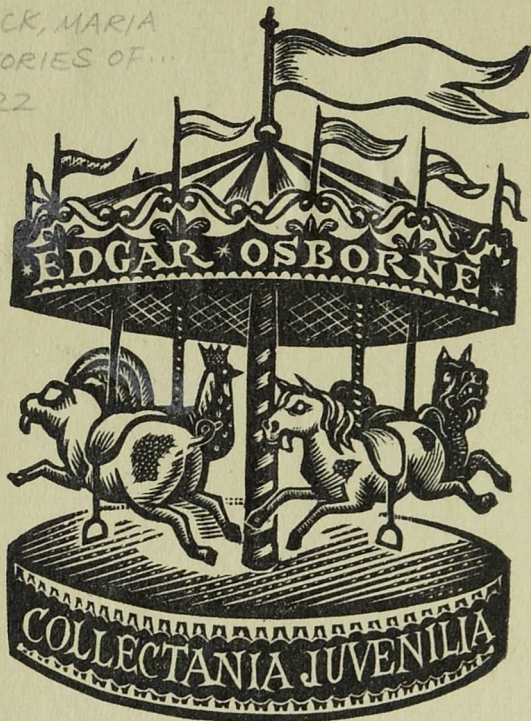




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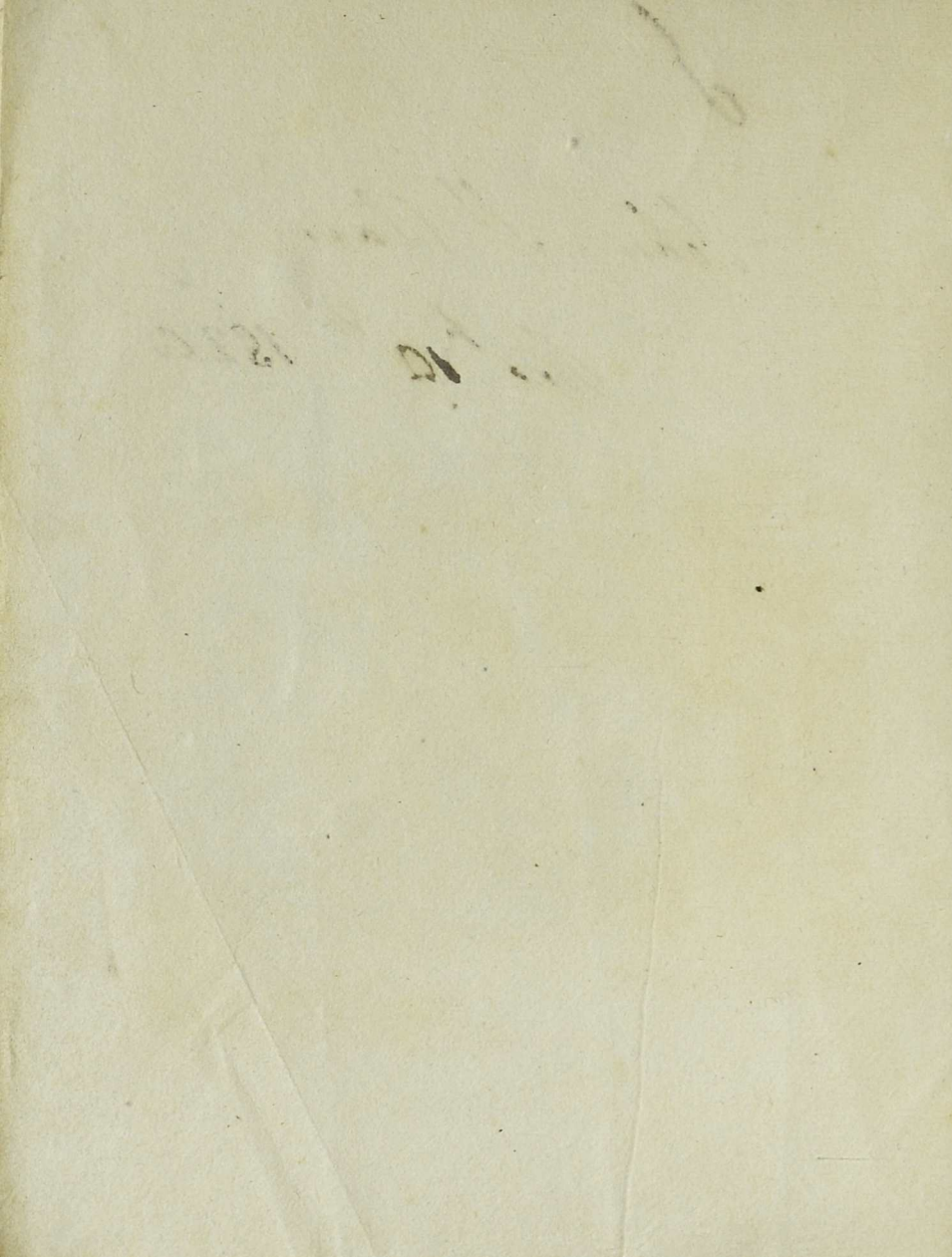
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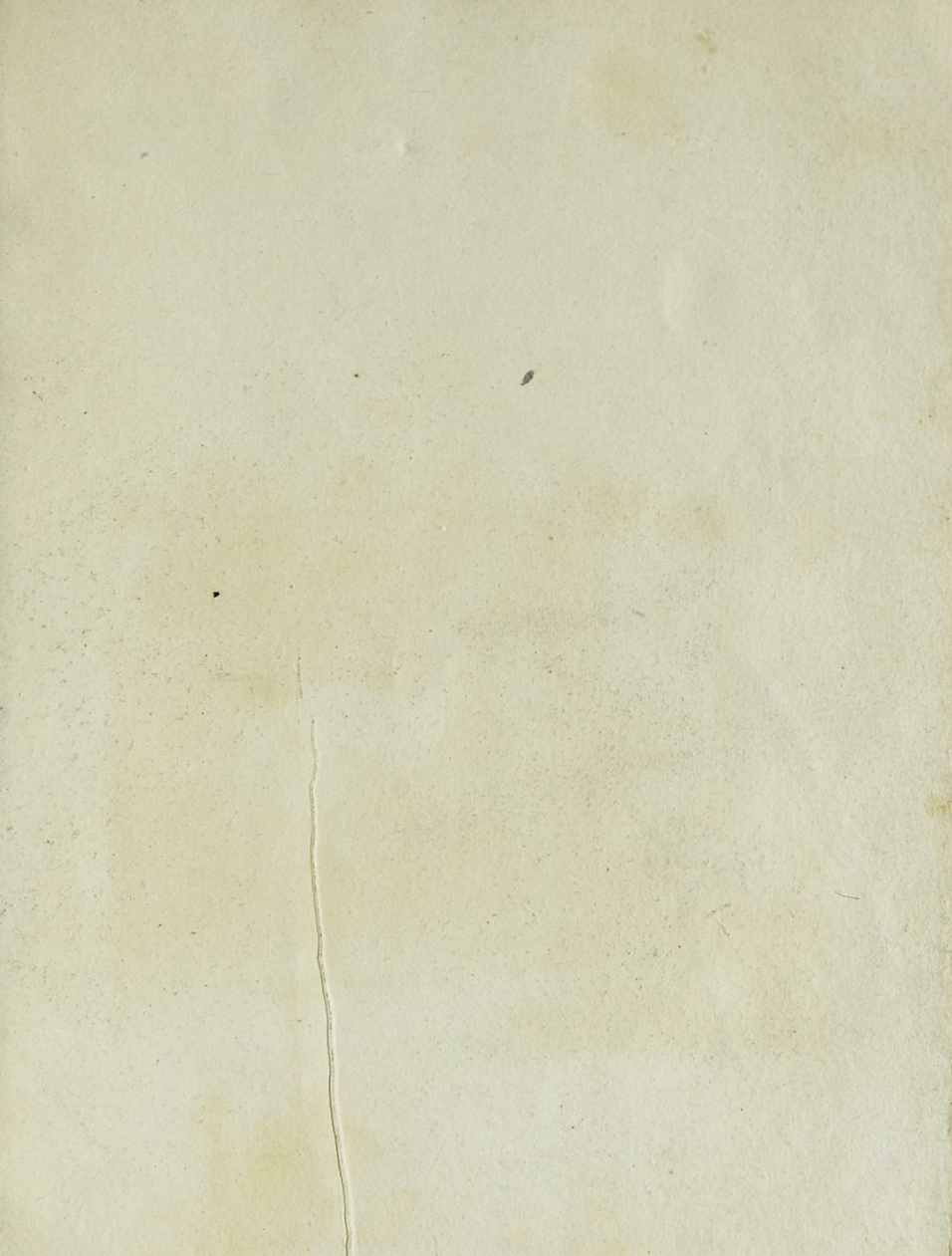
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John St. Clair

Nov 19<sup>th</sup> 1820







Page 3.

*A Stork playing at Hide & Seek.*

*London, Published by Harvey & Darton, 55, Gracechurch Street.*

# STORIES OF ANIMALS,

INTENDED FOR

CHILDREN

BETWEEN

FIVE AND SEVEN YEARS OLD.

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“Whether with reason or with instinct blest,  
Know, all enjoy that power which suits them best.”  
POPE.

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SECOND EDITION.

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London;

PRINTED FOR HARVEY AND DARTON,  
55, GRACECHURCH-STREET.

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1822.

STORIES OF ANIMALS

EDITED FOR

CHILDREN

BY

THE LITTLE GREEN ANIMALS

“The Little Green Animals” is a series of stories  
for children, written by the Little Green Animals.  
1891

PRINTED BY

THE LITTLE GREEN ANIMALS  
PRINTED FOR HARVARD AND  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1891



## STORIES OF ANIMALS.



### THE STORK.

THE White Stork is gentle and easily tamed. You may think it very strange, but this bird will take part in the sports of children, and hop and play about as merrily as any of them.

Once, when some children were playing at hide-and-seek in a garden, a tame Stork joined the party: it ran away when it was touched, and distinguished the child whose turn it was to chase the rest, so well as to keep out of its way in the same manner the children did. Here is a picture of

it\*. The cunning bird has hidden itself behind some paling, and a little girl comes along on tiptoe to find it. If she does not run very fast, I think her feathered play-fellow will soon overtake her; for I dare say its long legs can run faster than hers.

Storks are very common in Holland, where they make their nests on the tops of houses. The inhabitants are so fond of them, that they place boxes on the roofs of their houses, on purpose for them to build in, and are very careful that no one should hurt them. I do not wonder that the people in Holland are kind to these birds, for they are useful in clearing the fields of serpents and other reptiles, which might otherwise be troublesome.

\* See the Frontispiece.

The Stork is very careful of its young ones: it does not leave them till they are strong enough to defend and take care of themselves. When they begin to flutter out of the nest, the mother carries them on her wings: she protects them from danger, and sometimes she will die rather than forsake them. When the city of Delft, in Holland, was on fire, a female Stork tried several times to carry off her young ones, but could not: when she found that she was unable to save them, she remained with them, that she might share their fate.

But though Storks are, in general, so tame and gentle, yet they are sometimes very unkind and revengeful, as you will see from the story which I am going to tell you.

A farmer, who lived near Hamburg, a town in Germany, near the mouth of the river Elbe, brought a wild Stork into his poultry-yard, as a companion to a tame one which he had long kept there: but the tame Stork took a great dislike to the poor stranger: he attacked and beat him so unmercifully, that he was obliged to fly away, and had great difficulty in escaping from his cruel enemy. I suppose the tame Stork was very proud of having gained the victory; but about four months afterwards, the bird he had treated so cruelly returned to the poultry-yard, quite recovered from his wounds, and brought with him three other wild storks, who fell upon the tame Stork and killed him.

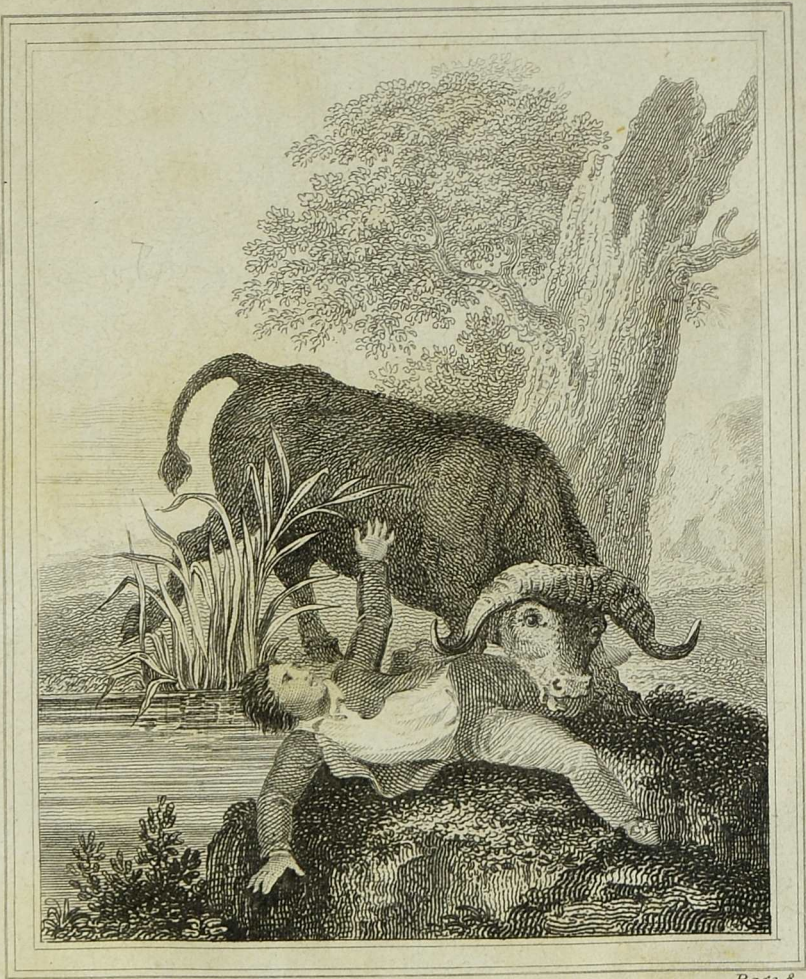
*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

## THE BUFFALO.

THE Buffalo is a very savage and terrible animal, and as cunning as he is fierce and strong. He will often hide himself among the trees, and wait till some poor traveller passes by: he then springs from his lurking-place, rushes into the road, and attacks the unsuspecting passenger, who has no chance of escape but by climbing up a tree. If there is no tree near, the poor man runs away; but his endeavours to escape are vain, because the Buffalo can run much faster: he soon overtakes, throws him down, and kills him. The furious animal, not content with this, stands over his prey for a long

time, trampling the dead body with his hoofs, tearing it with his horns, and licking it with his rough tongue till he strips off the skin.

Many years ago, M. Thunberg, a native of Sweden, determined to travel, in order to gain more knowledge than he could acquire by staying at home. He visited several countries, and took a great deal of pains in observing the manners of different people, the nature of plants, and the habits of animals. Among other places he went to the Cape of Good Hope, in the south of Africa. He staid a long time at Cape Town, and made several excursions into the country. He met with many strange adventures, and was once attacked by a Buffalo on the following occasion.



*The Buffalo.*





As M. Thunberg and some of his friends were travelling in Kaffraria, a large country to the north of the Cape, they happened to enter a wood, where they soon discovered an open space, in which a large old Buffalo was lying quite alone. The animal no sooner saw the guide, who was riding first, than he uttered a terrible roar, and ran towards him. The guide directly turned his horse behind a large tree, and the Buffalo rushed straight forward to the next man, goring his horse so dreadfully with his horns, that the poor animal died soon after. The guide and his companion climbed up into the neighbouring trees, and the furious Buffalo proceeded towards M. Thunberg and the rest, who were a little way behind. Fortunately for them.

a horse without a rider happened to be the first in their party. It could not stand the fierce attack of the Buffalo, but was thrown to the ground with such violence that it instantly died, and many of its bones were broken. Just then M. Thunberg himself came up: the path was so narrow that he could not turn back, and he was glad to jump from his horse, and take refuge in a pretty high tree. The Buffalo seemed content with the mischief he had already done; he did not attempt to molest them anymore, but turned round and galloped away.

Some time after this adventure, M. Thunberg and his friends saw a very large herd of Buffaloes grazing in a plain. Knowing that these creatures will not attack any one in the open country, they

approached pretty near the herd, and then fired at them. The sudden flash and noise of the guns frightened the Buffaloes, and they made off to the woods as fast as they could, but not before many of them had been wounded. Some of these could not keep up with the rest of the herd; and one old Buffalo, rendered furious by the pain he was suffering, ran towards M. Thunberg and his friends. The eyes of the Buffalo are so placed in his head, that he cannot see objects plainly, unless they are straight before him.

Our travellers knew this, and therefore they did not feel much frightened at the approach of the Buffalo. When the animal came near them, they ran to one side, and he passed almost close, without

perceiving them. When he had run a little further, his strength failing from pain and loss of blood, he fell down and died.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

*Thunberg's Voyage.*

## THE TOAD.

WHEN you are walking in the evening, you like to see the young frogs hopping across the path; for though they are not pretty, they are very lively and active: but you say that Toads are ugly and stupid, and you do not like them at all. If you knew more about them, you would like them better; for they are harmless creatures, and sensible of kindness: it is, therefore, very easy to make them quite tame. I will tell you a story.

A Toad was frequently seen, in an evening, on the steps before the hall-door of a gentleman who lived in Devonshire. I believe this gentleman had a kind temper, and

that he was not so silly as to dislike a poor animal because it was ugly. He and his family used to see the Toad on the steps, and they fed it, and treated it gently, till the creature grew so tame, that when they came out in the evening with a candle, it would creep out of its hole and look up, as if it expected to be fed. They took it up and carried it into the parlour, and put it upon the table; and all the family gathered round to watch its motions. Frogs and Toads generally feed on insects and worms, but what *our* Toad liked better than any thing else, was the maggot which comes out of the egg of the flesh-fly; and this good-natured gentleman used to have a great many maggots of that kind kept in bran, that they might be ready for the

Toad's supper when it was brought into the parlour. When the maggots were put before the Toad on the table, it watched them attentively with its beautiful eye; for the eye of the toad is *very* beautiful, though I dare say nobody would think so, till they had taken the pains to examine it. Well, when the maggots were at a proper distance, the Toad looked at them very earnestly; then, all at once, it threw out its tongue to a greater distance than you would imagine: the maggot stuck to the tip of it, and the Toad drew back its tongue into its mouth, and swallowed the maggot so quickly, that you must have watched very carefully to be able to see the motion. The liveliest and most active animal in the world could not catch its prey more swiftly and cleverly.

But how could it throw out its tongue to such a distance? You can put out your tongue only a very little way beyond your lips. I will tell you. The tongue of a Toad does not grow like yours: it is fixed to the *front* part of the mouth, and when the animal does not want to use it, the tip of the tongue is turned towards the throat. But when it catches its prey, it throws the whole length of the tongue out of its mouth; and this is the reason why it grows to the front part of it: for every creature is formed in the manner that is most convenient for it, that it may enjoy life and be happy.

Our Toad lived a great while in friendship with this good-natured family: it visited them, and they fed it, for thirty-six



years. But one day, when it was peeping out of its hole, it was espied by a tame raven. This was a sad thing for the poor Toad; for the raven seized it, pulled it out of the hole that had sheltered it so long, and hurt it so much that it died soon afterwards.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

## THE FOWLER.

THE wild duck is very much like the tame duck, but it is a smaller bird, and different in its habits and manners. It is shy and artful; therefore it is very difficult to catch, and whoever attempts it ought to have a great deal of skill and courage, and patience, or he would have no chance of succeeding.

Some of these wild-fowl live in large ponds, and are particularly fond of marshy, fenny countries, where they are found in amazing numbers. I have read many curious stories of their shy, cunning tricks, and the different ways that men have contrived to catch them; but, in the first place,

I will tell you about those wild-fowl which live on the sea-shore.

You can put the dissected map of England together; and you know very well that the little Isle of Wight must be placed just opposite to the coast of Hampshire, but not *close* to it. No: part of the English Channel lies between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Well, that narrow part of the sea is a very favourite resort of the wild-fowl; and I will tell you why they are so fond of it. This part of the sea is not so deep as on many other shores; and at low water, when the tide has retreated, you may see vast muddy flats, that are covered with green sea-weed.

The wild sea-fowl generally feed in the night. When it is low water, multitudes

of them alight on these muddy banks, to feed among the green sea-weed. The best time for shooting them is in the winter; and the same men who are busy all the summer in catching fish, often employ the long, dark winter nights in shooting wild-fowl. I will tell you how they manage it.

When evening comes on, and the retreating tide leaves the muddy banks I have mentioned, like wide green meadows out in the sea, (for some of these banks are two or three miles from the pebbly beach, and many little channels wind between them, in which the water remains,) then the fowler knows that it is time for him to get into his boat: he pushes it off from the shore, and away he goes. He does not

venture to take his dog with him, because no dog could bear the cold that the fowler is obliged to suffer; but *he* bears it willingly, that he may get money to buy bread for his wife and children.

**Well**, he glides along, as I told you, all alone in his boat; and when he comes to the mud-banks, he steers his boat among the little creeks that run up between them. His two guns are ready loaded, and now he lies quite still, and listens attentively. Presently he hears a noise in the air, like a pack of hounds in full cry: the sound comes nearer and nearer, but it is so dark that the fowler can see nothing. If he could see the birds, they could see him, you know; and they are so shy and so fearful, that they would never come within

reach of his gun. He is therefore obliged to trust to his ears, and listen which way the wild-fowl are going. When the flock alights, the loud cries cease, and they feed quietly; but if it happens to be a still night, the watchful fowler may distinguish some sounds from so vast a multitude. He then very softly takes up one of his guns, and fires towards the place where he thinks the birds are feeding. The frightened birds rise immediately; and the fowler snatches up his other gun as quick as thought, and fires it after them, as nearly as he can guess which way they are flying.

All his hopes of success for that night depend on the number of birds he may have happened to kill by those two shots;

and now he begins to gather his harvest. But first he ties two square pieces of board, which he calls his *mud-pattens*, to his feet. If he ventured to walk on the soft mud without them, his feet would probably sink; but the *mud-pattens* prevent that danger.

Then he goes groping about in the dark to find the birds that have been shot: sometimes he picks up a great many, but sometimes not one; and, after all his pains and fatigue, the birds he has suffered so much to obtain are often washed away by the next tide, and thrown upon the shore, where they are picked up by more fortunate men.

I have heard a story of one of these poor fowlers, who went to look after wild-

ducks in the day-time; therefore I suppose he had been shooting the night before, but could not find his game in the dark.

Mounted on his *mud-pattens*, he was traversing one of these banks, at the distance of a mile and a half from the shore; and he was so busy in searching for the ducks, that he was not aware of the advancing tide, which flowed through the channels that surrounded the bank, till it became a little green island in the midst of the sea. Every wave came higher and higher; and when it was too late, the poor fowler saw his dangerous situation. I believe he was not a coward, for he immediately thought of the only means that was likely to save his life. He had reason to think that, at high water, the tide on that







*Dangerous Situation of a Fowler.*

bank would not rise higher than the middle of his body; and he thought, if he could manage to stand against the force of the waves, that he would wait till the tide retreated again.

Having made this resolution, he went to the highest part of the bank, which was still uncovered, and striking the barrel of his long gun deep into the mud, he took fast hold of it, and courageously waited the advance of the tide. Wave after wave flowed on. The water rippled round his feet; then gained his knees: it rose to his waist. You know, he had not expected it to flow higher; but wave still followed wave, button after button of his coat was covered. At length the water flowed over

his shoulders; and now, with a beating heart, he expected nothing but death.

Still he held fast by his gun, and looked eagerly round, in hopes some boat might be passing in time to save him. No boat appeared: his head was too small an object to be seen from a distance, and sometimes even his head was washed over by the rising waves. Every hope now vanished, and he was making up his mind to endure the fate he could no longer escape, when a new object caught his attention. He thought he saw the *uppermost button* of his coat. It was but for a moment: he could not be sure of it: the restless waters had covered it again, and it was some time before the button was fairly above the flood, for the tide turned very slowly. At

length he had a glimpse of his *second* button. Now he was quite sure; and his joy gave him such strength and spirits, that he supported his unpleasant situation four or five hours longer, till the waters had completely retired.

*Daniel's Rural Sports.*

## THE GOOSE.

WILD Geese are found in different parts of the world, and mostly in the cold northern countries. Some of them are white, with a few black feathers in their wings. These are called Snow Geese, and inhabit the northern parts of Asia and America. Those which abound on the shores of Hudson's Bay, are as shy and fearful as the wild-fowl on the coast of Hampshire; but the Snow Geese of Siberia are not at all afraid of being caught, and the inhabitants have very little trouble in taking them, but they set about it in a droll manner.

These Geese, like other wild-fowl, live

in flocks, and generally one of them acts as leader to the others. When the natives of Siberia wish to take them, they make a hovel of skins sewed together: then one of the company dresses himself in the skin of a white rein-deer, and advances towards the flock of Geese till he thinks he is near enough: then he turns round and walks back to the hovel; and his companions, making a noise behind the Geese, drive them forward. The simple birds, mistaking the man in the white skin for their leader, follow him: he creeps into the hovel through a hole left for the purpose, and gets out of another at the opposite side, which he directly closes up. The Geese follow him through the first hole; and when they are all in the hovel, he

comes round, and, closing the entrance, secures every one of them.

The Gray Geese inhabit the fens of England; and they are kept tame, in great numbers, for the sake of their feathers and quills. I believe you know that pens are made from the long feathers of their wings. Every spring the poor geese are stripped of their feathers and quills, and the old ones, who have been accustomed to the operation, submit to it very quietly; therefore, I hope it does not hurt them much: but the young ones do not like it at all. Poor things, I suppose they are frightened, and think it very strange that they should be treated so roughly, for no reason that they can discover. But you know what comfortable beds and pillows are made with the help of their soft, warm feathers.



The Gray Goose may be rendered very tame, and it is capable of feeling great affection for those who are kind to it. I will tell you a story that will show you this, and that these birds are neither shy, like the Snow-Geese of Hudson's Bay, nor silly, like those of Siberia.

There was once a gentleman who lived in France: he was called the Count de Buffon, and he was remarkably fond of observing the characters and manners of different animals. I believe his friends could not please him much better than by telling him *true stories* of any animal they happened to meet with. A gentleman who kept Geese, one day related the following story to the Count:

In my flock of Geese I had two Ganders,

who were often striving for mastery: one of them was gray, and the other white. The gray Gander was much stronger than the other; and I believe that one day he would have quite killed him, if I had not been induced, by the noise they were making, to go to the bottom of the garden, where I happily arrived in time to rescue poor Jacquot (for that was the name given to the white Gander) from the gripe of his enemy. Jacquot was very grateful for my help, and soon became much attached to me.

One day I was going to a wood about a mile and a half distant, and as I passed through the park in my way to it, my friend Jacquot followed me very familiarly, till I came to an ice-house at the

extremity of the inclosure. Here we parted. I shut Jacquot into the park, and pursued my walk alone. When he saw himself separated from me, he began to make a strange noise. Still I went on, and when I had gone about half a mile, I heard something heavy flying, and, turning round, I saw poor Jacquot almost close to me. He followed me all the way, sometimes flying and sometimes walking. He would get before me, and stop where the path separated, in order to see which way I was going. The walk was a very long one, and I was gone many hours; but still Jacquot followed me through all the windings of the wood, without seeming tired.

Another time I was at the house of a friend, and as Jacquot happened to be pass-

ing the window, he heard my voice. The door of the house was open: he came in; ascended the stairs; and, to the no small alarm of the family, entered the room in which we were sitting, uttering loud cries of joy.

I am sorry when I think how our friendship ended; for at last poor Jacquot became so troublesome, by following me every where, that I was obliged to have him shut up. I did not see him afterwards. He pined away, and, in rather more than a year, died of vexation.

Perhaps the gentleman would have had no reason to be sorry, if he had gone to see poor Jacquot, and continued to be kind to him: indeed, I think his gratitude and affection to his master deserved a better return.

You have seen a dog leading a poor blind man by a string, and were very much pleased with the care he took to guide him safely. I have read, that in a village in Germany, a blind old woman was led to church, every Sunday, by a Gander, who used to take hold of her gown with his bill: when he had safely conducted the poor woman to her seat, he would go back to the church-yard and graze there till service was over. When he saw the people coming out of church, he went back to his blind mistress, and led her safely home. One day a gentleman called at the woman's house, and, when he found that she was gone out, he told her daughter that he was very much

surprised at her mother's being abroad. "Oh, Sir," said the girl, "we are not afraid of trusting her out, for the Gander is with her."

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*  
*Daniel's Rural Sports.*

## THE FOX.

I HAVE read a story of a Spartan boy, who caught a Fox and hid it under his gown. He resolved that nobody should know it; and though the animal bit him very severely, he did not cry out, or make the least complaint. The little Spartans were taught to despise pain, and to think that there was something clever in being cunning; and in these respects they were very much like Foxes. A Fox will allow himself to be beaten with a great stick till he dies, without making any complaint; but though he does not cry out, he always defends himself very bravely, as long as his strength will last. If he were to seize you

with his sharp teeth, I might beat him as much as I pleased, but he would not let you go; and if a fierce dog attacked him, he would fight in silence till he was torn to pieces.

The Fox is as cunning as he is fierce and bold: he knows that it is a very good thing to have a snug, comfortable home, and, in that respect, you and I are of the Fox's opinion. No man could be more clever than this animal in choosing a convenient place for his dwelling, nor in concealing the entrance to it, when he has found one that he thinks quite suitable. His kennel is usually situated near the edge of a wood, in the neighbourhood of a farm or village. Here he listens to the crowing of the cocks, and sometimes comes







*The Fox.*

near enough to hear the busy, careful hen, clucking amidst her brood of chicken. And now the Fox is very glad : he steals sily and cautiously along ; and, if nobody is in the way, he springs over the fence, or creeps through a hole in it, and seizes some poor unwary fowl that happens to be near. Then he slips away very quietly, and either carries his prey to his kennel, or hides it in some secret place while he returns for more. I believe he often practises these tricks very early in the morning, before the farmer is awake ; but when the Fox hears a bustle in the house, and doors and windows begin to open and shut, he is cunning enough to know that it is high time he should be gone. He takes the first opportunity of collecting the

poultry he has killed and hid in different places, and carries them to his den. Sometimes he hunts young hares in the plains, or seizes the poor partridge, while she is sitting on her nest among the long grass; and as he is accustomed to burrow in the ground, he digs the rabbits out from their warrens. All these creatures are very delicious food for the hungry Fox; but he cannot always get them, and then he makes war against rats, field-mice, snakes, lizards, toads, and moles. If he happens to live near the sea, he devours crabs, shrimps, and different kinds of shell-fish. In France and Italy he steals into the vineyards, and there he does terrible mischief; for he is as fond of grapes, as any little boy or girl I ever knew.

But while the Fox is an enemy to all the little animals I have mentioned, I can assure you that the dog is a very great enemy to him. All kinds of dogs will hunt Foxes; and men very often encourage them in doing so, because they like to ride after them, helter-skelter, and fancy there is great pleasure in galloping very fast across the fields, and leaping their horses over the gates and hedges that happen to be in their way. When the Fox is pursued by the dogs and hunters, he generally runs to his den for shelter: he creeps into the furthest part of it, and there he lies in hopes of safety; but the hunters often send a terrier into the hole after him. The dog endeavours to keep the Fox in a corner of the den, while the

hunters dig the earth away till they find the Fox: they then give him to the hungry hounds, and he is presently torn to pieces and devoured.

It sometimes happens that the Fox has made his den so cunningly under a rock, or among the roots of large old trees, that the hunters are not able to dig him out; and the terrier, though a very courageous kind of dog, is no match for him in such a situation. The Fox has also many contrivances when he is beset by his enemies, and he often makes his escape when they are almost sure of catching him. The she Foxes are very fond of their young ones, and they will brave many dangers rather than leave them to be worried by the dogs. I have heard of one running for

miles with her little cub in her mouth, in hopes of saving it from the pursuers; but at last, as she was scampering through a farm-yard, out sprung the great mastiff, and attacked her also. The poor Fox was now more frightened than ever: she dropped the cub from her mouth, and it was taken up by the farmer. I dare say you will be glad to hear that she escaped herself, and that neither the hounds nor the mastiff were able to catch her.

Men who are often hunting, and spend a great deal of time in the woods and fields, sometimes meet with strange adventures. A huntsman was one day returning from an unsuccessful chase, and his faithful terrier was with him. All at once the dog began to whine, and make a great bustle, at the foot of an oak tree. The

tree was one of those which are called *pollards*; that is, the top and its wide-spreading branches were lopped away, and the knotty old trunk was covered with twigs from the top to the bottom. Terriers are remarkable for finding rats, pole-cats, and such mischievous animals, which are called *vermin* by the careful farmer; and our huntsman thought that his dog had found something of this kind. He got off his horse, and went up to the tree to see what the terrier was doing. Neither man nor dog could find any hollow in the tree, but the dog seemed very anxious to climb it. The huntsman now looked at the tree more attentively, and he saw that the twigs were dirty, as if some animal was in the habit of passing up and down. He wondered what it could be; and he lifted



the dog up in his arms, and placed him on the twigs, as high as he could reach. The terrier now appeared more eager than ever, and his master grew still more curious: at length he resolved to climb the tree, and up he went, helping his dog up before him. The instant the dog reached the top, the huntsman heard him seize something: he scrambled after as fast as he could, and peeped into a hole in the trunk of the tree. I believe he was surprised indeed; for there he saw his dog, which had seized a she Fox, and beside them were four cubs. The hole where they lay was twenty feet from the ground, and there was no way for the Fox to get to her young ones but by scrambling up and down the outside boughs. Poor thing! I dare say she

thought she had found a very safe place for her little family, but she was mistaken. The huntsman took the cubs, and told this wonderful story to a great many people, who went and examined the pollard oak; and they thought the circumstance so curious, that one begged the huntsman to give him a cub, and another begged to have a cub; and I have heard that three of them were brought up tame, in memory of this strange adventure. One of them was taken to a hotel in London, where it used to run about the coffee-room; and I dare say the master of the house often entertained his guests with the story that I have been telling you.

*Bingley's British Quadrupeds.*

*Daniel's Rural Sports.*

## THE ARCTIC FOX.

THE Foxes of which I have been telling you were English Foxes; but these animals are found in many other countries, and I believe they are always bold and cunning. Those which live in the cold northern countries are smaller than ours, and of a blueish colour, or sometimes perfectly white; but they are as cunning as our Foxes, if not more so. I will tell you some of their tricks, and then you can judge.

A great way from England, in the sea that washes the shores of Kamtschatka, there is a barren, mountainous island, called Behring's Island. It was discovered by Vitus Behring, who was so unfortunate as

to be shipwrecked on that dreary shore. Poor man! he died there; and many of his crew perished, in consequence of the hardships they suffered. But some of them lived to come home again and relate their adventures.

These Russians built huts to shelter themselves, for they were obliged to remain for many months on that dismal island; but whatever they did, and wherever they went, they were annoyed by the troublesome Foxes with which Behring's Island swarmed. By day and by night these cunning animals would steal into the huts of the Russians, and carry off any thing that happened to be lying about. They seemed to feel pleasure in stealing; for they often took things that could be of no possible use

to Foxes; such as knives, sticks, and the sailors' clothes. But they exerted all their ingenuity to obtain provisions. They contrived to roll down casks that weighed more than an hundred pounds, and then stole the meat out so cleverly, that, at first, the Russians thought it was impossible that Foxes could have managed it: and I believe they were ready to accuse some of their own company of dishonesty; but the Foxes soon showed them that they were as cunning as any two-legged thieves could be.

When the Russians had killed an animal, and were not at leisure to strip off its skin immediately, they could not find any way of securing it from the Foxes. If they buried it ever so carefully, and laid plenty of stones, as well as earth, upon it, these sly

creatures were sure to find it out. They pushed away the stones with their shoulders, several of them uniting their strength to move the large ones; but scratching away the earth was easily managed. This made the Russians think of another plan: they put the slaughtered animal on the top of a high post, and thought they had outwitted the Foxes. But no: one of them sometimes climbed the post, and threw what was upon it down to his companions. If this could not be managed, a troop of Foxes collected round the post, dug up the earth in which it was fixed, and tumbled post and carcass down together.

Sometimes the Foxes would imitate the actions of the Russians; for instance, if they found an animal thrown on shore by

the sea, they would set some of their troop to watch, while the others were dividing it; and if a man appeared at a distance, all the Foxes immediately began digging in the sand, and so completely buried their booty, that not a trace of it could be seen.

The seals and bears that frequent those seas, are accustomed to sleep in companies on the shore. Every morning the Foxes were seen smelling about among the sleeping animals, in hopes of finding a dead one. If they were successful, they immediately tore it to pieces, that they might be able to carry it off. It sometimes happens that when the fat seals are asleep, they roll upon their little ones and smother them. The Foxes seemed to be conscious of this; for they regularly examined the whole herd,

one by one, and if they found a dead cub, they dragged it away from its sleeping mother.

These audacious animals did not appear to have that fear of man which is felt by creatures that have experienced his power. As Behring's Island is uninhabited, they had probably never seen any human being, till these poor Russians were shipwrecked there. When they were tired and sat down to rest themselves, the Foxes would gather round them, and play a thousand merry tricks, for they are remarkably playful animals; and they were so bold, that they would even come up to the sailors, and gnaw the thongs with which their shoes were tied. Or if they lay down to sleep, the Foxes would pull off their night-caps,



and drag away their beaver blankets, and the skins that they lay upon. They even took the liberty of smelling at their noses, to find whether they were dead or alive: so that the poor fellows were obliged to sleep with clubs in their hands, that they might be able to knock these troublesome creatures down when they disturbed them.

I have heard that the Russians are generally a patient, good-tempered people; but the mischievous Foxes would allow them to have no peace, either by day or by night: so at last they grew quite angry, and killed and harassed the intruders, by every means they could contrive. But even these troublesome animals may be made useful to man. The inhabitants of cold northern countries are very glad

of the soft, warm fur of the Fox; and the Greenlanders sometimes eat his flesh, which they say is better than that of the hare. They also make buttons of some part of the skin; and the tendons, (or sinews, which enable the Fox to move his active limbs,) they split into finer strings, and use them instead of thread.

*Edinburgh Gazetteer.*

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

## THE BUZZARD.

I HAVE told you that the Count de Buffon was very fond of observing the habits of animals, and that his friends often gave him such information respecting them, as they thought would please him. One day he received a letter from M. Fontaine, containing the following story.

Some persons who had caught a Buzzard in a snare, made me a present of him. When he was first brought to me, he was so wild that I was afraid I should never be able to tame him; but I thought I would make the attempt, and succeeded by letting him remain without food till he was so hungry that he was glad to eat out

of my hand. I accustomed him to feed in this manner for six weeks, when he appeared so tame that I thought I might allow him a little more liberty; and having tied his wings, I took him into my garden. There he walked about as he pleased, but always came when I called him to be fed. After some time, when I thought that he was grown too fond of me to wish to escape, I took off the bandages which fastened his wings, tied a small bell to his leg, and hung a piece of copper on his breast, with my name engraved upon it. I now set him entirely at liberty, but soon found that I was deceived in my opinion of his affection for me, for he flew away to a forest at a little distance. I gave him up for lost; but four hours after

he came rushing into the hall, pursued by five other Buzzards, with which I suppose he had been quarrelling in the forest ; and being attacked by so many at once, he was glad to come back to me for protection.

After this adventure, my Buzzard never tried to leave me again, but grew so fond of me, that he always seemed happiest when we were together. He sat on a corner of the table by me, when I was at dinner, often caressing me with his head and bill ; a favour he bestowed on no other person. One day I went out for a ride, and he followed me more than six miles, flying all the way over my head.

He had a great dislike to dogs and cats, but was not at all afraid of them ; often fighting them for some time, and on

such occasions was always the conqueror. I had four very strong cats, which I put into the garden with my Buzzard, and threw a piece of raw meat to them. The nimblest cat seized and ran off with it: away went the others after her, to take it from her; but the Buzzard darted upon her back, bit her ears with his bill, and squeezed her sides with his claws, so severely, that poor puss was obliged to give up her prize. Another cat often seized the meat, the instant it dropped; but the Buzzard treated her just the same, and at last got possession of it. The cats, finding that it was of no use to fight for their dinner, left it to the victorious bird.

My Buzzard had another dislike, which was not a little whimsical. He could not

endure to see a peasant in a red cap: if one approached, he whipped it off so dexterously, that the poor fellow found himself bare-headed, without knowing what was become of his cap. Those who wore wigs were treated with as little ceremony. The bird flew away with his prizes to the tallest tree in a neighbouring park, where he hung the caps and wigs which he had obtained so cunningly.

If any other birds of prey offered to enter his domain, he attacked them very boldly, and put them to flight. He did no mischief in my court-yard; and the poultry, though at first afraid of him, were soon reconciled to his company. But though he behaved so well at home, he was not gentle to my neighbour's fowls;

and I was often obliged to say that I would pay for the damage he did. Notwithstanding this assurance, my poor Buzzard was often fired at and wounded, though he escaped without material injury.

At length, early one morning, while he was hovering over a forest, he was so bold as to attack a fox; and a man, who saw him on its shoulders, fired two shots at him. The fox was killed, and the poor Buzzard had his wing broken; yet he contrived to escape, and was lost for seven days. The man, hearing the sound of the bell, knew to whom the bird belonged, and came to tell me what had happened. I sent people to look for him, but in vain; and every evening I called him myself with a whistle, but no answer was returned. At last, on the seventh day, I heard a feeble



cry at a distance. I whistled a second time, and again heard the same cry. I went to the place whence the sound proceeded, and there found my poor Buzzard with his wing broken. Not being able to fly, he was endeavouring to walk back to his home. Though he was very weak, yet he seemed quite delighted to see me. It was six weeks before his wounds were healed; but he quite recovered, and began to fly as he used to do, following his old habits for about a year. At the end of that time I lost him again, and he never returned; but as he was too much attached to me to have staid away from choice, I had every reason to believe that my poor Buzzard had been killed by some unfortunate accident.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

## THE ANT.

A GENTLEMAN once observed an Ant dragging along a piece of wood, very heavy in proportion to its strength. Several other Ants were near, but they had each their own work to do. Presently the little creature came to a place where he had to go up-hill; and, you know, that made his labour much more difficult. The Ant found that the wood was now too heavy for him; but he did not wait long before three or four others, seeing his difficulty, came behind and pushed it up. As soon as they came to level ground, they left their friend to drag his own load, and went to their work again. It happened that the piece

the ant was dragging was much thicker at one end than at the other. This soon threw the poor fellow into a fresh difficulty. He unluckily drew it between two pieces of wood that happened to be lying in his way. After trying several times, he found that it would not go through. What was to be done? The Ant adopted the only means that a man, in the same situation, could have contrived. He came behind it, pulled it back again, and turned it on its edge: then the wood slipped through without any difficulty.

But one of the most curious things about these little creatures, is, that they appear to have some means of making one another understand their thoughts and wishes. If they find out that there is a piece of sugar or bread, or any kind of fruit, even though

it should be in the garret, they will arrange themselves in a line, and follow their leader from the garden to the top of the house.

Dr. Franklin wished to discover whether it is really true that Ants have the power of communicating intelligence to each other, and he put a little earthen pot, containing some treacle, into a closet. A number of Ants crept into it, and eat the treacle very quietly. When he saw this, he shook them out, and tied the pot with a thin string to a nail which he fastened into the ceiling. By accident, an Ant remained in the pot: this Ant eat as much as he wanted, and then tried to go away. But he was a long time before he could find how to manage this: he ran about the bottom of the pot, but in vain. At last, after many

attempts, the Ant found the way to the ceiling by climbing along the string. Thence it ran to the wall, and soon reached the ground in safety. I suppose the Ant wished his friends to share the treacle which was left, and went to tell them how the affair must be managed; for he had scarcely been gone half an hour, before a great swarm of Ants climbed up the wall to the ceiling, crept along the string to the pot, and began to eat. More Ants were continually arriving, and those that had eaten what they wished were going away; so that some were always running down the string, and some up, while any treacle remained in the pot.

In England the female Ants always die in the winter, because they are not strong

enough to bear the cold: the other Ants remain in a torpid state; that is, they sleep, till the spring revives them by its warmth. But in very hot countries, Ants are never torpid; and I assure you that they do a great deal of mischief, and are very formidable creatures. The stings of these insects produce violent pain, and many animals are destroyed by them, if they linger too near their habitations. A person who travelled in Africa, says, that while he was in Guinea, the Ants have often attacked one of his sheep during the night: they always succeeded in killing it; and they were so quick in devouring their prey, that in the morning nothing but the skeleton was to be seen.

At Cape Coast Castle, in the same country, it happened that some negro servants were asleep on the floor of a chapel, when they

were alarmed by the approach of a large body of Ants, and immediately prepared to defend themselves. Indeed they had great occasion, for their enemies were so numerous, that while the foremost had already taken possession of the place, those which marched last were more than a quarter of a mile distant. For all that space, the ground seemed to be alive, so thickly was it covered with these destructive creatures. After thinking a few minutes on what was to be done, it was resolved to lay a large train of gunpowder along the path the Ants had taken. They then set fire to the gunpowder, and by this means millions of Ants were blown to pieces. The rest were so frightened, that they retreated immediately.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

## THE SUGAR ANT.

Do you know where to find the West Indies? No. Then I will tell you. The name of West Indies is given to that range of islands, which extends from Florida, in North America, to the mouth of the great river Orinoco, in South America. One of these islands is called Grenada: it belongs to the English; and you may easily find it in the map, a little to the north of the Orinoco. Grenada is a small island, but very fertile: it produces a great deal of sugar, and coffee, and cotton, as well as many other agreeable and useful things. Between forty and fifty years ago, this island was attacked by a host of enemies,



so numerous and so formidable, that the inhabitants were seized with alarm, and thought that all their beautiful plantations would have been destroyed.

These terrible enemies were no other than a species of Ant, not particularly large, and of a dark-red colour. You wonder that a little creeping insect should be called a terrible enemy; but their power was occasioned by their numbers. The roads were covered with them for miles together, and they advanced from one plantation to another, making their nests under the roots of the sugar-canes and the lemon and orange trees. They did not devour the plants, but they injured the roots of them very much; and consequently the valuable canes and fruit-trees

became quite stunted and sickly: very little sugar could be made, and that little was not good.

As the inhabitants of Grenada depend for a living upon the sugar and fruit produced in their plantations, just as the English farmer depends upon his corn, they were very much distressed by the ravages of the Ants, and tried every means they could think of to destroy them. They mixed poison with whatever they thought would be agreeable to the Ants, and laid it about on the ground, where it was greedily devoured, and occasioned the destruction of many thousands; but the planters could not get poison enough, even to give the hundred-thousandth part of their enemies a taste.

When poison failed, they thought they would try the effect of fire. They procured a great deal of wood, and burned it into charcoal, which they spread, red-hot, about the ground. I do not know what the Ants thought of these pieces of charcoal, but they crowded to them in astonishing numbers, and many thousands were miserably burned.

I believe the planters had now good hopes of succeeding: they dug a great many holes in the ground, and made fires in each of them. You have often seen the poor moths attracted by the candle, when we have been sitting, in the summer evenings, with the parlour-window open: they flutter round and round the flame, till at length their delicate gauzy wings catch

fire, and the poor thoughtless insect is destroyed. Well, when the Ants of Grenada saw these bright little fires shining over the fields, they crowded to them in such amazing swarms, that the places where the fires had been, appeared like mole-hills, from the quantity of half-burned bodies of Ants which lay heaped up over them. But all this destruction seemed to do no good, for the swarms of Ants were as numerous as ever.

The planters were now quite in despair: they had tried every thing they could think of; but it was of no use to wage war against a troublesome race of insects, which continually increased, in spite of all that could be done to destroy them. The governors of the island offered to give a very large

sum of money to any body who would find out some way of getting rid of these terrible Ants. Encouraged by the hope of obtaining the promised reward, many persons tried a number of experiments, but to no purpose: it seemed as if the sugar-plantations would be quite destroyed.

At length, in the year 1780, came one of those dreadful hurricanes, or tempests, with which the West India islands are sometimes visited. The storms we have in England cannot give you any idea of a West Indian hurricane. Whole fields of sugar-canes may there be seen whirled into the air by the violence of the wind, and scattered over the face of the country. As the storm increases, the strongest trees of the forest are torn up by the roots, and

driven about like stubble : houses and mills are stripped of their roofs, or quite blown down : the heavy copper boilers, in which the planters convert the juice of the cane into sugar, are wrenched from their places, and battered to pieces. This uproar and confusion is accompanied by thunder and lightning, and sometimes by an earthquake. Violent rains also descend and deluge the country. The sea as well as the land is in a state of dreadful agitation : it rises into great waves, and drives the ships from their anchors ; and often, before the sailors have time to take in the sails, the main-mast of a large ship will be twisted about like a reed, and broken. The vessels drive before the storm, and the shores are strewed with wrecks.

Such was the situation of Grenada in the year 1780. The hurricane seemed as if sent to complete the destruction of that unhappy island. But this only *seemed* to be the case. That dreadful hurricane proved a great blessing to the people of Grenada. It did for them what poison, and fire, and rich rewards, had failed to do. The whirlwind that tore up the sugar-canes, and twisted the trees out of the ground, opened and loosened the surface of the earth, admitting torrents of rain to the Ants' nests, which were already broken and injured by the violence of the wind. Thus these terrible insects were destroyed, and the plantations of Grenada recovered their fertility.

But the hurricane must have done a great deal of mischief?

Certainly; and yet you see that the good which it did was *still greater*. Perhaps, if it had not been for the hurricane, the Ants would have converted a fruitful island into a desert.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*  
*Chambers's Dictionary.*



## THE CHEETA.

IN the southern part of Asia there is a country called Hindostan. It is a very large and fruitful country; and the trees, and plants, and animals with which it abounds, are different from those that we are accustomed to see. The patient camel and the wise elephant are found there: lions are seen among the northern mountains; and the most beautiful and most terrible of beasts of prey, the royal Bengal tiger, often springs from his covert and seizes the unwary traveller. There is also another animal of the tiger kind, called the Cheeta, or Hunting Leopard: it is about the size of a large greyhound, of a

tawny colour, marked with black spots. It is a very beautiful creature; and people who live in that country often tame it, and it becomes so docile, that it will follow its master about as sociably as a dog. But though the Cheeta may be tamed, as I have told you, it is still very fond of running after those animals which, in its wild state, it is used to hunt. Its master takes advantage of this, and when he goes out hunting, often carries the Cheeta with him, to assist in catching the game. This is the reason why the Cheeta is often called the Hunting Leopard.

I will tell you how these hunts are managed, for we have not any thing like them in England.

You should always look at a map when

I tell you stories about foreign countries. Here is a map of Hindostan, and in the north-western part, that is, near the top of the map towards your left hand, you will find a large river called the Indus, which empties its waters, by a great many channels, into the Arabian Sea. A little way to the right of this river you will find a country called Gujerat: part of it belongs to the English, who have always been very fond of hunting; and I dare say they are glad that the finest Cheetas in all Hindostan are found in Gujerat. That country also abounds in antelopes; and there is seldom any doubt of finding game, when they are in a humour for hunting.

The antelopes are very timid creatures; and the Cheeta himself would be fright-

ened, if he was to be followed, as the hounds are in England, by a number of galloping horses and noisy sportsmen. In Gujerat, when the hunters are ready to set out, a cart drawn by the pretty, white oxen of the country, is brought for the Cheeta to ride in. The creature jumps into the carriage and sits beside his keeper, who puts a hood over the animal's head, and passes a string through the collar on his neck. Then away they go, followed by the horsemen and their attendants, who drive more carts like that of the Cheeta.

When the hunters come in sight of the game, they leave their horses to the care of their attendants, and get into the little carts, or *hackeries*, as they are called in Gujerat: they then proceed towards the

antelopes. If the country happens to be woody, the keeper soon pulls off the Cheeta's hood, and leaves him at liberty. The diversion of the hunters arises from the skill and dexterity of the animal they employ to help them, therefore all of them watch his motions attentively.

It is very amusing to see the Cheeta leap cautiously from the cart, and creep on from bush to bush, slyly watching the antelopes, but taking special care that they shall not see him. If he can steal on in this way till he is about seventy yards from the game, he rushes forth, at full speed, and seldom fails to catch one of them.

The Cheeta resembles the tiger in the strength of his paw: when he overtakes

the antelope, he gives it a sudden and powerful blow, which throws the poor creature down; and in the same instant the Cheeta seizes it by the throat. If it happens to be a female antelope, or a young one, it is soon strangled; but the neck of the buck is very thick and strong: his hoofs are sharp, and his horns are powerful and dangerous weapons. But the Cheeta is an artful creature, and takes good care of himself. You may see, in the picture, how cunningly he holds the poor buck in a posture which renders his horns and hoofs useless to him, and he soon loses the power of struggling. In the mean time, the keeper comes up and cuts the throat of the antelope. The Cheeta, finding that his prey is dead, would begin to tear it to



*A Cheeta Hunt.*





pieces ; but his keeper quickly cuts off the last joint of the leg, and puts it into his mouth : this pleases the animal, and keeps him employed ; while the keeper carries the antelope to the cart, and secures it there. He then returns for the Cheeta, and leads him to the cart, which he ascends quietly, without taking any further notice of the game he has killed, although it lies close beside him.

*Aikin's Geographical Delineations.*

*Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.*

## THE SPARROWS.

THESE little birds build their nests with a great deal of care, sometimes in holes in walls, sometimes under the eaves of houses ; and if they cannot find such a place, they build them in trees, with a hole in the side, just big enough for them to go in and out. They often take a fancy to make them underneath a rook's nest, so that their neighbour's house may shelter their own from the wind and rain. The old birds are very fond of their young ones, and feed them with caterpillars, and sometimes with butterflies and other insects. I have read a story about some Sparrows, which I think will please you.

A boy once carried away a nest of young Sparrows, which he found about a mile from the place where he lived. While he was walking along with them, he was very much surprised to see both the parents following him at a distance, and attentively watching every thing that he did. He thought that perhaps the old Sparrows would follow him home, and that he should have the pleasure of seeing them feed their little ones in their usual manner. Just as he was entering the door of the house where he lived, he held up the nest, that the old birds might see it, and made his poor little prisoners cry out, as if they wished for food. He immediately put the nest with the young sparrows in the corner of a wire cage, and then set it on the

outside of a window. He chose a place in the room whence he could see every thing that happened, and where the birds could not see him. Presently the poor little Sparrows cried for food; and soon both the parents came to the cage, with their bills full of small caterpillars, and after chirping as if they were talking to their young ones, they gave a small worm to each of them.

The affectionate birds continued to feed their young ones regularly every day, until the little creatures were quite fledged. The boy now took one of the strongest of them, and placed him on the outside of the cage, that he might see what the parents would do when they found that one of their little family was at liberty. In a few minutes the two Sparrows came bringing food. As

soon as they saw that one of their children had got out of prison, they fluttered about, chirped, and seemed quite delighted: soon their voices and motions showed that they were earnestly begging him to follow them, and to fly from his dangerous situation. The poor little bird seemed to wish very much to obey them; but his feeble cries declared that he was afraid of trying to fly, as he had never done so before. Still the fond parents kept entreating him to come with them. They flew backwards and forwards, from the cage to a chimney-top which was near, as if to show him how easy it was to fly, and that the journey was but short. At last, away he flew, and arrived safely at the top of the chimney. Then the old birds fluttered about, and

seemed as glad as they had done when first they found him at liberty.

The next day the boy put another of the little Sparrows on the top of the cage, and the parents behaved in the same manner. He did the same with the other two which were left. I dare say that the old Sparrows were greatly rejoiced when they had recovered all their family; and that when the boy saw how fond these birds were of their young ones, and what pains they took in feeding them and teaching them to fly, he was never so thoughtless again: for I do not think that he was a cruel boy, or he would not have felt so much pleasure in seeing the joy of the Sparrows, when he had set his little prisoners free.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

## THE OSTRICH.

You have never seen an Ostrich, and you do not know how tall and strong it is. If an Ostrich were standing here in the parlour, and stretching his long neck, his head would almost touch the ceiling. These large birds can run very fast indeed; faster than you have ever seen a horse gallop. You know, when a ship is sailing, the wind fills the sails and blows the ship along. Now, though the Ostrich has very long legs, it would not be able to run so fast as it does, if it did not spread out its wings before the wind, which blows it along like a ship.

You have sometimes rode on your papa's

horse, but I believe you never thought of riding upon a bird. At an African village, a gentleman saw two young Ostriches, which were very tame. Two negro children got both together upon the back of the larger of these birds: as soon as he felt their weight, he ran off as fast as he could, and he carried them several times round the village. The gentleman was so much pleased with this sight, that he wished to see it again; and, to try how strong the Ostriches were, he desired one man to get upon the smaller, and two men upon the larger. At first they only trotted very fast; but in a little while they spread their wings, and ran so swiftly that you could scarcely see them touch the ground with their feet.





*An Ostrich Race.*



But though Ostriches may be made so tame and familiar, they are not always gentle to those who are not acquainted with them. If a stranger should approach, the Ostrich would run furiously at him, and try to throw him down. If this unfortunately happens, the Ostrich pecks him with his bill, tears him with his claws, and sometimes even succeeds in killing him.

You have often heard of the deserts of Arabia: bring me that map, and I will show you where they are situated. The middle part of the country is a dreary waste of sand, where there is neither grass, nor trees, nor rivers. The whole of Arabia is not so desolate, for on the sea-coast are many pleasant and fertile spots. There,

“ On the cool and shady hills,  
Coffee-shrubs and tam'rinds grow;  
Headlong fall the welcome rills  
Down the fruitful dells below.

“ The fragrant myrrh and healing balm  
Perfume the passing gale;  
Thick hung with dates the spreading palm  
O'er-tow'rs the peopled vale.”

The Arabs of the sea-coast live in towns and villages: but those who inhabit the deserts reside in tents, which they carry about with them when they remove from place to place. I do not know how these Arabs would contrive, if it were not for the patient camel: they call it “the ship of the desert;” and it will travel, day after day, over the sandy wilderness, carrying heavy burdens, and browsing the prickly, half-withered plants which grow there. But

these wandering Arabs value their horses even more than their camels; and with good reason, for they are the strongest and finest in the world. These horses live in the same tents with their masters, who treat them with the greatest kindness; and they are so tame that they will let young children play with them, and lie down to sleep on their bodies and necks: when they are thus encumbered, the gentle animals seem afraid of moving, lest they should hurt their little companions. The Arabs use these strong, swift horses in hunting Ostriches, great numbers of which are found in the dry, sandy deserts.

But I thought that an Ostrich could run faster than a horse can gallop? Yes, and if an Arab were to get on the

swiftest horse he could find, and ride after it as fast as he could, the Ostrich would soon be out of sight, and quite escape from him. How can they catch it then? I will tell you. When the Arabs wish to hunt an Ostrich, they get on horseback, and gallop gently after it. This does not alarm the Ostrich so greatly as to make it run away very fast; but it goes on running, first to one side and then to the other, in a zig-zag line. The Arabs take advantage of this, and ride straight forward, by which means they save a great deal of ground, and the bird is less frightened than if they closely followed its steps. In this manner they pursue it, for two or three days, till the poor Ostrich is quite tired; for it is not so strong as the horse,

though it can run much faster for a little way. At length, when it can run no further, the Ostrich either turns round and fights the hunters with great fury, or hides its head, and quietly submits to be taken. Thus, skill and patience prevail over swiftness.

But the Arab must be very much tired himself with his long chase: why does he take so much trouble in hunting the Ostrich? The skin of this bird serves the Arab for leather, and its flesh makes a part of his food. The Arab also makes many things which his sandy deserts do not produce: he wants barley for his horse; and millet, (a grain like rice,) and coffee, and fruit, for himself: and if he takes the beautiful white feathers that grow on the

tail and wings of the Ostrich to his countrymen who live on the sea-shore, they will give him, in exchange for those feathers, barley, and millet, and coffee, or any thing else he may want.

But of what use are these feathers to the Arabs on the sea-shore? They sell them to the inhabitants of other countries, and obtain for them what the most fertile parts of Arabia cannot produce. When you see an English lady with a beautiful plume of Ostrich feathers, you may think how much toil and trouble the poor Arab of the desert has undergone to obtain them.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

*Aikin's Geographical Delineations.*



## THE BLACK SNAKE.

MANY kinds of serpents are found in the different countries of the world. Some of them have poisonous fangs, or teeth, furnished with a little bag of very powerful venom, which, when they are in the act of biting any creature, is forced into the wound, and causes a great deal of pain and swelling, and sometimes occasions death. But most kinds of serpents and snakes are harmless, and you might play with them very safely.

The Black Snake of North America is one of this kind. It is much larger than our English snakes: indeed, I have heard, that though its body is slender, it is as long

as that of a tall man. The black Snake is so nimble and active, that you would be very much diverted by watching its motions; and you need not be afraid of it, for this picture represents an event that really happened. One of these Snakes was seen eating milk out of the same bowl with some children: it was very much pleased to share their breakfast, and they had no objection to indulge it. The Snake had not sense enough to know that greediness is disliked by every body, and often took more than its share of the milk; for which the children punished it, by striking its head with their spoons when they thought it was too greedy. The Snake took this reproof very patiently, and did not attempt to bite the children in return: indeed, if



*The Black Snake.*



it had done so, no great harm would have followed, because, as I told you, the bite of the Black Snake is not poisonous.

It is said that in the spring the Black Snake is not so gentle as at other times of the year; and sometimes it is bold enough to attack a man. If he is courageous, he may easily drive it away by giving the creature a smart blow with a stick, should he happen to have one in his hand; but if he has not been accustomed to these reptiles, he would probably be frightened at seeing a Snake, six feet long, coming towards him as fast as a horse can gallop. I will tell you what happened to a man who was a stranger in America, and knew nothing of the qualities of the Black Snake.

This person, who had lately arrived from

Europe, was hired by a gentleman of New York, to assist some American workmen that were employed at his house in the country. It happened to be the spring of the year, when the Snakes are bolder than at other times; and the Americans thought they would amuse themselves by engaging their new companion in a battle with a Snake. No good-natured person would have taken advantage of a stranger's ignorance, to lead him into a disagreeable adventure; but these men were not good-natured. They saw two Black Snakes lying on the ground, at a little distance, and they asked the stranger to go and kill one of them. It was very foolish of him to agree to the proposal: indeed, I think it is wrong to kill or hurt a poor animal

that does not attempt to do us any harm. But the person I am telling you of did not consider this, and approached the Snakes with a stick in his hand. One of them observed him coming, and, instead of waiting to be attacked, it sprung forward towards the man. He little expected a poor Snake would be so courageous: and partly, I suppose, from surprise, and partly from fear, he flung away his stick, and took to his heels as fast as ever he could run. This was just what the other workmen desired to see: they thought it was capital fun, and laughed heartily at the chase. In the mean time the Black Snake came up with its enemy, and twisting its long body several times round the man's legs, threw him down, and frightened the poor fellow

almost out of his senses. It was of no use for him to kick and struggle, so tightly had the Snake coiled itself about him. Still the ill-natured workmen stood by laughing, without offering the least assistance. I wonder they were not ashamed of taking pleasure in the terror and distress of their companion. At length he found that he must contrive to help himself; and recollecting his knife, he took it out, and cut the Snake's body through in several places: thus freeing himself from his disagreeable situation.

I am sorry the poor Snake was killed, for it was less to blame than any body. I do not understand how it could overtake the man. You know the Snake has no legs: it can only crawl like a caterpillar.



The swiftness with which the Snake moves, and his wonderful power of twisting and bending his body, depend upon the curious form of his back-bone. It is composed of a great number of small bones, nicely fitted into each other, and moving freely in every direction. This curious back-bone answers the purpose of legs to the Snake. Sometimes it glides at full length, in pursuit of its prey: sometimes it raises its head and half of its body erect from the ground; then its bright eyes shine like fire, and it looks very beautiful.

If it happens to see a tree-frog springing from bough to bough, in search of the insects that live among the branches, the Black Snake will climb the tree as nimbly as if it had the legs of a squirrel, and seize the poor frog for its own supper.—I never

heard of frogs living in trees.—We have no tree-frogs in England; but they are found in France and Germany, and many other European countries, as well as in America, where they stand but a poor chance of escaping, if the Black Snake mounts a tree in pursuit of them.

The Americans, in general, do not like to hurt or kill Black Snakes, because they are so clever in catching rats, that they will soon clear a house of those troublesome animals. They may run as fast as they can, but the nimble Snake will pursue them still faster, even to the roofs of barns and out-houses. This pleases the American farmer; but the Black Snake is sometimes in sad disgrace with his wife. When the good woman goes into her dairy, she finds that the snake has been there skimming

off the cream with its slender tongue. She has reason to be vexed; for she knows that when once these creatures have found their way to the milk-pans, it is almost impossible to prevent their doing so afterwards: they slip about so slyly, and are so watchful to seize every opportunity of tasting what they are fond of.

The farmer's wife has another complaint against the Black Snake, for it likes eggs almost as well as milk. It is sometimes found coiled up in the nest of a sitting hen; and while she is patiently brooding over her eggs, they may all be spoiled by her sly, greedy visitor.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

*Paley's Natural Theology.*

## THE RATTLESNAKE.

I HAVE told you a story of a harmless snake: I will now tell you of another kind of serpent, which is armed with those poisonous fangs that inflict such terrible wounds.

No serpent is more dreaded than the Rattlesnake, which is found in the woods of America. The end of its tail is composed of a number of joints, loosely united to each other: when the animal is in motion, these joints make a rattling sound, which is generally heard at some little distance, and warns the traveller to get out of the way. It is also a very happy thing for the Americans that the Rattlesnake is slow in its motions, and has not the power of

springing to seize its prey. Another security is afforded, both to men and animals, in the disagreeable smell of this venomous reptile. When it lies basking in the sun, and when it is angry, this smell is so strong, that even horses and cattle are sensible of it, and make haste out of the way.

Then I suppose the Rattlesnake seldom does any mischief.

Not nearly so often as it would do if a kind Providence had not given to other animals these notices of its approach. Had the Rattlesnake been as swift and as dexterous in springing at any object as the black snake is, it would be very dangerous indeed to travel in the woods of America. But in rainy weather the rattling sound is not always to be heard, and this makes

the Americans afraid of travelling through the woods in wet seasons. It sometimes also happens, when the traveller is between the wind and the serpent, that the smell is blown away from him, and he may approach very near without being aware of it.

If the weather is not hot, nor the Rattlesnake angry, it seldom attacks a man; but if by accident he should hurt the snake, he would be in great danger. I will tell you what happened to an American farmer. He was out in the fields with his labourers, who were busy mowing, when, unfortunately, he trod on one of these snakes. The angry reptile immediately flew at the farmer's legs; but he had boots on, purposely to guard himself against any venomous creature that might happen to be

among the long grass. The Rattlesnake, after once attempting to bite, was going to do so a second time, when one of the Negro labourers cut it asunder with his scythe. They were very glad to have got rid of it so easily, and went on with their mowing. When his day's work was over, the farmer returned home, pulled off his boots, and went to bed. In a little while he became very ill, and complained of feeling a strange sickness; his body swelled, and, before a doctor could be fetched to his assistance, the poor man died.

When people die in a strange or sudden manner, their friends should endeavour to find out what caused their death, in order that other people may be careful not to run into the same danger. But the friends and

neighbours of the farmer were not so wise as to make this inquiry: they only wondered a little at his strange illness, and buried the dead body.

A few days afterwards, the farmer's son was going out to the hay-field, and he thought he would put on the boots that had defended his father from the attack of the Rattlesnake. He did so; and after employing himself in the meadow all day, he came home in the evening, pulled off the boots, and went to bed. In the night he was attacked with the same kind of sickness that had seized his father, and in the morning the young man died. A little before his death, the doctor, who had been sent for, came to see him; but he could do no good: indeed, he was a foolish, ignorant



man, so that he was not likely to be of any service. But he was proud, and did not choose to own that he knew nothing of the matter; therefore, when the neighbours asked his opinion, he said that the father and son were bewitched.

The poor afflicted mother of the family had now lost her husband and her eldest son. I believe her other children were too young to manage the farm, and she sold the ploughs, scythes, and every thing that was useless to a woman and little children; among the rest, she sold the farmer's boots.

One of the neighbours, who bought these boots, presently put them on; and, after a little while, he became very sick and ill, as the farmer and his son had been before him. Now this man had a prudent wife:

she resolved to lose no time, but sent off one of her negroes to fetch a very skilful physician. Happily, this physician had heard the strange story of the death of the farmer and his son: and being a wise man, he knew that it was impossible for any body to be bewitched, and that such idle stories are never believed, except by very ignorant people. He also knew that nothing happens by chance, but that there is a reason for every thing; and he thought it most likely, that as all the three men had the same kind of illness, they were made ill by the same cause. He guessed what that cause was, gave the sick man such medicines as were proper to cure the bite of a Rattlesnake, and his patient got well.

But had he been bitten by a Rattlesnake?

I do not know that he had even been near one.

Why this makes the story stranger than ever. I thought the wise physician had found out the reason.

He had guessed what it was likely to be. As the first person that died had been attacked by a Rattlesnake, though it did not bite him, and as two men who put on the farmer's boots had the same kind of illness, the physician resolved to have these boots very carefully examined. He found, as he expected, that the fangs of the Rattlesnake were sticking in one of the boots, and the little bags of poison still remained hanging to them. The unfortunate father

and son had been poisoned by these fangs scratching their legs when they pulled off the boots. Though the scratch was so slight that they had paid no attention to it, it was sufficient to allow some of the active poison to mix with their blood ; and thus it occasioned their death. The third owner of the boots would, most likely, have died in the same manner, if the physician had not been so clever as to discover the cause of this strange succession of misfortunes. You see how useful it is to endeavour to find out the *reason* of things ; and I hope you will think of the wise physician, whenever you see or hear of any thing extraordinary : do not be content with wondering at it, but try to find out *why* it happened ; and, perhaps, when you are grown

up, you may be of great use in the world.

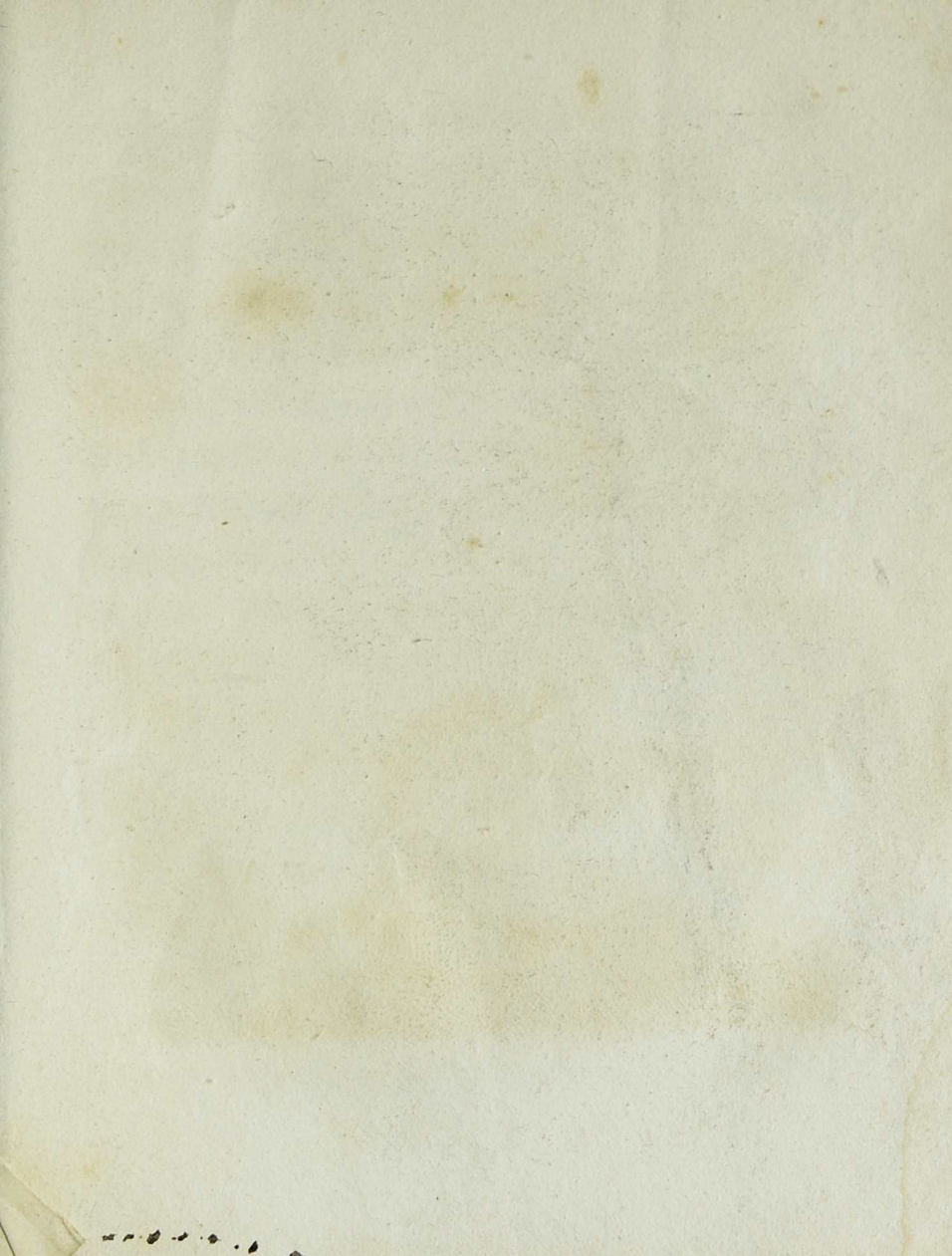
I think the physician must have felt very happy when he had saved that poor man's life.

No doubt of it. I believe one of the greatest pleasures a man can feel, is the consciousness of being useful. Wise and good men enjoy this happiness much oftener than other people, and they deserve such a reward.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*  
*American Farmer's Letters.*

## THE BEAVER.

I THINK you would like to hear a story about the Beaver. You are obliged to him for the soft, warm fur with which your hat is covered; and he is one of the cleverest and most industrious animals in the world. I need not describe him to you, because you may examine this picture, which will show you what kind of animal he is. But this picture does not tell me how large he is. Very true, there is nothing to enable you to judge of his size; therefore, I must tell you, that he is about three feet long, from his nose to the tip of his tail, and about one foot high. I see that he uses his fore-feet like hands, and he holds a little branch in his mouth. I suppose he has just bitten it





*A Beaver Village.*



off with those sharp, white teeth. But what are these little, round-topped things at a distance behind him? They are the *huts of Beavers*: this is a view of a *Beaver village*.—*A Beaver village!* Do you really mean to say that these pretty little houses were built by Beavers? I suppose they can swim; for two of their houses stand quite in the water. Yes; Beavers are of the *rat kind*: they can swim in the water, and walk about on the land. Look on the other side of the river, and you will see several Beavers round the foot of that large tree. What do you think they can be doing? I suppose they are collecting food to carry to their habitations, for they are very prudent animals; and they lay up a good store in the summer, which

enables them to pass the long, gloomy winter months in ease and plenty.

The Beaver feeds on the leaves and bark of many kinds of trees and shrubs; particularly the ash, the aspen, and the birch: he is also very fond of the root of the water-lily. When he eats, he holds the food in his fore-paws, and sits up and nibbles it like a squirrel. I can easily believe that, for his teeth are just like a squirrel's teeth: they seem made on purpose for nibbling. But he has not such a feathery tail as our poor squirrel had. No, the Beaver's tail is not so pretty: instead of hair, it is covered with scales, like the skin of a fish; but it is more useful to him than a hairy tail would be.

Do Beavers live in this country? I

should like to see one of their villages. They are not found here at present; but I have heard that they once frequented the river Tievi, in Cardiganshire. The Welsh called them "*The broad-tailed animals,*" and set a very great value on their smooth, glossy, beautiful skins.

If you and I were to visit a Beaver village, we must take a long voyage. We must sail across the Atlantic Ocean to North America, quite on the other side of our globe. I am afraid we cannot do this very conveniently, for papa would not like to be left at home by himself, and he is too busy to go with us. But you can find the Beavers' country in the map; and I will give you this pretty picture of his village, and tell you how he builds his houses; and

I think that will suit you quite as well as going to America.

In the months of June and July, the Beavers assemble in companies of two or three hundred, and look out for a convenient situation to settle in. They prefer a pond surrounded by aspen or birch trees; but if they cannot find one, they choose a level piece of ground with a rivulet running through it, and then they make a pond for themselves. Oh, what clever creatures! But can this be possible? I wish you would tell me how Beavers make a pond?

I said they were very industrious, and I am going to give you a proof of it. They do not grudge any labour or any trouble, to accomplish a work they have under-

taken; and when they find it necessary to make a pond, they set about it in this manner:

They first choose a part of the rivulet that seems most convenient; and then they disperse themselves about the neighbouring woods, to collect stakes five or six feet in length. Only think what labour it must be for these little creatures, who have no instruments but their strong, sharp teeth, to cut with. Well, when they have procured a sufficient number of stakes, they begin their work by driving them into the ground at the bottom of the rivulet. They place the stakes, side by side, in rows across the stream, and weave branches of trees between them, in the same manner that hurdles are made. Then they fill the space

between the rows with clay, stones, and sand, and carefully tread and beat it down, till it is firm and hard. This dam or bank is ten or twelve feet thick at the bottom: one side of the dam is upright; but the other slopes gently back, till at the top it measures only two or three feet, but it is sometimes an hundred feet long. The sloping side is soon covered with grass, which makes the work stronger. The Beavers make the dam to stop the course of the water, which spreads into a pond above the dam, till it is as large as the little builders wish it to be.

When the Beavers have thus found, or made, a pond to suit them, they begin to build their houses in it near the edge of the shore. They raise these little dwellings

very ingeniously on piles : the walls are about two feet thick, and made of earth, stones, and sticks, carefully cemented together. The outside, you see, is arched like a little dome : the inside is plastered as neatly as if a mason had been employed in the work. Some of the houses have only one floor, others have three ; and the number of inhabitants varies from two to thirty. Every Beaver forms its own bed of moss ; and each family has its magazine under the water, in which the store of winter provisions is kept safe from the frost, and brought up into the living apartments as it is wanted. From ten to twenty-five of these houses compose a village. If the Beavers like the situation, if they find plenty of their favourite food, and nobody comes to disturb

them, they will remain several years in the same pond. But they are not idle. They go on with their buildings; and I suppose this is the reason why some of their villages are so much larger than others. When provisions begin to fail, they wander till they find a convenient place for a new settlement. In the summer months they generally forsake their houses and ramble in the woods, sleeping on beds of small sticks, under the shelter of a bush, by the water-side. Some of the company keep watch as sentinels, and give notice, by a particular cry, if they suspect any danger: then the timid Beavers jump from their beds, and dash into the water for protection.

During the winter they remain snugly in their dwellings, for they are not able to



endure severe cold ; and at this time of year, when they take no exercise, and are plentifully supplied with food from their magazines, they grow excessively fat.

But though the Beavers have done all in their power to secure comfort and safety during the winter, that is the season when they are exposed to the greatest danger. The hunters then disperse themselves through the woods, to search for the settlements of these industrious animals. There are two ways of catching them. Sometimes the hunters stop up the entrance of the hut, which is on the side next the water, with stakes : they then make a hole through the wall of the hut, on the land side, sufficiently large to admit a dog. The dog is trained to hold the Beaver fast

with his teeth, while he suffers his master to pull him back again by his hind legs: thus the dog and the Beaver are drawn out together. The Indians of Hudson's Bay adopt another plan. They first drain away the water which surrounds the Beavers' huts, and then cover them with nets: when this is done, they begin to break in the tops of the houses. The frightened animals immediately endeavour to plunge into the water; but as soon as they run through the door to escape, they are entangled in the nets: the hunters seize them, and immediately strip off their soft, warm skins, which are thought more valuable in the winter than at any other time of the year. The hunters catch so many in one season, that you can form no idea of the number:

you must be older and wiser, and know how to cast up sums on your slate, before you can form any notion of such very great numbers\*.

The Beaver in the picture is covered with long hair; but I see no such hairs on my hat. No; it is the soft, downy fur which grows underneath those long hairs, that is used in making hats. This soft, downy fur keeps the Beaver warm; and it is quite necessary to its comfort, for it is a tender animal, though it inhabits such cold countries. Beavers are found in Lapland and Russia, as well as in America; but those of which I have been telling you,

\* In the year 1798, 106,000 skins were collected in Canada, and sent to Europe and China.

live in Labrador, on the shore of Hudson's Bay. Come here, and I will show you Labrador in the map. It is a very pleasant country for the Beavers, as it abounds in rivers, lakes, and ponds of excellent water. Birch and aspen trees, with many kinds of shrubs and wild fruits, are to be found in the woods. I dare say they are very happy animals; for they are not only active and industrious, but very sociable and affectionate. Two young beavers were once taken alive, and kept at one of the settlements in Hudson's Bay: they lived very comfortably, for some time, till one was killed by an accident. Its companion grieved very much for this sad loss. He had no pleasure in life when he had lost his friend; he would not take any more

food, and pined and drooped, till at length he died.

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There are a great many Beavers in another part of North America, called Louisiana. I will show you that country. Here it is, between the great river Mississipi and the Stony Mountains. There are many rivers in Louisiana, and these rivers empty their waters into the broad, deep channel of the Mississipi, in which their united streams flow till they reach the Gulf of Mexico.

In a very solitary place, at the head of one of these rivers, M. du Pratz, a gentleman who lived in that country, found a

Beaver village. He had a great curiosity to observe the actions of these industrious little creatures, and he resolved to remain for some time in the neighbourhood, that he might watch them. Some of his friends accompanied him, and they built a hut at a little distance, but out of sight of the Beavers, that they might not suspect that any body was near. Du Pratz and his friends remained quietly in their hut till night; and when the moon shone, and all was still, each of them took a large leafy branch, and carried it before him. They walked gently and silently along, till they came to the Beaver's dam. If one of them had peeped out, he would not have suspected any mischief, for the men were concealed by the branches they held before

them. Du Pratz then whispered to one of them, and bid him cut a gutter through the dam as softly as possible, and when he had done it, he was to slip quietly back to his companions.

When the gutter was cut, the water began to make a noise in running through it: immediately a watchful Beaver came from one of the huts, and plunged into the water to see what was the matter. Du Pratz quietly observed him: he saw the Beaver come to the damaged bank, get upon it, and examine it. Poor fellow, I dare say he was quite puzzled to think how a gutter should have opened there! But he saw that mischief was done, and that it must be repaired. He lifted up his broad, scaly tail, and, with all his force,

gave four distinct blows with it against the bank on which he was standing. The noise seemed to waken the whole colony: they came tumbling out of their houses into the water, and soon joined their companion. When they were all assembled, Du Pratz heard one of them make a muttering sound, as if he was giving orders. The Beavers dispersed immediately, and went, in different directions, to the banks of the pond. Some of them came so near to our party, that they could see what they were doing. The little creatures were busy in mixing a kind of mortar, I suppose with water and such clay as they could find: they mixed it pretty stiff, and then dragged it to the dam, where other Beavers were ready to



receive it. These put the mortar into the gutter, and rammed it down by striking upon it with their tails.

The noise of the water soon ceased, for the Beavers had repaired the damage completely. One of them now struck two blows with his tail, and the whole company went into the water, and swam quietly away. Du Pratz and his companions then went to their hut.

I hope he did not disturb the poor Beavers any more. Yes, I assure you, he came back the next day; for he wished to examine the dwellings of these clever, industrious creatures. He fired off his gun several times; and the noise frightened the Beavers so much that they scampered away and hid themselves in the woods.

Then Du Pratz examined their neat little huts at his leisure. They were built in the same way as those I have described to you ; but Du Pratz saw that the Beavers contrived to support the floors of their houses by cutting notches in the posts which form the walls: on these notches the floors were laid, and fixed tightly. If they had employed a carpenter, I think he could not have managed the job more cleverly. Do you think that Beavers have as much sense as men? No, the sense of Beavers is very different from ours: it does not depend upon instruction. A Beaver can only do and know such things as are necessary to make a Beaver happy. The great and good Being who made all animals, gave them a desire to do exactly

what will make them comfortable. A rabbit feels a wish to burrow in the ground, and he does it: he wants no other rabbit to teach him. This feeling, which serves animals instead of knowledge and experience, is called *instinct*. I will tell you more about it when you are older.

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