

THE MARABOU AND SECRETARY BIRD.

These birds are esteemed for their usefulness—the one as scavenger, devouring such things as might putrefy and breed disease in a hot country if left upon the ground, the other for destroying noxious serpents.

The Marabou, also known as the Adjutant, is allied to the stork, and is a native of India and the Asiatic Islands. It is also found in the tropical parts of Africa, where it frequents the vicinity of the negro villages and assists the vultures in their avocation of clearing away garbage. It is from this African species, rather smaller than the Indian Adjutant, that the beautiful plumes known as Marabou feathers, and which grow under its wings, are obtained, those imported into Europe coming chiefly from Senegal in the western part of Africa, where they are plucked from the bird at the proper seasons.

It is a rather ungainly-looking bird, standing over five feet high, and measuring from the tip of each outstretched wing not less than fourteen feet. The head and neck are nearly bare, the beak extremely large, long, and strong; and under it hangs a downy pouch or bag like a dew-lap, which is capable of being inflated. The upper part of this bird is of an ashy gray color, the under part white. It is not only an exceedingly greedy bird, but manages to swallow at one mouthful a rabbit, a fowl, or even a small leg of mutton. And when domesticated, its habits of purloining render it necessary to keep all kinds of provisions out of its reach.

In India, where they feed on lizards and various reptiles as well as all kinds of filth, it has on this account secured the good-will of the people. In the large cities of Hindostan they are as tame as dogs, and clean the streets of every kind of rubbish that litters them. And at meal-time they never fail to draw themselves up in line in front of the barracks to eat the refuse thrown to them by the soldiers. Their gluttony is so great that they will swallow enormous bones. At Calcutta and Chandernagore they are protected by the law, which inflicts a fine of ten guineas or any one killing a Marabou.

In their wild state they live in companies, and when seen at a distance near the mouths of the rivers, coming toward an observer—which it is said they often do with outspread wings—they may be taken for canoes upon the surface of a smooth sea; or when on the sand-banks, appear like men and women picking up shells. They are so peaceable in manner, and so inclined to become familiar, that there is little difficulty in taming them.

Dr. Latham, who resided in Smeathman, gives an account of a young one brought up tame in that part of Africa. He says: "The bird always took its place at dinner-time in the great hall behind its master's chair, where it remained in expectation of its usual share in the meal. The servants had some difficulty in protecting the dishes from its attack previously to the arrival of the guests. They carried switches for the purpose, but it would frequently watch its opportunity and snatch some favorite

morsel before they were aware of it. In this way it has been known to swallow an entire-boiled fowl at one mouthful. It was permitted to fly at large about the island, and roosted very high among the silk-cotton trees, from the top of which, even at the distance of two or three miles, it would espy the servant carrying the dishes across the yard and dash down among them as they entered the hall." A rather doubtful sort of pet, we think.

The attitudes of these birds are curious, and frequently not a little ludicrous, for at rest they either stand up on one leg with the neck—which is bare of feathers—withdrawn and the bill drawn toward the breast in a stupid sort of way, or else sit upon the ground with one or both legs directed straight before them. But when excited, they elongate their necks and stand at their full height, menacing with their large bills, which, however, are too light to inflict any serious injury even had the bird courage enough to attempt it.

The illustration gives a view of a Marabou awkwardly seated on the ground, and a Secretary-eater, or Secretary Bird, standing

their venomous bites, and waits till it finds an opportunity to spurn or tread on its adversary, or take him on its pinions and toss him up into the air. When it has at last thus wearied him out, it kills and devours him at leisure. Small serpents are swallowed entire, the larger ones torn to pieces.

The Secretary is most frequently seen in pairs or solitary. They pair about July, the male bird having first engaged in sanguinary conflict for the choice of his mate. Their nest, which is flat and lined on the inside with down and feathers, is constructed in the thickest bushes or on the loftiest trees, in which two or three eggs of a whitish hue, spotted with red, are laid. The young ones are very late in leaving their nest, for they are slow in acquiring full development, it being nearly four months before they are able to stand firmly and run about with complete freedom.

This bird is easily tamed when taken young. The colonists have made a domestic bird of it to protect their poultry against the incursions of serpents and rats. With the inhabitants of the poultry-yard it is on good terms, and when it sees any of them

CONVINCING ARGUMENTS.

"Another good man gone wrong, Harry," said his fellow clerk as he read of a prominent man whose accounts fell short, and whose name was on a church roll. "An excellent man, they say he was, in the Sunday-school and prayer meeting."

"I generally think, in such cases, that the heading should be, as some papers state it, 'Another bad man gone right.' The State Prison seems the right place for any man who makes religion a cloak for dishonesty."

"There seems to be a good deal of that kind of cloaking going on these times."

"It seems to me there is but little, considering the good repute in which Christian character is held. I should suppose every sharper would try and assume it."

"I think you are mistaken there. I have often heard men say that for downright hard bargains and taking the advantage when it could be safely done, commend them the church members."

"Talk is cheap. When any of these people want a reliable man for a most important trust they do not hunt around among the infidel, profane, Sabbath-breaking men

of their acquaintance to find him. Irreligious men have a standard of honesty so much higher, why don't you occasionally see such head lines as these: 'Another unbeliever gone wrong!' 'Another Sabbath-breaking defaulter!' 'Nobody would think of it as an incongruity even, or worth putting in capitals. Nor was it thought at all remarkable when a murderer lately boasted on the scaffold that he was a disciple of Ingersoll.'"

"You claim that these good people who go wrong are not the genuine sort."

"Certainly, they are only counterfeit. There must be true coin somewhere, or nobody would take the trouble to imitate it."

"There is a good deal of counterfeit in circulation, in my opinion."

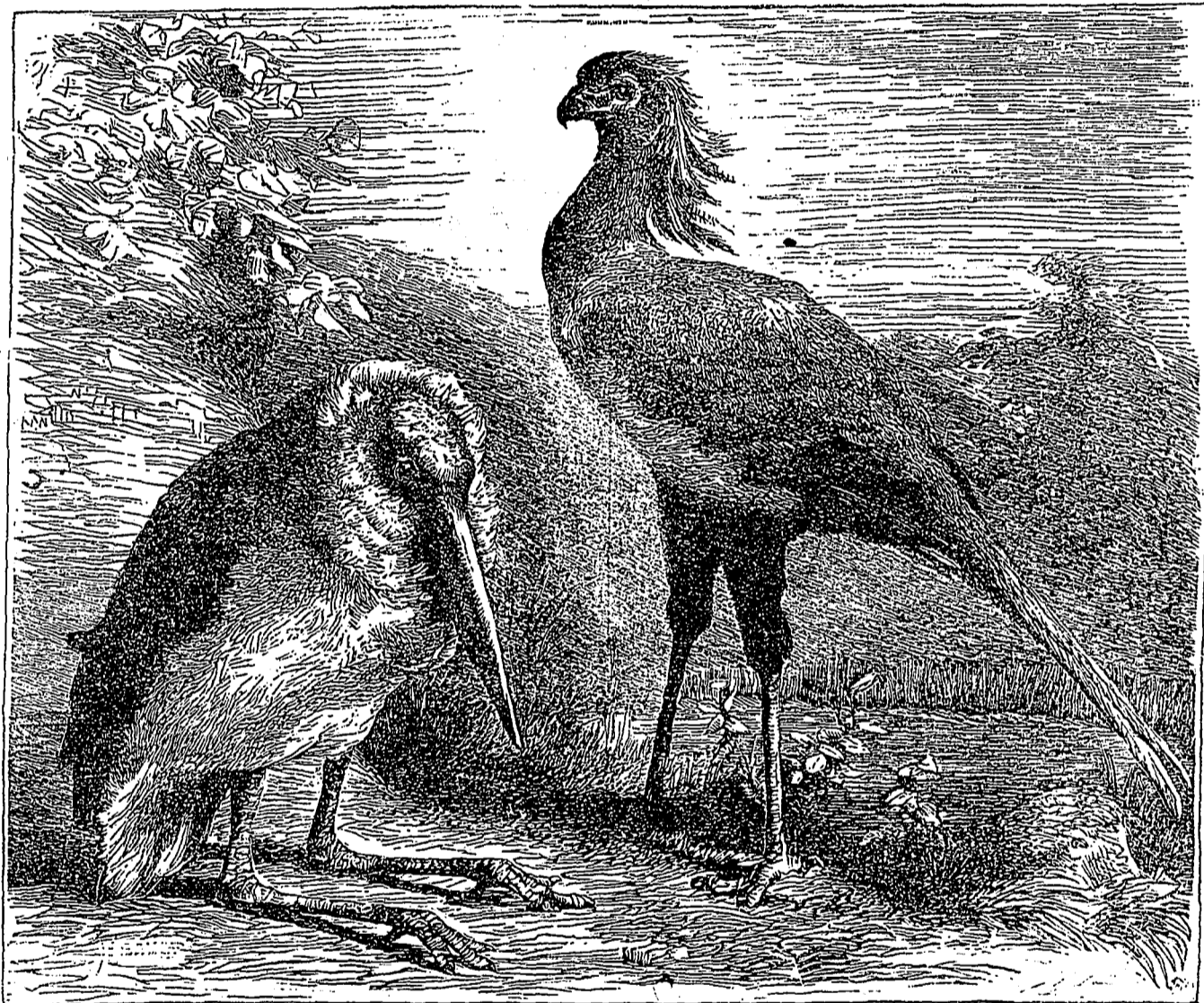
"I presume there is, and yet there is but little compared with the genuine coin in every day use."

To change the figure, we are told that 'tares and wheat will grow together until the harvest,' but that is nothing against the wheat. Have you been so unlucky in your life as never to have known a thoroughly good person?"

"Oh, not so bad as that, Harry; I don't quite forget my father, nor what I owe to good Mr. Lyman, who has befriended me these half dozen years. They were both true gold, if they were true blue as well."

"One good fact is worth a dozen arguments. You can't gainsay such lines. But I can tell you a more convincing way still of satisfying yourself on the question. Test it personally. One grain of experience can outweigh all that the world can pile on to the opposite scale. It isn't a matter of much moment whether you believe that such a sovereign as Queen Victoria reigns on the other side of the water, but it is a matter of most serious importance whether you believe in the God that rules this world, and whether you acknowledge his claims upon you."

"How do you come by such a fund of



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at its full height. This latter bird was a puzzle to naturalists to classify, its long legs being like the wading-birds, while in other respects it was more like the vultures, with which it is now classified. It feeds exclusively on reptiles, and is a native of Africa, Asia, and the Philippine Islands.

The Secretary Vulture, which is said to have received its name from the early Dutch settlers on account of the pendent feathers on the back of the head, which reminded them of the pens stuck behind the ears of writing-clerks, is about three feet in length, the plumage a bluish gray color, and feeds principally on various reptiles, which it devours in great numbers. It is indeed so highly valued on account of the constant war it wages against serpents that a fine is inflicted in the Cape Colony for shooting it. It fearlessly attacks the most venomous serpents, stunning them with blows of its wings. The wings, which are short and provided with long protuberances, are most destructive weapons, and the bird uses them with much skill to disable the serpents. On approaching them it carries forward the point of one of its wings in order to parry

quarrelling it will run to part the combatants. It must be confessed, however, that unless well fed it does not scruple to help itself to a plump chicken.

Figuier says that in 1832 the Secretary Bird was introduced into the French West Indies, particularly Guadeloupe and Martinique, on purpose to make war upon the rattlesnakes, a dangerous reptile swarming in those countries. The introduction of the Secretary into the Antilles also proved to be a real benefit.

Here we have two birds that seem especially endowed by our Heavenly Father to serve man by consuming garbage and devouring such creatures, which, if left to increase too rapidly, would become a terror to the inhabitants of those countries; and yet such reptiles are necessary in their turn to destroy other vermin. And thus we find in nature a perfect law controlling all things. —*Illus Chris. Weekly.*

TRUST the people—the wise and the ignorant, the good and the bad—with the gravest questions, and in the end you educate the race.