

Yet thy voice, thy childish singing,  
 Soundeth ever in my ears ;  
 And I listen, and remember,  
 Till mine eyes will gather tears,  
 Thinking of thy pretty prattlings,  
 And thy childish words of love ;  
 But when I begin to murmur,  
 Then my spirit looks above,  
 Listens to the songs of spirits—  
 Listens, longing, wondering,  
 To the ceaseless glad Hosannas,  
 Angels at thy bridal sing.

*From the Greek of Ephraim Syrus.*

#### THE LEOPARD.

ALLUSION is made to this beautiful animal in several passages in the Bible, from which it is clear that the leopard was far from uncommon in certain parts of Palestine in ancient days. Unlike the case of the lion, which is now entirely extinct in the Holy Land, the leopard is still occasionally to be seen. The Hebrew term for "Leopard," with which the modern Arabic is identical, is *mâmêr*, and appears to have given names to certain places, such as to Nimrah and Beth-nimrah (the house of the leopard), mentioned in Numb. xxxii. 3, 36. Compare also, Isa xv. 5; Jer. xliii. 34. The exquisite beauty of the spots on the skin of the leopard could not help being an especial object of admiration amongst the Hebrews and Orientals generally; accordingly, the name *mâmêr*, or *nimr*—i. e., "spotted"—in most of the Oriental languages, is used to designate the active and beautiful creature. The dark and glossy rosettes which beset its yellow skin are alluded to by the prophet Jeremiah—"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" The marvellous activity of the leopard is mentioned by Habakkuk (i. 8), who compares the swiftness of the horses of the Chaldean army to these animals. They are also celebrated for their cunning and insidious habits, being as crafty in the pursuit of their prey as foxes are in our own land. A leopard will frequently take up his quarters in some secret lurking-place near to a village, and lie in wait therein for any animal that may chance to come in his way. As night advances he will leave his ambush, and proceed to the village in search of fowls, lambs, or other prey, and often it is most difficult to discover the whereabouts of the cunning marauder. To this habit of lying concealed, watching for opportunities of plunder, the prophet Jeremiah alludes in the words—"A leopard shall watch over their cities" (v. 6); and Hosea—"As a leopard by the way will I observe them."

From a passage in that beautiful but little understood book of the Canticles, or Song of Solomon, as it is more generally called, it appears that in Biblical times leopards were not uncommon about Lebanon. The shepherd spouse addresses his faithful Shulamite wife as follows—"Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards." In the wooded ravines of the Lebanon, lions, wolves, bears, and leopards had their lairs.

Miss E. A. Beaufort tells a curious story of a leopard or panther in her interesting book, "Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines"—a story which, although in some of its parts it savours of legend, may be readily credited so far as relates to the case of the panther. The story is as follows:—"A Russian hermit used to live on the top of Mount Tabor" (the very locality which Burkhardt speaks of as containing leopards); "he was the son of the Archimandrite of a monastery in the Crimea, and took holy orders at a very early age, the intention being that he should succeed his father at the head of the brethren. Soon after he had settled down in this quiet life, a dream or vision, as he thought, appeared to him, in which he saw a mountain of most peculiar form, and heard a voice say to him, 'Arise, my son, and behold thy home upon earth!' The dream was repeated seven nights running (!), and at last the dreamer did arise. He knew not where to go to find the mountain, and no one gave him any information about it. However, he set out, and went first to Mount Athos; there was no mountain there like that he had seen in his dream. Then he went to Mount Sinai, and then to Mount Ararat, in Georgia; but none answered to the picture in the dream. He travelled far into the east, then into the west: eleven years of travelling, and at last he stood before Mount Tabor. 'This is it,' he said; 'I have found it. This is the strange shape I saw in my dream; I have sought and found nothing like this.' So he ascended the mountain, and never left it again. Many years he lived there, studying, and praying, and doing all kinds of good works; attending to the sick, and labouring among the peasants and shepherds around him. They soon loved him with grateful affection, and sought him in every sorrow and difficulty and he never wearied of administering to them. One winter's day a noble panther approached the cave in which he lived; he threw him a piece of bread, and the panther crouched down at his feet. He soon became quite tame, and thenceforth, wherever the hermit went, the beautiful creature was seen at his side, following him like a dog. Mr. Rogers, the English Consul at Haiffa, who told me this story, frequently saw them together on the mountain; he had learned the history of the dream and of his wanderings from the hermit himself. He lived to be very old, but had died about two years previous to our visit to Mount Tabor."

Such instances of friendship between man and an animal, in its wild and savage state, are certainly most unusual; but it is impossible to deny the truth of this latter portion of the story, considering the evidence which supports it; nor should we be too anxious to limit the effects which an act of kindness to even a brute creature may have upon its natural habits and temperament.

Leopards are found in Africa and Asia; the jaguar—the largest of the tribe—is the representative of the family in America. The whole group is frequently arboreal in their habits, and climb up trees with most surprising agility. The black leopard of Java is generally considered only a variety of the common leopard, or *Leopardus varius*.