

These are but a few of the diverse opinions which prevailed among the naturalists of former times, among which the most ingeniously quaint is that which places the bat and the ostrich in the same order, because the bat has wings, and the ostrich has not."*

Without reviewing the recorded errors of these observers, we will be content to call the attention of the reader to the following brief account of the structure of flying animals, so that the true position of the bat among them may be definitely fixed.

There are two distinct types of modifications which the vertebrate skeleton has undergone in adapting the animal for flight, both of which depend upon some peculiarity in the structure of the anterior extremities; and in order to obtain a correct opinion of them, we propose to cast a glance at each in turn.

The first act of the bat, after emerging in the evening from its retreat, is to fly to the water. The following account, illustrating the peculiarity, as well as showing the enormous numbers in which these animals will live together, is of great interest. It is from the pen of M. Figaniere, Minister to this country from Portugal, in a letter addressed to Prof. Henry, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution:—

"In the winter of 1859, having purchased the property known as Seneca Point, on the margin of the Northeast River, near Charlestown, in Cecil County, Maryland, we took possession of it in May of the next year. The dwelling is a brick structure covered with slate in the form of an L two-storeyed, with garret, cellars, and a stone laundry and milk-house attached. Having been uninhabited for several years, it exhibited the appearance, with the exception of one or two rooms, of desolation and neglect, with damp, black walls, all quite unexpected, as it had been but very slightly examined, and was represented in good habitable condition, merely requiring some few repairs and a little painting.

"The boxes, bundles, and other packages of furniture which had preceded us, lay scattered around and within the dwelling: these, with the exception of some mattresses and bedding for immediate use, were hastily arranged for unpacking and placing in order at leisure. The weather, which was beautiful, balmy, and warm, invited us toward evening to out-door enjoyment and rest after a fatiguing day of travel and active labor; but chairs, settees, and benches were scarcely occupied by us on the piazza and lawn,

*Wood, Nat. His., 1 (Mam.), 114.