

discern the approach of the tempest in time to prepare for its reception ; and, to a ship with all its canvas spread, its effects might prove terrific :—This instance, and others I have witnessed, are thoroughly explanatory of the passage in Kings, where the servant of Elijah descends from the top of Carmel the little cloud ascending from the sea : “ And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand ” In the meanwhile the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, “ and there was a great rain.” 1 Kings, xviii: 44, 45. In the Mediterranean such scenes are frequent—but, happily, though so dreadfully impetuous, the hurricane is so local in its fury, that its impetuosity will scarcely be perceived at the distance of a very few miles.

The remainder of the morning was spent in repairing the damage sustained by the sails and the cordage, and in overhauling an English brig which passed us on her way to London. About noon, the crew, dividing themselves into messes of four and six each, spread their little tables upon deck, and despatched their frugal dinner of salt fish and biscuit, washing it down with plentiful draughts of wine, which was supplied by a cup-bearer who attended each. Our fare in the cabin consisted solely of fish ; perches boiled in excellent soup, and sardellas served with vinegar and oil ; whilst a boy, on the conclusion of the repast, brought in a towel, a pewter basin and some soap, and poured water on the hands of each from an antique ewer, whilst we performed this necessary ablution. This is the custom so often and so minutely described by Homer and Virgil :—

“ Dant famuli manibus lymphas.”

ÆN. lib. i, v. 701.

“ Soft towels for their hands they bring,
And limpid water from the crystal spring.”

WARTON.

This practice seems to have been universal throughout the east. One of the servants of the king of Israel said, “ Here is Elisha, the

son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.” 2d Kings, iii. 11.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE PORCUPINE.

The porcupine has sometimes ignorantly been called the hedge hog, and hence associated in the minds of many with the swinish race. No conception scarcely can be more erroneous. There is not a particle of resemblance either in outward appearance or internal formation ; and the only shade of similarity is in the grunting sound of both. The porcupine has no long head and ears ; no tusks nor cloven feet with hoofs ; but a short head like that of the beaver with two incisive teeth, round and flat ears, and feet armed with nails. It has a short tail, long whiskers and a divided lip like the hare. But its peculiar characteristic, that which distinguishes it from all other animals, with a single exception, is its covering of spine or quills, which are from ten to fourteen inches in length, resembling the barrel of a goose quill, but tapering at both ends and variegated with black and white. When the animal is at rest they incline backward pretty close to the body ; but when “ stirred up” by the keeper, they are erected and made to rattle like so many dry horns.

The many fables and travellers’ legends respecting the porcupine, as capable of discharging his quills, as a bowman would his arrow, and of wounding his enemies at an immense distance, it is almost needless to say, are altogether imaginary. He sheds his quills occasionally, as other animals do their coats, but this is not done at periodical intervals, neither does he lose a large portion at a time. An iron bar thrust into the cage will cause the “ fretful porcupine” to “ bristle up” in his own defence, but not a quill will leave its bed. Insert a piece of soft wood, however, and let it come in contact with the quills, and some of them, which are only attached to the skin by a small pellicle, will adhere to the wood. Their common method of defence, when irritated, is