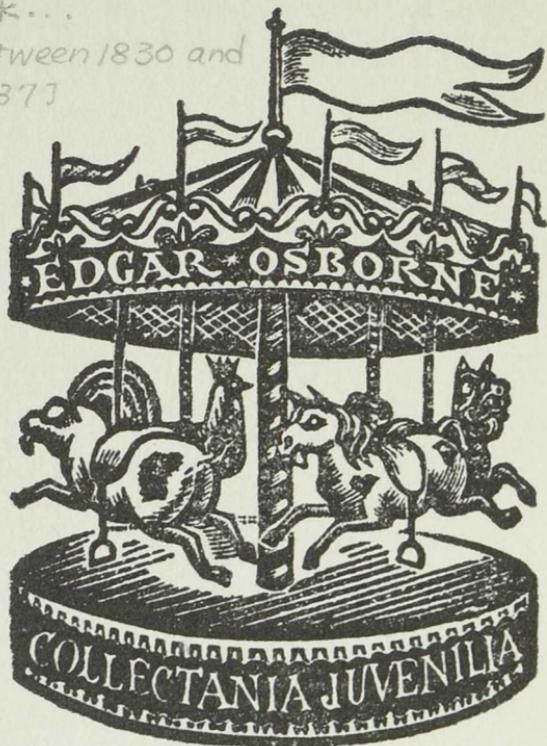


ELLIOTT'S
Book of
BEASTS AND BIRDS

W. CALLANDER,
3, Market Place,
WHITEHAVEN.

MS
ELLIOTT, MARY
BOOK...

[between 1830 and
1837]



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THE BOOK

OF

BIRDS AND BEASTS,

Beautifully Coloured,

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF EACH,

IN WORDS OF TWO AND THREE SYLLABLES.

BY MARY ELLIOTT.

Illustrated with Forty-Eight Plates.

LONDON:
WILLIAM DARTON AND SON,
HOLBORN HILL.

THE SHEEP.

ALMOST every country in the world has its Sheep; so useful are these creatures, it seems we could hardly exist without them; a hundred pages might be written in making known the many uses to which they turn: their wool gives clothing and assists hat making; their skins, when tanned, become leather for saddlers and book-binders. Lambs' skins make nice gloves. Their flesh is the most wholesome of all meat, if we reckon upon the young Lamb, called house-lamb, or the well-grown mutton that graces our board at least once a week. What wise child would desire better fare than a nice leg of mutton? The milk of the sheep makes butter and cheese, though of a coarse kind.

Did you know that the entrails of the Sheep make the strings of the fiddle and other instruments? Thus they help us to play a merry tune. Their bones make knife-handles and other useful things.

South Down, or Sussex mutton, is of a fine flavour. The Merino Sheep from Spain are much praised for their wool, as you must have heard, and they now flourish as well in England as in their own country, though our climate is colder.

The Sheep





The Squirrel

THE SQUIRREL.

THIS playful little creature has often amused us by cracking nuts and running round and round its cage. When wild, Squirrels are swift as lightning, skipping from one bough to another, and eluding pursuit. Some ladies make such pets of them that they carry them about in their pockets—a very absurd custom, you will say.

Squirrel skin is worn as a trimming and lining of garments. There are grey and black Squirrels, but the skin of the latter is esteemed most. America has abundance of them, and they are likewise plentiful in some parts of the north of Europe. I have seen numbers of them in the grounds of our English gentry.

I once heard of a little girl who was cruel enough to put a candle to the tail of her pet Squirrel: you know Squirrels have a full brush tail. It seems strange that children should hurt a creature they pretend to regard. Thus, when I see young persons tease and pinch a Cat or Dog, I do not believe they can really like the animal, and therefore blame them for telling a falsehood, as well as being cruel. Avoid conduct like this, if you wish to be loved.

THE HOG.

HERE is something we like very much when dressed in joints or salted. Most children are fond of pork, ham, and bacon, all of which are the flesh of Swine; yet too much of either is not good for any one: a young Pig is certainly the nicest, and not unpleasant to look upon; but the Sow has not much beauty.

How glad our poor sailors are to eat salt pork when they are at sea, far from home and land!

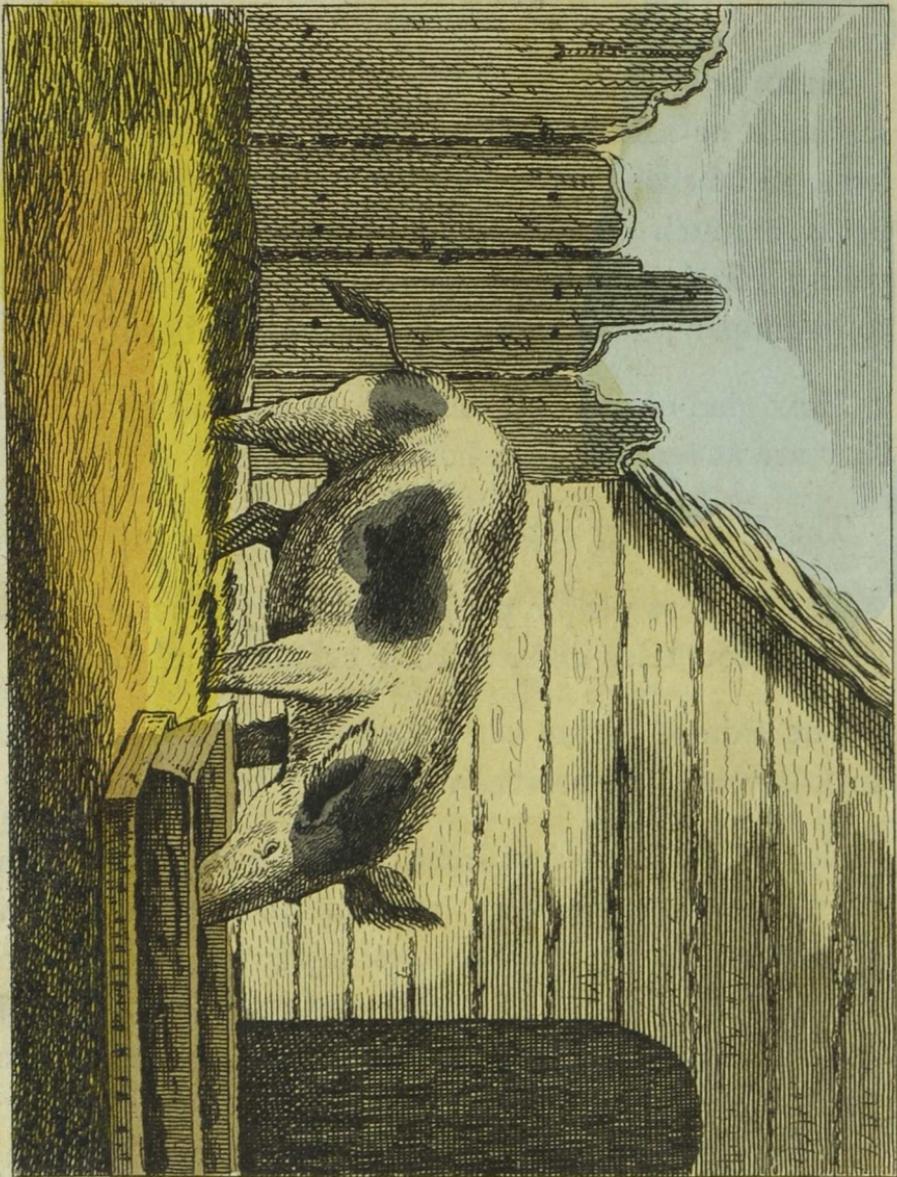
The Jews never eat Pork.

The Chinese people prefer it to every other meat; so you see countries differ in their customs and tastes.

The skin of Swine when dressed makes saddles and book-covers; the bristles are made into brushes.

Never be tempted to hunt a Pig, or throw stones at it. Some boys are very cruel in this way. I know not what right we have to hurt any living creature because its form does not please our eye: we have their flesh to eat when they are killed; let us spare them pain while they can feel. I forgot to observe to you, that Hog's grease or lard fries our Shrove-Tuesday Pancakes.

The Hog.





Mare & Foal

MARE AND FOAL.

THE very name of a Horse bespeaks a friend, and such it truly is to the human race. I never heard any person express a dislike to this useful and kind-natured creature. The picture before us gives the female Horse, or Mare, and her young one, called a Foal. It is very amusing to see a young Horse gambol round its mother and skip round a field. What little boy but wishes to ride on horseback?

The sense of the Horse is equal to its good-nature; it will do every thing but talk. How, then, can people use it ill—the creature that carries our burthens, conveys us from one place to another, knows our persons, and greets us as though a fellow-being?

Horse-racing is not pleasant to witness; the fatigue it suffers must give pain to every feeling heart. The English Hunter is one of the noblest of the species. The Arabs are noted for their fine breed of Horses.

The Tartars and Russians eat the flesh of this animal, and even some English people say it is good flavoured, but custom alone could tempt us to join in this opinion. I really have no wish to try it—have you?

THE REIN DEER.

Look at this useful animal, not unlike the Stag in form, but rather bigger, and much stronger: its horns, you see, branch out into small ones. The feet are very thick. The Rein Deer is by nature wild, but can be tamed and taught many things that would surprise you: it will draw a sledge or cart, carry heavy burthens, and, in short, do the duties of a Horse. In Lapland, where the ground is so long covered with snow and ice, it travels with a speed that is hardly to be supposed, and yet its pace is quite steady.

The people of Lapland make cheese of its milk, but I guess we, who have our nice Cows to give us sweet milk, would think the Lapland cheese poor stuff. It is pleasant to live in a country where we need not have recourse to such means for simple food, yet no doubt the Laplanders think their cheese good, and enjoy it as such. Content will make all things pleasant.

The Rein Deer's summer treat is grass, leaves, and white moss, and this last it scrapes out from the snow, when winter denies better fare. This creature seldom lives more than ten years, perhaps from hard labour.

Rein Deer





The Kangaroo

London, Published Augst 26, 1826, by Will^m Darton, 58, Holborn Hill.

THE KANGAROO.

ONE of the most curious creatures we can behold is the Kangaroo, whose picture is now before you: look at it well, for there is much to observe in its form, and I will give you some account of its habits.

The Kangaroo was first known to us through the great Captain Cook, when he was on the coast of New Holland, fifty-seven years ago. Its length is between five and six feet from nose to tail. The fore legs, you see, are very short, and look like paws, while the hind ones are one foot eight inches longer: this looks very strange. Its food is grass, and other substances of a like nature. It carries its young in a pouch, which is a kind of pocket in the stomach, and this enables it to move about with them in time of danger; for of course its short paws would ill do the offices of a nurse.

Kangaroos live in herds, like Deer, and one is on the watch, like a centinel, at some distance from the rest, in case of alarm.

It is no less strange than true, that the Kangaroo can divide the two front teeth in the lower jaw at pleasure.

THE GREAT MORSE.

HERE is a frightful-looking animal, Lucy ; it makes one stare something like himself to see such a strange creature. In former times, the Walrus was called the Horse Whale. The tusks of the Morse are ivory, and its body yields nearly half a tun of oil each, so that it is worth catching.

The Greenlanders make harness of its skin, and twist strips of it into cables. You know when a man is six feet high, we think him very tall indeed, but the Morse, or Walrus, is eighteen feet in length ; it is, therefore, three times as long as such a tall man.

I guess, Lucy, you would rather hear this monster described, than behold it with the naked eye—and no wonder. They say, thread is made from its tendons or sinews. How would you like to sew with it ? I fear even your neat hand would make a bad job of it.

This creature lives in the sea near the northern parts of the American coasts ; there let it remain ; we wish not to bring it nearer our peaceful shores. Do you know why they call the Walrus a marine animal ? Because it lives in, or belongs to the sea. Remember this.

Morse or Arctic Walrus





Three toed Sloth

THE SLOTH.

WHEN we speak of lazy persons, we sometimes say that they are slothful; and, after seeing this picture, and hearing the animal described, we may conclude no term can be more disgraceful.

The Sloth is frightful and heavy in its form, sluggish in its movements, and of no use to mankind. It has no soles to its feet, the toes do not separate; indeed, it has only two or three crooked claws; and not being able to seize on prey, and having no teeth that will bite, it is forced to feed on leaves and wild fruits. It is a long time getting to a tree, and still longer climbing up to its branches. It will strip the tree of all its foliage, and then drop to the ground.

Its voice is disgusting and mournful. It can live a great many days without eating, and for weeks will not moisten its food. All its strength is in the paws, and with these it will fasten so strongly on beasts of prey who may attack it, that they cannot be released, and it often happens that both are found dead.

What can be so hateful as the Sloth? Who would be like one in any respect?

WEASEL.

I DON'T know if you ever saw one of these little animals ; the print will give you an idea of its shape. The upper part of its body is striped with black and white ; the neck and legs are very short ; it destroys Rats, and for that purpose is useful in barns and places where grain is laid up. The Martin is a kind of Weasel : it may be found in woods both in Ireland and England. The skin of the Martin is much prized ; and in Turkey they deem its fur very handsome. But the Sable, which is also of the Weasel tribe, is of much greater value.

You have seen ladies' pelisses trimmed with this fur, and it certainly looks very rich and warm ; most of it comes from Russia ; sometimes it is sold at a vast price, but it is folly to pay so much for a trifle of this sort.

The Ermine is another kind of Weasel. The king's robes are trimmed with this fur, which is white with black spots ; the black formed by the tail. The skin of the Ermine is brown in the summer, and only changes to white in winter, and this change of colour saves it from the sight of many foes.

Weasel



From the right of many feet



Greyhound

GREYHOUND.

THIS is a handsome kind of Dog, and very pleasing to the eye; how slight and genteel he looks! It is a pity he should be kept for the same purpose as the Pointer. Sportsmen call hunting with the Greyhound, coursing. The timid Hare is the prey it seeks. Poor Puss, your fate has often caused me a sigh—so meek, so trembling as I have seen you look, when fatigue has checked your flight.

The Greyhound does not hunt by scent, but sight, so you may suppose it has a keen eye. Now I think if this Dog could spy our faults as quickly as the presence of the simple Hare, he might prove to us, what he is not to her, a *true friend!* for I hope we should have sense enough to thank even an animal for pointing out what might be mended.

So fleet is the foot of the Greyhound, that in a hilly country few horses can keep up with him. If you observe, his body is very slender, and fitly formed for racing. I must again repeat, I envy not the sportsman his pleasure in such pursuits, though he may reckon them good for his health.

POINTER.

JAMES, you have often seen the Pointer go out with papa, when he was going to shoot game. This Dog is of all others the most useful to sportsmen. His smell is so acute, and his tread so gentle, that the poor bird is not aware how nigh the foe is, when the eyes of the Pointer are fixed on the very spot where the game lies.

If the bird runs, the Dog steals after it in the same cautious manner, and stops when his prey does. Look at the picture; one foot is a little raised, as if ready to pounce upon the game, or fearful of making a noise. Well, it is a cruel sport, and for what? Surely nature offers us enough wholesome food, without dainties of this kind, only gained at the expense of a harmless creature's life—besides all the fear and pain which precedes its death.

You and I, James, like mutton, beef, and veal, and have no desire for Woodcocks, Pheasants, and other birds; so we will not require the Pointer to exert his skill for our palates. I wish the rest of the world thought as we do on this subject. Do not you, my dear boy?



Pointer.

London, Published Augst 26, 1836, by WELLM Darton, 38, Holborn Hill.



Duck billed Platypus, from New Holland

DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS.

THIS strange-looking animal is, as you read under the print, a creature of New Holland, and really there is nothing in its form to tempt us to wish it were a native of our own coasts. The Platypus was not known to us until of late years, nor is it so minutely described as many other creatures, though we readily guess why it is called Duck-billed, for its snout, or bill, is very like that of a Duck.

When my little readers have made farther progress in their studies, books of travels and discoveries will be put into their hands, from which they will derive much to amuse, and, among other things, may learn more of the Platypus than they would understand at present.

Uncouth as many of the objects of nature appear to the eye, and useless as we may at first think some of them, a very little thought will convince us the whole are useful, and therefore proper; for God formed creation, and he is perfect! His works are without fault! Our blindness may fancy a blemish, but in reality nature is complete. Let us admire, but not censure; let us wonder, and be grateful.

EGYPTIAN JERBOA.

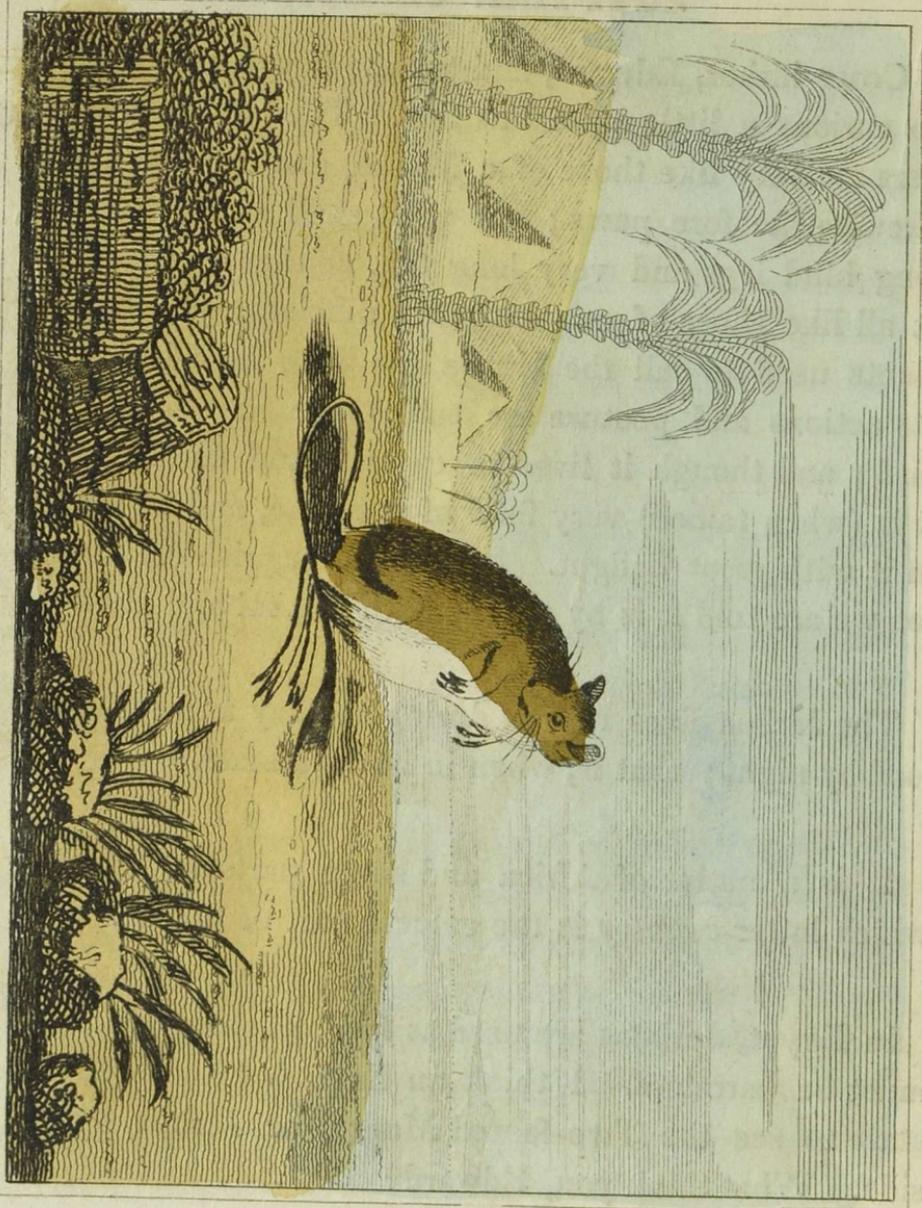
COME hither, Edward, and tell me if you ever beheld so curious a little animal as this. The head and whiskers are very like those of a Mouse, and we might add likewise the fore paws; but what shall we say of the long hind legs and very long tail, neither of which is at all like those of our cupboard nibblers; yet the ancients used to call the Jerboa the Two-footed Mouse. Its actions and posture are said to be like those of a bird; and though it lives in caverns and dark places, it is (when tamed) very fond of sunshine, and will bask in it with great delight. It is not a sluggish creature; for we are told it is by nature both playful and alert.

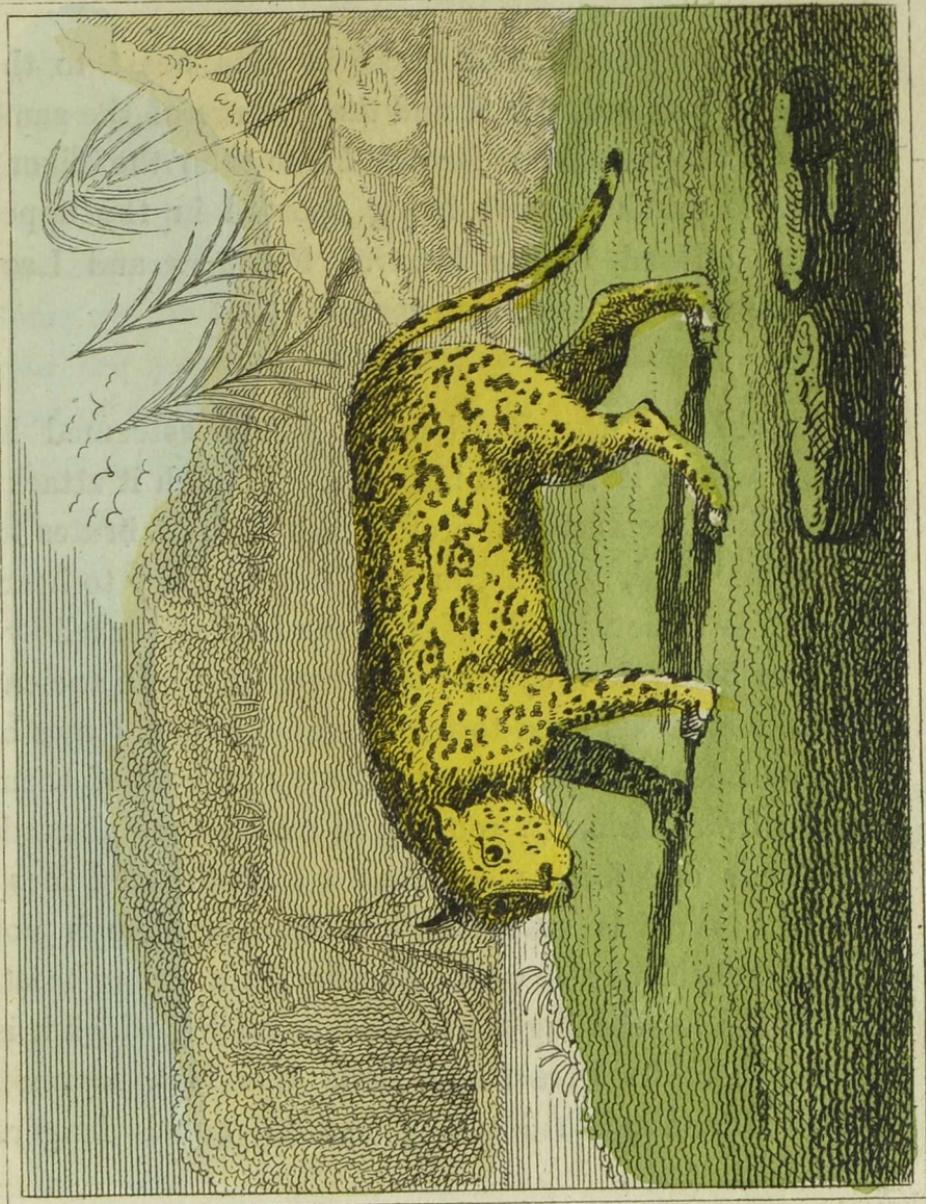
The Jerboa lives retired during the day and seeks its food by night; that is, when in its wild state.

It is a native of Africa and some parts of Siberia, which latter country is the coldest part of Russia.

In Egypt, Jerboas are used as food, so that their flesh must be harmless. I think an English Mouse would stare to see the Two-footed Mouse, or Jerboa, by its side. What think you, Edward?

Egyptian Jerboa





Panther

PANTHER.

You will perceive a likeness in this beast to the Tiger and Leopard, for it and the Cat are of the same tribe, but the Panther is far less fierce than the Tiger: its skin is much valued, being spotted in the upper part and striped in the lower. Panthers and Leopards are very handsome creatures.

The skin of the Panther is highly esteemed in Russia, where it is made into fur. Though it attacks every living creature, it prefers the flesh of brutes to that of mankind, which you will not be sorry to hear, for there is something dreadful in the idea of our fellow-creatures being destroyed by a savage beast. In ancient times the Romans used to make grand public shows of them, and for this purpose had vast numbers of them brought from Africa, a country in which they abound. Our woods and forests contain no such dreaded foes; even the Wolf is extinct. The Ounce, though not more than half the size of the Panther, is a strong beast, and famous for chasing Antelopes, in seizing which it is very expert. In Persia and India this is a common sport. Our English hunting has not equal dangers added to its toils.

ASS.

WHAT a contrast in these two prints! one the savage Tiger, the other our patient Donkey! We used to think the Ass a stupid animal, and fit for nothing but to carry heavy burthens; of late years it has been more caressed, and is now getting quite a handsome creature. Some people are very often cruel to the Ass, but I must own the poor beast is in much greater favour with most of us: indeed we owe him some kindness, for he is useful in more ways than one. Great boys and girls are very glad to mount the Donkey, which, when dressed out with a smart saddle and trappings, looks gay and stylish.

You must have heard how much good its milk has done to the sick and weak, even when physic has failed to cure. Would you not feel grateful to the Ass if its milk had brought back the colour in the cheek of a dear brother or sister? Surely you would. You have seen the leaves in a pocket-book, made from the skin of this beast, which likewise is used for drum-heads and many other things. The Hottentots think the flesh a very nice dish; others, more polished, allow it is tender and sweet.





Tiger

London, Published Aug. 26, 1826, by Will^m. Darton, 58, Holborn Hill.

TIGER.

THIS fierce and cruel animal is the terror of men as well as beasts, and no wonder; his very look would make one tremble. This creature lives in woods and thickets; and when he is going to seize his prey, he conceals himself, then darts on his victim at the moment it is least prepared to expect him. At the sight of him the stoutest Horse will tremble. Asia abounds with Tigers. The Indians eat their flesh, and think it good.

Their skin is very handsome, being richly striped, as you may have seen in hammer-cloths for coaches, and it often hangs up in the shop of the furrier. I have been told that a gentleman once pressed one of these monsters in his arms so strongly, that the creature was squeezed to death! It was well for this person that he was endowed with so much strength.

In the cages of Exeter Change are to be seen very fine Tigers, and those who love to view nature's wildest animals, may there be gratified. The Chinese esteem Tiger skins of much value, and cover their seats of justice with them, as well as their sedans, and in winter use them as cushions and pillows. Cats are of this tribe.

SPOTTED SEAL.

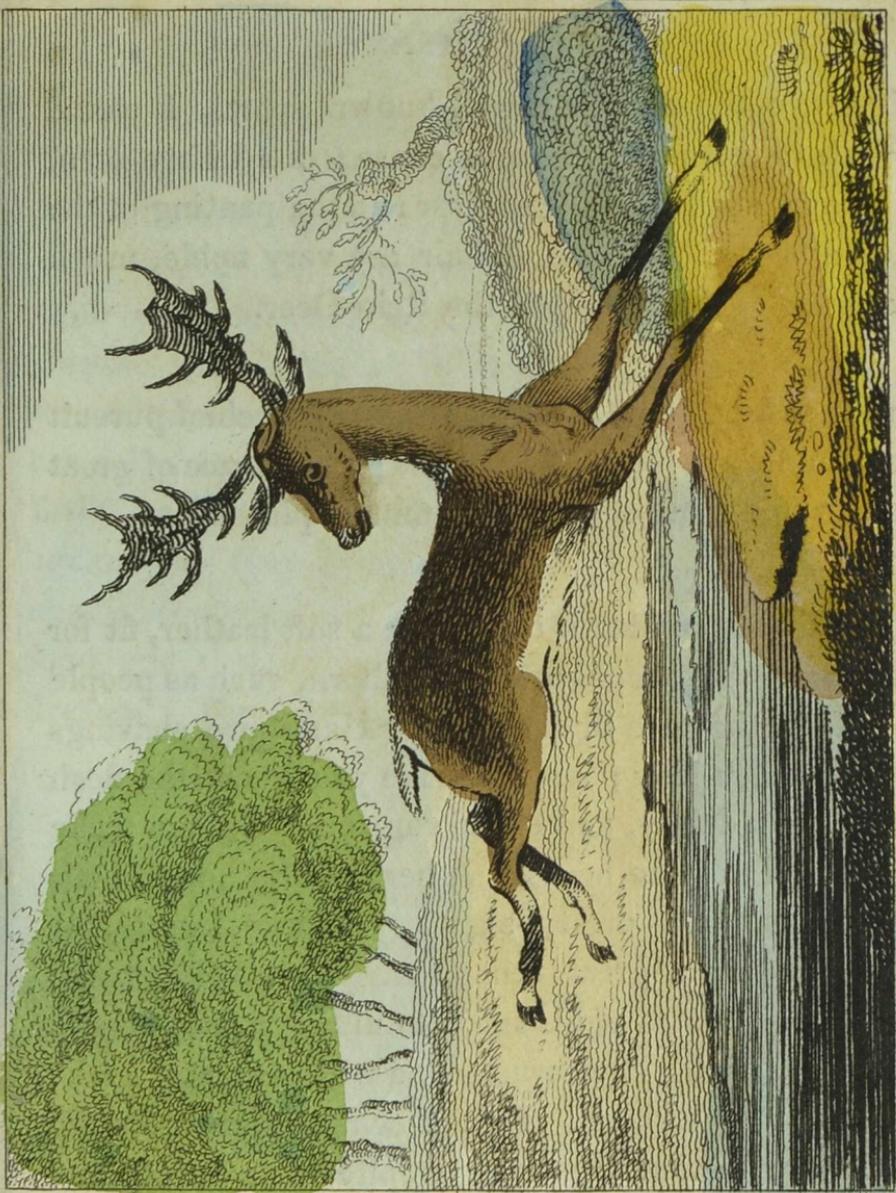
ALL Seals are not spotted like the one you see, but their nature and uses are the same. They are found in hollow rocks near the sea; and I will tell you what is done with them when killed. Their fat makes oil, their skins (when prepared) soft leather for shoes, and when the coarse hair of the creatures is taken off, a fine silky down is left, which makes a handsome fur, and is just now much worn, both as trimming for ladies' dresses and as warm caps or bonnets.

In Greenland they are of still greater use. The natives of that cold country are glad to make clothes and bed-covers of Seals' skins, and with part of the inside they cover their windows, as we do with glass; even the small fibres of the sinews serve them instead of thread. Thus you see, though this print of the Seal offers nothing pleasing to your view, it is a creature not to be despised.

When next you go out in damp weather, and feel the comfort of thick warm shoes, think what skin made them, and what trouble they caused before they were fit for wear.

Spotted Seal





Stag

STAG.

HUNTING the Stag is a well-known sport. I would not wish to witness a second chase ; one I have seen, and I never shall forget the terror and the panting of the harassed beast. Its form and air are very noble, much more graceful than those of the Rein Deer.

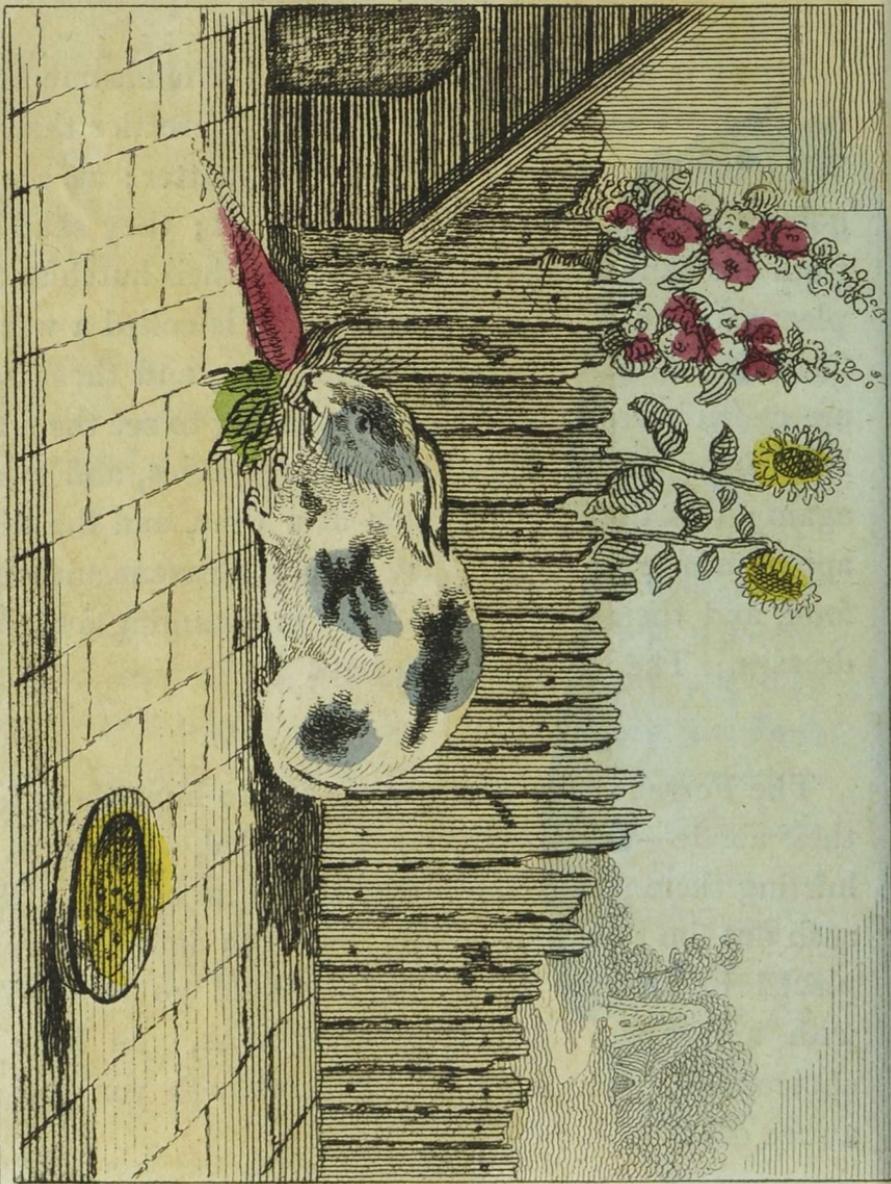
In times long past, a Stag-hunt was the chief pursuit of the English nobles. I hope the present race of great folks can find more useful and humane pleasures.

The skin of the Stag is made into a soft leather, fit for many uses. The bones make hartshorn, such as people smell when they are ill and faint. Hartshorn shavings will give a rich jelly ; and I believe you know the flesh is reckoned a dainty, and called venison. Cutlers make knife-handles of the horns. A herd of Deer, with their little fawns, is a pretty sight. In large forests, or parks, they are a great ornament. King William the First thought more of his subjects killing a Stag than a fellow-creature ! How cruel ! you will say ; and I add, how very, very wicked ! For, of what value is its life compared with that of man's, in spite of its beauty and fine form ? and these we will allow.

TAME RABBIT.

HERE is one of our little pets, and a handsome one of its kind. The Tame Rabbit is much prettier than the Wild, but not such nice eating. No matter; we are not going to kill our sportive neighbours; they shall feed from our hands, and run in and out of their hutch as they please. The home of Wild Rabbits is called a warren, formed of holes they make themselves, and these holes are called burrows. It is quite amusing to see the active little beings dart from their hiding-places, and run in again; this they do hundreds at a time, and the whole appear a moving hill. They yield a pleasant and sweet food, and their skins make a warm trimming for ladies' dresses. The fur is used in hats.

The Ferret is the creature chosen to hunt them from their abode—but the Ferret is muzzled, to prevent its hurting them; indeed the fright is quite enough. They rush out on the first alarm, and run into nets ready placed to ensnare them. Who would go into prison with a free will? Alas! poor Rabbits, you have no choice, and your doom is fixed, though you are not aware of it.



Tame Rabbit



Guinea Pig

GUINEA PIG.

HERE is a little animal you know very well, for the Guinea Pig is now quite one of the family, and is found in most parts of the world. Some people think it pretty ; certainly it is a strange-looking little creature, but more droll than handsome. Its legs are very short. On the fore feet it has four toes, but only three on the hind ones. See how short the neck is ! the head seems quite fixed to the shoulders. The soft hair over its body is like that of a young sucking Pig, and its motion very like a Rabbit's.

There is no animal more timid or helpless than this : if a pin were to fall, it would feel alarm, and take to flight ; nay, it will desert its young in time of danger, rather than exert itself to assist them.

Yet the little coward, when young, will fight its equal, to gain a warm place, or secure a nice bit. Is not this very selfish ?

Let me now tell you what is better than all this—it loves to be clean, and it takes care to keep itself so : even in the brute kind, we like to trace such habits.

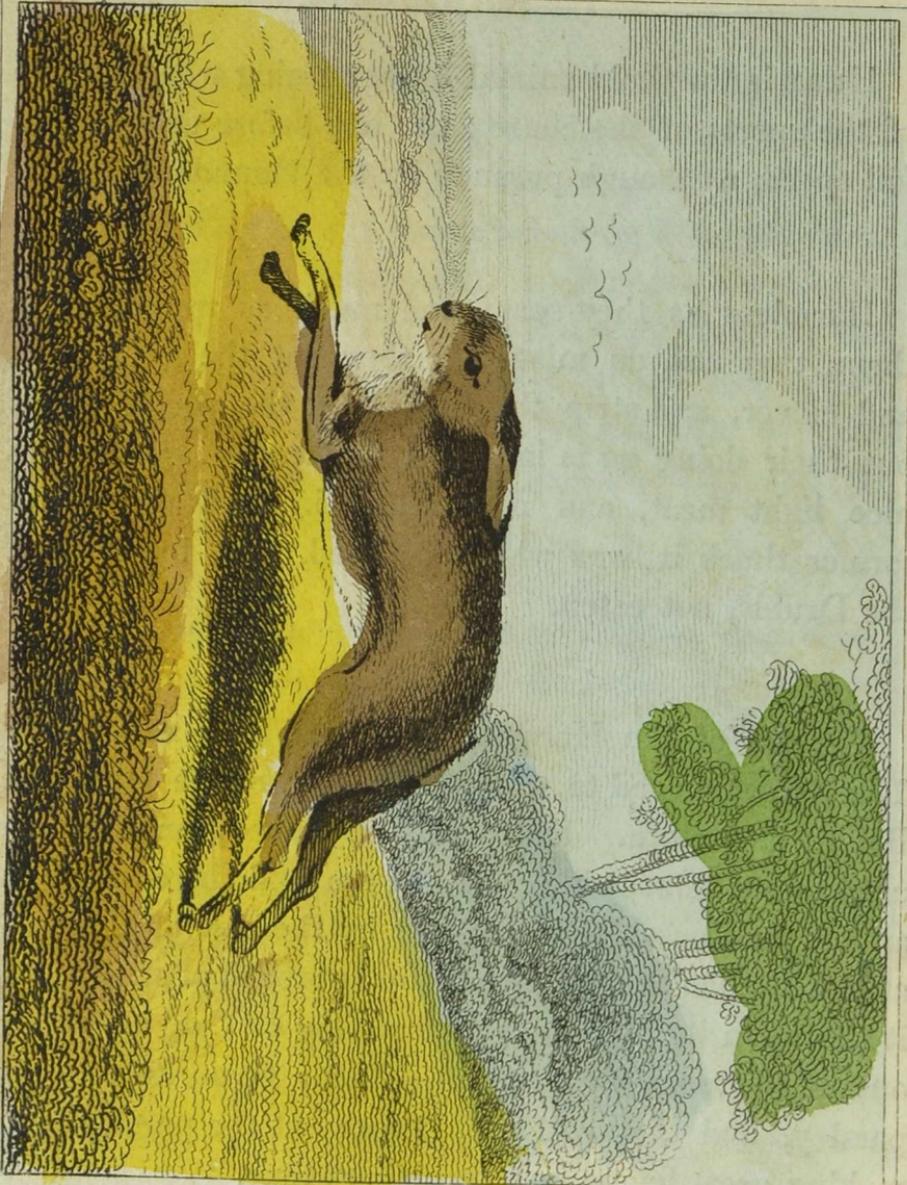
HARE.

HERE is the timid animal I was naming when I spoke of the sports of the chase ; the one before us seems at full speed, as though pursued by the Hounds.

Harmless as they seem, and much as we may pity them, they can do mischief : they eat the green corn and clover, and strip the bark from the young trees ; but their doing so is injurious to farmers. Hare is a nice light meat, and now much in request, but in former times it was wholly disliked, and, by order of the Druids, not eaten.

The fur of the Hare is much used in making hats. The Romans used to spin the fur both of the Hare and Rabbit into cloth. Hares may be tamed, and become used to our houses like cats. I am told there is one at an Inn in Yorkshire which sits by the side of the Cat, at the kitchen fire, nor heeds the approach of strangers : it sits upon its hind legs like a Dog or Cat, and feeds out of the same dish or pan.—Their favourite food is parsley, and they will nibble away at the parsley bed, making great havoc in a very short time.

The Hare





Lion

LION.

THE Lion is fierce, strong, and noble. He is called the king of the beasts. His roaring is dreadful, and creates terror in other wild beasts, yet his nature is generous. It is said he sleeps with his eyes open! How should we tremble to find ourselves near such a strange-looking sleeper! Some Lions have curled, others shagged hair. But in this happy country we have no neighbours of this kind: our animals are quite harmless; though many wild ones are to be seen in places fitted to keep them in safety: these are brought from distant countries.

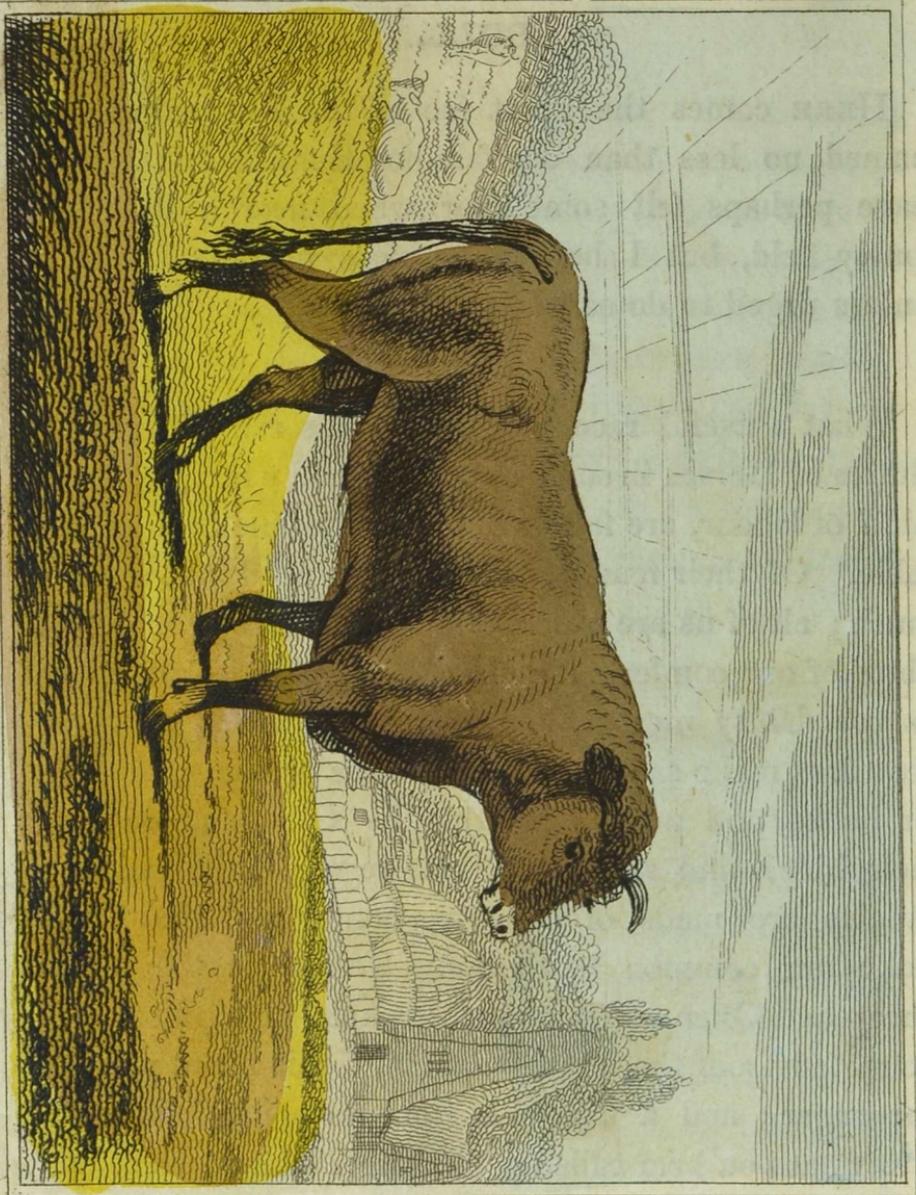
We are well content to view the flaming eyes of the Lion between iron bars; a nearer approach would frighten the boldest of us.

Do you not know the fable of the Lion and the Mouse? Fables are not true stories, but they have their moral; and this fable proves that the smallest of living creatures may help the greatest—and surely the strong should assist the weak. Stout as the Lion is, he can be conquered. He is sometimes hunted by Dogs of great size, and sometimes caught in nets. The Lioness is not so handsome as the Lion.

BULL.

HERE comes the great foe of the last animal we named, no less than our famous English Bull. You have perhaps felt some fear when near a Bull in a lonely field, but I believe he does not often attack, unless urged to do so by being teased.

What a useful race this is! Bulls can perform the duties of Horses in some instances, and when past such kind of labour, are fattened, and make fine beef for our table. Of their female, the Cow, I need not explain much; all of us are aware that we owe to her milk the chief of our comforts: their offspring, the Calf, gives us the dainty meat called veal. The skins of these creatures make saddles, bridles, soles of shoes, binding for books, and many other things. Glue is made from their hides and scraps of their legs. Knife and fork handles are made of their leg-bones, and the horns make our common lanthorns. Tallow is the fat of Sheep and Oxen. After much trouble, neats-foot oil is extracted from the feet of Oxen. Their blood purifies our sugar; and a thin skin from their inside is made into what you hear called gold-beaters' skin. Here is a list of benefits!



The Bull



Bull Dog

BULL DOG.

LOOK at honest Tray : No, look again, it is not the faithful Mastiff you see, but the fierce Bull-Dog : he is not so large as Tray, but his head is very big ; his eyes are full of fierceness, and he appears ready to tear us to pieces ; but no wonder ; he is taught to combat with Bulls, and you know what strong beasts they are. Bull-baiting is a horrid practice, and, I am sorry to say, has been a scene of mirth and splendour in this kingdom ; but of late years the custom has decreased, and we seldom hear of the cruel sport. Bull-Dogs therefore are not so great in number as they used to be ; but with all their courage and strength, we would rather be without them, than see them trained to such a shameful purpose.

This is one of the breed called British, and in former times much pride was displayed in rearing them : now they are chiefly used by Butchers and others, as watch-dogs, and for this purpose, as you may suppose, they answer well, for it is not easy to attack them, and would require courage, something like their own, to do so.

REDSTART.

HERE is the little Redstart; I say little, for it is smaller than our Robin, which you know is not a large bird. The Redstart has a red breast likewise, and some of its tail feathers are of this colour; the top of the head, back of the neck, and the back, are blue or grey; the throat and cheeks are black. Is not this a curious mixture, think you?

This bird is but a visitor; a summer one of course; he quits us in October.

The Redstart builds its nest near our houses, and seems to seek us as neighbours; but we must not intrude on him, for if any thing be misplaced in its nest, the home is deserted entirely. The eggs are blue. Though not a loud singer, it has a pleasing and rather a sweet tone, and, what our birds do not always treat us with, it gives us a song by night as well as day. But it is not easy to confine it in a cage.

Now I think you may pretty well judge what kind of bird this is, and should you ever see a Redstart, you will be at no loss to give it the right name.



Redstart.



Golden Oriole

ORIOLE.

THIS bird is called Golden, from the orange colour of its plumage, or rather a part of its plumage, for it also contains white, black, and brown.

Orioles make great havoc among grain. The farmers in America once offered a reward for killing them, but they soon repented of the plan, for they found the noxious insects which the Orioles used to eat, returned in such numbers, that their harvest failed, and thus proved these birds were of some use, though they might also do mischief.

They are birds of courage, as I will prove; for though it sometimes happens that the sportsman commits great slaughter among them by a shot, they will merely fly away to a short distance, and then return as bold as ever. Autumn is the season in which they appear in great numbers. They are handsome birds, about the size of a common Thrush, and are to be found in many parts of Europe as well as in America.

There is another kind of Oriole in Holland, not so handsome, but much the same in other respects.

COMMON COOT.

THE Coot is a water fowl, yet, strictly speaking, not web-footed, but it has a kind of fringed membrane on each side of the toes, which helps it in swimming just as well.

The legs of the Coot are long; the thighs are without feathers; the neck is of middling length; the wings and bill are short, and the last is weak; the forehead is bald, black, and free from feathers.

The Coot and Water-hen are much alike, but the Coot being much larger, does not content herself, like the Hen, in shallow water, but seeks larger streams, and more remote places: she is often seen in lakes, and makes her nest of the weeds growing in the stream, and among the reeds floating on the surface. If the reeds and nest be washed into the middle of the stream (which very seldom happens) the Coot still keeps her nest, and paddles her cargo into the nearest port, like a skilful sailor, and though the water should force its way into her nest, she hatches her eggs in quiet. It is a bold bird, and sometimes ventures down a current till it reaches the sea; but in such voyages there is much danger, and it often becomes a prey to Otters.

Common Coot





Marsh Titmouse

MARSH TITMOUSE.

THIS bird is also called the Bearded Titmouse. The bill is brown, the head a fine grey, the hind part of the neck and back is of an orange colour, and I should tell you that the chin and throat are white. It may, therefore, be called, on the whole, a pretty-looking bird. The tail is from three to five inches long.

One may suppose from the title it bears, that its home is in marshy and moist places.

In another part of the book you will find a much longer account of the Titmouse, though that is not exactly of this species: but they differ only in certain points, and I think I have here shewn you in what this difference consists, so that you may tell a Marsh Titmouse from any other sort, should one meet your eye.

BLACK TERN.

THE bird of this name is sometimes called the Cloven-footed Gull, though it is of the Swallow tribe; but there are other Terns besides the Black one.

The one you now view is about ten inches long.

The Black Tern frequents fresh waters, yet some of this species have been seen very remote from land, even in the Atlantic Ocean, which is a very large sea between this country and America. These birds must therefore fly a great way; not that they all live in England.

During spring and summer, they are to be found in vast numbers in the fens of Lincolnshire, where, you may recollect I told you, many Water Fowls were to be seen.

These Black Terns make a constant noise, but not a pleasant one. Their food is fish, flies, water, and insects. Their eggs are small, of a dark olive colour, much spotted with black.



Black Tern



Rook

ROOK.

THIS is a common bird ; you must often have seen it when in the country. It is of the Crow tribe, but a far more handsome bird. Its skin is very black and glossy.

Many hundreds of Rooks will build their nests in high trees, and live in a large body. Such an assemblage is called a rookery. The noise they make when taking flight, or before going to roost, is not very pleasant ; it is a constant cawing and jabber, that almost deafens the hearer ; still a rookery is a pretty object ; and I have heard some people admire the very strange noise I have just mentioned.

Many farmers think Rooks destroy the grain, and do them much mischief ; others again say they do greater service by keeping near the plough, to devour the grubs of the insects as they are turned up with the earth. The old Rook, from the frequent grubbing in this way, wears the feathers from the sides of her mouth, which gets white from the same cause. Young Rooks are eaten by many persons, and when made into a pie are reckoned a nice dish, even by epicures, who, you know, are more choice in their food, than plain people like us.

SHOVELLER DUCK.

FEW Fowls are nicer to eat than Ducks, yet their habits are any thing but clean; they will swim in and eat out of such dirty water, as gives us disgust to look at. The Shoveller Duck delights in scooping up the mud, as you here see: if he walks on shore, no dirt prevents his seeking his dainty bits. Have you not often smiled at his bad taste? Yet his own flesh does not eat the worse for it, as we all know, when he is nicely roasted, with green peas in the summer season. But we have something to do with the Duck besides eating him.

The Eider Duck, which is as large again as the common one, gives us soft stuffing for our beds; and let me observe, a down bed is esteemed a great luxury, yet I believe a hard one is much more wholesome.

The bird plucks the down from its own breast to line the inside of its nest, which you may suppose is very warm and snug.

The Wigeon and Teal are of the Duck kind, but wild. Many people prefer them to the tame Fowl. A young brood looks very droll when first in the water, all quacking together.



Shoveller Duck



Robin Redbreast

ROBIN.

HERE is a little friend, whose presence is ever welcome. Do you not like to hear the sweet wild notes of the Robin with which he cheers us, even in winter and early spring? One would suppose he knew how well liked he is by the human species, for he comes to our very windows and doors to shew himself, when bleak winter offers him no shelter in the trees. I love to watch the increase of his freedom with us.

When first we behold his red breast, we hail him with pleasure, and gladly open our window to bestow on Robin the crumbs he seeks: he may be shy for a time; but hunger and his own kind nature soon give him courage, and he hops towards the offered food with little signs of fear. Who would not give a part of each meal to such a timid little beggar, and feel well repaid by a few of his sweet notes? The Robin can serve us in return, for his chief food consists of such insects as are hurtful to the products of nature.

This bird quickly learns the song of others, even that of the Nightingale, which you know is called the sweetest of all songsters.

THE WOODPECKER.

WHAT a long bill this bird has ! One may guess he makes some use of it ; sometimes indeed a bad use ; for in making holes in the trees for its nest, it lets in the rain, which of course destroys them, and the bill is hard enough to pierce the stoutest timber ; but the Woodpecker certainly does us service when it destroys such insects as feed upon the barks of trees, or eats the grubs of the timber-beetle, which greatly annoys our woods and forests.

The American Indians form a kind of crown with the bills of the White-billed Woodpecker : we should find little to admire in such finery ; but they prize them so much, that two or three Deer's skins would be given for one bill.

The Woodpecker has no sweet notes to charm the ear, like some wild birds : its constant tapping is not even a pleasant noise, yet custom makes it welcome to the rustic.

It is rather a pretty bird, as you may perceive. Some kinds are esteemed good eating. As I never ate any, I cannot be a judge. The beech is a favourite tree with this bird, as you may have learned from the song so called.



Greater Spotted Woodpecker



Great Horned Owl

London, Published Augth 26, 1826, by Will^m Darton; 58, Holborn Hill.

GREAT HORNED OWL.

AN Owl is a bird of prey, not very handsome or gentle in its looks; but in former times it was much esteemed by many nations.

The people of Athens had a great respect for it, and called it the Bird of Wisdom.

The Romans were weak enough to hold it in dread, and thought its presence brought evil among them. We modern folks are wiser than the ancients; we neither believe in its wisdom, nor fear its visits: indeed, we cannot but smile when we view the grave looks of the Owl, and might almost suppose we were the subjects of its thoughts.

The Owl before us is the Great Horned Owl. It is not much less in size than the Eagle. Its feathers form a red, but rusty brown coat, spotted with brown, black, and grey. The bill is black; the eyes are large, and of a bright golden, or orange colour; the legs short and strong. The Horned Owl is seldom seen in this country; it is rather common in Germany and other parts of Europe.

The common Owl is, however, an old acquaintance, and therefore we know more of its habits, of which we shall speak when we come to its picture.

THE PIED FLY-CATCHER.

THERE are so many kinds of Fly-Catchers, that it would take a whole day to read an account of all that are described by authors, but as we have only the Pied Fly-Catcher's picture, we shall keep to his history alone.

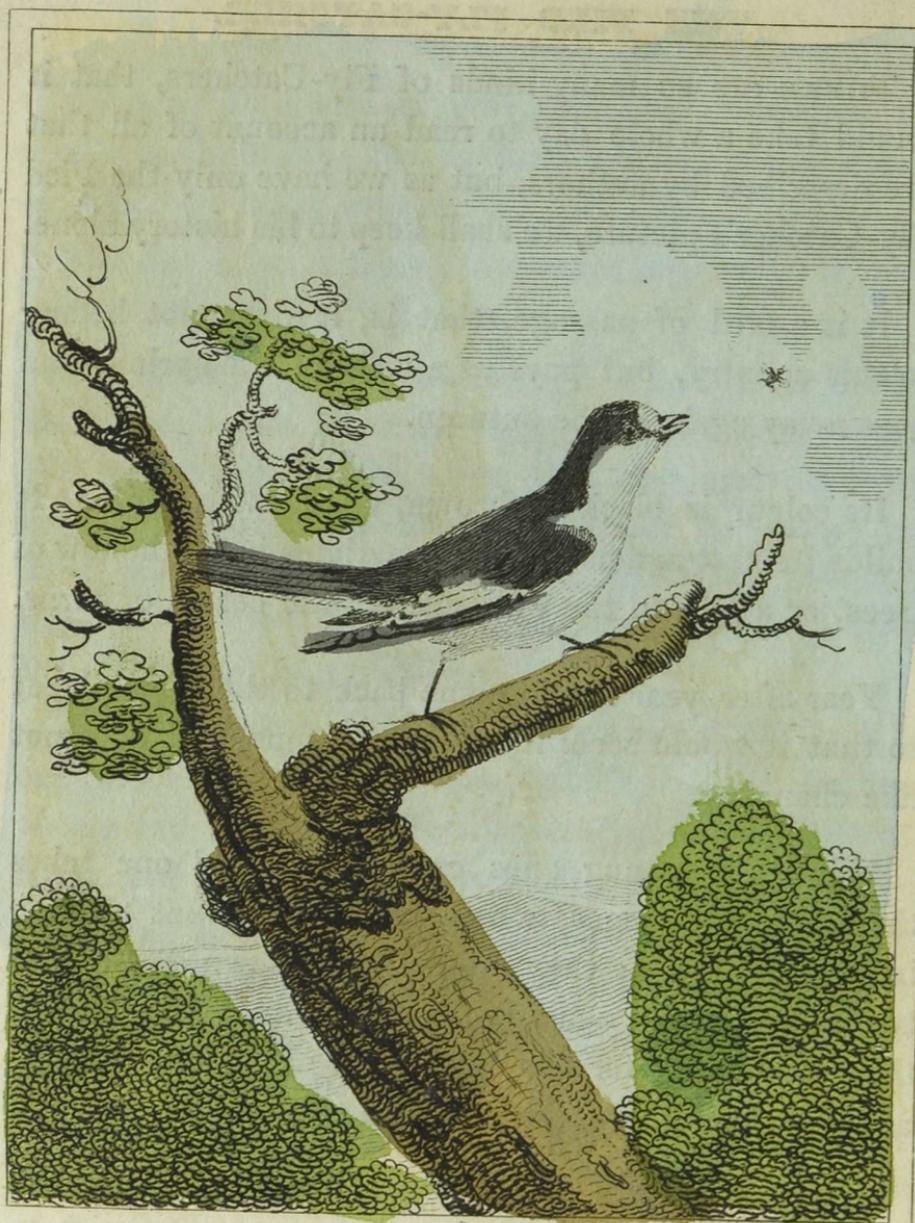
It is a bird of passage, that is, it does not belong to this country, but pays us a visit in the spring, and goes away again in the autumn.

Its colour is black or brown, mixed with white. It builds its nest against trees, sometimes in the hollow of trees, or a hole in the wall, also on the beams of barns.

Year after year it will come back to the same place; so that it would seem it is fond of home, and does not like changing.

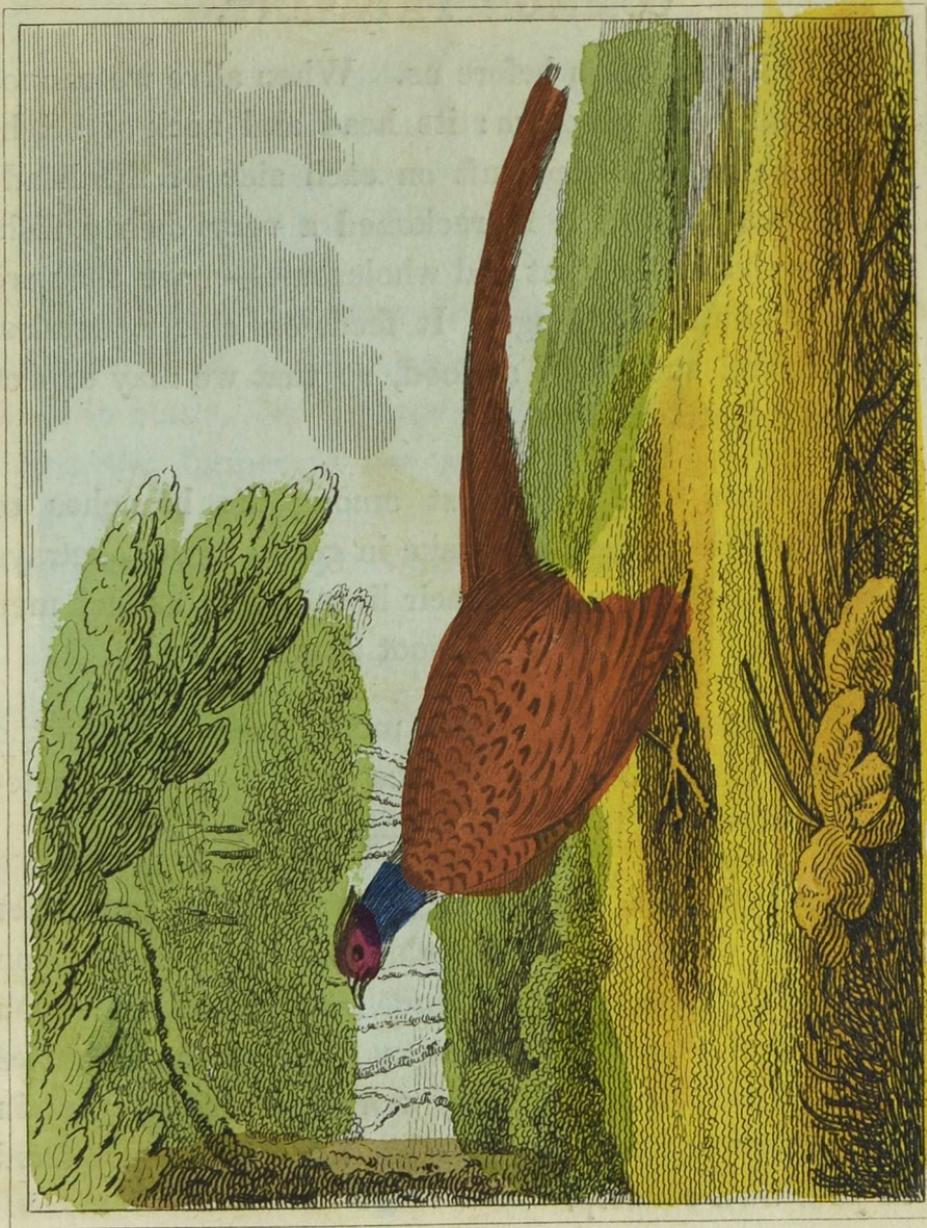
When the young ones can fly, the old one takes them into the woods, where they frisk about the top branches of trees: they drop straight down on the flies beneath, then rise again in the same way. Flies are not their only food; for like some young folk I know, they are very fond of cherries; no bad taste, you will say.

In India this bird is much admired for its note.



Pied Fly catcher

London, Published Augth 26, 1826, by Will^m Darton, 58, Holborn Hill.



Common Pheasant

COMMON PHEASANT.

THIS bird is often before us. When alive we cannot but admire its plumage: its head and neck of bright blue; its red eye and tuft on each side of the head; and when roasted it is reckoned a very dainty dish, besides that it is light and wholesome—more than we can say of all nice things. It feeds on clover, berries, acorns, and such kind of food, so that we may expect it would taste well.

Pheasants take their rest among the branches of trees, and the noise they make in going to bed, betrays them to those who seek their lives—such as bad men called poachers, who soon shoot them.

The Argus Pheasant is yet more handsome than the common one, but not such nice eating. Ladies sometimes make tippets and trimming of its feathers.

This last bird came first from Tartary, and other parts far distant; indeed, what we call our common Pheasant was brought to Europe from Asia. When you understand maps you will soon find out the countries where these birds and many more first came from; in the meantime be content to see them so quietly fixed in your own country.

WHITE, OR BARN OWL.

HAVING before spoken of the Owl, I can say little more on the one before us, for although there be many kinds of these birds, they differ only in habit, and are wilder or tamer as they live far from or near to man.

The White, or Common Owl, is more domestic than any other Owl, for it lives, as it were, amongst us, either in barns, hay-lofts, or other out-houses. In such places the farmer is not sorry to see it take up its abode, for it rivals the Cat in Mouse-hunting, destroying as many Mice as Puss herself can do.

At twilight it quits its perch, and rambles round the fields in quest of Field Mice

This bird builds its nest in the hollows of trees or eaves of churches, and does not hoot like most Owls, but snores and hisses in a strange and violent manner.

They feed only on Mice, so that we cannot accuse them of being dainty birds; and as what they destroy is a source of mischief to the farmer, we may own ourselves, in some measure, obliged to Owls for their pursuits.



White or Barn Owl.



Thistle or Goldfinch

THE GOLDFINCH.

THIS lovely bird is well known. I don't know any thing prettier than its plumage: the mixture of yellow and brown, red head, and black crown, make quite a show; add to this, it has a sweet and lively note.

The nest of this bird is formed in the most artful manner, of horse-hair, wool, feathers, and grass; indeed it is a bird of genius; it quickly learns the song of any other bird, if the cages be near each other.

I have seen a Goldfinch perform tricks that would surprise you; not that I should wish a bird of mine so taught, for I am aware, in such cases, methods are used which I consider cruel, and why should we require more of a Goldfinch than its song—and such a song too!

These pretty creatures meet in large flocks during the winter season, as if to keep one another warm, but they divide into pairs as spring comes on.

Some people give four and five guineas for a Goldfinch well taught, but as I love its simple notes best, I should not approve of such folly; one bird like mine is of more value to me than twenty ill used ones.

THE BRENT GOOSE.

IT were needless to ask if my little friends know what kind of bird a Goose is, or if they know how it tastes, for I will venture to affirm, roast Goose has many admirers.

It is common to call a silly person by this name, but the poor bird has surely more excuse for bad habits, than a little girl, boy, or grown person.

The cackling of this bird is not pleasant, and it waddles rather than walks, but in the water it looks well, and it answers so many useful ends, that we ought to forget trifling defects.

Our best pens are made of Goose quills, and our choicest beds we owe to their nice feathers; not merely when they are dead, for I am sorry to say the quills are plucked from them once every year, and the feathers four or five times: it must give them pain, you may suppose.

When Geese are very young, they are called Green Geese, but though dainty folks may prefer them at this age, you and I should find them too fat and rich. There are many species of the Goose besides what you see here, but they are much alike, and all of them useful.



Brent Goose



Red-breasted Godwit

GODWIT.

THERE are no less than eighteen sorts of this kind of bird; and, as you may suppose, they are pretty much alike in most respects. The length of the one you see before you, is about sixteen inches, and its bill four inches. I never saw a Godwit, but should suppose from this picture it is rather a pretty bird than otherwise. I am told it is very nice to the palate, and, when fattened, will fetch a good price.

Look what a strange broad white streak extends from the eye to the bill! The feathers of the head, neck, and back, are of a bright reddish brown, in the middle of which is a dark spot, so that on the whole, our friend, the Godwit, may be termed a curious bird, and well worth looking at.

This bird is caught in the fenny parts of England, and, with others of its species, comes to our coast. Godwits appear in small flocks about the month of September, and they do not leave us until the winter is ended.

They are to be seen walking on the open sands like the Curlew. Their food is insects. How many birds feed on what we do not look at without disgust!

RUFF.

THIS is a stately-looking bird, and his feathers form a kind of ruff round his head and neck.

The plumage of this bird varies. The feathers round the head drop off every year. Ruffs are found in fens and damp places. As the spring approaches they begin to shew themselves, but in autumn they retire, and we lose sight of them until the next year. They are caught in nets, and then fed upon sweet food, to fatten them for our eating. All things seem born for the use of man! These birds afford the epicure a dainty dish.

The Ruff has a singular custom of running in a circle upon a spot of ground until the grass be worn away, and this barren spot it seems to regard as its own.

The female of the Ruff is called a Reeve, and her eggs are white, with large dark spots on them. The nest is made of straw and dried grass.

Though you may be fond of bread and milk, or boiled wheat, I fancy you would not like to be fed with such food as the poor Ruff is, merely to fit him for dainty palates, and after eight or ten days' feasting, to be roasted.



Ruff

London. Published Augth 26, 1826, by Will^m Darton, 58, Holborn Hill.



Swan

SWAN.

HERE, Charles, is a Swan. You have often admired this web-footed bird. How graceful it looks on a fine sheet of water or on a canal! Its long neck has so many joints, that it can bend it at pleasure, and catch fish as if with a line.

See how it uses one foot as an oar! It is quite its own pilot. When on land this bird does not look so handsome, for its feet are ill formed, and its motion is awkward; but who or what is without blemish? We want this stately bird only to adorn the water of our parks and pleasure grounds.

Some morning we will take a piece of bread with us, when we go to St. James's Park, and you, Charles, shall feed them, for they are quite tame, and not shy of strangers. One would suppose they knew we looked at their milk-white hue to admire it; or perhaps they are like some children I have known, who were of a greedy habit, and soon tempted by nice things: if it is so, there is an excuse for a silly bird, but, I am sure you will think with me, none for a child of sense. My own Charles never was of this greedy nature.

PARTRIDGE.

THIS is one of the best-flavoured game birds, and I believe most people esteem it nice eating.

It is a pretty little creature, but never very strong. The young ones are nearly four months old before they are quite fledged, or feathered, and then, poor things, their trouble begins.

The Partridge is a fond parent, and the art it displays in trying to conceal its offspring is well known to the country sportsman, and shews how strong the tie of nature is, even in a field bird. Partridges construct their nests on the ground, and are fond of corn fields, where indeed they do some mischief: it may be, they feel themselves more secure when hidden amongst the corn, but such a shelter avails them little. I think if I was fond of the sport, I could not level a gun at a trembling bird, which had sought to protect its young from the fowler. I have seen a whole family rise from the waving corn, and seek their safety by sudden flight, but alas! the gun soon lessened their number. Partridges live in coveys, or family parties, as we may say, during the autumn and winter. The common Hen will sometimes hatch their eggs.

French or Guernsey Partridge





Black headed or Reed Bunting

REED BUNTING.

THIS bird is one of a species of which I shall mention several sorts: it differs from the others in regard to building its nest amongst the reeds, and has a black head; there are likewise the Yellow Bunting, the Snow Bunting, (a very small bird,) Tawny Bunting, &c., but the Rice-hunting Bunting is the most noted.

This last sort inhabit the Island of Cuba, which is in the West Indies, where they commit great ravages among the first crops of rice. They fly in large flocks, or bodies, making a noise in their flight well known to our sailors. They are very lean before they commence their attack on the rice; but we, who know what nice food this grain makes, shall not be surprised to find that they quickly fatten upon it—so much so, that sometimes they can hardly fly, and when shot, burst with the fall. They are one of the kinds of birds whose flesh is reckoned a dainty, and, no doubt, young and sweet rice helps to give them such a nice flavour.

It is said the male has a fine note, so that good living does not spoil his song.

The common Bunting has little claim to notice.

TITMOUSE.

Most boys know this kind of birds, and often make pets of them. They are really very amusing when used to a cage: being very active and sharp, they acquire many droll tricks; but they are by nature bold and cruel, so that there is great danger in letting them into an aviary, (which you know is a place fitted up to receive all kinds of birds,) for they would soon destroy their neighbours, if allowed.

They feed on insects, fruits, and seeds, but when I tell you that the food they like best are the brains of other birds, you will not be surprised to hear they will go great lengths to obtain this dainty: they cleave the skull of such as they find dead, and thus gain what they seek. Mischief-makers are seldom scarce! and this destroying little tribe make good the saying, for they lay from eighteen to twenty eggs for one brood.

The Great and the Marsh Titmouse are much the same in their nature and habits. The Marsh Titmouse lives in damp or moist places: it is rather a pretty looking bird, and has quite a black cap on its head.



Greater Titmouse

London, Published Aug.th 26, 1826, by Will^m Darton, 58, Holborn Hill.



The Puffin

PUFFIN.

THIS is a marine bird, not larger than a pigeon : it is not a bird we see every day. Puffins are nice food after growing to a certain size, but when quite young they are boned, and pickled in spiced vinegar, by which method they become a dainty, and are in much request. North Wales is the chief place for so curing them, and there, it is quite a branch of trade.

Puffins are not English birds. They arrive in this country early in April, and leave it in August. Such visitors are called birds of passage. Their abode while here is on rocks or high ground near the sea-shore, where they live retired.

Do you observe the ring round its throat, which has the appearance of a collar ? The black top on its head looks not unlike a hood, or cap.

One cannot mistake this bird for any we are in the habit of seeing ; but of course, unless we were near the sea, the Puffin could not come in our way, for, as I told you before, it is a marine bird.

THRUSH.

THE sweet warble of this bird is well known: it has greater power, and is more plaintive in its notes, than the Blackbird, which is also of the Thrush species.

The Thrush is rather a dingy-looking bird, and would not attract notice by its form or plumage, but its sweet song makes more than amends for its want of beauty. For two-thirds of the year the Thrush warbles in the woods, and delights the ear of all who love Nature's music. In a room, we sometimes find its note too loud. You must have seen the nest of this bird in the low hedges round our orchard, and how smoothly it plasters the inside.

Poets have taken up their pen in praise of this songster, and music has been added to their verse. In most woods of Europe, where the climate is not too severe, Thrushes may be found.

In dry seasons they do us great service, by seeking shell snails, which they give to their young as food, and take away at the same time a foe we wish absent. Thus we find their song is not their only merit; to be pleasing and useful is what all admire.

Ring Ouzel or Thrush





The Avocet

AVOCET.

HERE is the picture of a bird which I believe you never saw, or perhaps heard mentioned: it lives chiefly in Italy, but now and then pays us English a visit. In size it is near the Pigeon, rather upright, and, as you here see, has a pair of very long legs, almost like those of a Stork.

But now let us observe its bill, shaped so unlike all others. In the first place, it is very long and turns up like a scoop, as much so as that of the Hawk or Parrot turns in. The colour of the bill is black, its shape flat, and, though sharp, it is not hard at the end.

It should seem a water fowl, for the legs are bare of feathers far above the knee, and it is web-footed, like the Duck. We are told it makes a kind of chirping in a sharp note. Its neck and breast are rather prettily formed, and upon the whole the Avocet is not an ugly bird.

THE END.

