

THE APTERYX, OR KIWI.

The apteryx, or kiwi, is a native of New Zealand, and is a very strange, weird bird. It has scarcely a trace of wings, and is on that account called apteryx, or wingless. It has very little similarity to other short winged birds. Its body is compact, its neck short but thick, the wings so stunted that they are scarcely visible, except in the skeleton. The plumage consists of long, lanceolate feathers, which are covered part of their length with shiny silken down. The quill portion of the feathers is very short. The general color of the apteryx is chestnut brown. The bird has no tail. The beak is long and curved; the nostrils, very small and narrow, are set on each side of the tip. The legs are very strong and short.

Not many years ago the apteryx was thought to be a fabulous bird, and its veritable existence was denied by scientific men. The first one brought to Europe was called the Apteryx Australis; it was killed in the forests of New Zealand, on the south-western coast. A second one from the same locality was carried to the British Museum.

Almost all the specimens found in collections now come from the North Island, and belong to another species (*Apteryx mantelli*). This bird is called kiwi by the natives. Bartlett says that this species is distinguished from the others by being somewhat smaller; it has also longer legs and shorter claws, and there are long bristly hairs on the head. The color of the plumage is darker and more reddish.

The kiwi lives in the uninhabited forest regions of the North Island but is wholly extinct in the inhabited regions, and is not very easily captured. Dieffenbach, who resided in New Zealand eighteen months only obtained only one skin although he offered large rewards to the natives.

The bird is found now most frequently in Little Barrier Island, a small uninhabited island covered with dense forests, situated in Hauraki Gulf, near Auckland, and in the forests of the mountain chain between Cape Palliser and the East Cape, on the Southeastern side of the North Island. This island consists of mountains about seven hundred metres high, is only accessible in a quiet sea, and the existence of these wingless birds there proves that it was once connected with the other part of the island. Two of these birds, male and female, were captured alive near the source of the Rocky and Slate Rivers, on a dangerous height a thousand metres above the sea. The natives carried them to Hochstetter, who paid five pounds sterling for them.

In the year 1861 Skeet found the kiwi very abundant upon the grassy mountain ridges on the eastern side of the Owen River. With the help of two dogs he caught every night from fifteen to twenty of these birds. He and his people subsisted upon their flesh.

These birds are nocturnal, and during the day hide in holes in the earth or under the roots of large trees, and only come forth at night to obtain their food. They live upon insects, larvae, worms, and the seeds of various plants. The natives hunt them only at night, and often bewilder them so with the glare of their torches that they can be caught by the hand or knocked down with sticks. They are remarkably fleet of foot, which makes up for the absence of wings. When running they take long strides, hold their body in an inclined position with the neck stretched out. They moved cautiously, and as noiselessly as a rat. If disturbed during the day they yawn frequently, and wrench their wide open jaws out of shape in the most singular manner. If provoked they raise their body to an erect position, lift up the foot to the breast, and strike with it their only but not insignificant weapon of defence. It has been said that they attract worms to the surface by striking on the ground with their powerful feet.

While in search of food they make a constant snuffling sound through the nostrils. It is doubtful whether they are guided by the sense of feeling or of smell. It is certain that the sense of feeling is strongly developed, for they touch every object with the point of their bill, whether they are eating or examining the ground. When they are confined in a room or cage, the snuffling sound is only heard during the night when they are in search of food or eating, and is not heard when they softly touch the walls of the cage. Buller has observed these imprisoned birds searching the ground in the immediate vicinity of a lost worm, without finding the morsel again, and has noticed that they are never able to take

straw is piled up in one corner. The kiwi conceals itself behind this straw during the day. If the keeper takes it out from its hiding place it looks puzzled for a time, but when it is placed on the ground it turns its back and runs back to the straw in the most absurd style. After the sun goes down it runs about in a lively manner, and thrusts its long bill into every corner.

The female in the London gardens has laid several eggs. The bird weighs a little more than four pounds, and the eggs, which are remarkably large, weigh between four and fifteen ounces.

"The skin of these birds is very tough, yet flexible, and the chiefs in New Zealand set great value upon it for the manufacture

my slate," said Caspar ruefully, "and then I tried to pass it at the candy-shop, and the lady shook her head, and when I offered it to the conductor of the car, he was quite cross, and asked me if I didn't know how to r. ad. When I said 'Yes, of course I did,' he pointed to a notice in big letters, 'No mutilated coin received here.' What shall I do with it?" finished the little fellow with a sigh.

"You have no idea who gave it to you, have you, Caspar?" said Bertie.

"Not the least. It is part of the change I had from Uncle John's Christmas gift to me."

"Well, you must be sharper next time. Now, if I were you, I would put it into the Missionary Box. The Society will work it off somehow."

"But I don't want to put a whole quarter in the box."

"It is not a whole quarter, Casp, it's a quarter that's had a hole in it. Nobody'll take it from you. You may just as well get rid of it in that way as any other."

Bertie and Caspar Hall were in their father's library when this conversation took place. They thought themselves alone. But just on the other side of a curtain which divided the room from the parlor, their little cousin Ethel was sitting. As Caspar moved towards the mantel where the family missionary box stood in plain sight, Ethel drew the curtain aside and spoke to him.

"Boys," she said, "I did not mean to listen but I could not help over-hearing you, and Caspar, dear, don't drop that quarter into the box, please."

"Why not, Ethel?"

"The Lord's money goes into that box."

Bertie looked up from his Latin grammar to meet the glowing face of the little girl. Her eyes were shining, and her lip quivered a little, but she spoke gravely.

"It was the lamb without blemish, don't you know that the Hebrews were to offer to the Lord. If you saw Jesus here in this room, you wouldn't like to say, 'I give this to Thee, because nobody else will have it.' It was gold, frankincense, and myrrh the wise men offered the infant Jesus."

The boys drew nearer Ethel. She went on.

"It isn't much we can give to him who gave himself to us, but I believe we ought to give him our best, and what costs us something. Excuse me, but it seems mean to drop a battered coin into God's treasury, just to get it out of sight."

Caspar and Bertie agreed with Ethel. They were about to do wrong from want of thought. Are there no older people who should remember that the Lord's money ought to be perfect, and of our best?—*M. E. Sangster.*

CHURCH MOORINGS.

An old sea captain was riding in the cars, and a young man sat down by his side. He said:

"Young man, where are you going?"

"I am going to Philadelphia to live."

"Have you letters of introduction?"

"Yes," said the young man, and he pulled some of them out.

"Well," said the old sea captain, "have you a church certificate?"

"O yes," replied the young man; "I did not suppose you desired to look at that."

"Yes," said the sea captain, "I want to see that. As soon as you reach Philadelphia present that to some Christian Church. I am an old sailor, and I have been up and down in the world; and it is my rule, as soon as I can get into port, to fasten my ship fore and aft to the wharf although it may cost a little wharfage, rather than have my ship out in the stream, floating hither and thither with the tide."—*Presbyterian.*



THE APTERYX, OR KIWI.

a piece of meat from the ground or from a vessel of water until they have touched it with the point of their bill.

It is very amusing to see the free birds searching for worms. They thrust their long bills in the soft ground, sinking it almost to the roots, and draw it forth immediately with a worm on the point of the bill. They never draw the worm from the ground suddenly, but are very careful not to mangle it. When they have laid the worm on the ground, they throw it into their jaws with a sudden motion and then swallow it. They consume insects and berries in the same way, and take up small stones.

In the London Zoological Gardens the cage of this bird is in a dark stall; some

of their state mantles, permitting no inferior person to wear them, and being extremely unwilling to part with them even for a valuable consideration.—*From Brehm's Animal Life.*

THE LORD'S MONEY.

"Bertie, Bertie, isn't this a shame!" cried little Caspar Deems, as he held up a silver quarter for his older brother Jim to look at.

It was a bright quarter, and at first sight there was nothing the matter with it, but closer inspection showed that it had been bored, and the hole had afterwards been carefully filled up.

"They wouldn't take it where I bought