Books of Birds and Beasts

THE large and handsome volume, "A Year of Sport and Natural History" (Chapman and Hall), edited by Mr. Oswald Crawfurd, consists of forty-five articles by different authors, each writing on the subjects on which he is an eminently qualified instructor, and of more than as many large illustrations by nine no less capable artists. The "Sport" ranges from chapter the wild rad does to

artists. The "Sport" ranges from chasing the wild red deer to bird-nesting; the "Natural History" has a special reference to British birds of prey; and with regard to a predatory biped of another species we may quote a passage from Mr. H. H. S. Pearse on "The Tricks of Poochers". Pearse on Poachers":—

Pearse on "The Tricks of Poachers":—

Of the many wise things written by Richard Jefferies, and in the writing of which he showed how keen an observer of nature he was, none contained more truth in ten words than the sentence "All poaching is founded on the habits of wild creatures." ... Nobody studies animal nature more closely and patiently than the poacher, and none knows the habits of birds and beasts better. Until he has acquired that knowledge he is a mere bungler at his craft. For my own part, I candidly own that the first inkling of all the charm which field sports have the power to exercise over me came through an old Poacher, the most notorious of his class in the west country, where as schoolboys we used to sit literally at his feet and try to learn all that he could teach. ... Bob rarely, if ever, went to work at night armed with anything more formidable than a stout blackhorn; but his reputation for dexterity with that, in a give-and-take bout at cudgelling, made keepers wary, until at last a notice from him saying that he wanted, and meant to have, some pheasants out of a certain preserve was enough to insure the absence of watchers when he called. A hot-tempered, athletic young squire could not brook this tyranny, so in answer to such a notice he met the poacher one night in a dark lane, where, single-handed, they fought it out, first with tough "ash plants," then with fists. At the tenth round, Bob confessed that he had met with more than his match, and so they came to a compact. "Yer, Squoire, that'll do, I tell 'ee. You'm a man, you be, and I don't mayn to taske no more of your vessants." "Bob, you may come whenever you like, but I'll have nobody else, and you must never go into a cover until I've shot it." That compact was faithfully kept; and thenceforth, no keeper did so much as Bob to rrevent anybody but himself from poaching on that young squire's preserves. But the old fellow was never quite the same after the thrashing he got then. Pride in his own provess was gone, and he degenerated—I

Mr. Trevor-Battye, in his practical and suggestive paper on the kindred topic of "Gamekeepers," divides his subjects, four-footed and feathered enemies, the "vermin," into two classes—one of "inveterate foes," namely, the cat, fox, crow, sparrow-hawk, magpie, stoat, and, deadliest and most persistent of all, the rat; the other

of "occasional foes, or possible friends," the tawny owl, barn owl, rook, jay, kestrel, weasel, hedgehog, and badger.

The Tawny Owl is more specially championed in a good little book called "Forest Birds: their Haunts and Habits" (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co.), by Harry F. Witherby,

This beautiful and most useful bird is still much persecuted by the gamekeeper and farmer, notwithstanding all that has been said in its favour. Occasionally

may be new to many readers that the wood pigeon, so shy and wild by nature, may also be observed at first hand, during the summer, in such presumably unlikely places as St. James's Park, about Westminster Abbey, and even in Piccadilly. And we would draw the particular attention of young naturalists to the author's description of that marvel of adaptation to its purpose—the woodpecker's tongue.

To turn to a different branch of the animal world, here is the character of the mule distinguished from that of the horse, as from a correspondent by Messrs.
W. B. Tegetmeier and C. L.
Sutherland, in their "Horses,
Asses, Zebras, Mules, and Mule
Breeding" (Horace Cox, Field Office):-

Office):—

First, their working life is longer, in the ratio of about five to two, than that of a horse; secondly, they can live and thrive upon food which soon reduces a horse to a weak and helpless skeleton; thirdly, they are indifferent to heat or cold; fourthly, they never know what it is to be sick; fifthly, they can work day and night without being worn out; sixthly, they walk quicker than horses; seventhly, being light of limb and bulky of body, their weight is better disposed for moving heavy loads: eighthly, they are, when of full size, considerably stronger than a team of equal-numbered horses.

Mules have also a high character.

Mules have also a high character, among those who know them, for being very easily broken, at least as tractable as horses under kind treatment, and always doing all the work that is in them. Why, the work that is in them. Why, if all this be the case, have they not acquired that recognised status in this country which they hold elsewhere? A principal purpose in this treatise, which is both scientific and practical, is to excite this very question. We have a very full account of the immense, but little known, mule-breeding industry of Poitou, with a resulting opinion that we could a resulting opinion that we could do a great deal better here. If anybody wishes to study the sub-ject with a view to experiment or enterprise, the authors of this volume

enterprise, the authors of this volume have provided him with a preliminary manual. The little understood, or rather much misunderstood mule is its centre of interest, and exceedingly interesting he is.

But he has also given Mr. Tegetmeier and Mr. Sutherland plenty of reason for adding to the "upwards of 4,000 works on horses," which they say have already been published, and for including such more or less near relations as the ass (an important personage in this regard), the zebra, and the quagga. "Burchell's Zebra," seems to have a future; as to the nearly, if not quite, exterminated Quagga—
It is most lamentable to know that this species, which might have become a

It is most lamentable to know that this species, which might have become a most useful domestic quadruped, admirably adapted for the requirements of the inhabitants of the country of which it was a native, should have been shot down by the colonists merely for the sake of its hide.



A mass meeting of Turkish Cypriotes was recently held at Limassol to petition the English Government to enter into negotiations with the Porte with a view to bring about the union of Cyprus with Greece; or, failing that, to abolish the yearly tribute of 92,500%, payable to Turkey under the Convention of 1878

THE AGITATION AGAINST THE TURKISH SUZERATNTY IN CYPRUS
Photographed by J. P. Foscolo, Limassol

the Tawny Owl may take a young rabbit. Why should we grudge him this, when we consider the vast numbers of mice and rats that he consumes? Game-keepers have said that they have seen this owl among their young pheasants, and have therefore shot it; but it has been proved more than once by dissection that the bird was merely catching the mice and rats, which were feeding on the corn left by the young pheasants.

Mr. Witherby deals with the structure and habits of the green woodpecker, tree creeper, nuthatch, wood pigeon, stock dove, sparrow hawk, tawny owl, and waterhen, from his own observations made chiefly in "that bird-lover's paradise," the New Forest. It

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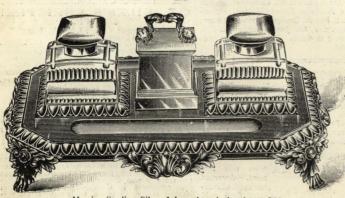
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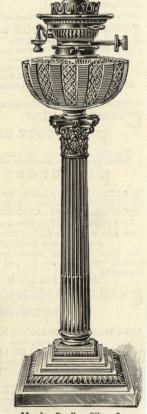


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