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THE CONEY.

I think I hear some little one exclaim, "Oh! what a curious little creature! what is its name?" Well, it is known by several names in the rocky parts of Palestine and Arabia, where it is found. The natives commonly called it *Oueber* or *Wuber*, and the old Bible name for it is *Shaphan* or *Hider*, because of the quick way in which it hides away in the clefts of the rocks when any one draws near.

But we know it best by the name of Coney. It is about as large as our English wild rabbit, and very much like it in its habits of living underground, quick movements, and dwelling together in families; but it is not a rabbit, for this animal is not known in Palestine. Again, it does not burrow in the earth, for it has no claws to do so, but only short, stunted nails. It therefore searches for some ready-made hole or cleft in the rocks, where it makes a comfortable nest of moss and fur, in which the three or four little conies are brought up in warmth and safety.

The soft, furry coat of this animal is of a dark-brown yellow color, studded with a few longer black hairs upon the back. The legs are short and all of the same height, and the feet are black and clumsy looking. In appearance it is not unlike a guinea-pig, for the neck is short, the ears small, and it has no tail. Around the mouth and head a few bristles are found, and the nose is rather pointed.

These interesting little animals are found in considerable numbers in many parts of the Holy Land. The peculiar rocky nature of the country is well suited for the conies. They are very timid and shy, only leaving their hiding-places underground during the early morning and at dusk; so that it is rather difficult to get near them to watch them at their gambols. Sentries are always placed to look out for the least approach of danger, and when any one draws near these give out a shrill cry, when instantly the whole colony vanishes underground, in the same way that our pretty wild rabbits rush

into their holes when we go too near to where they are feeding in the rabbit-warren.

In the picture the timid habits of the conies are well shown. Look at the little one just peeping out of the entrance to its underground nursery. It is afraid yet to join the older ones in their play. The one perched upon a piece of rock is watching to see that no one may surprise them by drawing too near during their gambols. With uplifted paw he is all attention and ready to give the note to escape.

Travellers tell us it is a pretty sight to watch a colony of conies at early morning;

but this can only be done when some ambush is near, so as to shelter you from the keen sight of the watchers.

These animals are mentioned three times in the Bible. They were classed among the unclean animals in Lev. xi, 5, as being unfit for food or sacrifice, although their flesh is often eaten by the natives now. King Solomon, in Prov. xxx, 26, calls the conies a wise but a feeble folk, which make their houses in the rocks; and David, in the beautiful 104th Psalm, verse 18, declares the wisdom and goodness of God in providing for the wants and safety of all His creatures,

when he says, "The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies."—*Theodore Johnson, in Sunday Reading.*

THE NATURAL WAY.

BY MARGARET MEREDITH.

As the guest of a village pastor I was one evening included in an invitation to a little family tea-party.

I met there a young man, a travelling salesman, temporarily in the place, and evidently regarded as a great beau by the household. He fell to my share, and after a few minutes' talk startled me by the abrupt question, "I believe you are a member of the church?"

"Yes."

Well, then, probably I could give him some help; he was trying to become a Christian, and wanted to find out all he could, wanted to get all the directions he could as to what he must do. In excuse he explained that he knew it was unusual to talk openly of such things, but that he could not see why, that it was a practical matter of very great importance, that he had set about it with that feeling, and that, knowing that he needed all the information he could get, he meant to ask it from every one likely to be able to give it.

He was not at all flippant, and yet he treated the subject as unhesitatingly as any old elder might have done, earnestly, but with an earnestness thoroughly practical.

He spoke neither low nor loud, and of course I at first felt embarrassed, but he apparently paid no attention whether people noticed what he was talking about or not, but in a matter-of-fact manner asked my opinion on one and another point.

I did not feel that he got any new ideas or inspiration from me. On the contrary, no doubt the poor young fellow was frequently disappointed in his efforts to get human help. All of us hope to obtain from others a light which never comes except direct from God into the heart.

But perhaps he got a little help, confirmation of others'



"The rocks are a refuge for the Conies."

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