

prepared a masterly paper on these animals for the *Philosophical Transactions*, of England, and their discussion is a wide and tempting field in the subject of animal distribution and variation.

The Galapagos Islands are volcanic in their origin and present desolate surfaces of scoriae, rugged and black surfaces of blistered and splintered lava. Here these immense tortoises were found by some of the earliest navigators, and were long resorted to as food by the buccaneers of the Spanish Main. Their flesh, especially that upon the breastbone, as instanced by Darwin, is very delicious, and as they retain their size and sweetness after months of confinement, they afforded a very convenient source of food for the provisioning of ships which would be for a long time away from means of supply of fresh meat. The great numbers of these reptiles in the islands before they had become reduced by men were surprising. In 1680 Dampier said of them: "The land turtle are here so numerous that five or six hundred men might subsist on them alone for several months without any other sort of provision." As early as Admiral Porter's visit to these islands (1813) the difference between the occupants of the different islands had been noticed. Dr. Gunther has separated the tortoises from this group into five different species, each restricted to its own island, and assumes their derivation from some typical ancestor whose characters have gradually diverged into these subordinate races by reason of the varying feature of food and habits. Darwin has given some of the most interesting observations about these strange creatures.

He says ("Voyage of the Beagle"). "The tortoise is very fond of water, drinking large quantities, and wallowing in the mud. The larger islands alone possess springs, and these are always situated toward the central parts and at a considerable height. The tortoises, therefore, which frequent the lower districts, when thirsty are obliged to travel from a long distance. Hence broad and well beaten paths branch off in every direction from the wells down to the seacoast, and the Spaniards, by following them up, first discovered the watering places. When I landed at Chatham Island, I could not imagine what animal travelled so methodically along well chosen tracks. Near the springs it was a curious spectacle to behold many of these huge creatures, one set travelling onward with outstretched necks, and another set returning, after having drunk their fill. When the tortoise arrives at the spring, quite regardless of any spectator he buries his head in the water above his eyes, and greedily swallows great mouthfuls, at the rate of about ten in a minute. The inhabitants say each animal stays three or four days in the neighborhood of the water, and then returns to the lower country; but they differed respecting the frequency of these visits. The animal probably regulates them according to the nature of the food on which it has lived. It is, however, certain that tortoises can subsist even on those islands where there is no other water than what falls during a few rainy days in the year." The Galapagos tortoise appears to be quite deaf, and gives but few audible indications of life. These are limited to the deep hiss it emits when disturbed, as it withdraws its head within its hard integument, and the roar given by the male in the breeding season. The female deposits its eggs in the sand and covers them up, but in rocky places drops them "indiscriminately in any hole." The eggs are white and spherical and are found seven inches in circumference.

The young become the prey of the flesh-eating buzzards, while those who escape and reach maturity die from accidents, as a natural death from disease or age seems almost unknown. They can be handled with impunity, but from their enormous size they frequently require the united efforts of five or seven men to lift them. They feed upon cactus or the leaves of various trees. They appear to be aboriginal inhabitants of these islands, and, therefore, have an almost exciting interest to naturalists; but they are also representatives of a wider distribution, for allied forms and even fossil remains of congeneric species are found in Mauritius and its neighboring islands. They may be remnants of a tribe which over a broad Pacific continent has had an extreme easterly and westerly dis-

persion and now separated from their western allies have, in conjunction with these latter, undergone varietal changes which have become inherited and established separate generic groups.

MRS. GAY'S THANK-OFFERING BOX.

"I'm so much happy as if I have millions." So said an unusual guest in Mrs. Judge Gay's back parlor that September morning. It was Christine, the washer-woman, who had brought to Mrs. Gay her gift to missions; and this is how it came about.

In the household complications which arose during a prevailing influenza of the previous winter, Christine had been helping Mrs. Gay, from whose dressing-case one morning Christine in dusting took up a little pink pasteboard box. It looked so unlike its rich surroundings that she was hesitating what to do with it, when Mrs. Gay entered.

"Shall I take this to the child room?" inquired Christine.

"Yes—no, why that's my thank offering box," replied Mrs. Gay.

"Thank-offering box," slowly repeated Christine, little comprehending what that meant, and still at a loss what to do with it.

Seeing her puzzled look, Mrs. Gay began to explain. "It's to put money in when I'm thankful; it's for foreign missions."

"What missions are they?" inquired Christine, who knew only of the city mission.

"Oh, they're in China and India, in Turkey and Africa, and other countries," answered Mrs. Gay.

"Nobody can be so much poor as folks on the Flats, nor so much poor as folks in Sweden, anyway," answered Christine positively.

"Let me see," said Mrs. Gay. "Do mothers in Sweden, like Indian mothers, throw their beloved babies into a rapid river to please an angry god, and before they can turn away see them caught by a greedy shark? Do fathers in Sweden, like Chinese fathers, throw living girl babies into deep vaults built for very that purpose, or drown them in the presence of the agonized mothers? Do the women in Sweden, like the women of Turkey, cook their food in water brought a long way upon their heads, and with fuel carried from distant hill upon their backs, and when they have prepared a meal see their husbands and their husbands' dogs first filled, and themselves and children permitted to eat what is left?"

Mrs. Gay was surprised at her own words; but mistaking Christine's perplexed look for skepticism, she continued: "At the recent death of Ashantee's king, twelve living women were sacrificed to line his grave. Is anything like that done in Sweden?"

Christine's eyes opened wide. "Oh, Mrs. Gay, if things be so bad why don't the ministers say so? Why do they preach as we do well to be saved ourselves, and say not about other poor bodies. I wish I had a box." And Christine resumed her dusting.

"Here, take this," said Mrs. Gay; "you're welcome to it, I am sure."

Christine took the box. She never dreamed how welcome she was to it. She never suspected that all this eloquence was but the effervescence of the views of missions which Mrs. Webb, the president of the auxiliary, had been so faithfully dropping into Mrs. Gay's worldly mind.

Christine did not know that for months that little box had stood upon Mrs. Gay's dressing-case quite unheeded. Unheeded, did I say? Silently it had put in its plea to many a purchase which Mrs. Gay had made.

A new rug had been needed for the library. Mrs. Gay wanted a Persian. "Buy a Wilton," cried the little pink box, "and help Dahomey's burdened women." "The best is the cheapest; besides I do not like my friends to think I have no taste," argued Mrs. Gay, and she decided upon the Persian.

New curtains were needed for the parlors. "Buy Brussels net," whispered the pink box, "and help those little ones over there," and India's child widows lifted beseeching eyes. "These Irish point are so

much handsomer," urged Mrs. Gay, "and while one is getting it is economy to get a really good article;" and the Irish point were purchased.

The china had to be renewed. "Buy Haviland; they are the very best," said the clerk in Ovington's. "Buy Carlsbad," urged the little monitor of the dressing-case, and China's babies filled the air with wailing. "These Haviland wares are exquisite," returned Mrs. Gay. "I dote on lovely China;" and the Haviland was ordered.

What wonder that Mrs. Gay had spoken earnestly! She had only repeated what she had herself heard. If bitterness were in her tone, Christine mistook its meaning. To her humble home that night Christine took the little box. She held it in her toil-worn hand, she studied its mystic letters, "W.B.M.I." "Women Be Much Interested," she exclaimed triumphantly, as she dropped her first coin within, and then went upon her knees with sincerer thanks than she had ever felt before.

She went to her work the next morning with a new song in her heart. She could not have told you why, but there was a new meaning in everything. Each homely task took on a new significance. She was the daughter of a King, a co-worker with the Lord. She did her work better and the favors she received were but a natural consequence.

Mrs. Field had her maid put aside all remnants from the table for Christine's chickens and with each sackful Christine dropped a nickle in her box, "for now," she reasoned to herself, "I have no chicken food to buy." If Mrs. Cook gave her a new apron a nickle went lovingly into the box.

When one March day her neighbor Johnson slipped and sprained her ankle in going down the icy, precipitous banks of the Mississippi which separated the homes of the well-to-do from the riverside where Christine dwelt, she sat down and slid and saved a fall. 'Twas then she made a special offering.

So day by day, and in many ways that box was filled and on the morning referred to, she had brought it to Mrs. Gay. Mrs. Gay was at first surprised, then she remonstrated. "You are giving too much, Christine; you can't afford it."

Christine was hurt. Then she drew close to Mrs. Gay, and lowering her tone, and in the most confiding manner she remarked: "I've thirty dollars in the bank. I can give so much as this, and I'm so much happy as if I have millions," and then she hurried off to her day's work.

Expensive carpets, rich draperies, and rare bric-a-brac had no interest for Mrs. Gay that day. She thought of their bank stock, and of their real estate, and of Christine's box. She had been trying to quiet her conscience with a dollar a year for missions, but before she slept that night she took from her purse a gold half eagle and tucked it into the box.

But Christine had had another auditor that morning. Judge Gay himself was sitting in the library and had heard every word. He was not happy, though he had made the day before a sale of real estate at such a proud advance. Now he was belaboring himself because he had not held it at twelve thousand instead of ten.

Christine's exultant "I'm so much happy as if I have millions" kept ringing in his ears.

That night when the house was still, no one but God and the angels saw Judge Gay take that little box and slip two gold eagles into its almost bursting sides.

Of the rejoicing in heaven we do not know; but we do know that there was a burden lifted from the missionary society next day when the thank-offering was counted, and that Mrs. Webb recognized a peculiar tenderness in Mrs. Gay's voice as she spoke of "our" and not "your" missionary society.

But Mrs. Webb did not know for years how it came about, and Christine never knew the part she had in making both Judge and Mrs. Gay the earnest helpers they became in all missionary enterprises.—Mrs. Celia E. Leavitt, in *Northern Presbyterian*.

SUCCESS ACCOUNTED FOR.

Dr. Joseph Parker addressed these words to young ministers at a recent service: You are not George Whitefield simply because

you have a cast in one eye; you are not Mr. Spurgeon because you are eccentric. A man is not necessarily Byron because he limps, nor is one inevitably Burns because he drinks. Many men are puzzling themselves quite needlessly in trying to account for Mr. Spurgeon's success. You can only account for it by the fact that he was sent from God—he lived in God. God lived in him.

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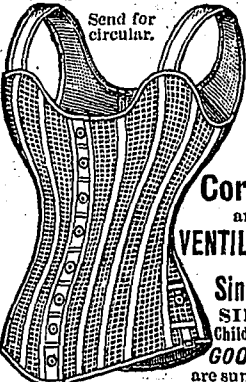
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