

Animal Collectors.

The mania for collecting curious objects, beautiful or otherwise, is not confined to man alone who makes the accumulation of stamps, coins and various curiosities the fancy of his life. Many of the lower animals show a similar desire for collecting curious things. This is well illustrated at the present time by a bird in the zoological garden of London, that possesses such aesthetic tastes that thousands of people have visited it for this reason alone. The bird has an extraordinary fancy for odd-shaped and colored objects, and when they are placed in its cage, which is a large and commodious enclosure, it carefully collects them in one place, and amuses itself by changing them about, after the manner of collectors at large who delight in arranging and rearranging their treasures.

It is only the very odd things that this bird collector notices—quaint bits of shell, odd shapes in metal, broken glass if of a bright color, vivid tints in cloth and ribbon, in all, in the instance of this one bird, making a bushel of what the geologists term *ejeculites*.

This peculiar fancy is noticeable among a variety of birds. One, known as the *amblyornis*, is a bird botanist, collecting bright-hued flowers which are placed about the spot it frequents, and as they fade are carried away and replaced by others, showing that the bird has a taste that is decidedly aesthetic.

Certain birds in the islands near the Indian Ocean have been watched by naturalists. They would collect every object that in any way was odd or peculiar. Certain ones frequented the camp, going early in the morning, and stealing various objects. By following them the observers see at the bird museum a marvellous collection of objects—pieces of shining tin from sardine cans, oval tags of the same metal that had been left exposed, the nozzle of a deep-green bottle, ball of red tape, dozens of a rich red helix or snail that had caught the eye of the bird, bits of mica from some distant ledge, several quartz crystals that shone brightly in the sunlight—probably dazzling gems to the bird collector. When observed in their museum the birds passed their time in running about and rearranging the specimens in different places, placing them here and there as fancy dictated.

The Australian bird *candalaria* is so famous for its collections that when anything is lost about the camps of the natives they immediately hunt in the curious museums of this bird for the missing object. This bird is especially fond of bright-colored feathers, bones, sea weeds, shells, dozens of the former being found strewn upon the ground or hanging on twigs.

One of the albatrosses in its nesting grounds on the borders of the Arctic ocean is known as a collector, and piles about its nest all kinds of curious and useless objects, which are undoubtedly considered as ornamental. A small tern observed by the writer on the Pacific coast, made the flooring to its nest of the shells of the highly-colored *Donax*, on which the small speckled egg was laid, a most dainty and aesthetic arrangement.

Certain shells are known to have a taste for collecting, one especially attaching to its large shell-portion of others, securing them by some peculiar cement, so that they entirely hide the shell, giving it a most singular appearance. That the shell considers the decoration ornamental and that it obtains a certain amount of aesthetic pleasure is evident from the fact that it would be much easier to obtain ordinary pieces of stone and other refuse; but the shell passes them all

by, selecting only a certain kind which apparently appeals to its artistic taste.

Even among the very low forms of life we find this desire, for the caddis worm is a remarkable example. This little creature builds a cell for itself half an inch in length and then ornaments it in so striking a manner that it often becomes a really beautiful object. In some instances the worm collects minute coiled shells and attaches them so that the cell is completely covered. Another caddis makes a specialty of short and delicate twigs which it attaches with remarkable regularity, so that the cell looks as though it had been converted into a rich mosaic. Again, one will be covered with little grains of carefully selected quartz so that a dozen or more caddis worms display as many different kinds of ornamentation. Other worms collect singular objects to cover their dens, displaying no little taste.

By far the most remarkable collector is a South American animal which resembles a rabbit and is called the *bizcacha*; its remarkable propensity may be illustrated by the following incident: 'A gentleman travelling across the pampas suddenly missed his watch, and as it was a valuable one, was in great distress, and insisted upon turning back on the trail to hunt for it. They followed back for several miles, going over the ground carefully, looking among the grass and in the dusty trail, but all to no purpose. The watch which had evidently slipped off and fallen into the road had utterly disappeared, and as no one had passed or followed them, it was a mystery. Finally, they came to a hut that stood back from the trail and told their tale to the occupant, the traveller offering the man a large reward should he find the watch, leaving his address in the city for which he was bound. The native listened to the story, and then asked if the white man would give the reward now if the watch could be found, to which the owner only too gladly assented. The native saddled a wiry pony and started on the back trail, followed by the party. He paid little attention to the trail, but whenever he saw the nest of a *bizcacha* he rode up to it and carefully examined it. The traveller noticed that all these nests were littered about with strange and incongruous objects which, apparently, had very little to do with the real nest of the animal.

Finally, the guide, who was some distance ahead, gave a shout, and the party of white men hurried on to find the native standing by the side of a *bizcacha* hole, and there on the sand, safe with the exception of a few scratches, was the gold watch, still going. It had been added to the collection of one of these strange little creatures which are such inveterate collectors, that they gather up every conceivable object of a curious or highly-colored nature and carry it to their rest, so that in some instances four or five bushels of objects are found around the opening, of no use to the animal except as articles of virtue for its contemplation and aesthetic enjoyment. This habit is so well known and understood by the natives that when anything is missed along the roads they immediately visit the nests of the *bizcachas* where the article is often found.—C. F. Holder, in N. Y. 'Observer.'

Got the Youngster Out of the Way.

'Our Animal Friends' reports the following, vouched for as true:—

'From my earliest recollections my father was very fond of horses, and he usually kept from one to five in his stables. They were well cared for, and in turn he expected good service and speed. We had one horse, Fan, who was the pet of the whole

family, and was considered so safe that I, a little fellow in kilts, was allowed to play around her head and heels without restraint.

'One day I was playing in the yard as usual while old Fan was being hitched up. When all was ready, father jumped into the waggon, gathered up the reins, and gave the word to go. But the horse moved not a muscle. He then lightly touched her with the whip; old Fan merely pricked up her ears, but would not budge. Just then my father, a little out of patience, gave the horse a sharper stroke. What was his amazement to see Fan lower her head, carefully seize with her teeth a bundle which was directly in front of her, gently toss it to one side, then start off at a brisk trot. As the small bundle proved to be me, it is needless to say that after that old Fan was more petted than ever before.'

'I Say, Mister.'

A little junior, while out walking, saw a man going up a very high ladder with a load of bricks on his head, and as she stood watching him she thought every minute she would see him fall to the ground, but after he had gone up two or three times, she called out to him:—

'I say, mister, aren't you afraid to go up that big ladder?'

He laughed and replied, 'No, I'm not afraid, I'm used to it.'

This hardly seemed to satisfy her, and after thinking for a minute or two, she said,

'I guess, mister, why you're not afraid.'

'Why is it?' he asked.

'Because before you came out this morning you knelt down and asked Jesus to keep you safe.'

The man answered nothing, but all the day long those words seemed to ring in his ears, and before long he could have been seen kneeling at the Cross and accepting Christ as his guide and protector in this life. Some months later Jesus wanted this little junior for higher service and at the graveside the man told how these few simple words had been used by God to his soul's salvation.

Sow the seed, children, God will give the increase.—'Young Soldier.'

To the Rescue.

'To the rescue!' shouts the seaman,

Through the howling midnight dark,

As athwart the seething waters

Pilots he his trusty barque;

'To the rescue, man the lifeboat,

There are precious souls to save;

Aid the shipwrecked ere they perish,

Sounds o'er tempest, wind, and wave.

'To the rescue, to the rescue!'

Is the sturdy fireman's cry.

Fiercely are the embers glowing,

And the scorching flames leap high:

Yet at duty's call he riseth,

There are lives from death to win,

So to save them doth he hasten,

Through the smoke and glare and din.

To the rescue, to the rescue!

Seek the little ones who roam,

Tend the suffering, bid the orphaned

Welcome to your heart and home

To the rescue, to the rescue!

Fold them all in love's embrace,

Christ will say, 'To me ye did it.'

When you see him face to face,

—'Wellspring.'