

## THE BOOK OF NATURE LAID OPEN.

## BIRDS—Continued.

How admirably fortified are the eyes of the birds of night for seeing better when the sun is below than above the horizon. Those of the Poultry kind are not furnished with hooked bills and formidable talons, or wings calculated for long flights; and while the solitary Eagle or Hawk pay us a transient visit, unaccompanied and alone, these surround our dwellings in numerous flocks. Those of the Grouse kind, who feed on moor-berries and the top of heath plants, have their habitations assigned them in the most barren and uncultivated tracts where their favorite food abounds. The hooked bill of the Parrot is well contrived to assist him in climbing. Ducks, Geese, and many others, have long broad bills to enable them to grope for their food in waters and mud; on the contrary a thick, short, and sharp edged bill, is as necessary to those who have occasion to husk and flay the grain they swallow. The Woodpecker's bill is sufficiently strong to dig holes; that of the Swallow is slender and sharp pointed, and he is also furnished with a very wide mouth, to enable him to catch the winged insect in its flight; and the one with which Sea-pies raise their favourite food from the rocks, by means of their long, narrow, and compressed bills, is astonishing.

The long legs and necks of birds of the Crane kind, together with their sharp pointed bills, are wonderfully adapted for the purpose of wading and picking up their food from the bottom of the shallows; and the webbed feet, oily feathers, and broad bills of those of the Swan kind, are equally so to enable them to swim along, and lay hold of their prey in the watery element.

The PELICAN of the wilderness is a most dexterous fisher, and nature has provided him with a prodigious pouch of a singular construction, under his bis bill, which, although scarcely perceptible when empty, enables him when full, to bear ashore as many fish at a time as would suffice 60 men to dinner.—The ALBATROSS, the most formidable of the Gull kind, preys not only on fish, but water-fowl of an inferior size; and his bill terminates in a crooked point, by which he is enabled to lay hold of them on the wing.—The PENGUIN seldom leaves the water; and while others of the feathery race only skim its surface pursues his prey to the greatest depth, and he approaches the finny tribe in his conformation as well as in his disposition and habits.

How wonderful the migration of birds! or that surprising instinct by which "the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times," and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming." When Storks take their departure of Europe, it is said they all assemble on a particular day, decamp during the night, and leave not a single one of their company behind. Now what power unseen commands them to this general assembly, directs them in their course, orders them to halt as occasion requires, and then to renew their flight till they arrive at the exact point of their destination?

"Who bids the Stork, Columbus-like explore  
Heavens not his own, and worlds unknown before?  
Who calls the council, states the certain day?  
Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?"  
"Where do the Cranes, or winding Swallows go,  
Fearful of gathering winds and falling snow?

If into rocks or hollow trees they creep,  
In temporary death confined to sleep;  
Or, conscious of the coming evil, fly  
To milder regions and a southern sky?"

Birds in the torrid zone, where their nests otherwise situated, would be exposed to the assaults of the snake when he twines up the trunk, or the depredation of the ape, suspend them at the point of a bough, or the extreme branches of the trees; and some, as the Taylor-bird, not content with that precaution, attach their nests to the side of a leaf. The Eagle constructs her habitation among inaccessible rocks, where it is shielded by projecting crags;—and the Flamingo builds her nest in the middle of an extensive morass, beyond the reach of danger.

What sagacity does the Vulture display as he sits silent and unseen in the American forest, watching the operations of the monstrous Crocodile, while he deposits his eggs in the sand on the banks of the river? The little Butcher-bird, that attacks creatures four times bigger than himself, seizes its victims by the throat, and strangles them in an instant; and, as if conscious of its inability otherwise to separate the food it has so secured, contrives to spit it on a neighbouring thorn, and then pulls it to pieces by its bill. The solitary Owl takes up its station in a corner of the barn at the approach of night, & with inflexible perseverance watches its prey. The magpie is noted for its singular cunning.—Bustards are said to keep a sentinel on the outlook to apprise them of danger.—The Partridge acts with the greatest subtlety, in order to decoy away a dog or other animal when he apprehends her nest; and the affection of the Hen for her brood is such, that for their protection she will attack the hog or the mastiff, and even not hesitate to fly at the fox. What animal evinces more courage than the Cock, as he struts in sovereignty on his favourite dunghill? The facility with which Parrots are taught to speak, and retain and repeat a number of words is truly surprising.—Cormorants in China are trained for the purposes of fishing; and Hawks, in other countries for fowling; and the Carrier Pigeon performs his lengthened embassy with unerring precision, and with an astonishing celebrity: Even the stupid Ostrich, as it may be called in other respects, is not so destitute of natural affection and instinctive cunning as some are apt to imagine; for if she more frequently leaves her eggs than other birds, it is only in those hot climates where there is no necessity for constant incubation; and if she thrusts her head in the sand, when every chance of escape is at end, it is no less certain that she contrives to prolong the chace and distance her pursuer, by occasionally lowering one of her wings, and disappointing him with a mouthful of feathers.

## POETRY.

## THE FABLE OF THE YOUNG MOUSE.

In a crack near the cupboard, with dainties provided,  
A certain young mouse with her mother resided.  
So securely they lived on that fortunate spot,  
Any mouse in the land might have envied their lot.  
But one day, the young mouse, who was given to roam,  
Having made an excursion some way from her home,  
On a sudden return'd, with such joy in her eyes,  
That her grey, sedate parent, express'd some surprise.  
"O Mother!" said she, "the good folks of this house,  
I'm convinc'd, have not any ill will to a mouse;

And those tales can't be true which you always are  
telling.

For they've been at such pains to construct us a dwelling.

The floor is of wood, and the walls are of wires,  
Exactly the size that one's comfort requires;  
And I'm sure that we there should have nothing to  
fear,

If ten cats with their kittens should at once appear.  
And then they have made such nice holes in the wall,  
One could slip in and out, with no trouble at all;  
But forcing one through such rough crannies as these,  
Always gives one's poor ribs a most terrible squeeze.  
But the best of all is they've provided us well  
With a large piece of cheese of most exquisite smell;  
'Twas so nice, I had put my head in to get through,  
When I thought it my duty to come and fetch you."  
"Ah child," said her mother, "believe I entreat,  
Both the cago and the chooso are a terrible cheat;  
Do not think all that trouble they took for our good,  
They would catch us, and kill us all there, if they could.  
As they've caught and kill'd scores; and I never could  
learn

That a mouse, who once enter'd did ever return!"  
Let the young people mind what the old people say  
And when danger is near them, keep out of the way.

## THE FLY'S REVENGE.

"So," said a fly, as he paused and thought  
How he had just been brushed about,  
"They think, perhaps, I am next to nought—  
Put into the world to be put out!

"Just as if, when our maker planned  
His mighty scheme, he had quite forgot  
To grant the work of his skilful hand,  
The peaceful fly, an abiding spot!

"They grudge me even a breath of air,  
A speck of earth and a ray of sun!  
This is more than a fly can bear—  
Now I'll pay them for what they have done!"

First he lit on the idle thumb  
Of a poet, and "Now for your thoughts," said  
he,  
"Wherever they soar, I'll make them come  
Down from their towering flight, to me!"

He went and tickled the nasal tip  
Of the scholar, and over his eyebrow stung,  
Till he raised his hand and his brain let slip  
A chain of gems that had just been strung.

He washed his feet in the worthless tear  
A belle in the theatre chanc'd to weep—  
"Rouge in the bath!" he cried; "my dear,  
Your cheek has a blush that is not skin deep!"

Off, to a crowded church he flew,  
And over their faces boldly stepped,  
Pointing out to the pastor's pew  
How many sheep in the pasture slept.

He buzzed about a lady's ear,  
Just as a youth with piteous sigh,  
Popped a question she would not hear,  
And only answered, "a saucy fly!"

On the astronomer's painted glass  
He leisurely stood and stretch'd his wing;  
For here he knew he was sure to pass  
For quite a great and important thing.

"Now is the time," said he, "my men,  
To measure the fly from head to heel!  
Number the miles, and if you can,  
Name the planets that I conceal!

"What do you call the twinkling star