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NATURAL HISTORY.

HAWK AND KITE.

This bird, which is distinguished by the swiftness of its flight, is appropriately termed *the fier*, in the Hebrew scriptures. But the term is not confined to the individual species of bird properly called the hawk; it includes the various species of the falcon family, which is very numerous.

The HAWK was highly venerated by the heathen, but it was pronounced unclean by the Jewish lawgiver; and was an abomination to the people of Israel. Its flesh was not to be eaten, nor its carcass touched with impunity. The reason of this law may probably be found in the dispositions and qualities of the bird; she is a bird of prey, and, by consequence, cruel in her temper, and gross in her manners. Her mode of living, too, may, perhaps, impart a disagreeable taste and flavour to the flesh, and render it, particularly in a warm climate, improper for the table.

Most of the species of hawks are birds of passage, to which circumstance there is a reference in Job xxxiv. 26:

*Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom,
And stretch her wings towards the south?*

That is, 'doth she know, through thy skill and wisdom, the precise period for taking flight, or migrating and stretching her wings towards a southern or warmer climate?' Her migration is not conducted by the wisdom and prudence of man, but by the superintending and upholding providence of God.

The KITE may with propriety be noticed here, as it belongs to the same family of birds. It is remarkable for the quickness of its sight, to which there is evidently an allusion in Job xxviii. 7, though the 'vulture' is inserted in our authorized version.

*There is a path which no fowl knoweth,
And which the eye of the kite hath not seen.*

THE HORSELEACH.

The import of the Hebrew word *horseleach* in the LXX, the Vulgate, and the Targums, as well as in the English and other modern versions of scripture, is by no means well ascertained. 'The horseleach,' says Solomon, 'hath two daughters, crying, give, give,' Prov. xxx. 15. Bochart thinks the translators have mistaken the import of one word for that of another very similar, and that it should be translated *Destiny*, or the necessity of dying; to which the Rabbins gave two daughters, Eden or Paradise, and Hades or Hell; the first of which invites the good, the second calls for the wicked.

And this interpretation is thought to be strengthened by ch. xxvii. 20; 'Hell and Destruction [Hades and the Grave] are never satisfied.' Paxton, on the other hand, contends that the common interpretation is in every respect entitled to the preference. Solomon, having in the preceding verses mentioned those that devoured the property of the poor, as the worst of all the generations he had specified, proceeds in the fifteenth verse, to state and illustrate the insatiable cupidity with which they prosecuted their schemes of rapine and plunder. As the horseleach hath two daughters, cruelty and thirst of blood, which cannot be satisfied; so, the oppressor of the poor has two dispositions, cruelty and avarice, which never say they have enough, but continually demand additional gratifications.

CASSIA.

In Exodus xxx. 24, Cassia is prescribed as one of the ingredients for composing the holy anointing oil. It is the bark of a tree of the bay tribe, which now grows chiefly in the East Indies. This bark was made known to the ancients, and highly esteemed by them; but, since the use of cinnamon has been generally adopted, the cassia bark has fallen into disrepute, on account of its inferiority. It is thicker and more coarse than cinnamon, of weaker quality, and abounds more with a viscid mucilaginous matter. For many purposes, however, Cassia, as being much less expensive, is substituted for cinnamon, but more particularly for the preparation of what is called oil of cinnamon.

Cassia was one of the articles of merchandise in the markets of Tyre, Ezek. xxvii. 10. The Cassia mentioned in Psalm xlv. 8, is thought to have been an extract, or essential oil, from the bark.

DANGERS OF A NOVA-SCOTIA FOG.

There are few things more provoking than the fogs off Halifax; for, as they happen to be companions of that very wind, the south-east, which is the best for running in, the navigator is plagued with the tormenting consciousness, that if he could be allowed but a couple of hours of clear weather, his port would be gained, and his troubles over.—The clearing up, therefore, of these odious clouds or veils is about the most delightful thing I know; and the instantaneous effect which a clear sight of the land, or even of the sharp horizon, when far at sea, has on the mind of every person on board, is quite remarkable. All things look bright, fresh,

and more beautiful than ever. The stir over the whole ship at these moments is so great that even persons sitting below can tell at once that the fog has cleared away. The rapid clatter of the men's feet, springing up the hatchways at the lively sound of the boatswains call to "make sail!" soon follows. Then comes the cheerful voice of the officer, hailing the topmen to shake out the reefs, trice up the stay sails, and rig out the booms. That peculiar and well known kind of echo, also, by which the sound of the voice is thrown back from the wet sails, contributes in like manner, to produce a joyous elasticity of spirits, greater, I think than is excited by most of the ordinary occurrences of a sea life.

A year or two after the time I am speaking of, it was resolved to place a heavy gun upon the rock on which Sambro light-house is built; and, after a good deal of trouble, a long twenty-four pounder was hoisted up to the highest ridge of this prominent station. It was then arranged that, if, on the arrival of any ship off the harbour, in a period of fog, she chose to fire guns, these were to be answered from the light-house, and in this way a kind of audible though invisible telegraph might be set to work. If it happened that the officers of the ship were sufficiently familiar with the ground, and possessed nerves stout enough for such a groping kind of navigation, perilous at best, it was possible to run fairly into the harbor, notwithstanding the obscurity, by watching the sound of these guns, and attending closely to the depth of water.

I never was in any ship which ventured upon this feat, but I perfectly recollect a curious circumstance, which occurred, I think, to his Majesty's ship *Cambrian*.—She had run in from sea towards the coast, enveloped in one of these dense fogs. Of course they took for granted that the light-house and the adjacent land Halifax included were likewise covered with an impenetrable cloud of mist. But it so chanced, by what freak of Dame Nature, I know not, that the fog, on that day, was confined to the deep water, so that we who were in the port, could see it at the distance of several miles from the coast lying on the ocean like a huge stratum of snow, with an abrupt face fronting the shore. The *Cambrian*, lost in the midst of this fog bank, supposing herself to be near the land, fired a gun. To this the light-house replied; and so the ship and the light went on pelting away, gun for gun, during half the day without ever seeing one another. The people at the light-house had no means of com-