well,” replied Miss Mayfield, “but I believe,” she added, laughing, “that we are incurring all sorts of penalties by poaching in this way.”

“As papa would be the person to proceed against us, I don’t think we need be very much afraid,” I said, “and you know, Miss Mayfield, that both he and mamma like us to pet animals, and try and tame them.”

So I picked up my little baby partridge and carried it home. At first I kept it in an old dove’s cage and fed it with the same food that was given to young chickens. I often had it out of its cage, and at last it would follow me about anywhere. I gave it the name of “Speckles,” and the little fat bird would run up to me like a little dog when I called it. Sometimes I found Speckles’ affection rather overpowering, and it occasionally got me into trouble. For

instance, one day a lady, who wore a very palpable wig, called upon my mother. It was in the summer, and Speckles, who was running about on the lawn after me, followed me into the drawing-room, where I was called, through the open window by mamma. At first I did not notice Speckles, who came running in as a matter of course. I stood in front of my mother's visitor, who was very good-natured, and talked very kindly to me. But I was rather surprised to find that, as I watched her plain but amiable face, her forehead seemed to grow higher! I looked, and looked again! No, there could be no doubt about it, Miss Purket's hair was fast receding; bonnet and hair too retreated together, with sundry curious little jerks! The fact was that Speckles had, unheard and unseen, mounted on the back of her chair, and was closely examining the lady's bonnet to which it gave a little peck every now and then.

In a moment I suspected the true state of the case, and without saying anything, I stepped behind Miss Purket's chair, and made a grab at the offender. Alas! I but increased the mischief already done! I tried to catch Speckles, but he was too quick for me; as I stretched out my hands to seize him, the partridge gave a queer sort of little cry and flew on the top of Miss Purket's bonnet; in doing which he succeeded in dragging off the unlucky bonnet entirely, wig and all! I shall never forget the sight of Miss Purket's bald head, and face of dismay as she turned round. The scene was too terrible to dwell upon!

GOATS.



THIS, you see, is a picture of goats, enjoying a feast of nice fresh young leaves from that tree which hangs over the paling. How greedily the little kid there, standing on his hind legs, reaches up to eat, while the other little fellow stands with pricked-up ears and wide-open eyes, holding a sprig of some tree in his mouth. He has heard a noise, and is on the watch, fearful lest some enemy should come, and ready to spring away in a moment.

This picture just represents a family of common European goats. They are fleet, active creatures. In their wild state they delight in climbing rocks, and bounding about at the edge of precipices, as sure-footed as the chamois. Even our tame goats here at home are so fond of climbing that they always get on to some high place, even on to the tops of houses or outbuildings, when they have a chance.

You know, children, how tame and gentle these creatures can be made; for I am sure there is scarcely one of you but has ridden in a goat-chaise at some time of his or her life; yes, and has sat up in state, and held the reins, and driven the poor little willing goat too. But I trust that the little hands have been merciful the while, and that the poor goat's mouth has not been jerked and dragged till every tooth in

its head ached. And how about the whips? Goats' skins are not very sensitive, perhaps; but I am terribly afraid that some little children whip their goats till they must smart again. Now, if your consciences accuse you—and I address myself to any of my little readers—make up your minds never to be cruel to goats, or any other living creature, again.

When I was in India I had a number of goats: they were kept to give milk. I grew quite fond of them, and they knew me so well that they would come trotting after me, baaing at me for bread or sugar, whenever I walked out in the compound.

I have been told that at the Cape of Good Hope large flocks of these animals are kept, and they are very sagacious, requiring no goatherd to look after them. In this respect they are very different from sheep: they start off in an orderly flock, of their own accord, to find their food in the morning, and they return in the same orderly fashion in the evening.

Goats are almost the only animals that will face fire. On some occasions when stables have caught fire, they have been known to save the lives of horses by setting them a good example, and boldly leading the way through smoke and flame out of the burning stables.

I think you would like to hear of a very kind thing that one of my goats did in India. When you have heard the story, I am sure you will say that goats are very nice ani-



mals. You must know—indeed, I dare say you have heard—that when people travel in India, they take a great many things with them—such as tents, and furniture, and cooking utensils, and also a great many people—that is, black servants—and also a good many animals. Now, once, when I was travelling in India, I took several of my goats with me, as we knew we should want milk, and the cows in India are often delicate, and moving about does not agree with them; so we left the cows at home, and took the goats with us. We were only going on a little hunting expedition, and intended returning to Bellary—the station where we lived in India—in a week or two.

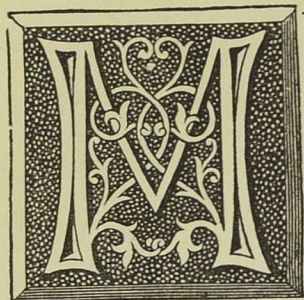
Well, one day, on our journey, we came upon a herd of antelopes—which, I dare say you know, is a kind of small deer. They are very beautiful little animals, most graceful, with lovely, pleading, large dark eyes, and the tiniest delicate little legs in the world. The herd was so startled at our appearance that the little creatures composing it dashed off, as fast as they could gallop, at a moment's notice. Indeed, one little mother antelope was in such a fright that she scampered off, leaving her young one behind her! This was very shocking and unnatural of her; but the poor thing must have quite lost her head, as people say, from terror, or I'm sure she never could have left the little creature. When the herd had galloped a great way off, I saw something moving on the ground, at a short distance from the road on which we were travelling, and just where

the antelopes had been. I was on horseback, and I rode up to it, and found it was a little young antelope. I got off my horse, and picked the poor little creature up, and carried it back to the road, and put it into one of the "bandies," as the carriages you use for travelling are called. I covered it up, and laid it on some hay, with which I made it a nice soft bed; and it lay there quietly for some time. But when we reached our resting-place for the night—where we found our tents already pitched—the difficulty arose of how should the poor little antelope be fed and brought up. I tried to give it some milk in a spoon, but the little creature would not take it.

I did not know what to do; but at that moment one of my goats popped its head into the tent, and the thought occurred to me that, perhaps, she would have pity upon the poor antelope. This goat had left her little kid at home only a couple of days before, so I fancied that she would take to and mother my little charge.

I called the goat, who was very tame, into the tent, and showed her the antelope; and I was rejoiced to see that she stooped down and sniffed at it, first, quite gently, and then licked it; and before many minutes had passed, she had quite adopted it as her own child. The antelope thrived well, and grew up into a fine, strong, healthy creature, very tame and loving, and most beautiful to look at. I can assure you I felt very grateful to the kind goat, for I should never have been able to rear my little pet without her help.

THE SHRIKE, OR BUTCHER BIRD.



Y little readers have, none of them perhaps, ever seen this bird: it is not very common in England, though found in most parts of the globe. This one we see in the picture is feeding its young with an insect, or beetle; but the shrike is a very voracious and cruel bird. It not only eats insects, reptiles, little mice and such things, but attacks the young unfledged nestlings of smaller birds than itself, and devours them. This is why it is called by the ugly name of Butcher Bird. Fancy the horrid thing devouring the tender, weak, and helpless young of its own species! Poor little baby-birds settled comfortably in their nests, waiting for the return of papa or mamma with food, are pounced upon by these cruel creatures, carried off, torn limb from limb, and used to feed a nestful of little butcher birds!

I never saw a shrike but once, and that was many years ago. I was driving with a relation of mine, the wife of a country clergyman, to visit a sick child, the daughter of one of the parishioners. As we drove up to the farmhouse, we met the child's father, who was a small farmer, coming out at the door with a gun in his hand. After inquiring about the child, we naturally asked what he was going to shoot, for it was not the shooting season. He

told us in reply that he had just seen a grey shrike up in an apple-tree in the orchard, and he was going to have a shot at it.

“For it be a rare bird, that it be,” added he; “this be the furst as I’ve seen since I wor a boy, and loike enough I mayn’t never see another, so I be a’going to shoot un.”

Although the bird is so cruel itself, I did not feel inclined to see it killed, so I wished the farmer good morning. But he did “shoot un,” I afterwards learnt; in fact, he butchered the butcher bird, and had it stuffed, too, and put into a glass case. In this condition I saw it. It was a handsome bird; the general colour of it was grey, but it had a white breast, and some strong black marks upon the head, wings, and tail. Its size was about that of a pigeon.

There is another kind of shrike, which is found in South America, and is called the Bush Shrike. This bird is rather larger, and more powerful than the European shrike, and has a handsome tuft of feathers on its head. It is found in forests and thick brushwood, where it passes its time in a constant search for insects, reptiles, and the young of other birds, which it devours, like the European shrike. It possesses a strong and rather hooked beak, and is a formidable enemy to any creature it may attack.

But the country in which the shrike lives on the best terms with man is New South Wales. There it is very common, and in appearance resembles the shrike of Europe.



It is called by the colonists the Piping Crow, on account of the varied strain of song it pours forth in early morning and towards evening. In this gift of song it seems to differ from the European bird ; or at least, if the latter possesses such a merit, it has not been observed. In New South Wales the shrike prefers the open localities to the wooded districts ; and in particular shows a preference for those parts which have been cleared by the settlers. In fact, in that country, the Piping Crow is looked upon as being a particularly trustful bird—trustful, I mean, of man. It will build its nest in the plantations or gardens of the colonists, who, particularly in the back settlements, do all they can to encourage it for the sake of its pleasant morning and evening song.

I may as well tell you here an anecdote about a shrike, not a tame shrike, far from it ; but you will see, how by means of a shrike I became possessed of a dear little bulfinch.

One day in early summer, when I was staying at Penstone Rectory, I was walking about in the kitchen garden helping my sister-in-law to gather some roses to put in the vase on the drawing-room table ; when my nephew Georgie came up to me and said, “ Look here, Aunt Lucy, here is a poor little young bulfinch which has been knocked out of its nest by a shrike ; you know, one of those butcher birds. I saw it : a biggish grey bird. I believe he killed the rest, and this one got knocked out of the nest.”

"Poor little thing!" I exclaimed, and taking it out of Georgie's hand, I saw that it was more frightened than hurt. We then went to the hedge where the bulfinch's nest was, and it was indeed a sad sight; there had evidently been two or three more little young birds, that had fallen a victim to the horrible shrike. I did not see him and I was glad of it. The horrid, cruel thing!

"I will try and rear this poor little bird," I said. "Bulfinches are hardy little creatures, and I have no doubt I shall be able to bring it up."

"I don't believe you will," said Georgie.

"Well, we will see," replied I; "I can but try."

When I told my sister-in-law my intention of bringing up my bulfinch fledgling, she laughed at me, and said she did not think it possible.

"Why the little creature has only half its feathers," said she.

However, I made a little nest for it in a box out of the canary-birds' breeding cage, and I fed it six or seven times a day with soft food, bread and chopped-up egg, and boiled rape seed. I used to feed it with a quill, and I had the pleasure of seeing my Bully thrive to perfection.

In a few weeks the little bird could fly round the room, and, as you may suppose, he was wonderfully tame and fond of me. He would perch on my shoulder or head, and peck at me to take notice of him. In fact he was one of the sweetest and dearest of all the many pets that I have had in my life. And I have had more than most people.

LIONS.



THE Lion is called the king of beasts, because he is the most courageous, the strongest, and the grandest-looking of all beasts. The picture represents a great lion and his family; you see he has just caught a poor little gazelle, of which herds are found in the plains of Africa. And that, as I dare say you know, is also the country of the lions.

Lions belong to what is called the cat tribe of animals, as do also tigers and leopards. The members of this tribe are remarkable for their powerful jaw, large fangs, the quickness and grace of their movements, and for the manner in which the sharp hooked claws of the feet are drawn back when not in use, and thrust forward when needed for action.

The colour of the lion is a tawny yellow, lighter on the under parts of the body, and darker above. The ears are almost black, and there is a tuft of black hair at the tip of the tail. When full-grown, the male lion has a thick, shaggy mane of long hair, which falls from the neck and shoulders, covering the throat and breast. He measures some four feet in height at the shoulder, and about eleven feet in length, including the tail. These measurements, however, only apply to the animals which have lived in freedom in their native land, with their limbs unshackled, and spirits unbroken.

The lioness is a smaller animal than her mate, the difference in size appearing greater than it really is, because she is without the shaggy mane, which makes the lion seem so grand and imposing. But though smaller, she is quite as terrible as the lion ; and if she has cubs to look after and protect, she is a fearful enemy to any who cross her path.

I think it would amuse you to hear an anecdote of a revengeful lioness which I lately read. The gentleman who relates the story was out with a party of hunters in Southern Africa, in search of elephants. They had not had much sport, and as they were going to encamp for a day, this gentleman thought he would ride off alone to a patch of jungle, or wood, not far away, which appeared likely to harbour wild beasts. He discovered no sign of elephants, but he found a new footprint made by a lion. Now, he had never shot a lion, and had a great ambition to do so ; accordingly, he followed the lion's track—which, of course, was very brave of him, but I must say, I think, very rash. After a little while, he came suddenly upon the savage beast, and luckily shot him dead at the first shot.

Having achieved this exploit, he was anxious to carry back the skin with him as a trophy ; and therefore set to work to skin the dead beast—which, it seems to me, must have been a most horrible business. This operation took a long time : and, when accomplished, our friend the hunter found great difficulty in persuading his horse to carry the skin. Horses have a great horror of lions, and the poor



animal probably did not feel sure that the skin alone could do him no harm.

At last all was satisfactorily arranged, and the hunter started to return to the encampment; but so much time had been lost that, before he had gone far, night began to close in, and he thought it best to bivouac where he was till daylight. There was a stream of water close by; and he had with him a blanket, a flask of brandy, and a box of matches. He took the precaution, also, before it was quite dark, to shoot a guinea-fowl for his supper. Then, collecting a quantity of dry wood, he piled it up in a circle, leaving space enough inside for himself, his horse, and the skin. Setting fire to the wood, he considered himself safe from any attack of wild beasts within this magic circle of fire, and made himself comfortable for the night. He cooked and ate his supper, and then, lying down by the side of his horse, soon began to doze.

Presently he was disturbed by a loud snort from his horse. He rose up, and kicking the burning wood together with the heel of his boot, made a brighter blaze, and distinctly saw the head of an old lioness looking through the surrounding bushes. She was gone in an instant, but you may be sure the hunter did not go to sleep again. He suspected at once that she was the widow of the lion he had killed, and that she had followed the scent of his skin to be revenged upon his murderer.

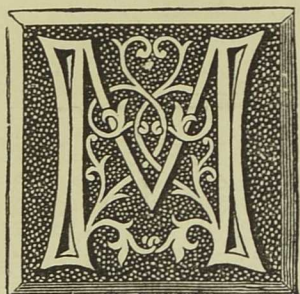
Our hunter made his fire burn as brightly as he could,

and remained upon the watch for the lioness. He thought he could see her again among the bushes, and, seizing a piece of burning wood, threw it at her; then he detected her slinking away into the darkness. He did not fire, for he saw too imperfectly to be sure of his aim. Not long afterwards he suddenly heard a terrific roar, and at the same moment some large body flew through the air close to him. Then followed a crash, and the hunter saw his poor horse knocked down, as if shot, beneath the weight of the lioness, who stood on him, tearing at him and growling. The hunter fired: the first shot wounded her, the second killed; but she had so far revenged the lion's death that she had killed the horse.

The hunter now had her skin as well as the lion's, which must have been a satisfaction to him. He set to work to skin her at once, and then buried both skins in the ground, that they might not be eaten or damaged by prowling animals, while he trudged back on foot to the encampment. In the afternoon he returned in a waggon, and fetched away both skins, which he kept as trophies.

My own experience of a lioness is of a very different sort to this, as my acquaintance with either lions or lionesses has been made only at the Zoological Gardens. But I remember a few years ago there was a dear old lioness there, who had five little cubs; and I can only say her kindness and tenderness to her young ones would have afforded a good example to many mothers.

SWANS.



Y little readers all know very well what a swan is like. Which of you has not seen the beautiful large bird sailing proudly on the water ; either on some river or lake, or perhaps on the Serpentine, or round a pond in Kensington Gardens ? How graceful the Swan is, with its long arched neck and pure white plumage ! How grand it looks, turning slowly from side to side, followed perhaps by one or two cygnets ! The mother swan casts sharp glances round her to see that no one is daring to interfere with her children. Then, too, how curiously she thrusts her long neck and head under the water, seeking for river weeds or some water insect.

In the picture there we see two swans and two growing-up cygnets. The papa and mamma swans, and one of the cygnets, are all engaged in obtaining food with their heads under water. Swans live upon water-plants, frogs, and insects ; and some swans get a great deal of bread besides. Certain little friends of mine, and indeed almost all little children living at the west end of London, take delight in carrying out pieces of bread for the swans in Kensington Gardens. These swans are nearly always gentle to children, and will come waddling out of the water, and eat from the children's hands. I must say, however, if swans could know

how awkward they look when waddling about on dry land, they would never—at least, if they care for admiration—show themselves out of their proper element. They are as awkward and ungainly in all their movements when on land, as they are graceful in the water. I know few prettier sights than that of a swan moving lazily along in summer on some calm lake or river, his reflection just broken now and then by the tiny wavelets that he makes in swimming.

Swans build their nests on the bank of some river or piece of water, or still more frequently on some small island. In the nest the mother swan lays six or seven greenish-white eggs, on which she sits patiently for two months before the young cygnets appear. She nurses them with most tender care, teaching them to swim, and sometimes carrying them on her back when the water is rough, or the current strong.

I told you just now how gentle tame swans generally are, but I must add that they are not always so. They are anything but gentle if you go near their nests, or their young ones. When I was a little girl, and was staying at a country house, where there was a large lake, I had a very disagreeable adventure with a swan.

I had been feeding some swans in the morning with bread which I had brought from breakfast. My governess had taken me down to the lake, and we had found the beautiful creatures perfectly tame. In the afternoon, after my early dinner, I took some bread from the table, thinking I would run down and feed them again. I ran off alone, for they



had been so gentle in the morning it did not occur to me that there was any danger. Reaching the edge of the water, I found that my friends whom I had fed before had gone off to another part of the lake ; but there was a solitary one not far away, sitting among some reeds upon the bank.

I approached it, and tried to make it come to me by calling, and by holding out the bread in my hand ; but it took not the slightest notice. Then I threw some bread to it, when I saw its feathers rising as if it was growing angry. But I wanted to make it either come to me or go into the water, that I might see it swim ; so at last I threw a piece of hard crust at it, calling out at the same time, " You stupid thing, get up." It did get up, and more quickly than I expected ; for it ran at me as fast as it could waddle, hissing angrily, flapping its wings, and with all its feathers raised up. I was a tall child of eight years old, and could easily have escaped by running, but unluckily I stumbled and fell just as I turned to run away. The swan instantly seized my dress in its bill, while it beat me cruelly with its wings. My screams soon brought a gardener to the spot, who drove the swan away ; but I was already dreadfully bruised. Then the gardener warned me solemnly never to go near a sitting swan again : I had disturbed the poor swan while she was sitting on her eggs.

The nest of the swan is made of a quantity of reeds, rushes, and grasses set upon the bank close to the water, in some quiet place. The bird will generally choose the shore

of some little island to build its nest in, if it can find one. There are several different kinds of swans. The one with which we are most familiar, and which I have been describing to you, is known as the Tame, or Mute Swan.

Then there is the Hooper, Elk Swan, or Whistling Swan, which has a very slender beak, black at the tip, and yellow at the base, and without the black tubercle. This bird is called the Hooper, because its cry resembles the word "hoop" called out in a loud tone. When flying, these birds take the form of a wedge, and cry loudly as they go.

There is another species of British Swan, called Bewick's Swan, which resembles the Hooper, but is smaller, and has a large patch of orange at the base of the beak. This is not a graceful bird, and, when sitting on the water, appears more like a goose than a swan. When flying, these birds go generally in a line.

There is also another species of swan, called the Polish, or Immutable, Swan. This is also sometimes found in England. It is called the Immutable from the fact that the young ones are white, like the older birds, as they do not pass through the grey state of plumage. This kind of swan has a decided orange colour covering the whole of the beak.

Then we have the Black Swan—I daresay you have often seen them, for they are quite common in England now. They were first found in Australia, and are wonderfully handsome birds, with scarlet bills; but their long necks have not got the graceful curve seen in the white swans.

