

According to Buffon, the *fauna* of America is characterized by inferiority in size when compared with that of the Old World; on the other hand, it is the richest in species, none having yet been extirpated, possessing 557 mammalia, of which 480 are its own. One curious feature is, that no country has contributed so little to the stock of domestic animals, having furnished, with the exception of the Llama and the Turkey, no animal serviceable to man.—In connection with this, however, we must remark, that a common-place observer would be apt to imagine that the vast herds of wild cattle and horses which roam in thousands over the savannahs of Mexico, and the extreme Southern States, are indigenous; little thinking that the descendants of the few animals the Spanish conquerors permitted to run wild, resumed the originality of their species.

The object of these papers will be to enumerate all the species of animals of the Northern Continent of America, arranged according to Cuvier's system, with the introduction of incidents and peculiarities really authorized and reliable, and in many instances unknown to the majority of readers.

Passing over the first family (*bimana*, *two-handed*) man,—and the second (*quadrumana*, *four-handed*) or monkeys, as wanting in North America, we commence with the third,—

*Chiroptera*, (*wing-handed*). The Bats.—Few if any of the individuals of the animal kingdom are so singularly and curiously formed as the Bat. It is described by an eminent writer as “holding a very equivocal rank in creation, and though having a marked resemblance to a quadruped, a great part of his life is spent in the air like a bird.” Instead of being oviparous or egg-laying, this is a lactescent, or milk giving animal; instead of living on grain, its food is flesh; and instead of being like a bird, a biped or two-legged animal, it is a quadruped in the true sense of the term.

Great ignorance prevailed among the ancients respecting bats. Aristotle describes them as “birds with skinny wings!” Pliny asserts that they are “birds which produce their young alive, and suckle them;” while Aldrovandus, who always has something exquisitely graphic, places them in the same family as the Ostrich, giving as his reason, that “these two species partake equally of the nature of quadrupeds!!” How, why, or from what similitude, he leaves an open subject.

The wings of the bat are formed by the extension of a fine membrane over the elongated fingers of the fore-legs, reaching as far as, and fastened to, or rather stretched over the hind-legs. As however the four fingers are involved in the membrane which forms the wings, only a little hook, called the thumb-nail, is left free. With this the animal suspends itself on any rough or uneven surface where it happens to alight; while the hind feet are also provided with claws, by which it hangs head downwards on the sides of chimneys, hollow trees, and roofs of caverns, a favorite resort, still and silent, sleeping or perhaps nursing its young by day, till the approach of evening, when it begins its excursions in search of food.

Having neither the disposition nor the power to exercise themselves by day, bats are strictly nocturnal animals, commencing their search after insects, soon after the swallow has quitted his operations for the day. Its motions, as it flits about in the dim twilight, seldom moving more than a few yards in a straight line, darting up or down, this way or that, instead of being for its mere pleasure, as many would suppose, are really its only means of procuring its living, since at every turn it seizes or attempts to seize some one of the insect tribe, which swarm under cover of darkness in the air. While on the wing it continually utters a low shrill cry, not unlike the squeaking of a mouse.

Naturalists have long since discovered by experiments, that bats deprived of sight, still avoided obstacles as perfectly as those with their sight entire, flying through small apertures only just large enough to admit them without touching; numerous small threads also were drawn across the room where the experiment was made at different angles, and still the blind bat would fly about in every possible direction without ever touching them. The vibration of the air striking against the impediment, was supposed to return a sound by which the animal was warned of its direction. But it has since been found that the destruction of hearing as well, made no difference in the facts, and the only theory that has been proposed to account for this curious circumstance is, that some peculiar sense is lodged in the expanded nerves of the nose.

No authentic records have ever come before the writer's notice of the Bat having been tamed; they seldom live any time in captivity, but will eat fearlessly and voraciously of raw meat; they invariably refuse the house-fly. There are a number of

