

SOME BRITISH BIRDS.

BY H. KENDRICK, JUNR.



KINGFISHER.

THERE are people who assert that the proper study of mankind is "man," but I say that the proper study for mankind or boykind is "Nature." Taken in its every phase and aspect, there is nothing more entrancing and attractive; and in all Nature, there is no subject more enticing than the bird. In whatever garb he is dressed, be he plain sparrow or glorious kingfisher, wary hawk or nervous wood pigeon, there is always the same interest, the same enthusiasm. Let me here say, at once, that there is only one way in which to study birds, and that is in the open, by personal observation. You may read books all day long, and they will all help you to distinguish and love the different species, but you will not be a true nature student. Go out to the hedgerows and meadows on all occasions possible and find bird life in its most beautiful form. Peep into the nest, and watch all the proceedings; keep a death-like stillness and unravel the mysteries with your own eyes. This is the method, the only method, and it will bring you the truest delight.

But I have not been allowed the privilege of writing this article in order to raise

your enthusiasm. I have to describe in it the haunts and habits and the personal appearance of some of our British birds, and I can do no better than begin with the Kingfisher.

In your wanderings you may find this bird, though unfortunately it is becoming rare. The reason for this is that they so frequently fall victims to the gun of the so-called "sport." However, if you are walking along the bank of a river, you may suddenly see a bird shooting past you, either up or down the stream, and so slightly above the water that you can look down on its back. Its flight is rapid and the colours of its plumage gorgeous, so that you cannot fail to recognise the Kingfisher. If you are quick enough to follow the course of the bird, you will see it perched motionless on the lower branches of a tree, overhanging a shallow pool which contains fish. With beak pointed down, and ever on the alert, it is watching until a victim comes within fair aim; then with a twinkle of the wing, it dashes head foremost into the stream, disappears but for a moment, and emerges with its struggling booty. A few pinches with the beak deprives the prey of life, and the

morsel is swallowed entire, head foremost. When trees are rare, and no convenient perch available, the Kingfisher will hover over the pool like a Kestrel, and make its dart from the air. A description of the colour of this bird may be valuable as a guide to the reader. The back is of azure blue, the head and wing coverts bluish green, spotted with azure blue. Under and behind the eye there is a reddish band passing into white, and beneath this a band of azure green. The wings and tail are greenish blue, throat white, and the under plumage rusty orange red. In length the bird is seven and a quarter inches, and in width ten inches. The eggs are glossy white and nearly round, but I do not think you are likely to find the nest. It is a collection of small fish bones, evidently disgorged by the old birds. They are generally found in deep holes on the river's banks. Mr. Gould, the naturalist, found one in a hole three feet deep on the banks of the Thames; it was half an inch thick, about the size of a tea saucer, and weighed 700 grains. The Kingfisher does

peck on the ground. But I am afraid I am giving too much attention to this one very attractive specimen.

Let us hasten to a commoner bird, and get a look at the Cuckoo—if we can. I have heard it said that it is very unlucky to see a Cuckoo; I prefer to think it very lucky; anyhow, it is a rare sight. The Cuckoo is a wonderful bird in many ways. It has the distinguished honour, with the Swallow, of heralding the Spring; its notes are more like the human voice than any other bird's, and its habits are unlike those of any other member of the feathered tribe. To the earliest naturalists the Cuckoo was a puzzle, and to some he is a puzzle still. After all is said and done, it is not difficult to follow the career of this bird. It arrives in this country about the middle of April, and while it is with us, it leads a wanderer's life, building no nest, like the blackguard it is, and choosing out no particular locality for its settlement. It cannot be termed hostile to its neighbours, and on the other hand is devoid of any affection. The Cuckoo hunts for food



CUCKOO.

not build a nest. The bones are spread on the earth, apparently simply as a protection for the eggs from the damp, and the reason why bones are used appears to be because they are more readily available than leaves, etc., by a bird which does not

wherever it can, and on its first arrival in this country lives principally on beetles, but it prefers caterpillars when they are to be had, particularly the hairy ones. It is in May and June that the appropriation of other nests takes place, and the hen Cuckoo lays her five to ten or twelve eggs in the handiest and most easily obtainable nest. The Hedge Sparrow, Robin, Redstart, Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Pipit, Wagtail, Yellow Bunting, Chaffinch, Skylark, Linnet, Greenfinch, Blackbird, and Wren, have all at times been forcibly ejected from their homes, provided at the "sweat of their brows," so to speak, to make room for the eggs of this upstart. The Pipit appears to be most frequently disturbed. The eggs are laid at some distance from the nest in most cases, and carried by the bird to the appropriated home. Sometimes the intruder is wicked enough to eject those

eggs already laid, that is if there is not room for her own as well, and it is here that we see the wisdom of the smallness (out of all proportion) of the Cuckoo eggs. If they were larger, the strange birds would either refuse to incubate them or throw them out if amongst their own. Besides, they would take longer to hatch, and possibly never would come to life at all. As it is, the young Cuckoos are usually hatched simultaneously with the other birds, and get a fair share of attention from the foster parents. The eggs incubate in the remarkably short space of fourteen days. It is unfortunate for the other inmates of the nest that the Cuckoo comes to life so soon, for as quickly as he emerges from the shell, he starts appropriating after the manner of his parents, and frequently pushes the other youngsters out of the nest altogether. This ungenerous treatment, which is really murder, results in the Cuckoo obtaining practically sole occupancy of the nest and single attention of the parents. Thus does he flourish amazingly, owing to the death of other poor innocent birds. The upper note of the Cuckoo is E flat, and the lower most frequently C natural, forming something between a minor and a major third. The cry is really that of the gourmand for food, the bird uttering the notes very frequently, and being almost insatiable. It is said that in the Autumn the bird alters its song, and towards winter it ceases altogether. At the end of June, we see the last of the cock birds in this country, and the females follow soon after their mates have departed. The youngsters do not leave us until October, when they also take flight southward. This is without a doubt a remarkable career.

The terribly cheeky Robin is a remarkable bird in many ways. His quaint manners and familiar methods are loved by all, although I have known people call him a fraud, because of his jealousy of

other Robins. No one can gainsay, however, that he is a good friend to the gardener, destroying as he does immense quantities of worms and other insects. Probably, excepting the Sparrow, he is the most familiar of our wild birds, and his



WAGTAIL.

excursions carry him far into the hearts of towns in the winter time when food is scarce. In the summer he is not so familiar, and it is a common belief that the Robin only visits us in Winter. This, of course, is not so, for the Redbreast is essentially a British bird, and in the summer time retires to the woods to nest and rear its broods. Peculiar as it seems, the Robin is, at other than breeding times, strangely unsociable with its kind, and two Robins are rarely to be seen together excepting during the actual breeding season. If you keep them in an aviary, they will, alas! fight until the death, and very often the victors are maimed for life, possibly mortally wounded. To define where one might expect to find the Robin's nest is out of the question, for it chooses some of the most out of the way places. It is found in old tin kettles; in a hedge; in a flower pot, turned upside down on a greenhouse shelf; in a cabbage; and other equally extraordinary situations. Generally well concealed, it is at no great height

from the ground. It is a clumsy structure, loosely put together with leaves, grass, moss, etc., and it is lined with hair. It is so terribly clumsy, however, and so unlike the neat little Robin in every respect, that it is not an infrequent occurrence to find one or two of the fledglings fallen out and killed. The eggs vary from five to seven in number. The ground colour is white, and they are plentifully marked with several shades of red and sometimes with grey. They vary, however, very considerably, and are occasionally found with no spot of any kind on them, but absolutely white in colour. The Robin has a sweet song, and it can be heard all the year round, but particularly in the evening.



ROBIN

It seems a pity, and in fact entirely out of place, to confine these birds in cages; they will surely pine, and it is only too true that if kindly treated as wild birds, they will make friends with all. In the free and open they are much more beautiful birds in every way. Take my advice—leave them there!

We give a picture of the Wagtail, a very popular bird in reality, and one which may always be found in the neighbourhood of water, or taking an airing and a run upon some freshly cut lawn. It is amongst the most beautiful of our feathered tribe, and in point of colouring the Grey Wagtail is surpassed by very few. It is not, of course, a permanent resident in Great Britain, but it visits us every Autumn and retires northwards in the Spring. It has

a very peculiar way of getting over the ground, as you will say when you have seen it. It is like the little men we know who are always in a hurry and cannot walk to save their lives—they must run. The Wagtail runs a foot or two, then flies a foot, then runs again, and in this running the tail wags—wags incessantly, in fact, and altogether its motion is most peculiar. If I describe the bird in brief, you will be able to recognize him in your walks abroad. The head and beak are bluish grey, and there is a pale streak above the eyes. The throat is black, the under parts bright yellow, and the tail very long. In winter the chin and throat are whitish, passing into yellow. This is

what he is like without going too far into dry detail. The favourite spot for nests is amongst the grass or stones, or say hollows in a bank, and in nearly every case it is near the side of a stream. The nest is constructed of dried grass, fibrous roots and twigs, carefully lined with hair, wool, and a few feathers. Generally we find half-a-dozen eggs in the nest, and they are greyish white in colour, and have markings of light grey and brown. In shape they are short and oval, and, I ought to add, vary a great deal in colour and marking. One peculiar habit which this bird has, is that of remaining motionless if surprised, and it will even allow persons to pass quite near it without moving. Im-

mediately afterwards, however, it will fly off, uttering its usual call note. For an aviary, this bird does fairly well, becomes very tame, and is always very much admired. Mind and give it plenty of water, and feed it similarly to the Nightingale.

The Goldfinch is one of the most sprightly little birds I know, and it is a general favourite as a house pet. It makes an ideal cage pet, and its song is very beautiful. Its affection for its owner is a remarkable one. In a wild state, its favourite food is the seed of the thistle, and wherever the Goldfinch is found, there also will be found a good supply of its favourite food. It has some beautiful colouration. The back of its head, nape and feathers around the skull base are

black: the forehead and throat are blood red; the cheeks, fore part of the neck and lower parts are white; the scapulous and back are dark brown; the wings are variegated with black, white, and yellow; and the tail is black, tipped with white. The nest is as beautiful as that of any British bird. It is found encircled by leafy twigs, which unite beneath the base and afford effectual support. The substance is composed of tufted white lichen and a few fine roots or strong stems, though, of course, this varies. These different constituents are generally bound together with wool, so that it is impossible to remove any without damaging the whole. There are often other soft ingredients, and the inside is lined with the coltsfoot's white silky down, or with willow, cotton, or feathers. The nests are found in firs, apple, and elms; also in low bushes and hedges, and the eggs are bluish white, speckled with pale purple and brown. It is very pretty to notice Goldfinches in the Autumn. It is at this time that they assemble in flocks, ten to twenty or more, and repair to waste places or borders of fields, where plenty of thistles are to be found. Here they may be observed in couples picking out the seeds, and separating them very cleverly from the foreign matter, twittering all the time. They will, when thus occupied, allow strangers to approach quite near, and will only then fly off and perch on a friendly thistle again.

There is another great favourite amongst British birds. I refer to the Bullfinch. He is found everywhere, and is indeed an awful thief. However, he is so beautiful that we cannot help forgiving him. They are usually met with in pairs, and do not

appear to desire the company of other birds, from which they are easily distinguished by their pretty colouration, the red cheeks, neck, breast, and flank standing out prominently. In its wild state the Bullfinch has no particular song, but it can be taught to pipe, and a good piping specimen is valuable. They soon become accustomed to having a captive life, though their life is not a long one—hardly ever more than two years. The Bully builds its nest as far away as possible from the haunts of man, generally choosing a secluded copse or thick hedge, and the nest consists of twigs and dry grass, and has a lining of fibrous roots. The eggs, which are five in number, are light greenish blue, speckled and streaked with light red and dark purple. Sometimes, but very rarely, nests are found in gardens and shrubberies; generally the Bully seems to think it is best to keep as far away as possible from the haunts of man during breeding, as he considers him, owing to his own thieving propensities, to be his natural enemy. In a wild state this bird eats various seeds and buds; also some small insects. In confinement, remember this, and give them a diet as nearly as possible approaching this. Prepare the seed he is given by scalding the rape and canary, and lightly cracking the hemp. In lieu of green food, a branch of a tree should be given, but do not give any ornamental shrub or evergreen under any circumstances. Bear in mind that these birds require constant companionship. If they have it, they will do well, but if not, they will pine and die. With attention, they make splendid and interesting pets.



TRAPPING THE WILY AHMED.

By W. H. HUNT.

“**T**HE chief is terribly cut up, old man, over our failure to capture the wily Ahmed!”

Lieutenant Harrison switched his boot meditatively with his riding whip as he imparted this information.

His fellow subaltern, Lieutenant Riley, emitted a puff of cigarette smoke and saw it float away in delicate circles before he attempted a reply. Then he said, slowly, “Seems to me the chief is never satisfied. Here we have been and licked these dirty dervishes, who out-numbered us ten to one, and instead of being thankful for his crowning mercy, as old Oliver Cromwell would have called it, he is groaning because one man has slipped through his fingers. For my part I think it rank ingratitude—howling ingratitude. What can one coffee-coloured rascal do all alone in this desert? Starve I should think, nothing else, and a precious good way to get rid of him.”

Lieutenant Harrison smiled. He had had a little more experience of dervish life than his friend, and was amused at the way in which this recent importation from the homeland talked of an isolated dervish leader. Then he condescended to enlighten him.

“My dear fellow,” said he, “one man, and he such a one as the Emir Ahmed, may mean a good deal out here. He has given out to his followers that he bears a charmed life; that against the Turk—that is the Egyptian in our parlance, and of course the Englishman thrown in—he is invulnerable. The poor fools never seem to see that what Ahmed calls a charm is only what we call cowardice; and so every time he skips from our attack and gets clear away they chalk up another score to his credit while he, no doubt, laughs in his sleeve at their credulity.”

“Well, we could do no more,” said Riley. “We followed the beggar till our horses were fit to drop, but he had too much start—was mounted on a swift camel—and we could not go stalking him on foot.”

“All the same,” said Harrison, “it’s a

pity he escaped, and I do not wonder that the chief feels a bit down. With Ahmed in his hands he could have wound up the campaign and we should have been able to make tracks for home. Now this beggar will appoint a rendezvous, gather all the stragglers from the last fight, with I don’t know how many more besides, and we shall have to begin the work over again.”

Riley puffed away at his cigarette in silence for a few minutes. Then he said, “That being the case I am sorry he managed to get away. I have just written home to tell them we have smashed the beggar and that there is nothing else for us to do.”

Harrison laughed. “It’s a thousand pities,” he said, “that the failure to catch old Ahmed should stand in the way of our return home. And the letter is gone, you say. Otherwise you might first of all have taken the precaution to ask the aged dervish leader to come in.”

“Now you are chaffing,” said Riley, “but many a true word has been spoken in jest and, by the powers, if I only knew where the old fox lay I would take him that same invitation.”

Harrison, laughing again, suggested to his friend that now he was talking mere moonshine, and they sauntered away in opposite directions.

That night Lieutenant Riley crept into Harrison’s tent as its occupant was composing himself for slumber, and proceeded to make an announcement. A scout had just come in with the news that the Emir Ahmed was rendezvousing his followers at the Yellow Wells, forty miles to the southward. The General, on hearing the news had expressed himself pleased with it, but, on second thoughts doubted whether he could put it to profitable use. It would be a long and risky ride for a detachment of horse and the wary Ahmed, advised of their approach, would be able to show them a clean pair of heels, if he was not in a position to give fight.

“Awfully obliged for your news, old man,” said Harrison; “but I don’t see

where it particularly concerns us although you seem so desperately excited about it."

"Don't you," said Riley, "then I'll tell you. It is pretty well known in this camp that you can talk the lingo like a native, and that when you are properly dressed Mahomet himself would not know the difference between you and one of his followers."

"Well, and then?" said Harrison.

"Why, then," said Riley, "all you have to do is to get into native dress, saddle your horse, and we will go out and fetch the old man in."

Harrison rolled over to get a sight of his friend in order to discover whether he was joking, but Riley was serious enough. He meant every word of it.

"Come, Ted," said Lieutenant Harrison, still reluctant to believe, "you are joking."

"Never a bit," Riley responded.

"Haven't you told me we are doomed to linger here until this same disreputable old vagabond is laid by the heels, and haven't I told you I want to go home to the old country? And now we know the whereabouts of the old blackguard the only reasonable thing is to go and lay hold of him."

And then it dawned upon Lieutenant Harrison that his friend was in earnest, and that, being prepared with such a proposal, he might also be ready with a scheme for carrying it out.

Such was the case, and for the space of fifteen minutes, they put their heads together with the result that, about ten o'clock, two mounted figures, with a led horse between them, passed out of the camp and rode away into the moonlight. One was a deaf and dumb Dervish—at least he was supposed to be—but for the time his tongue wagged merrily as the mettlesome chargers bounded over the plain.

The desert in this part afforded good riding, and they made excellent progress while the moon was yet young. After three hours in the saddle they pulled up for a few minutes rest, slackened girths and looked to their revolvers.

Refreshed by the halt they pushed on again, and the ground flew beneath the hoofs of their galloping horses.

Three hours after midnight, in a moonlight almost equal to day, they were looking out anxiously for the five tall palms which served as the distinctive landmark of the oasis known as the Yellow Wells.

Another hour went by and still the eagerly desired palms failed to appear.

"Give me the compass, Ted," said the deaf and dumb Dervish, "we must have lost our bearings."

"Not a bit of it," said Riley, "I have been steering due south and—hullo! there they are," he exclaimed, pointing ahead.

The disguised lieutenant, notwithstanding his character of deaf mute, uttered a jubilant cry, for there, on the sky line, were the palm trees.

"The very place," he cried, "and there, to the eastward, is what looks like a dense mass of scrub."

"Couldn't have been better," said Riley, "if we had arranged it ourselves."

They now rode forward with the greatest caution, making a wide circle so as to bring the scrub between them and the wells. Then they dropped steadily down to within half a mile of the Dervish rendezvous, and Riley proceeded to tether the horses and give them a feed, together with a rub down and a good long pull from a water skin.

The spot had been wisely chosen, for although concealed, there was a slight eminence at hand, from which it was possible to obtain a good view of the ground between the scrub and the wells.

"Good-bye, old boy," said Harrison, extending his hand. His companion grasped it without a word, and away went the disguised cavalryman upon his dangerous errand.

He had long been familiar with North Africa and the Arab races, and his get-up was exact. The dialects, too, were not strange to him, but he had his own reasons, on this occasion, for being deaf and dumb. His clothes were torn, his feet worn, and he had the limping gait of one who had tramped for many a weary mile.

Boldly breaking into the open he limped towards the wells, and was within a hundred yards when he was challenged by a sentry. He made no response—how could he when he had not heard?—and limped on. Some paces further he raised his hands above his head, as an intimation to whom it might concern, that he was unarmed; and a piece of white paper fluttered between the fingers of one upstretched hand. He was allowed to approach without molestation.

The mute Dervish pointed to his lips and ears and pathetically shook his head,

at the same time proffering the paper which the sentry would not take, on the ground that he could not read.

"Truly thou must be taken to the Emir," he said, in his own tongue, forgetful of the stranger's infirmity. The mute almost betrayed himself at this announcement, but promptly regained his impassiveness and stood stock still, until the sentry beckoned him to come on.

There, under the palms, lay a motley group of fugitive Dervishes from the great fight, and in the midst of them one Lieutenant Harrison judged to be their leader.

To this man the sentinel led the way, and quietly roused him from his slumbers.

Ahmed sprang to his feet at the touch, prepared to face a foe, and relieved to find that it was only one of his followers. He asked what was wanted, and, as the sentry explained, stepped out to where the deaf and dumb man was standing.

Ahmed spoke to him, but the mute made no sign, except to extend a grimy, sunburnt hand, holding a strip of paper.

The Emir took it cautiously and looked at it. Traced in Arabic on its surface, in a colour that looked like blood, were the words:

"I faint. Trust bearer. Great tidings."

As the Emir raised his eyes from perusing this strange missive, the mute beckoned with his hand, and led the way to the open desert, towards the north-west.

Without a question Ahmed followed him, misled by many things. He was not wide awake, and had not had time to think; the messenger was evidently exhausted and defenceless, and he had accepted it from the sentinel's manner that this stranger was a genuine deaf mute. Besides, he was being taken out into the open where he could see everything before him; he would scarcely have been so confiding if the messenger had led him out on the eastward side, towards the scrub.

So he paced solemnly on behind the limping mute for nearly a quarter of an hour. Then he made signs that he would go no further. He had expected to come across an exhausted traveller couched upon the sand and he could see nobody, as far as the eye could reach.

The mute pointed to a spot some two or three hundred yards ahead, and pleadingly signed to the Emir to come on. As a matter of fact he did not much care

whether the dervish leader came or stood debating where he was, for he knew that other eyes were on the watch. Riley, from his vantage point, had seen the pair directly they broke cover, and Harrison knew he could trust him to do his part.

Reluctantly the Emir moved forward, it may have been with some presentiment of approaching evil, and not without cause. All at once he came to a dead halt. His quick ear had caught the sound of galloping hoofs. He turned and there, between him and the wells, coming as noiselessly and as rapidly as they could, were a man and three horses. He knew himself betrayed. From the folds of his outer garment flashed the jewelled hilt of a knife, and it would have gone hard with the disguised Englishman had he not been prepared for the blow. As it was he met it more than half way, for, while the dagger rose in the air the lieutenant's fist was already between the eyes of the dervish leader, who went to the earth, felled like an ox.

Riley saw the act, hastened his horses, and both of them were upon the stricken man before he could struggle to his feet. From the spare horse they snatched a rope and, in a trice, the tricked leader was pinioned and tied across the animal's back. Then his companions mounted and, on either side of him, rode hastily northwards; but not before Emir Ahmed had given vent to a terrific yell which startled the sentry at the wells and sent him promptly to gather a party for pursuit.

All in vain. The Englishmen had too good a start. In less than an hour only one man was seen to be riding after them on a swift camel, and in time he fell away, apparently not anxious to risk a single-handed encounter.

Long before the British camp was reached the horses were knocked up. Ahmed had been untrussed as soon as the pursuit failed, and allowed to ride in a natural position, with only a restraining cord from ankle to ankle.

It was between four and five o'clock in the morning when the capture was effected and it was gone noon when the two lieutenants and their prisoner, scorched by the tropical sun and worn out with riding, made their way into the British camp, which was soon ringing with the story of their adventure.

The General was over-joyed at such good fortune and overwhelmed them with praise.

A FLIGHT OF FANCY.

By O. WYNNE APPERLEY.

AT the witching hour of mid-night every self-respecting cast in the antique room came to life.

The dancing Faun threw his castanets on the floor and kicked his concertina off the pedestal. Then he jumped down with a whoop and turned on the electric light. The Discobolos flung his disc to the other end of the room and walked over to the fire-place, where the Venus de Medici was endeavouring to resuscitate the fire. He laid violent hands on the coal-scuttle, and shovelled its contents into the grate.

"Don't be so clumsy!" cried Venus. "How on earth do you think that fire is going to burn now? You always were an ass, Cobby!"

'Cobby' was crushed, the more so because Antinous was standing by, jeering at him openly. He scowled.

"Shut up, or I'll punch your head!" he snapped. "What——"

"Cobby!" interrupted Venus imperatively. "Go and get the poker! one of those absurd students has been playing cricket with it. There it is—in that corner!"

Just then a loud roar of laughter escaped from the dancing Faun, who was looking through some drawing-boards to which were pinned various examples of the students' work, in a distant part of the room.

"This is ripping!" he shouted, skipping across to the fire-place. "Aphrodite, behold thy likeness!"

He held up a chalk drawing in its earlier stages, of the Venus de Medici. The arms which, as everyone knows, are an addition (and a doubtful improvement) by Canova, had been taken off by this enterprising student, and the representation was not only armless, but proportioned with the most supreme disregard of the principles of anatomy imaginable. The result was a fat and exceedingly stumpy servant girl.

Everyone—except the Torso, who couldn't—crowded round the group at the fire-place.

"Aphrodite—my poor sister!" cried the Venus of Milo. It may be as well here to mention that the two representations of the foam-born goddess were distinguished by being called the one by the Greek name, Aphrodite, and the other—that of Milo—by the Roman, Venus.

"Poor sister, indeed!" exclaimed Aphrodite indignantly, turning upon the other. "I have at least arms and the usual number of feet! . . . Why don't you get yourself restored? You're positively indecent!" and she stamped her little foot in scorn.

"Don't be hard on the poor thing!" said the dancing Faun. "Remember you've got 'Cobby' and 'Tinny'—and me! And she's got no one!"

"Unless we give her the benefit of the Torso!" sneered Aphrodite. "He can't object, because he hasn't got a mouth, and he's, if anything, worse off than she—in regard to limbs! Poor Boy! He used to be so handsome!"

The Venus of Milo rose up to her full, majestic height. She lashed out in fury with her tongue; whatever she lacked—the Venus of Milo had very certainly a tongue!

"You patched up thing!" she hissed, and retired to her pedestal, which she mounted, and instantly returned to her former plaster—coldly white and rather magnificent in the glare of the electric light.

Aphrodite gave a sigh of relief.

"Thank goodness we've got rid of her!" she said. "Now what shall we play—Bridge or Ping-Pong? Blow this fire!"

Antinous proceeded with great deliberation to blow into the fire. The Faun hit him over the head with a T square.

"Let's play Ping-Pong!" said the Discobolos. "Fauny, where are those castanets of yours? I've got the balls. It was

very considerate of Miss What's-her-name to leave them here that day. She thought how useful they would be to us in tedious hours! Boy, chuck those busts and things off that table!"

He addressed a small cast of a boy, which was sitting on the table in question doing nothing.

"I wish someone would leave some tobacco here one day," said the Faun, rummaging behind a canvas screen for his discarded castanets. Presently he emerged in triumph. Antinous challenged the Discobolos to a single.

"Right you are," said the latter, and having erected the net, an example of the small boy's carpentry, each took a castanet from the Faun, and the game began. Aphrodite sat down on one of the specimen chairs the students had to draw—or did their level best to libel—and prepared to watch the contest. The dancing Faun dropped into a graceful position at her feet and asked if he could do anything for her.

"Yes—cut off your tail and stick it on to your upper lip!" she said. "You would look quite handsome then!"

"Supposing I were to take your advice, would you marry me—de-ar-r Aphrodite?"

"Yes!" said Aphrodite, mischievously.

The Faun rose to his feet and left the room, applauding a stroke of Antinous's as

he passed the table. In the next room he knew there was a pair of scissors and a looking glass. With most delicate precision he cut off his little stump of a tail, and taking it between his fingers, contemplated it in silence for a moment. In a wooden box standing on the table was a quantity of plaster of Paris. He collected some in his hand and wetted it at the tap in the corner; for this was the modelling-room. This he applied to his upper lip, then the tail—and the thing was done. He returned to the antique room. Just as he entered the Discobolos was shouting:—

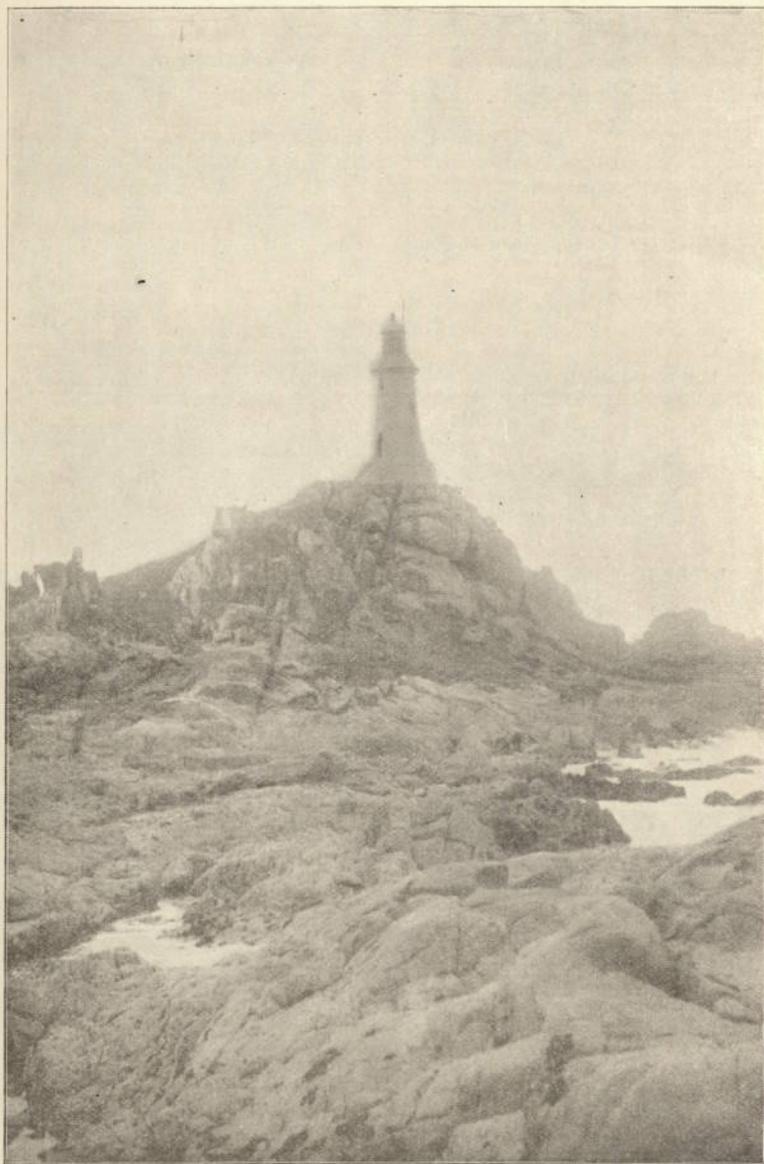
"I've won the game, and—Aphrodite, thou art mine!"

He was just about to take the Venus de Medici in his arms, when the Faun came up behind and sent him flying. In the silence that ensued everyone looked at the Faun, with his strange, new moustache.

"I beg your pardon, Cobby!" he said. "Aphrodite is mine!"

When the head master came in next morning he found the Dancing Faun's pedestal had been moved very close up to that of the Venus de Medici. He wondered at this, but he wondered still more, and danger-signals blazed from his eyes, when he saw the former's tail protruding, not from out his back, but stuck in a conspicuous position on his upper lip.





THE CORBIERE LIGHTHOUSE, JERSEY.

This Lighthouse stands on the rocky North-western corner of the Island of Jersey, and is surrounded by a most dangerous sea to navigate. Many shipwrecks have happened near this spot, and on sunken reefs in the vicinity.

ANECDOTES.

In the same Boat.

Feeling that it was his duty to remonstrate with one of his clergy for attending a fox hunt, the bishop had an interview with him.

"Well, your lordship," the offender replied, "I really do not see that there is any more harm in hunting than in going to a ball."

"I presume," answered his lordship, "that you refer to my name having been down amongst those who were present at Mrs. De Vaux's ball, but I assure you I was never once in the same room as the dancers throughout the whole evening."

"That, my lord, is exactly my position. During the hunt, I was never in the same field as the hounds."

The bishop collapsed, and silence reigned.

* * *

Frightened the Ghost.

The Bishop was put to sleep in the haunted room. Next morning they asked him whether anything had disturbed him during the night, and he acknowledged that he had seen a figure at his bedside.

"Who are you?" said the Bishop.

"Please, sir, I am the ghost," was the reply.

"Ah!" said the Bishop; "your family have always subscribed very liberally to the Church. I am now restoring the cathedral; may I put your name down for a good handsome sum?"

The ghost disappeared, and the room was never haunted again.

* * *

An Awful Time.

It is related that a prisoner arrested in America for murder bribed an Irishman on the jury with a ten-pound note to hold out for a verdict of manslaughter. The jury were out for a long time and finally brought in a verdict of manslaughter. "I'm deeply obliged to you, my friend," said the prisoner, when he had an opportunity of speaking to the Irish juror. "Did you have a hard time?" "Yes," said the Irishman—"an awful time! The other eleven wanted to acquit you!"

The American Undergrad.

Is Oxford as expensive for the undergraduate as is reported? A well-known American millionaire just domiciled in England went to the university recently to find out. He met his son and another undergraduate. To the latter he said, "Now, tell me what do you think a proper sum for me to allow my son a year while he is up here?" The son quietly whispered to his friend, "Double it, and I'll give you 10 per cent. on the lot."

* * *

"The Cannimal."

A schoolboy of tender years is said to have produced the following dissertation. As to its genuineness there may be possibly a little misgiving. "The cannimal is the sheep of the desert. It is called a back-teria because it has a hump on its back. The cannimal is very patient, and will lie down and die without a groan, but when it is angry it gets its back up, which is called taking the hump. The shepherds of cannimals is called Arabs. When they live in towns they are called street arabs. When the cannimal goes on a journey it drinks as much as it can to last for many days. Such animals are called acquiducks. Those who cannot carry enough are called inebrates."

* * *

Tommy Knew.

A teacher in a day school said to one of her pupils, "Now, Tommy, spell needle." Tommy: "N-e-i-d-l-e." Teacher: "That's wrong. There's no 'i' in needle." Tommy: "Well, it isn't a good needle then."

* * *

More of the Flounder.

Theodore Hook was at a musical party, at which a certain young lady attempted to sing a very difficult song, which she gave with exaggerated feeling and a great many blunders. "Don't you adore her singing?" asked a gushing old lady who sat next to Hook. "It is so full of soul." "Well, madam, for my part," answered the wit, "I think there seems more of the flounder than the sole about it."