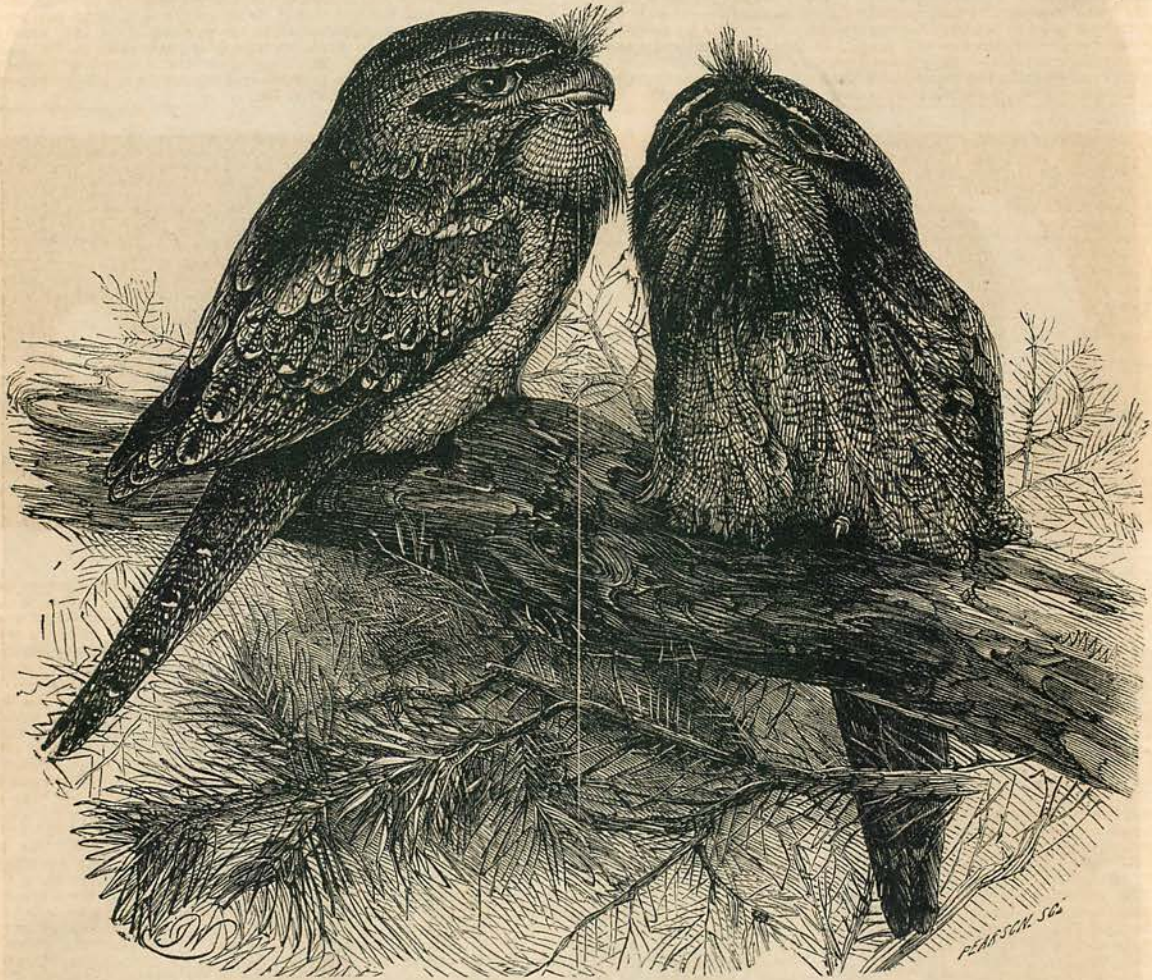


THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN GOATSUCKERS.

The Bird Room in the Zoological Society's Gardens was formerly inhabited by parrots only, brilliant in colour, but noisy beyond all bearing. They still occupy the largest portion of it, as will be readily supposed when we state that upwards of seventy species of macaws, cockatoos, parakeets, and parrots are assembled there. On the south side of the room, however, have recently been placed some large cages, containing choice specimens of the Australian Goatsuckers, which form the subject of our present illustration.

Cuvier's Podargus is an inhabitant of Van Diemen's Land, which, says Mr. Gould, in his great work on the birds of Australia, "if not its exclusive habitat, is certainly its great stronghold, it being there very numerous, as evidenced by the frequency with which I encountered it during my rambles in the woods; and, its distribution over the island is so general that to

particularise localities in which it may be found is quite unnecessary, it being equally abundant near the coast as well as in the interior. I observed it both among the thick branches of the Casuarine and on the dead limbs of the Eucalypti: it appeared, however, to evince a greater partiality for the latter, which it closely resembles in colour, and, from the position in which it rests, looks so like a part of the branch itself as frequently to elude detection: it is generally seen in pairs sitting near each other, and frequently on the same branch. Like the other members of the genus, this bird feeds almost exclusively on insects, of which Coleoptera form a great part. It is strictly nocturnal in its habits; and, although not so active as the true Caprimulgi, displays considerable alertness in the capture of its food, presenting a striking contrast to its inertness in the daytime, when it is so drowsy that it can scarcely be aroused from its slumbers, that portion of its existence being passed in a sitting posture across a dead branch, perfectly motionless, and with the bill pointing upwards; it never



THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN GOATSUCKERS (PODARGUS CUVIER,) AT THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S GARDENS, REGENT'S PARK. FROM "THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."

flies by day unless roused from the branch on which it is sitting, and this is not easily effected, as neither the discharge of a gun nor any other noise will cause it to take wing. It is frequently captured, and kept in captivity, where it excites attention more from the sluggishness of its nature and the singular position it assumes than from any other cause. Raw meat forms a suitable substitute for its natural food. In captivity it will pass the entire day in sleep on the back of a chair, or any other piece of furniture on which it can perch. Like the owl, it is considered by some a bird of ill omen, principally from the extraordinary sound of its hoarse, unearthly cry, which resembles the words 'more pork.' It not only approaches the immediate vicinity of the houses, but emits this sound while perched in their verandahs and on the buildings themselves, and it is often to be seen perched on the tombstones of the churchyard."

DAMP IN WALLS: WALL PAPERS.—Paper-hangings in themselves, as materials, maintain a higher temperature than the walls or partitions on which they may be placed; then less condensation of vapour takes place, and the dampness is removed from the room as the process of ventilation goes on. To a great extent paper is an absorbent, but then the moisture is given off in the same form, or may escape by other means. The reason why dark papers are drier than light ones is still due to the same action. All dark materials imbibe more light and heat, and will thus maintain a higher temperature; besides which, many of the very light-coloured papers (particularly the better ones) have a glazed or satin face,

which is produced by the use of a large quantity of China clay—a material that from its coldness at once causes condensation of moisture, and thus facilitates its own decay. The health of thousands, both among the rich and poor, has been affected by living in cold, damp houses, the dampness causing decomposition of the vegetable matter in the paper or the colouring on the walls, and the putrefaction of the animal substances used as a vehicle for the colours: thus the atmosphere becomes impregnated with impurities, is rendered unfit for respiration, and is unequal to the sustenance of human life in a healthy form.

FERRUCYANIDE OF POTASSIUM FOR THE REMOVAL OF RUST-SPOTS IN WHITE LINEN.—The employment of ferrocyanide of potassium may often help us out of great difficulties in the case of rust-spots in linen. It is added in a comparatively small quantity to the water, acidulated with sulphuric acid, and the linen is then moved about in the fluid. When all the yellow has disappeared, and a clear blue made its appearance, the linen is rinsed and treated with solution of carbonate of potash. Here the blue colour disappears, and with it a great part of the yellow, which only remains in spots. These are very easily got rid of by dilute sulphuric acid alone.

THE INK OF THE ANCIENTS.—By making a solution of shellac with borax, in water, and adding a suitable portion of pure lampblack, an ink is producible which is indestructible by time or by chemical agents, and which, on drying, will present a polished surface, as with the ink found on the Egyptian papyri.