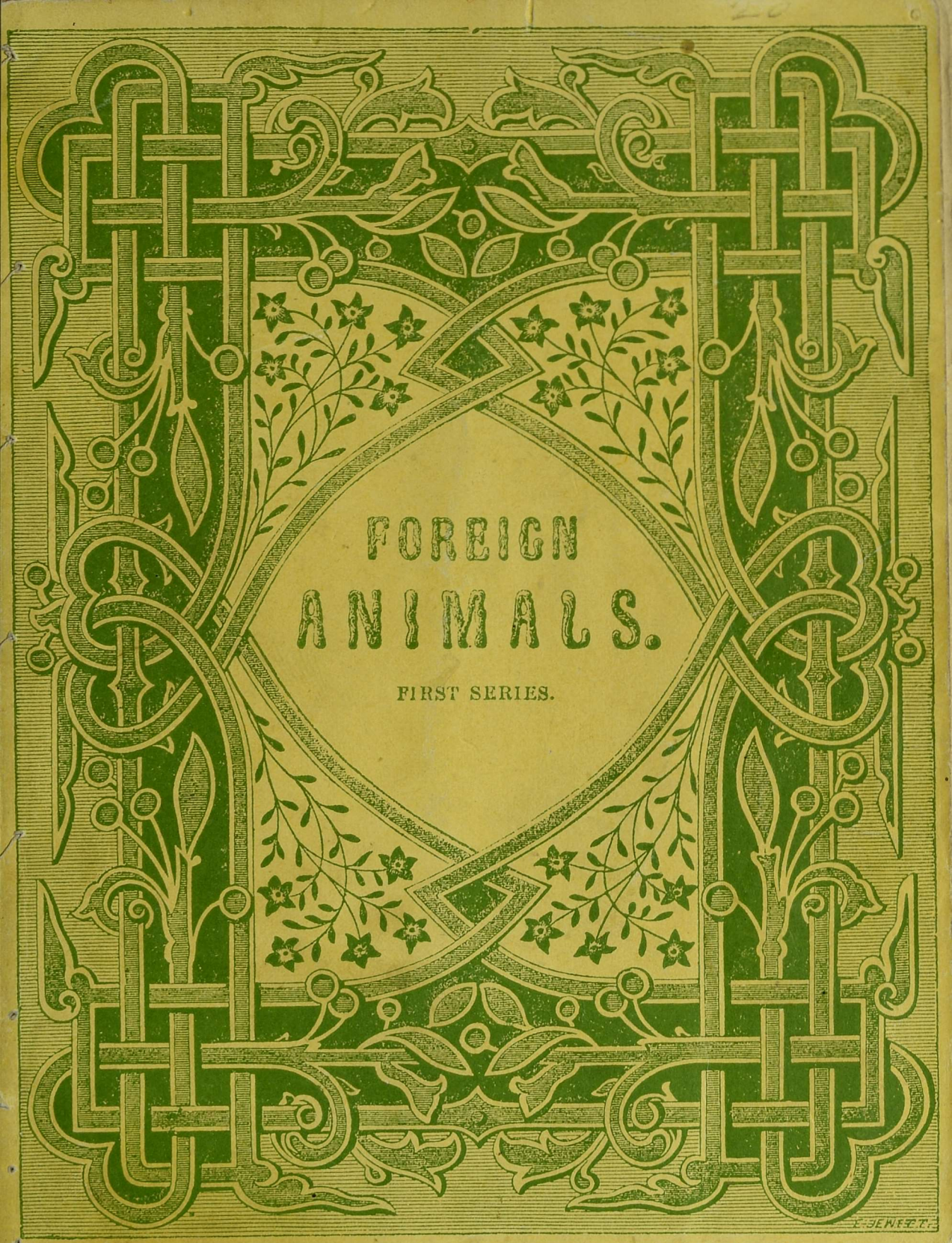


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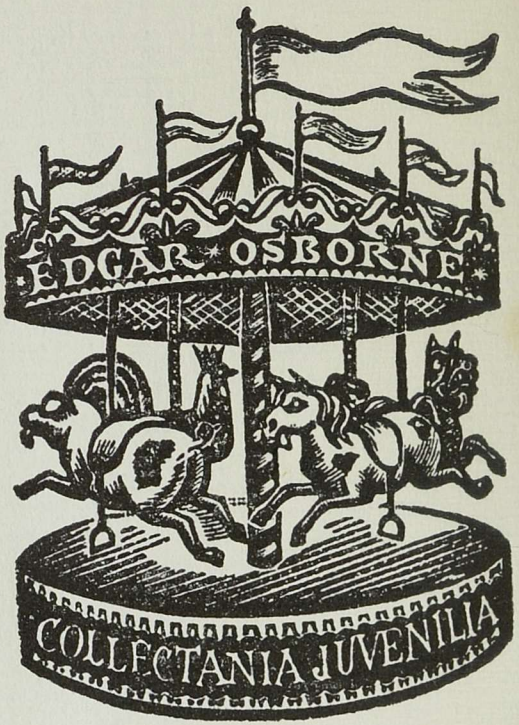


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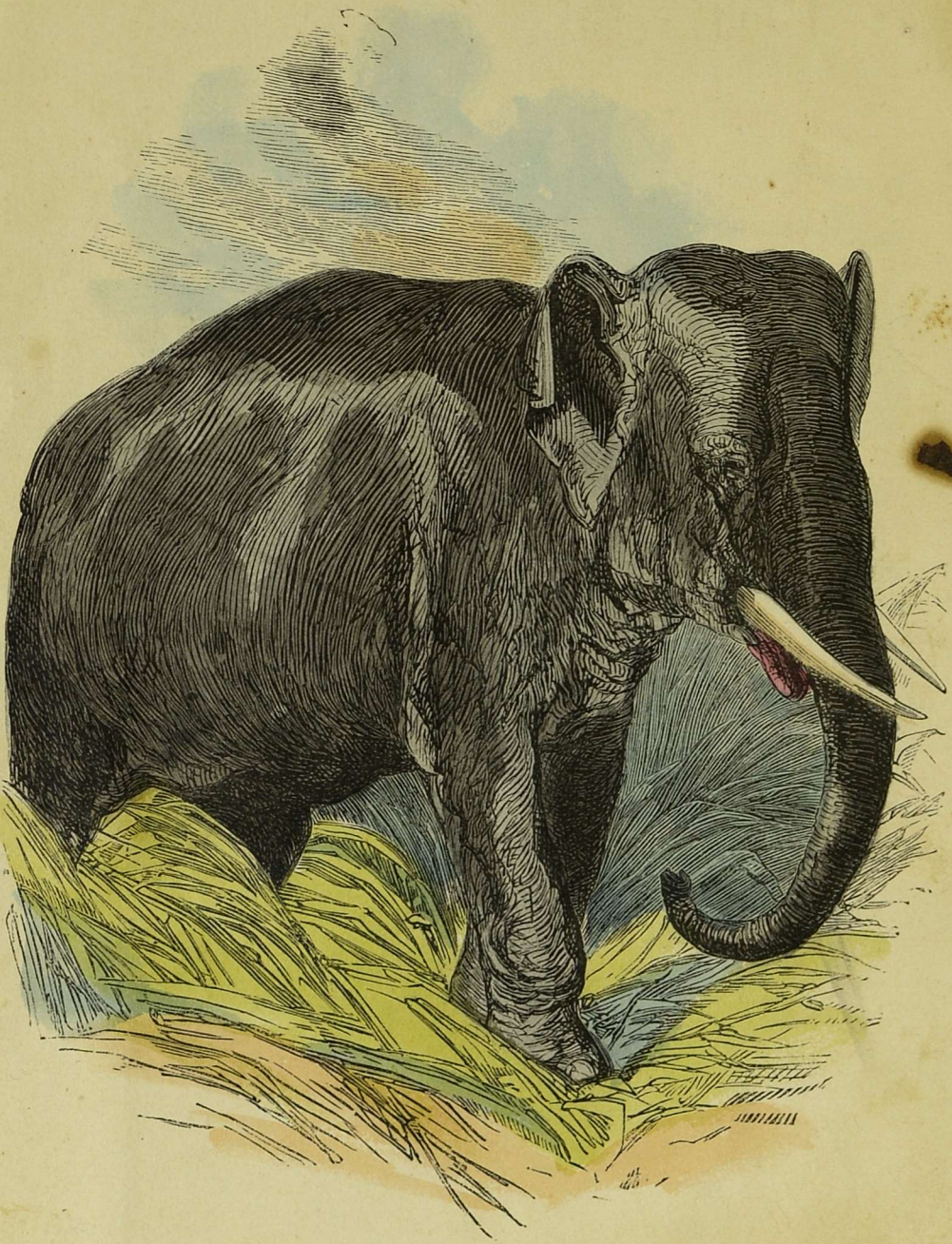

# FOREIGN ANIMALS,

WITH

DESCRIPTIONS BY MRS. R. LEE,

AUTHOR OF THE "AFRICAN WANDERERS," "ADVENTURES IN AUSTRALIA," "ANECDOTES OF ANIMALS," ETC.

AND

Seven Pictures

FROM

DRAWINGS BY HARRISON WEIR.

First Series.

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# THE ELEPHANT.

Elephants are the largest animals in the world; have a very thick skin, a very long nose, called a trunk or proboscis, and two teeth, or tusks, of enormous size, always a little curved, which stick out of their mouth, and afford us the ivory which is employed for so many useful and ornamental purposes. They have also huge grinders, formed of several fastened together, which, when they are worn out, are pushed away by new ones coming from behind. They have small hoofs on their toes, but the skin of the foot so covers them, that they are not much seen. There are two sorts of elephants, one of which comes from India, and the other from Africa; the greatest height reached by the former is said to be ten feet; the latter are larger, and we hear of them as fourteen feet high. Their tusks also are bigger and heavier, their ivory being of a closer nature; and they have wide, flapping ears, by which they are often guided when they are in captivity; a pull of the ear being enough to make the docile animal obedient.

The beauty of elephants lies in their great size,

which gives them a majestic appearance; but they are not otherwise handsome animals. Their eyes are very small, though bright; their tail has a few thick, ugly hairs at the broad end, and the rest hangs down like a stiff rope. Their legs are thick and straight, and their feet misshapen. They are generally of a dark, blackish grey, and only a few hairs scattered upon them. In India there are some almost white, which are much prized.

The weight of an elephant's head—although the large portion of bone which it appears to contain, is much diminished by several hollows, or cells—is great; and when to it are added the tusks, it is evident that a strong neck is required for its support. Accordingly, the elephant's head looks as if set upon his shoulders, so little is the neck to be distinguished in consequence of its thickness. It would be impossible for him to bend it, and therefore he is provided with his very long nose. In this are two tubes, or hollows, running up to the nostrils in the skull; and at the end is a sort of fleshy hook, with which the animal can pick up small substances, even a sixpence. The trunk itself is able to wind round large trees, and pull them down, and it conveys all the food of the elephant to his mouth; it is covered with

a skin, which is, in general, full of wrinkles, but which disappear when it is stretched to its utmost extent. When the elephant wishes to drink, he dips his proboscis into the water, sucks up as much as he requires, and putting the end into his mouth, pours the liquid down his throat. He can raise or lower this proboscis as he pleases, and twist it in various directions, for it is very flexible. He often keeps water in it for a long time, that he may spirt it all over any body or thing, in fun or anger, and frequently refreshes his own hide in this manner, for although so thick, it is very sensitive. It is by causing the air to rush through the proboscis, that the elephant makes the loud noise called trumpeting.

Elephants do not arrive at their full growth till they are twenty-five years old. Their pace is swift, from the large strides which they take, and they occasionally rush on at great speed. They were formerly much used in war, and performed a number of services; but this has been discontinued, and they now are only employed for dragging artillery, tiger-hunting, and in the state-processions of the Rajahs. They look very grand with all their trappings, which are sometimes very costly; and on their backs is placed a canopy, called a howdah, in which

the riders sit; the driver is seated upon the neck, and guides them with a sharp-pointed instrument. Horses are very often frightened at them, and therefore they are not allowed to come to the principal English settlements.

They are very affectionate towards each other, and towards those who treat them well; but when made angry by any ill-treatment, they are often furious; and as they have very good memories, they will remember an injury for a long time, and revenge themselves at a convenient opportunity.

The principal trade in ivory is carried on in Africa, where the teeth have been known to weigh three hundred and fifty pounds; so that, if both tusks are alike, the owner must have walked about with a constant burden of seven hundred pounds.

The African elephants never have been trained to service of any kind; but this is not from any fault of their own, for those kept in our menageries have been extremely docile and affectionate. In India one is often to be met with living in the woods by himself, and is always ill-tempered and fierce; so that it has been supposed, he has been turned out of the herd for his wickedness.

# THE LION.

THE grandest and one of the most courageous of all beasts is the lion, and well does he deserve to be called a king. He cannot, however, be called the monarch of the forests, because he lives in stony, rugged plains and jungles. Of late years a species has been discovered in Guzerat, in India, which has no mane, or else we might have said that there was but one species inhabiting the whole of the continent of Africa, Arabia, India, and other parts of Asia. Holy Scriptures tell us that it formerly abounded in Syria; but none are found there at the present time.

Varieties of shade are met with in different places, and the beautiful mane which covers the head and neck of the lion is coloured according to age. It is yellow when the lion is young, black when he is of full age, which he attains at five years, and when he is old it becomes grizzly; the lioness has not any. The mature age of which we speak is of long duration, as proved by a lion from the Gambia, which lived seventy years in the Tower of London.

The tail of the lion is very handsome, has a thick

tuft at the end, and very often there is a claw concealed in the tuft, supposed to be a hardened piece of skin, or perhaps some of the hairs which have adhered to each other.

The fore-legs of the lion are much more powerful than the hind legs, and with them he seizes his prey; his long and sharp claws forming the most terrific weapons. These, however, when not used are drawn back into a sheath; they never touch the ground and so get blunted, for there is a beautiful contrivance in the ligaments which prevents this. The under part of the foot is furnished with a cushion, and a smaller one lies under each toe, so that their step is noiseless. Nothing can exceed the vigour of their bound when they seize their prey; and besides their terrible claws, they have large, sharp teeth, which tear the flesh of their victims. Their tongue is beset with small, horny projections, which enable them to lick bones clean. These prevent them from having an acute taste; nevertheless they will not eat putrid flesh. Their long whiskers give them a delicate sense of feeling, and their smell and hearing are highly developed. They go forth at night to feed and drink, and sleep in their lairs by day.

# THE BROWN BEAR.

THE hairy, massive-looking animals called bears, walk firmly upon their feet, setting every part of them to the ground; have great facility in walking on their hind-feet only, and climb rocks and trees wish considerable agility. They have large, thick limbs, and enormous claws, which serve them for digging in search of roots. They eat every thing, and shew a strong preference for honey, with great sagacity finding out the trees where it has been deposited. They live in Europe, Asia, and America, and many have asserted that they are to be found in Northern Africa; others, however, choose to doubt their existence in that continent.

Our artist has represented the species called the brown bear, which was formerly numerous in Great Britain, and remained in Scotland longer than elsewhere, that country affording it better shelter. It used to be sent from here to Rome, to take a part in the shows and combats of wild beasts, so often exhibited in that city.

The manner in which bears hug their victims to death with their fore-paws is well known, and they

also tear them with their great claws. They swim well; and when excited will proceed at a tolerably rapid pace. Their strength is so great, that they will carry away dead horses. Their fondness for their cubs and their defence of them is something remarkable, even when compared with other animals who also love their offspring.

Bear's flesh is very good to eat, and their skins afford valuable furs. They pass the winter in gloomy caverns, which they have often made for themselves, or the hollow trunks of enormous trees; and some say that they remain torpid during the cold months: this, however, can scarcely be the case, for it is at this period that the females bring forth their young, and it is not possible they can pass that long time entirely without food. They are, however, very thin when they leave these retreats, and it is known that they are partly supported by their own fat, which nourishes them. The sucking of their paws is an idle tale, as far as regards any degree of sustenance to be derived from them. They do suck their paws, but for what purpose no one knows, and the noise and gesture with which they pursue this occupation is most ludicrous.

# THE REIN-DEER.

If rein-deer are not the most beautiful of their beautiful race, they are the most useful to man, supplying him with food and clothing, and performing the part of horses, in climates where no horses will live. Both males and females have horns, and their muzzle is covered with hair, which is not the case with other deer; their heads are large, and not handsomely shaped; their neck is short and thick, as are their legs, which wear a misshapen appearance. Their horns are peculiarly formed, and large in size; a portion of the branches hangs over their forehead, and the rest rises to a considerable height backwards, and curves upwards. Their feet are so much divided, that they spread when they are set upon the ground, and rise up again with a snapping noise. They become much lighter in colour when winter sets in, and their fur is extremely close, some long hairs hanging down over the neck, and the whole affording such warmth, that a person wrapped up in one of their skins may defy the cold of the arctic regions.

Rein-deer live in the north of all the countries which are situated in the frozen zone, and some

frequent the Ural mountains, and go as far south as those of Caucasus. Three species are supposed to exist, and they are numerous in America. We know most of them, however, in Lapland, where they are a source of wealth and comfort to the inhabitants, who frequently boast of large herds of them. They migrate from place to place in search of food, or to avoid mosquitoes and gad-flies, which make their appearance in great numbers during the short summers of those regions. They chiefly live on lichens of various kinds, some of which grow on the soil, and others on trees, from which they hang in large masses; they also eat the young twigs of trees. They, however, sometimes die of hunger when the rigorous climate produces scarcity; and it is of no use for their masters to lay in a stock of food for the winter, for they will not eat any thing that is dried. One singular propensity requires to be mentioned, which is, their desire to eat the mouse-like animals called lemmings. They draw sledges weighing, with their burden, two hundred and seventy pounds, and go for many hours at the rate of ten miles the hour. Their flesh is excellent to eat, their tongues are dainties, their milk is delicious; and, to complete their good qualities, they are docile and affectionate.

# THE WOLF.

SAVAGE, bloodthirsty, rapacious, and powerful, there is no animal more to be feared than the wolf. Strong and bony in frame, with a bushy tail, sharp muzzle, and strong teeth, his disposition is easily seen in his countenance. Yet a wolf-puppy is very pretty, and if properly reared and tutored, the grown-up animal is perfectly tame, and shews great attachment.

Besides having a ferocious look, wolves have a cunning expression when wild; and as they are by no means swift, when compared with many other animals, they conquer more by artifice and untiring perseverance, than by open and rapid pursuit. They assemble in large packs when pressed by hunger in the winter, but at other times they are unsociable in their habits. Their attachment to their young is very great, and they defend them with a courage which is only to be overcome by death. They possess strong powers of smell, and when pursued, rush along with their tail and head down, their eyes glowing like fire; and if at last caught by dogs, and surrounded by them without a hope of escape, they assume a more erect bearing, and fight to the

last, biting and tearing with a force which often kills their adversaries. Their cry is between a bark and a howl.

Wolves were once very numerous throughout the British Isles, and nothing but rewards offered for their heads made any impression on their numbers. They are still occasionally found in France, especially during severe winters; and they are said even now to be abundant in Poland, where they have much increased since fire-arms were not permitted to remain in the hands of the peasantry. They formerly existed in Egypt, and are still common in parts of Asia. They are numerous in the northern portions of Europe and America.

Many are the fearful stories told of wolves devouring men, women, and children, seizing them almost from the doors of their houses; and several of the old tales are mixed up with spectres and demons, as if wolves had been connected with supernatural beings. They have a clever trick in North America, if they see an animal of any kind near a precipice or river. They then get between it and the means of escape, in the form of a semicircle, by narrowing which they oblige it to fall, and then they secure it without any difficulty.

# THE BEAVER.

Beavers are gnawing animals, their front teeth in each jaw being constructed in such a manner as to give them the power of wearing away the hardest woods and bark, so as to convert them into food, and make them serve for other purposes. Their lower jaw can only move backwards and forwards, which motion helps them to work upon their hard materials. Their tails are flat, covered with scales, and serve them as a sort of rudder when they are swimming; and under them lie two bags, or pockets, which produce a kind of ointment, possessing a strong odour, formerly much used in medicine. They pass the greater part of their lives under water. Their fur, from its lightness and durability, used to be in great request for the making of hats, but many other substances are now preferred to beaver's hair. They chiefly inhabit North America, but in former times frequented Wales; and now they are found in some of the principal rivers of eastern Europe and the western part of Asia. They are easily tamed, and in that condition will eat flesh; their own is of very good flavour.

Besides the manufacture of hats, beavers are famous for constructing comfortable dwellings with

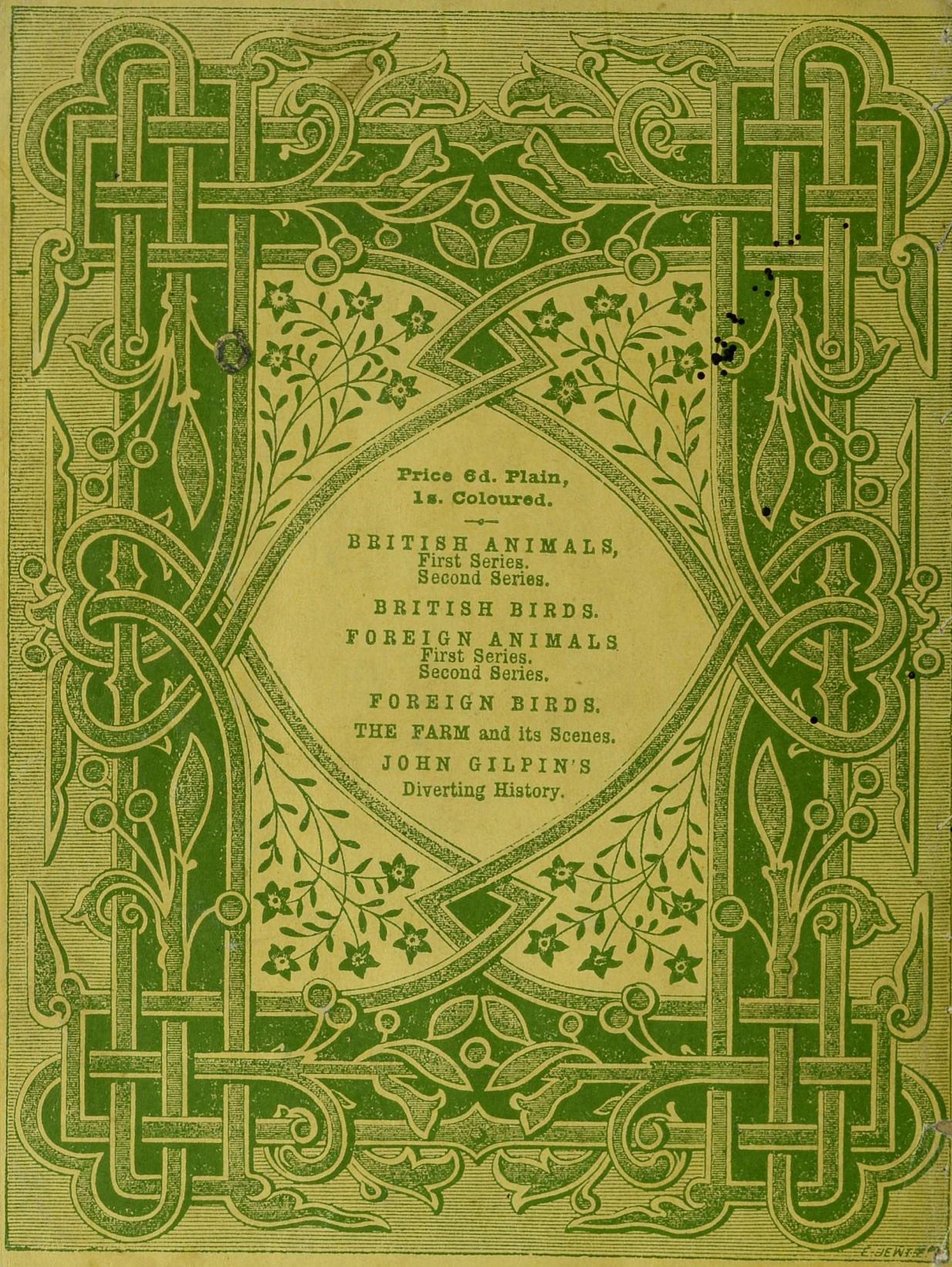
considerable skill. They choose those parts of rivers and lakes which are too deep to be frozen at the bottom; and if at any time they think there is a likelihood of scarcity of water, they raise a dam of young trees, mud, and stones, which entirely prevents it from flowing away from the spot they have selected. The houses are built of the same materials, which they either carry with their fore-paws, or drag to the spot with their teeth. The pieces of wood are laid across each other, and plastered over with mud and stones, so as to form a dry, substantial floor; and from this rise the walls, several feet thick, also plastered over with mud, and all of which are repaired every year. There are often several compartments in these houses, in each of which one family takes up its abode, but which have no communication except by water, by which way the beavers go out and come in. Near the entrance of the hut is laid the winter-store of provision, consisting of wood and bark, each layer of which is kept fast by means of stones. In these dwellings they pass the severe weather; but they have other places of refuge in case their houses should be attacked, which are numerous holes, deep under water, in the neighbouring banks. During the summer they roam about at pleasure; but their movements on land are awkward.

# THE SLOTH.

THE singular animals called sloths afford another instance of the beautiful manner in which an all-wise Providence adapts His creatures to the purposes for which He intended them. They are intended to live entirely on trees, and they are accordingly formed for that life, and no other. They have no teeth in the front of their jaws; their toes are joined together by the skin; and the only way by which the feet are seen to be divided is by an enormous nail, which proceeds from the end of each toe. These powerful nails bend towards the sole of the foot when the animal is at rest, and in time even the bones grow together, and each foot forms a large and powerful hook. Their fore-legs are much longer than those behind, so that, if by any chance they should be forced to crawl upon the ground, they drag themselves upon their elbows; they, however, never do crawl if they can help it, and remain upon a tree till they have devoured all its foliage. Their young ones cling to the mother from the moment of their birth till they are able to be independent of her, accompanying her every where in her slow progress.

Their long hair often looks like faded grass hanging all over them; and when they sleep, they roll themselves into a ball, and hide their faces in it, to protect themselves from innumerable insects.

The strength which lies in the fore-paws of sloths is immense, and they have been known to strangle a dog when holding him at arm's length. They grapple with large snakes in the same manner, and with the same success. They seldom drink; and their cry is melancholy, very like a human being in distress. They inhabit the warmer parts of the world.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