

POETRY.

THE AULD MAN'S FAREWELL TO HIS WEE HOUSE.

BY HOGG, THE STRICK SHEPHERD.

I like ye weel, my wee auld house,
Though laigh thy wa's and flat thy riggin',
Though roun' thy lun' the sourcock grows,
An rain draps gaw thy cozy biggin'.

Lang hast thou happit mino an' me,
My head's grown grey aneath thy kipple,
An' aye thy inglo cheek was free
Bath to the blind man and the cripple.

What gart my ewes thrive on the hill,
An' kept my little store increasin'?
The rich man never wished me ill,
The poor man left me aye his blessin'.

Troth I maun greet wi' thee to part,
Though to a better house I'm sittin';
Sic joys will never glad my heart
As I've had by thy hallan sittin'.

My bonny bairns around me emil'd;
My sony wife sat by me spinnin';
Aye litin' o'er her duties wild,
In notes sae artless an' sae winnin'.

Our frugal meal was aye a feast;
Our o'ning psalm a hymn o' joy,
Aye calm an' peacefu' was our rest;
Our bliss, our love, without alloy.

I canna help but haud thee dear,
My auld storm-batter'd hamely shielin',
Thy sooty lum an' kipples clear,
I better loe than gaudy ceilin'.

Thy roof will fa', thy rafters start,
How damp and cauld thy hearth will be!
Ah! sae will soon ilk honest heart,
That erst was bauld and blythe in thee!

I thought to cour aneath thy wa',
Till death had closed my weary een,
Then left thee for the narrow ha',
Wi' lowly roof o' swaird sae green.

Fareweel, my house an' burnie clear,
My bourtrees bush, an' bouzy tree,
The wee while I maun sojourn here
I'll never find a lame like thee.

* Chimney.

MISCELLANY.

GULLS.

When people talk of certain persons being easily gulled, or that they are stupid gulls, meaning that they are of a simple credulous character, and may be imposed upon with impunity, they follow a very erroneous idea of considerable standing, namely, that the species of sea-birds, known by the name of gulls, possess an intelligence inferior to the rest of the feathered tribes. There could be nothing more unfair as respects the genus and habits of these poor animals. Instead of being stupid, or over-simple, the gull is a right knowing bird, active in his pursuits, and wise in his contrivances. Those who have any doubts on the subject may be referred to the recently published volume of American Ornithology by Audubon. This enterprising naturalist gives us some amusing sketches of the different descriptions of gulls on the North American coast, from Florida to Labrador, from which it appears that these birds are ever on the watch for self-preservation from man's rapacity, and ingenious and persevering in their schemes both while seeking for food and choosing localities for their habitation. Speaking of the Herring Gulls, at White Head Island, in the Bay of Fundy, the author expresses

his surprise on finding that these birds had changed their natural habits of building nests on the ground to placing them on the branches of trees. "I was greatly surprised (says he) to see the nets placed on the branches, some near the top, others about the middle or on the lower parts of the trees, while at the time there were many on the ground. It is true I had been informed of this by our captain, but I had almost believed, that, on arriving at the spot, I should find the birds not to be gulls. My doubts, however, were now dispelled, and I was delighted to see how strangely nature had provided them with the means of securing their eggs and young from their arch-enemy man. My delight was greatly increased on being afterwards informed by Mr. Frankland that the strange habit in question had been acquired by these gulls within his recollection, for, said he, 'when I first came here, many years ago, they all built their nests on the moss, and in open ground; but as my sons and the fishermen collected most of their eggs for winter use, and sadly annoyed the poor things, the old ones gradually began to put their nests on the trees in the thickest parts of the woods. The youngest birds, however, still have some on the ground, and the whole are becoming less wild since I have forbidden strangers to rob their nests; for, gentlemen, you are the only persons out of my family that have fired a gun on White Head Island for several years past, and I daresay you will not commit any greater havoc among them than is necessary, and to that you are welcome.' I was much pleased with the humanity of our host, and requested him to let me know when all the gulls, or the greater part of them, would abandon the trees and resume their former mode of breeding on the ground, which he promised to do. But I afterwards found that this was not likely to happen, because, on some other islands, not far distant, to which the fishermen and eggers have free access, these gulls breed altogether on the trees, even when their eggs and young are regularly removed every year, so that their original habits have been entirely given up. My opinion, that, after being thus molested for some time longer, they may resort to the inaccessible shelves of the high rocks of these Islands, was strengthened by Mr. Frankland's informing me that many pairs had already taken refuge in such places, where they bred in perfect security. The most remarkable effect produced by these changes of locality is, that the young which are hatched on the trees or high rocks, do not leave their nests until they are able to fly, while those on the ground run about in less than a week, and hide themselves at the sight of man among the moss and plants, which frequently saves them from being carried away. The young on the trees are shaken out of their nests, or knocked down with poles, their flesh being considered as very good by the fishermen and eggers, who collect and salt them for winter provision.

Shy and wary in as great a degree as the black-backed gull is, (continues Mr. Audubon), they were with difficulty obtained, unless we approach them under cover. The least noise made them instantly leave their perch; and although there were six of us, each furnished with a good gun, and some sufficiently expert, not more than a dozen were killed that day, and all of them while flying. The moment one started, it would sound an alarm, on which hundreds would rise and sail over us, at such a height that it was useless to shoot at them. Now and then, one accidentally passing low over the woods, was brought down. While returning in the evening, we shot one at a great height, having merely broken the tip of its wing. Having caught it, we placed it on the narrow path, on which it ran before us nearly

to the house of the governor, as Capt. Frankland is called. It offered no resistance, but bit severely, and now and then lay down to rest for a few moments. It ran fast enough to keep several yards before us, cackling all the while, and once suddenly made off from the path at a rapid rate."

The above traits of character do not indicate anything like either stupidity or simplicity on the part of the gull; and its reasoning power on cause and effect—or what the phonologists call Causality—is pleasingly illustrated by the author when describing the manner in which it procures its food, which is principally the fry of the herring. "They also feed on other fishes of small size, shrimps, crabs, and shellfish, as well as on young birds and small quadrupeds, and suck all the eggs they can find. The rocky shores of the islands on which I found them breeding are covered with multitudes of sea-urchins, having short greenish spines, which give them the semblance of a ball of moss. At low-water, the herring gulls frequently devour these animals, thrusting their bill through the shell, and sucking its contents. They also take up shells in the air, and drop them on the rocks to break them. We saw one that had met with a very hard mussel, take it up and drop it three times in succession, before it succeeded in breaking it, and I was much pleased to see the bird let it fall each succeeding time from a greater height than before."

Let no one after this imagine that gull is an appropriate synonyme for blockhead.

ANIMAL FUEL.—Animal matter is sometimes, although rarely, used as fuel. The Arabs, however, who dwell in that part of their country bordering on Egypt, must be regarded as forming, in some degree, an exception to the remark; for they draw no inconsiderable portion of the fuel with which they cook their victuals, from the exhaustless chimney-pits so often described by travellers. The extremely dry state of the bodies, and the inflammable nature of the matters with which they have been saturated, during the process of embalming, render them exceedingly convenient for the above purpose. We have a still more striking instance: wood was formerly so scarce at Buenos Ayres, and cattle so plentiful, that sheep were actually driven into the furnaces of lime-kilns, in order to answer the purposes of fuel. This fact could hardly have been mentioned as credible, however undoubted, if a decree of the King of Spain, prohibiting this barbarous custom, were not still preserved in the archives of Buenos Ayres.—*History of Fossil Fuel.*

ORIGIN OF THE TERM DUNNING.—Some falsely think it comes from the French, where *dunnez* signifies "give me," implying a demand for something due; others from *dunan* (Saxon), "to thunder;" but the true origin of this expression owes its birth to one Joe-Dunn, a famous bulliff of Lincoln, so extremely active, and so dexterous at the management of his rough business, that it became a proverb, when a man refused to pay his debts, to say, "Why don't you Dunn him?" that is, "Why don't you send Dunn to arrest him." Hence it grew into a custom, and is now as old as since the days of Henry VIII.

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