

will be shown to be important by the leaders of science, is to be refused owing to the trifling expenditure it will occasion, let us be told so at once; and let not those who would advocate any iniquitous war with China or Japan, in pursuit of the main chance, protest against the imaginary risk of a scientific expedition. M'Clintock's voyage, and he was absent two years and a half, cost £8400. Parry's attempt to reach the Pole cost £9900. The actual expense of a Polar expedition up Smith Sound, consisting of two of those numerous 60-horse power gunboats which are now lying idle, or being sold to be broken up, would not exceed £30,000. Now if the solution of the greatest geographical problem that remains to be solved, and the attainment of those scientific results which have already been enumerated, are not considered worth the expenditure of so trifling a sum—an expenditure which would be richly and abundantly repaid—the character of the English people must be strangely altered. Certain it is that our forefathers would have held that such a sum appropriated for such an end was money well spent; and there is good reason for the belief that if the subject receives full and fair consideration, the public opinion of the country will now approve the despatch of a North Polar expedition. During the last ten years the sum of £150,000,000 has been spent upon the navy, out of which only a 230th part has gone to the scientific department of the profession. Surely it is not much to ask that this infinitesimal proportion should be imperceptibly augmented, in order that an important and valuable service may be performed!

An expedition for North Polar discovery, by way of Smith Sound, will yield most useful scientific results, will add largely to the sum of human knowledge, while it will run no risk of a catastrophe such as that which befel the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror." For these reasons it deserves such cordial support from the public opinion of the country as will induce the Government to undertake it. When it is remembered how beneficial are the indirect advantages invariably derived from voyages of discovery, and how important it is that naval officers should have some nobler career opened to them, in times of peace, than the ceaseless round of holystoning decks and cleaning brass work, an interest will be felt in these voyages, even by men who do not personally appreciate their scientific results. The same enterprise, courage, endurance, and presence of mind are required to conduct an Arctic expedition as to face an enemy in the field; but in the former case those qualities are exercised in advancing civilization, extending knowledge, and exciting friendly sympathy and interest throughout the world; in the latter, they are wasted in the deplorable operations of war.—*Intellectual Observer.*

### Leaves from Gosse's Romance of Natural History.

#### THE RECLUSE.

There are regions where the presence of man is a thing so totally out of experience, that the wild animals manifest no sort of dread of him when he does by accident intrude on their solitude. In the Galapagos Islands, perhaps the most singular land in the world, all the animals appear quite devoid of the fear of man. Cowley, in 1684, observed that the doves there "were so tame that they would often alight on our hats and arms, so as that we could take them alive." Darwin saw a boy sitting by a well with a switch, with which he killed the doves and finches as they came to drink. He had already obtained a heap of them for his dinner, and he said he had been constantly in the habit of doing this. The naturalist himself says that a mocking-bird alighted on the edge of a pitcher which he held in his hand, and began quietly to sip the water;—that a gun is superfluous, for with the muzzle he actually pushed a hawk off the branch of a tree: in fact, all the birds of the islands will allow themselves to be killed with a switch, or even to be caught in a hat.

Other naturalists have noticed the extreme tameness of many kinds of birds at the Falkland Islands; where, though they take precautions against the attacks of foxes, they appear to have no dread of

man. Formerly they were more confiding than at present. When the Isle of Bourbon was discovered, all the birds, except the flamingo and goose, were so tame that they could be caught with the hand; and on the lone islet of Tristan d'A Cunha in the Atlantic, the only two land-birds, a thrush and a bunting, were so tame as to suffer themselves to be caught with a hand-net. I have myself had large and beautiful butterflies come and suck at flowers in my hand, in the forest-glades of North America.

Cowper has finely used this phenomenon to heighten the desolation of a solitary island, when he makes Solkirk, on Juan Fernandez, complain,—

"The beasts that roam over the plain,  
My form with indifference see;  
They are so unacquainted with man,  
Their tameness is shocking to me."

But these facts are only local and partial exceptions to a general rule. They can in nowise be allowed to set aside the prevalence of that pristine law, by which God covenanted to implant a terror of man in all the inferior creatures, even those which are far stronger than he. "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea." Often have I seen, and marked with wonder, the excessive vigilance and jealousy with which fishes watch the least approach of man. Often have I stood on a rock in Jamaica, and seen the little shoals come playing and nibbling at my feet, apparently all unconscious of the monster that was watching them; but the least movement of the hand towards them was sufficient to send them like arrows in all directions. And how often have I been tantalised by the excessive prudence of some fine butterfly that I eagerly desired to capture, when, day after day, I might see the species numerous enough at a particular part of the forest, and by no means shy of being seen, playing in the air, and alighting continually on the leaves of the trees, and continuing there, opening and closing their beautiful wings in the sun, and rubbing them together with the most fearless unconcern, though I walked to and fro with upturned face below,—yet invariably taking care to keep themselves just out of the reach of my net!

This power of judging of actual danger, and the free-and-easy boldness which results from it, are by no means uncommon. Many birds seem to have a most correct notion of a gun's range, and, while scrupulously careful to keep beyond it, confine their care to this caution, though the most obvious resource would be to fly quite away out of sight and hearing, which they do not choose to do. And they sometimes appear to make even an ostentatious use of their power, fairly putting their wit and cleverness in antagonism to that of man, for the benefit of their fellows. I lately read an account, by a naturalist in Brazil, of an expedition he made to one of the islands of the Amazon to shoot spoonbills, ibises, and other of the magnificent gallatorial birds, which were most abundant there. His design was completely baffled, however, by a wretched little sandpiper, that preceded him, continually uttering its tell-tale cry, which at once aroused all the birds within hearing. Throughout the day did this individual bird continue its self-imposed duty of sentinel to others, effectually preventing the approach of the fowler to the game, and yet managing to keep out of the reach of his gun.

There is, however, in some animals, a tendency to seek safety in an entire avoidance of the presence of man; a jealous shyness which cannot bear to be even looked at, and which prompts the creature to haunt the most reclusive and solitary places. This disposition invests them with a poetic interest. The loneliness of the situations which they choose for their retreats has in itself a charm, and the rarity with which we can obtain a glimpse of them in their solitudes makes the sight proportionally gratifying when we can obtain it.

The golden eagle seeks for its eyrie, the peak of some inaccessible rock, far from the haunts of man, whose domain it shuns. Here it forms its platform-nest, rearing its young in awful silence and solitude, unbroken even by the presence of bird or beast; for these it jealously drives from its neighbourhood. The bald eagle of North America achieves the same end by selecting the precipices of cataracts for its abode. Lewis and Clarke have described the picturesque locality of the nest of a pair of these birds amidst the grand scenery of the Falls of the Missouri. Just below the upper fall there is a little islet in the midst of the boiling river, well covered with wood. Here, on a lofty cotton-wood tree, a pair of bald eagles had built their nest, the undisputed lords of the spot, to contest whose dominion neither man nor beast would venture across the gulf which surrounds it, the awfulness of their throne being further defended by the encircling mists which perpetually arise from the falls.

Our own wild-duck or mallard is a shy bird, avoiding the haunts of