

with ideas of the horrible and the unknown. In olden times, when the imagination of the people exceeded the accuracy of their observations, it was one of the numerous monsters inhabiting their caverns and forests. It has done service in many a legend; its bite was fatal; it was the emblem of haunted houses; its wings bore up the dragon slain by St. George.

It is easy to trace from this early impression the permanent position that the bat, as an emblem of the repulsive, held in letters and the arts. It is mentioned in the book of Leviticus as one of the unclean things. Its image is rudely carved upon the tombs of the ancient Egyptians. The Greeks consecrated it to Proserpine. It is part of the infernal potion of the witches in Macbeth, while Ariel employs it in his erratic flights. In art, its wings have entered largely into the creation of those composite horrors, evil spirits; nor have modern artists escaped from the absurdity of encumbering the Satan of Holy Writ with like appendages.*

Of this association with the monstrous the intelligent observer ceases to take note when the finer beauties of structure develop themselves under his gaze. Upon acquaintance, he learns, perhaps with surprise, that, in anatomical and physiological peculiarities, and zoological position, the bat is a subject for study worthy of the attention of the most contemplative. Indeed no order of animals is more interesting, and none has received greater attention from the hands of savans.

The early pioneers of natural history were far astray in their endeavors to correctly define the nature and position of the bat.

"Some authors place bats among the birds, because they are able to fly through the air; while others assign them a position among the quadrupeds, because they can walk on the earth. Some again, who admitted the mammalian nature of the creatures, scattered them at intervals through the scale of animated beings, heedless of any distinction excepting the single characteristic in which they took their stand, and by which they judged every animal.

* To this fancy of the ancients of placing the wings of a bat upon demons, is happily opposed the sweet conceits of poets in adorning the figures of angels and cherubim with the wings of birds. The wing of a bat is sombre and angular; that of a bird is of delicate hues, and replete with curves. It is therefore poetic justice to have the one become an emblem of the infernal, as the other is an expression of the heavenly form.