

# THE SASSANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## BATS.

THERE is probably no more repulsive looking animal than the bat. So ugly is it that in ancient times it was pronounced unclean, and naturalists were entirely ignorant of its characteristics, calling it a kind of bird, and this erroneous idea many persons still entertain. The bat has very strong organs for flight but they are entirely different from those of a bird. They can fly to a considerable height and with great rapidity, but are very clumsy on the ground.

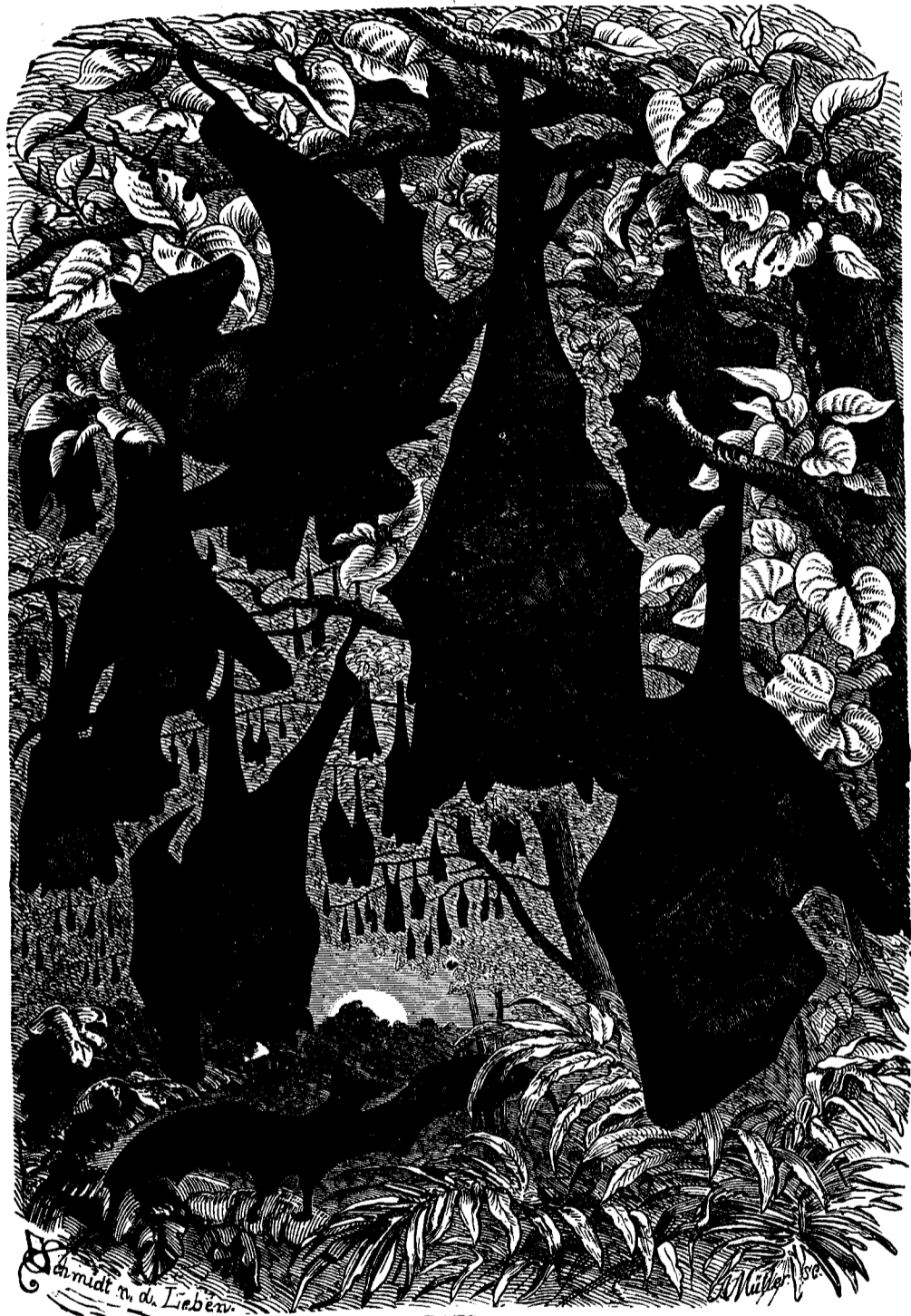
When the animal tries to walk the wings are shut and become forefeet. They have hands with long fingers and two short thumbs with a hook at the end of each with which they cling to some object, and by it the body is pulled forward to one side, the next step being by a similar movement of the other thumb.

The illustration shows their mode of resting when tired by some long flight. They seek some dark retreat from the top of which they can suspend themselves, head downwards by their hind claws. Very often the limbs of trees answer this purpose, as shown in our picture. That bats have very small eyes, we all know, from the familiar expression "as blind as a bat." However, compensation is made for their semi-blindness by their very acute sense of hearing.

They have also a remarkably fine sense of touch. So sensitive are they to this sense of touch that the great naturalist Spallanzani believed them to have a sixth sense. He found that they could fly in the dark, avoiding every obstacle, even after the eyes were put out and the ears and nose completely stopped up. It was afterwards discovered however, that this exquisite sense of touch resides in the flying membrane, forming a surface entirely disproportionate to the size of the body; to increase its sensitiveness it is entirely destitute of hair. The bat is thus made acquainted with the distance of bodies by the different modifications impressed upon this membrane by the impulse of the air. Bats are nocturnal animals and avoid the light and noise of the day, but on mild summer nights they leave their retreats and fly forth in search of prey. Much of the time they live in a kind of stupor and even when in flight they become an easy prey, themselves, to owls, and other birds of night, and any snare that may be set for them.

## A TRUE STORY.

ABOUT seventy years ago, there lived in the eastern part of Pennsylvania a little boy named Abram H—. Like boys now-a-days, Abram liked to see all the sights; and so one beautiful autumn day his father took him to the neighbouring village to see the soldiers drill, as it was the annual "training day." Nearly everybody in those days drank whiskey, even the children being taught to drink it; and in almost every cellar a big barrel of the awful stuff was



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kept. On these "training days" there was a good deal of drinking, many of the men going home drunk. Little Abram saw these drunken men the day he went to the training; and when he got home he said to his mother, after telling her of the things he had seen: "Ma, I am never going to drink a single drop of whiskey nor use a bit of tobacco as long as I live." His mother said: "I am glad to hear you say that. You shall be my little temperance boy." This was the first temperance speech he made. Don't you think it was a good one?

About ten years after this, Abram, now a boy of seventeen, left his home and went on foot over the mountains to Pittsburg, a

journey of two hundred miles. Here he hired out to a sign painter, and began to learn the business.

It was the custom in the shop for the workmen to send one of their apprentice boys every day for a quart of whiskey, which they brought in an old stone jug. Of course, when Abram began working in the shop as an apprentice boy, the men sent him after the whiskey. He went two or three times, and then made up his mind that he would not go again, as he felt that it was not right.

The next day, while Mr. Jones, the owner of the shop, was at dinner, one of the men handed a shilling to Abram, and ordered him to go for the whiskey, which

he refused to do, saying that it was not right, and he would bring no whiskey for them to drink. This made the man very angry, and while he was talking very loud, and threatening to whip Abram unless he went, Mr. Jones, the proprietor, came in, and asked what the trouble was. Abram said: "Mr. Jones, I came into your shop to learn to paint signs, not to help make men drunkards. I am willing to do all the honourable work I can, but I will not carry whiskey for these men to drink. If I can't stay here unless I do this, why, then, I will leave."

Mr. Jones said nothing for a moment; then, seizing the whiskey jug, he smashed it to pieces on the hard floor, and exclaimed: "The last drop of liquor has come into this shop that ever shall with my consent. This boy has preached me a temperance sermon that I shall never forget; and I shall never touch another drop of liquor."

This was Abram's second temperance speech, and what a brave, noble speech it was! Now, I want to tell you something curious that happened fifty years later.

Abram learned the painting business, and became a fine workman. After this, he moved to Ohio, where he lives now, respected by all who know him. About a year ago, Abram, or as will now call him, Mr. H—, now an old man of seventy-two, went with his wife to visit a son in Pittsburg. One day, while there, he went to a "Murphy" temperance meeting, which was held in one of the largest churches. After speeches had been made by a number of gentlemen, an old man, with long white hair and beard, went to the platform, and said:

"I have been a temperance man ever since I was a young man; and I was led into being one by the brave stand taken by a boy who was learning the painter's trade in my shop fifty years ago." The old gentleman then went on and told of the scene in his shop, which I have told you.

While he was speaking, Mr. H— asked a gentleman, sitting by his side, who the speaker was. "That," said the man, "is Mr. Jones, an old citizen of Pittsburg."

Mr. H— said: "Tell them that the boy he tells of is in the house."

The gentleman sprang up, and interrupting the speaker, said: "The boy who led you into being a temperance man is here by my side."

Such a scene of excitement as then took place was hardly ever witnessed in a church. Mr. H— was almost carried up the long aisle to the platform, and was there introduced as "that boy."

Then he had to tell the story over again; and also told of the first temperance speech he ever made—the one I told you of his making to his mother when a little boy about six years old.

After he got through, Mr. Jones greeted him very warmly, and said, with tears in his eyes: "It was your noble stand against bringing whiskey for the workmen that day, that, with the blessing of God, saved me from being a drunkard, and everything I am I owe to those noble words."