

BIRD-CATCHING SPIDERS.

H. W. Bates, an English naturalist, has lately published an account of his adventures in the region of the river Amazon. The following is his account of a bird-catching spider, which he saw at Cameta, in the Province of Para:

"The species was *M. avicularia*, or one very closely allied to it. The individual was nearly two inches in length of body, but the legs expanded seven inches, and the entire body and legs were covered with coarse gray and reddish hairs. I was attracted by the movement of the monster on a tree trunk: it was close beneath a deep crevice in the tree, across which was stretched a dense white web. The lower part of the web was broken, and two small birds, finches, were entangled in the pieces; they were about the size of the English siskin, and I judged the two to be male and female; one of them was quite dead; the other lay under the body of the spider, not quite dead, and was smeared with the filthy liquor or saliva exuded by the monster.

"I drove away the spider and took the birds; but the second one soon died. The fact of species of *Mygale* sallying forth at night, mounting trees and sucking the eggs and young of humming birds, has been recorded long ago by Madame Merian and Palisot de Beauvois; but in the absence of any confirmation it has come to be discredited.

"The *Mygales* are quite common insects; some species make their cells under stones, others form artistic tunnels in the earth, and some build their dens in the thatch of houses. The natives call them *Aranhas caranguejeiras*, or crab-spiders. The hairs with which they are clothed come off when touched, and cause a peculiar and almost maddening irritation. The first specimen that I killed and prepared was handled incautiously, and I suffered terribly for three days afterward. I think this is not owing to any poisonous quality residing in the hairs, but to their being short and hard, and thus getting into the fine creases of the skin. Some *Mygales* are of immense size. One day I saw the children belonging to an Indian family who collected for me, with one of these monsters secured by a cord round its waist, by which they were leading it about the house as they would a dog."

THE OCEAN.

Man, as a conqueror, can ravage the earth; cities are plundered, countries are desolated and laid waste; ruin and destruction mark his path. But his reign stops him. Over the might of ocean he has no control, and his dominion cannot extend over the great deep. Here he is powerless. What earthly arm can save him or his frail bark, when the rushing waves and angry billows are rolling upon them like clouds upon some mighty giant coffin, to entomb it?

Their doom is sealed, another and another victim are added to the long list of those who have perished upon its treacherous waters. What a record of blighted hearts and withered hopes could the wreck of ocean furnish! How many have gone forth full of joy and gladness to return no more! The anxious and expectant forms awaited them on shore have looked in vain for their coming. No intelligence has ever reached them of their fate, and anxiety has sunk into despair. Alas! they have perished, with none but the solitary sea-bird to chant their last requiem.—But if the ocean is so terrible in its wrath it is equally lovely in its repose, when upon its tranquil surface is reflected the rays of the rising sun—"The glorious orb of nature"—what myriads of the finny tribe can be seen sporting in its glossy waves; what monsters are found buried in its dark caves!

How lovely the golden sunset, as the last rays glitter upon gorgeous piles of clouds floating above the horizon. How does fancy wander into its fathomless abyss, and read in its dark and gloomy chambers, peopling them with a fairy creation of its own. What priceless gems, and untold treasures adorn these gloomy caverns of the sea.

For many centuries the mysteries of the ocean have reposed undisturbed by man, but the spirit of improvement and progress have at last intruded upon this solitude and brought to light many an unknown fact regarding these dark regions. The submarine telegraph has invaded the territory of old Neptune, and disputed with him his empire over the waves.

There is nothing so dear to the heart of the mariner as the sight of the ocean; its white-capped waves and blue expanse are objects of deep love and veneration

to his soul. Every breeze that is wafted over its surface is laden with health and life to him, and the roar of his own element is music to his own ears. Even those whose home is upon the sea-coast ever delight in its wave-lashed shore. Earth has no charms for them that equal the steep cliff and boundless views of waters around them.

HOW ANIMALS COOL OFF.

Every observing farmer knows that man and horses are the only animals that have double means of refrigeration, and all others have but one. No other being sweat like men and horses, and therefore cannot cool themselves by perspiring through the skin. This will be found true throughout the whole range of comparative anatomy, and applies to the largest as well as the smallest beings. All the thick-skinned animals, except the horse, have no powers in the skin to exhale heat by perspiration, it being only a secretive surface. All the cleft-foot species, including those with feet and toes, rounded and unprovided with claws, the rhinoceros, elephant, bison, mammoth, mastodon, buffalo, or, swine, deer, the lion, tiger, bear, wolf, fox, squirrel, dormouse, opossum, racoon, all, like the dog, have no means of cooling themselves when heated except through the medium of respiration. Thus the ox, when very hot thrusts out his tongue and pants, to exhale the heat generated by exercise, and if driven without time allowed for this, will die with the heat that accumulates within him. Hogs often die when driven too fast, because they cannot part with the general heat.

LEISURE MOMENTS.

Existence would be altogether miserable were it not for the exercise of the social affections. Our desires concentrated within the narrow limits of self-gratification, and our feelings unexcited by any other object than self-esteem, we should never enjoy the sweet interchanges of mutual attachment, nor experience the pleasures of communicating delight. We should wander like hermits through a dreary world; our wants unrelieved by friendship, our sorrows unmitigated, and our anxieties unassuaged by sympathy. No kind hand would shield us from error or misfortune. No disinterested counsel would direct us to wisdom, happiness and