OUR DUMB NEIGHBOURS

REV. T. JACKSON. M.A.

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OUR

DUMB NEIGHBOURS;

OR,

CONVERSATIONS OF A FATHER WITH HIS CHILDREN

ON DOMESTIC AND OTHER ANIMALS.

By THOMAS JACKSON, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S AND RECTOR OF STOKE NEWINGTON;

AUTHOR OF "OUR DUMB COMPANIONS."

LONDON:

S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO. 9, PATERNOSTER ROW.

"The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship; as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own."

COWPER.

London: R. Clay, Sons, and Taylor, Printers.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

EARL OF HARROWBY, K.G.

PRESIDENT OF

THE ROYAL SOCIETY

FOR THE

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS;

TO

W. A. Mackinnon, Esq., F.R.S.

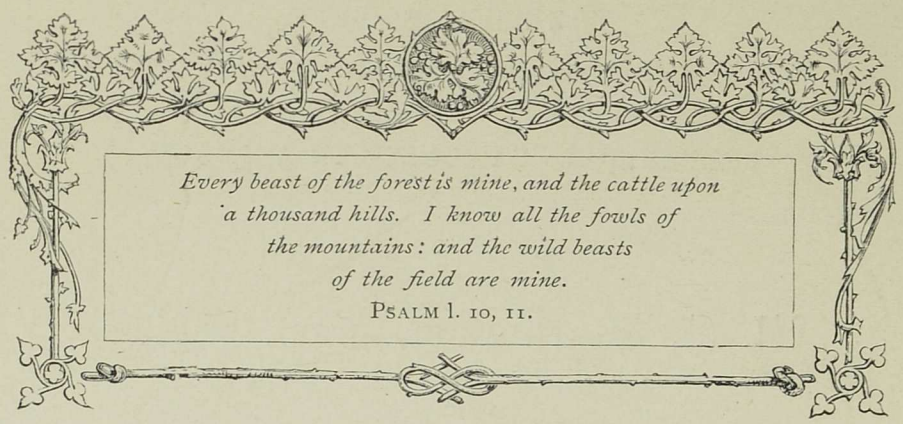
AND THE

OTHER VICE-PRESIDENTS,

THIS VOLUME IS, BY PERMISSION,

MOST CORDIALLY

Dedicated.



Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

PSALM l. 10, 11.

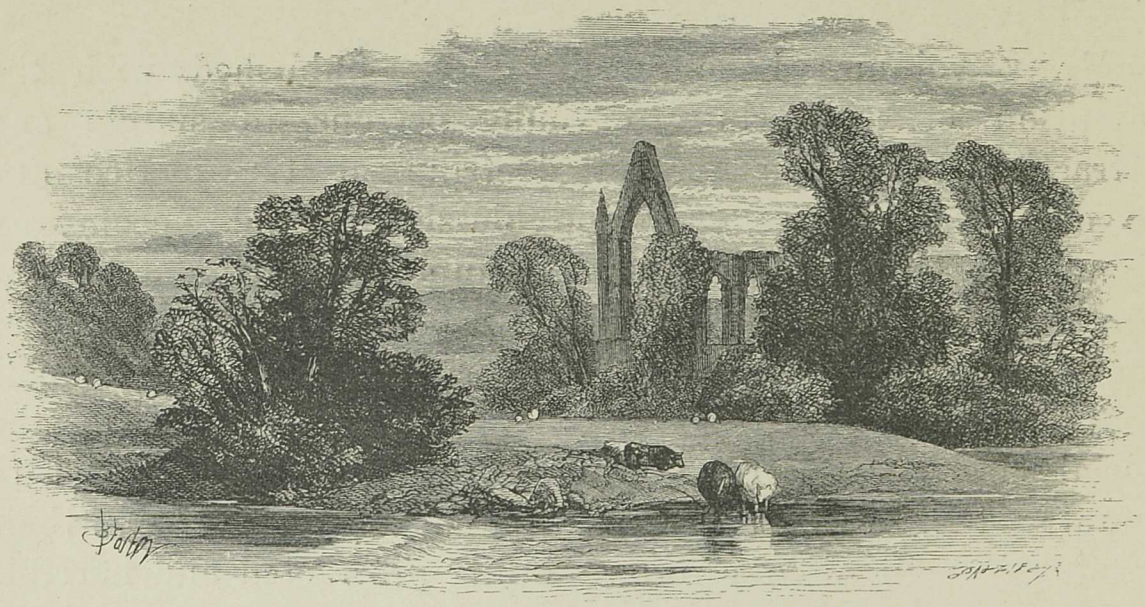
PREFACE.

MANY volumes have recently been published with the intention of presenting to young persons, in simple and attractive form, the solemn doctrine of the justice due to domestic animals, and the blessings which accompany the right treatment of these dumb companions. But the cruelties inflicted on horses, dogs, and cats, are as nothing compared with the tortures endured by animals that are not, so to speak, immediately included in the social circle. Children and young persons accustomed to country life, while tender to animals which enjoy their friendship, will often wantonly inflict protracted and horrible pain on other animals, especially if they are popularly

called *vermin*. It is chiefly in the interest of these poor creatures, and through them of religion, humanity, and civilization, that the present volume has been compiled. It is hoped that, like "Our Dumb Companions," it will occasionally be used in primary, secondary, and other schools, and offered as a reward to boys and girls distinguished for their gentleness towards the lower creation.

The extirpation of so-called vermin may be sometimes a duty, but to put a poor animal to unnecessary torture is at all times a crime. The improvement of public opinion, as to the treatment of the humblest beast and bird, is part of that general advance in civilization and humanity, which is equally favourable to the law of kindness and Christian love, as it respects every dealing between man and man.

The Rectory,
Stoke Newington.



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The merciful man
doeth good to his own soul:
but he that is cruel
troubleth his own flesh.

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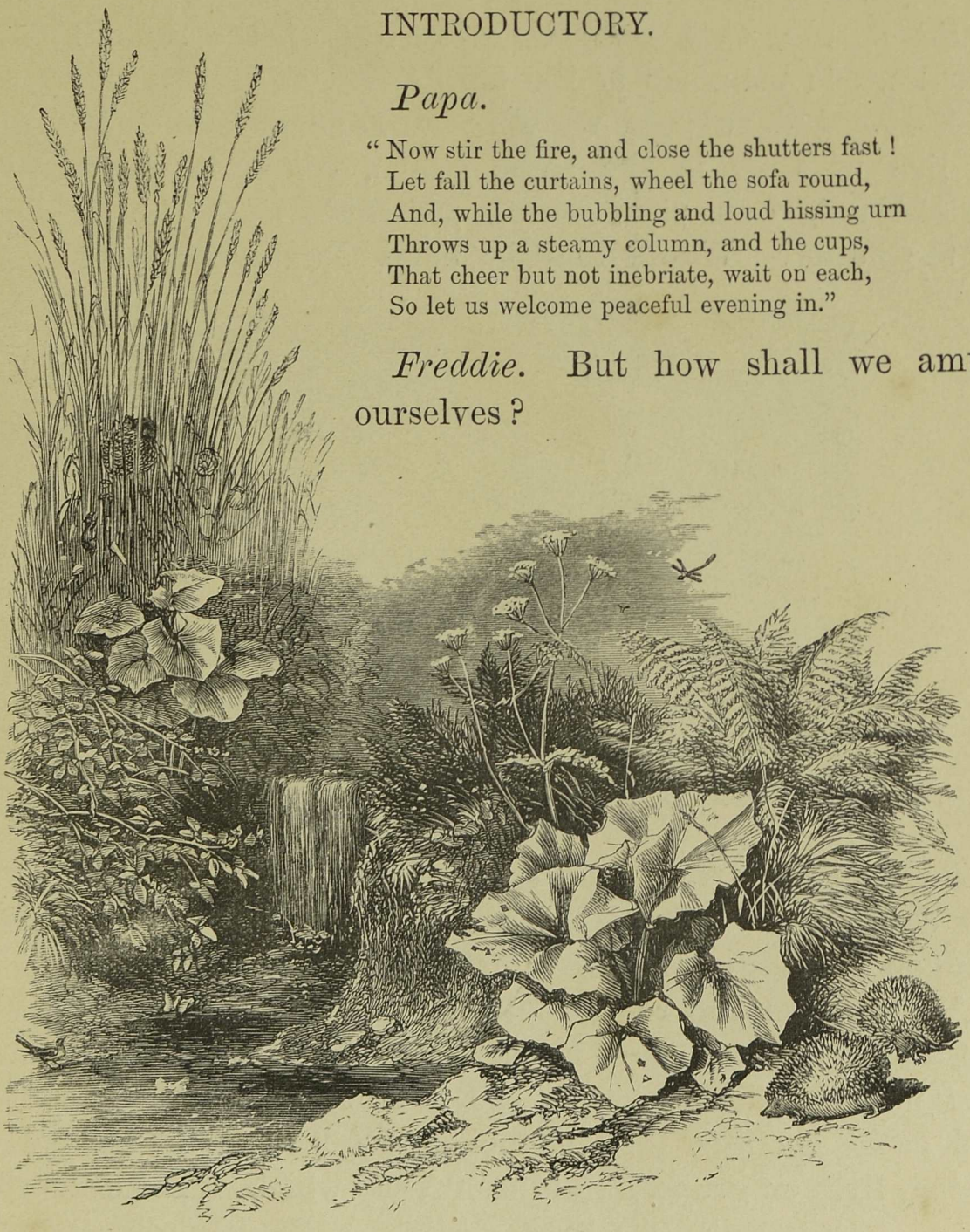
OUR DUMB NEIGHBOURS.

CONVERSATION I.

INTRODUCTORY.



Papa.

"Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast!
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in."

Freddie. But how shall we amuse ourselves?

Papa. Let us converse about our Dumb Neighbours.

Freddie. But who is my dumb neighbour? Mary's cat, or my dog Vido?

Papa. No, they are rather inmates of the same house, and humble members of the family.

Mary. But suppose we were in Ireland, and had a pig to live with us in the same room; or, as is the case in Switzerland, cows, pigs, horses, and fowls in the lower story of the house? Would they be neighbours or companions?

FEEDING BIRDS IN WINTER.

Papa. Of course I am speaking of our neighbours and our companions in good old England; the best place to live in upon the face of the earth, notwithstanding all its faults.

Mary. Then the robin that comes to be fed every winter's morning when the snow is on the ground; and the sparrow, that useful under-gardener, who if he steals a little mustard and cress, spoiling the outline of my initials in the early spring, lives on grubs, and other insects which, if not checked,

would soon grow as numerous as a plague of locusts; and the beautiful squirrel; and the timorous hare that flits across my path;—these are some of my pleasant neighbours.

Tom. And the rat—

Mary. He is a felon by nature!

Papa. The type and the parable of renegades and turn-coats—

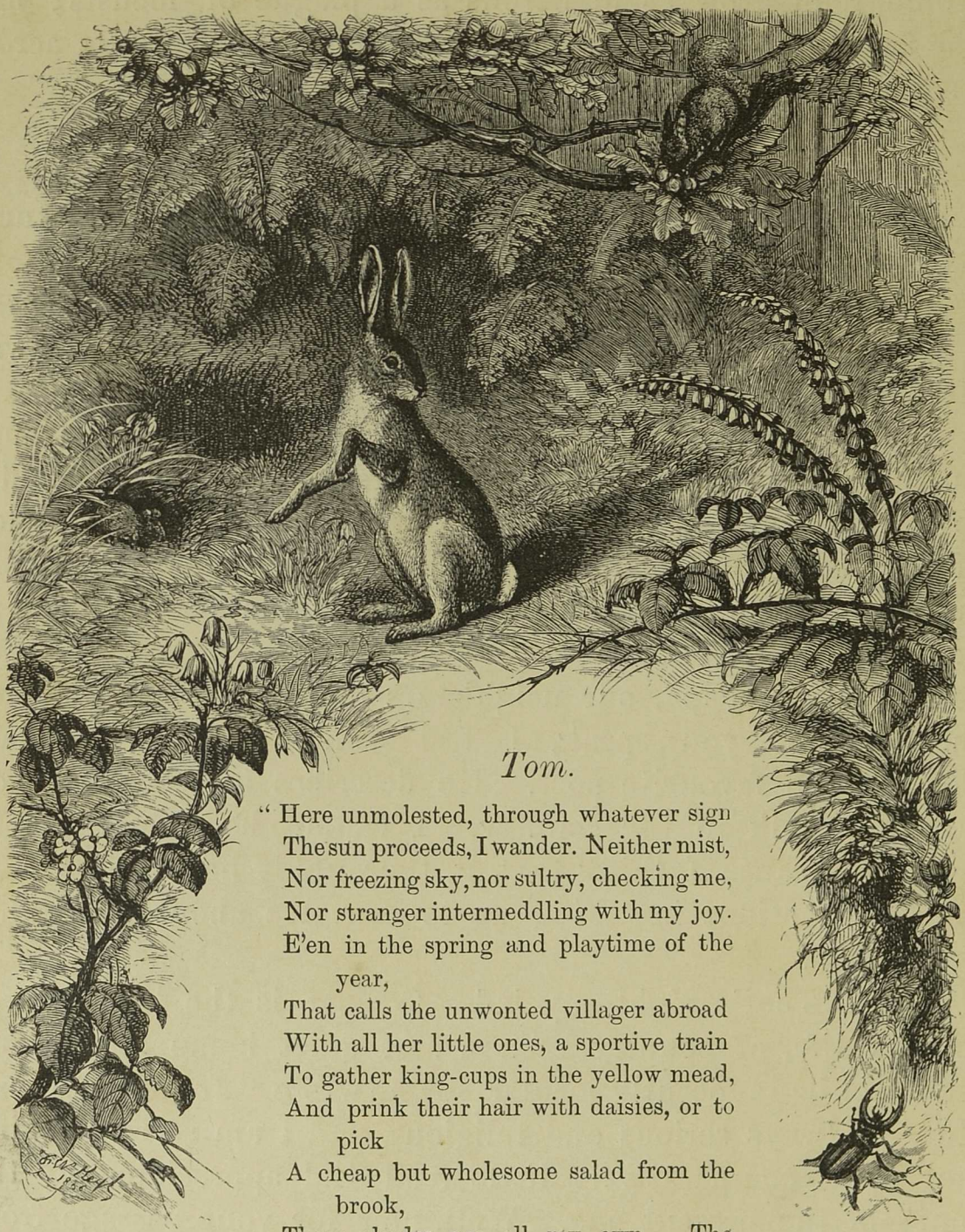
Tom. Who steals my fish—

Mary. Who worries my chickens; who carried away Grandmother's best lace cap.

Papa. Nay, Mary, that will never do. A rat, strange as the statement may seem at first sight, has an office to perform and a work to do in the boundless creation of the living and merciful God. We may kill him, but it ought to be done with as little pain to the poor animal as possible.

Tom. But, Papa, our neighbours must be very numerous, then. While you speak, I feel something like William Cowper, the favourite poet. He describes his sensations on taking a walk in the country. I cannot help quoting the passage, because I think that it thoroughly harmonizes with Papa's intentions in asking us to converse about our dumb neighbours.

Papa. That's right, my lad. Cowper is the true poet of country life, of country scenes, and quiet home recreations. He could be innocently jocular, for he wrote "Johnny Gilpin." He was always serious and religious, and I am sorry to think that he is comparatively little read and appreciated by the youth of the present age. Well, now for your passage from Cowper.



Tom.

" Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,

Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me ; and the stockdove, unalarm'd,
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth,
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play :
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech ; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.
The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own."

Mary. Thank you, Tom; now with what animal shall we begin our conversations?

Papa. I propose that we shall take the Rat first, because, in the opinion of you all, he has not a single redeeming quality.

Freddie. The other day, as I was walking by the river-side, I saw a beautiful little creature sitting on a stone in the stream, with a piece of succulent root between its fore-paws, and nibbling its repast in perfect peace with every living thing. It was timid and innocent in the expression of its countenance. Its colour was of a reddish brown. It was about as large as the common rat of the sewers, but its tail was much shorter, and covered with hair. I took

quite a liking to the little creature. I cannot think that he ought to be classed with the creatures you have just alluded to.

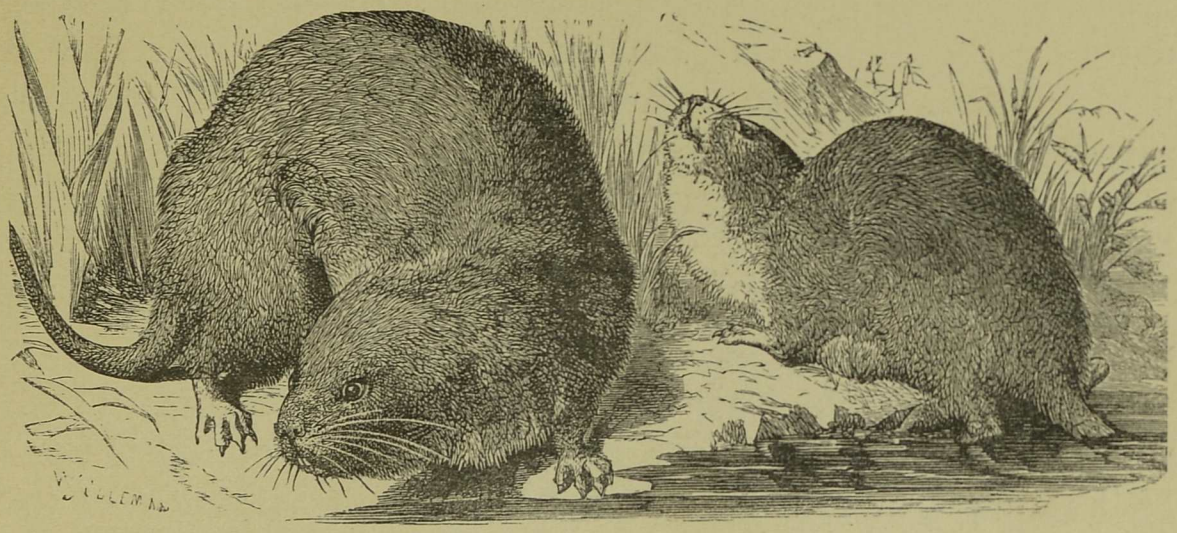
Tom. Rats are ingenious little creatures; they have actually been known to convey eggs up a staircase, from the pantry to their nest! Here is a beautiful picture, by Mr. Harrison Weir, from the "Children's Friend," shewing how they did it.

Papa. The rat of which Freddie speaks bears little resemblance to the rats with which we are chiefly acquainted, namely, the black rat, the albino or white rat, and the brown rat. But we must not anticipate. After supper we will renew our conversation, and see what facts and opinions we can contribute to the common stock of information. True conversation ought to be a picnic of thought, in which each guest brings something to the intellectual feast.

Mary. Then one speaker ought not to monopolize the whole of the conversation.

Papa. No, indeed, for then the charm of conversation disappears.

RATS CARRYING EGGS UP-STAIRS. P. 6.



THE WATER RAT.

CONVERSATION II.

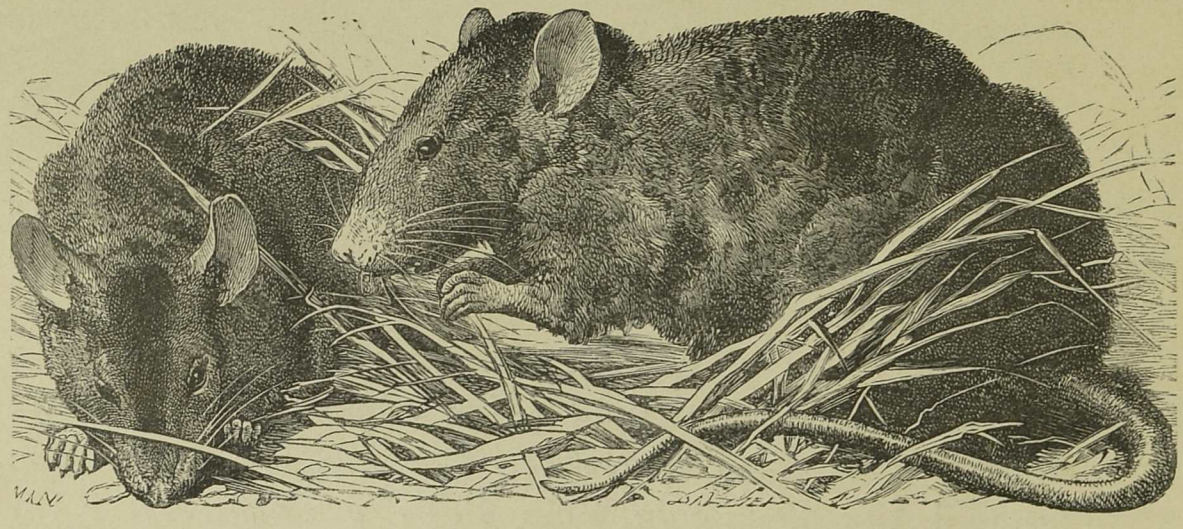
THE RAT—VARIETIES OF—THE WATER VOLE—BLACK AND BROWN RATS—MR. WATERTON ON THE BLACK RAT—THE NEW ZEALANDER'S MORAL—RATS IN PARIS—MR. RODWELL'S DESCRIPTION—ORIGIN OF THE RAT—RAT-SKINS USED AS A MATERIAL FOR DRESS—TERRIERS AND OTHER DOGS—THE SKUNK—THE STOAT.

Papa. One of you just now spoke of a quiet unobtrusive grass-eating rat which lives and dies by the side of remote and secluded streams. It is the Water Vole, or Water Rat, that is, the Arvicola of Cuvier, who divides the genus into four species: the Water Vole (*Mus amphibius*, Linnæus); the Alsatian Vole (*Mus terrestris*), the Meadow Vole (*Mus arvalis*), and the Economic Vole (*Mus œconomicus*). On no account disturb this little creature. The race is not numerous; it has young but twice in the year, and very few at a birth.

Mary. Some months ago, when the workmen were pulling down some houses in London, in order to construct a new railway, diligent search was made by naturalists for specimens of the old English black rat. It appears that the species is getting comparatively scarce. The brown rat has superseded it.

Tom. Yes. Do you remember the story that the amusing traveller and naturalist, Mr. Waterton, once rode fifty miles to see one, and that when he beheld it, he exclaimed, "Poor injured Briton, hard indeed has been the fate of thy family! In another generation at furthest, the last specimen of the black rat will have sunk down into the dust."

Mary. Did not Mr. Waterton think that the black rat was destroyed by the brown rat, which is the larger and the stronger animal, and that the brown rat first came over



THE BLACK RAT.

in the ship which brought Prince George of Hanover to England, being seen swimming in shoals round her hull?

Papa. This seems to be a mistake. Both the black and the brown rat are so fierce that they will destroy each other, but sometimes they live in perfect harmony. Indeed, notwithstanding the antagonism that is generally supposed to exist between the black and brown races of rats, it is well known that they do intermingle in the breeding season, and the effect of this is that the descendants of the black rat become gradually lighter; and it is probable enough that after a few generations, the entire breed will become confirmed brown rats; while the old black rats, having lived as long as nature will allow them, cease to exist, and the race becomes extinct.

Freddie. I remember to have read that once a missionary clergyman found a Maori, or aboriginal New Zealander, reclining on the ground, and showing signs of the most poignant distress. "What is the matter with you?" asked the missionary. "I am watching," he replied, "this little native rat. It will soon be utterly extinct; not one specimen will survive. It is eaten up and superseded by the big brown rat you have brought in your ships from England. It is the type of me and of my people. We also are disappearing from the face of the earth."

NEW ZEALANDER.

Papa. When in New Zealand some years ago, I heard the same anecdote from an intelligent colonist. The natives have been known to waste away, without any symptoms

of disease, and from sheer sickness of soul—a sort of self-abandonment that ended in atrophy and death.

Mary. But to return to the black rat. That he sometimes lives on terms of perfect friendship with his big brown brother is proved by a curious record preserved in the municipal archives of Paris. After the Revolution of 1848, and the breaking down of the Republican Government, the palace of the Tuileries was left uninhabited, and a vast multitude of black and brown rats established themselves in the cellars of the royal castle. Some old shoes, old hats, and sacks of potatoes, which had been left in the cellars, amply served them for provisions, and as there is a direct communication between the cellars and the river Seine, they had every thing they required to lead a joyous life. They then began to make excursions into the houses of the Rue de Rivoli. The inhabitants complained to the Prefect of the Seine, and orders were given to the person charged with the destruction of the vermin of the capital, to organize a razzia against the intruders. On entering the cellars, he found a complete mass of black and brown rats living on terms of the most brotherly concord. In consequence of crossing the breed, many of them were dark on the back with white bellies and tails. The rat-catcher began to set his traps, and by the following morning he had killed 847 fine specimens. According to custom, their tails were cut off, and sent to the Hôtel de Ville, in order to support the claim for the usual reward.

Freddie. The Welsh call the black rat the French mouse; so I think we may safely come to the conclusion as to which country the black rats would call their fatherland, were they gifted with powers of speech. I never saw a black rat in

my life—that is to say, a large-eared, sharp-nosed, fierce-eyed, scaly-tailed, sable-coated, real, unsophisticated *mus rattus*.

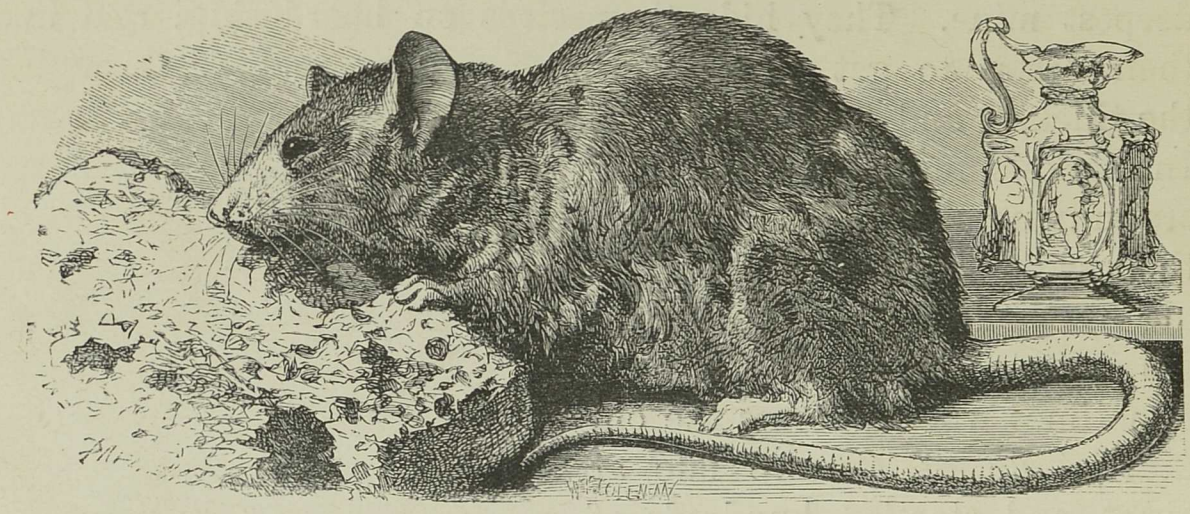
Papa. It is remarkable that no classical writer speaks of rats. They are supposed to have come from the East in the sixteenth century; but such is the astonishing fecundity of the animal that now they are found in every part of the civilized world. They travel down to, and multiply in, the deepest mine. They hide themselves on board ship, and in their desire to get at water, sometimes try to bore through the thickest and hardest timber. In markets and menageries they are innumerable. You may see them swimming, skipping, crawling by thousands in the Jardin des Plantes at Paris. I have sometimes walked across the old Marché de St. Honoré late at night, and startled hundreds of them as they were preying on the garbage and offal left by the market people. There we find a use for them in the economy of creation. The quantity of corrupted matter which they absorb and assimilate would be enough to breed a pestilence. So that you see the rat is not without its value.

Freddie. But now, Papa, you are speaking of the common brown rat.

Papa. Yes. Buffon and Cuvier style it the *Surmulot*.

Mary. Can you give us any account of its colour, parts, and proportions?

Papa. In reply to that question, I think that I cannot do better than quote from Mr. James Rodwell's instructive and amusing volume, entitled "The Rat." He says: "The brown rat is the largest species of the genus that occurs with us. Its body is rather elongated and full; the limbs short and moderately strong; the neck short; the head of moderate size, com-



THE BROWN RAT.

pressed, and rather pointed; the ears are short and round; the tail long, tapering to a point, and covered with 200 rows of scales. On the fore feet are four toes, of which the two middle are much the longest; the soles are bare, and have five prominent papillæ. The hind feet have five toes, of which the three middle are the longest, and nearly equal, the first shorter than the fifth; the sole is bare up to the heel, and has six papillæ. The general colour of the upper parts is reddish brown; the long hairs are black at the end, the lower parts greyish white. On the feet the hairs are very short, whitish and glistening; the claws are horn-coloured, or greyish yellow."

Mary. Besides the black and brown, Cuvier gives accounts of seventy-two different kinds of rats, each of which has its native locality, and which it seldom or never quits, except by force or accident. But the black and brown rats are citizens of every genial portion of the globe, and seem to say the world is theirs, for they go where they like and do as they please. Now it may be asked, from whence came they? Ay, there's the puzzle; for I know of no animals in the whole range of natural history wherein there is so much discrepancy of opinion as to the land of their nativity, or such conflicting testimony adduced by the various philosophers as to which country has the honour of claiming these little truants as its legitimate offspring.* Some naturalists believe these came from the East Indies; others believe they came from the West. Many assert they came from Norway, while others maintain that they were common in England before the Norwegians even heard of them.

Tom. It may surprise some sticklers for the Scandinavian origin, to know that this rat was brought to England from the Indies and Persia in 1730; that in 1750 the breed made its way to France, and its progress over Europe has since then been more or less rapid; and that when Pallas was travelling in Southern Russia he saw the first detachment arrive, near the mouth of the Volga, in 1766.

Some respectable authorities state that the brown rat came from Persia and the southern regions of Asia, and that the fact is rendered sufficiently evident from the testimonies of

* Cuvier says that this animal did not pass into Europe till the eighteenth century. He further observes that it appears to belong to Persia, where it lives in burrows, and that it was not till 1727 that, after an earthquake, it arrived at Astrachan, by crossing the Volga.

Pallas and F. Cuvier. Pallas describes the migratory nature of these rats, and states that in the autumn of 1729 they arrived at Astrachan, in Russia, in such incredible numbers that nothing could be done to oppose them. They came from the western deserts, and even the waves of the Volga did not arrest their progress.

Papa. Some say that their first arrival was on the coast of Ireland, in those ships that used to trade in provisions to Gibraltar, and that perhaps we owe to a single couple of these animals the numerous progeny now infesting the whole extent of the British empire. Mr. Newman asserts that we received the rat from Hanover, whence it was called the Hanoverian rat.

Tom. Pennant says that the brown rat came to England in 1728, and to Paris twenty years later ; but a modern writer asserts that they appeared in France in the middle of the sixteenth century, and were first observed in Paris. Buffon says that it is uncertain from whence they came, though it was only ten years before that they arrived in France, and this I believe to be about the true state of the case; though the Egyptians maintain that they were made out of the mud of the Nile, and assert that they have seen them in the process of formation, being half rat, half mud.

NILE AND PAPYRUS.

George. Among the practical uses to which rats may be put, the following is amusing, though it may be doubted whether many persons will be inclined to follow the example

here set them. An ingenious individual of Liskeard, Cornwall, has for some time past been exhibiting himself in a dress composed from top to toe of rat-skins, which he has been collecting for three years and a half. The dress was made entirely by himself: it consists of hat, neckerchief, coat, waistcoat, trowsers, tippet, gaiters, and shoes. The number of rats required to complete the suit was 670; and the individual, when thus dressed, appears exactly like one of the Esquimaux described in the travels of Parry and Ross. The tippet, or boa, is composed of the pieces of skin immediately round the tails of the rats, and is a very curious part of the dress, containing about 600 tails—and those none of the shortest.

ESQUIMAUX.

Freddie. A lady in Glasgow has just now a pair of shoes, of exquisite workmanship, the upper parts being made of the skins of rats. The leather is exceedingly smooth, and as soft as the finest kid, and appears stout and firm. It took six skins to make the pair of shoes, as the back of the skin is the only part stout enough for use.

Mary. That the temper and habits of animals represent the vices and virtues of mankind, and are a sort of living metaphor or parable, is a doctrine as old and as universal as civilization itself. Thus we say, "Proud as a peacock," "Cunning as a fox," "Slippery as an eel," "Bold as a lion," "Ravenous as a wolf," "Swift as an antelope," "Ferocious

as a tiger." Why do we attach the name of a rat to the politician who gives up his principles in order to promote his advancement?

Papa. An amusing story is told of Dr. Musgrave, afterwards the genial Archbishop of York, illustrating this use of the word rat. Mr. Copley, afterwards Lord Lyndhurst, was, in early life, a zealous Whig. On his accepting office under a Tory administration, and while canvassing the University of Cambridge, he called on his old friend Musgrave, and asked him for his vote. Honest Tom, as he was called, is said to have answered, "I am a Whig still, Sir." Now Musgrave had a dog, which, though attached to his master, was fierce and bold. He happened to be crouching beneath the chair on which the candidate was seated. Musgrave, with cynical humour, advised Copley to beware of that dog. "For," added Musgrave, "he's a terrible fellow for rats!"

Mary. I heard a remarkable story yesterday about a rat emptying an oil bottle, which will amuse you. Mr. Bramhall, the silversmith, of Gloucester Street, Clerkenwell, states that for a long time he constantly found the oil bottle attached to his lathe emptied of its contents. Various plans were devised to find out the thief, but without success. At last Mr. Bramhall determined to watch. Through a hole in the door he peeped for some time; at length he heard a gentle noise. Something was creeping up the framework of the lathe. It was a fine rat! Planting itself on the edge of the lathe, the ingenious creature dropped its tail inside the bottle, then drew it out and licked off the oil. This it continued to do until nearly every drop of oil was extracted.

Charlotte. I had not intended telling any stories to-night about dogs, but I heard one yesterday which I should like you to hear.

Once on a time Mr. Gilbert of Torpoint, Devon, lost a young and handsome spaniel dog, upon which he set great value, and accordingly advertised it repeatedly in the local papers, offering a liberal reward for its recovery. One day, after the nomination held at the Town-hall of Devonport was over, Mr. Gilbert repaired with some of his political partisans to the hostelry of Mrs. Hyne, in Fore-street, where some very pleasant "small talk" was indulged in. Presently, however, most of the company adjourned, leaving Mr. Gilbert to think that, if he did not soon be off too, he should be left to the study of his own reflections. He was seated near the window in the bar of the house, wondering if ever he should find his canine companion again—one who always stuck by his side however often other people thought proper to estrange themselves. While in this mood, what, remarkable to say, should catch his eye but his missing dog, which was trotting slowly up the street. With great joy Mr. Gilbert, who instantly recognised it, ran into the street and, catching it up in his arms, ran back into the bar with it. On calling the dog by its name, it leaped and sprang with all that excessive joy so peculiar to its faithful nature, positively licking the very boots of its old master. Mr. Gilbert was followed into the house by a tradesman's wife in Devonport, who very indignantly demanded his authority for stealing her husband's dog. He said he had missed it, and it was his property. This she denied, and a short "banter" ensued. Presently her lord and master came to the rescue, and although the dog was

called by the name he had given it, it refused to stir from under the legs of its old master, although nearly two months had elapsed since it had seen his face. It was stated that the dog had about five or six weeks previously (sometime after it was missed by Mr. Gilbert) followed its new master while on a visit to the neighbourhood of Saltash, and he brought it to Devonport, where his wife and children had fed it and had become much attached to it. Mutual concessions, however, were eventually arrived at, and the dog, having extended his paw in wishing his new Devonport friends adieu, resumed his wonted habitation under the care of his old master.

Tom. I also claim permission to add my story.

We have the following announcement in one of the Austrian papers: "Captain G——, seriously wounded in the head, has returned to Vienna with his dog!" Thereby hangs a pretty tale of canine affection and sagacity. The captain was wounded at Magenta in 1859, and lay out on the battle-field; he was missed, and no tidings could be had of him by the men of his regiment. But he had at the time a young dog, which had become much attached to him. It occurred to his groom that through the agency of this little favourite of his master he might discover him, and so he took the dog with him to the field, and amongst a heap of dead the poor thing discovered the badly wounded officer, and howled piteously to attract the groom's attention. The master was brought in, and he considered he owed his life to the dog, and became more attached to him than ever. This officer was again wounded in the retreat from Königgrätz, in 1867, and again was missed. Of course it occurred to his brother officers who had heard the former story, to try again the former agency of

discovery. The dog, now grown old and sage, was brought out, and after a long search set up once more its melancholy cry, and was found rubbing its anxious nose to its master's pallid face. Captain G—— was again only wounded, but very badly. He was sent down to Vienna, and as he drove through the city, lying prostrate in a carriage, it was noticed that a poor dog, with anxious and sympathetic eye, lay with his head upon his breast. The anxiety of the officer to reach Vienna and to live was noticed as strange for one of well-known bravery, who had a hundred times unflinchingly faced death. But his first request was for a notary, and he hastened to make a will, leaving a certain annuity to a relative, on condition of his taking charge of his best of friends, his little dog, and of watching tenderly over its comfort for the remnant of its days. This was the secret of his anxiety to survive. "Now," he said, "if it be God's will, I am content to die." But I am happy to say there are strong hopes of saving the gallant gentleman's life, and that it is highly probable he will himself enjoy the agreeable duty of giving the greatest of all happiness to his dumb friend, and that will be his own society.

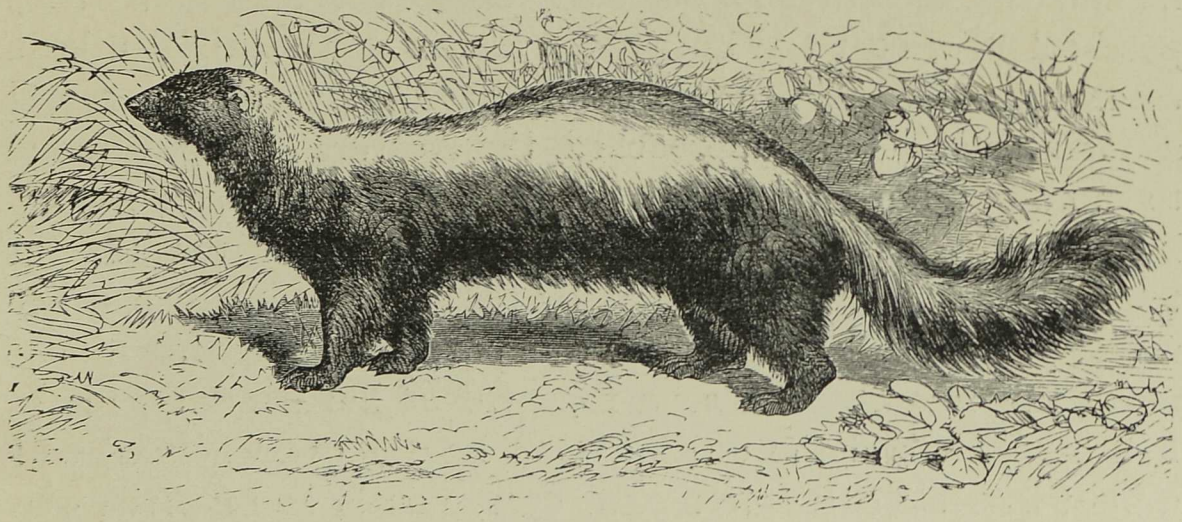
Freddie. I have here a beautiful picture of a dog at the grave of his mistress. But I am getting tired of these dog tales. Do, Papa, resume the thread of your narrative.

Tom. There is another animal yet more symbolical of characters to be found in every neighbourhood, and sometimes developed among the lads of a public school. He is civil, and complimentary. He alternately fawns on and patronises his unsuspecting victim. But if you differ from him or thwart some scheme of ambition, on which he has set his heart, he

THE FAVOURITE DOG AT THE GRAVE.

will assail you with every variety of calumny, and heap on you every epithet of abuse. He is represented in the animal

creation by the skunk, pre-eminent in the utter noisomeness of the stench which it exhales when annoyed or alarmed. Should but a single drop of the horrid secretion formed in some glands near the insertion of the tail, and which can be retained or



THE SKUNK.

ejected at will, fall on the dress or the skin, it is hardly possible to relieve the tainted object of its disgusting influence. A dog whose coat had suffered from a discharge of a skunk's battery, retained the stench for so long a time, that even after a week had elapsed, it rendered a table useless by rubbing itself against one of the legs, although its fur had been repeatedly washed. The odour of this substance is so penetrating that it taints everything that may be near the spot on which it has fallen, and renders them quite useless. Provisions rapidly become uneatable, and clothes are so saturated with the vapour that they will retain the smell for several weeks, even though they are repeatedly washed and dried. It is said that if a drop of the odorous fluid should fall upon the eyes, it will deprive them of sight. Several

Indians were seen by Mr. Gresham who had lost the use of their eyes from this cause.

Mr. Audubon has recorded a curious adventure which befell him in his younger days. In one of his accustomed rambles he suddenly came upon a curious little animal, decorated with a parti-coloured coat and bushy tail, and so apparently gentle in demeanour that he was irresistibly impelled to seek a nearer acquaintance. As he approached, the creature did not attempt to run away, but awaited his coming with perfect equanimity. Deceived by its gentle aspect, he eagerly ran towards the tempting prize, and grasped it by its bushy tail, which it had raised perpendicularly as if for the purpose of inviting him to make the assault. He soon repented of his temerity, for he had hardly seized the animal when he was overwhelmed with a most horrible substance. His eyes, mouth, and nostrils were equally offended. After this adventure he became very cautious with respect to pretty little animals with white backs and bushy tails.

Charlotte. I have just come from my visit to our Aunt. They caught a poacher for us. The game-keeper brought him up to the house, with a cord round his neck.

Papa. I hope it wasn't old Brown, our incorrigible neighbour down at the mill cottage. I am always afraid that I shall have to go bail for Brown, who will not let the pheasants alone.

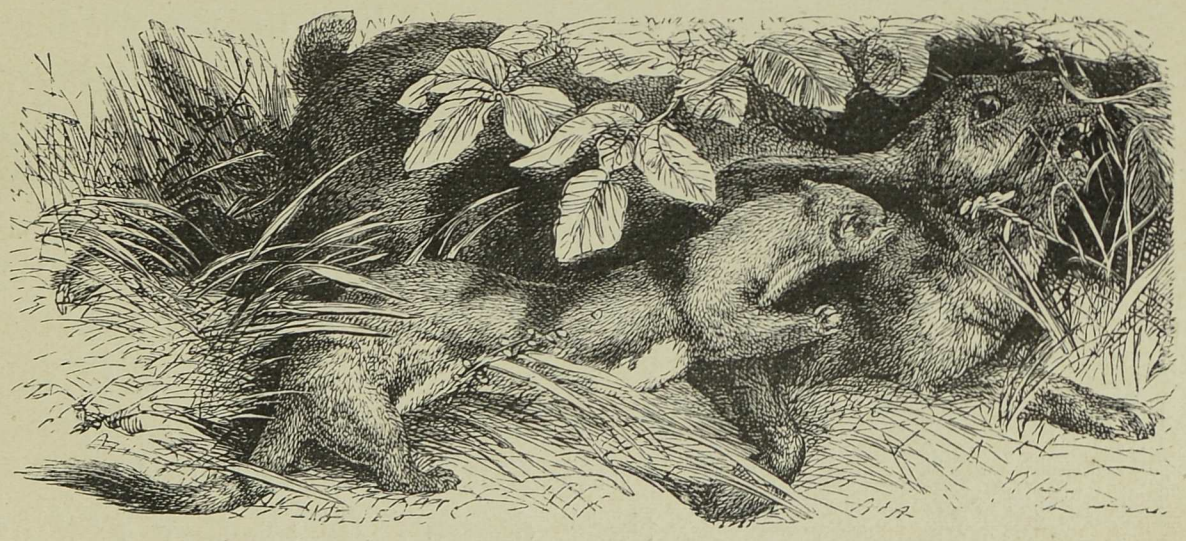
Charlotte. Brown? No, papa, it was not. Our poacher was nothing like the size of Brown.

Freddie. One of the gipsy tinker's children, perhaps?

Charlotte. No, it was nothing but a stoat! The servants found its nest. In it were two young rabbits and a bird's nest

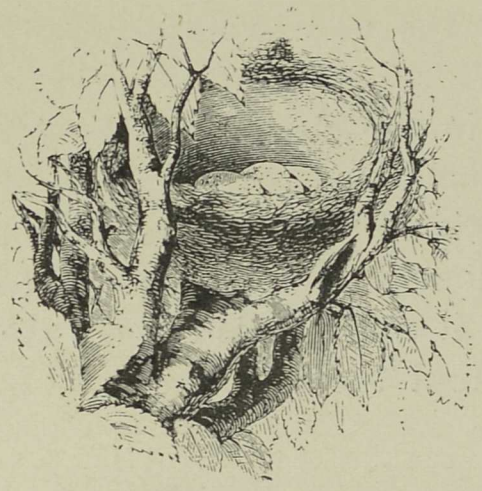
and eggs. The stoat and the water-vole are thorough enemies. The stoat swims tolerably well, but the water-vole generally escapes by his superior skill.

Mary. I remember to have read in the Rev. J. G. Wood's *Natural History* the following facts about the stoat :—That the silent, soft-footed, gliding stoat steals quietly on its victim without alarming it by violent demonstrations, soothes it to its death, and kills it daintily. Be it noticed that there are human types of the stoat, or rather that the visible animal is



THE STOAT.

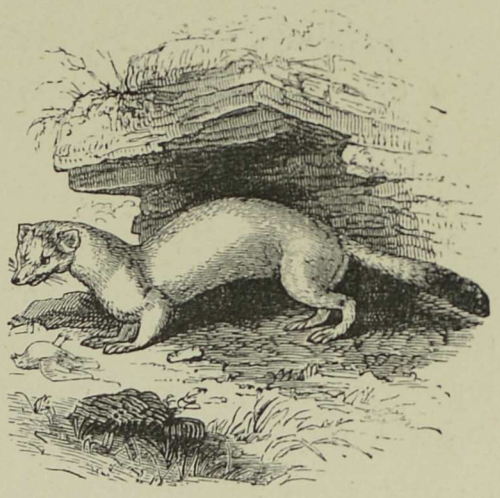
but an outward emblem of the inward nature. Birds' nests of all kinds are plundered by this incorrigible poacher, for its quick eye and keen nose enable it to discover a nest, be it ever so carefully hidden ; its agile limbs and sharp claws give it the power of climbing any tree-trunk, and of clinging to any branch which will bear the weight of a nest and eggs ; while its little and serpent-like body enables it to insinuate itself into any crevice that is sufficiently large to afford ingress



THRUSH'S NEST.

and egress to the parent birds. The pheasant and partridge are said to be sad sufferers from the stoat, which is mercilessly slain by the keepers with the aid of traps or gun, the former being the preferable mode of destroying "vermin." When the female stoat is providing for the wants of a young family, she forages far and wide for her offspring, and lays up the produce of her chase in certain cunningly contrived larders. In a wood belonging to Lord Bagot, a stoat nursery was discovered, having within it no less than six inhabitants, a mother and her five young. Their larder was supplied with five hares and four rabbits, neither of which had been the least mangled, with the exception of the little wound that had caused their death. In another nest of stoats were found a number of small animals, such as field-mice, birds, and frogs, all packed away in a very methodical manner. In two nests which were found in Tollymore Park, the stoats had laid up an abundance of provision. In one of them there were six or seven mice, besides other small animals, all laid with their heads in the same direction. In the other nest was a more extensive

assortment of dead animals. A dozen mice, a young rabbit, and a young hare were laid in the storehouse, together with the feathers and tail of a woodcock, showing that even that wary bird had fallen a victim to the stoat.



STOAT AND BIRD.

Tom. Although the stoat is so formidable a foe to rats and mice, and destroys annually such numbers of these destructive animals, it sometimes happens that the clever thieving animal finds its intended prey to be more than its match, and is forced ignominiously to yield the contest. One of these animals was seen in chase of a rat, which it was following by scent, and at a great pace. After a while, the stoat overtook the rat, and would have sprung upon her, had not its purpose been anticipated by a sudden attack from the rat, which turned to bay, and fiercely flung herself with open jaws on her pursuer. The stoat was so startled at this unexpected proceeding, that it fairly turned tail and ran away. The rat now took up the pursuit and chased the stoat with such furious energy that she drove her enemy far from the place. It is probable that the rat had a young family at hand, and was urged to this curious display of courage by the force of motherly feelings. A stoat has been known to attack a weasel. This was indeed "diamond cut diamond!"

Papa. The stoat has active limbs, sharp teeth, and a ferocious disposition; so that even a single stoat would be an

unpleasant opponent for an unarmed man. But if several stoats should unite to attack a single man, he would find himself in bad case, armed or not. Such a circumstance has been lately communicated to me, my informant having heard it from the lips of the principal actor in the scene.

A gentleman was walking along a road near Cricklade, when he saw two stoats sitting in the path. He picked up a stone, and cruelly flung it at the animals, one of which was struck, and was knocked over by the force of the blow. The other stoat immediately uttered a loud and peculiar cry, which was answered by a number of its companions, who issued from a neighbouring hedge, and sprang upon their assailant, running up his body with surprising rapidity, and striving to reach his neck. As soon as he saw the stoats coming to the attack, he picked up a handful of stones, thinking that he should be able to repel his little enemies, but they came boldly on, in spite of the stones and of his stick. Most providentially a sharp wind happened to be blowing on that day, and he had wound a thick woollen comforter round his neck, so that he was partially protected.

Finding that he had no chance of beating off the pertinacious animals, he flung his stick down, fixed his hat firmly over his temples, and, pressing his hands to his neck, so as to guard that perilous spot as much as possible from the sharp teeth of the stoats, set off homewards as fast as he could run. By degrees several of the animals dropped off, but others clung so determinedly to their opponent, that when he arrived at his stables, no less than five stoats were killed by his servants as they hung on his person. His hands, face, and part of his neck were covered with wounds; but owing to the

presence of mind with which he had defended his neck, the large blood-vessels had escaped without injury. The distance from the spot where he had been attacked to his own house was nearly four miles. He paid a severe penalty for his thoughtless cruelty.

CONVERSATION III.

ANECDOTES OF RATS—THIEVES STOPPED BY RATS—THE SYDNEY CAPTAIN'S DEVICE—COOPER THORNHILL'S CORN-RICK DESTROYED BY RATS AND MICE—THE WEASEL—THE ERMINE.

Papa. Since our last conversation, I have been making inquiries in several directions about rats and their habits. An old rat-catcher has told me that he once killed 1490 in taking down one old-standing wheat-rick. The quantity of grain destroyed by the rats was enormous, and at that time corn fetched from 75*s.* to 85*s.* a quarter.

Mary. They carry about with them, says a writer in *Bentley's Miscellany*, four formidable weapons in the shape of long, sharp teeth,—two in the front of the upper jaw, and two corresponding in the lower.

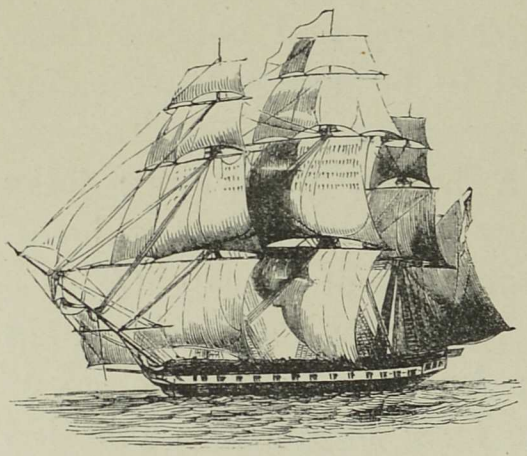
They sometimes unite in great bodies and will attack men. A few years ago four condemned criminals made their escape from Newgate by descending from a closet into the sewer; having formed the daring project of proceeding along it to the river Thames. But when they got as far as Fleet Market,

they were beset on every side by such legions of rats that the unhappy men screamed with agony. The people above, hearing their cries, tore up the iron gratings, and hoisted them out, when they were only too glad to be taken back safely to prison.

Mary. If there are rats in a house, we young folks should always remember that they are very great thieves. They sometimes steal things that cannot be of the slightest use to them: a lace cap, a Paisley shawl, or even a shoe, may help to line a nest, or appease hunger; but what shall we say of the well-authenticated story of the farm bailiff who laid his watch on a table in his bedroom before retiring to rest, and was awoke by a crash of something that had fallen, and a rattling sound, as of something being dragged along the floor? He immediately got up and discovered that his watch was gone. He lost no time in pursuing the thief, following the direction of the sound, when he came upon the watch at the mouth of a rat's hole, into which the rat had entered, taking with him the whole of the guard-chain, and was only prevented from taking the watch by the case springing open from the fall, which made it require more room than the hole would admit. As it was, the rat did not seem disposed to lose his prize, but kept a firm hold of the guard, when the owner tried to pull it from him.

Freddie. Do you remember, Papa, telling me an amusing story of the manner in which an English captain cleared his vessel of rats while he was lying at anchor in Sydney harbour? He shifted the berth of his ship so as to place it alongside a barge full of rich cheeses. The keen scent of his rats soon found out the cheese, and in a single night

all the vermin had departed! He then removed to a considerable distance in the harbour, and saw no more of the rats.



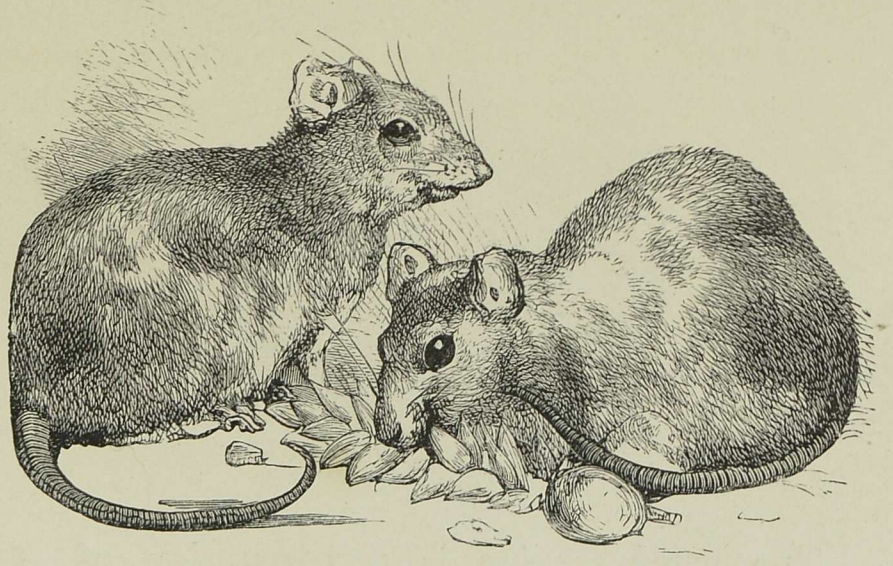
Mary. Here let me say one word. If a child meets a rat, the best thing is at once to run away. Terror and opposition exasperate all the rat's dangerous qualities. The instinct of self-preservation makes him fly *at* you, if you will not let him fly *from* you. Give him a way of escape and he will *go*.

Freddie. But though the rat is a queer-tempered animal, and delights in nothing more than eating up his own children, he sometimes becomes sincerely attached to human beings. You remember little Charlie, who, though he found Latin difficult, and Euclid insupportable, was so clever and observant of beasts and birds. One day I remember his mother saying to him, "Have you got any rats in your pockets, Charlie, to show your friends?" and immediately opening the breast-pocket of his overcoat, he showed me two fat brown rats, their noses just peering out of the edge of the pocket. "Ah, Freddie!" said he, "if you ever make a friend of a rat, he will stick to you faithfully all the days of your life. I have half-a-dozen beautiful Albinos in a cave which I have made in the garden."

Tom. During the last century there lived at Stilton, a man named Cooper Thornhill, who was very famous for his cheeses; in fact, some people have attributed to him the invention of Stilton cheese. He acquired considerable fame

from having ridden faster and farther in a shorter space of time than any of the men of his day who had attempted similar feats on horseback. Brayley, who wrote in the year 1808, records of this inn-keeper that he had a corn-rick of the value of eight hundred pounds at Stilton, which, though placed on high stones, was found to have the whole inside eaten through by rats and mice, when intended to be threshed.

The compiler of "Cook's Topography," who wrote his work soon after Brayley's was



published, speaks of "the celebrated Cooper Thornhill, of equestrian celebrity; but *still more* famed through the

destruction of his large corn-rick by rats and mice." Such is fame!

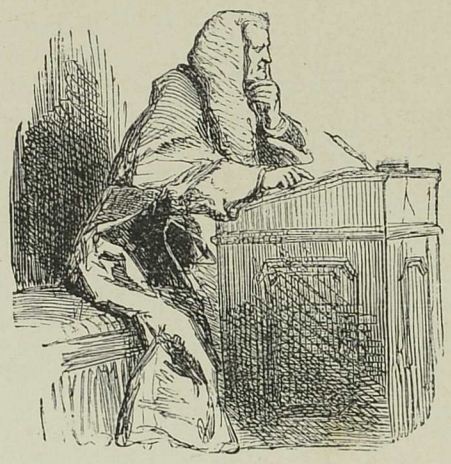
Charlotte. I have heard that the celebrated ermine fur which is in such general favour, is produced by an animal that is precisely the same as the stoat. In fact, the stoat is a variety of weasel.

Tom. Some people say that the weasel cannot be tamed. I know that to be wrong, for I have taught them to feed out of my own hand.

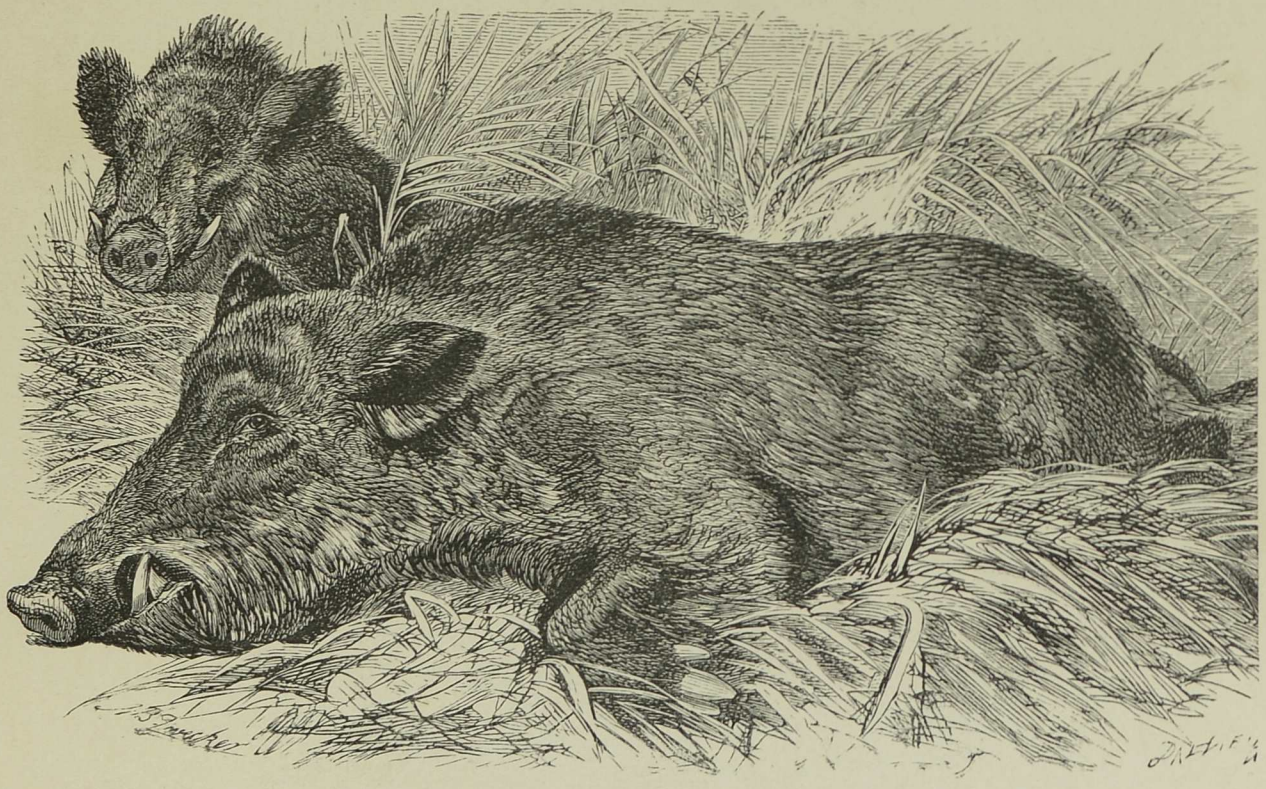
Mary. Papa, what are weasels like? I never saw one.

Papa. I have several pictures of them and their varieties, which you shall see when we come to speak of weasels.

Freddie. Do not forget that the little ermine supplies the fur of the robes of the judges. Hence we say, the *judicial ermine.* It forms the type and sign of the office and dignity of a judge.



Papa. The word *ermine* is a corruption of *Armenian.* The ermine is often called the Armenian weasel, because it is plentiful in that country.



WILD BOAR

CONVERSATION IV.

SWINE—OLD WILD BOARS—CARNIVOROUS POWER OF SWINE—VERY PROLIFIC—MUCH CALUMNIATED—LEARNED PIGS—POINTER PIGS—A TEAM OF HOGS—A BOAR TRAINED FOR THE SADDLE—SIR F. B. HEAD'S REMARKS.

Papa. Let us, this evening, have some talk about swine. We shall treat our poor pigs with the greater kindness if we know something of their history and habits.

Charlotte. I must say that I am not predisposed in their favour. I like them best in the form of Ham.

Tom. Have you ever observed the snout of a boar? It is admirably adapted for the purpose of rooting in the earth. The boar distinguishes by the delicacy of its touch and by its sense of smell the things most suitable for his food, even when they are buried in the ground. Hence he is sometimes used to hunt for truffles.

Papa. Look at his heavy and massive form, the power of his neck and fore-quarters, and the wedge-like shape of the head. He will charge fearlessly at an apparently impenetrable thicket, and vanish as by magic. Observe the polished tusks. They are terrible weapons when attacking

BOARS FIGHTING.

an enemy. It has been remarked that in striking with his tusks the boar does not seem to make any great exertion, but simply wriggles with his snout as he pierces his victim.

Charlotte. Wolves and wild boars have quite disappeared in England, and foxes are only saved from extinction by the care of the sportsman. Once the wild boar was protected

by severe forest laws, and to chase him was the favourite amusement of the nobility. He was attacked with the spear: to use nets or arrows was deemed an unworthy mode of destroying him. On would come the huge beast with lightning swiftness, his eyes furious, and lips dripping with foam. Just at the moment when the hunter expected to strike him, he would swerve from his course, snapping at the spear-head and breaking it from the shaft.

Tom. I was told one day at Ringwood that there are some traces of wild boars still to be found in the forest pigs of Hampshire. Certainly these animals are wonderfully active, and much fiercer than the ordinary swine. Their crests are high, shoulders broad, and their manes thick and bristling.

Freddie. There is one thing about a pig I don't like. He'll eat almost anything. But I have heard butchers say that if his flesh is to be sound and firm, he must be fed upon a vegetable diet. To feed him on the offal of other animals is to render his flesh flabby and unwholesome.

Charlotte. Why did the Jews prohibit the use of the hog as an article of diet?

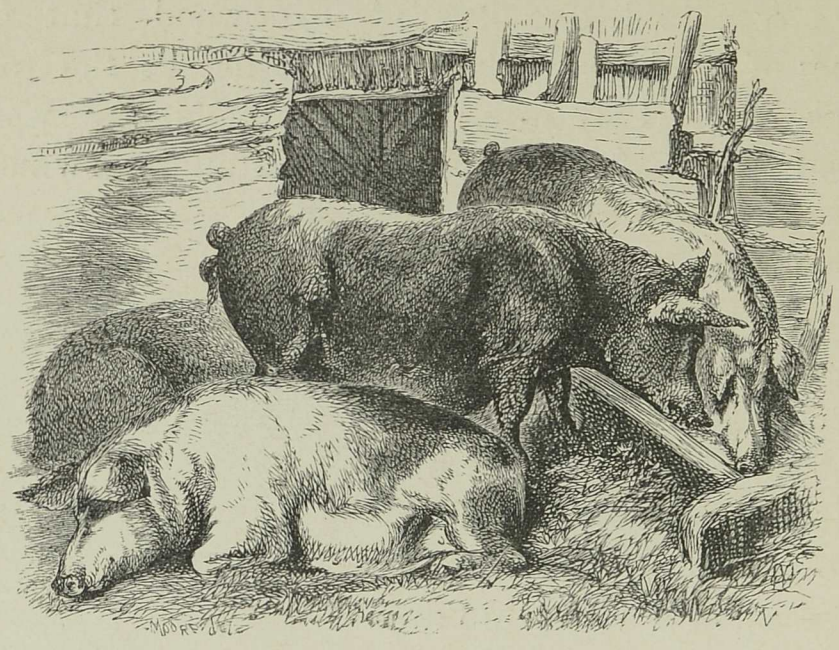
Papa. The reason of this prohibition has never been clearly ascertained. The Mahomedans, no doubt following the example of the Jews, hold the same opinion. Spain, you know, was largely colonized by its Arabian conquerors.

In some parts of that country swine's flesh is thought to produce leprosy.

Freddie. By the bye, girls, have you ever observed what an elegant mode of walking the pig has?

Mary. Yes, and he swims beautifully, but cuts his throat with every stroke he takes.

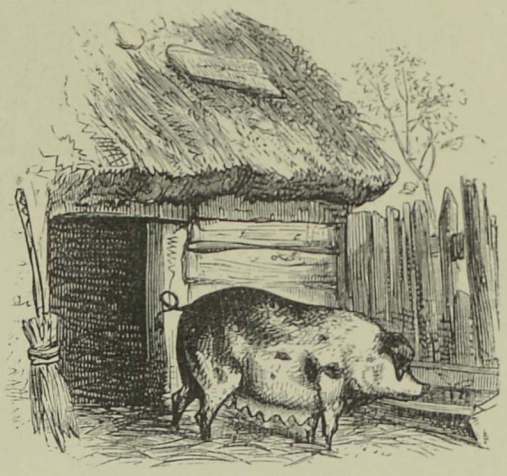
Tom. No, that's a vulgar error. He does nothing of the kind.



Charlotte. Pigs have always large families. Gilbert White, the naturalist, tells us of a sow that, when she died, was the mother of no less than three hundred children.

Papa. We often libel the hog, and ascribe to it qualities which are of our own creation. It is no more naturally gluttonous than the cow or the dog. In its wild state it is never overloaded with fat. It will surpass a horse in swiftness when roaming in wild activity through its native woods.

It is only dirty when confined to a narrow sty, and, as modern farmers discover, the cleaner a pig is kept the more rapid is its growth, and the richer and finer its flesh.

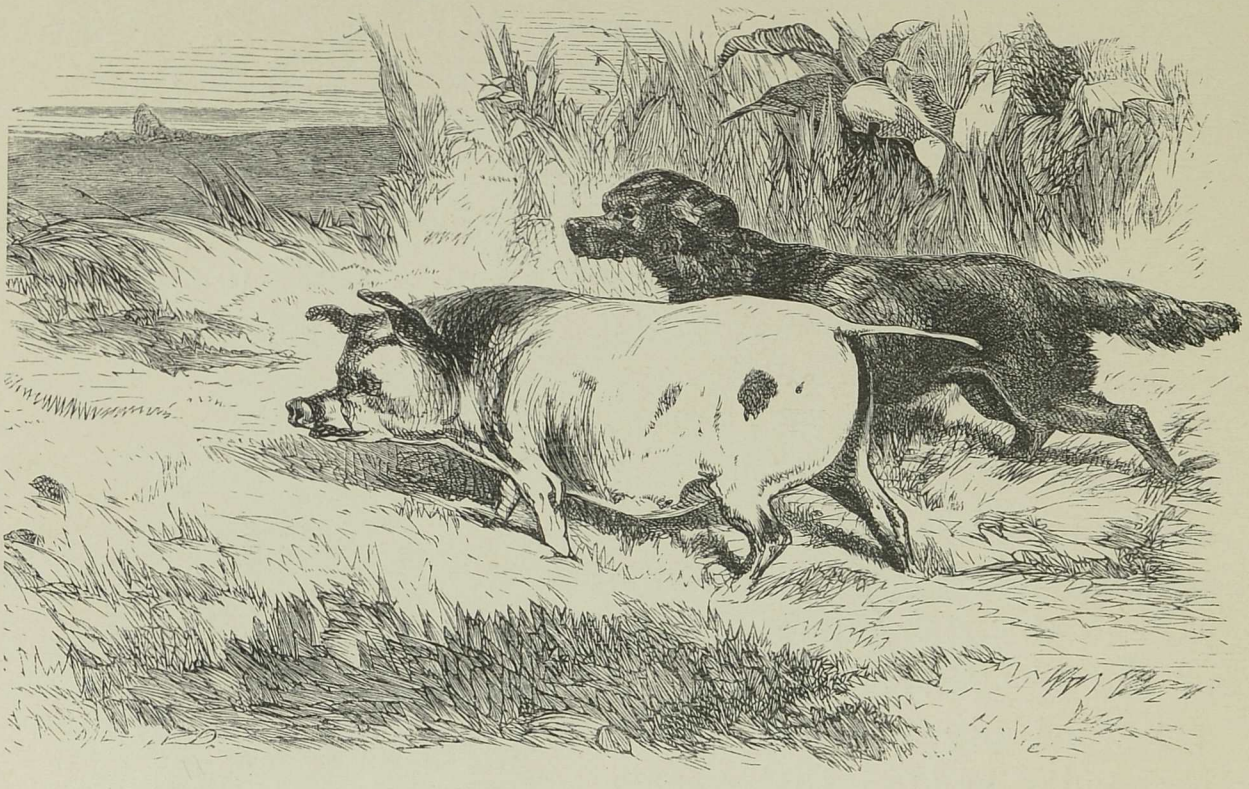


Tom. And why should people say, "As stupid as a pig"? or "As stupid as an ass"? Asses and pigs are not stupid animals at all. A pig has fully an average amount of intelligence.

Charlotte. I once went with my aunt to a country fair. We paid sixpence each, and stepped into a booth to see some learned pigs. They picked out cards, rang bells, and performed other tricks, clearly exhibiting a capacity of observation and obedience which could hardly have been expected from so maligned an animal. We read in the May number, 1868, of the *Cornhill Magazine*, that a learned pig was so popular in London in 1785, that women of the first fashion waited four hours for their turn to see him. No wonder he was clever, for he was a Yorkshire pig; "Bred at Beverley," says a contemporary writer.

Freddie. Did you ever hear of the pig that its master had trained to be a pointer, whose sharpness of smell was so great, that it would often find birds which the dogs had missed?

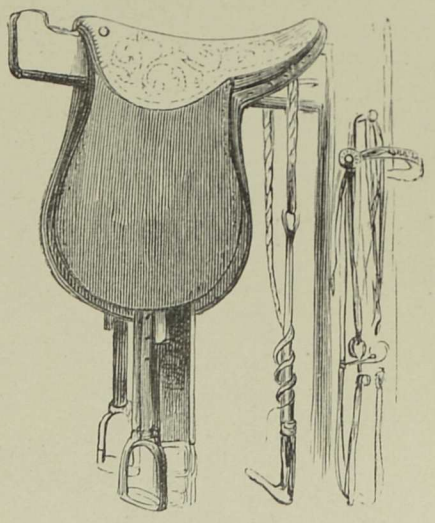
Papa. Yes, Mr. Wood describes her in the following graphic terms :—" ' Slut,' as this animal was called, was very fond of the sport, and would frequently walk a distance of seven miles in hopes of finding some one who was going out with a gun. She would point at every kind of game with the curious exception of the hare, which she never seemed



POINTER PIG.

to notice. Although she would willingly back the dogs, they were very jealous of her presence, and refused to do their duty when she happened to be the discoverer of any game, so that she was seldom taken out together with dogs, but was employed as a solitary pointer. So sensitive was her nose, that she would frequently point a bird at a distance

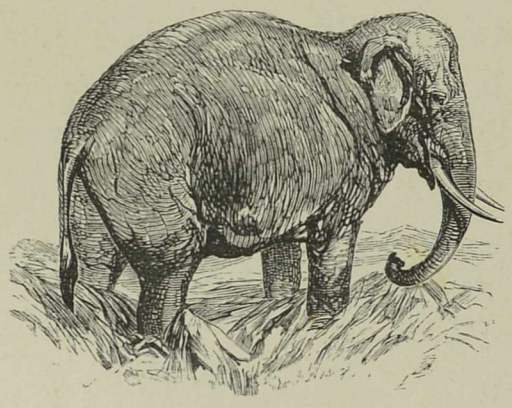
of forty yards; and if it rose and flew away she would walk to the place from which it had taken wing, and put her nose on the very spot where it had been sitting. If, however, the bird only ran on, she would slowly follow it up by the scent, and when it came to a stop, she would again halt and point towards it. She was employed in the capacity of pointer for several years, but was at last killed because she had become a dangerous neighbour to the sheep."



Mary. Pig's skin makes the best leather for a saddle.

Tom. A team of four very fine hogs has been ridden into the market-place of St. Albans. After driving once or twice round the market-place, the owner unharnessed his team, fed them, and in two hours put them again to his chaise and drove them back to his house, a distance of two or three miles. Absurd as the idea may seem, the hog is a good leaper, for a livery stable-keeper who petted a favourite pig, engaged that he could make him leap over a door four feet and a half in height. In order to induce the animal to make the effort, he placed the door across the entrance to the sty, and laid a bounteous supply of food within the enclosure. A wild boar has been known to clear a paling nearly nine feet in height, and it is remarkably active in leaping across ravines.

Papa. It is interesting to observe the links that there are in nature. Thus the trunk of the elephant, the trunk-like

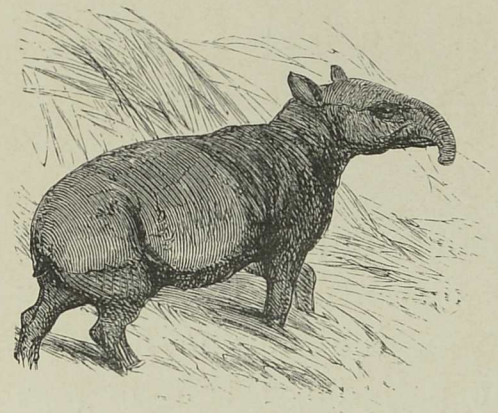


ELEPHANT.

snout of the tapir, and the snout of the little peccary seem to be all more or less allied to each other.

Mary. What! the noble trunk of the magnificent elephant like the snout of a porker?

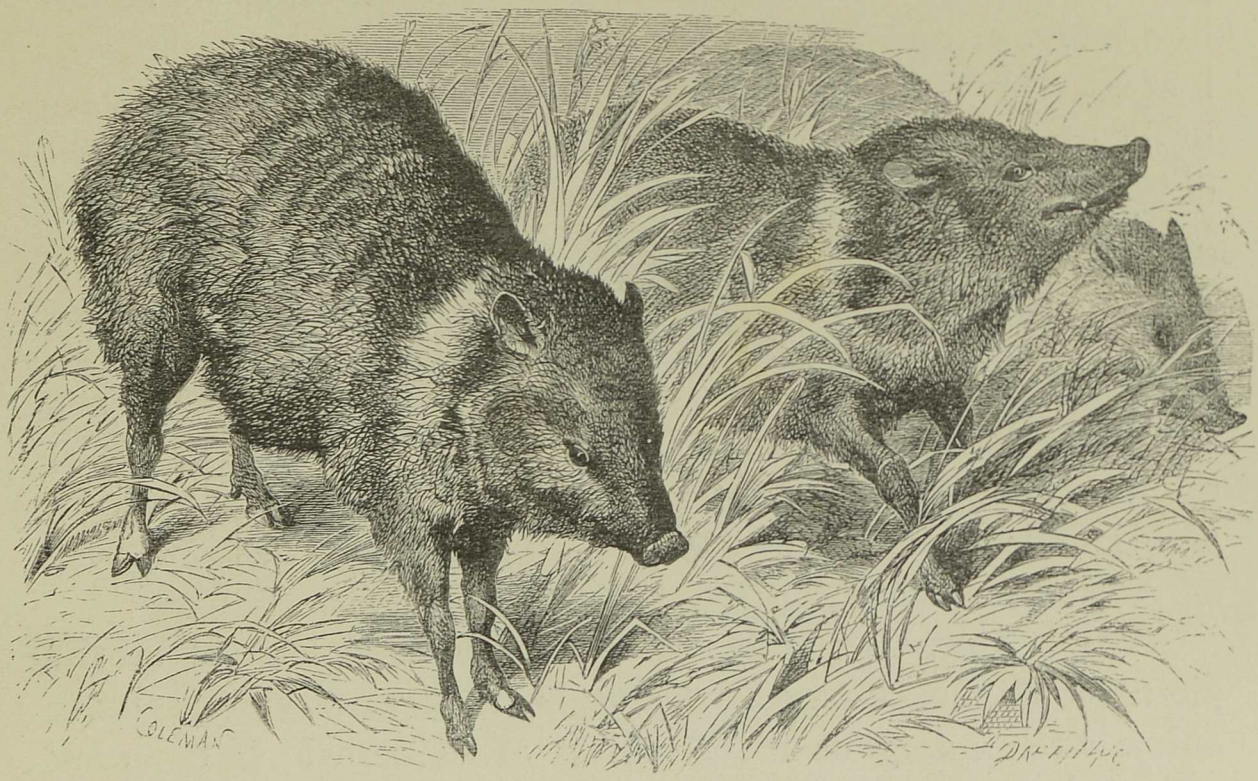
Papa. Ah! Mary, you may sneer at that snout, but I tell you that there is not a more beautiful apparatus in nature, or one better adapted to fulfil the ends for which it has been made. If you had lived in the reign of William the Conqueror, and killed a boar without authority, you would have had to lose your eyes. Boars were thought much of in former days.



TAPIR.

Freddie. A boy who had been in New Zealand, once told me that there was not a larger quadruped in those islands when Captain Cook came, than a little rat. He left several pairs of pigs behind him, which now are more like dogs than swine, being long-legged and lanky.

Papa. We must not say anything more about pigs now, as I want to turn your attention to the fox. But just listen to these telling words of Sir Francis Bond Head: "There exists, perhaps, in creation no animal which has less justice and more injustice done to him by man than the pig; gifted with every faculty of supplying himself, and of providing

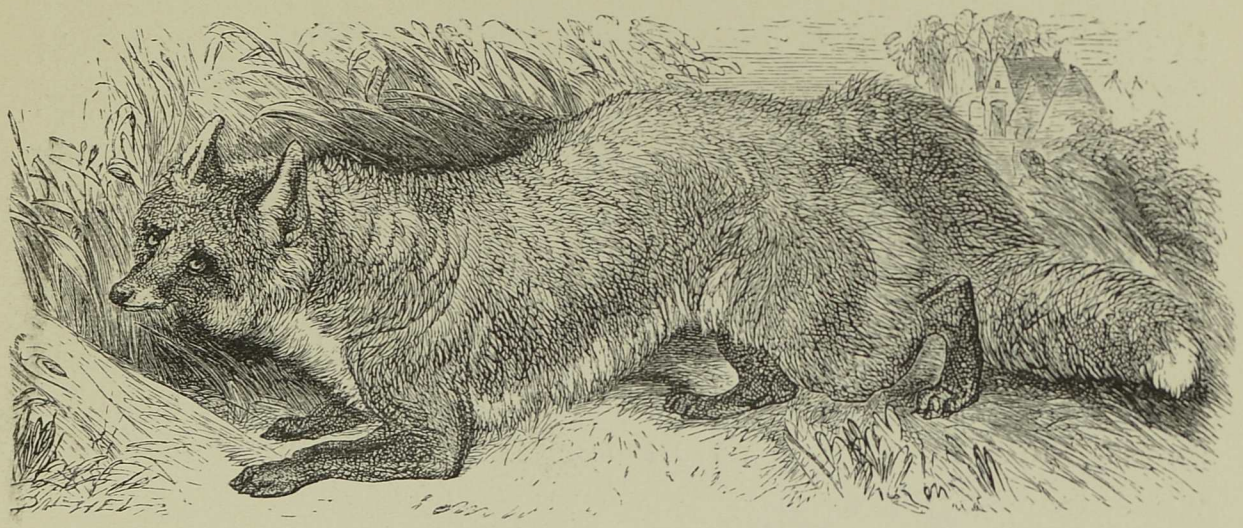


PECCARY.

even against the approaching storm, which no animal is better capable of foretelling. We begin by putting an iron ring through the cartilage of his nose, and having thus deprived him of the power of searching for, and analysing, his food, we generally condemn him for the rest of his life to solitary confinement in a sty. While his faculties are still his own, only observe how with a bark or snort he starts if you approach him, and mark what shrewd intelligence there is in his bright twinkling little eye; but with pigs, as with mankind, idleness is the root of all evil. The poor animal, finding that he has absolutely nothing to do, having no enjoyment, nothing to look forward to but the

pail which feeds him, naturally, most eagerly, or, as we accuse him, most greedily, he greets its arrival. Having no paternal business or diversion within reach—nothing to occupy his brain—the whole powers of his system are directed to the digestion of a superabundance of food: to encourage this, nature assists him with sleep, which, lulling his better faculties, leads his stomach to become the ruling power of his system; a tyrant that can bear no one's presence but his own. The poor pig, thus treated, gorges himself, sleeps, eats again, sleeps, awakens in a fright, screams, struggles against a blue apron, screams fainter and fainter, turns up the whites of his little eyes,—and—dies!"—*Bubbles from the Brunnens of Nassau*, p. 255.

Mary. Now, Charlotte, let us have a good look at all the pictures of the elephant, the tapir, the peccary, and other animals reminding us more or less of swine, which Papa has collected.



THE FOX.

CONVERSATION V.

THE FOX—NOT OF THE DOG TRIBE—RARE CUNNING OF THE ANIMAL—DISLIKE OF THE CAT AND THE HORSE TO THE SMELL OF A FOX—MR. WOOD'S STORY.

Freddie. You said, Papa, that we were to talk about foxes to-night. What is a fox like? I never saw one.

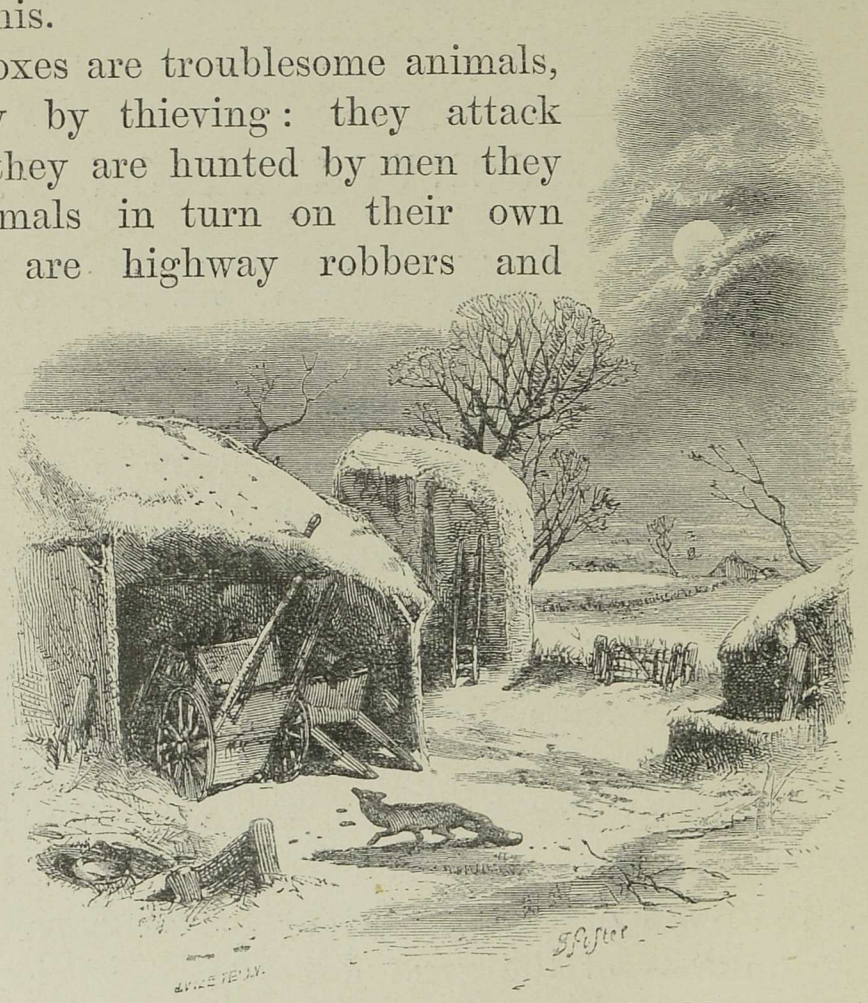
Papa. I am not surprised at that, for the fox is a stealthy animal. He resides in burrows, scooping them out of the earth by the help of his formidable digging paws, and contriving whenever he can to take advantage of the space between the roots of trees or large stones.

Mary. Foxes used to be thought, by natural historians, to belong to the dog tribe, but now they are placed in a genus by themselves. It has been remarked that the shape of the pupil of the eye in the fox is elongated, whereas in the animals of the great dog race it is circular. The ears of the fox are three-cornered in shape, and pointed; the tail

is always exceedingly bushy; sportsmen call it a brush. It partakes of the reddish fawn tints which cover the body, except at the tip, which is white. The height of the common species is about a foot; its length is about two feet and a half, exclusive of the tail.

Tom. The providence of God is manifested in a thousand ways, so our Rector tells us from the pulpit. In the fox there is this benevolent provision: his fur is twice as thick and strong in winter as in the summer. The dealers are well aware of this.

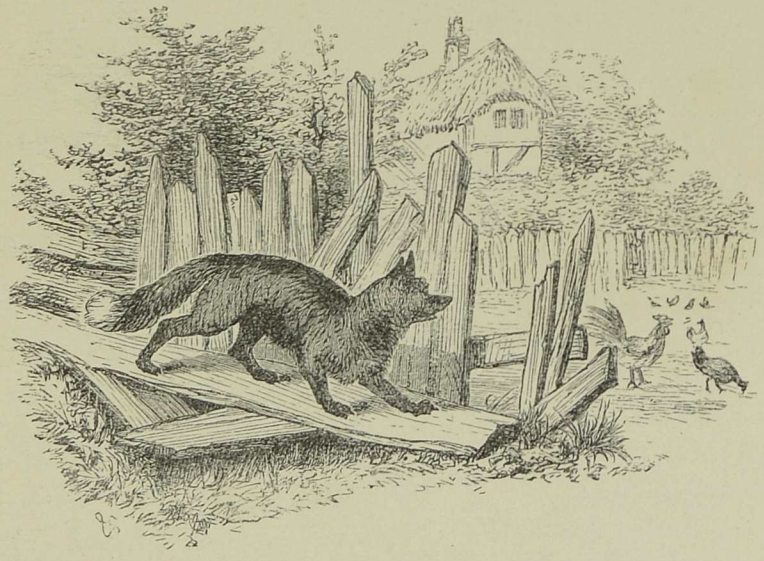
Charlotte. Foxes are troublesome animals, and live chiefly by thieving: they attack farmyards. If they are hunted by men they hunt other animals in turn on their own account. They are highway robbers and burglars. Poor fellows! what are they to do for a livelihood? But they sometimes get a bad character on account of the misconduct of others. When rats have carried off a number of chickens, for instance, poor Reynard has, often very unjustly, to bear the blame. A



FOXES. P. 44.

number of interesting anecdotes have been related, however, illustrative of the instinct of the fox, which show that he is a very skilful hunter on his own account. A fox will often make prey of animals much quicker than himself, and apparently quite as cunning.

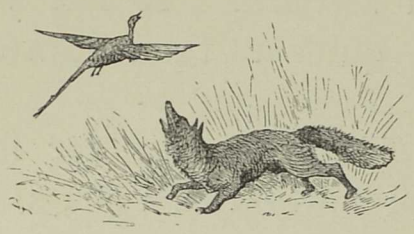
Papa. I have heard it said that if it were not for fox-hunting, the country gentlemen would never live upon their estates; they would become mere idlers about the pampered capital, lounging at the doors of luxurious clubs, and secretly



indulging in many forms of vice. The management of the lands would be left to middle-men, and all the miseries of absenteeism would follow. But I do not believe this.

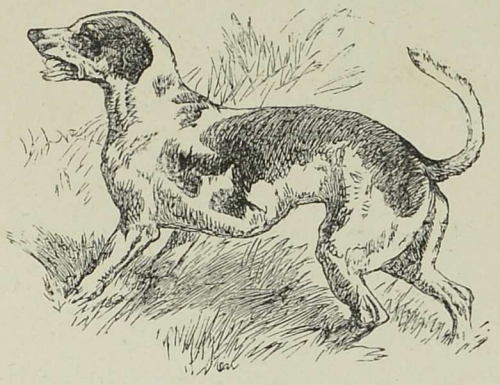
Tom. It is a curious fact that the fox has some glands placed near the root of his tail, furnishing an odorous secretion. The consequence is, that wherever a fox goes, a powerful scent accompanies him. Glands of a similar nature, but not so well developed, are found in the wolf. Do you remember when old Ploughshare caught a fox that had been

plundering his chickens and stealing the game, and exhibited him in an outhouse, the fox filled the outhouse with a nauseous odour which lasted for many weeks, though he wasn't there for more than twenty minutes? In his pursuit the hound is entirely guided by this strange and powerful smell. He is thus enabled to follow the flying animal, and runs it down by superior swiftness and endurance.



Freddie. Yes, but the poor fox seems to know that the dog pursues him by the scent.

Papa. That is true, my boy, and this makes him practise every scheme that he can invent in order to break or to overpower the scent. Sometimes, after running some distance in a straight line, he will return on his own track, and then make a long jump on one side, so as to induce the hounds to run forward, while he slips away into some hole. He tries to cheat the dogs by changing the scent.



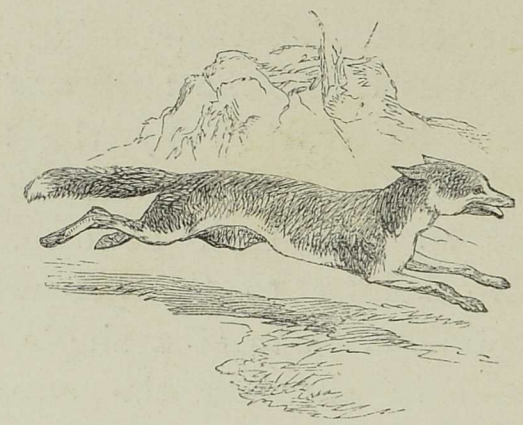
FOXHOUND.

Mary. Do you remember, Papa, the tame fox that stayed with us some months ago for about a week? He made friends with several of the dogs, but my cat would never go near him. Is it true that cats cannot bear disagreeable smells? I know that my tabby would not even walk upon the spot where the fox had been standing.

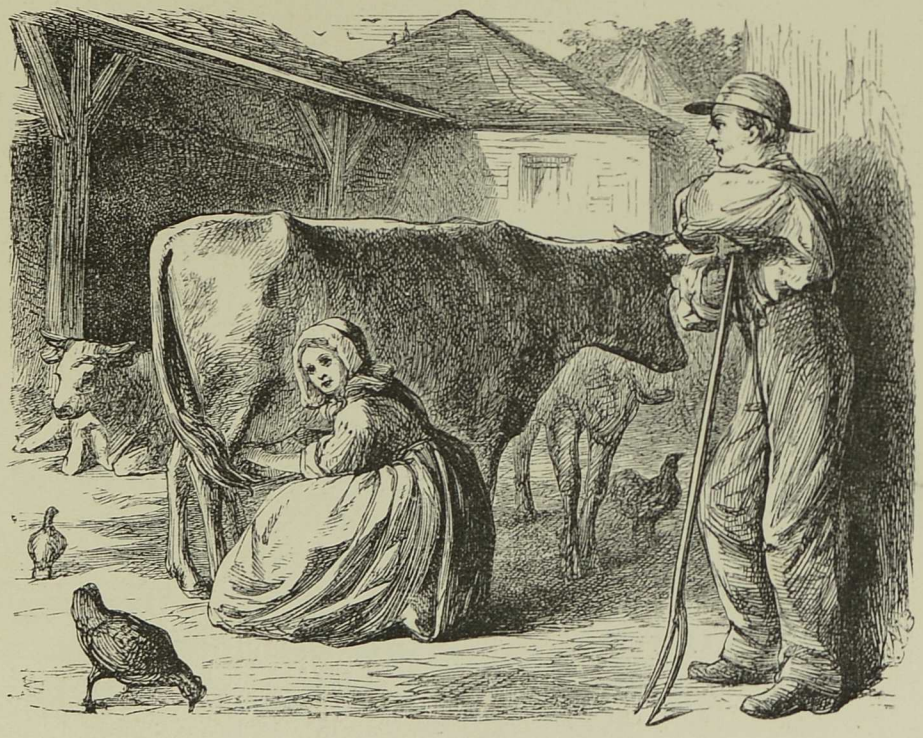
Papa. The horse holds the fox in similar detestation. His presence in the stable sets horses in confusion, and they plunge about restless and uneasy. Mr. Wood tells a good story, illustrating the craft of the animal, knowing that cats won't come near him if they can help it. He informs us that a fox once made use of this knowledge to cheat some cats of their breakfast. As soon as the servant poured out the cats' allowance of milk, the fox would run to the spot, and walk about the saucer, well knowing that none of the rightful owners would approach the defiled locality. Day after day the cats lost their milk, until the clever stratagem was discovered, and the milk was placed in a spot where it could not be reached by the fox. There were three cats attached to the stables, and they all partook of the same dislike; so that their abhorrence of the odour of the fox seems to belong to the general nature of cats, and not to the fastidious taste of a single animal. He was also very successful in cheating the dogs of their food; achieving his thefts by the force of superior intellect.

Charlotte. The same animal was cunning enough to procure a supply of milk, even after he had been prevented from robbing the cats. Once, as the dairymaid was passing along with her pails, the fox went up to her

and brushed himself against one of the milk-pails. In consequence of this contact, the milk became so tainted with the smell of the fox, that the dairymaid did not venture to bring it to the house, and rather thoughtlessly poured it into a vessel, and gave it to the fox. The crafty animal took advantage of the circumstance, and watched for the coming of the maid with her pails, in order to repeat the process. Several times he succeeded in his project, but when he found the spoiled milk was given to the pigs, instead of being appropriated to his own use, he ceased his nefarious attempts. He detested all ragged beggars, and was so energetic in his hostile demonstrations that he realized the truth of the proverb, "Set a thief to catch a thief!"



By permission] CATTLE IN PASTURE.—After Rosa Bonheur [*Goupil and Co.*



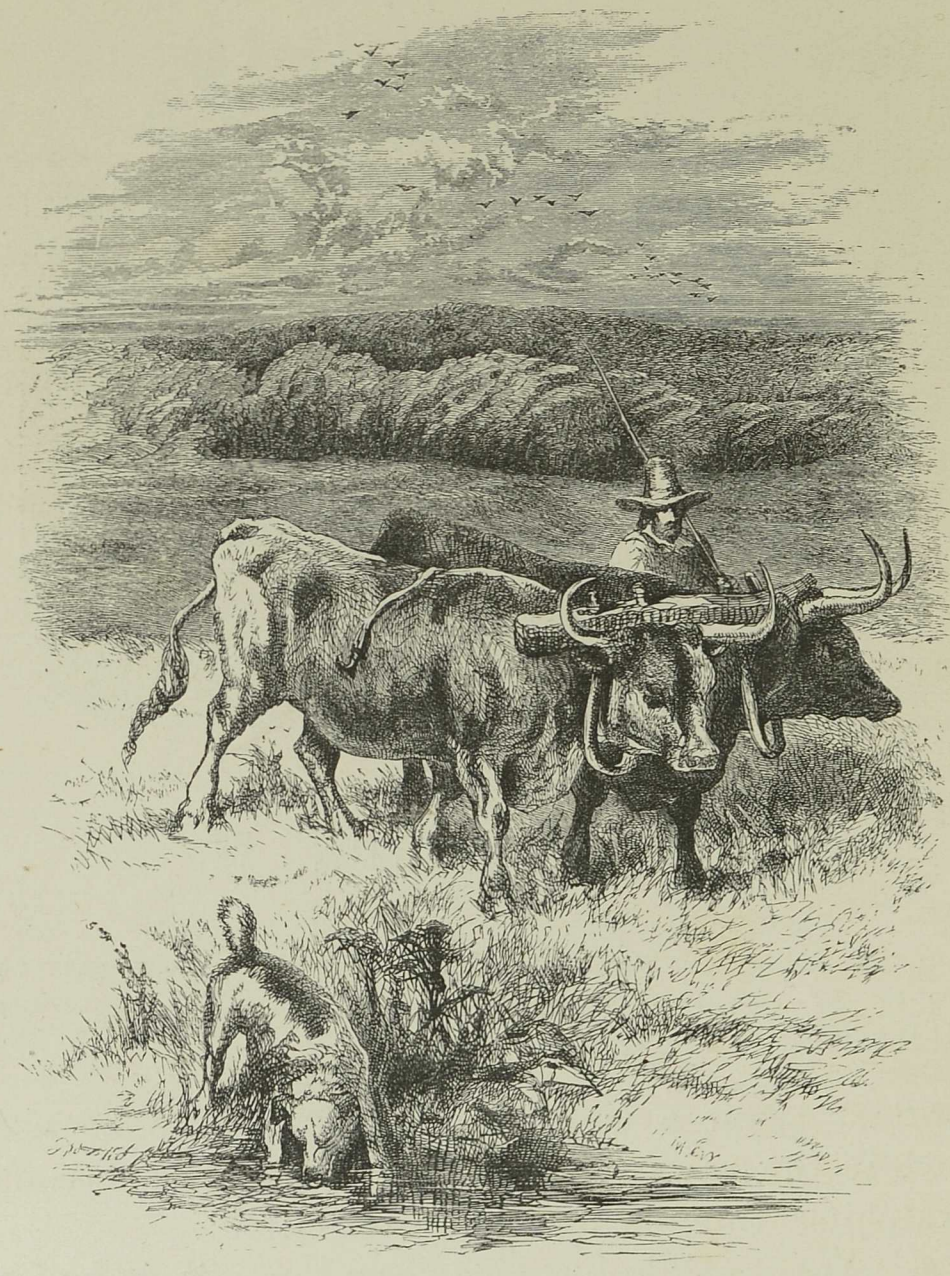
CONVERSATION VI.

CATTLE—OXEN YOKED TO WAGGONS AND PLOUGHS—HORNLESS CATTLE—WHITE CATTLE OF CHILLINGHAM—HERDS OF OXEN AND COWS DANGEROUS WHEN ALARMED.

Freddie. About a week ago I happened to be near the dairy when the cows came to be milked, and I could not help watching Dumple under the operation.

Mary. Yes, Freddie, but how came the milk to be formed?

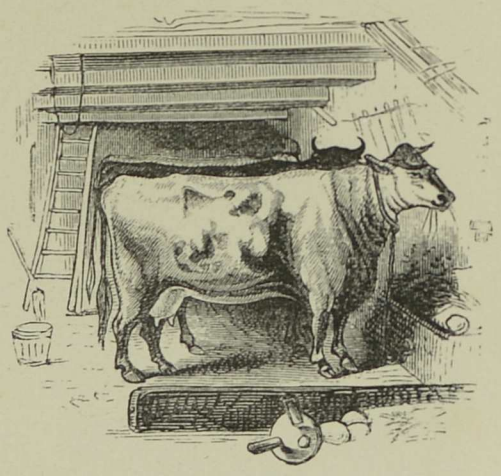
Charlotte. That is a question which I cannot indeed fully answer, but I know that oxen are ruminating, or chew the cud. I wonder if this fact helps to account for the quantity of rich, nourishing milk which the cow produces?



YOKED OXEN.

Papa. There are, perhaps, no animals in the world more useful to us on the whole than oxen. In Switzerland I have seen a pair of them yoked in a huge farmer's waggon.

Mary. They were so used by the Jews in Old Testament times. Hence the Proverb, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks;" meaning, it is a foolish thing for an ox to kick against the goad employed in driving him, because in such a case he only increases his own pain.



COWHOUSE.

Tom. Yes, and in Palestine oxen are used to tread out the corn. Hence another saying, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn;" meaning, "Thou shalt not reward in a grudging spirit those who diligently serve in Church or State."

Papa. The more I read about oxen, the more I find it difficult to divide and subdivide them into groups and varieties. Some have thought that the horn is the most natural characteristic for making such subdivisions. On this principle we have the long-horned, the short-horned, the polled or hornless breed, and the Alderney cow, which is justly celebrated for the quantity and the quality of its milk.

HORNS.

Tom. When French gentlemen, lovers of animals, Papa, have sometimes called upon you, I have heard them record with great delight their success in producing a race of hornless oxen.

Papa. That is true. Moreover, it may be observed that

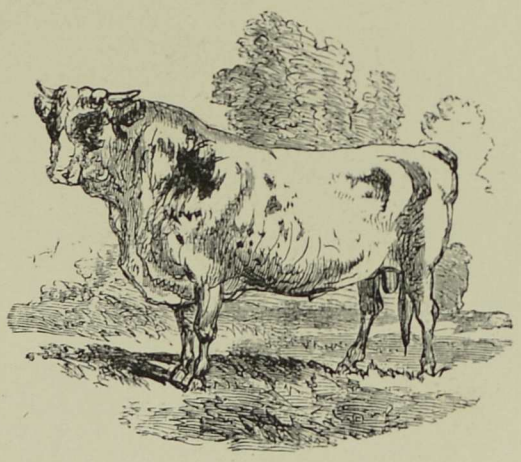
oxen and cows, alive and dead, are most useful to man. In childhood we depend greatly for sustenance on the milk of the cow, and beef is one of our constant articles of food. From the hoofs, the ears, and the parings of the hide of the ox, we manufacture glue. His skin, when tanned, is useful to the maker of harness and shoes, and to the builder of carriages. The hair of the cow is mixed with mortar in order to give it additional power of holding fast. What would the chemist do without their bones?

MILKING.

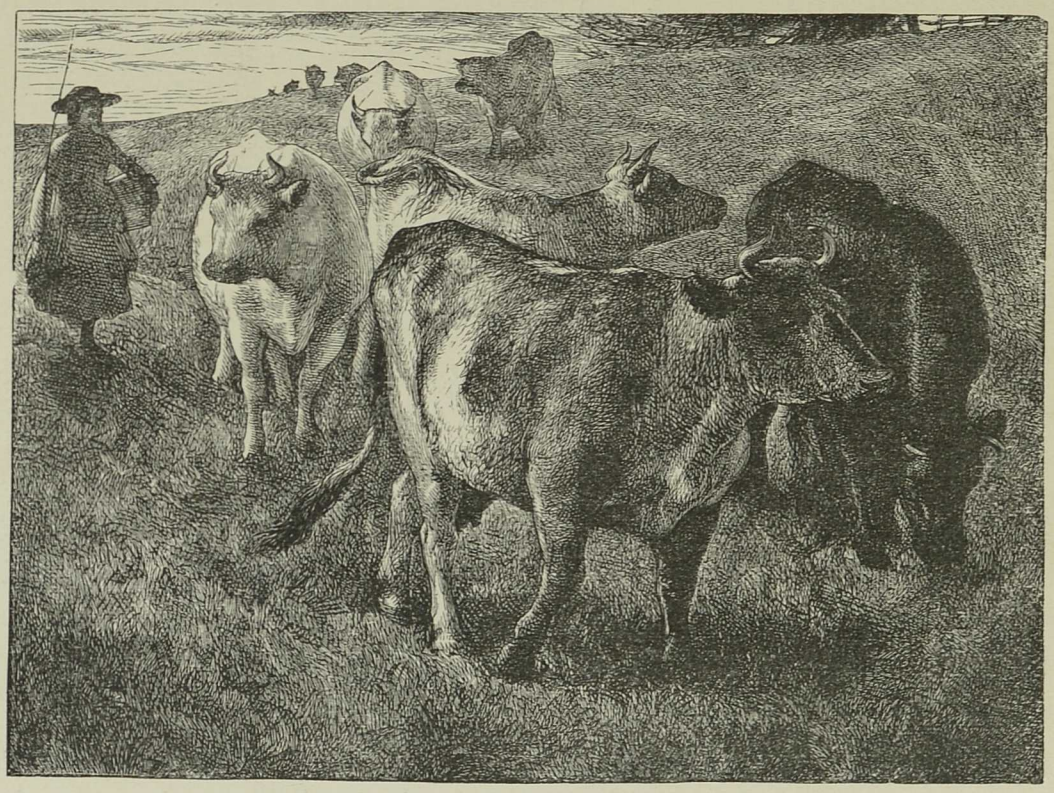
Tom. They say that there is still remaining in England a troop of the old original British oxen.

Papa. Yes, they are called the white cattle of Chillingham. The colour of these beautiful animals is a cream-white, with the exception of the ears and muzzle, the former of which are red, and the latter is black. Mr. Bell observes, that in every case of white cattle which has passed under his personal notice, the ears are marked with red or black, according to the breed. The white tint extends even to the horns, which are, however, tipped with black. They are rather slender in their make, and curve boldly upwards. As

these Chillingham cattle are permitted to range at will through spacious parks in which they are kept, they retain many of the wild habits of their tribe, and are so impatient of observation, that a stranger will generally find himself in a very unsafe position if he attempts to approach closely to the herd. When they are alarmed or provoked at the intrusion of a strange human being within the limit of their territories, they toss their heads wildly in the air, paw the ground, and stedfastly regard the object of their dislike. If he should make a sudden movement, they scamper away precipitately, gallop round him in a circle, and come to another halt at a shorter distance. This process is continually repeated, the diameter of the circle being shortened at every fresh start, until the angry, yet half-frightened, animals come so alarmingly close to the spectator, that he finds himself obliged to escape as he best can. In performing these curious evolutions, they seem to be inspired by a mixture of curiosity, timidity, and irritation, which may be observed even in ordinary domestic cattle under like circumstances. On one occasion, when a herd of cattle were pressing upon a gentleman in a most uncomfortable manner, he owed his escape to early instruction in the art of the "acrobat." The herd, wholly composed of cows, was surrounding him with a very threatening aspect, and was advancing in such a manner that there was no mode of escape from their ranks. Seeing that a bold



BULL.



stratagem was the only resource, he ran sharply forward, and commenced rotating towards them in that peculiar method which is technically termed "turning a wheel," *i. e.* executing a series of somersaults on the hands and feet alternately. The cows were so terrified at the unknown foe who was attacking them in so extraordinary a manner, that they were panic-stricken, and galloped off at full speed, leaving him an easy escape before they had recovered from their surprise.

Mary. I sincerely hope that no cattle allied by race or temper to these wild animals are allowed to cross the streets

of London and our other great towns on their way from the cattle-market to the slaughter-house.

Papa. The practice to which you allude is a scandal to civilization and humanity. I trust that it will be soon a thing of the past.

DROVER.

Freddie. What are Abattoirs?

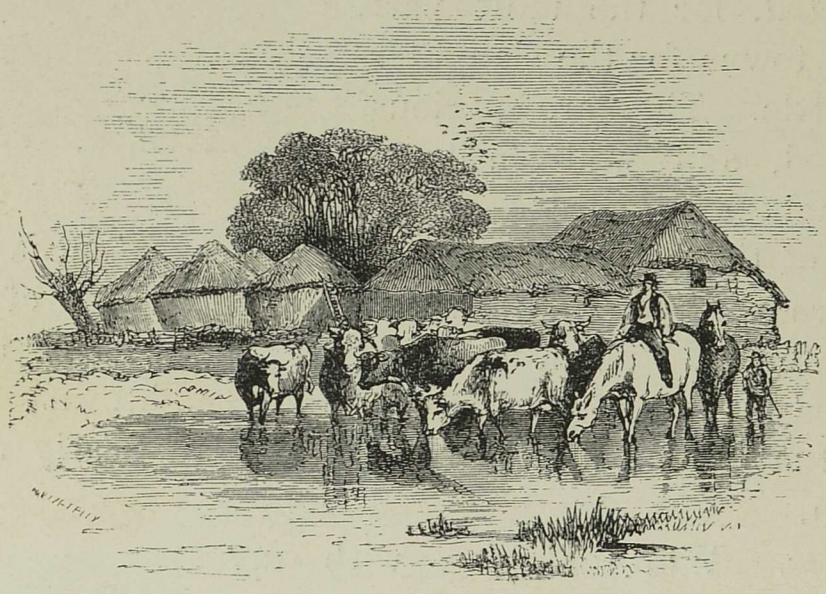
Papa. They are large structures erected, for the most part, outside of towns for the slaughtering of cattle. They are spacious, well-drained, and well-ventilated. The animals are killed with the infliction of the least possible pain. Every atom is carefully utilized, from the tip of the horns to the last hair of the tail. The only nuisance about the abattoirs in Paris is, that they are infested by tens of thousands of grey and brown rats. It is reported that in one battue at Montmartre nearly a million were slain.

Charlotte. While staying with my aunt, I have had several opportunities of observing the habits of her cows. Until I went to the Grange, I had no idea how affectionate and intelligent the cow is.

CALF.

Papa. Yes, and their lives form a sort of parable or living lesson for the instruction of mankind. They are very sensitive and susceptible; they will not stand insult or disrespect from their

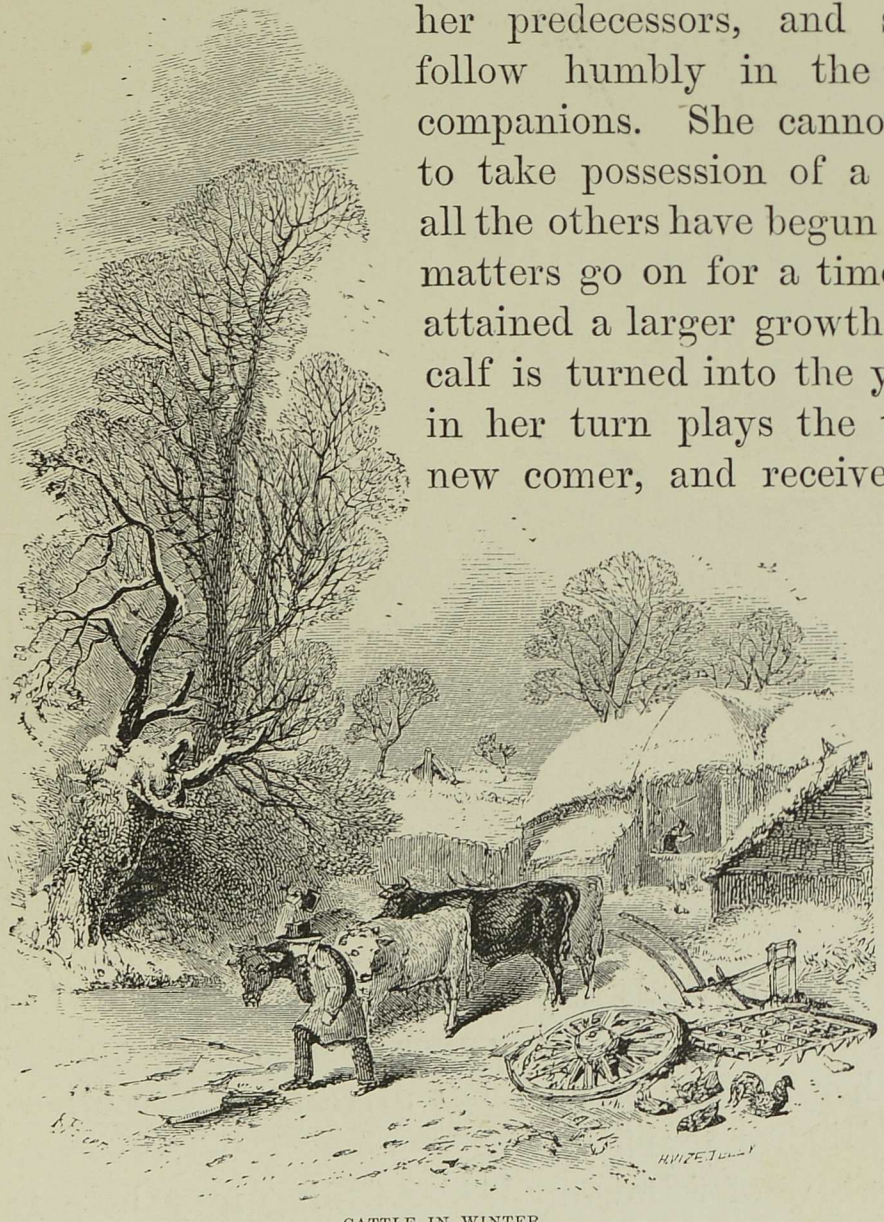
inferiors; they pay great deference to seniority. In a herd of cows the oldest leads, and all the rest implicitly follow and obey. None of the juniors dare to leave or enter the pasture until the leader has set the example. No young calf must even crop the grass without permission; a terrible butting will follow a breach of etiquette, and the poor calf sometimes has to go without her supper altogether. Mr. Wood tells us many curious facts, which are very in-



WATERING CATTLE.

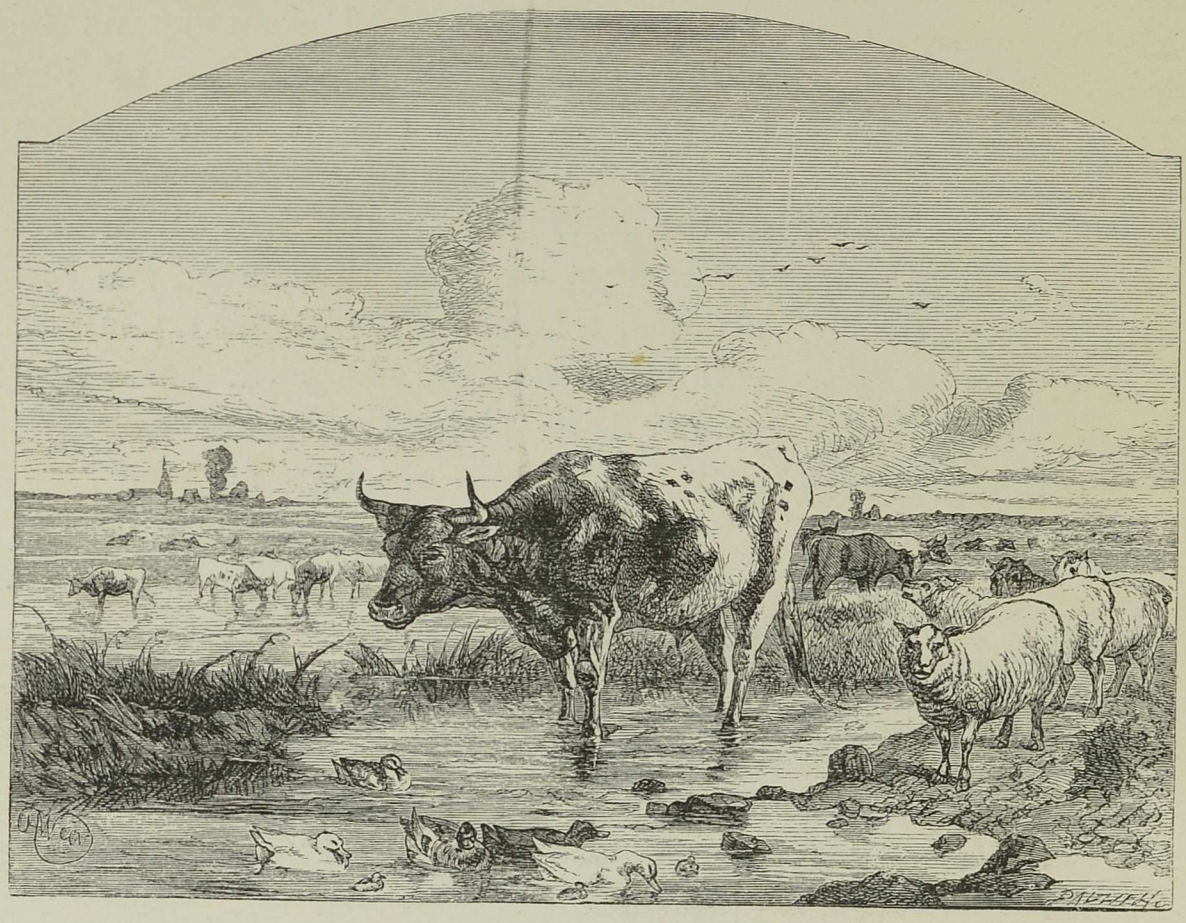
teresting, but are not generally known, beyond the circle of natural historians. To watch a calf through its various phases of existence is a most amusing employment. When the young animal is introduced for the first time into the farm-yard, she is treated in the most supercilious manner by the previous occupants, who look with an air of supreme contempt upon the new comer. She is pushed aside by all

By permission] MOTHER AND SON.—After Rosa Bonheur. [*Goupil and Co.*



CATTLE IN WINTER.

her predecessors, and soon learns to follow humbly in the wake of her companions. She cannot even venture to take possession of a food-rack until all the others have begun their meal. So matters go on for a time, until she has attained a larger growth, and a younger calf is turned into the yard. She now in her turn plays the tyrant over the new comer, and receives no small accession of dignity from the fact of having a follower, instead of bringing up the rear in her own person. In process of time she makes her way to the head of the yard by virtue of seniority, and is then happy in the supreme rule which she enjoys. Sometimes a three-parts grown heifer is introduced into a farm-yard, and in that case the new comer refuses to take her place below all the others, unless she is absolutely compelled to do so by main force. There is generally a considerable amount of fighting



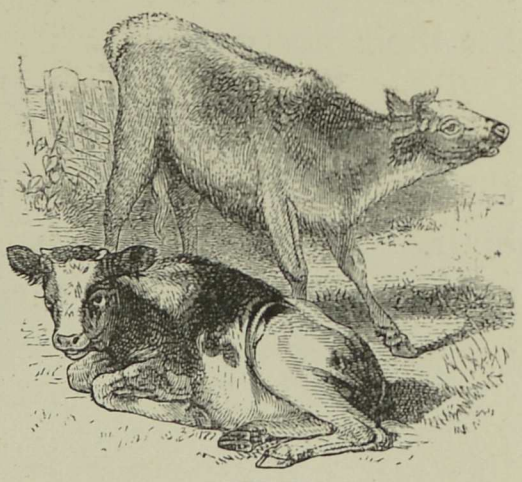
before such an animal finds her level; but when she has discovered her superiors and her subordinates, she quietly settles down in her place, and does not attempt to rise otherwise than by legitimate seniority.

Freddie. This sort of follow-my-leader feeling may help to account for what I remember once seeing in Yorkshire, and which, an old East Riding gentleman told me, is called *clegging*. A herd of cattle suddenly, following the oldest and the largest, rushed violently across a vast field, their tails reared high in the air, and overthrowing all before them, with big, thundering force, and wild terror, lest they

should be bitten by a *cleg*, that is a horse-fly or gad-fly.

Charlotte. What do you mean by ruminating?

Papa. In scientific language, the first compartment of a cow's stomach is called *rumen*, hence the word ruminate,—that is, chewing the cud.



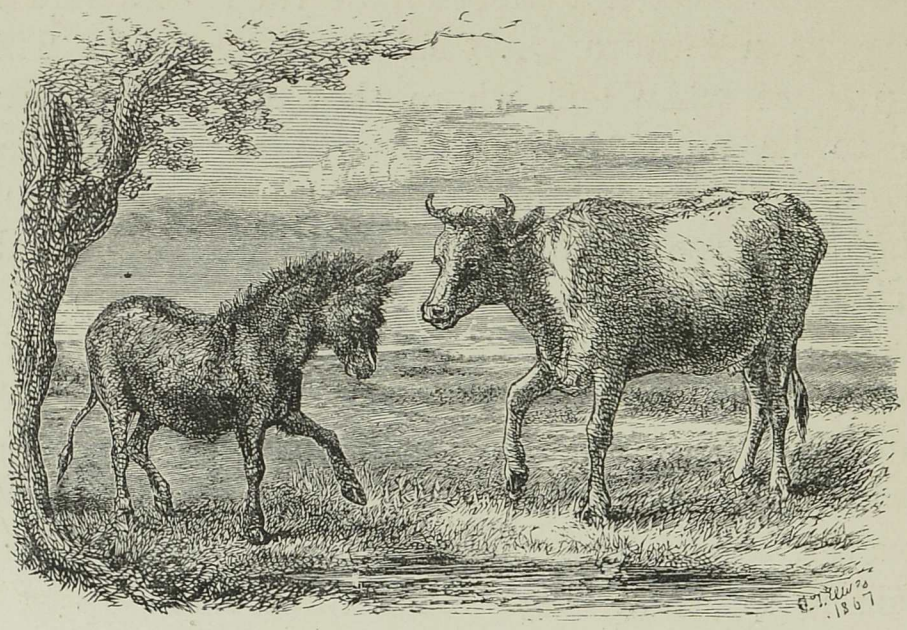
HEIFERS.

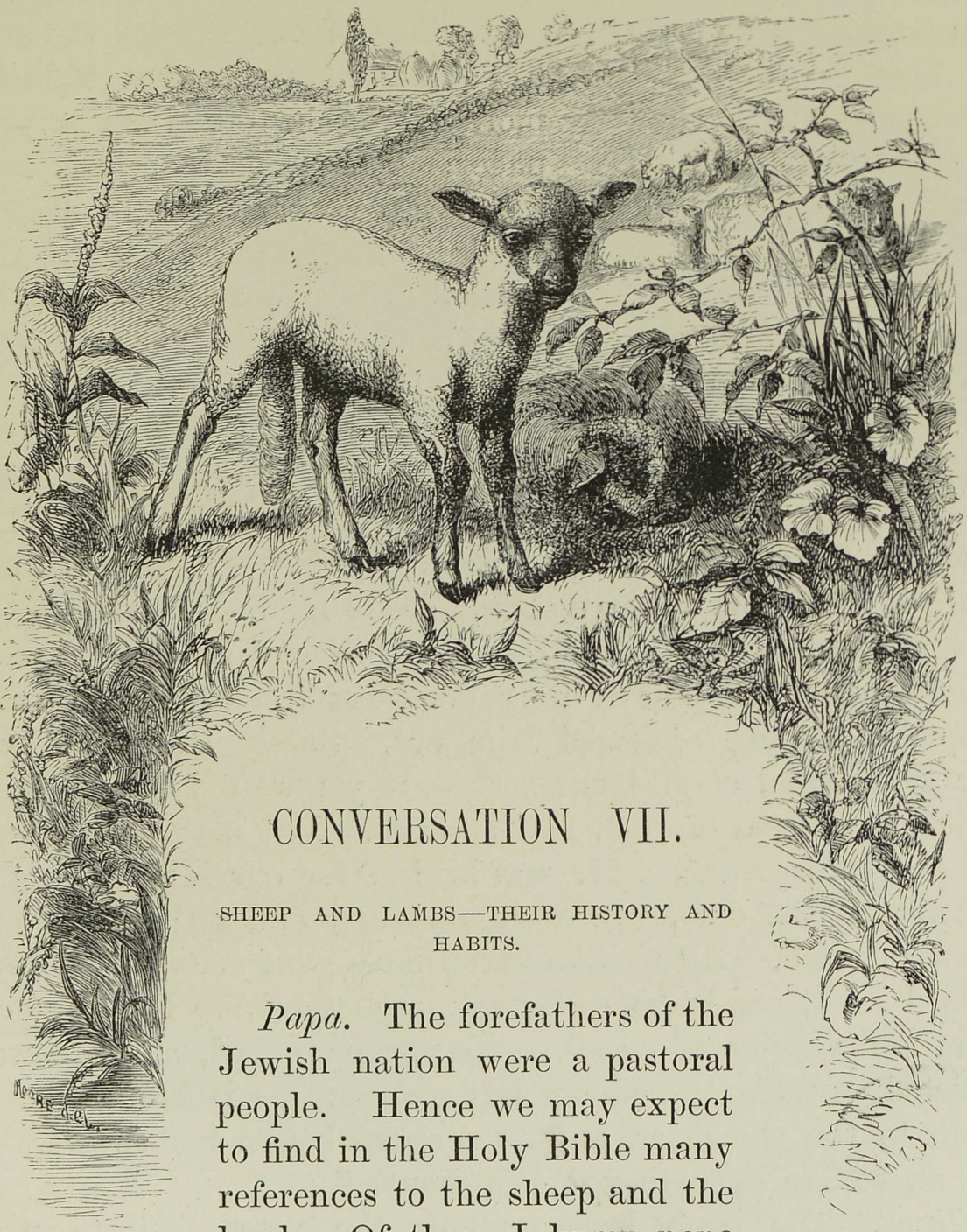
Tom. This is a proof of the wonderful bounty and providence of the Creator. Oxen and cows, in their wild and natural state, require a large amount of vegetable food. This they cannot procure when and where they will; they are liable perhaps to be pursued by animals bigger or bolder than themselves. They sometimes are obliged to gorge much more than they require for immediate mastication and digestion. Their gullet and stomach are so built up as to act as an inside food-pocket. The entire stomach is fourfold.

Papa. When I was in Australia, there was much talk about utilizing the vast herds of cattle which roam undisturbed throughout the unsettled parts of the country. It must not, however, be supposed that they are without owners. The stock-holders to whom they belong hunt them up at certain seasons, and few, if any, except those of very tender age indeed are found without the name of the owner branded upon them; those not marked are brought up and branded accordingly. It is said that millions upon millions of pounds of beef and mutton are annually wasted in Australia for want of mouths to eat them before they are spoiled. The cattle

are chiefly bred for their hides and their tallow, the sheep for their fleeces.

Tom. You said something about oxen being used as beasts for the yoke. In Africa, they are also trained for the saddle. They move at the pace of about five miles an hour. In our next conversation I propose that we devote an hour or two to the sheep and the goat.





CONVERSATION VII.

SHEEP AND LAMBS—THEIR HISTORY AND HABITS.

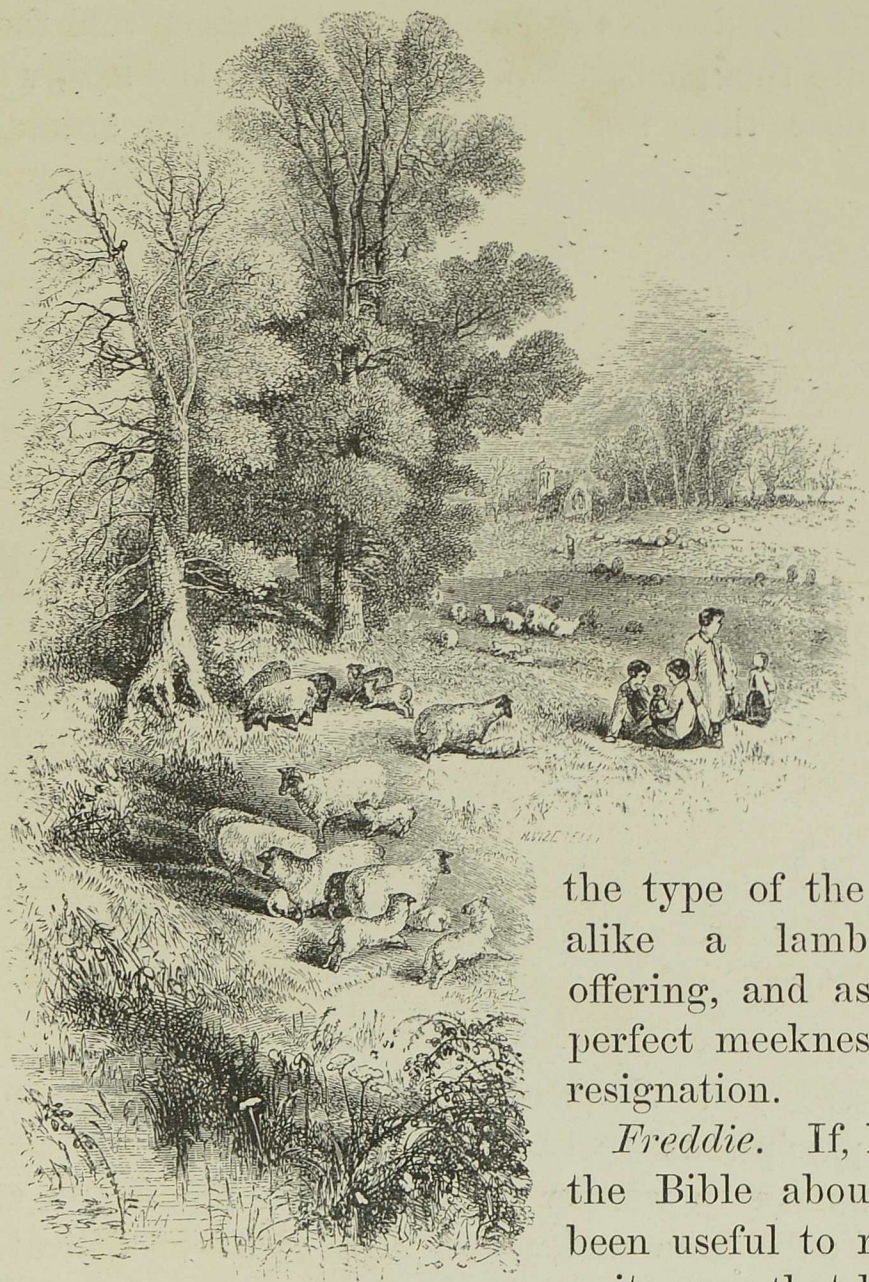
Papa. The forefathers of the Jewish nation were a pastoral people. Hence we may expect to find in the Holy Bible many references to the sheep and the lamb. Of these I know none more beautiful and touching than that contained in the fifty-

third chapter of the Book of Isaiah. I quote the passage in full because it describes the sufferings of our Blessed Saviour in such lively terms that it looks more like a history than a prophecy. The perusal of it is said to have converted the profligate Lord Rochester to a fervent belief in the Christian revelation. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

SHEEPFOLD.

Mary. The lamb here presents the most delicate portraiture of resigned innocence. The Divine Sufferer is making

an atonement for sins, but not His own. His meek and passive behaviour is the result of that perfect resignation which seems to be required for a perfect sacrifice. No character that ever appeared fills up the measure of this picture except the ever blessed Jesus. In the Book of the Revelation of St. John, He is represented as ever living and pleading in Heaven under the type of the spotless Lamb; alike a lamb for sacrificial offering, and as an example of perfect meekness, patience, and resignation.



Freddie. If, Papa, we read in the Bible about sheep having been useful to man, we may be quite sure that he has been subjected to the ways of mankind, and provided man with meat and clothing, from the very earliest times.

Papa. That is true, and he is closely allied to the goat, an animal which is also often mentioned in the Bible.

Tom. Yes, but because in the parable of the sheep and the goats, the sheep are the good people, and the goats the bad, we are not to suppose that the poor goat is a worse animal than the sheep!

Charlotte. Have you observed how fond sheep are of clambering up precipitous rocks? Sometimes a sheep and her lamb will manage to wander up and down the fronts of sea cliffs which offer here and there little spots of delicate grass: and you would suppose that they must be dashed in pieces; but I believe they are never known to suffer injury.

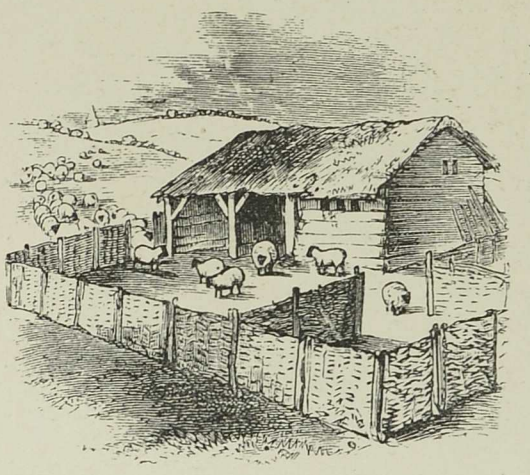
Freddie. Surely this is a proof that sheep are not such timid animals as they are supposed to be.

Charlotte. No, indeed, they are very courageous, when possessed of full freedom. The little Welsh sheep which roam

over the mountains of Snowdon and Plinlimmon, so far from flying in wild affright from the presence of man, draw together into a compact phalanx, and watch him with stern and defiant

gaze. Woe betide him if he attempts to move forward! The rams, forming the first line of battle, would rush on him one and all, and he might be seriously if not mortally hurt.

Tom. I have reason to believe that a single old ram will attack a man in a most dangerous fashion when he is roused. Observe, that goats and sheep do not fight in the same way. A goat rears himself on his hind legs, and then plunges sideways against his enemy; a sheep gallops forward at full speed, lifts his fore-feet from the ground, and strikes his opponent with the whole weight as well as impetus of the body. A ram has been known to kill a bull, at the first blow, in one of these wild encounters.



SHEEP-COT.

Mary. But we are not to suppose that a sheep only fights for selfish objects. Mr. Wood informs us that a sheep that had been led into a slaughter-house has been known to turn fiercely upon the butcher as he was about to kill one of its companions, and to butt him severely in order to make him relinquish his grasp of its friend.

Tom. A curious question has sometimes arisen, as to which is the more intelligent animal, a sheep or a goat. The opinion of those who have

inquired carefully into the subject seems to be in favour of the latter animal.

SYRIAN SHEEP.

Sheep have one curious propensity. They always follow the one that happens to be the leader, even though he should rush down a deep precipice.

The Spanish shepherds manage their sheep in the Oriental fashion. They take advantage of the natural propensity of the animal, and walk in front of the vast flocks

over which they are set in charge. They do not *drive* but *lead* them. I wish English shepherds would follow their example.

Mary. Our Blessed Saviour often refers to sheep and shepherds in His incomparable conversations with His disciples. On one occasion He proved that it was lawful to do a greater good on the Sabbath-day, by reminding His accusers that they themselves did a lesser, but still a real good, when He said unto them, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep?"

Papa. Hear the parable of the Good Shepherd, and the manner in which our Blessed Lord illustrates His work and His mission:—"He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice; and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a

stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Nor must we forget the

exquisitely plaintive and tender pastoral appeal of Ezekiel, addressed to the careless priesthood of the temple, under a

series of images derived from the duties of a shepherd to his flock: "Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? . . . The diseased have ye not strengthened; neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them."

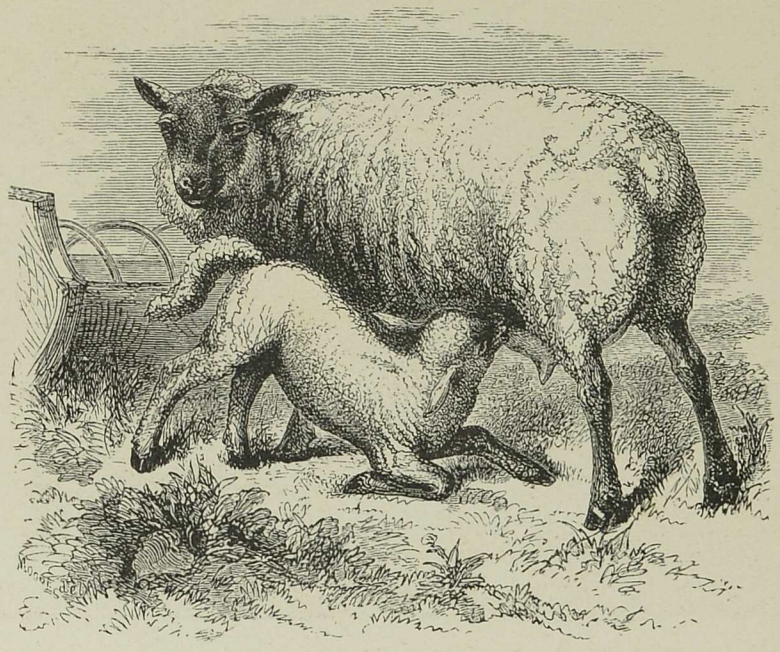
Charlotte. I have sometimes told you with what beautiful taste animals are introduced into pictures, forming, so to speak, their complement, and often strangely illustrating the subject of the painting. At Florence, in the gallery of the academy, I remember to have seen a picture of the birth of our Lord, by Lorenzo di Credi or Cigoli.—Our Saviour lies upon the ground; Joseph of Arimathea is represented in thoughtful worship. Two girls are kneeling by the side of the Virgin. Two women are in deep and rapturous discourse, as it were dwelling upon the prophecies. A lad leads a lamb as though unresisting to the slaughter; God, in the person of Jesus Christ, providing an offering. The introduction of this lamb adds a strange beauty to the masterly picture.

Mary. When you, Papa, generously took us with you in your tour through Belgium and the Low Countries, do you remember our stopping two days at Ghent? In the Cathedral of St. Bavon, in the Eleventh Chapel, there is one of the finest works ever produced by the early Flemish School, the masterpiece of the brothers Hubert and John Van Eyck, celebrated all over the world. Let me read to you a

description of this picture. The subject is the adoration of the Spotless Lamb. "In the centre is seen the Lamb as described in the Revelation, surrounded by angels, and

approached by worshippers in four groups: in the foreground, on the right of the fountain of life, are the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament; on the left, apostles and saints of the New; while, in the horizon, rise the towers of the New Jerusalem, copied from some old Flemish town. More than three hundred heads may be counted in this wonderful production, all finished with the most scrupulous minuteness."

Freddie. We are to understand, then, that the SPOTLESS LAMB is the sign or type of our loving Saviour's sacrifice for us.



By permission] SHEEP AND LAMBS.—After Rosa Bonheur. [*Goupil and Co.*

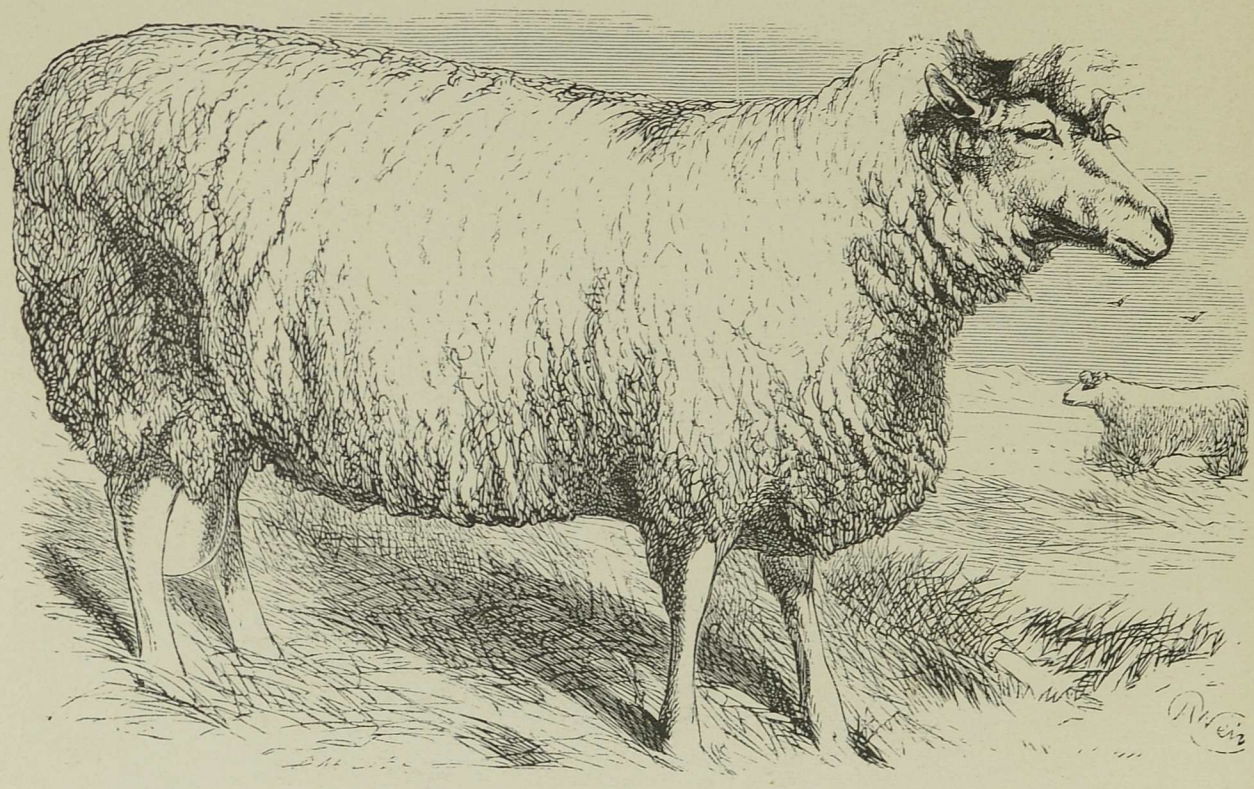
CONVERSATION VIII.

VARIETIES OF SHEEP—SOUTHDOWN, MERINO, ETC.

Freddie. You said, Papa, that there were a great many varieties of sheep?

Papa. Yes; about thirty are mentioned by naturalists. Amongst these breeds, none is on the whole better than the Southdown, which is valuable, not only for the wool it produces, but for the delicacy of its flesh. By careful crossing and good management the horns of this variety have entirely disappeared, and the nourishment required to perfect them has been diverted to the flesh and the wool.

Mary. Where are the Southdowns?

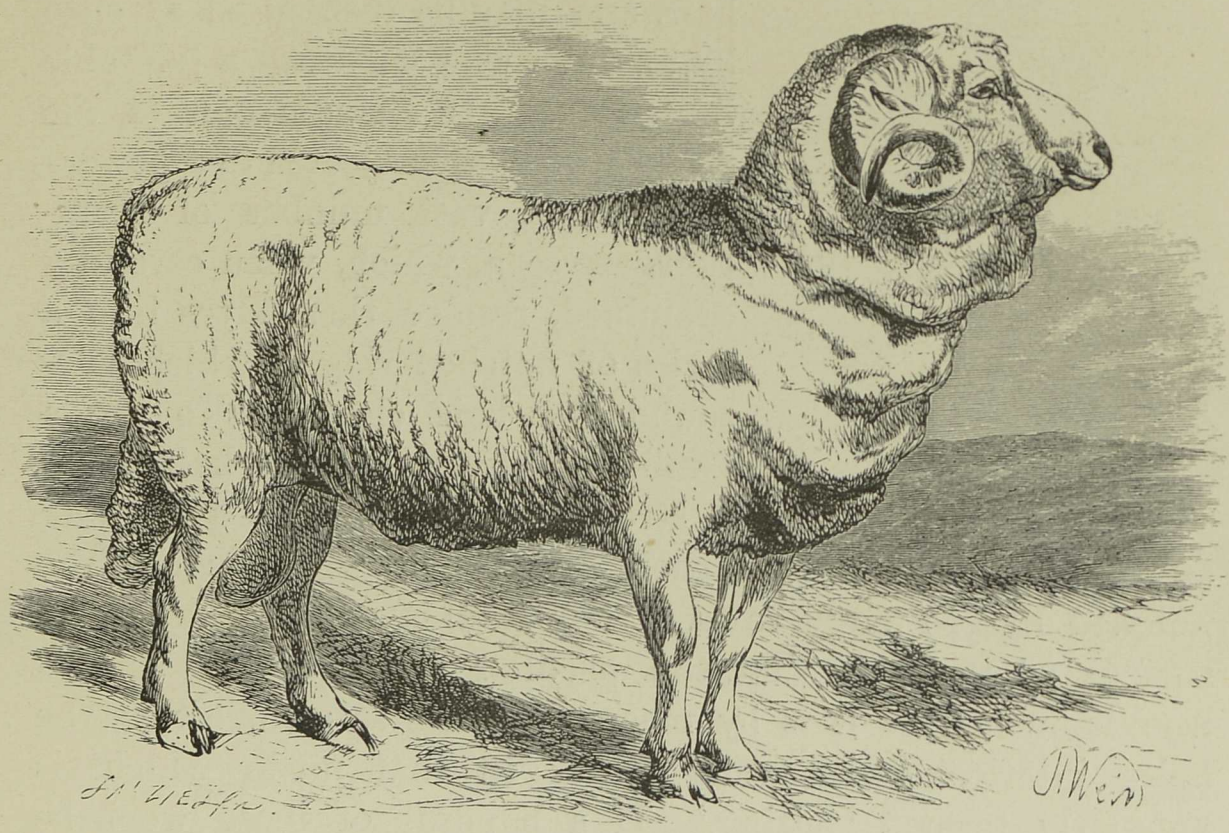


LEICESTER SHEEP.

Papa. Yes, the Spanish sheep is also called merino; that is, *marine*, having been originally imported by sea. He is not valued much, except for his wool. He is bigger in the limbs than an ordinary English sheep, and the ram has large spiral horns. If a merino be left untouched by the shears for two seasons, the wool will double its length and be equally fine in texture.

Charlotte. What is wool? I should like to know something about it.

Mary. In country places I have often observed old women knitting woollen stockings for their husbands and sons. The



MERINO SHEEP.

wives of the fishermen of Boulogne are remarkable for the neatness of their stockings and shoes. You may see them by scores on a fine day, seated on the pier with their baskets by their side, waiting for the return of their husbands from the sea, and plying their knitting-needles with incredible industry.

Papa. Mr. Wood, in his *Natural History*, gives such a simple and admirable account of the peculiar hair which decorates the sheep, and which is known by the name of wool, that I shall read it to you at length :—

KNITTING.

"Wool is a very curious kind of hair, and may be recognised at once by any one who possesses a tolerable microscope. If a single hair of the sheep's wool be subjected to a powerful lens, a vast number of serrations are seen, which, when carefully examined, resolve themselves into a series of notched ridges, which surround the hair closely. To use a familiar illustration, the hair bears a strong resemblance to a number of thimbles thrust into each other, and with their edges notched like so many saws. It is to this notched or jagged surface of the hair that the peculiar value of the sheep's wool is owing, for it is by means of these serrations that the hairs interlock with each other in that mode which is popularly termed 'felting.' If a handful of loose wool be taken and well kneaded, the fibres become inextricably matted together, and form the substance which we term 'felt.' In a similar manner, when woollen thread is made into cloth, and subjected to the hard usage of its manufacture, the fibres of the different threads become so firmly adherent to each other that they never get unravelled when the cloth is cut or torn. The 'felting' property is greatly increased by the propensity of woollen fibre to contract when touched by water. It is in consequence of this peculiarity that woollen fabrics will always shrink when they are wetted for the first time after their manufacture. The reader may naturally wonder why the wool does not become thus matted together

when it is upon the sheep's back, and subject to the influence of nightly dew and daily rain. The answer is, that the fleece is imbued with a peculiar secretion from the skin, which is technically called the "yolk," and which repels the action of water. Upon the quantity of this "yolk" the quality of the wool greatly depends.

"The custom of annually depriving the sheep of its wool by means of shears is of very ancient origin, and still holds its ground. But within a comparatively recent period, the poor creatures were even in this country barbarously stripped of their warm coats by main force, the workmen grasping large handfuls of the wool and dragging it from the body. This 'evil deed' was called 'rowing,' and those who are learned in old English ballad lore will remember many passages where reference to this cruel custom may be found. The Latin word for wool, 'vellus,' is derived from the verb 'vellere,' to pluck out, and evidently refers to the same custom. By that cruel mode of action, the sheep owner was generally a bad economist, for the injury to the more delicate animals was so severe, that their sensitive skins were unable to resist the effects of the weather, and the death of the poor creature was often the result."

Tom. Some varieties of sheep appear to be more intelligent than others. The Highland breed bears the palm of cleverness. A Highland lamb is sometimes known to be as adroit a mimic as a monkey. One favourite little lamb, if blamed or scolded, would hide its head in a corner, and appeared overwhelmed with sorrow. But if it were praised or patted it became almost mad with excitement, rolling over and over like a ball, and even standing upon its head. It was

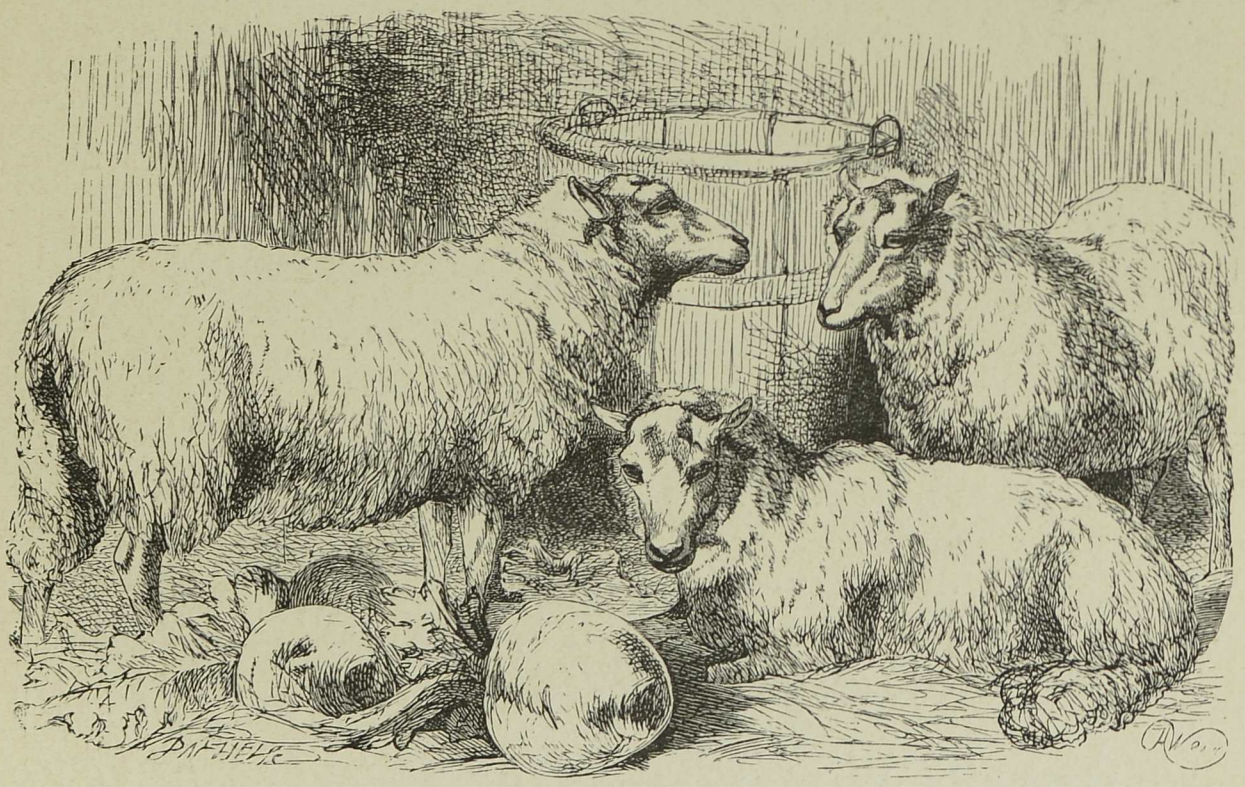
a discriminating admirer of music, "being," as Mr. Wood informs us, "delighted at brisk and lively airs, such as are set for polkas, quadrilles, and other dance tunes; but abhorring all slow and solemn compositions. It had the deepest detestation of the National Anthem, and would set

HIGHLAND SHEEP.

up such a continuous baa-baa as soon as its ears were struck with the unwelcome sounds, that the musician was fain to close the performance, being silenced by mirth if not by pity."

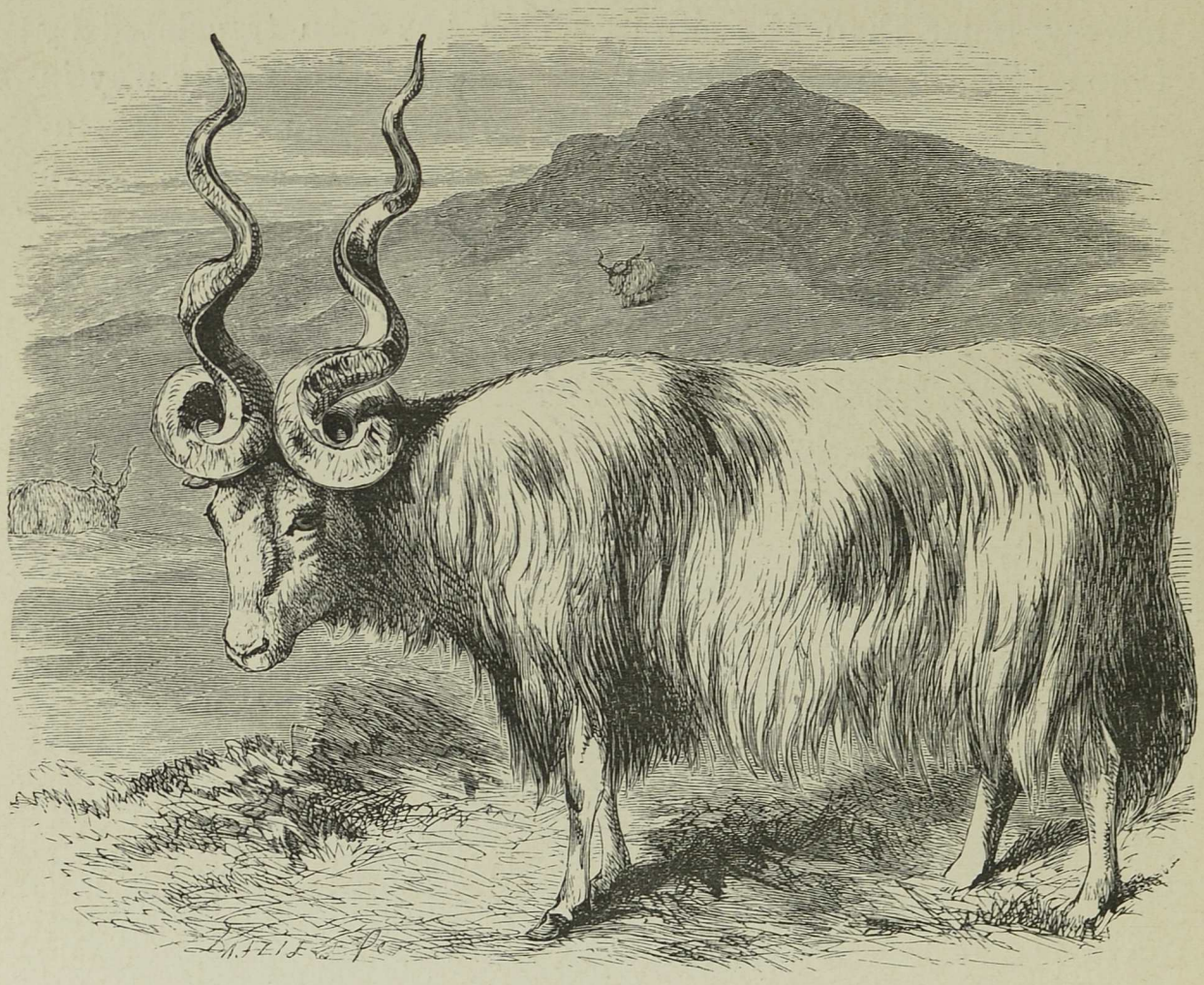
Papa. Most animals are affected by music. There still

remains a fragment of Charon of Lampsacus, the writer of history, older than Herodotus, which has been translated by Colonel Mure. It gives an amusing description of the way in which this well-known tendency of animals was cleverly employed in winning a battle. The following is the narrative of Charon :—



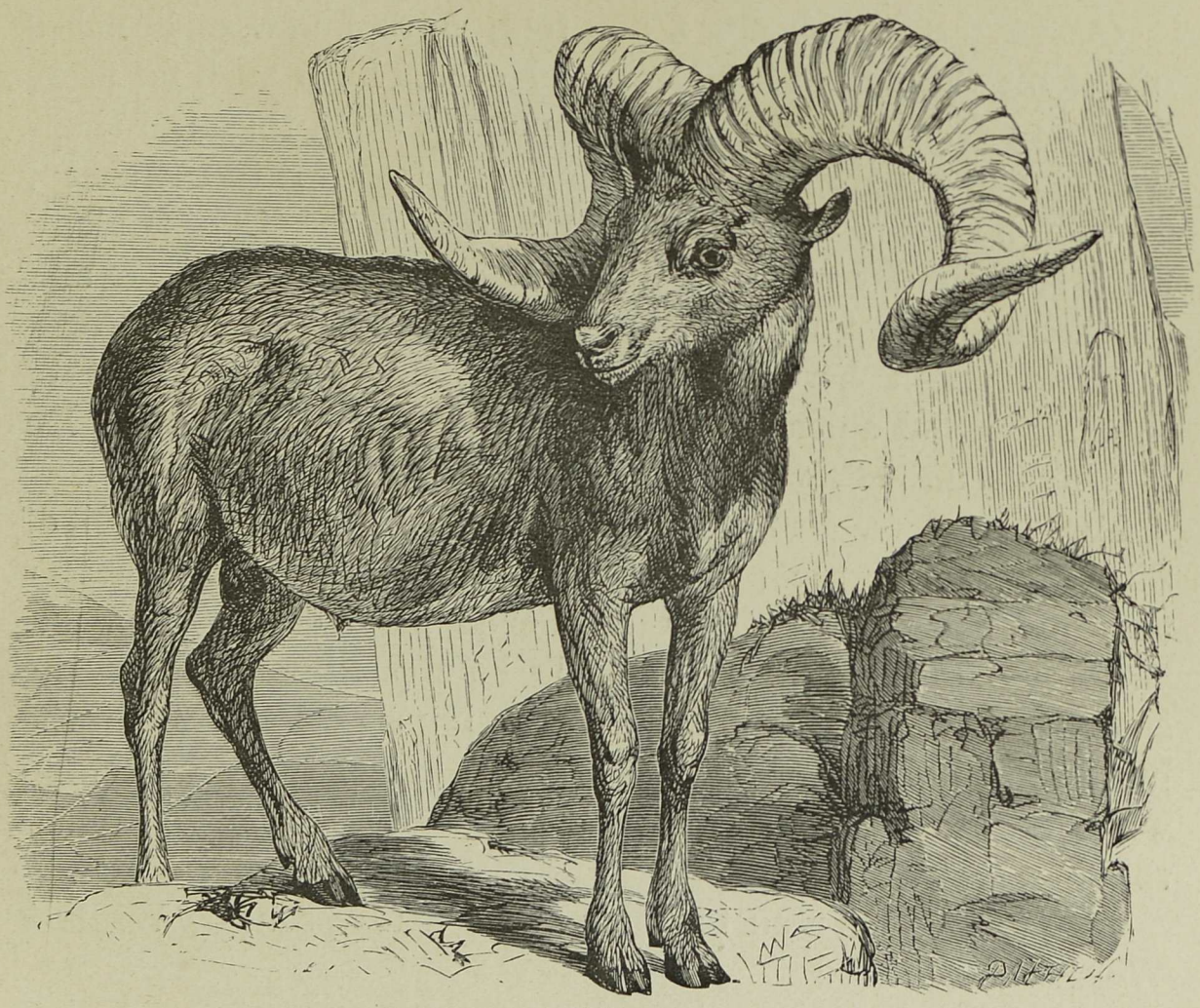
BRETON SHEEP.

"The Cardians were accustomed to teach their horses to dance to the sound of the flute in their festivals; when standing upright on their hind-legs, they adapted the motions of their fore-feet to the time of the music. Onaris, being acquainted with this custom, procured a female flute-player from Cardia, and this flute-player, on her arrival in



WALLACHIAN SHEEP.

Bisaltis, instructed many of the flute-players of that city, whom he caused to accompany him in his march against the Cardians. As soon as the engagements commenced, he ordered the flute-players to strike up those tunes to which the Cardian horses were used to perform. And no sooner had the horses heard the music, than they stood up on their hind-legs and began to dance. But the chief force



ARGALI.

of the Cardians was in cavalry; and so they lost the battle."

Charlotte. When, Papa, you bring us home a very little leg of delicately flavoured mutton, we know that it has come from a Welsh sheep. Are the Welsh the smallest variety?

Papa. No; the Breton sheep are more pigmy still. By the side of a big Leicester ram the little Breton looks like a Shetland pony by the side of a Flanders dray-horse.

George. Some sheep, I am told, have immense hunches of fat on their hind quarters, and others have such fat tails, weighing from seventy to eighty pounds each, that the shepherds make a little wheeled carriage and fasten it to the sheep, so that he drags along his own tail. In the Cape Colony there is a similar race, and immense quantities of delicate and excellent soap are manufactured from the fat of their tails.

Mary. Look here! just let me show you a portrait of that large and splendid animal, the Wallachian sheep. He is a noble animal, with his horns ever so long.

Freddie. Yes, but he is not as large as the Argali of Siberia, who is the giant of the Ovine race. In winter they are sometimes wholly enveloped in a deep snow-drift, and breathe by means of a little hole passing through the snow to the surface. For these imprisoned Argalis the hunters eagerly search. Their fleet legs avail them nothing when they are found, and they perish ignominiously under the spear of the huntsman.

Mary. Let me read to you a sweet little poem by William Wordsworth, called

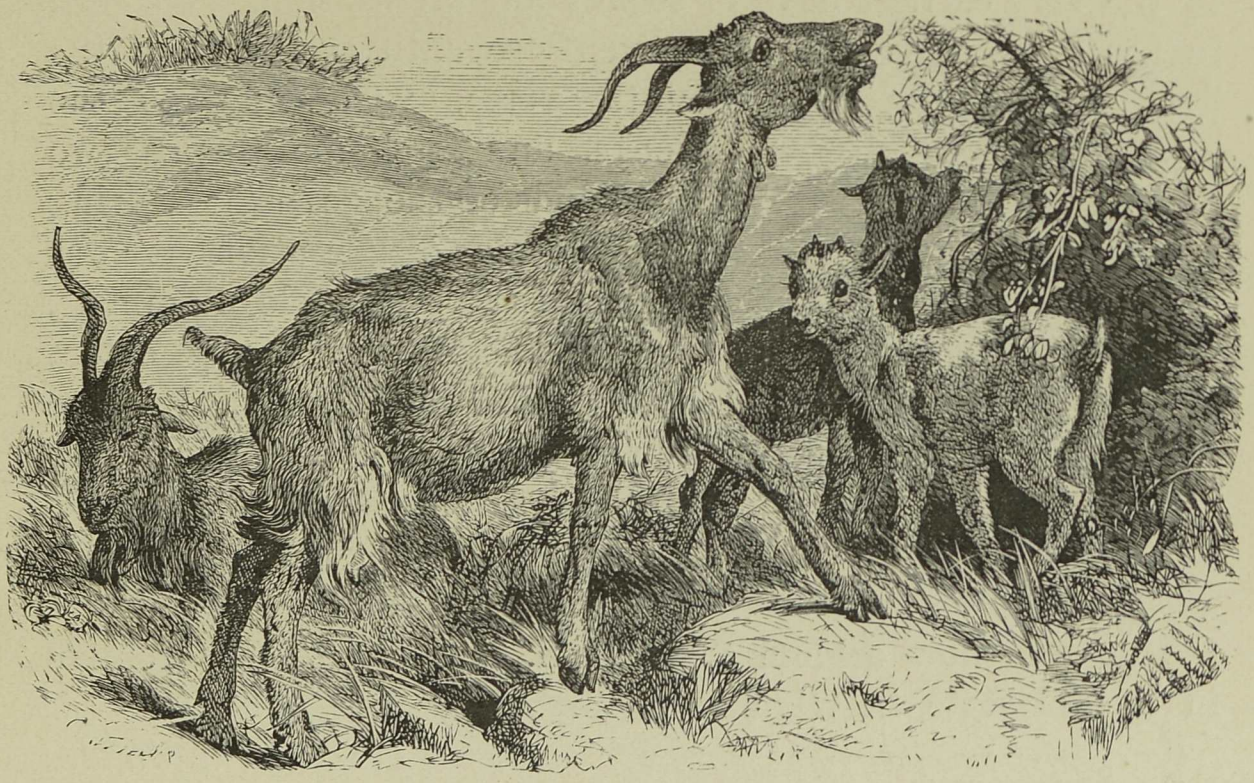
THE PET LAMB.

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, "Drink, pretty creature, drink!"
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb with a maiden at its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near; the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone;
With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel,
While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening meal.

By permission] GOATS.—After Rosa Bonheur. *[Goupil and Co.*

P. 84.

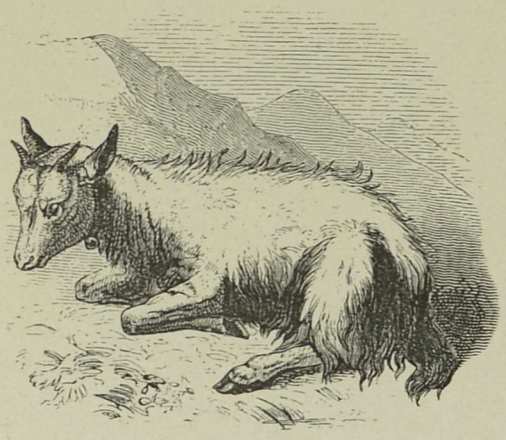


CONVERSATION IX.

GOATS—WELSH GOATS—THE IBEX—THE CASHMERE GOAT—THE GOAT AS A PERFORMER—THE FRIENDLY GOATS.

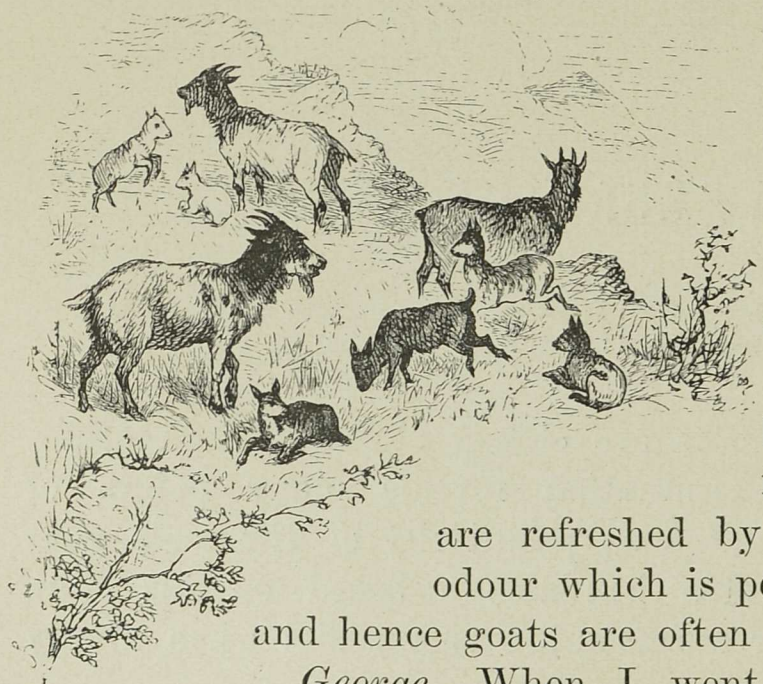
Papa. Sheep and goats are closely allied to each other, and yet a careful examination reveals many points of difference between them. One peculiarity of the male goat is his large horns. He has also a beard on his chin. Goats, like most other animals, are very social when kindly treated.

Mary. I find that the goat was well known and appreciated in the very earliest days of society and civilization. We read in the Book of Genesis, the twenty-seventh chapter and the ninth verse, "Go now to the flocks, and fetch me thence two good kids of the goats." During the Mosaic dispensation it was reckoned among the clean animals, and was not only freely eaten, both boiled and roast, by the Jewish people, but employed also in their sacrifices and feasts.



KID.

Charlotte. When I was travelling in South Wales, I found that the goat is now seldom to be seen, and a few only remain in a wild state in Glamorganshire.



Freddie. I wonder if the story is true, that Uncle Taffy used to ride the goat, and that the original Welsh pony was nothing but a goat.

Tom. How this may be I know not, but it appears that horses are refreshed by the strange, strong odour which is peculiar to the animal, and hence goats are often kept in stables.

George. When I went to Switzerland two

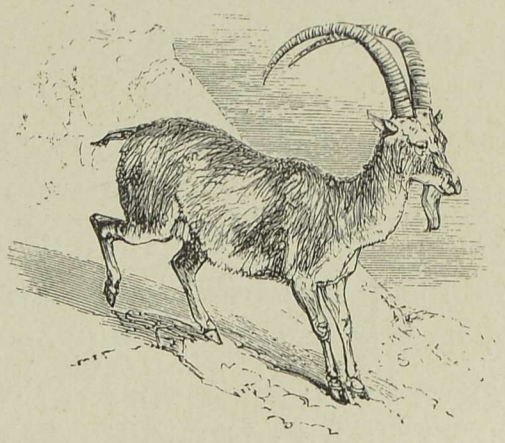
years ago, and wanted to cross over from the Valley of Engelberg by the Surenen Pass to the St. Gothard road, how I wished that I had the activity and sure-footedness of the goat! The Ibex will stand safely on the loftiest points of the rocks, will walk in perfect security along the edge of the highest precipices, and bound from crag to crag with wonderful precision.

SWISS.

Papa. Yes, at some of the Swiss villages famous for their milk-and-whey cures, you may see early in the morning and at sunset invalids waiting their turn for a glass of goats'-milk.

Mary. Where's Edith? She ought to join in these conversations, for she knows more about animals than most of us. As you have just returned from Switzerland, Edith, tell us all about the Steinbok.

Edith. Now let me confess to you that all the time I was in Switzerland, though I crossed over the Simplon, the Splugen, the St. Gothard, and the Brunig passes—though I wandered into the defiles of the Valley of Engelberg, a thoroughly out-of-the-way place, chosen by St. Bernard as the site of a monastery—I never saw but one Ibex.



His horns were more

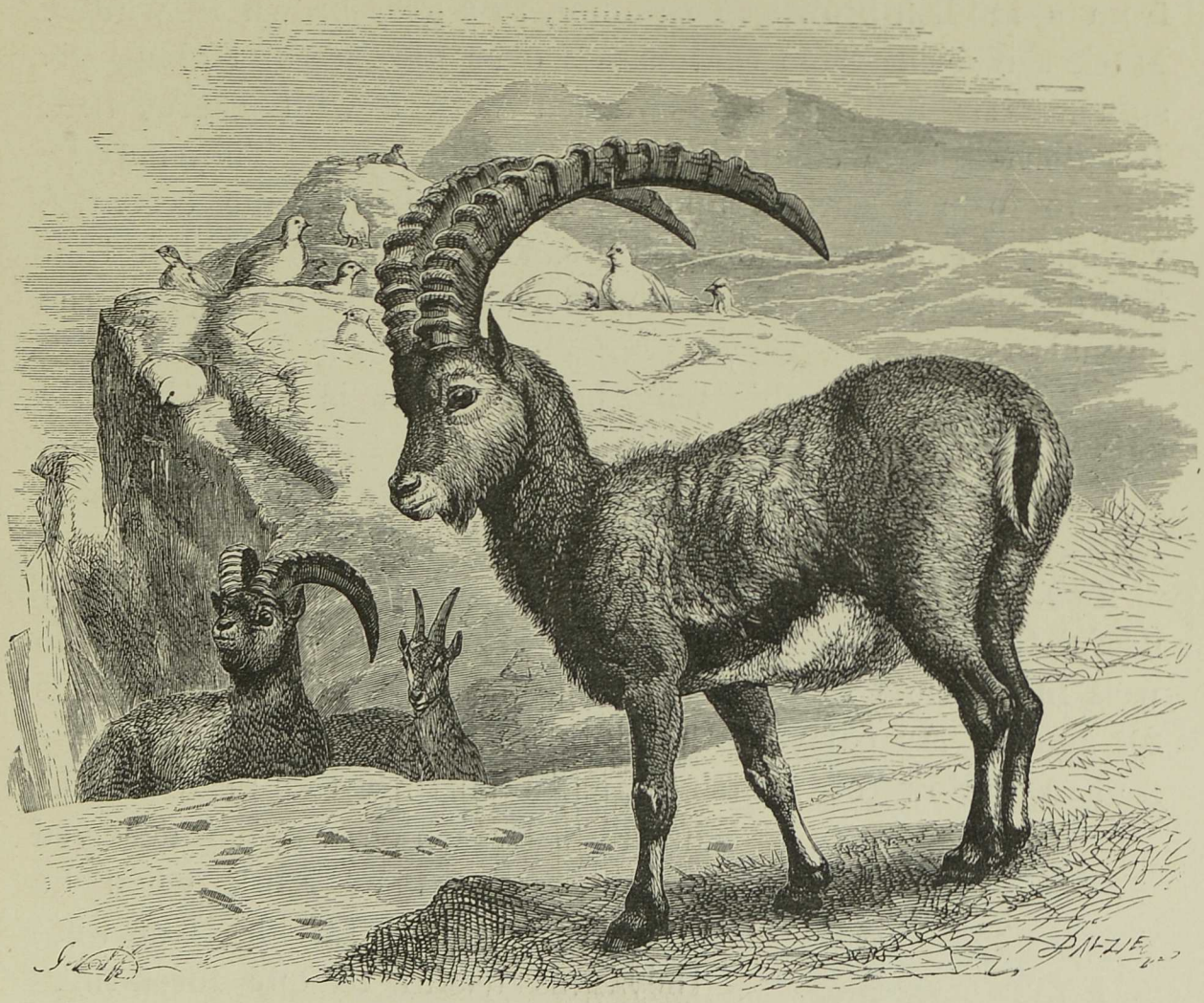
NEAR ENGELBERG.

than three feet long, and seemed utterly unsuitable to an animal that lived amongst glaciers.

Papa. We must not presume that the bony protuberances of some animals have no use because we cannot at first sight find it out. It appears that some Swiss hunters think that these enormous horns act as buffers, so that when the animal springs or falls from a great elevation, he alights on his horns, while his body rebounds from the rock. He is thus preserved from the consequences of a concussion which would probably endanger his life.

Tom. It strikes me, Edith, that it is much more likely that these great horns are weapons of offence. The Bouquetin, as the Ibex is sometimes called, is wary and active, and when impelled by the utter peril of its life, will turn round upon a huntsman, leap at him full tilt, and striking him on the head with these horns, will bruise him with their cross ridges, and capsize him, stunned and bleeding.

Edith. Yes, and they often escape the huntsman, because they can subsist for a long time without food or water, crouching in a snowdrift, or mounted securely on some peak not to be reached by the foot of man. Their faces are often grave, demure, and intelligent. They form a sort of parable of patriarchal government. They live in little clans, from six to a dozen in number, obeying with admirable and perfect discipline some grand old patriarch. A sentinel keeps watch over them every night. No sound or scent escapes him. He is wakeful



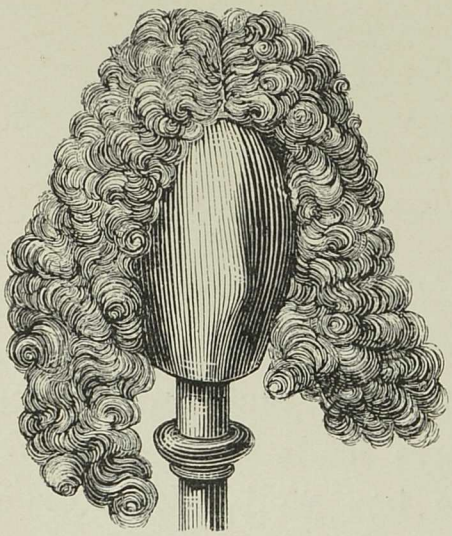
IBEX.

and suspicious, and if he thinks that the slightest danger is to be apprehended, he gives a strange, weird, warning cry, something between a bleat and a whistle, and away goes the whole band. Their instinct always leads them upward, an inborn "Excelsior" being, as one has well said, woven into their very nature.

Papa. Here is the picture of the Ibex. His colour varies from a reddish-brown in summer, to a grey-brown in winter. Mark the dark stripe that passes over his face and along his spine. His belly also is washed with a whitish-grey tint. His horns give a comical character to his face. They may be said to form a sort of apology in nature for some eccentric varieties in feminine head-dress. Some persons think that the number of ridges on the horns denotes the age of the animal.

Edith. However this may be, his flesh is often heartily enjoyed by the hungry mountaineer, and Providence renders him subservient to the wants of man in cold and inhospitable lands.

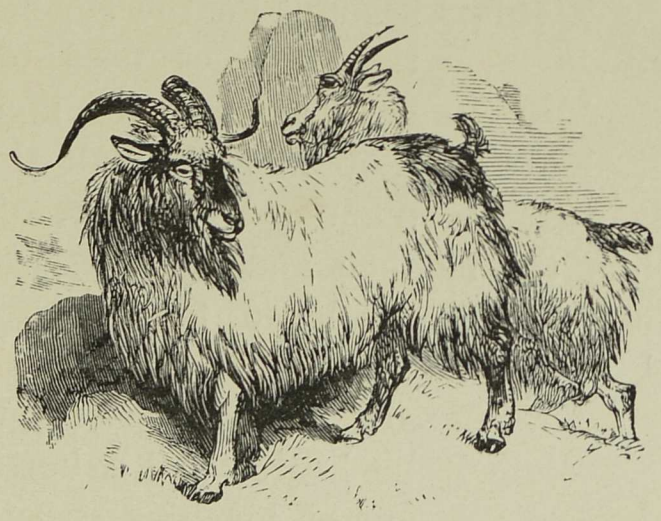
Tom. It must not, however, be supposed that they are only useful to man in icy and snowy regions. The goat will do well in districts that are too rocky, woody, and mountainous for sheep. As early as the time of the Prophet Samuel we find a pillow of goats' hair supporting the head of the image with which Michal deceived the messengers of Saul, when he sought the life of David. Nor were they less useful to our forefathers when wigs were fashionable. The whitest were made of the hair of the common domestic goat. A good Welsh skin in the last century sold for a guinea. Bishops now have entirely discontinued the use of the wig, but it is retained by the bench, and by the members of the



GOATS' HAIR WIG.

bar. Goats' hair is largely used in the manufacture of these articles. Well, then, thousands of gloves are made of the skin of the kid. Its horns are useful for the handles of knives. The Welsh chandlers used to prefer the suet of the goat for candles, as being superior in whiteness and lighting power to that of the sheep and the ox.

Charlotte. Yes, and the Welsh used often to salt and dry the haunches, as a substitute for bacon. This was



WELSH GOATS.

called hung venison. The pasties made of goat's flesh went under the name of rock venison, and were thought by hungry travellers to rival those of the deer.

Papa. It is remarkable that, as far as geological observations have extended, no sheep or goats have been detected among the numerous fossil remains that have attracted the notice of the comparative anatomist.

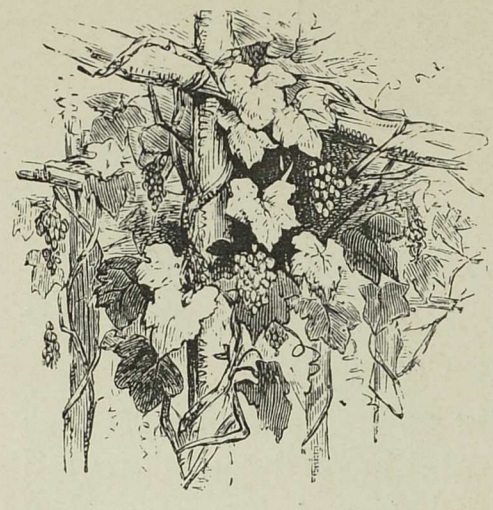
Charlotte. You were saying something about the in-

telligence of the goat. They have some mode of communicating readily with each other. In Wales, when two were yoked together, they would, as by consent, take wide and hazardous leaps, and yet so time their mutual efforts as rarely to miscarry in the attempt.

WITCH.

Tom. Perhaps their power of taking long leaps from one mountain crag to another helps to account for the superstitious notion that witches used to employ the goat as the convenience on which they flew through the air to their diabolical festivals.

Tom. Bacchus, the heathen god of wine, was supposed to hate the animal, because it loved to crop the tendrils of the vine, and thus destroyed the tree. So Bacchus, we are told, commanded the goat to be killed, and a bottle to be made out of his hide.



VINE.

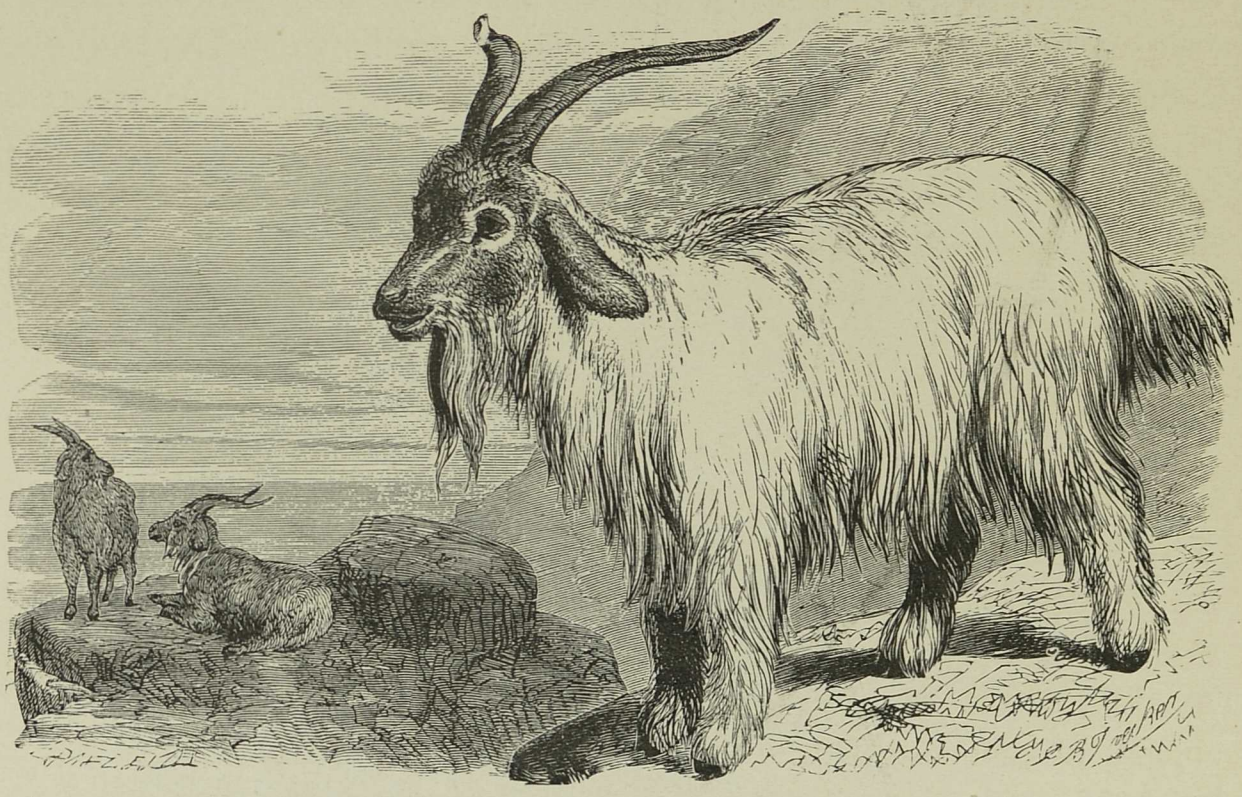
Edith. Are not the beautiful and costly Cashmere shawls made of goat's hair?

Papa. I would rather say of the soft, silken, and delicate wool of the Thibet goat. Then there is the Angora goat, which inhabits the tract that surrounds Angora and Beibazar, in Asiatic Turkey, where the goatherds bestow much care on their flocks, frequently combing and washing them.

GOAT AND VINE

Edith. Why did papa say that he preferred to speak of goat's wool, rather than goat's hair?

Papa. For a simple reason. The fur of the Cashmere goat is of two sorts; a soft woolly undercoat of greyish hair, and a covering of long silken hairs, which seem to defend the interior coat from the effects of cold, and from



CASHMERE GOAT.

many kinds of impurities. The woolly undercoat is the substance from which the Cashmere shawls are woven, and in order to make a single shawl a yard and a half square, at least ten goats are robbed of their natural covering. How often poor animals are made to suffer, in order to gratify the whims of the public!

Edith. But why are Cashmere shawls made of the Thibet goat's hair?

Papa. The animal is a native of Thibet, and the neighbouring locality. The wool is taken to the Cashmere district to be woven.

Tom. There are some uses to which the common goat is put that are not generally known, but which alone ought to secure for him kind and generous treatment. It has been remarked that goats are the only animals that will boldly face fire, and that their chief use in a stable is to lead the horses from the stalls in case of the stables being burned. Horses are such nervous, excitable animals, that when their dwelling has taken fire they cannot be induced to face the dreaded element, and must see some other animal lead the way before they will dare to stir. It is also said, and apparently with reason, that in case of fire, a horse may be easily removed from the scene of danger by harnessing him as usual, instead of trying to lead him out at once. The animal has learned to connect obedience and trustfulness with the harness, and while he bears the bit in his mouth, and the saddle or traces on his back, he will go wherever he may be led. Blindfolding the horse is another good method of inducing the animal to follow his guide without hesitation in case of a fire.

Charlotte. It would be well if the "Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" would publish a tract giving suggestions how to act with animals in case of fire.

Edith. Do not forget that the goat is a kind of barometer, and is very useful in foretelling stormy weather.

At country fairs you may sometimes observe him perched on the top of a pole, his four feet occupying a space not more than two or three inches square, or trotting along a ridge ever so narrow, as if he were scampering over a plain.

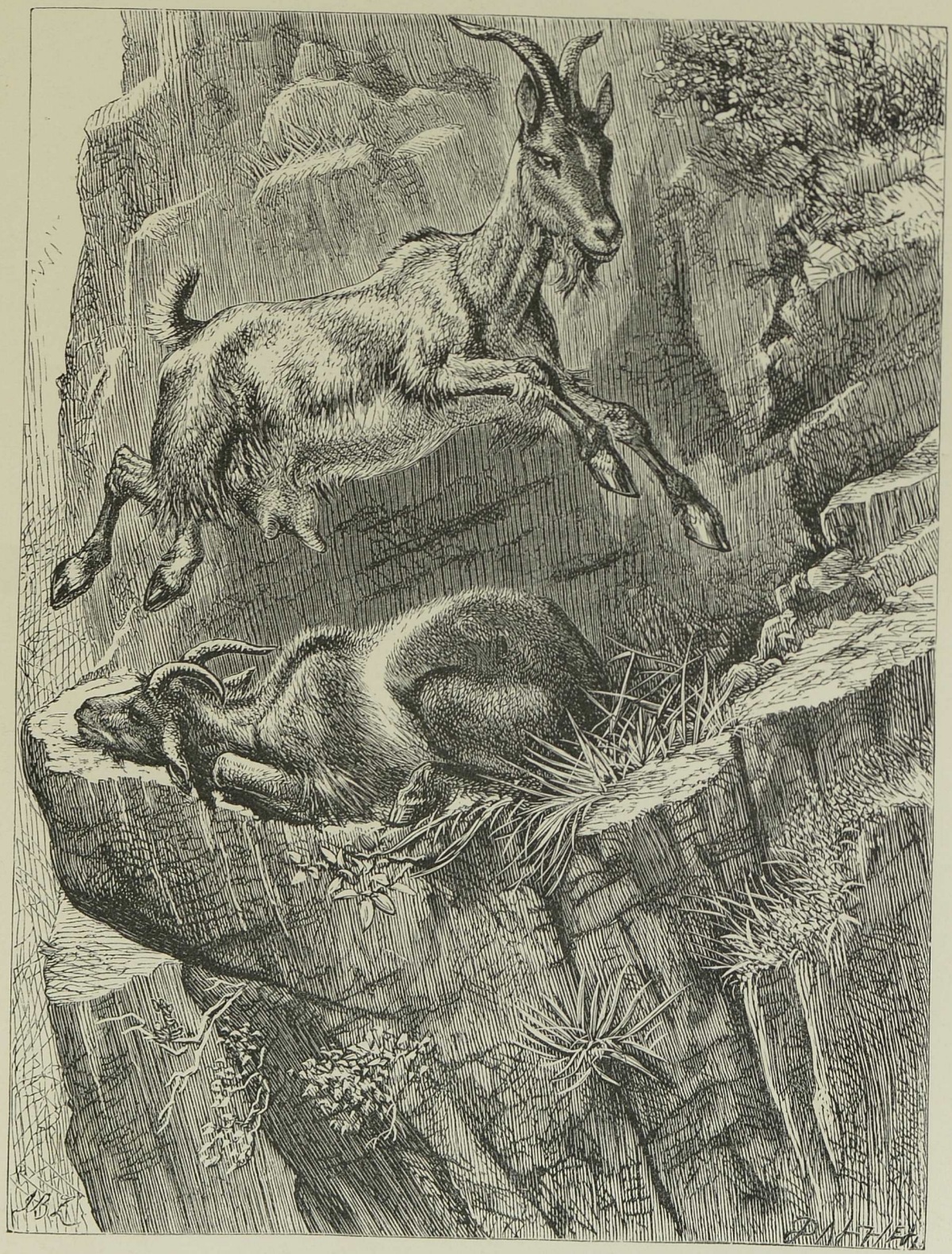
Papa. We have already spoken of goats in connexion with

a parable; but what do you think of this anecdote of a Welsh clergyman? He preached from the text "LOVE ONE ANOTHER," and told his congregation that in kind and respectful treatment to our fellow-creatures we were inferior to the brute creation. As an illustration of the truth of this remark, he quoted an instance of two goats in his own parish, that once met upon a bridge so very narrow, that they could not pass by without one thrusting the other off into the river. "And," continued he, "how do you think they acted? Why, I will tell you. One goat laid himself down and let the other leap over him. Ah! beloved, let us live like goats." Do you not think that the method of illustration and the animal selected for the purpose were thoroughly Welsh? Let thus much be said about goats. In our next conversation we will find some other animal to occupy our attention.

Tom. Stop a moment! Is it not Luther who narrates the story about the two goats which you attribute to the Welsh clergyman?

Papa. Now what say you to a little pleasant talk about weasels and mice?

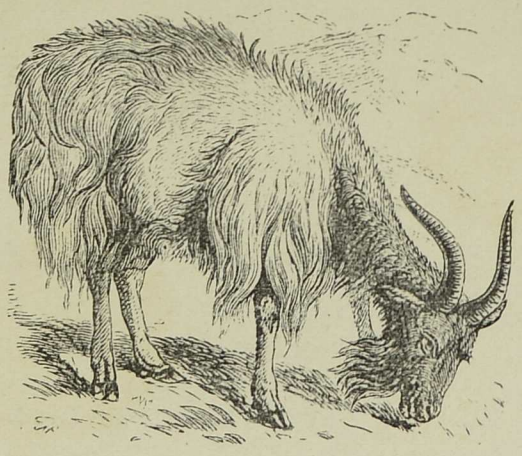
Edith. Yes; but you must keep the weasels from the mice, or else the poor mice will very soon be destroyed. Weasels and mice! what a charming subject for an evening's talk.

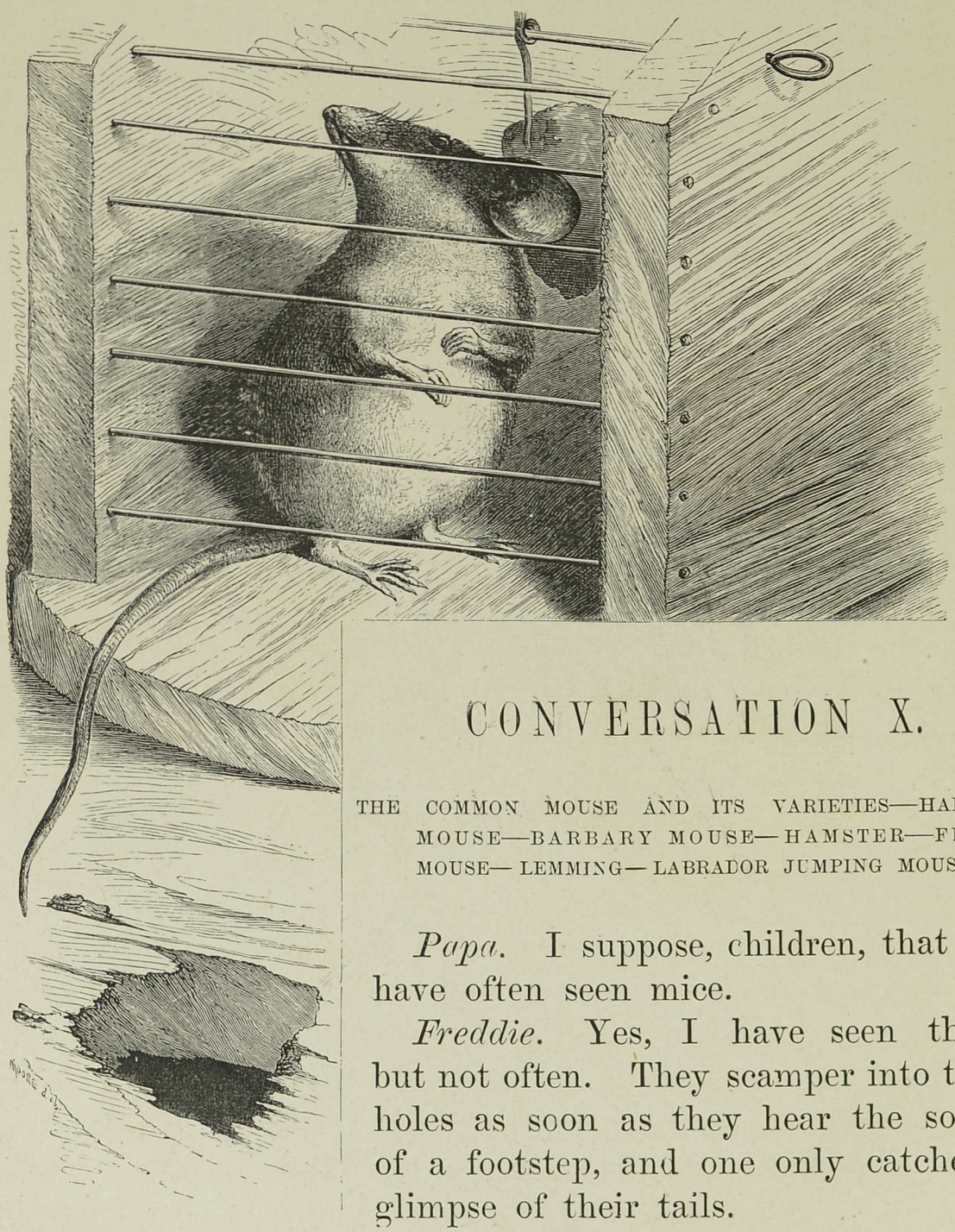


GOATS ON MOUNTAIN PASS.

Mary. Better, at least, than imitating the skunk and slandering our neighbours.

If like in joys, beasts surely must
Be like in sufferings too,
And we cannot be right or just
To treat them as we do.





CONVERSATION X.

THE COMMON MOUSE AND ITS VARIETIES—HARVEST MOUSE—BARBARY MOUSE—HAMSTER—FIELD-MOUSE—LEMMING—LABRADOR JUMPING MOUSE.

Papa. I suppose, children, that you have often seen mice.

Freddie. Yes, I have seen them, but not often. They scamper into their holes as soon as they hear the sound of a footstep, and one only catches a glimpse of their tails.

Papa. The cook caught a little common mouse in a trap last night. It yielded to the temptation of a delicious morsel of toasted cheese, and so was captured. I hope, Freddie, that you will not give way to temptation. Never allow a mere desire or a passion to overpower your better judgment.

Mary. Suppose we fetch the poor captive and get a good look at him.

Tom. Here he is, papa, and his poor little heart almost beats through his skin for terror. Mark the brown-grey of his back, and the delicate grey of his belly and throat. His eyes sparkle like little black jewels. The paws remind one of the squirrel.

Papa. Now, children, I propose that we let the poor little prisoner go. I think he has earned his freedom by the information that he has afforded us.

Edith. Yes; but I hope you will carry him a good way from the house before you open the trap, for sometimes I am awoke in the night by noises which our maid says are caused by rats or mice, but which would make a nervous person think that thieves were in the house.

George. I am just old enough to remember the ancient moated grange which stood near the site of our present residence. This moat was nine or ten feet wide, and six or seven feet deep, but it was much choked with the accumulated mud of centuries, and with all kinds of water plants. Queer old wooden drains, consisting chiefly of bored trunks of trees, joined the house and the moat, making underground passages which, if they had been on a larger scale, would have furnished splendid material for the antiquary and the author. The house was said to be haunted. An ancient

lawyer, who, it seems, had lived a life of chicanery and falsehood, was said, so went the story in the village, to have killed himself in a first-floor room of the Grange, in a closet of which he kept his parchments and papers. The family

who resided here found it difficult to retain a domestic servant for more than six months. All had heard in turn old Hunks scuffling among his papers, turning over parchments, stopping for a minute or two as though reading,

and then rattling them as he turned them over again. On making some alterations in that room, it was found that the walls were canvas papered over, and that there were occasional narrow crossbars of timber morticed to the upright beams, so as to stiffen and strengthen them. Up the interstices the mice used to scratch their way, making a noise on the drum-like canvas not unlike that of hands searching among papers. When the wood-framing was pulled down and brickwork substituted, the haunting of the premises immediately ceased!

Charlotte. If ricks are but placed firmly upon staddles the mouse will not be able to reach the corn; and again, if a rick have a good roof, or be kept under cover, mice will either avoid it or not remain long in it. For they are thirsty souls, and cannot do long without a supply of clean water.

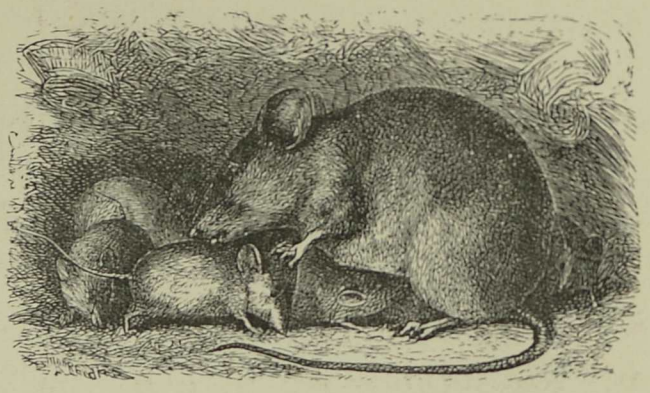
Papa. When I was a boy I used to tame mice, both the pied, white, and brown varieties. I grew very fond of many of these odd little animals, and used to watch their quaint gamesomeness with sincere delight. It has been remarked that they are as inquisitive as cats. A new piece of furniture, an uncommon-shaped dish, nay, even a new trap, they will examine with the greatest curiosity.

Freddie. My friend Charlie, of whose friendship for rats I have already spoken, used to wonder why boys preferred white mice to brown. He says that the latter were far more susceptible of kindness, more teachable, and more easily tamed.

COMMON MOUSE—PIED, WHITE, AND BROWN.

Mary. But why do brown mice die so often in confinement?

Papa. Some may possibly die of chagrin and annoyance at being kept in captivity, but I believe that more are killed by want of attention to their cages, and no dirt, nothing of an impure kind, must be left in their little houses. Their bedding should be changed daily. Their house should have two or three false floors, so that one may be always clean and perfectly dry. Black wadding must not be used for them to lie upon. It has been known to snap the slender thread of mouse life in a single night.



MOTHER AND BABY MICE.

Edith. What do you think? I once found that I could not make my pianoforte give out any sounds. It was so much damaged from some unknown cause that the maker fetched it away, the tuners not being able to repair it at home. Afterwards, under the sounding-board, a mouse-nest was found, nearly as large as a man's head. It was composed almost entirely of leather and scraps of cloth, which had been stolen from the keys of the pianoforte.

Mary. I once read that a person, on taking up some boards in his room, found a mouse-nest about the size of a slop-basin, formed entirely of scraps of paper, in which were sleeping six or seven tiny, red, semi-transparent mouselets, through whose little bodies the substance of the bed on which they were lying could almost be seen.

Charlotte. Is it true that mice sing?

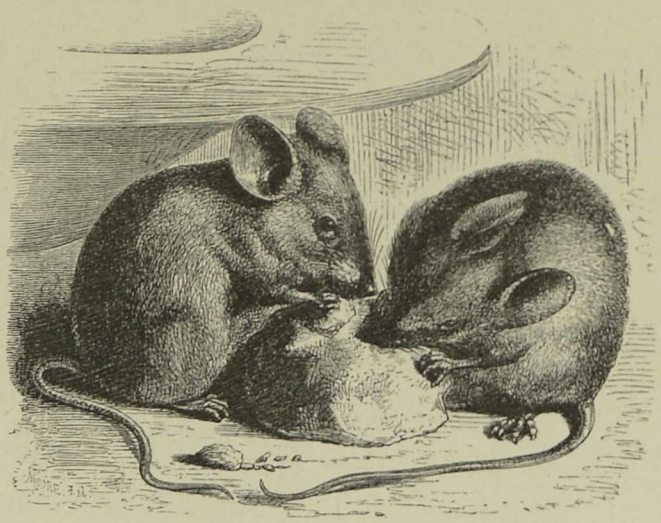
George. Yes, but only, it is said, when they have bronchitis, whereas when men suffer from a cold, they lose the powers of the voice.

Papa. This seems to be, by a balance of evidence against it, an erroneous opinion. It is much more likely that the singing of a mouse is voluntarily produced by the imitative powers of the performer. Let us hear what Mr. Wood says in his "Illustrated Natural History." "In a letter to the *Field* newspaper, one of the correspondents gives a curious instance of 'singing,' which favours the former of these

suppositions. A mouse had been caught in a trap with weak springs, and being half-choked by the wire pressing on its neck, gave vent to a twittering or chirruping, not unlike that of a small bird. Other correspondents, however, who have met with examples of singing mice, seem rather to incline to the opinion that the musical sound is produced by healthy animals, and is not owing to disease. A very interesting letter on this subject has been sent to me by the Rev. R. L. Bampfield, of Little Barfield, in Essex, and seems also to favour the latter supposition. By the kind permission of the writer, I am enabled to present the account to the reader, and will leave him to come to his own conclusions on the subject.

"'In a former residence of mine some mice took up their abode behind the wainscot in the kitchen. From motives which few housekeepers would appreciate, we allowed them to remain undisturbed; and most merry, cheerful little creatures they were. It seemed to us that a young brood was being carefully educated; but they did not learn all their accomplishments from their parents. In the kitchen hung a good singing canary, and we observed that by degrees the chirp of the mice changed into an exact imitation of the canary's song; at least it was so with one, for though several attempted it, one considerably excelled the rest. I am not sure that admiration of the music influenced them, for from the funny facetious way in which it was done, I should rather say it was out of mockery, or at least from a love of imitation. Yet the result was very pleasing; far inferior to the canary's note in volume, strength, and sweetness, it was, perhaps, superior to it in softness and delicacy.

"'Often have I listened to it with pleasure in the evening, when the canary was asleep with its head beneath its wings; and more than once have I observed a kitchen guest glance at the canary, then look round in some astonishment and say, "Is that a bird, sir, singing?" One trustworthy person assured me that he too had had in his house a similar "singing mouse." I have, therefore, little doubt that, if a young family of mice were brought up from the first close to a canary or some other songster, some of them would learn to sing.'



A FEAST IN MOUSE'S HALL.

"I have also been favoured with an account of a young singing rat, which endeavoured to imitate the sounds produced by a piping bullfinch and an ordinary goldfinch. In the first, the creature entirely failed, but was tolerably successful in its imitation of the mild notes of the goldfinch. The same animal would begin to sing if a melody were played in the minor key, but would give no response to the major. The fondness of mice for music is already well known, and may afford some clue to their sensitiveness of ear. I believe, by the way, that the untaught cries of all the lower animals, whether they be quadrupeds or birds, are in the minor key."

Mary. Have you seen this pretty picture of harvest mice, in the corn?

Edith. No, let me look at it, for the harvest mouse is described as the smallest and prettiest of British Mammalia, and I have often wanted to see what it was like.

HARVEST MICE.

George. It is about five inches long, with fur of a reddish-brown colour, dark at the base of each hair, and warming into red at the point. The under part of the little animal is white.

Charlotte. I have heard of the Rev. Gilbert White's account of its nest: do you know where it builds, papa?

Papa. A nest was discovered by some mowers in a field in Wiltshire. It was built upon a scaffolding of four of the rank grass stems that are generally found on the sides of ditches, and was situated at some ten or eleven inches from the ground. It was round in form, and rather larger than a cricket-ball, quite empty, and probably only just finished when its scaffolding was cut down by the scythe. It was made of thin, dry grass, and so loosely put together that anything in it could be seen through the interstices as easily as

through an open-worked basket. There was no sign of any hole for entrance and exit, so how it was built is a puzzle.

Edith. I remember reading that description, and it was supposed that the little builder must have remained in the middle while constructing it, and after weaving it around her pushed her way through the loosely woven grass, and arranged the holes outside so as not to show. Or, perhaps, both mice help in the work, one plaiting inside, and the other bringing fresh grass and filling up holes outside.

Mary. When there are little mice inside, I wonder how their father and mother get at them to feed them.

George. They probably poke openings opposite each little one, and when it is fed, make the grass tidy and put it back in its place again.

Papa. The nest that Mr. White describes was entirely filled by the bodies of eight young harvest mice, and he wonders how such a little thing would expand to accommodate itself to their growth; but the materials are so interwoven, that it will stretch a great deal without spoiling its shape.

Mary. How very curious! Then I suppose the house stretches as the little inmates grow.

Edith. There is a great deal of difference between this picture, and that of a common mouse. Observe, this little creature's ears are shorter, and its eyes do not project so much. I shall know a harvest mouse now, directly I see one.

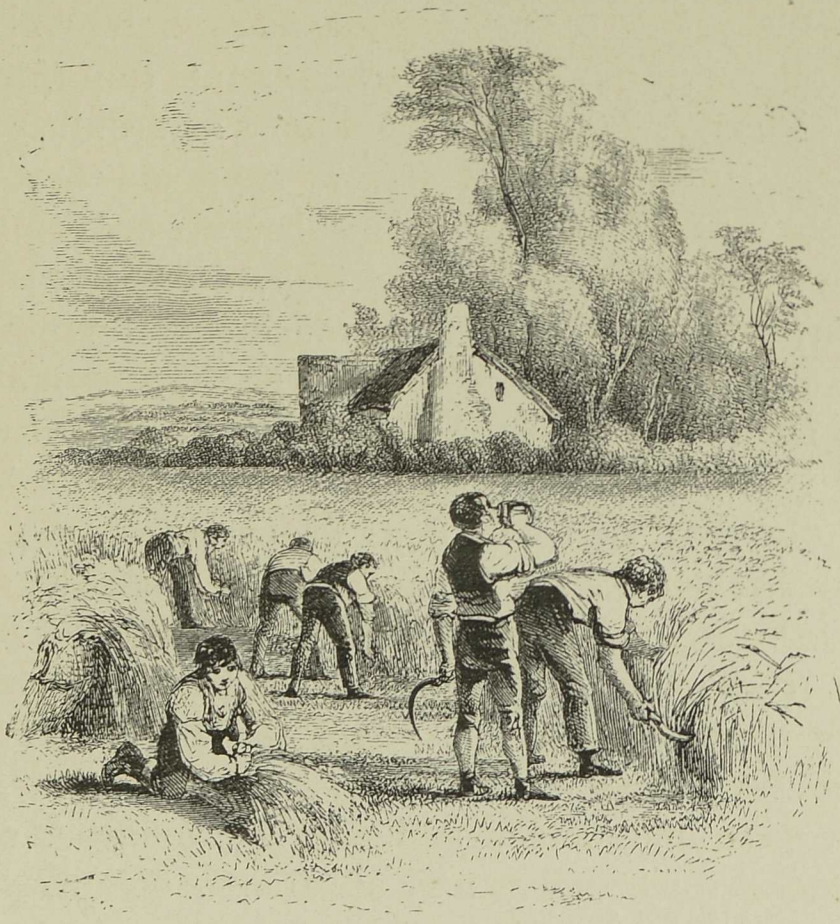
Charlotte. Mr. Bingley kept one in a cage. It was very fond of bluebottle flies and other insects, to eat, so that it likes different food from other mice. You might call it an "insectivorous" animal.

Tom. But you must not suppose that they are not a trouble to the farmer, for Mr. White goes on to observe:—

NEST OF FIELD-MOUSE.

"They never enter into houses; are carried into ricks and barns with the sheaves, abound in harvest, and build their nests amidst the straws of the corn above the ground, and sometimes in thistles. They breed as many as eight at a litter, in a little round nest composed of the blades of grass or wheat. One of these I procured this autumn most artificially plaited, and composed of the blades of wheat, perfectly round, and about the size of a cricket-ball; with the opening so ingeniously closed, that there was no discovering to what part it belonged. It was so compact and well fitted that it would roll across the table without being discomposed, though it contained eight little mice that were naked and blind. As this nest was perfectly full, how could the dam come at her litter respectively so as to administer a teat to each? Perhaps she opens different places for that purpose, putting them to rights again when the business is over; but she could not be contained herself in the ball with her young, which moreover would be daily increasing in bulk. This wonderful elastic cradle, an elegant instance of the efforts of instinct, was found in a wheat field suspended in the head of a thistle." And again:—

"As to the small mice, I have further to remark, that though they hang their nests for their children up amidst the straws of standing corn above the ground, yet I find that, in the winter, they burrow deep in the earth, and



HARVESTING.

make warm beds of grass; but their grand rendezvous seems to be in corn-ricks into which they are carried at harvest. A neighbour housed an oat-rick lately, under the thatch of which were assembled near a hundred, most of which

were taken, and some I saw. I measured them and found that from nose to tail they were just two inches and a quarter, and their tails just two inches long. Two of them, in a scale, weighed down just one copper halfpenny, which is about the third of an ounce avoirdupois; so that I suppose they are the smallest quadrupeds in this island. A full-grown *mus medius domesticus* weighs, I find, one ounce lumping weight, which is more than six times as much as the mouse above, and measures from nose to rump four inches and a quarter, and the same in its tail. . . . As my neighbour was housing a rick, he observed that his dogs devoured all the little red mice they could catch, but rejected the common mice; and that his cats ate the common mice, refusing the red."

THE FIELD MOUSE'S CARRIAGE.

Papa. There is a very handsome animal, midway in size between a mouse and a rat, called the Barbary mouse. It always excites attention at the Zoological Gardens, running about its cage in a lively and cheerful manner, sometimes diving among its bedding, and apparently delighted to show off its beautiful fur.

Edith. In all this it forms a perfect contrast to a rat-like mouse, or a mouse-like rat, that I once saw when travelling in Germany. If animals are types of men, I should say that, on its good side, the hamster represents the provident man, who lays up a good store for the time to come, and the man of

FIELD-MICE AND THEIR NEST. P. 110.

sturdy, persevering courage, who is just the person to lead a forlorn hope. On his bad side, he represents grovelling stupidity, gluttony, and cannibalism. He is a great plague to the Prussian farmer, who wages against him a war of extermination. Besides this, his fur is of some value in commerce, so that he is hunted down for the sake of his skin. But in spite of his enemies he holds his own, for the females have several

BARBARY MOUSE.

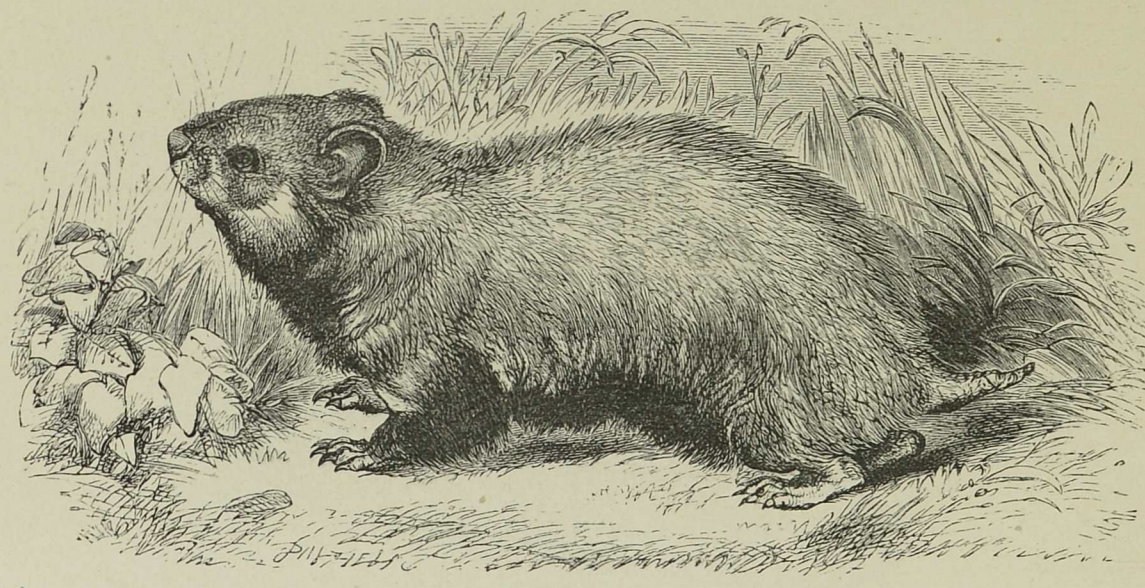
broods in every year, and the average number of each family consists of ten or twelve.

Mary. If you examine his cheeks carefully, you will observe that he has two large pouches, one on each side of the face. Into these he manages to stuff a considerable amount of grain

and other plunder. He can give them, when empty, a puffy appearance, by filling them with air at pleasure. His tail is a little ugly protuberance, not more than three inches in length. The hamster is a regular Troglodyte.

Freddy. What in the world, Mary, is a Troglodyte ?

Mary. A Troglodyte is one who conceals himself, or lives in holes; an inhabitant of caverns, whether natural or artificial.



HAMSTER.

The golden-crested wren used to be called a Troglodyte, because it was supposed to burrow.

Papa. Every season, as summer advances, the hamster begins to excavate downwards, throwing out the earth, as he loosens it, behind him. At some depth below the surface he forms several large chambers, communicating with each other

by horizontal passages. These chambers are ventilated by means of a perpendicular funnel or shaft, distinct from the sloping entrance. Some of his rooms he reserves as a store for his food. One he lives in himself, and provides another to be the harem of his wife. This mine-like residence is from three to five feet below the surface of the earth. He is a terrible plunderer, for when he has crammed his cheek pouches with grain, pressing it firmly with his paws to lose no space, he carries it off to his abode beneath the earth, deposits it, and returns for more.

Edith. Yes, one hamster has been known to hoard a hundredweight of beans, and another a scarcely less considerable quantity of corn.

Mary. But in one respect he shows much want of cunning, for he always throws up at the entrance to his burrow all the earth that he has excavated. In this way the hunter finds out his haunts, and destroys fathers, mothers, and children by thousands.

Papa. It was stated at the beginning of our conversation, that an irritable hamster formed an excellent type of the sturdy courage adapted to lead a forlorn hope.

Edith. Yes; he does not hesitate to fly at a bulldog. It is said, that upon one occasion a poker nearly red hot was seized by one of these animals with his teeth. It was with great difficulty that he was forced to let go of the poker, though he must have suffered excruciating agony. A hamster's wife has been known to fight her husband with such wild ferocity that the male has been killed in the encounter, when his widow celebrated her triumph by devouring part of his remains.

George. What is a campagnol?

Papa. This is another name for the short-tailed field-mouse. It is akin to the water-vole, and is sometimes called the field-vole.

Mary. Once when I was walking in the marshy meadows, I came upon a large number of these pretty little animals.

CAMPAGNOL.

Their progress was silent and almost imperceptible. Their colour is a ruddy brown on the upper surface of the body, and grey on the chest and belly. Being so much like the soil, it is hard to distinguish them: you see a little reddish thing moving in the grass, but unless you pounce upon it immediately the strange substance disappears.

Edith. When I was travelling in Holstein and Denmark last summer, I had an opportunity of going over to Stockholm,

when I heard that Lapland and Norway had been visited by an invasion of thousands of little animals of the mouse tribe, coming nobody knew from whence, and disappearing nobody knew how. These creatures are called lemmings, and some superstitious people thought that they had been rained down from the clouds as a punishment for the sins of the people.

LEMMING.

Mary. Mr. Wood, in his "Illustrated Natural History," gives a highly picturesque and vigorous description of the lemming and its migrations.

Papa. Pray read it to us.

Mary. "Driven onwards by some overpowering instinct, these vast hordes travel in a straight line, permitting nothing but a smooth perpendicular wall or rock to turn them from their course. If they should happen to meet with any living

being, they immediately attack, knowing no fear, but only urged by undiscriminating rage. Any river or lake they swim without hesitation, and rather seem to enjoy the water than to fear it. If a stack or a corn-rick should stand in their way, they settle the matter by eating their way through it, and will not be turned from their direct course even by fire. The country over which they pass is utterly devastated by them, and it is said that cattle will not touch the grass on which a lemming has trotten.

NORWEGIAN SCENE.

"These migrating hosts are accompanied by clouds of predaceous birds, and by many predaceous quadrupeds, who find a continual feast spread for them as long as the lemmings are on their pilgrimage. While they are crossing the rivers or lakes, the fish come in for their share of the banquet, and make great havoc among their columns. It is a very remarkable fact that the reindeer is often seen in chase of the lemmings, and the Norwegians say that the deer is in the habit of eating them. This statement, however, seems to be of rather doubtful character. The termination of these extraordinary migrations is generally

in the sea, where the survivors of the much reduced ranks finally perish.

"Mr. Lloyd mentions that just before his visit to Wermeland, the lemming had overrun the whole country. The primary cause of these strange migrations is generally thought to be hunger. It is fortunate for the country that these razzias only occur at rare intervals, a space of some ten or fifteen years generally elapsing between them, as if to fill up the places of those which were drowned or otherwise killed in the preceding migration.

"The lemming feeds upon various vegetable substances, such as grass, reeds, and lichens, being often forced to seek the last-named plant beneath the snow, and to make occasional air-shafts to the surface. Even when engaged in their ordinary pursuits, and not excited by the wandering instinct, they are obstinately savage creatures. Mr. Metcalfe describes them as swarming in the forest, sitting two or three on every stump, and biting the dogs' noses as they came to investigate the character of the irritable little animals. If they happened to be in a pathway, they would not turn aside to permit a passenger to move by them, but boldly disputed the right of way, and uttered defiance in little sharp, squeaking barks. The colour of the lemming is dark brownish-black, mixed irregularly with a tawny hue upon the back, and fading into yellowish-white upon the abdomen. Its length is not quite six inches, the tail being only half an inch long."

Tom. In some of our museums there are specimens of a queer little animal from America, common in the Fur countries, as far as the Great Slave Lake, and perhaps farther. It is called the Labrador jumping mouse. The Ojibaway Indians call it

the *katse*, or the leaper. It moves by taking long jumps or springs; it is almost exactly like an animal at the Cape of Good Hope, called by the Dutch *spring-has*, or jumping hare. It sleeps during the day, and goes out by night. It has been known to leap twenty or thirty feet at a bound. It sits nearly

LABRADOR JUMPING MOUSE

upright, resting partly on its long tail, the hind legs being extended horizontally. It brings its food to its mouth by means of its short fore-feet. Its strength is prodigious, considering its size; its fore-feet are furnished with scoop-like claws or nails, admirably adapted for burrowing. It digs a hole to hide in with marvellous swiftness. It sleeps in a

sitting posture, placing the head between the legs, and protecting its eyes by holding the ears over them with its fore-feet.

Freddie. How various and wonderful are the works of God! A poet once said, "An undevout astronomer is mad:" surely no one can study animal life without being filled with reverential awe.

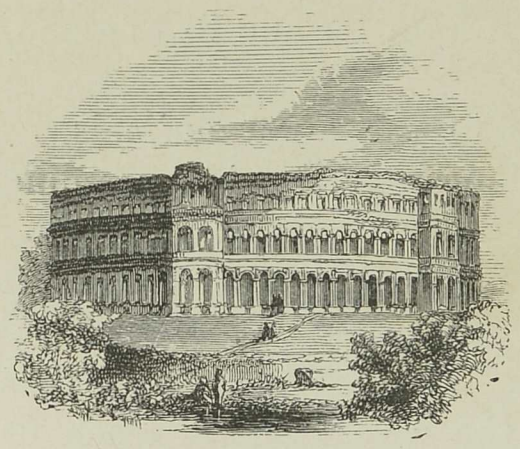
Mary. Yes; and let us not forget the impressive language in which the poet has embodied the Divine rule of mercy to all sentient beings:—

"Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

Papa. Dr. Moffatt of Galway has just published some eloquent remarks upon this subject, which I will read to you at length. After some well-timed observations on the sufferings of cattle in their passage from Ireland to England, he remarks:—

"The recognition of our duties to the lower animals, so far from being antagonistic to philanthropy, would, according to very simple and well-understood laws of human nature, react on our feelings towards our fellow-men, and strengthen and draw closer human ties; thus is Mercy 'twice blessed.' While, on the other hand, it does not need the terrible pictures of Hogarth, nor the proverbs of the wise king, to teach us how corrupting and demoralizing a thing is cruelty; how it can pervert the feelings and character, and replace the best capacities of manhood with the worst; blunting the moral sensibility, supplanting the very germ of the divinest virtue that man can exercise—the virtue of perfect charity, which calls no creature too common for compassion, and which considers no agony so vulgar that it should be left to cry

in vain for comfort; and ultimately, and in the way of natural consequence—I might perhaps say, of just retribution—debasing and degrading the mind that indulges it and the community that tolerates it, to that condition which has been justly called the last stage of human depravity, when the infliction of pain becomes pleasing for its own sake, when the sight of suffering as suffering, where no advantage is to be gained, no offence punished, no danger averted, has become an agreeable excitement. Which of us has not sometimes encountered such depraved natures? And history presents to us examples on the large scale. The most prominent and palpable characteristic of society in ancient Rome, during the period of its decline, was remorseless cruelty towards man as well as all the inferior creation. Then it was that the rank, the refinement, and the philosophy, the beauty and the fashion of the imperial city thronged the benches of the vast Amphitheatre, to make holiday on the agonies of innocent human beings thrown to wild beasts; the supremacy of man being thus surrendered to aggravate the bitterness of suffering.



AMPHITHEATRE.

These times are past, without fear, we believe, of their recurrence. The modern world acknowledges a more elevated standard of morality; it has recognised more comprehensive human relations and responsibilities, and it professes a more catholic sentiment of duty, and broader and deeper sympathies with all that concerns the welfare of our common race. Now,

as never before, for the capable ear, 'the still sad music of humanity' fills the air, and sweeps the chords of feeling; the advent has been hymned of an age of sweeter manners, purer laws, nobler modes of life. Let us hope that, amidst the developments of civilization reserved for the coming time, the responsibilities pertaining to the sovereign position which man holds in relation to the other species shall cease to be ignored; that the lessons which the gentleness, and patience, and faithful service of many of them are so capable of imparting, shall at length be learned; and that their 'unbought, untaught' affection,—

'That strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate,'—

shall receive its long-deferred appreciation and requital. Some may smile at such views as sentimental, and such anticipations as visionary and Utopian; but let it be remembered that the most practical as well as the most profound thinkers of our century have concurred in enforcing such obligations, and in portraying such a future. Two men whom Mr. Mill designates 'the two great seminal minds of England in their age, the teachers of the teachers,' Coleridge and Bentham—and it would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another—are in this at one. To inculcate the duty was the purpose of that wondrous poem 'The Ancient Mariner:'—

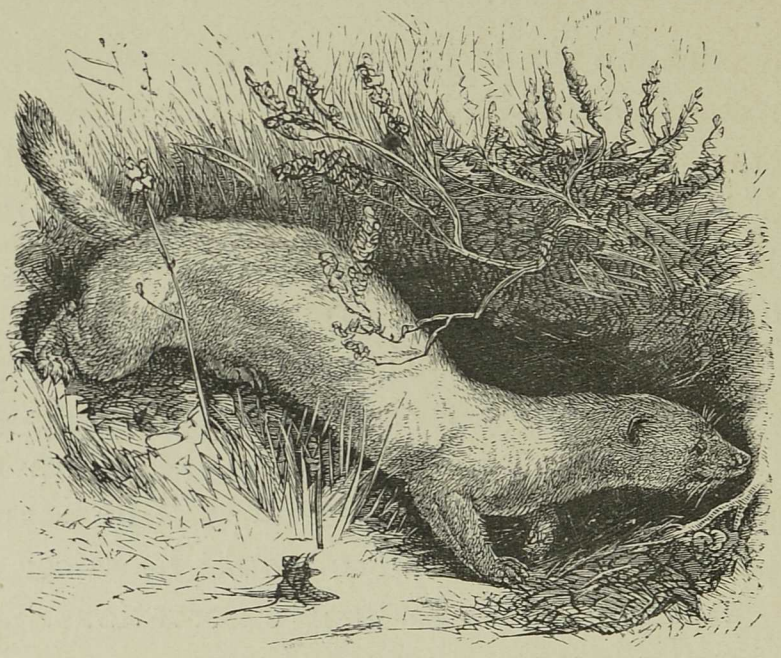
'He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast:
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'

The only fault, indeed, of the poem, in the opinion of its author, was that 'there was *too much moral* in it.' 'I ought not to have stopped,' said Coleridge, 'to give reasons for things, or inculcate humanity for beasts. "The Arabian Nights" might have taught me better.' While the great Utilitarian moralist—to whom above all men the merit is due of the thorough-going and beneficent reformation of the law that has been long in progress, and which is the chief glory of our age—has expressed his positive expectation in language of characteristic quaintness: 'Assuredly it will come one day to be generally recognised that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum* are reasons insufficient for abandoning a sensitive creature to the caprices of a tormentor.' Men differing so widely in constitutional sensibility and habits of thought as Cowper and Southey, Sydney Smith and Dr. Parr, have described mercy to beings of an inferior species as a primal duty, and one of the most ennobling attributes of man. It was this theme that drew from Chalmers that appeal which has never been surpassed in power and pathos; it was to this cause that Erskine devoted his latest energies; the condition and destiny of these creatures sorely troubled the mind of Arnold, and painfully heightened for him the mystery of existence. And I may mention another—one prematurely lost to science and to the world, but not unworthy to be classed with those I have named — I allude to the late Professor Boole. Once, when mentioning to me that he had long had in contemplation an essay on this subject, which I know weighed heavily on his thoughts and feelings—for his sympathies were as strong and as far-reaching as his intellect—

he declared that he would esteem it a higher happiness to be able to awaken the public conscience to a sense of this duty than to attain the intellectual fame of Newton. 'The surest touchstone,' he remarked, 'of a man's moral character is his treatment of the lower animals that come within his power, for these he can wrong with impunity.' "

Freddie. Thank you, papa; but to think that you should have made such a long story about the jumping mouse!

Tom. I thank you, too, papa! I am sure that those thoughtless men, who tease a poor dog till he snaps at them, and then beat him for snapping, would be wiser and better for reading Dr. Moffatt's excellent observations.



FERRET.

CONVERSATION XI.

THE WEASEL—THE FERRET—FERRETS THE TYPE OF SLANDERERS—THE POLECAT FERRET—THE WEASEL AND THE RATS—ANECDOTES OF WEASELS.

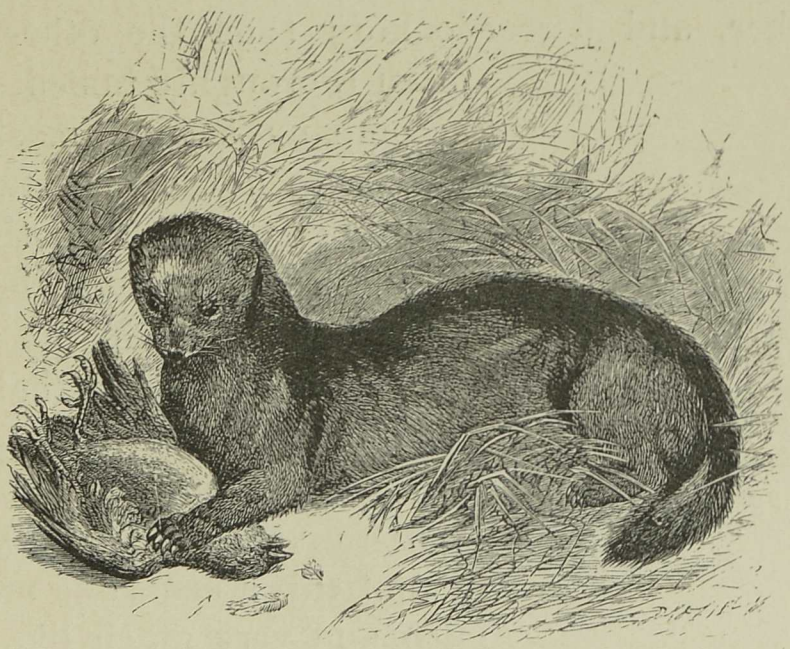
Freddie. I think you said, Papa, that weasels were to be the subject of our conversation to-night.

Papa. Yes, and ferrets too.

Mary. The other day we had the rat-catchers here. They had three or four ferrets with them; they told me that these animals originally came from Africa. "They feel cold very much during the winter," said the rat-catchers; "we fill the box where they live with cotton-wool." Sometimes, in the early warm spring, a ferret will run away from its owner, and live on rabbits and game during the whole of the summer. But when the cold nights of September and October return, the

truant has been known to come back again to his warm hutch, and, as it were, to solicit the forgiveness and good offices of his old master,—a warning to all truants, whether boys or girls.

Tom. I have remarked that ferrets are like those persons of uncertain temper and impetuous, impulsive disposition, who suddenly turn round upon their friends and bite them with



POLECAT FERRET.

calumny. I have read of a boy, who had a beautiful white ferret. He had carefully tamed it, and never allowed it to be cruelly treated. He carried it in his pocket, where it was kept warm and comfortable, and it crawled up his coat sleeve. He trusted the creature as thoroughly as my friend Charlie did his rats. But one hot day, being irritated from some unknown cause, he made a snap at his owner's lips, and bit him severely.

Edith. There is another kind of ferret, used for the purpose of hunting game, besides the pretty creamy-white creature with bright pink eyes, of which Tom has been speaking. I mean the polecat ferret. Some have thought that the polecat and ferret are identical in species. Others maintain that they are different, because the polecat is found to bear without inconvenience the severest cold, and to track its prey for miles over the snow. Be this as it may, polecat ferrets, though larger, darker, and fiercer-looking than the other sort, are often thoroughly tamed. They will accompany a kind master in his walks, with the cheerfulness and fidelity of a dog. Sometimes a bell has been hung round the animal's neck, lest he should run away.

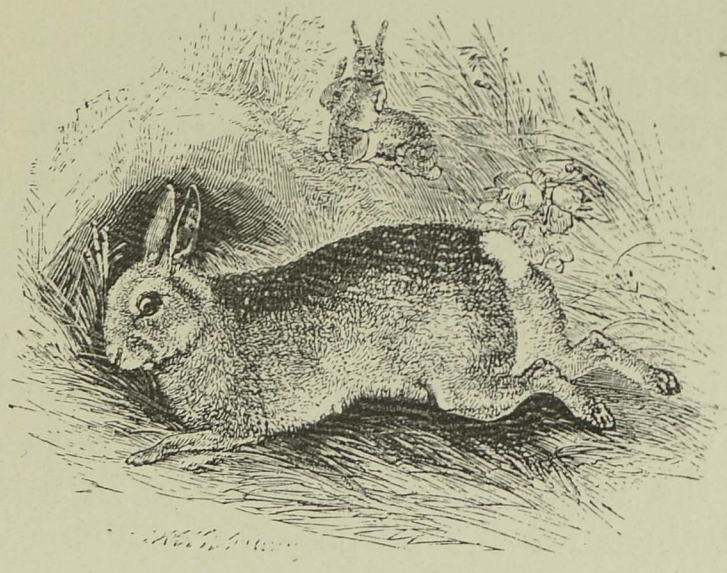
WARRENER.

Freddie. I observe that when the gamekeepers use ferrets for the purpose of hunting rabbits, they fasten up their jaws. Why is this? Is not this a cruel and unjust practice, and very much like muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn?

Papa. The practice is necessary. They are fond of sucking blood, and if they once got into a burrow and found a rabbit, they would in all likelihood never come out again until they had sucked out the last drop from their prey. Some modes of muzzling the ferret are abominable. Formerly the lips of the poor creature were sewn up whenever he was required for hunting. The best muzzle that can be devised is one made of leather.

Tom. I once saw a ferret let loose among the burrows of a rabbit warren. The poor rabbits never attempted to fight him, but rushed out of their burrows wherever he went, scampering about in wild horror and confusion. They thus became an easy prey to the hunter.

Edith. But ferrets do not like to enter a rat's hole. In fact, a ferret, though accustomed to chase the rabbit, will not venture to face a well-grown and vicious old rat. Just



WILD RABBIT.

as a burnt child dreads the fire, so a ferret, that once has felt the sharp teeth of a rat, is in no humour to encounter him again.

Charlotte. But I remember once reading, in Mr. Rodwell's amusing book upon rats, that the polecat ferret is trained to fight and to destroy its long-tailed foes. An old rat-catcher used to say that to put a ferret into a rat-hole was like cram-

ming a cat into a boot—in other words, the ferret's chance of victory lay in the fight being open, so that he could attack, retreat, and circumvent at will, fighting something like the Horatii and Curiatii, as described in Livy's famous story.

Papa. What an idea, to compare a fight between rats and ferrets to the combats of the grand old Romans!

Charlotte. As for that, wait till you have heard Mr. Rodwell's narrative, describing not only the strength and agility of the ferret, but the modes of attack and defence practised by both kinds of animals.

Tom. I know both passages: Mr. Rodwell's is quite Livian in spirit. The old Patavine might say over it, as Sir Walter Scott did over Horace Smith's celebrated poem in the "Rejected Addresses:"—"I am not sure that I wrote those verses, but I have written something very much like them." Hear Mr. Rodwell:—

"One evening I called upon an acquaintance of mine, and found him just going to decide a wager respecting a large male ferret of the polecat breed, which was to destroy fifty rats within the hour. It must be borne in mind that this ferret was trained for the purpose.

"The rats were placed in a large square measuring eight or ten feet from corner to corner. The ferret was put in, and it was astonishing to see the systematic way in which he set about his work. Some of the larger rats were very great cowards, and surrendered with scarcely a struggle, while some of the smaller, or three-parts grown ones, fought most desperately. One of these drew my particular attention. The ferret, in making his attacks, was beaten off several times, to his great discomfiture, for the rat bit him most severely.

At last the ferret bustled the fight, and succeeded in getting the rat upon its back, with one of his feet upon the lower part of its belly. In this position they remained for some minutes, with their heads close to each other and their mouths wide open. The ferret was rather exhausted with his former conflicts, and at every move he made the rat bit him. At last he lost his temper, and making one desperate effort, he succeeded

FERRETS.

in getting the rat within his deadly grasp. He threw himself upon his side, and drawing the rat close to him, he fixed his teeth in its neck.

"While thus engaged, a rat was running carelessly about. All at once, when near the ferret, it threw up its head, as if a new idea had struck it; it retreated till it met with another, and it was astonishing to see the instantaneous effect produced in the second. Off they ran together to the corner where the ferret lay. The fact was, they scented the blood of either the

rat or the ferret, which in both was running in profusion. Without any further ceremony they seized the ferret fast by the crown of the head, and drew themselves up, apparently, for a comfortable meal. The ferret, feeling the smart, thought it was his old opponent that was struggling in his grasp, and bit his lifeless victim most furiously. Presently he let go the dead rat, and seemed astonished at the bravery of the others. He began to struggle, and they seemed quite offended at being disturbed at their repast. He very soon, however, succeeded in catching hold of one of them, and the other ran away; but only for a few seconds. The ferret demolished the whole fifty considerably under the hour."

Mary. It appears to me that the practice here so cleverly described is clearly indefensible in the light of humanity and civilization. It is a relic of the old, brutalizing heathenism, and properly belongs to the æra when the huge Flavian Amphitheatre was filled with an eager crowd ready to gloat over lions fighting elephants, and tigers pitted against the savage Dacian, or ever-courageous inhabitant of the British isles. This sort of *battue* delighted Nana Sahib, and was popular with the miserable dynasty which formerly tyrannized over Oude.

George. There are some men who have such overweening self-consciousness, such vulgar and vain pretence, that they hold all beings, except themselves, in most sovereign contempt. They are well represented in unreasoning animals by the weasel. It is extremely small, a full-grown male being about ten inches in length. Its hair is reddish-brown on the upper parts of the body, the under portions being of pure white.

Freddie. It is indeed a brave little animal. If rhinoceroses lived and ruled in England, the weasel would fight with them for the government of the country.

Mary. Some farmers do not like weasels, looking upon them as mere vermin. But on the whole they are useful in agriculture, as they keep down the rats and mice.

WEASEL.

Edith. I believe that when they suck an egg they do not break the shell to pieces, but only make a little hole at one end.

Tom. Weasels will never bear an insult with impunity. One day a number of saucy rooks found a weasel in a field, and, as they thought him destitute of defence, they began mobbing the poor creature, and cawing with a great noise. He seized one making a lower stoop than usual, dashed it to

the ground, and killed it instantly. The feathered friends of the bird gathered round the dead with a mighty clamour. The weasel calmly retired into a place of security, and there waited for an opportunity to carry off his prey.

George. It is remarkable that the weasel is in other respects a type of mankind. Goethe somewhere speaks of the strange delirium which he felt at the battle of Valmy. Soldiers say, that when in the heat of battle everything seems tinted with a blood-red hue, so the savage spirit of this animal, for killing's sake, kills more than it can eat, and all that it encounters, apparently for the mere pleasure of killing.

Papa. Mr. Bell, in his "History of British Quadrupeds," gives us two anecdotes, illustrative of courage in the weasel. Let me read them to you:—"As a gentleman was riding over his grounds he saw a kite pounce upon some object and carry it from the ground. In a short time the kite showed symptoms of uneasiness, trying to free itself from some annoying object by means of its talons, and flapping about in a very bewildered manner. In a few minutes the kite fell dead to the earth, and when the spectator of the aërial combat approached, a weasel ran away from the dead body of the bird, itself being apparently uninjured. On examination of the kite's body, it was found that the weasel, which had been marked out for the kite's repast, had in its turn become the assailant, and had attacked the unprotected parts which lie beneath the wings. A considerable wound had been made in that spot, and the large blood-vessels torn through.

"The same writer relates a curious anecdote of the conduct of a weasel towards a snake which was placed in the same box. The snake did not attempt to attack the weasel, nor the weasel

BRITISH WEASELS. P. 132.

the snake, both animals appearing equally unwilling to become the assailant. After a while the weasel bit the snake once or twice near the nose, but not with any degree of violence, and

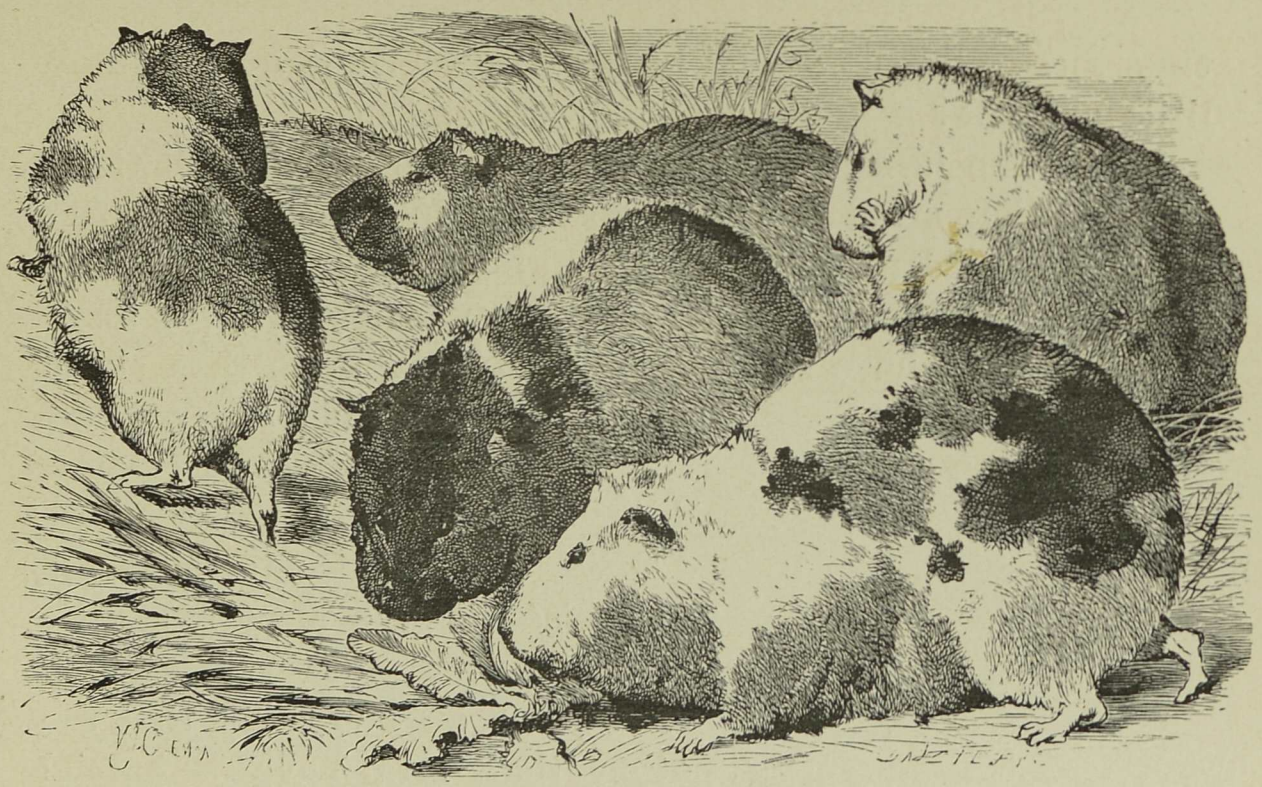
KITE POUNCING ON A WEASEL.

as the two creatures appeared to be indifferent to each other, the snake was removed. That this peaceable demeanour on the part of the weasel was not owing to any sluggishness on its own part was made sufficiently evident by the fact, that when a mouse was introduced into the same box, the weasel

immediately issued from its corner, and with a single bite laid the mouse dead. The experiment was made for the purpose of ascertaining whether the weasel would kill and eat a snake, which had been asserted to be the case."

Charlotte. And a stupid, vulgar experiment it was, unworthy of science and disgraceful to humanity.

Edith. Yes: of what possible advantage could it be?



GUINEA-PIGS.

CONVERSATION XII.

THE GUINEA-PIG AND THE HARE.

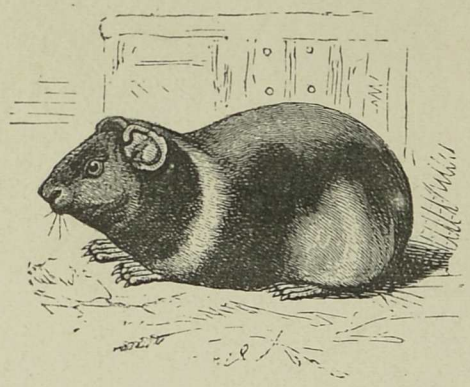
Freddie. Why is a guinea-pig so called ?

Papa. This name is singularly inappropriate, for it is not a pig at all. It is a rodent animal like the hare, and it does not come from Guinea, for it was said to have been originally imported from the Brazils.

Freddie. I cannot say that my guinea-pigs are clever and quick. They are unimpressible and dull. But they are very tame, and I find I must keep them dry and warm, or

they die. Why do rabbit-keepers breed these queer, funny little animals?

Tom. The idea is common that rats carefully avoid them, and that they are a protection to the young stock. They feed upon such food as rabbits like, as grain and bran. It is said that they are fond of tea leaves, but must not have too many of them. They have rarely less than two or more than six at a litter. They are not so large as a rabbit. They are of varied colours, white, black, and fawn.



GUINEA-PIG.

Edith. I prefer the tortoiseshell.

Charlotte. Give me a nice little white one with pink eyes.

Mary. I do not think that the notion that rats have a special antipathy to the guinea-pig is founded on fact, for one night all my guinea-pigs, which we had left wandering loose about the out-house where the rabbits lived in hutches, were devoured by rats.

Charlotte. In the beginning of our conversations we quoted a fine passage from Cowper's Poems, referring to the squirrel and the hare among other dumb neighbours. The poet in this passage called the latter timid. Observant naturalists say that this is an inappropriate epithet. He is courageous enough, but when the little fellow finds that he is hunted down by numbers of dogs followed by men on fleet horses, he naturally runs away as fast as he can. The strongest man would hardly dare to brave the onset of a hunting-field.

Tom. As a proof of the courage of the hare it may be

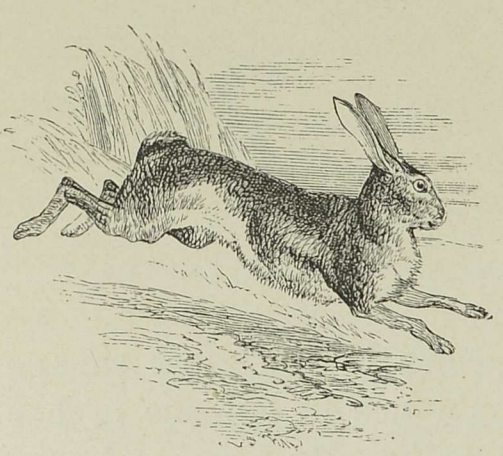
HARES.

stated that they fight their own species in the most savage manner. A mother will fly in a man's face in defence of her leveret. Observe that a hare never walks. It hops or leaps, and sometimes takes tremendous strides. It has been known to jump over a perpendicular wall eight feet high.

Edith. There are few animals in creation more cunning. I remember one day being in a train which was stopped in its progress by a collision on a part of the Midland Railway,

between Trent and Chesterfield. Suddenly there were great shouts and excitement in all the carriages of the train. A hare was seen coming along a field parallel to the line at a great pace. A hound shortly followed, evidently on the scent. In order to break it, she dashed under the railway carriages, and came out on the other side, several times. She manœuvred most craftily by returning on her own track for a little way, and then making a great leap to the right or the left. In our case the hare made her escape, and the hound wandered helplessly up and down the line.

Tom. It is not, I believe, generally known that, in order to break the line of scent, a hare will leap into running water. A hare has sometimes been seen to brave the salt waters. He is an excellent swimmer. The chief defect in his mental constitution, if I may so speak, is that he looks more to things behind than before, and has sometimes been known to run into the midst of hounds and huntsmen without, apparently, the slightest consciousness that they were near.



Papa. In some parts of Poland, where the snow lies deep in the winter, the hare chooses a suitable spot for her form, and allows the snow to fall around and above her. Merely

pushing it a few inches away from her body on all sides, she thus dwells in a little cave, enclosed on all sides. Her warm breath thaws the snow about an inch above her nose, and in this way she has an air-hole to breathe through. But the method she takes for safety is often the cause of her capture. Dogs are trained to search for these air-holes, and wait till their masters arrive to shoot the poor victim.

Edith. I believe you wish me to take part in these conversations because I have travelled in most countries of Europe. You know that in Ireland the people are for the most part very different in character and tone from their neighbours in England and Scotland. The hares are equally distinguished from their English relatives. Their heads are round, not oblong, and their limbs and ears comparatively stumpy. I am not sure whether the coat of this variety whitens or not during the winter.

Papa. The following story shows what a bold swimmer the English hare is:—"A harbour of great extent on our southern coast has an island, near the middle, of considerable size, the nearest point of which is a mile distant from the mainland at high water, and with which point there is frequent communication by a ferry. Early one morning in spring two hares were observed to come down from the hills of the mainland towards the sea-side, one of which, from time to time, left its companion, and proceeding to the very edge of the water, stopped there a minute or two, and then returned to its mate. The tide was rising, and after waiting some time, one of them, exactly at high water, took to the sea, and swam rapidly over in a straight line to the opposite projecting point of land. The observer on this occasion, who

was near the spot, but remained unperceived by the hares, had no doubt they were of different sexes, and that it was the male that swam across the water, as he had probably done many times before. The hares remained on the shore

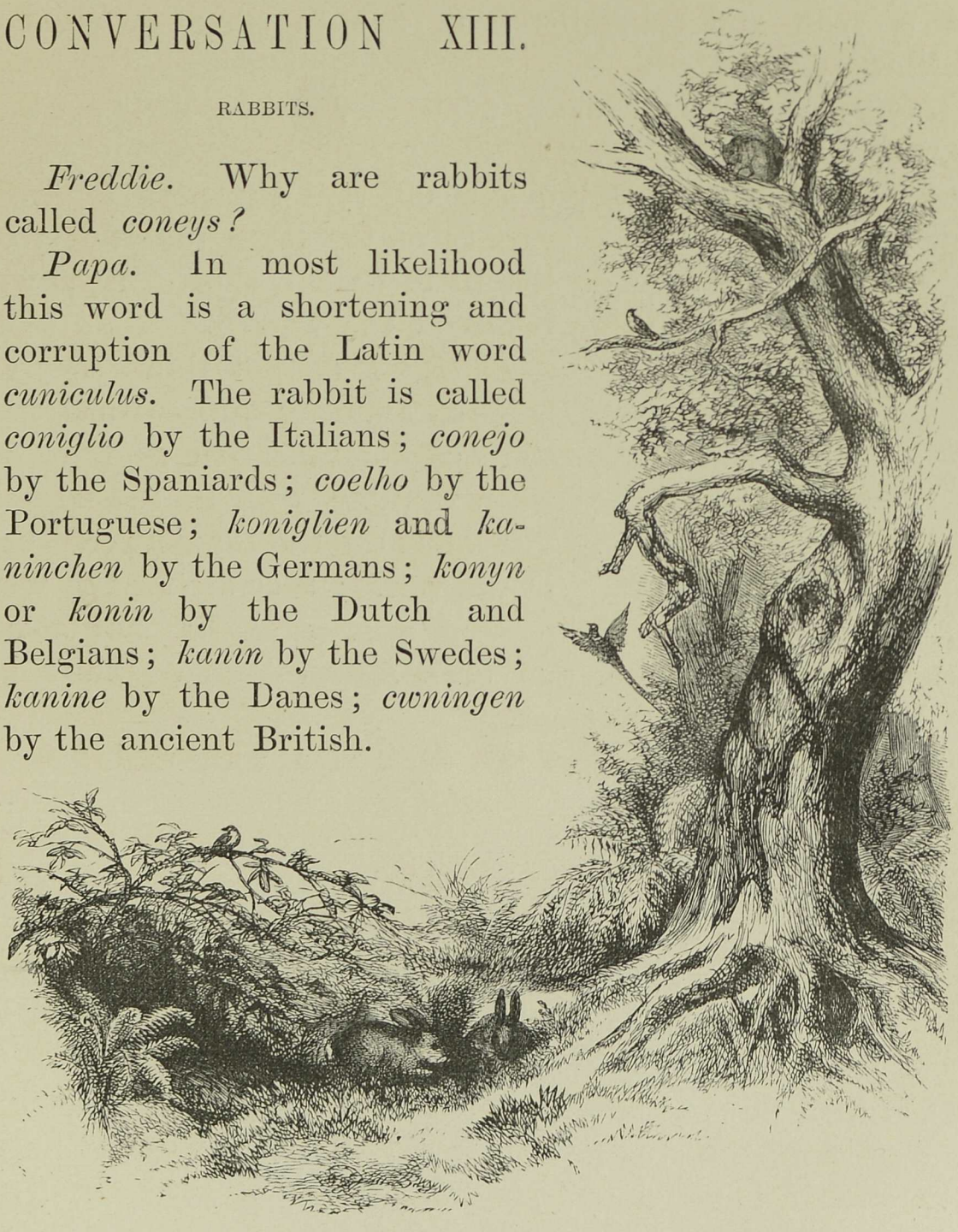
nearly half an hour; one of them occasionally examining, as it would seem, the state of the current, and taking to the sea at that precise period of the tide called slack water, when the passage across could be effected without being carried by the stream either above or below the desired point of landing. The other hare then cantered back to the hills."

CONVERSATION XIII.

RABBITS.

Freddie. Why are rabbits called *coneys?*

Papa. In most likelihood this word is a shortening and corruption of the Latin word *cuniculus.* The rabbit is called *coniglio* by the Italians; *conejo* by the Spaniards; *coelho* by the Portuguese; *koniglien* and *kaninchen* by the Germans; *konyn* or *konin* by the Dutch and Belgians; *kanin* by the Swedes; *kanine* by the Danes; *cwningen* by the ancient British.



Tom. There are few four-footed animals which have such enormous families as rabbits. They produce several broods in a year, and generally from five to seven or eight at a time.

Mary. No animal makes a nicer or sweeter little pet than a rabbit.

Tom. It is astonishing how different the pure lop-eared variety of the tame rabbit is from the little brown short-furred wild rabbit of the warren.

RABBIT.

Edith. I do not think they are half so amusing and comical in a state of domestication as they are when running wild in the warren. The latter are the funniest creatures in the world; they are for the most part of a grey colour, but a few black, black-and-white, and even fawn-coloured rabbits are to be seen in some warrens.

Mary. Why is it that the flesh of a wild rabbit is so much better than that of a tame one?

Papa. I think the explanation of this fact is to be found in the freedom with which the wild rabbit runs about, thus obtaining plenty of fresh air and exercise. The flesh of the tame rabbit may be greatly improved by rigorous attention to diet and cleanliness, and by giving the animal plenty of room for exercise.

Mary. I do not know anything more amusing than quietly to recline on the stump of some old tree, and, without being seen oneself, to watch the playful gambols of young and old

By permission] CHILD AND RABBITS.—After Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A. [*of Mr. Graves.*

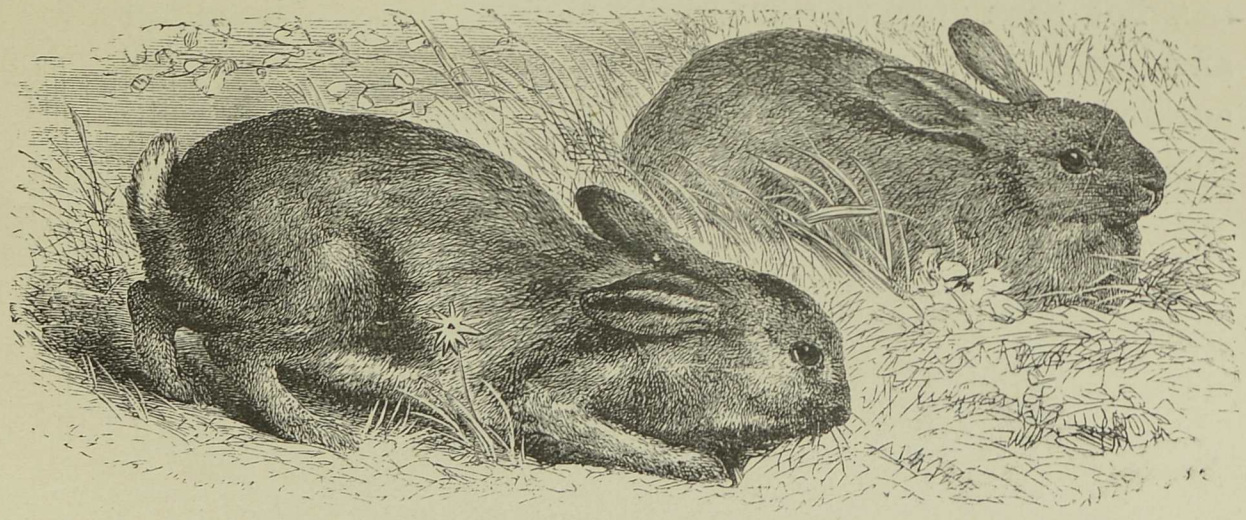
rabbits. The early dawn or the fall of the evening is the best time for watching their antics. Mr. Wood says: "To describe the manifold antics of a rabbit warren would occupy the space which ought to be devoted to some twenty or thirty

animals, and even then would be quite inadequate to the proposed task. They are such odd, quaint, ludicrous animals, and are full of such comical little coquetries, and such absurd airs of assumed dignity, that they sorely try the gravity of the concealed observer, and sometimes cause him to burst into irrepressible laughter, to their profound dismay.

"At one time they are gravely pattering about the doors of their subterranean homes, occasionally sitting upright and gazing in every direction, as if fearful of a surprise, and all behaving with the supremest gravity. Next moment someone gets angry, and stamps his feet fiercely on the ground, as a preliminary observation before engaging in a regular fight. Suddenly a whole party rush off at full speed, scampering over the ground as if they meant to run for a mile at least, but unexpectedly stop short at an inviting tuft of herbage, and nibble it composedly as if they had not run a yard. Then a sudden panic will flash through the whole party, and with a rush and a scurry every rabbit leaps into its burrow, and vanishes from sight like magic. The spot that was so full of life but a moment since is now deserted and silent, as if it had been uninhabited for ages; but in a few minutes one little nose is seen cautiously poked out of a burrow, the head and ears follow, and in a very few minutes the frightened rabbits have come again into the light of day, and have recommenced their interrupted pastimes.

"Few animals are so easily startled as the rabbit, and with perfect good reason. For their enemies are found in so many directions, and under such insidious guises, that they are well justified in taking every possible precaution for their safety. Sundry rapacious birds are very fond of young rabbits, and

swoop down unexpectedly from some unknown aërial region before the doomed creature can even comprehend its danger. Stoats and weasels make dreadful havoc in a warren, and even the domestic cat is sadly apt to turn poacher if a well-stocked warren should happen to be within easy distance of her home. Foxes are very crafty in the pursuit of young rabbits, and dig them out of the ground in a very ingenious and expeditious



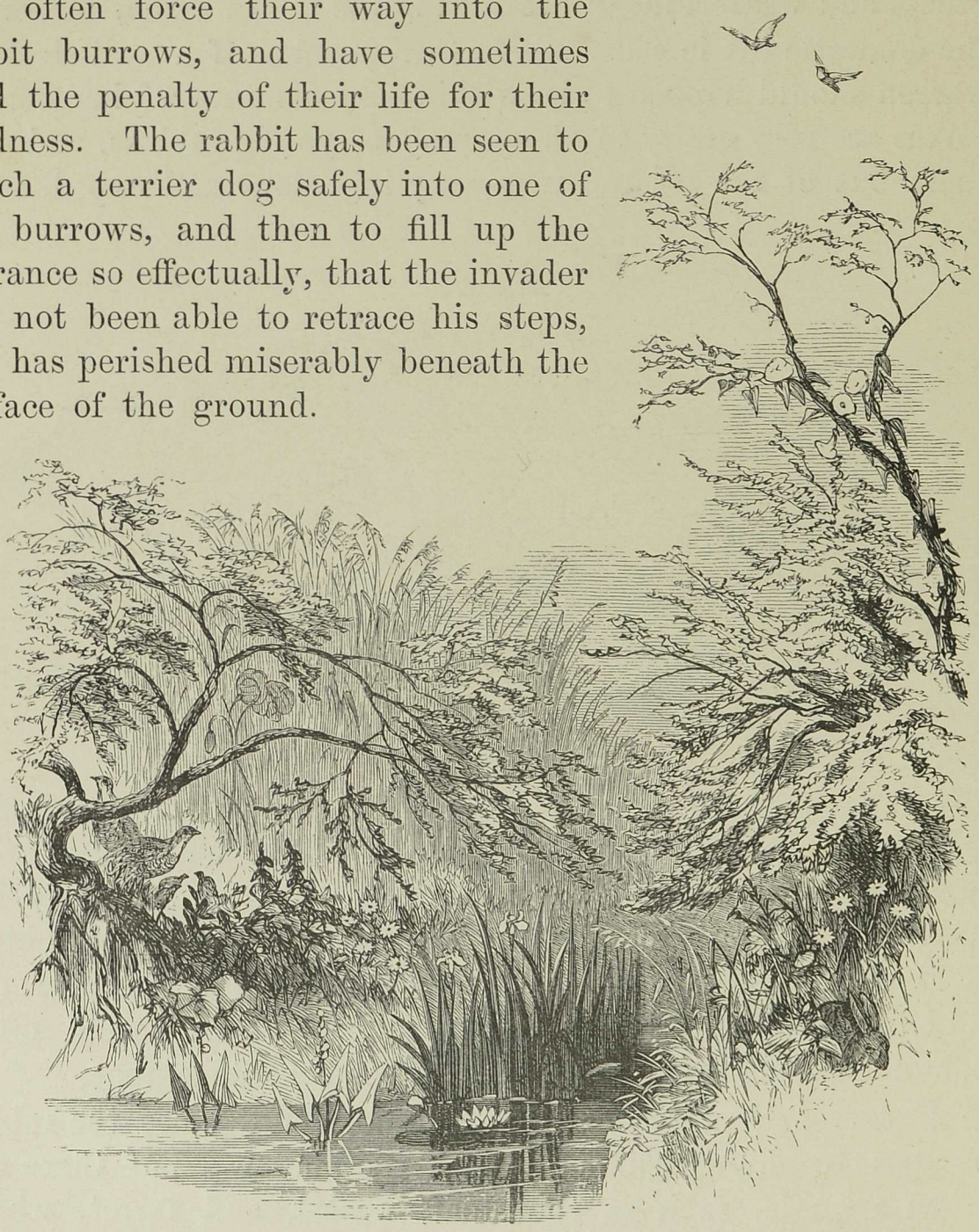
RABBITS.

manner; while the common hedgehog is but too apt to indulge its appetite for flesh meat with an occasional rabbit."

Tom. Did you ever dig into a rabbit burrow? You would find it extremely irregular in its construction, and often communicating with another to a remarkable extent.

Mary. I have read that from many of its foes the rabbit escapes by diving suddenly into its burrow; but there are some animals, such as the stoat, weasel, and ferret, which

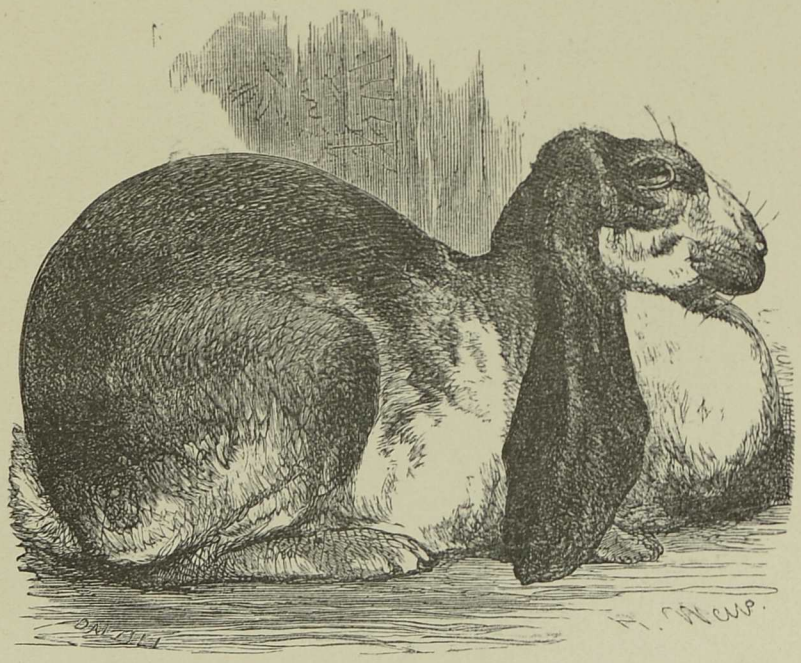
follow it into its abode, and slay it within the precincts of its own home. Dogs, especially those of the small terrier breeds, will often force their way into the rabbit burrows, and have sometimes paid the penalty of their life for their boldness. The rabbit has been seen to watch a terrier dog safely into one of the burrows, and then to fill up the entrance so effectually, that the invader has not been able to retrace his steps, and has perished miserably beneath the surface of the ground.



Freddie. That reminds me of the man in "Marmion," who was walled up.

Tom. Yes, when people persecuted each other like wild beasts.

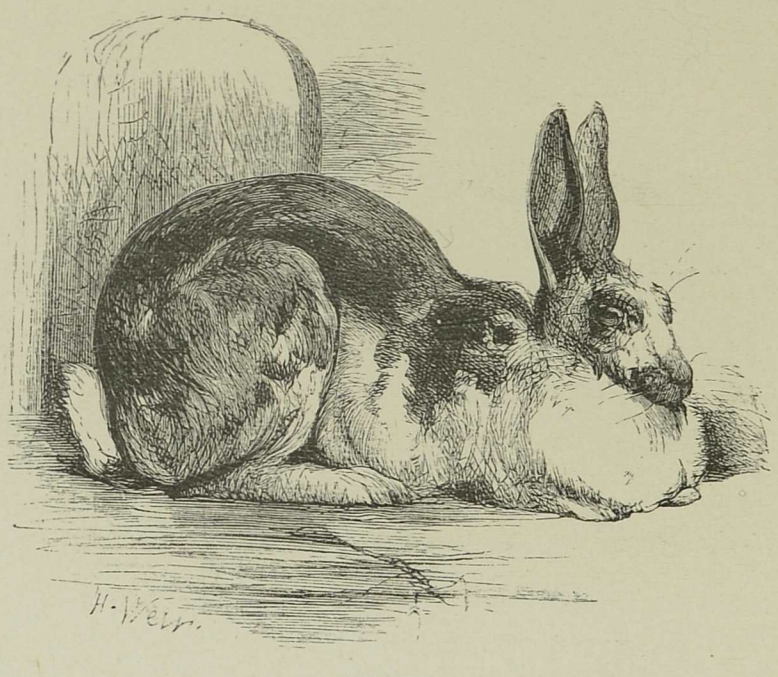
Freddie. I should like to hear something about fancy rabbits.



PERFECT LOP.

Papa. These vary according to the taste of the times. Forty years ago the smut, or a mark on one side of the nose, was the most precious sign among fanciers. There are three sorts of smut: the single, double, and butterfly smut. It ought to be darker than any other part of the fur. The finest specimens had a black smut. The single smut was a patch of colour on one side of the nose. The double was a patch

on each side. The butterfly is a double smut, with a mark of the same colour running a little distance up the ridge of the nose, in such a manner that the whole resembles in shape a butterfly reversed, of which the two marks on the sides are the wings, and that on the front of the nose the body and tail.



DEW-LAP.

Edith. These points are not now considered of first importance. The long-lopped ear is indispensable; it must be very long, and have a peculiar form. Next, the dew-lap is attended to if the animal is in its prime. Next, the colours and markings on the fur; and, lastly, the shape and general appearance.

Tom. It is astonishing how much the kind treatment and careful breeding of animals has to do, not only with their general appearance, but with their temper, character, and beauty. A striking illustration of this fact is to be found in the cattle which roam over the great plains of Piedmont. They are extremely beautiful. The Lombard ox bears the

HALF-LOP.

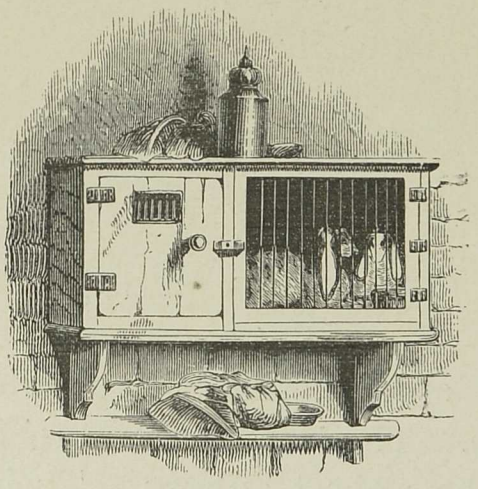
same relation to the Lincolnshire animal, that the Apollo Belvedere does to a London drayman. The tint of the horned cattle deepens from light cream to the richest auburn. Their firm and majestic forms, combining symmetry with strength, and elegance with force and weight, animate the surrounding landscape, and hence are often introduced into the pictures of

Italian scenery. They also occupy no unimportant place in the most sacred subjects, such as the thanksgiving of Noah, and the birth of our Blessed Lord. Perhaps the most remarkable feature about them is their long black eyebrows, giving a singular and almost human expression to the head, especially when seen in profile.

WARREN.

Mary. Does this strange, weird look help to account for their having been worshipped by the ancient Egyptians?

Papa. It is well for you to know that rabbits in a warren are considered by the law *feræ natura*, that is, wild by nature. If they wander out of their enclosure and eat up the crops of the neighbouring farmer, he cannot recover damages from the owner of the warren any more than if blackbirds and rooks, building in one man's garden, were to plunder the produce of another garden in the neighbourhood. The owner or occupier of the former garden would clearly not be answerable for such depredations.



HUTCH.

Charlotte. Why is it that the female rabbit often eats up her own young?

George. This habit was considered natural to the animal,

and incurable. But it has been found, like so many other troublesome practices of domestic animals, the result of the cruelty or inconsiderateness of owners and fanciers. Many persons do not allow their rabbits any water. They say that rabbits in their wild state are never known to drink; deriving the liquid they need from the herbage on which they feed. But let it be remembered that in such cases they always take their meal when the dew lies heavy on the grass. They never eat bran, pollard, oats, bread, and other like nourishment, such as fanciers place in their hutches. The mother rabbit licks her young when they are born, and suffers from an overwhelming desire for anything that will assuage her burning thirst. A fancier had once a doe which he caught devouring its young. He instantly fetched a pan of water and placed it within her reach. She gave signs of great delight, and immediately left off her cannibal feast. All animals nursing their young ought to have a sufficiency of clean water supplied them.

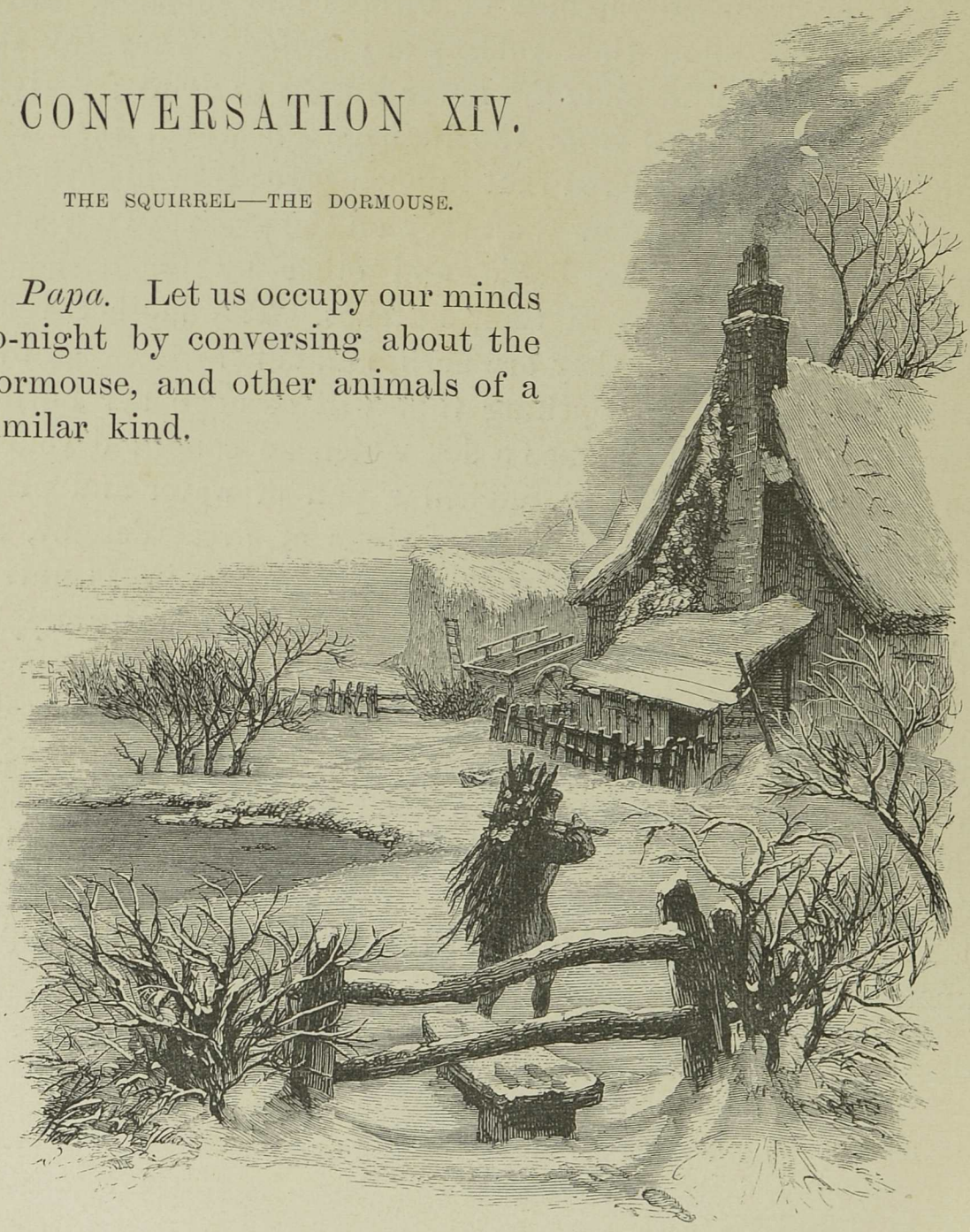
Edith. Yes, but on the other hand some humane breeders prefer to give the doe greens moistened, or corn steeped in water or milk. Tea leaves are good for this purpose. It is thought by many a dangerous experiment to try the effect of liquid on their stomachs.

Freddie. If your rabbits eat too much green food, depend upon it they will be pot-bellied.

CONVERSATION XIV.

THE SQUIRREL—THE DORMOUSE.

Papa. Let us occupy our minds to-night by conversing about the dormouse, and other animals of a similar kind.



SQUIRREL AND NUTS.

Freddie. Why is the dormouse so called?

Tom. The word means sleepy-mouse, because the little animal spends the greater part of its life in a slumber which is almost unbroken. Five or six of them will form themselves into a sort of colony, or Mouse Service Mutual Supply Association. They find a convenient hiding-place, where they lay up a store of food for the winter. For this purpose they appropriate no small quantity of corn, beans, peas, and other dry provender. When the cold weather arrives they nestle together, and sleep, only waking occasionally for the purpose of taking food. They are generally born about July or August, but they do not become fathers and mothers till the summer of the following year.

DORMOUSE.

Charlotte. There are many kinds of dormice. One of these is called the Loire, or fat dormouse, and was famous among the Romans as an article of luxury. They used to feed it for the table, in receptacles called *Gliraria.*

Edith. Have you ever observed the beautiful tints of the

fur of the common dormouse? The ruddiness of its long hair, when it has grown to its full size, is very delicate and refined. It is easily caught in broad sunlight when fast asleep, and reconciles itself to a life of captivity with a cheerfulness almost allied to resignation and fortitude.

Tom. Nonsense, nothing of the sort! It is a sleepy little animal, only waking in the night. It is generally so deeply buried in repose, that it can be handled without offering any resistance. Papa, did you not complain the other day that you were getting too fat?

Papa. Yes, but you know that it is the characteristic of healthy men and women as they advance in life to grow fatter than they were in youth.

Tom. It may console you to know that if, like the dormouse, you ever take to sleeping much in winter, you will be able to withstand the severity of the season much better than if you remained a thin person.

Edith. The dormouse is very prudent in the management of his provision stores. He does not put them all in one place, so that he would lose his entire means of sustenance if it were discovered, but with great skill and forethought he selects various little crannies for his investments, so to speak, against a rainy day. In doing this he sets a good example to many reasoning bipeds, who forget the proverb that it is dangerous to put all your eggs in one basket.

George. It is a remarkable fact that very often the store

of provision is scarcely touched during the severity of the winter, unless it be very mild, when the animal seems to awake out of sleep like a giant refreshed, resuming his slumber as the weather grows cold.

Edith. For my part I never heard a more wonderful story of dormice than that which my friend Emily told me. She went one day to visit a benevolent lady of the Quaker persuasion, and found that one of the guests assembled had a

pair of pet dormice. These were of course brought out to be admired by the company. After paying her visit, my friend went home, had her tea, and then went to an evening concert in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile one of the dormice was missing, and though diligent search was made it could not be found. Its owner sent to inquire if Emily had carried it away in any portion of her clothing, as no roost seems to please a dormouse more than the ample folds of a young lady's warm winter frock. Accordingly Emily examined her dress

carefully, but no trace could be found of the little truant. Emily wore her hair in long curls, and on retiring to rest at night, while combing her abounding locks, she discovered the dormouse hiding in the very centre of a thick curl. How he climbed into that nest without her knowing it, and how he managed to hold on through all the vicissitudes of an

SQUIRREL.

evening's occupation, will probably remain for ever an enigma. He was duly restored to his anxious mistress. I fear that good advice would have been thrown away upon him, as being only a dormouse he never could be able to comprehend words.

Charlotte. In my humble opinion, the squirrel is by far the most interesting and beautiful pet of which I can form a conception. But I should like my darling always to

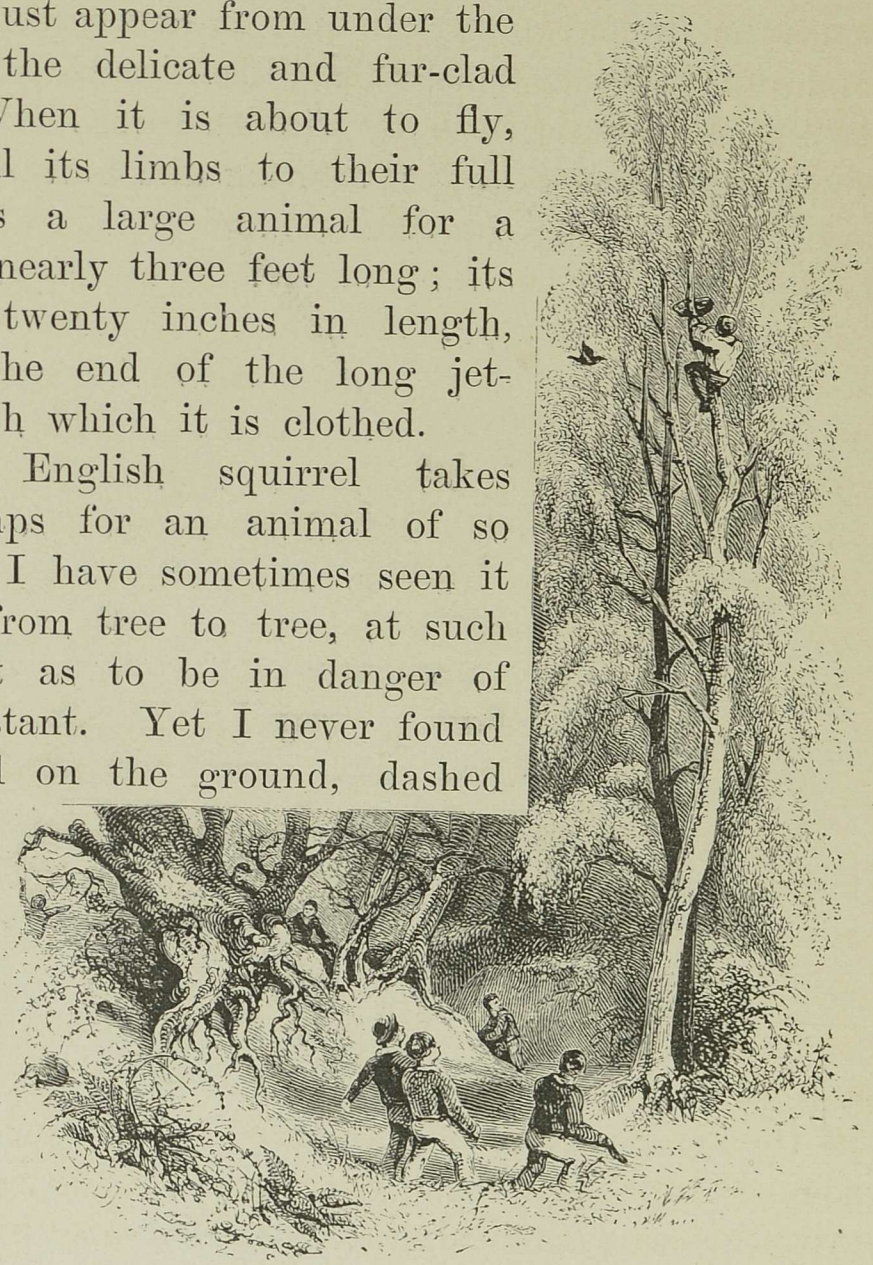
continue tame, roving in the garden and the shrubbery, and not to be fastened in a little circular cage, only maintaining its equilibrium by violent leaps, living a life something like that of a prisoner on the treadmill at Brixton.

TAGUAN.

All the wild ravishing grace of a squirrel's movements depends upon his freedom from constraint.

Edith. There is a kind of squirrel called the taguan. Its sides are constructed something like the parachutes of a balloon; that is, the skin of the flanks hangs so largely and so loosely, that when the animal is sitting at its ease,

its paws only just appear from under the soft folds of the delicate and fur-clad membrane. When it is about to fly, it stretches all its limbs to their full tension; it is a large animal for a squirrel, it is nearly three feet long; its tail is about twenty inches in length, measured to the end of the long jet-black hairs with which it is clothed.



Tom. The English squirrel takes tremendous leaps for an animal of so small a size. I have sometimes seen it flinging itself from tree to tree, at such a giddy height as to be in danger of death every instant. Yet I never found a dead squirrel on the ground, dashed to pieces by making a false step.

Papa. No; that is easily explained. The English squirrel, though he has not the thin flexible, parchment-like membrane of the flying squirrel, yet manages to extend his legs and feet laterally in such a manner, and so to stiffen his tail, that he materially softens his fall to the ground.

Tom. Squirrels are the most difficult things in the world

to catch. When the sun is hot, the active little creature lies quietly asleep in his nest. It is generally placed in the fork of some lofty branch, or in the decayed hollow of a tree completely out of sight. There nestles our little brown beauty, his bright, keen eye closed, and his bushy tail wrapped round him like a blanket. In the early, cool morning he sallies forth to procure his simple breakfast of nuts, acorns, fruits, and seeds, and in like manner when the shades of evening gather. I do not know to what race of men to compare him. He is like the Spaniard in his fondness for a siesta, and as frolicsome as an Irishman at a fair. Like the dormouse, he hides little stores of provision against the winter, and his memory is so accurate that he never forgets, however thickly the ground may be covered with snow, the spots where he has placed his treasures.

Mary. Have you ever seen a squirrel eating a nut?

Edith. Yes, two or three times I have had an opportunity of seeing this comical and suggestive sight. The squirrel is an example to the housewife going to market, and of a schoolboy buying fruit in the street; as the nuts grow ripe on the trees he examines them with a critical eye. He rejects every unsound nut. He quickly discovers if it has a hole in it. When he has found a nut that just suits him he takes it in his fore-paws, seats himself daintily on his hind-legs with his tail for a cushion, and then, lifting

the nut to his mouth, chisels out the tip with his incisor teeth. He next breaks away the shell, divests the kernel of its husk, and enjoys the inside with all the gusto of a connoisseur. It seems to find equal pleasure in gnawing through the shell of a filbert, a walnut, a chestnut, or an acorn.

Charlotte. Do you know what it feeds upon when its favourite fruits are not to be obtained?

Mary. Yes, it nibbles young shoots, and tender buds of trees, and thus stunts the growth of half a young plantation.

Papa. In consequence of this propensity squirrels are often destroyed by the woodman when he can catch them; a task by no means easy. But the new and deeper philosophy concerning the providential reasons of animal increase and peculiar instincts which is the product of these latter days, maintains that the plantations are thinned and strengthened by the so-called depredations of the squirrel, as effectually as by the axe of the most skilful woodcraft.

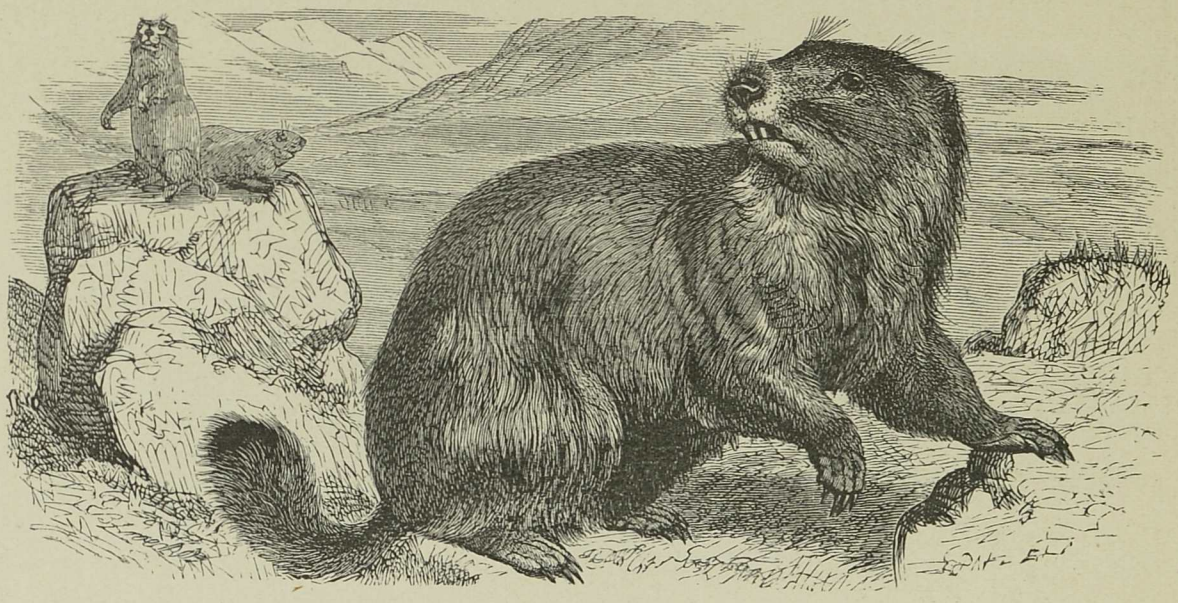
Tom. You must all beware of buying a squirrel in the street of an unknown person. They catch a wild squirrel, as fierce and spiteful as any wild animal can be, when suddenly reduced to a state of captivity. They drug the poor little creature with strychnine or some other poison, which kills him sooner or later, but in the meantime reduces him to an utter state of non-resistance. Another trick practised by these unscrupulous scoundrels is that of drawing his incisor teeth. The poor creature is supposed to be tame because he cannot give a good bite, whereas in point of fact he has been rendered physically incapable of biting by a cruel operation.

Papa. I have collected a number of pictures of squirrels of various kinds and countries. Some of them are very curious little animals. Take for instance the *Hackees*, or chipping squirrels. The description which Mr. Wood gives of these familiar North American quadrupeds is well worth perusal. It applies more or less exactly to other varieties

THE HACKEE.

of the squirrel tribe. Mr. Wood says: "The *Hackee*, or chipping squirrel, as it is sometimes termed, is one of the most familiar of North American quadrupeds, and is found in great numbers in almost every locality. It is a truly beautiful little creature, and deserving of notice, both on account of the dainty elegance of its form, and the pleasing tints with which its coat is decked. The general colour of the hackee is a brownish-grey on the back, warming into

orange-brown on the forehead and the hinder quarters. Upon the back and sides are drawn five longitudinal black stripes and two streaks of yellowish-white, so that it is a most conspicuous little creature, and by these peculiar stripes may easily be distinguished from any other animal. The abdomen and throat are white.



THE MARMOT.

"The length of the hackee is about eleven inches, the tail being about four inches and a half in length.

"It is one of the liveliest and briskest of quadrupeds, and, by reason of its quick and rapid movements, has not inaptly been compared to the wren. It is chiefly seen among brushwood and small timber, and as it whisks about the branches, or shoots through their interstices with its peculiar, quick, jerking movements, and its odd, quaint little clucking cry, like the chip-chipping of newly hatched chickens, the

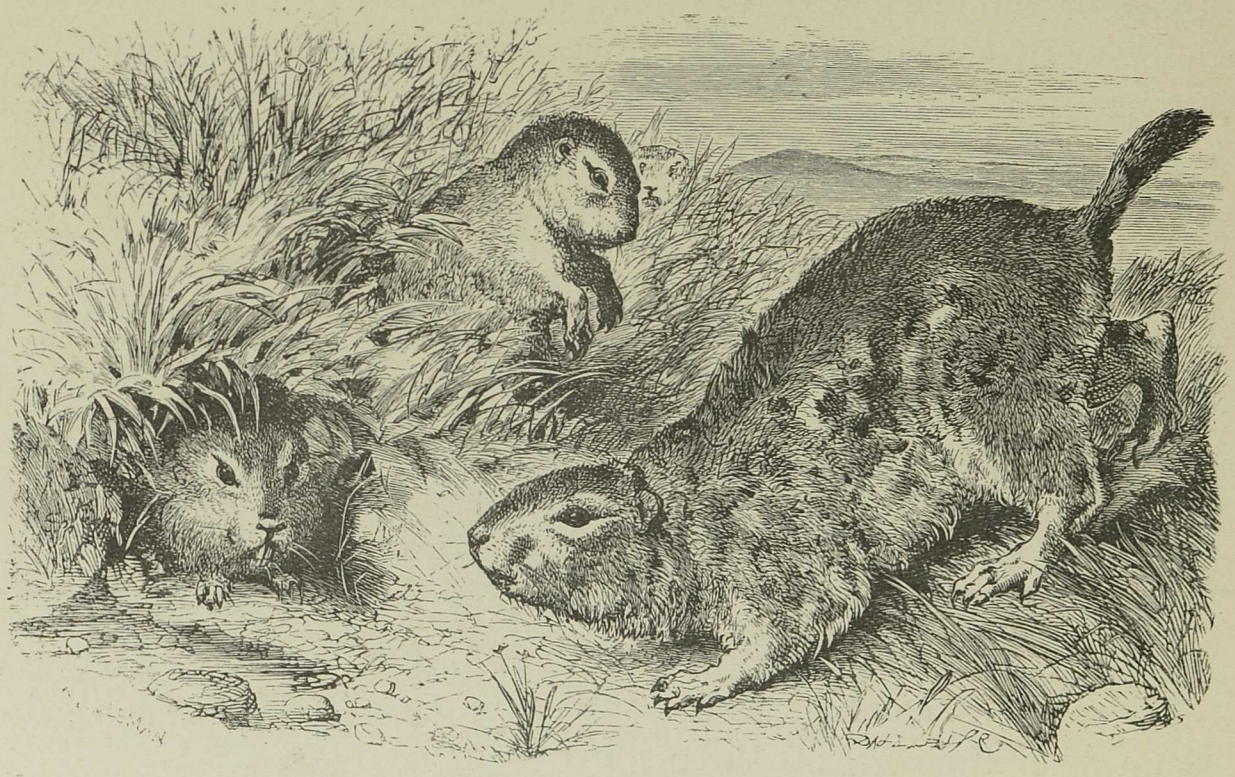
analogy between itself and the bird is very apparent. As it is found in such plenty, and is a bold little creature, it is much persecuted by small boys, who arm themselves with long sticks, and by dexterous management knock down many a hackee as it tries to escape from its pursuers by running along the rail fences. Among boys the popular name of the hackee is the 'chipmuck.' It is a burrowing animal, making its little tunnels in various retired spots, but generally preferring an old tree, or the earth which is sheltered by a wall, a fence, or a bank. The burrows are rather complicated, and as they run to some length, the task of digging the animal out of its retreat is no easy one.

"The hackee moves into its winter quarters early in November, and, excepting occasional reappearances whenever the sun happens to shine with peculiar warmth, is not seen again until the beginning of spring. The young are produced in May, and there is generally a second brood in August. Their number is about four or five. The male hackee is rather a pugnacious animal, and it is said that during their combats their tails are apt to snap asunder from the violence of their movements.

"Pretty as it is, and graceful as are its movements, it hardly repays the trouble of keeping it in a domesticated state; for its temper is very uncertain, and it is generally sullen towards its keeper."

Edith. Not long ago I met with a gentleman who had just come from America. He told me that in the valleys of the Mississippi and Missouri were several animals allied to the squirrel and the marmot. One is called the prairie

dog, or wish-ton-wish. Another variety is called the seek-seek, because it whisks about the neighbourhood of its home uttering its sharp little cry of "seek, seek, seek," continually.



PRAIRIE DOG.

Mary. But why should they call a squirrel-like animal a dog.

Edith. Most likely on account of the sharp yelp which it is fond of uttering, especially when it is frightened or excited. By-the-bye, prairie dogs are patterns and types of town life and municipal government. They live together

in crowds, and honeycomb the soil in all directions. At the same time they leave broad streets in which they do not permit a burrow to be made. They seem to be under the government of a prefect, or lord mayor, called the Big Dog. He governs his subjects like a patriarch king of old, seated at the door of his subterranean house on a little

THE LEOPARD MARMOT.

mound, formed by the earth that was excavated in its construction. Many anecdotes are told of the ludicrous effect produced by its gambols and manœuvres.

Charlotte. I have heard that in America they sometimes make pets of the pretty little leopard marmot, but that it is of a sour, unsocial disposition, and, like some modern reviewers, is apt to snap at, and bite, its best friends and supporters.

CONVERSATION XV.

DEER.

Papa. What are those animals, Freddie, that have as it were the skeleton of a tree growing out of their heads?

REINDEER.

Freddie. Of course you mean the deer, Papa; I have often seen them roaming about the Royal Park of Richmond.

Papa. Yes, but we are told that, after all, deer cannot be distinguished or divided into varieties by merely considering their horns.

Edith. At the same time, the horns are the most won-

derful part of a deer. In the beginning of spring, the male deer hides himself in the woods. Soon two lumps appear on his brow, covered with a skin as soft as velvet. If you touch now one of these lumps, it will be found as hot as fire; the blood is racing through the skin, and deposits every moment a particle of bone. Ten weeks are sufficient for the growth of these great horns; they generally fall off in the February following, and then begin to be renewed.

Mary. I am told that the reindeer is the most useful of all the varieties.

Tom. Yes; but, poor fellow, he is badly used. He does not raise his head, like a kingly stag in the park of an English nobleman. He is nervous, sad, and careworn. He looks the very type of royalty in distress. First, there are insects which sting him from head to tail; others lay eggs in his ears and nostrils. The wolves hunt him down, unless he is under the protection of man. He becomes the slave of the Laplander, and has nothing to eat except moss, which tastes like a dry sponge.

Edith. The poor reindeer lives upon this white lichen in the winter; he works away with his hoofs and head and nose to remove the snow which covers his food. If the ice is so hard that he cannot get at the moss, he sometimes dies of starvation.

Tom. I believe they have no banks in Lapland, but the criterion of wealth is the possession of a thousand or more reindeer.

Mary. The reindeer well earns his simple victuals. He is trained to draw sledges; he carries a heavy load upon

By permission] THE LITTLE FAVOURITE.—After Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A. [*of Mr. Graves.*

his back; he has been known to drag as much as three hundred pounds' weight, and that at the rate of nine or ten miles an hour.

Tom. Yes, but I admire the Laps for one thing: they punish a man who puts a weight of more than one hundred and ninety pounds upon a sledge, or one hundred and thirty upon the back of the animal.

SLEDGE.

Papa. How wonderful is the Providence of GOD! The Laps are a sparse and scattered people; their habitations and villages are often at long distances from each other. The reindeer is exactly adapted to this state of things; he can go nine miles an hour for twelve hours together; his eyes are quick and sparkling; he catches the faintest sounds of danger from afar, and the most wonderful thing about him is his keenness of smell.

LAPLANDER.

Freddie. I have sometimes read about the wapiti, or Carolina stag, known in America by the name of the elk; and the caribou, which is the American name for a variety called the reindeer. But I confess, I should much rather hear something about the stag or red deer, of which formerly so many thousands were found in England and Wales.

Tom. Yes, we have all heard of the New Forest, which was founded by Red William, the Norman king, at the expense of so much sorrow and suffering on the part of the villagers who were turned out to make way for the chase. There the red deer were plentiful.

Papa. There are very few left of these animals in England in an unrestricted state, but in Scotland they roam the waste lands in considerable numbers.

Tom. Yes, and it is one of the amusements of Londoners to spend the autumn in Scotland, in order that they may try their coolness, and strength, and cunning against those of this magnificent brute.

Charlotte. I have read that, formerly, terrible laws were enacted against any one who killed the king's deer. If one man murdered another he had some hope of getting off, but if he slew one of the king's stags, and devoured the royal venison, woe betide him!

Tom. Stags, like pigs, have sometimes been trained to run in harness, but they are not to be depended upon, and they are apt to turn upon the very hand that feeds them. It is likely before long that they will become extinct.

Papa. You must remember that the deer which you generally see in gentlemen's parks is not, properly speaking, the stag or red deer, but the fallow deer. They are smaller than the stag, their horns are spreading, like palms, and their coats are dappled with white spots.

FALLOW DEER.

Mary. They are very tame; their food consists chiefly of grass, but they like bread, and will munch an apple.

Charlotte. Yes, and I have heard Oxford men say that they will eat a ham sandwich in spite of the mustard.

Tom. Father, which animal produces the better vension, the stag or the fallow deer?

Papa. The fallow deer. The flesh of the stag is comparatively hard and dry. But the skin of the latter makes excellent leather; his horns are manufactured into knife-handles, and hartshorn is a common name for ammonia, because it is made out of the shavings of his horns.

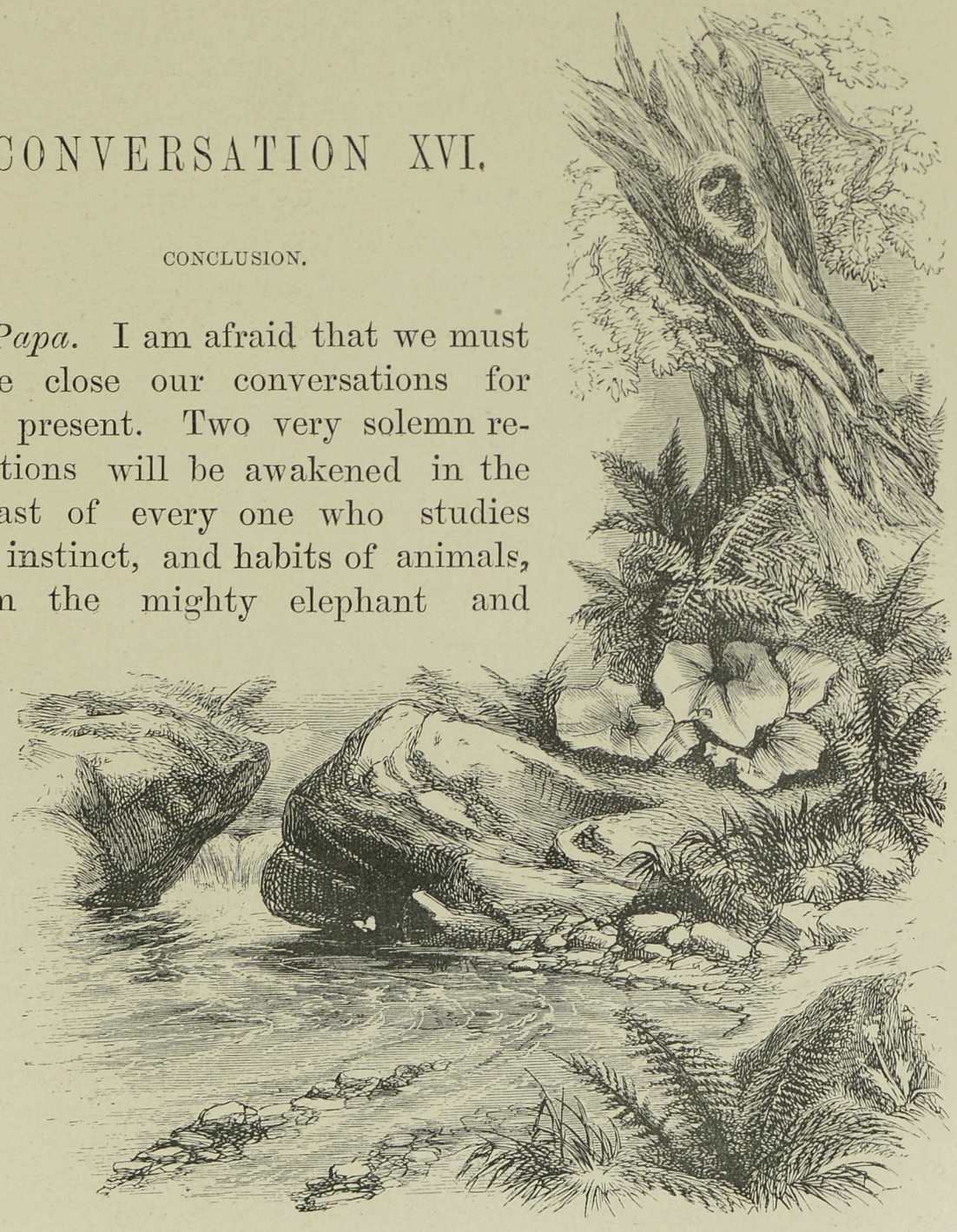
Mary. The way to tame, and keep tame, a fallow deer is simply to treat him with loving-kindness. He is a teachable and gentle creature. If you have any fruit, or biscuit, give him a share and he will follow you about anywhere.

Tom. Yes, but in the spring you must take care of him, and keep out of his way, for he sometimes gets vicious, and attacks his dearest friends. In this respect I am afraid he is not altogether unlike some men, from whom one is not always certain of receiving courteous treatment.

Papa. There are many other varieties of deer—in fact, we might fill a volume in describing them all.

CONVERSATION XVI.

CONCLUSION.



Papa. I am afraid that we must here close our conversations for the present. Two very solemn reflections will be awakened in the breast of every one who studies the instinct, and habits of animals, from the mighty elephant and

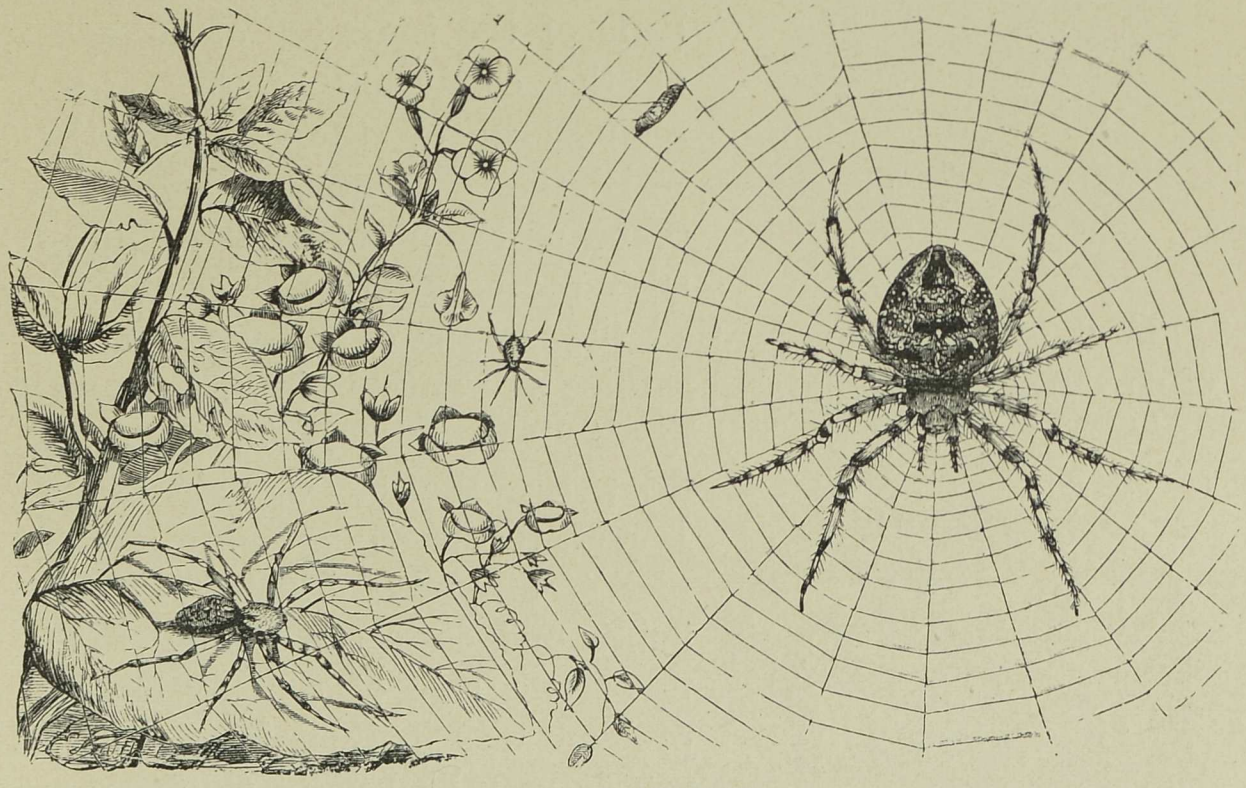
hippopotamus to the smallest insect that floats on the sunbeam. One is the infinite wisdom and goodness of the great Creator, the Governor and Preserver of the universe, the Father which is in heaven. The other is the strange mystery which surrounds so much of the internal consciousness and instinctive thought which seem to be so strong in the minutest as in the most enormous living beings. Take for instance their pervading sense of the duty of self-preservation. They seem to dread and avoid all pain and suffering. They are conscious that at some period or other they must die. In some animals that consciousness is of the highest order, since they feign that death as the last remaining struggle for self-preservation, when all other hopes have failed. In Thompson's "Note Book of a Naturalist" are the following profound observations upon the subject:—

"An implanted knowledge of the termination of life must exist, or its effects would not be feigned, nor the anxiety for safety be so permanent an object. It cannot be example that sets the fox to simulate death so perfectly that he permits himself to be handled, to be conveyed to a distant spot, and then to be flung on a dunghill. The ultimate hope—escape—prompts the measure, which unaided instinct could not have contrived. What we, humanly speaking, call knowledge of the world, which is the mainspring of half our acts and plans, is the result of deep observation of character, and of the leading principles which influence society; and this would apply very well with fox in relation to fox; but the analogy must cease here, and we can only say that this artifice of the fox is an extraordinary display of high cunning, great self-confidence, and strong resolution.

There are many insects, particularly the spider and the door-beetle, which feign death when seized by the hand."

Mary. What a wonderful problem these observations present! How much or how little do animals really *know?*

Tom. The "Times" newspaper of June the 6th, 1868, commences a leading article with the following questions,



GARDEN OR CROSS SPIDER.

which present this problem in a concrete form: "Does any horse know that he is thorough-bred, and not a butcher's hack? Does he know the difference between a gentleman's carriage and a scavenger's cart? He appreciates sweet voices, gentle movements, and soft hands, but does he feel the

observance and the flattery?" Persons will probably answer this question according to their mental constitution. Some, drily reasoning, will doubt the fact, if they do not ridicule the whole notion. Others of an imaginative and sentimental turn, will believe it. In fact, notwithstanding all our study of natural history, we know very little of the inner life of animals, of the conditions of their consciousness, of the methods by which they communicate with each other, or the nature and limits of such communication.

Mary. It would seem that the instinct of self-preservation often develops strange sympathies and antipathies in animals. The following anecdote, extracted from the life of Captain John Barrett in the "Biographia Hibernica," strongly illustrates this point, and casts some small light upon one side of the mysterious problem we are discussing. At any rate it may lead us to think more kindly of an animal which is usually regarded as the emblem and type of ferocious cruelty, treachery, and cunning.

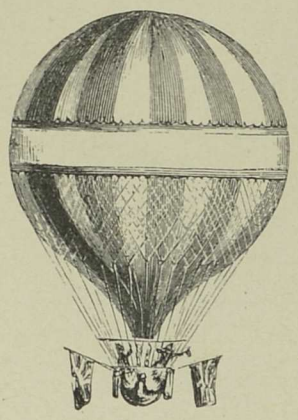
"The fate of Lieutenant Salsford was distinguished by a singularity which we cannot forbear recording:—A large

tame wolf, caught at Aspro, and brought up from a cub by the ship's company, and exceedingly docile, continued to the last an object of general solicitude. Sensible of its danger, its howls were peculiarly distressing. He had always been a particular favourite of the lieutenant, and through the whole of their sufferings he kept close to his master. On the breaking up of the ship, both got upon the mast. At times they were washed off, but, by each other's assistance, regained it. The lieutenant at last became exhausted by continued exertion, and benumbed with cold. The wolf was equally fatigued, and both held occasionally by the other to retain his station. When within a short distance of the land, Lieutenant Salsford, affected by the attachment of the animal, and totally unable any longer to support himself, turned towards him from the mast; the beast clasped his fore-paws round his neck, while the lieutenant clasped him in his arms, and they sunk together."

Edith. Do animals live in a future state?

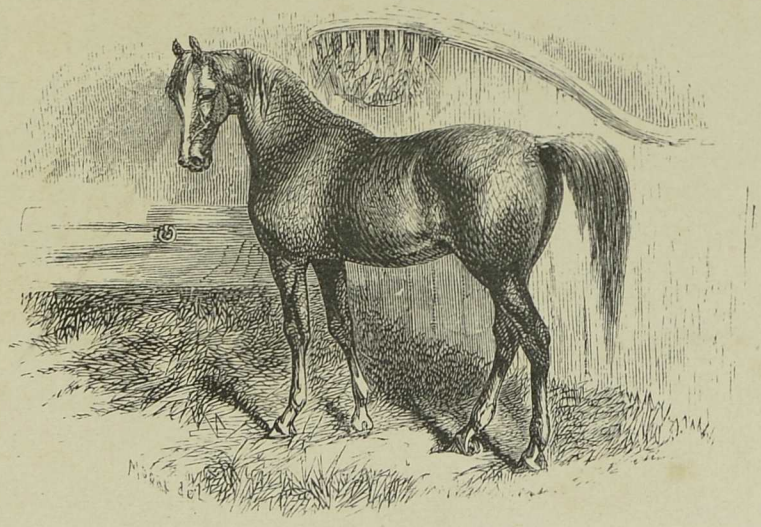
Freddie. I would rather not try to answer that question, but I once met with a lady who called my attention to an ingenious little tract called "The Paradise of Animals." Miss Catherine Sinclair quotes it in her "Kaleidoscope of Anecdotes and Aphorisms." The story describes the ascent of a balloon, which rises with a degree of buoyant velocity defying the power of man to control, until at length the

bewildered aëronaut within is driven upon an unknown planet, where his equipage is greatly damaged, and he hurriedly alights. On glancing around he sees a country of inexpressible beauty, but for some time this planetary Crusoe can discover no inhabitants. After some hours of profound repose, however, he awakens to find himself surrounded by a perfect Noah's Ark of animals, by a crowd containing delegates from every species that ever inhabited the earth, and all evidently in a state of tumultuous agitation. This newly-discovered planet is, in fact, "The Paradise of Animals;" therefore all the inhabitants are in consternation that their old enemy, man, has intruded on the scene of their felicity. A veto is instantly promulgated against him, and a general resolution is formed that all the injuries inflicted on animals during the last century by mankind shall now be revenged by putting the stranger to the cruellest death that can be devised. He is unanimously condemned, but it is resolved that before consigning him to the torture, each animal shall detail all the injuries that his race has suffered on earth from mankind. The catalogue rapidly swells to a fearful magnitude, as each indignant witness bears his overwhelming testimony against man, while one tragical tale after another causes the incensed and alarmed auditory to be more impatient to secure their safety and to wreak their vengeance.



The captive, in despair, now covers his face with his hands, and the infuriated animals are about to tear him in pieces,

when suddenly his own *ci-devant* horse and dog appear in his favour, testifying that the prisoner had been a kind master to them, and proposing that he shall be allowed to escape on condition of decamping immediately, and never more on any pretext appearing there again. Not a moment is lost; the unwelcome visitor is thrust into the ragged remains of his balloon, promises faithfully never to return, and is banished with ignominy from the presence of the whole animal species, whose only idea of happiness con-



sisted in the absence of mankind. It might be a useful admonition for individuals sometimes to consider what reception they would deserve in "The Paradise of Animals."

Mary. "I shall not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau if birds confabulate or no."

Papa. I believe it is generally granted that animals do convey information to each other by means of sounds which they utter, but the question occurs whether their language is

not analogous to their instinct; that is, a faculty which, apparently starting from a higher point than reason, was at first dawning in an infant, stops short, and never advances in an appreciable degree.

Tom. I should like us to discuss for a few moments the question of the immortality of the spiritual nature of animals. Is the idea of the untutored Indian, who wishes his faithful dog to bear him company in another world, altogether visionary?

Papa. This question is one of great interest, and is not so easily disposed of at first sight as many imagine. For myself, I confess I incline to the opinion that beasts have, properly speaking, no souls.

This seems to be the doctrine of the Holy Bible. In the third chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes the following remarkable passage appears :—

"17. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

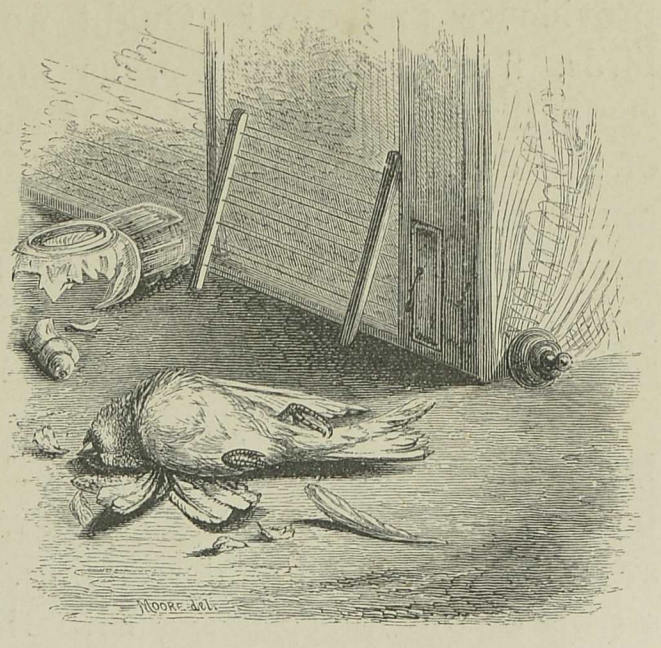
"18. I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

"19. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

"20. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

"21. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

"22. Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?"



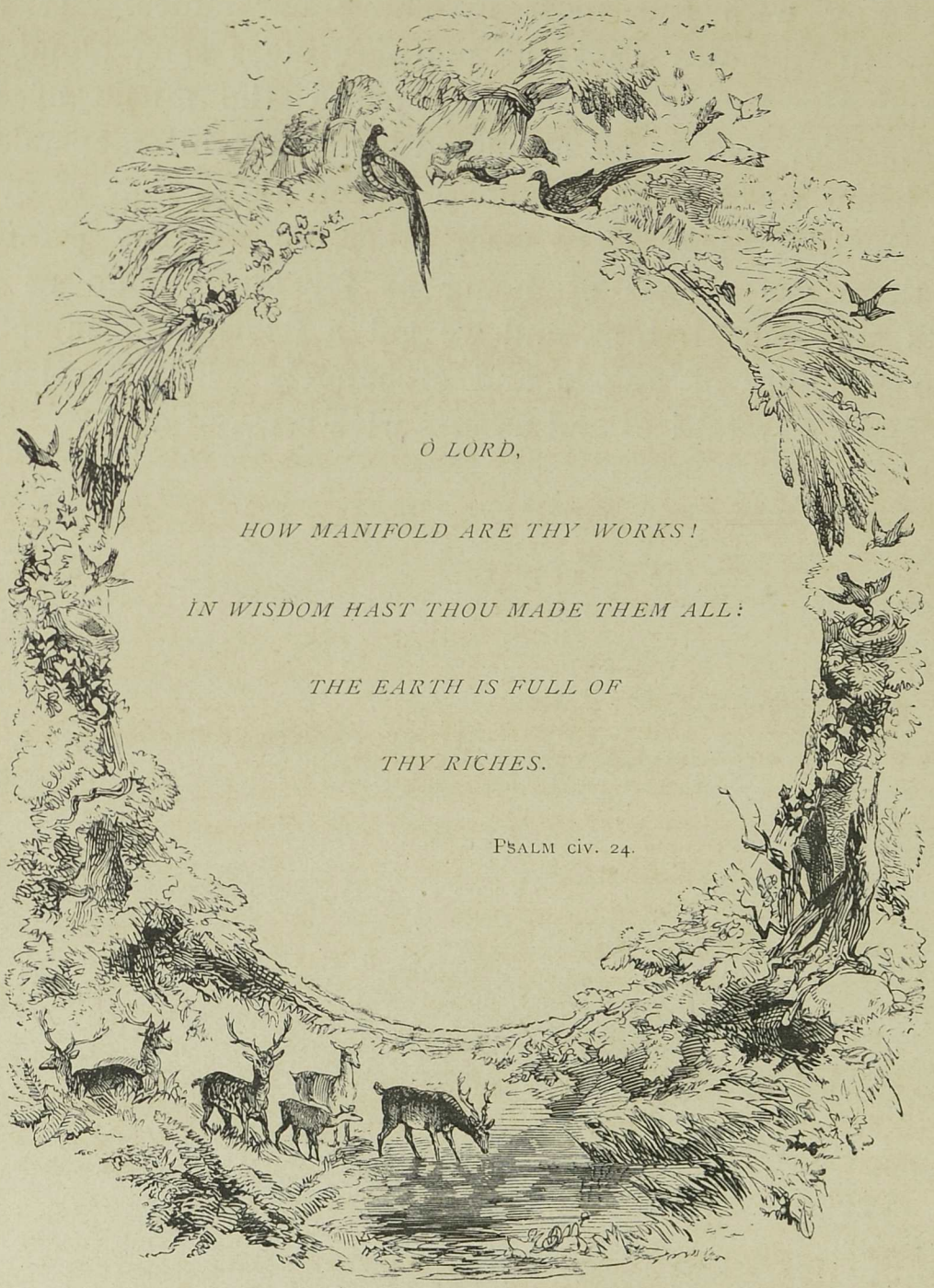
Mary. The point of this passage seems to be that beasts and man are subject to the same diseases, casualties, and pain;

that both sooner or later will die, and that with pangs of equal intensity and duration; that both have one breath of life, which is in their nostrils, and by which the beasts perform the same animal functions as ourselves. The great difference between man and brutes is, that the life of the beast utterly ends with the death of the body, whereas the soul of man, that is, his rational spirit, will live for ever.

Edith. It seems to me that the proper solution of this question is found in our regarding creation as a sort of ladder. That the Creator is pleased to begin with minute atoms of animated life; that He proceeds upwards from these through all the ranges of the living, breathing, busy family, bound together by the ties of a common creature-hood, which we call the animal creation. At the summit of the scale stands man, made in the image of God, made a little lower than the angels. May we not then be said to stand before animals as the representatives of Divine providence and care? Ought we not to regard beasts and birds, fishes and reptiles, as entitled to some crumbs of sympathy and indulgence? If this life is the final existence of my dog and my horse, is it not my duty to make it as much like heaven and as little like hell as lies in my power — remembering that the Supreme Governor of the universe will exact from every one of us, his vicegerents, a strict account of our stewardship?

Tom. You properly compare creation to a ladder, but it is something like that which Jacob beheld in the vision when he laid his head on the stone in the desert, and saw the angels ascending and descending. Or it may be likened to a scale of music beginning with the simplest note of melody,

and ending with the most ravishing harmonies. It was perhaps in this way that the morning stars sang aloud for joy, and the Greek philosopher heard the music of the spheres. For just as all animated beings are interdependent, there being links of connexion between those that seem to stand furthest apart from each other, so we may presume that there are ranges of being as far above man as the insects are beneath him, and we get a floating presumption of the existence of angels and archangels which revelation, so to speak, crystallizes and asserts with certainty.



O LORD,

HOW MANIFOLD ARE THY WORKS!

IN WISDOM HAST THOU MADE THEM ALL:

THE EARTH IS FULL OF

THY RICHES.

PSALM CIV. 24.

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