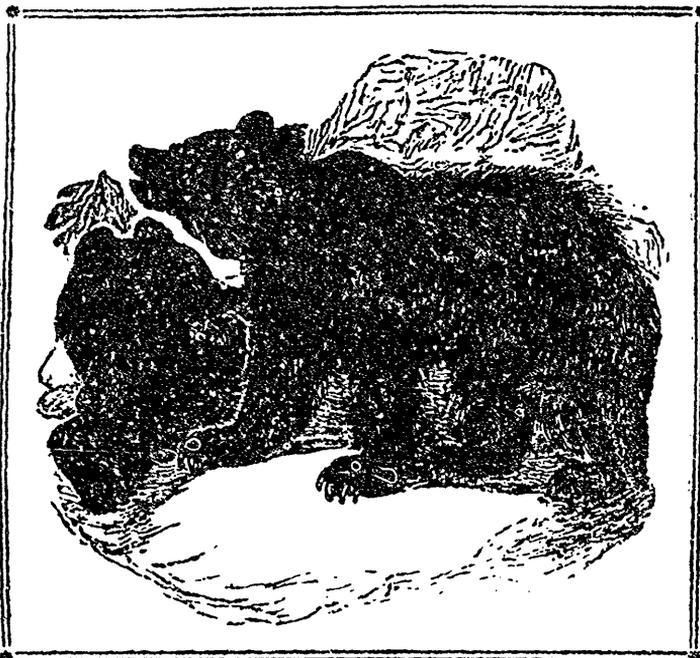


## THE BEAR

## Natural History.

"Consider the wondrous works of God."—Job xxxvii. 14.



Is an animal generally known, and yet various differences and contradictions exist among the writers of natural history concerning this subject, which can have originated only from the circumstance of not rightly distinguishing the different species. The three principal varieties of the bear kind, are the brown, the black, and the white, or great polar bear: the first is an inhabitant of almost every climate; the black bear is chiefly found in the extensive forests with which the northern regions of Europe and America abound. The bear is a solitary, savage, and ferocious animal; he chooses his residence in most unfrequented deserts, and makes his den in the most dangerous and inaccessible precipices of mountains, where silence and solitude reign. For this purpose, he commonly searches out some natural cavern, or some hollow tree of an enormous size, which it is not very difficult to find in the immense forests of the hyperborean regions. About the end of autumn, at which time the bear is exceedingly fat, he retires to this asylum, and remains, during some weeks, in a state of total inactivity and abstinence from food. This animal is not, however, like some others, totally deprived of sensation during that interval, but retains the former exuberance of his flesh; without feeling the calls of hunger, until the superabundant fat which he had acquired in the summer season begins to be considerably wasted.

During the time of this apathy, to which the male bear resigns himself, the female brings forth, and suckles her young. For this purpose she chooses her retreat in the most sequestered places, and apart from the male, lest he should devour them. She makes a warm bed for her cubs, and nurses them with unremitting assiduity for the space of about four months; during which time she scarcely allows herself any support. The bear produces only two, or at the most three, at a time. The cubs are at first not above eight inches long, and remain blind during the first month. The time of this animal's gestation is six months, and the beginning of January is their time of parturition. Although the male bear, whenever it finds an opportunity, destroys the little ones, the females are fond of them to a ferocious distraction; and as soon as they have brought forth, their fierceness is more violent and dangerous than that of the males.

In the spring, the old bears come out from their retreats, lean, and almost famished with confinement and abstinence. They then ransack every place for food, climb trees, and devour the fruit. They ascend the

highest trees, with surprising agility; with one paw they hold themselves fast to the branches, and with the other they gather the fruit. They are remarkably fond of honey, for which they seek with great avidity and cunning, and will encounter any difficulties to obtain it.

The bear is easily irritated, and his resentment is always furious, and often capricious. When tamed, he appears mild and obedient, but never ought to be too far trusted. He may be taught to walk upright, to dance, and play many curious pranks; and the multitude are highly entertained with the clumsy motions of this rugged and unwieldy creature. The young bears show

a very considerable degree of docility in acquiring these accomplishments; the old ones, however, will not submit to this kind of education, but manifest the most ferocious resentment against any attempt to subject them to discipline.

The bears of America are of a small size, and quite black; and, although ferocious, are not carnivorous. Even when pressed with hunger, they will not eat animal food, but live on vegetables, and are particularly fond of potatoes, honey, and milk. They lodge in the hollow trunks of large trees, which they climb and descend with great agility. The hunters generally take them by setting fire to their habitation. The old ones then come out first, and are slain, and the cubs follow, and are taken alive. The flesh of the young bear is reckoned a great delicacy; and the paws of the old ones are esteemed an excellent dish. The fat is very sweet, and of great efficacy in curing sprains and various kinds of swellings.

## A SENSIBLE DOG.

The *Boston Temperance Standard* tells the following story of a Newfoundland dog:—

"A gentleman residing at Brighton has a Newfoundland Dog remarkable for its sagacity. The other day he attempted to catch a couple of mice, which evaded his efforts by creeping into the hay. After repeated disappointments, he was observed to run with great haste into the house, and presently return with the cat in his mouth. He laid her down by the hay, and holding her between his paws, kept her safe until the mice again made their appearance. Their fate was sealed; and the dog seemed greatly satisfied with the success of his scheme."

The *Standard* adds that the statement can be verified if any doubt it.