

man, and resorting to the reedy margins of some lonely lake, or broad reach of a river. The summer-duck of America has similar habits, but more delights in woods. I have often been charmed, when standing by the edge of some darkling stream, bordered with lofty trees that so overhang the water as nearly to meet, leaving only a narrow line of sky above the centre of the river, with the sight of the coy summer-duck. When the western sky is burning with golden flame, and its gleam, reflected from the middle of "the dark, the silent stream," throws into blacker shadow the placid margins, then, from out of the indistinct obscurity, a whirring of wings is heard, and the little duck shoots plashing along the surface into the centre, leaving a long V-shaped wake behind her, till, rising into the air, she sails away on rapid pinion till the eye loses her in the sunset glow.

On other occasions we trace the same bird far up in the solitudes of the sky, breaking into view out of the objectless expanse, and presently disappearing in the same blank. We wonder whence it came; whither it is going. Bryant's beautiful stanzas, though well known, will bear repetition here:—

#### TO A WATER-FOWL.

Whither, 'midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,  
Far through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue  
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,  
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,  
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,  
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—  
The desert and illimitable air,—  
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fann'd,  
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,  
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end.  
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,  
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,  
Soon, o'er thy shelter'd nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
Hath swallow'd up thy form; yet, on my heart,  
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.

The ostrich is remarkably shy and wary. A native of wide sandy plains, its stature enables it to command a wide horizon, while its great fleetness makes the chase a most severe exercise. "When she lifteth herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider." The rheas, which are the representatives of the ostrich in South America, inhabit regions presenting many of the characteristics of the African plains, and have much the same habits. They are extraordinarily vigilant, and so swift of foot, that it is only by surrounding them from various quarters, and thus confusing the birds, who know not whither to run, that the Gauchos are able to entangle them with the bolas or weighted cord. Mr. Darwin says that the bird takes alarm at the approach of man, when he is so far off as to be unable to discern the bird.

Ancient writers mention a species of ox as inhabiting the forests of Europe, which they call the urus. It is described as being of a most savage and untamable disposition, delighting in the most wild and reclusive parts of the forest, of vast size and power. It is generally believed that this race is preserved in some semi-wild oxen of a pure white colour, which inhabit one or two extensive woodland parks in the northern parts of our own island. It is interesting to observe the effect which the presence of man produces upon these animals. On the appearance of any person, the herd sets off at full gallop, and,

at the distance of two or three hundred yards, they make a wheel round, and come boldly up again, tossing their heads in a menacing manner; on a sudden they make a full stop, at the distance of forty or fifty yards, looking wildly at the object of their surprise; but, upon the least motion being made, they all again turn round and fly off with equal speed, but not to the same distance; forming a shorter circle, and again returning with a bolder and more threatening aspect than before, they approach much nearer, probably within thirty yards, when they make another stand, and again fly off; this they do several times, shortening their distance, and advancing nearer, till they come within ten yards; when most people think it prudent to leave them, not choosing to provoke them further; for there is little doubt but, in two or three turns more, they would make an attack.

The cows and calves partake of this jealous seclusion. When the former bring forth, it is in some sequestered thicket, where the calf is carefully concealed until it is able to accompany its dam, who, till that time, visits it regularly twice or thrice a day. Should accident bring a person near the secret place, the calf immediately claps its head upon the ground, and seeks concealment by lying close like a hare in its form. A hidden calf of only two days old, on being disturbed, manifested its inborn wildness in a remarkable manner. On the stranger stroking its head, it sprang to its feet, though very lean and very weak, pawed two or three times like an old bull, bellowed very loud, stepped back a few paces, and bolted at his legs with all its force; it then began to paw again, bellowed, stepped back and bolted as before. The observer, however, now knowing its intention, stepped aside, so that it missed its aim and fell, when it was so very weak that it could not rise, though it made several efforts to do so. But it had done enough; the whole herd had taken the alarm, and, coming to its rescue, obliged the intruder to retire.

In the forests of Lithuania there yet linger a few herds of another enormous ox, which at one time roamed over the whole of Europe, including even the British Isles—the European bison. The great marshy forest of Bialowicza, in which it dwells, is believed to be the only example of genuine primeval or purely natural forest yet remaining in Europe, and the habits of the noble ox are in accordance with the prestige of his ancient domain.

A few years ago the Czar of Russia presented a pair of half-grown animals of this species to the Zoological Society of London; and a very interesting memoir on their capture, by M. Dolmatoff, was published in their *Proceedings*. A few extracts from that paper will illustrate the seclusion of their haunts and manner. "The day was magnificent, the sky serene, there was not a breath of wind, and nothing interrupted that calm of nature which was so imposing under the majestic dome of the primitive forest. Three hundred trackers, supported by fifty hunters, had surrounded, in profound silence, the solitary valley where the herd of bisons were found. Myself, accompanied by thirty other hunters, the most resolute and skilful, had penetrated in Indian file the circle, advancing with the utmost precaution, and almost fearing to breathe. Arrived at the margin of the valley, a most interesting spectacle met our eyes. The herd of bisons were lying down on the slope of a hill, ruminating in the most perfect security, while the calves frolicked around the herd, amusing themselves by attacking one another, striking the ground with their agile feet, and making the earth fly into the air; then they would rush towards their respective dams, rub against them, lick them, and return to their play. But at the first blast of the horn the picture changed in the twinkling of an eye. The herd, as if touched with a magic wand, bounded to their feet, and seemed to concentrate all their faculties in two senses, those of sight and hearing. The calves pressed timidly against their mothers. Then, while the forest re-echoed with bellowings, the bisons proceeded to assume the order which they always take under such circumstances, putting the calves in front to guard them from the attack of pursuing dogs, and carrying them before. When they reached the line occupied by the trackers and hunters, they were received with loud shouts and discharges of guns. Immediately the order of battle was changed; the old bulls rushed furiously towards the side, burst through the line of the hunters, and continued their victorious course, bounding along, and disdainingly to occupy themselves with their enemies, who were lying close against the trees. The hunters managed, however, to separate from the herd two calves; one of these, three months old, was taken at one effort, another of fifteen months, though seized by eight trackers, overturned them all, and fled." It was subsequently taken, as were five others, in another part of the forest, one of them only a few days old. The savage impatience of man manifested by these young sylvans, was in the ratio of their age and sex. The bull of fifteen months maintained for a long time its sullen and morose behaviour; it became furious at the approach of man, tossing its head, lashing its tail, and presenting its horns. After a while, however, it became tolerant of its keeper, and was allowed a measure of liberty.