

MISCELLANEOUS.

LONDON.

So vast is the population and magnitude of the metropolis of the world, that if the population of Exeter, Plymouth, Dartmouth, Taunton, Bridgewater, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Bristol, Newcastle, Brighton, Bath, Leicester, Cambridge, Chester, Halifax, Derby, Huddersfield, Norwich, Northampton, York, Lancaster, Worcester, Ramsgate, Scarborough, Leamington, Newark, Mansfield, Whithy, Kidderminster, Sheffield, Tunbridge, Shrewsbury, Lincoln, Warwick, Dover, Boston, Winchester, Colchester, Yarmouth, Durham, Gloucester, Ipswich, Stafford, Hereford, Rochester, Doncaster, Carlisle, Canterbury, Wakefield, Hertford, Bedford, Chesham, Darlington, Cirencester, Devizes, Beverley, Bury St. Edmund's, Grantham, Gainsborough, Peterborough, Huntingdon, Shaftesbury, Ely, Stamford, and Lichfield, making altogether 69 of the principal cities and towns of England, were added together, they would not make another London; for these 69 towns make 1,873,189, whilst the metropolis alone is 1,873,676, leaving an overplus of 487 in favour of London. It would require above 60 cities as large as Exeter to make another metropolis. So rapid is the growth of this queen of cities, that a population equal to that of Exeter is added to its number every nine months; but so overwhelmingly large is this Leviathan of towns, that this constant and progressive increase is scarcely perceived—it is almost like throwing a bucket of water into the ocean. Such is London—the city of the world.—*Cornwall Gazette*.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

Young ladies are, now-a-days, taught a multiplicity of arts and accomplishments, and nothing which can add to the graces of mind and manners seems to be omitted or forgotten. Only one requisite is wanting to complete the system. It is that these intelligent and accomplished young ladies should be sedulously instructed in the art of applying their knowledge and exhibiting their graces advantageously. Not that they may procure a good establishment, which, as the term is now understood, means a fine house, fine furniture, and a husband that has money in his purse; but that they may be fitted to discharge those important duties which only can make women useful, respectable, truly beloved, and consequently happy. The aim of female education, therefore, ought to be, not to exalt those who enjoy its advantages above their sphere, but to make them more capable of performing the part which the law of society, and, indeed, the nature of things, allot as the peculiar province of the female. "She looked well to the ways of her household," is a commendation which every body who is the mistress of a family should be ambitious to deserve; and if she possess genius, and even talent, yet still let her remember, that to make a happy home for husband and children is far more praiseworthy than to make a book—*Mrs. Hale*.

NEGRO DISINTERESTEDNESS.—"Numerous instances have occurred in which freedom has been offered to Christian slaves connected with missionary churches, on condition of their leaving off praying; but in no instance, of which the author is aware, has there been a compliance with the terms. An excellent African negro woman, with a family of six or seven children, who, on account of her fidelity and unwearied attentions to some part of the family to which she belonged, was promised her freedom; and the manumission-papers, both for herself and children, were actually prepared. She had just begun to attend on the preaching of the Gospel, intelligence of which soon reaching the ear of her master, he questioned her upon the subject; she acknowledged that she had begun to pray, and that her heart led her to take up God's work. The master threatened, that unless she at once abandoned all connexion with the missionaries he would recall his promise with regard to giving her liberty. She was immovable; he reasoned:—reproached her with obstinacy and with want of natural affection for her children. She wept but remained steadfast. He gave her a few days to consider his determination. She carried her case to God and to her minister. At the conclusion of the specified time she was again ushered into the presence of her master. The writings were ex-

hibited, and the terms again proposed. She had prepared herself for the result, and replied with tears, and an almost bursting heart. 'Mamma, me want be free, but she cannot deny my Saviour.' The master was enraged, and commanded her to take the papers and put them into the fire. She did so, and superintended the flames until they were consumed to ashes."—*From Philippi's Jamaica*.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE HERON.

The herons, of which there are a great many species, form one of the divisions of the numerous tribe of waders, which contains nearly a hundred varieties. They are remarkably light for their size, for they seldom weigh more than three or four pounds, while they measure more than three feet in length, and their wings extend five feet; and though most voracious, are always lean. The bill is five inches long. It is armed with teeth, like a saw, at the end, for the purpose of securing prey. The claws are long; but the heron is not a very courageous bird, as many of the rapacious tribes easily put it to flight. It strikes and wounds the largest fish. Of the smaller it devours immense numbers: one writer mentions having seen seventeen carp taken from the stomach of a single heron, and asserts that a single bird will destroy as many as nine thousand fish in the year. It has been ascertained that each will eat fifty moderate dace and perch per day. One has been known to take from a fish pond a thousand store carp in a year.

From this commonly received opinion of the voracity of the heron, however, Mr. Waterton dissent: "I attribute the bad character which the heron has with us," he says, "for destroying fish, more to erroneous ideas than to any well authenticated proofs that it commits extensive depredations on our fish ponds. Under this impression, which certainly has not hitherto been to my disadvantage, I encourage this poor persecuted wader to come and take shelter here; and I am glad to see it build its nests in the trees which overhang the water, though carp and tench and many other sorts of fish are there in abundance. Close attention to its habits has convinced me that I have not done wrongly. Let us bear in mind that the heron can neither swim nor dive, wherefore the range of its depredations on the finny tribe must necessarily be very circumscribed. In the shallow water only can it surprise the fish; and, even there, when we see it standing motionless, and suppose it to be intent on striking some delicious perch or passing tench, it is just as likely that it has waded into the pond to have a better opportunity of tanishing a water rat lurking at the mouth of its hole, or of gobbling down some unfortunate frog which had taken refuge on the rush-grown margin of the pool. The water rat may appear a large morsel to be swallowed whole; but so great are the expansive powers of the heron's throat, that it can gulp down one of these animals without much apparent difficulty. As the ordinary food of this bird consists of reptiles, quadrupeds, and fish, and as the herons can only catch the fish when they come into shallow water: I think I may fairly consider the wader as not very injurious to our property; especially when we reflect on the prodigious fecundity of fish."

The heron is shot with difficulty, from its shyness and vigilance. It is sometimes taken by a fish hook fastened to a wire, being so secured that it cannot be dragged away. When seeking their food herons are more frequently found alone, but they assemble in flocks at their building places, and place their nests together like rooks. The nests are made of sticks, and lined with wool, and the female lays four pale green eggs. When hatched, as they usually are in May, the cravings of the young keep the parent birds continually on the wing; during which time an enormous quantity of fish are taken and destroyed.

Heron is mostly found about pools and marshes, and usually take their prey by wading into the water as far as their legs will carry them; sometimes they take it on the wing, especially in shallow waters. They can neither dive nor swim.

The flesh of the heron was formerly counted a great delicacy, and held in high estimation. Heron-hawking was also a favourite amusement of the upper ranks, and the severest laws enacted for

its preservation. A person destroying its eggs was liable to a very heavy fine. In the Farnes islands, where it occasionally resorts in the summer, many strange stories are told of it, and many superstitious notions maintained; one of these is, that the fishermen believe themselves sure of success when they have one of its feet in their pocket.

Among the extensive cedar and cypress swamps on the Atlantic coast, from New York to Florida, the great heron is constantly found. It resembles the European, but is greatly superior in size and weight. These herons construct their nests on the tops of the cedars; ten or fifteen pairs occupying a particular part of the forest. The young remain on the trees till as heavy as the old ones; being exceedingly fat before they can fly. They breed but once in the season, and, if disturbed in their heronry, or breeding place, the old birds fly occasionally over the spot, uttering a coarse, hollow noise. These herons, though fed principally on fish, for which they watch with amazing patience, and catch with surprising dexterity, feed on grasshoppers, dragon-flies, and other insects that come in their way. Though the flight of the heron appears heavy, it takes often very long and lofty journeys. When taking these long flights the neck appears doubled, the head drawn in, and its long legs are stretched out, in a right line, far behind; sailing, probably, as a rudder to steer its passage through the air.

The great white heron is a tall and elegant bird, found on the South American continent and West Indian islands, and migrates to the southern of the United States. It is about the size of our common heron, but the tail feathers are much larger; it has a beautiful train, composed of a great number of long, thick, tapering shafts, arising from the lower part of the shoulders, and thinly furnished on each side with fine flowing hair-like threads, of several inches in length, covering the lower part of the back, and falling gracefully over the tail, which it conceals. With the exception of this train, which is slightly tinged with yellow, the whole plumage is white. The male and female are alike in plumage, both having the train equally long. These plumes have been greatly valued in Europe, particularly in France and Italy, for ladies' head-dresses. The Indians also prize them for ornamenting their hair, or top knot, and bring them to the American towns for sale.

"Nothing," says Sir T. Dick Lauder, "can be more picturesque or interesting than a heronry. We know of one on the banks of the river Findhorn, which has called forth the admiration of all who have had the good fortune to see it, especially when in full occupation, during the breeding season. The rocks on the river at the place where the herons have established themselves are of the flax formation. On the left bank the under strata rise abruptly over the bed of the stream, whilst the upper strata recede from it, so as to form a broad piece of plain. On the rock immediately over the river some very venerable old oaks of great height rise from among the smaller wood, which every where clusters along the brink. On the elevated heads of these trees the greater number of the herons have established their nests, whilst the rocks, which rise in perpendicular cliffs to an immense height on the opposite side of the river, including the whole of the existing strata, have, here and there, a nest adhering to some prominent shelf. So far as we can learn, there is reason to believe that this heronry has existed upon these trees, and upon their predecessors, and upon the rocks in their neighbourhood, for ages. The neighbouring proprietors are zealous for its preservation, and no one is allowed to injure or to alarm the birds while occupied in rearing their young. The only enemies they have are the mischievous jacksnaws, who [which] built in the crevices of the cliffs. We have often been amused for hours together in watching their predatory warfare from the brow of the cliff, whence the spectator can see down into the nests on the top of the trees, on the opposite side of the river. These nimble little birds no sooner perceive that a heron has quitted her nest, than they dart into it and carry off an egg; and nothing can be more ludicrous than the attempts made by the unwieldy herons to pursue their enemies and recover their eggs, or to punish the depredators. The heron was formerly royal game; and it is possible that those birds have frequented this place since the time that Thomas