

the winter season, the agreeable mildness of the climate, the beauty of the scenery, trees, flowers, and fruits, are such, that we wonder these days of travel do not bring more visitors to its shores.

WINTER SHOOTING—THE LIGHTHOUSE.

We can assure our readers from the experience of several years' stay in Bermuda, that between October and March the sportsman has little difficulty in filling his bag, and the naturalist may add largely to his collection. Flocks of plover, sand-pipers, snipe and duck are annually driven on the shores, the flocks of birds that migrate from America at the approach of winter to Southern latitudes being scattered by the storms generally prevailing at that season. These birds, with blue-winged teal (*Anas Discors*) the Carolina Crane (*Ortygometra Carolinus*), the barn swallow, Rice bird, &c., seek a temporary refuge in Bermuda, and before the weather is sufficiently settled to admit of their resuming their migrations, many can be bagged without restriction—game laws being unknown in Bermuda.

During the winter, the keepers of the lighthouse on Gibb's Hill are frequently supplied with game for the trouble of picking it up. The lighthouse towers many feet above the hill, and plover, duck, and other *bonnes bouches* frequently dash against the glass that encircles its revolving light, and fall dead upon the rocks beneath. Herons are often seen—they are supposed to be the descendants of a flock driven on shore by a violent gale in 1848. A friend shot two—the Blue Heron, and the Black Crowned Night Heron. The latter fell at a place called Spital Pond, where he was doing the agreeable to a circle of duck, and probably seeking for what he could get. The nest and two eggs of the Great Blue Heron were found in a cedar tree a few years ago, and the writer when sailing about Castle Harbour in his small yacht "Early Riser," often saw herons, but though a gun was usually kept in the cabin for their particular edification, they were ever impressed with the idea that familiarity was dangerous, and kept at a respectful distance. The Snow Goose (*Anser Hyperboreus*), Frigate Bird (*Tachypetes Aquilus*), Horned Grebe (*Bolopeus Cornutus*), Sooty Tern, Blue-backed, Black-headed and Kittiwake Gulls, the common Sea Dove (*Mergulus Albus*), may be numbered among the occasional visitors to Bermuda.

THE NATIVE BIRDS OF BERMDUDA.

But Bermuda possesses its native birds, as well as its migratory ones. They are the Red Bird, Blue Bird, Cat Bird, Kingfisher, Ground Dove, Crow, Moorhen and Chick of the village. Many years ago the Virginian Partridge or Quail used to breed in Bermuda, but after awhile it became extinct; however, about nine years since, a gentleman turned out several pairs, and by the latest accounts they were multiplying and doing well.

The Red Bird (*Cardinalis Rubra*, according to some *Cardinalis Pitylus*), also known as the Virginian Nightingale, is a handsome creature, and looks gaudy enough flying among or perched upon the dark cedar trees. The plumage of the cock bird is scarlet and reddish brown, that of the hen brown only. The cock bird has a pretty crest of scarlet feathers, and a row of black ones round his throat and beak. His body is covered with scintillating feathers, while his wings and tail are reddish brown. The hen has no crest, but her brown plumage has a *caumon* of red edging. The beak of both male and female is a reddish white and is very strong, the extremity of the upper mandible slightly hooked. This bird has two families in the spring, and generally builds its nest some height from the ground. The nest in the writer's collection is made of thin pieces of bark and dried grass, and contains small eggs. The female, however, generally lays but two, which are about the size of a Blackbird's, and by no means beautiful, as they are a dull white, thickly covered with brown blotches.

The Blue Bird (*Sialia*), about the size of a robin, has, as its name implies, a blue plumage. This colour is, however, confined to the back, the upper part of the wings, tail, breast and head being covered with brown; its bill, legs and eyes are black. The cock and hen are very much alike. The Blue Bird builds in bushes, or low down in trees, and its elegant pale blue eggs are often taken from mere wantonness. Although a native of Bermuda, there appears to be little doubt that the tribe receive accessions only in the spring from the American coast.

Both the Red and Blue Birds, though fond of worms, are also partial to seeds, and through this weakness are captured in traps in the shape of a common house-roof, made of sticks fastened with string. A little corn is strown under the trap, which is delicately balanced upon a thin stick, so that the bird in picking up the corn generally knocks it away, down comes the trap and captures the songster. The Red Bird does not take kindly to being captured, and it is well to give him something to bite when you take him out of the trap, for if he gets hold of his captor's hand, he will make a terrible wound. Both Red and Blue Bird sing during spring and summer. As a description of the Cat Bird, Kingfisher, Crow, and Moor-hen, can be seen in most ornithological works, a few remarks will suffice for them here. The Cat Bird's feline-like note is heard all over the island at most seasons, but the Kingfisher, the Crow and Moor-hen, are never found far from their favourite haunts. The writer shot a Kingfisher (*Alcedo Halcyon*), on Longbird Island, and generally used to see a few at the Devil's Hole in Harrington Sound, at a pond on Paget's Island, and at Mullet Bay. The Crow (*Corvus*) is never seen far from a small rookery near Hamilton, and the Moor-hen (*Gallinula*) frequents and breeds in several of the marshes and swamps between St. George's and the town of Hamilton, but it keeps so much under shelter of the sedge and water plants, that it rarely enters the sportsman's bag.

The Ground Dove (*Columba Passerina*) is a sweet little bird, and generally pretty tame. It is found all over the islands, and looks like a diminutive pigeon, but its colour is a mottled grey, its wings and tail being bordered with black feathers. Its legs are reddish white, and its bill black. Its nest is never far from the ground, and is formed of fine twigs and grass, and the snow-white eggs are not as often taken by mischievous boys as the eggs of other of the Bermudian feathered tribe.

We do not know the scientific name of the Chick of the village, but the tiny creature is very like a wren, and its nest and eggs resemble those of the same bird. It measures about three inches from the extremity of its bill to the tip of its tail, is a dark brown colour with a few dusky white feathers interspersed along its breast and the edges of its wings. Its eyes and bill and legs are a dark colour, but its eggs are pure white, their ends being dusted with tiny black specks. The nest in the writer's possession, is built with great ingenuity,

being formed of coarse grass, twigs and bark in the fork of, and pendant from, a slight cedar bough. Surgeon Griffith, R.A., who was with the writer in Bermuda, obtained and brought to England a bird over whose genus a mystery not only hangs, but the existence of the species has even been denied, and standard works of Natural History are silent about it. Here we may give its Bermudian name—the *Cahow*.

An almost romantic history hangs over the *Cahow*. In a work published in 1629 by John Smith, Governor of Bermuda, he says: "The *Cahow* is a bird of the night, for all day she lies hid in holes in the rocks, where they and their young are taken with as much ease as may be, but in the night, if you bat halloo and whoop, they will light upon you, that with your hands you may chase the fat and leave the lean—those they have only in winter. Their eggs are white."

Another writer in 1738 (Purchas) says: "Birds are equally abundant and various, many of the species peculiar to the islands; the most singular was one called *Cochow* or *Cochie*, about the size of a plover, which comes forth only in the darkest nights of November and December, hovering over the shore, making a strange hollow and harsh howling. The most approved method of taking them was by standing on rocks by the sea side, whooping and hallooing, and making the strangest outcries, which attracted the birds until they settled on the very person of the hunter." The only spot where these birds were thought to breed when the writer was in Bermuda a few years since is Gurnet's Head—a solitary craggy and almost inaccessible limestone rock rising abruptly out of the sea, a little beyond the entrance to St. George's harbour. The ocean swell that surges against its rugged sides precludes landing upon it except in fine summer weather. Surgeon Griffith, however, made an excursion there, and secured and still possesses two specimens of the *Cahow*, which have been kindly lent to aid in its description. The writer believes the owner may most fairly claim to be the first who has added the *Cahow* to an ornithological collection, so we give a scientific description for the benefit of our readers: Upper surface of body, head, beak, wings and tail, of a dull black; under surface of the same white; eyes and feet jet black; webbed in the foot, with three toes, and no kind of claw or spur; weighs 8½ oz.; measures 8½ inches from the root of bill to end of tail, and 14½ inches from the tip of either wing; bill 2½ inch long, black, and very hard, the upper mandible turned down over the under like a hook; the egg (they lay but one) is white, and the same size and shape as that of a wood pigeon. They lay in holes or under projecting points of rock, making no nest. The male and female are invariably found in the same hole, and probably take turn and turn about in the process of incubation. They see but imperfectly in the day time, and are continually blinking their small eyes. Their food appears to be vegetable matters. Some officers visited the rock in 1847 and landed a black boy, who ever stoutly maintained that in addition to various sea birds and eggs he secured two *Cahows*. However, in getting into the boat, he missed his footing upset the boat and was nearly drowned, the whole of the specimens and eggs finding a watery grave. In 1849 two officers of the 42nd Regiment captured on the rocks two of the dusky Shearwater (*Puffinus Obscurus*), birds found in the Gulf of Man and the Scilly Isles, but their description given by Bulfinch does not tally with that of the *Cahow*, though in some respects the *Cahow* and dusky Shearwater are alike.

My account of the Bermuda birds would be sadly incomplete without a notice of the boatswain bird. During the breeding season, numbers of these birds, known by the local names of "Longtail" or "Boat-swain," lay their eggs and rear their young in the clefts of the rocks that skirt much of the coast, and without doubt did the same ages before Bermuda was colonized. We have heard that the scientific name of this bird is *Phaeton Atherous*. Having brought two with their egg to England, it is not difficult to give a description. We may remark that the gentleman who "set" them up, and who does an extensive business in that line, informed the writer that he had never seen any birds resembling them. They are about the size of a teal, and their body is thickly covered with glossy white feathers, so that like sea gulls they are difficult to shoot. The feathers which overspread the wings, neck, head and tail are almost entirely white; but jet black feathers edge the inner portion of the wings, and there is also a row just above the tail, from which project two slender fawn-coloured feathers (with a tiny black strip down their centre) about twenty inches long. These latter feathers, however, fall out before the birds quit Bermuda—about October.

The beak is yellow, about two inches long, and very powerful; the legs are not more than two-and-a-half inches long, while the feet are black. The birds are web-footed, and their eyes are black, and a few delicate black feathers behind them show in strong contrast to the white plumage. The egg is as large as a hen's, and is chocolate colour, with light brown stains. The birds bite very severely, and the enterprising naturalist will do well to take care of his fingers in handling live specimens. The "boatswains" live upon sea fish, and may be seen during spring and summer hovering and darting over the sea close to their haunts, and every now and then dashing into the waves in pursuit of their prey. They are readily taken when sitting on their eggs, and as an illustration of their number we mention a laughable incident of a gentleman passing through Bermuda. He was anxious to obtain two or three specimens, and without limiting the supply rashly offered 2s. 6d. each for any brought him within forty-eight hours. Within the prescribed time a black fellow arrived with a small boatload, the result of a seven or eight hours' hunt, and "let in" our friend for about £10—"served him right," was the public verdict.

THE FISHES IN BERMDUDA WATERS.

Of the Bermudian finny tribe there is a long list, but it will suffice to mention here the most prominent—viz.: Hog fish, groupers, mackerel, porphy-shark, angel and rock fish. Excursions to the grouper ground off St. George's Island, hauling the seine in various sandy bays, varied by special fishing trips in Bermuda yachts, were among our summer amusements. In 1860, a fish, supposed by many to be a young sea serpent, was thrown on shore in Hungry Bay. He was sixteen feet long, and along his head ran a crest of thin long, red spines. A lengthy account of the creature was published in *Harper's Weekly* paper, and in the *Theologist* for 1860. After considerable controversy it was assigned to the order of the Ribband fish of the genus *Gymnetus*, but it was unfortunately much mutilated by its captors. The head and tail have, however,

been preserved and brought to England, and a Yankee has hinted that their owner had better manufacture a body, "fix" on the head and tail, and exhibit the creature as the far famed sea serpent. There was one bright summer morning that the writer and three friends left Bermuda stretching away in the background, and stood well out to sea in the "Victoria" for a celebrated finny town—the North Rock. The land sank lower and lower; at length Bermuda appeared to be a strip of dark green land, balanced between the cerulean ocean and the azure dome above. The soft sultry breeze was neither too light nor too strong; it filled the white sails of the "Victoria," and wafted us merrily along the liquid plain until we came to where we would lie. Then we let go our anchor on a coal ridge, turned the mainsail into an awning, and having baited our large hooks let them sink to within a few inches of the bottom of the Atlantic, threw a few dead small fish overboard to attract the big fellows, and bided our time. We had not long to wait, and every one in the course of the day had the satisfaction of catching some monster—an enormous rock fish, 84 lbs.; a gigantic porphy, 50 lbs.; a shark three feet long; several groupers, ungainly, ugly fish, with mouths exactly like a negro's, and several smaller fish were our take. The black crew slew our prizes—all tolerable eating—as soon as they were hauled on deck, and a strong cord run through their gills they were towed astern the "Victoria" to keep them sweet and fresh.

Our labours over, we filled the silver challenge vase—the gift of H. R. H. Prince Alfred to the Bermuda Royal Yacht Club—with that delicious compound champagne cup, and quaffed it merrily, and the tropical sun was flooding the horizon with a golden bath of dying light when we reached the "Victoria's" moorings.

Of late years the whale fishery has somewhat declined in Bermuda, perhaps owing to the number annually taken by the American whalers that sail round its shores. The species most commonly met with is the Greenland whale, (*Balena mysticus*) from the month of March to July. The more valuable—the sperm whale—(*Physeter macrocephalus*) rarely falls to the harpoons of our "Mudian" friends. We cannot better describe the process of the "Mudian" whale fishery in 1860—a process not very successful, because the noise of the boat disturbs the creatures—than by quoting a communication sent by Mr. R. Norwood, of Bermuda, to the Royal Society of London, nearly two hundred years ago. "The killing of whales," he writes, "hath been formerly attempted in vain, but within these two or three years, in the spring time and fair weather, they take sometimes one, two, or three in a day. They are less, I hear, than those in Greenland, but more quick and lively, so that if they be struck in deep water, they presently make into the deep with such violence that the boat is in danger of being hauled down after them if they cut not the rope in time. Therefore they usually strike them in shoal water. They have very good boats for that purpose, manned with six oars, such as they can row backwards or forwards as occasion requireth. They row up gently to the whale, and so he will scarcely shun them, and when the harpiner, standing ready fitted, sees his opportunity, he strikes his harping iron into the whale, about or before the fins, rather than towards the taylor. Now the harping irons are like those that are used in England in striking porpoises, but singular good metal that will not break, but wind, as they say, about a man's hand. To the harping iron is made fast a staff which, when the whale is struck, comes out of the socket, and so when the whale is something quiet, they haul up to him by the rope, and it may be, strike into him another harping iron, or lance him with lances in staves till they have killed him. This I write by relation, for I have not seen any killed myself. I hear not that they have found any sperm whale in any of these whales, but I have heard from credible persons that there is a kind of such as have the sperma at Eleutheria, and other of the Bahama Islands, (where also they find often quantities of ambergrease) and that those have great teeth, (which ours have not) and are very sinewy. One of this place (John Perinichig) found one of them dead, driven upon an island, and tho', I think, ignorant in the business, yet got a great quantity of spermaceti out of it. It seems they have not much oyl, as ours; but this oyl, I hear, is at first all over their bodies, like spermaceti, but they clarify it, I think, by the fire. When I speak with him (whom I could not meet with at present, and now the ship is ready to sail) I shall endeavour to be further informed; but at present with the tender of my humble service to the Royal Society, and commending your noble designs to the blessing of the Almighty, I take my leave," &c.

A whale case gave the good Bermuda lawyers some employment at the assizes in 1857. Two boats belonging to the same company went in chase of a whale, and one of them approaching closely, the creature was struck, splitting the boat as it made off. The whale was again struck from the other boat, which, by some mishap, was also damaged, and away went the whale into Castle Harbour, towing the second boat after it. For some reason—probably terror—this boat did not, as it ought to have done, pull up to the whale and despatch it, but remained inactive for about an hour, the whale all the time plunging about the harbour, and, as they term it, "feeling for the boat." Another whaling company, disgusted at this pusillanimity, despatched a boat to the slaughter, which pulled up to the prize and killed it, but as the first company persisted in refusing either to allot this boat any share of the carcass, or to give any remuneration, its owner brought an action at the ensuing assizes, and was awarded fifty pounds for work and labour. Whale beef is a favourite dish with the coloured population, and was not despised at the Artillery and Engineer mess dinner, being a better dish than the horrid beef weekly imported in the shape of *ancient* cattle. We think a description of the operation of cutting up the whale, *i.e.*, "finching," would hardly edify our readers, so we omit further mention.

(To be continued.)

NUMBER OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN.—A statistician has taken the pains to calculate the number of languages spoken, and puts the number at 3,064. The number of men is about equal to the number of women. The average of human life is about 33 years. One quarter die before the age of 9. One half before the age of 17. To every 1,000 persons, one only reaches 100 years. There are on earth 1,000,000,000 of inhabitants. Of these 33,333,333 die every year; 7,780 every hour, and 60 every minute—or one for every second. These losses are about balanced by the number of births.