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whence from his zeal and activity in the destruction of rats and mice, he forms a valuable substitute for the cat, which indeed he is in Egypt used instead of. He is also said to be very domestic in his habits, quite a tarry-at-home kind of gentleman, and, unlike puss, never on any account given to ramble; when lost, he is said to seek his patron with indefatigable zeal until he finds him, and to express his joy at rejoicing him by the most tender and affectionate caresses. When he eats, however, nature asserts her prerogative, and the natural disposition of the animal resumes its place, whence it had for a time been driven by artificial means.

Indeed it requires but little to awaken in this creature all its natural fierceness and love of slaughter, notwithstanding that so much has been said and written of its amiability and docility. Mr D'Obsonville, in his "Essay on the Nature of Animals," gives an account of a domesticated individual which he had in his possession, which places its disposition in a correct point of view. He got the animal very young, and fed it upon milk, and as it grew older, upon baked meat, mixed with rice. He states that it soon became even tamer than a cat, would come to his call, and if at liberty, follow him everywhere, even in his walks. One day Mr D'Obsonville brought him a small living water-serpent, curious to ascertain how far his instinct would carry him against a creature with which he had been hitherto totally unacquainted. "His emotion," says Mr D'Obsonville, "seemed at first to be that of astonishment mixed with anger, for his hair became erect; but in an instant after, he slipped behind the reptile, and with remarkable swiftness and agility leaped upon its head, seized it, and crushed it between his teeth. This essay and new aliment seemed to have awakened in him his innate and destructive voracity, which till then had given way to the gentleness he had acquired from his education. I had about my house several curious kinds of fowls, among which he had been brought up, and which till then he had suffered to go and come unmolested and unregarded; but a few days after, when he found himself alone, he strangled them every one, ate a little, and, as it appeared, drank the blood of two."

I have already stated that the Ichneumon is said to eat of the leaves or root of a certain plant in the event of his being bitten by a poisonous serpent. I revert to the circumstance, because it is an extraordinary one, inasmuch as the Indians follow the example of the animal, and use the same plant successfully as an antidote when they themselves happen to get a bite, and call the plant after the animal. This is curious, as being parallel with the case of the Guacomithy or Serpent Hawk of South America, mentioned in one of my papers on Serpent Charming; nor is it upon light authority that I relate this fact of the Ichneumon. Mr Percival, that close and scrupulous observer, saw the experiment tried of presenting a snake to the animal in a closed room, when, instead of attacking, it did all in its power to avoid it. On the snake, however, being carried out of the house, and laid near its antagonist in a plantation, he immediately darted at and soon destroyed it. The Ichneumon then retired to a wood, and ate a portion of that plant which is said to be an antidote to the serpent's bite, and no harm came to him, although he had received a bite in the encounter.

I for my part can speak but little for the gentleness of the Ichneumon, or the facility with which it may be tamed, having one in my own possession, which has now for a considerable period baffled all my endeavours to domesticate it, and will not even now suffer me to approach the case in which it is kept, without growling fiercely at me, and spitting in the manner of an enraged cat, springing also against the bars of its prison, and using its utmost endeavours to fly in my face. I have tried starvation, high feeding, kindness, chastisement, hard usage, and tenderness, all by turns, and as yet unsuccessfully. I was never so baffled in taming an animal before, though the polecat, weasel, fox, and badger, have with the otter successively owned my mastery, and acknowledged me as their subjugator. I have not even handled this animal yet, unless with a thick glove upon my hand, and even with that protection I have received several severe bites. I saw one, however, in the Royal Zoological Gardens some time ago, which was very tame, and would suffer itself to be caressed even by strangers; so I shall persevere; and should I eventually succeed in taming the little savage, depend upon it the reader shall be advertised of the fact, and of all the circumstances attendant thereupon.

Until lately the Ichneumon had not a well-determined name in the methodical catalogues. Naturalists have mostly described it rather by character than figure. Figures were

indeed given by Gesner, Aldrovandi, and others, but not sufficiently distinct to guard against mistake. Even Buffon mistook the Mangouste for it, to which he has applied all the descriptions properly belonging to the Ichneumon. The name "Ichneumon" is Greek, and is indicative of the habits of the animal, and was first applied to it by Herodotus.

I trust that the above sketch may serve to point out the animal and its habits to the reader with sufficient distinctness.

H. D. R.

**MODERN EDUCATION.**—"Larning—larning—larning," is the cry of father an' mother—if my boy had the "larning," what a jamius he'd be! In coorse, ye old fools, your *bouchal* would be a swan among the goslins; but it isn't "larning" half the world want: instead of "larning," by which they mean cobwebs picked out of dead men's brains, if they would get some discipline. Discipline—discipline—discipline, that's the only education I ever saw that brought a boy to any good. What's the use of *battering* a man's brains full of Greek and Latin pothooks, that he forgets before he doffs his last round jacket, to put on his first long-tailed blue, if ye don't teach him the old Spartan virtue of obedience, hard living, early rising, and them sort of classics? Where's the use of instructing him in hexameters and pentameters, if you leave him ignorant of the value of a penny piece? What height of bletherin' stupidity it is to be fillin' a boy's brains with the wisdom of the ancients, and then turn him out like an *omadhaus* to pick up his victuals among the moderns!—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

#### TO OUR READERS.

It becomes our duty to acquaint our readers that the present Number of the IRISH PENNY JOURNAL, which will complete a volume, will also be the last presented to them, at least by its original projectors and present proprietors. Our readers will hardly deem it necessary that we should trouble them with any detail of the circumstances which have led to this determination; it will be sufficient to state, that while the success of the work has in some respects even exceeded the anticipations of its proprietors, it has disappointed them in others. The sale of the Journal, although great and steadily progressing in those distant localities where any increase of sale was least to be expected, has been either stationary or diminishing in those portions of the kingdom for whose use and advantage it was especially intended, and to which, therefore, the proprietors naturally looked for the greatest degree of encouragement. However humbling it may be to the national feeling of most of our Irish readers, the fact must be acknowledged, that the sale of the Journal in London alone has exceeded that in the four provinces of Ireland, not including Dublin; and that in other cities at the other side of the Channel it has been nearly equal to half the Irish provincial sale. And it may be added that in London, as well as in most other cities in the sister island, the sale has to the present moment continued to increase, while in all parts of Ireland, with the exception of the metropolis, it has gradually declined. In short, nearly two-thirds of the amount of sales of the IRISH PENNY JOURNAL have been effected out of Ireland. Whatever may be the causes of this result, it is sufficient for the proprietors to have ascertained, that the object which they had originally in view in starting this little publication, have not been attained to the extent which they had anticipated, and that, under such circumstances, it would be visionary in them further to indulge hopes which there is so little probability of ever being realised.

The proprietors have only therefore to take a respectful leave of their numerous readers and supporters, and return their grateful acknowledgments to all who have taken an interest in their publication. To the Press of the British Empire such an expression of gratitude is especially due, for from those influential organs of public opinion it has received during its progress the most cheering encouragement, and this, too, wholly unmingled with even a portion of censure or dispraise. That such commendations have not been altogether undeserved, and that the promises made in the original prospectus have not been left unfulfilled, the proprietors fondly anticipate will be the permanent opinion of the public; and they indulge, moreover, the pleasing conviction, that the volume now brought to a termination will live in the literature of Ireland as one almost exclusively Irish, and possessing what may be considered as no trifling distinction for such a work—a spirit throughout its pages wholly national, and untinged by the slightest admixture of prejudices either political or sectarian.

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