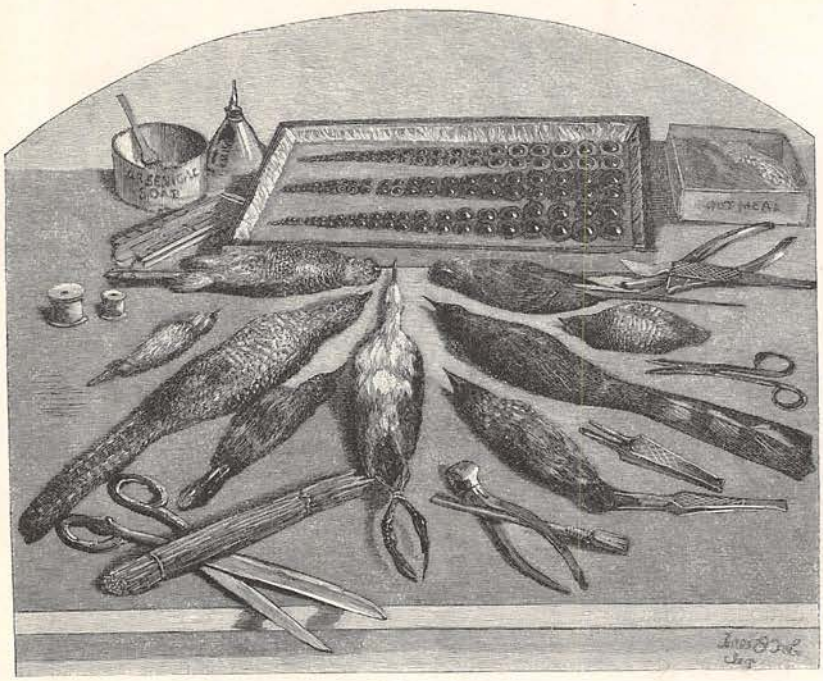
THE TAXIDERMAL ART.



READY FOR WORK.

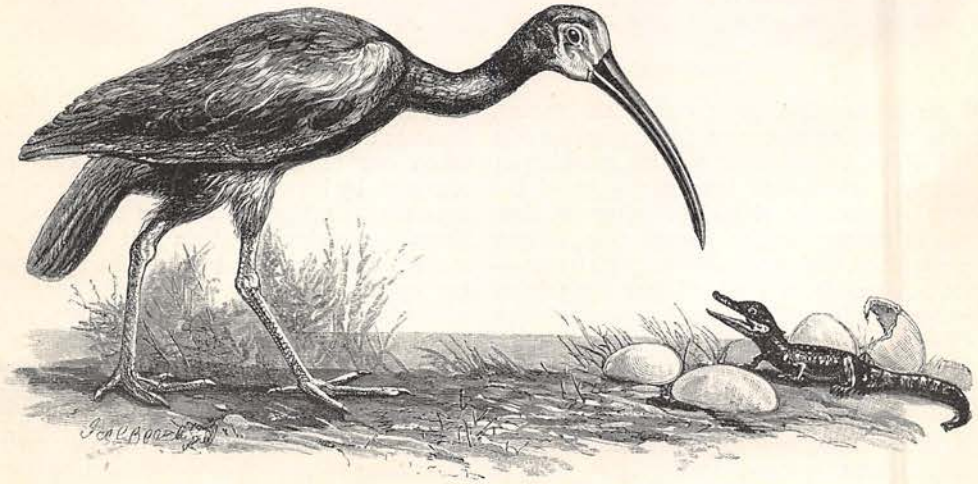
THE recent sale of the Audubon collection of birds' skins awakened little interest, even among ornithologists: nor is this surprising, for Audubon was famous for his sketches and descriptions, rather than for his collections. When a bird was bagged, it was his habit to pin it to a neighboring tree and make a colored drawing. An accurate eye and skillful hand enabled him to imitate those delicate tints which the experienced taxidermist alone can hope to preserve in the specimen; and the measurements he has recorded, taken from birds while the bodies were yet warm, serve sportsmen as criteria even to-day. But, unfortunately for the student of natural history, the author of "The Birds of North America" did not apply himself to the taxidermist's art, and the collection of skins he has left behind him has little more than a historical value.

Waterton, his contemporary, whose name is as famous in England as that of Audubon in America, by reason of his attention to the art of preserving specimens, left far more to posterity. The coloring on Audubon's representations, once so accurate, has dulled and faded with time; new and better methods have been found for imitating plumage, and cheaper though no less reliable plates are at hand. But the collection of birds stuffed by Waterton, now in the museum at York, is deserving of praise, and his directions for imitating the posture of birds, as well as his receipts for preserving their skins, are of great practical value. Waterton had exceptional facilities for obtaining perfect specimens of birds. He possessed a large estate at Wilton, in Yorkshire, about which he built a high, stone wall, ten miles long. Within its boundaries were woods and lakes, fells and valleys, and there the songster and the game-bird built their nests undisturbed and grew tame. Thus Waterton was enabled to obtain unblemished specimens. The value of these, when the subjects are small birds, can be appreciated only by the naturalist and the sportsman. The feathers of a bird fall gracefully, the one over the other, and, when pierced by shot, they are, to a certain extent, disarranged, and their beautiful harmony is interrupted. To correct such defects, the taxidermist draws down the feathers immediately over the wound, and pulls up those beneath; but this, though con-

cealing the gap, distorts the plumage and contracts the skin.

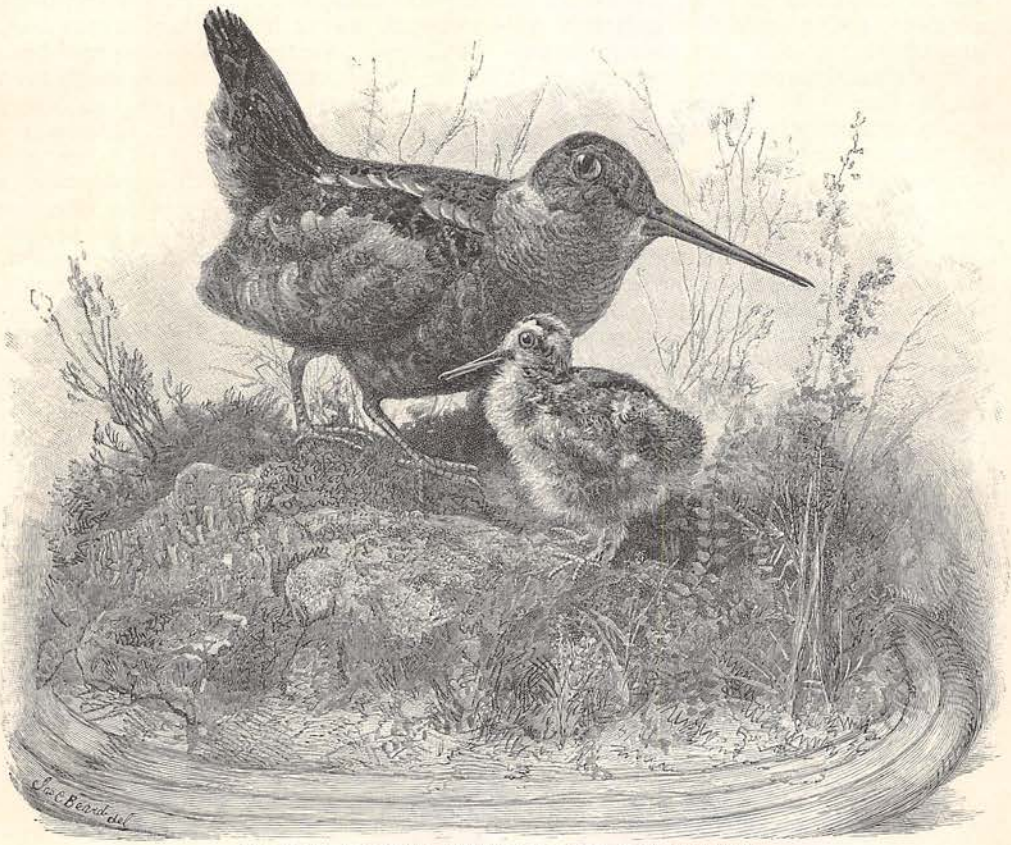
Waterton's directions for stuffing animals, which have, from time to time, furnished cause for laughter, possess other merits save that of being unique. He maintained that an animal should be stuffed in three sections: (1.) The head and fore legs; (2.) the body from the shoulders to the flare of the flanks; (3.) the flanks and the hind legs. Such treatment is calculated to strike the novice as ridiculous, but a careful examination will demonstrate that this plan, though it possesses defects, has much to commend it. It was, no doubt, the difficulty of stuffing a skin in its entirety, of imitating the muscles and tendons, the protrusions and depressions, the play of the joints, and the expression of the various parts, that led Waterton to divide it.

It is not enough that the dimensions of the subject be carefully recorded, the skin removed by skillful use of the scalpel, and the wounds stopped while yet warm. All these are essential to an accurate artificial reproduction, but they are, by no means, an assurance of it. It is upon the subsequent treatment of the skin that the success of the final mounting of the specimen depends. And here it may be laid down as a fact that no taxidermist can be trusted to stuff a bird or animal with the characteristics of which he is unfamiliar. Examples of monstrosities due to such ignorance were recently noticed in a taxidermist's window. One of these had the plumage of an eagle, but its body was almost parallel to the ground, and its drooping wings expressed ignoble indolence. These are attributes of the vulture, not of the eagle, whose very name symbolizes dignity, courage, and grace. Another had the plumage of a magpie, but the man who stuffed and mounted it was ignorant of the craftiness and sprightliness of the magpie, or he would not have allowed it to assume such a heavy, hang-dog appearance. There was also the skin of a fox, but the taxidermist had not been happy in catching its cunning expression, and, if you could pardon this, closer scrutiny would prove that he had given Reynard round or dog's eyes, whereas, being nocturnal, the fox has elliptical or cat's eyes. But, happily, the taxidermists who have been in the habit of stuffing birds and animals as an upholsterer stuffs pillows are fast losing ground, and men of artistic instincts are coming to the front. These men are well grounded in anatomy, which is indispensable to proper treatment, and pay close attention to form and attitude. They study the proportion that each curve or extension, each contraction or expansion, of a particular part bears to the remainder of the body. Waterton insisted that such studies were indispensable to successful treatment; and in mounting birds' skins he discountenanced the use of wire, which, up to that time, had formed the skeleton or manikin of stuffed birds, on the ground that it introduced a disagreeable stiffness and destroyed the natural symmetry of the specimen. His plan was almost completely to skin the bird, leaving in only that portion of the skull-bone which extends from the fore part of the eyes to the bill, parts of the wing-bones, the jaw-bones, and half of the thigh-bones. With a stick shaped like a knitting-needle, he introduced cotton into the skin little by little, taking careful account of every swelling or cavity of the live bird, and of that just proportion which is so often neglected by the taxidermist.



SCARLET IBIS AND YOUNG CROCODILE. (MOUNTED BY WILLIAM T. HORNADAY.)

Those who have carefully examined a bird are aware that the feathers do not completely cover the body. There are cavities in the region of the shoulders, wings, and thighs that are comparatively bare, and in which the skin fits with extraordinary nicety. The usual manner of treating these parts is by stuffing them into rotund surfaces. This results in a certain loss of symmetry and proportion.



WOODCOCK AND YOUNG. (MOUNTED BY WILLIAM T. HORNADAY.)

Waterton exercised great care in this regard, being unwilling that even those portions of a bird which, by reason of the interposition of plumage, are hidden from the sight of the ordinary spectator, should be otherwise than true to nature. At the present time, as may be imagined, such work as Waterton's is rare,—not, however, from a lack of men capable of successfully imitating it, but for reasons which will be dwelt upon farther on in this paper.

The most approved mode of preserving a bird's skin necessitates a careful attention from the moment it is brought to bag up to the time when it is ready for mounting. The wounds must be stopped with cotton or tow, and the feathers that have been discolored by blood must be carefully touched with a wet sponge. In warm countries, the skin should be removed at once; elsewhere, the bird may first be allowed to grow cold. Beginning at the breast-bone, the skin is slowly removed by forcing a blunt instrument beneath it, while at the same time care should be taken not to stretch it. The bones of the wings are cut at the shoulder-joints, and, after the back of the skull is exposed, the vertebræ of the neck are separated from the head. The brains are now taken out of the skull, and the eyes are removed by breaking the little bones which separate the orbits and the roof of the mouth. From the under mandible the flesh is removed, care being taken not to injure the ear openings nor the eyelids. In the case of sea-birds, which are commonly oily, powdered chalk is profusely used. The skin is now rubbed with arsenical soap, or a solution of corrosive sublimate, and preparations are made to dry it. A copy of the notes taken when the bird was bagged, giving exact dimensions, color of eyes and legs, sex, and season of the year, should accompany

the skin. If it is to be sent far away to be mounted, the skin should be packed in a box with camphor and strong aromatics, all crevices being stopped with pitch to keep out insects. A naturalist traveling in Abyssinia laid his cured bird-skins between sheets of paper, as in an herbarium, and thus they made the voyage to England without injury, and when mounted, they made fair specimens.

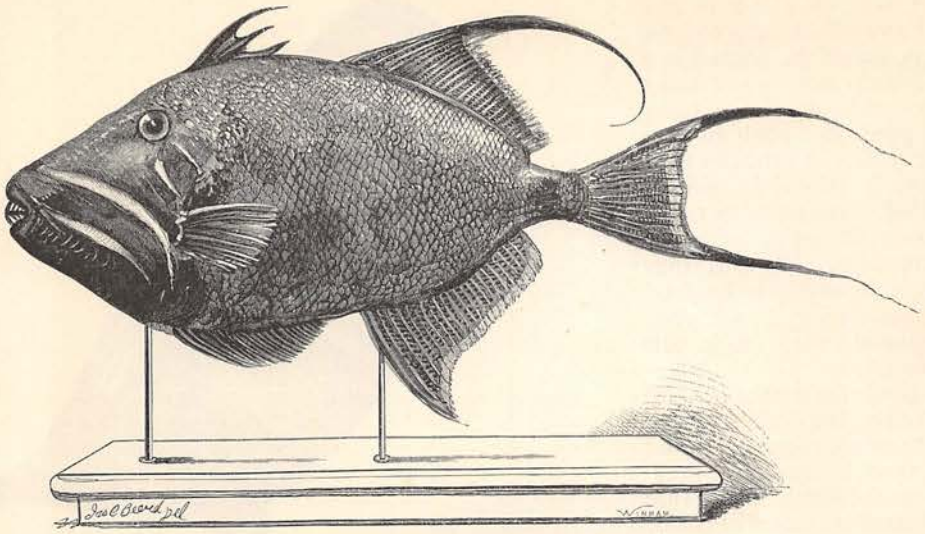
Before the stuffing of a bird is begun, the skull is washed with corrosive sublimate and replaced by way of the neck. Then the wings and legs are adjusted by means of bits of wire connected with a central piece, which is made to extend longitudinally from the head to the tip of the tail, where it forms a triangle for the support of the spreading feathers or rectrices. One of the principal faults of stuffed birds is an apparent elongation of the leg. The three bones which compose the leg of a bird are articulated so as almost to form the letter Z, and though, in the case of the waders, such as the stork, the heron, and the crane, the upper joint of the thigh bone is less inclined than in the birds of the wood, it is never straight. In stuffing, an operation that must of necessity be slow, chopped flax, tow, or cotton is used. Great care must be taken not to stretch the skin or distort the parts while stuffing or sewing up. With a pair of forceps, chopped cotton is inserted into the orbits in order to prepare them for the reception of the eyes, which are affixed to the head by means of calcareous cement. Should the nictitating membrane protrude, it should be pressed back with the point of the lancet. When the pose of the bird has been decided upon and arranged, cotton thread is carefully wound round and round the plumage. This is to hold the feathers in position until the skin is thoroughly dry.

The preservation of fish-forms is a distinctive branch of taxidermy, and while many taxidermists attempt it, few are really successful. Fish, when first taken out of the water, have a bloom upon their skins that might be likened to the bloom upon a ripe plum. To retain this, they must be skinned and stuffed almost immediately after capture—say within a half hour's time—by a careful and experienced hand. According to the authorities, in order to protect the scales and colors, cambric or tissue-paper should be applied before the skin is removed. When this is effected, it is wrapped in a moist cloth to keep it pliable.

HARLEQUIN DUCK WRAPPED. (MOUNTED BY F. S. WEBSTER.)

The old custom of mounting birds on twigs or moss-covered bases has largely been abandoned. Moss and all such material is the resort of insects, and when near animal matter is a favorite place for moths and the like to lay their eggs. A stand composed of two pieces of polished mahogany, or rosewood, in the shape of the letter T, affixed to an elliptical-shaped base of the same material, has been adopted by the principal museums of natural history.

The French or German taxidermist usually serves a long and laborious apprenticeship in the study of animal forms, anatomy, and drawing, before he considers himself sufficiently equipped for the practical work of his vocation. But even the skilled taxidermist, when competing for contracts, will sometimes turn out work which, if not absolutely worthless, is at least unsatisfactory. A fair example of this was recently to be seen in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Desiring some fine work done to serve as criteria for his own work, Professor Baird sent to Herr Martin, a famous taxidermist of Stuttgart, asking him to bid for the restoration of



TRIGGER FISH. (MOUNTED BY WILLIAM T. HORNADAY.)

a large collection of birds' skins. Now, Martin, supposing he was competing with the English and French taxidermists, made what proved to be a very low estimate, and obtained the contract. When the collection arrived from Stuttgart it was a most deplorable sight, and, so far as the study of ornithology was concerned, utterly worthless. Yet Martin has done some of the best and most conscientious work to be found on the continent of Europe. He has mounted swans so exquisitely, with such truth to nature, that it has been said that live swans could rival them in form only when they were at their very best.

What might not inappropriately be called the antithesis of Martin's cheap and inaccurate work is done by Edwin Ward, of London. Though by no means superior to that of many others, it commands by far the best price, and it is by means of this excessive price that Ward is enabled to turn out such satisfactory work. Indian officers and wealthy persons who have shown prowess in the jungle are pretty sure to save the skins for Ward to mount. Starting with an accurate knowledge of the subject, he repairs to the "Zoo," and there makes elaborate drawings of the particular subject in hand. Slowly and carefully he brings the lion, tiger, cheetah, or whatever else it may be, into its natural form and attitude. The feelers about the nose of the king of beasts stand out with their wonted vigor, the great muscles of the shoulder and flank yield gracefully to the joints which they cover, and the wire-like tendons of the herculean fore-arm may be as easily traced in the restoration as in the caged beast.

Before those famous taxidermists and hunters, the Verreaux Frères, established themselves in Paris, museums of natural history were compelled to rely upon picking up their specimens in all parts of the world. The keen intelligence of the Verreaux was not long in discovering a means of serving the cause of science and advancing their own fortunes at the same time. They established a sort of clearing-house for wild beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, with branches in every quarter of the globe, and from them you could order a stuffed elephant, giraffe, or Bengal tiger, as you would a flitch of bacon from your butcher or a boiled lobster from the fishmonger.

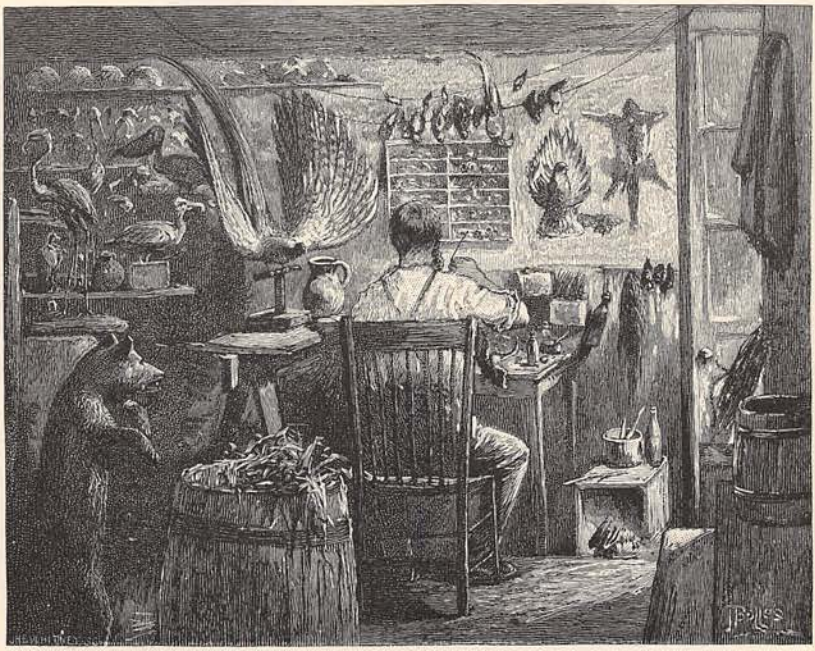
While the Verreaux were gaining a world-wide reputation, an American lad, Henry A. Ward by name, was pursuing his studies in Paris at the Sorbonne, L'École des Mines, and the Jardin des Plantes. When his means were all but exhausted, young Ward left his lodgings in the Latin Quarter and sought for fossils in the chalk and limestone quarries in the suburbs of Paris. For these he found a ready sale in London, bringing back with him to Paris fine collections of minerals purchased from the Cornwall miners. Among difficulties that would have appalled most young men, he worked his way through an elaborate course of studies, without help or encouragement. To-day, he supplies the largest museums in the world with stuffed specimens, from the elephant down to the smallest rodent, and, the Verreaux Frères being now dead, he has established, as they did, stations upon every continent for the collection of natural history specimens. At his American head-

quarters at Rochester, N. Y., there are over twenty thousand mammals, birds, fishes, and reptiles, ready for stuffing and mounting. Among these are one thousand kangaroos, one hundred tigers, three elephants, sixty bears, thirty cynocephali, one thousand serpents and snakes, two hundred seals and sea-lions, thirty orang-outang, five chimpanzees, one hundred bison and buffalo, three gorillas, and three hundred antelope.

When the news came that Corea was open to Americans, Ward at once dispatched a man to secure skins of the various animals indigenous to that country. A German baron, Von Hoppenfeld by name, is hunting the gorilla for him in African wilds, — a means of utilizing the German baron not previously discovered. In this quest Von Hoppenfeld has penetrated so far into the interior that he can only indicate his whereabouts by his latitude and longitude.

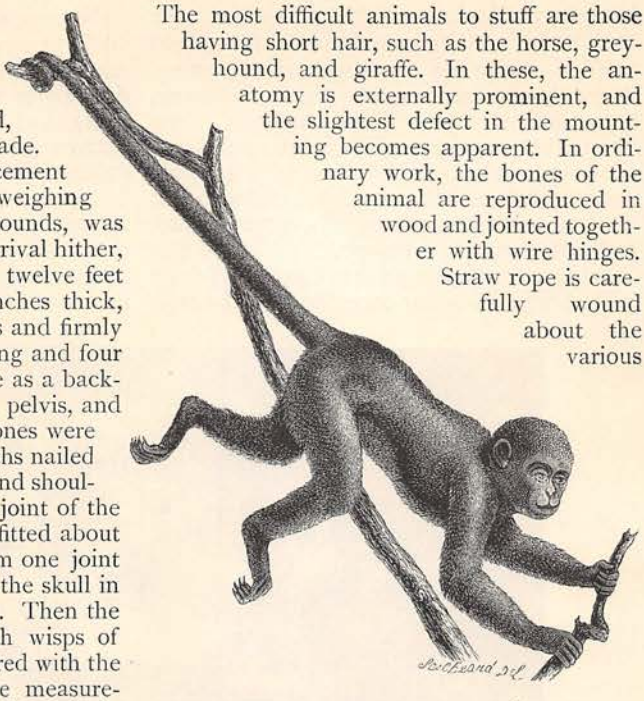
Ward is capable of doing quick as well as excellent work. The Fishery Exhibition of 1880 opened in Berlin, April 18th. In March, President White, of Cornell University, then United States Minister to Germany, sent to Ward, then in Paris, asking him to make an exhibit of American fishes. Two days after the opening of the exposition, an almost complete collection arrived at Berlin, consisting of fifteen hundred forms, all of which had been labeled, classified, packed, and sent from the American headquarters on a month's notice.

Not long ago, Ward dispatched a man to India to shoot an elephant. He obtained permission from the Governor of the Madras Presidency (for the elephant is protected by the laws), and after a long hunt, in which the natives joined, finally secured the largest stuffed specimen in the country, now in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Cambridge, Mass. The elephant was shot through the head. Careful measurements were first made of the body and limbs, and then the skin was removed in three sections. One incision was made at the top of the neck, along the back to the tail; another divided the skin from the throat, along the middle of the body underneath, meeting the first incision at the tail; and a third cut severed the head from the body. On the inside of each leg an incision was made from the sole of the foot to the abdominal opening. The skin was removed by working from the latter and the back cuts at the same time, the legs being cut off at the joints. Then the body was rolled over, and the operation was repeated. Finally the head and trunk were skinned. The absence of hair from the skin facilitated the treatment of both sides with preservatives. Both sides were washed with arsenical soap and salt, and rubbed with a flat stone. The skin was then rolled up and packed away. Two days later it was spread out, and the pieces of flesh adhering were removed. After being again treated with arsenic, it was left undisturbed for



ROOM IN A TAXIDERMIST'S SHOP.

a week, at the expiration of which time the fibers were found to be hardened, and the epidermis thoroughly set. Powdered alum was now freely used, and the skin left to dry in the shade. Twenty days after the commencement of the operation, the skin, then weighing only two hundred and forty pounds, was shipped to America. Upon its arrival hither, four bars of wrought iron, each twelve feet long and one and a quarter inches thick, were bent into shape for the legs and firmly bolted to a beam sixteen feet long and four inches thick. This was to serve as a backbone for the attachment of ribs, pelvis, and scapulæ. Semicircular-shaped bones were attached to the backbone, and laths nailed thereon. Then a wooden pelvis and shoulder-blades were set, and at each joint of the legs a round piece of wood was fitted about the leg-iron, and laths nailed from one joint to the other. An exact copy of the skull in wood was bolted on in position. Then the several parts were wrapped with wisps of straw, and the manikin was covered with the skin of the elephant. From the measurements that had been made, the distances between the various extremities were copied, and the protrusions imitated by stuffing. The trunk was filled with straw, and the wooden imitation of the skull covered with clay and molded into shape. After the skin was thoroughly dry,—for previous to mounting it had been in the relapsing tank,—the seams were sewed together, and the elephant was complete.

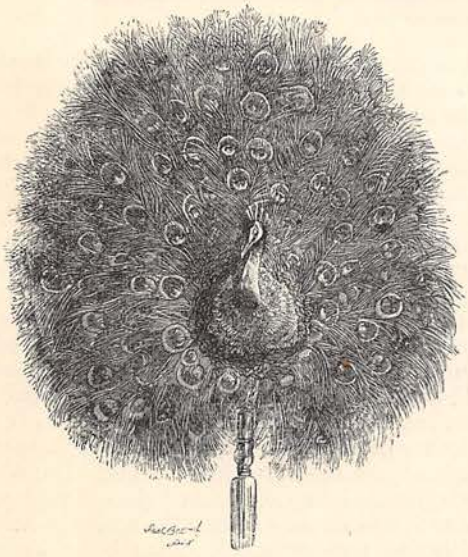


SOUTH AMERICAN BLACK-FACED MONKEY. (MOUNTED BY F. S. WEBSTER.)

The most difficult animals to stuff are those having short hair, such as the horse, greyhound, and giraffe. In these, the anatomy is externally prominent, and the slightest defect in the mounting becomes apparent. In ordinary work, the bones of the animal are reproduced in wood and jointed together with wire hinges. Straw rope is carefully wound about the various imitation bones until the original dimensions are reached. Then the muscles and tendons are imitated, and the skin is pinched from the outside along the line of the false tendons. In this work the taxidermist is aided by the retention by the articular surfaces of their old creases.

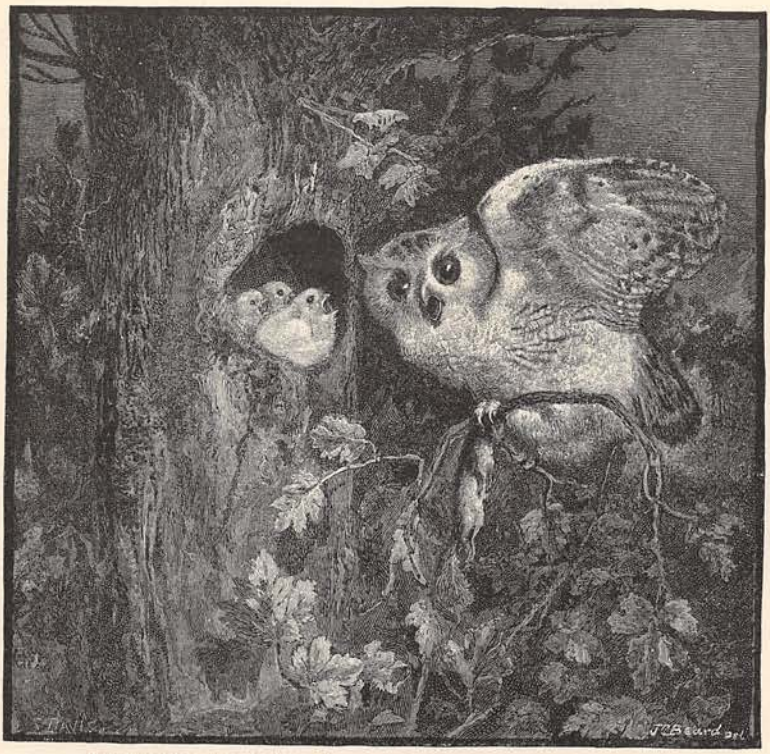
A serious obstacle in the path of the conscientious stuffer of animals is the inability of many of his patrons to distinguish between the ideal and the real. This can not be better illustrated than by citing the case of the buffalo. The ideal buffalo has very heavy fore legs, short neck, depressed head, and light flanks. The attitude of the ideal buffalo is always rampant. The real buffalo is disappointing in comparison. If a line were drawn midway between the end of the nose and the termination of the flanks, only three-fifths of the animal would be found forward and two-fifths back of it. But, in the ideal buffalo, three-fourths of the body is forward of this point and only one-fourth behind it. Again, the pelage is by no means so thick nor so shaggy as is usually represented. Nor is the real buffalo of threatening mien; his expression is rather one of timidity.

The most important part of the work of the taxidermist is the preservation of skins of birds and mammals. Many of the specimens mounted by taxidermists ten years



PEACOCK SCREEN. (MOUNTED BY F. S. WEBSTER.)

ago, some of even more recent date, which may be seen in the various museums, show signs of decay and of decomposition, while instances are not rare where the work of their predecessors is yet sound and free from blemish. In order to protect the skin of bird or mammal effectually against the assault of insects, it must be thoroughly penetrated by that which will so change its internal chemistry as to make it proof against yielding, cracking, and other deterioration to which organic tissue is subject. According to the best authorities, a bath of arsenical solution, corrosive sublimate, or chloride of zinc, will effect this.



SCREECH-OWL AND YOUNG. (WALL-CASE, MOUNTED BY F. S. WEBSTER.)

The metropolitan taxidermist is constantly in the receipt of skins sent in from the field, which, through the carelessness or ignorance of the owner, have been injured beyond repair. According to the best authorities, the legs and feet of a mammal and the head of a bird should be skinned. The leg bones and skull, though permitted to adhere to the skin, should be freed from flesh. The skin should be treated with arsenic or arsenical soap, dry alum or salt, or placed in strong alcohol or brine. It must not be allowed to dry while yet stained with blood, nor be stretched or left in the sun. If it is placed in the shade, where the wind blows, it will soon dry without deterioration. In a good-sized bird all but the head of the humerus should be permitted to remain; in birds as large as the red-shouldered hawk, the secondaries must not be detached from the ulna. The muscles and tendons of a bird may be removed by cutting underneath the wing from the elbow and beyond. In long-legged birds and waders an incision should be made back of the heel, that is to say, in the tibio-tarsal joint, and another in the fleshy part of the foot, and by this means the tendon at the back of the leg should be removed. This will greatly facilitate the work of the taxidermist in wiring the leg, and will go far to preserve the scutellæ of the tarsus.

Of commercial naturalists, Frank, of Amsterdam, now dead, held high rank. He devoted himself particularly to the mammals of the Dutch archipelago. His specimens may be seen at the museum in his native city, as well as at the museums of Lyons, Bordeaux, Hamburg, Berlin, and Vienna. Hermann Plonquet, also dead, formerly of the Royal Natural History Museum in Stuttgart, excelled in preparing and mounting ornithological subjects, wisely refraining from the mammalia on the ground that a man could not do justice to both,—an

assertion, by the way, which may be verified in almost any large museum. It is said that no taxidermist has yet appeared who excels in both classes. A Pole, Bielowski by name, of the Museum of the Imperial Academy at St. Petersburg and the museum at Moscow, is said to be among the best, having executed some really superior work, as the cases and corridors of the British Museum and the museums of Liverpool, Edinburgh, Florence, and Madrid will bear witness.

GOLDEN EAGLE. (MOUNTED BY F. S. WEBSTER.)

That there is much excellent taxidermal work done in and about New York — work that will safely vie with the best productions of European masters — few will deny; but it is also true that a vast amount of inferior work is yearly turned out. There are several reasons for this. One is that the prices now prevailing do not warrant the taxidermist in devoting the time to his work that the subject requires, and another, that a certain class of work now in popular demand does not call for, nor does it compensate, the careful attention of the master. The poulterer wishes stuffed hens for his window; the florist, swans and doves; the furrier, bears rampant; the milkman, cows couchant, and so on.

Among taxidermal curiosities, mention should be made of that department of "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" which might, not inappropriately, be called its Museum of Horrors, and which Mr. Henry Bergh has collected to give the emphasis of reality to his effective arguments against brutality to dumb animals. Here the taxidermist has portrayed the sufferings of the game-cock after the main; of the dog after the fight with his fellow; of the pigeon when wounded by the sportsman, and of the overdriven horse. The horrors of vivisection are graphically set forth by means of skillfully prepared animals, whose apparent sufferings, even in dumb show, it is painful to contemplate.

Several celebrated horses have been preserved by taxidermy. Sheridan's war-horse "Rienzi," which carried him to "Winchester twenty miles away," may be seen on Governor's Island. Sherman's famous horse "Tecumseh," which he rode "from Atlanta to the sea," is in the University of Wisconsin, at Madison, and General Robert E. Lee's war-horse "Traveller" is in the museum of the Washington and Lee University, Virginia. The famous trotter "Lexington" was recently exhumed on Alexander's breeding-farm in Kentucky, and remodeled from a sketch taken during life.

One of the first objects to catch the eye of the visitor in the Arsenal, in Central Park, is a group representing an Arab courier attacked by lions. This is a masterpiece from the hands of the late Édouard Verreaux, of Paris, and at the Exposition of 1867, where it was greatly admired, secured a gold medal. Hard by is a grizzly bear, stuffed nearly half a century ago, but, owing to the care of Superintendent Conklin, it does not yet show signs of deterioration.

An important branch of the taxidermist's business is the stuffing of favorite animals and birds. Conspicuously displayed at one New York shop is a sign with the legend, "Cats and dogs must be paid for in advance!" This is only a necessary precaution of the taxidermist to protect himself from loss. His most frequent visitors are women who have lost a pet dog or cat. At first the mistress is inconsolable, and orders her favorite stuffed and mounted in the best manner. This requires time, and when the work is done its owner has usually so far recovered from her grief as to be indifferent concerning it. Were it a bird of fine plumage or a rare animal, the taxidermist would be willing to have it left on his hands; but there is no demand for miscellaneous stuffed cats and dogs. It is remarkable how many canaries are brought to be mounted. "Here's 'Dickie!'" says a little girl as she enters the shop, and, carefully unwinding a handkerchief, takes out a diminu-

tive yellow bird. "Ma wants you to stuff 'm!" Then she whispers tearful directions regarding her pet, concluding with: "You must make him look just exactly as if he was alive."

Skins of birds and animals from all over the country are sent to New York to be mounted. Oftentimes the owner desires information regarding the curious changes of color in the plumage, particularly of shore birds, or regarding that *crux* of ornithological science, "What constitutes a species?" Many ornithologists throughout the country rely upon pictorial representation to decide upon bird-forms, and while there are some very accurate ornithological publications to be had, it is a well-known fact that the market is flooded with works illustrated from badly stuffed specimens instead of from live or freshly killed birds.

A serious obstacle in the path of taxidermal progress has been the unwillingness of American taxidermists to compare notes. The physician, the surgeon, and the scientist publish to the world the results of their experiments, and to keep secret important discoveries for purposes of money-getting is looked upon by the members of these several fraternities as a species of quackery. Such has not been the case among taxidermists. If a man by experiment has learned a better method of restoring skins, or protecting them from the attack of parasites, it has been his habit to conceal the discovery from other members of his guild. Two years ago the Society of American Taxidermists was organized, with a view of bringing the workmen together. The first meeting was held at Rochester, N. Y., the second at Boston, Mass., and the third is about to be held in New York city, under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History. At these meetings the best work done in the country is placed on exhibition. Notable features in the last meeting were an excellent taxidermal representation of the story of Cock Robin, and a chorus of open-mouthed birds perched upon a bough, with one of their number armed with a baton as leader. There were also mammals in groups, and many single specimens of birds, mammals, and fishes. The specialists openly ply their several branches of the taxidermal art each day of the exhibition, and thus the spectator may enlarge his knowledge of the art without hinderance. The officers of the society say that there are already signs of improvement in American taxidermy. At former exhibitions old workmen have obtained valuable hints from sources which at first seemed unpromising,

A GROTESQUE.

while the younger members of the guild have been partly disabused of the idea that celerity of execution will make amends for inartistic treatment.

There is a species of taxidermy which might not inappropriately be called "plastic," and of which Mr. P. T. Barnum, if not the originator, is at least a patron. In this, fabulous or costly specimens are modeled out of parts of other and not necessarily similar natural forms. Several years since, a New York taxidermist constructed a whale thirty-six feet long. It was made like a balloon, to be blown up with gas. The covering was silk, upon which dog-fish and shark-skins were carefully attached. The jaws were made to work like an alligator's, and the interior of the mouth was lined with whalebone. This whale was purchased by a Western showman, for whom it proved a phenomenal attraction. Its career as a curiosity was, however, brought to a close by an accident which could hardly have been foreseen by either its builder or its owner. Contrary to his usual custom, the latter permitted its exhibition in a tent at a county fair. The man employed to describe in stentorian tones the habits of the "monsters of the deep" had arrived at about the middle of his discourse, when a cross-beam fell from the peak of the tent and struck the whale in the back. There was a sharp, hissing sound as the gas escaped, and the whale gradually flattened. "There she blows!" shouted one of the surrounding rustics, and whales ceased to draw in that part of the West.

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