

or hawked, was the touter of books in numbers. This man laid out a beat for himself, which he traversed weekly, or perhaps monthly; and his main object seems to have been to dig a big hole in your pocket "by force of numbers." Our recollections of this persevering genius are not half so pleasant as they might have been, had we turned a deaf ear to his seductions. We have indignant reminiscences of a certain "Cruden's Concordance," printed on a kind of stone-coloured tea paper, which cost us nearly four pounds sterling by the time it got wrapped in decent calf skin, but which, long before that time, was selling in the shops, in quite as good a garment, at twenty-eight shillings. We had paid the difference for the pleasure of having the work dribbled out weekly in blue paper covers, and we were but one of some thousand or so subscribers who had contributed, for about three years, to a "losing bank." Large fortunes were made by speculators in this sort of literature, during the first decades of the present century; and, looking to the margin of profit exhibited by the Concordance transaction, the fact is easily explained. Some huge monuments of the trade yet remain, in the shape of gigantic Bibles and voluminous illustrated histories, stored up among the penates of many a farmhouse and rural residence. The touter of books in numbers still survives; but he has undergone a change; the decrease in the money value of books of all kinds has cropped his large profits to something like average dimensions, and, having a better informed public to deal with, he must give the money's worth for the money.

The most characteristic literary hawked of the present day is the trash packman of London, and the suburbs, within five or six miles of St. Paul's. Nothing derogatory is signified by the word "trash," in connection with this subject; "trash" and "trash-shops" being merely technical trade terms, used to designate cheap serial literature, and the places where it is sold retail. The function of the trash packman is to supply innumerable small shopkeepers, who sell cheap literature, either as their staple article, or in connection with snuff and tobacco, with lollypops and sweetstuff, with toys and walking-sticks, with apples, oranges, and nuts, with red herrings and treacle, small beer and vinegar, with brass bracelets, brooches, rings, and Birmingham ware, or even with coals and potatoes. It is for his special convenience, though that fact is modestly kept in the background, that the cheap serials are issued so long before the nominal date of their publication; the cheaper they are, and the larger their circulation, the earlier do they issue from the press. Were they to come from the printer only on the eve of publication day, the packman would never be able to get them to the counters of his customers, who, for the most part, have themselves no connection with the publishing houses, and rely solely upon him for their supply. He is the most unwearied and punctual of purveyors; and in all weathers you may see him pelting along on his route, laden with the ponderous reams and quires which melt away gradually as he continues his circuit from shop to shop. His

wares are far more various and manifold than the general reader is aware. Besides those journals which are well known and extensively popular, he has a catalogue of others, altogether as obscure and ephemeral, the first numbers of which are generally given away, or added, as a bonus, to some other periodical, with a view to secure a welcome reception for the numbers which are to follow. These are mostly of the melo-dramatic, demonological, or stirring and startling class of narratives—speculations which as often fail as remunerate their originators, but which, spite of all failures, are constantly springing up in some form or other.

The remuneration of this industrious disseminator of the cheap literature of the day is not, we imagine, very large; and it is rather a mystery how he is remunerated at all, seeing that he sells at five-and-twenty per cent. under the published price, and therefore must exist himself on that meagre margin—whatever it may be, for we confess our inability to define it—which is expressed by such terms as quirage, dozenage, per-centage, etc. Perhaps he supplements his wholesale transactions by a small independent trade in retail, which he is able to carry on concurrently with his larger operations, and along the same beat.

The reader will perceive that literary packmen may be very useful agents, circulating sound sense and good instruction; or, on the contrary, they may be perambulating nuisances, carrying infection into the moral atmosphere wherever they go. The tendencies of the times are, however, happily in favour of their being beneficially employed, and it behoves every man who wields a pen to see that, so far as he himself is concerned, they are so.

#### THE CALCUTTA MALL.

At last the golden orb of day, after his brilliant career across the azure vault of heaven, and after

"Hurling fierce splendour through the saltry air,"

betakes himself to his gorgeous crimson bed across the Hooghly. The fact is physically announced to me by the perception of a gradual mitigation in the heat as I lie recumbent, divested of all but the airiest of habiliments, attempting to snatch a brief forty winks to brace up my energies for the coming visit to the Calcutta Mall. But still more practically is the event of closing day made significant by the silent entry of my sable valet, who proceeds to business by opening the venetians, and letting a flood of light into my hitherto darkened chamber; he then arranges my wardrobe, and, after certain manual telegraphic signals from the window, to summon the water-carrier to give me a bath, formally announces that everything is ready. My valet is resolute: any attempt to court still further slumber would be absurd. As the water-carrier enters the bath-room, I rouse myself, and emerging from the precincts of the musquito-curtains, enjoy the luxury of the huge skinful of freshly-drawn cool water that is poured over me; I then rapidly perform my toilette, under the joint administrations

of my valet and his mate, and descend to the door, where I find my sparkling proud little Arab fretting with impatience to carry me to the scene of confusion and of conquest.

I have my habitation in Chowringhee, the Belgravia of Calcutta; and, mounting my Saladin, (whose saltatory proceedings evince a salutary efflux for a superabundance of mercurial humours, and whose eccentric fancies are somewhat opposed to the long enjoyment of the cooling effects of the bath,) I am borne along by a series of initiatory bounds, and at last reach the Chowringhee Road, which skirts the broad green plain that lies around the celebrated Fort William. The sun is rapidly sinking, while from every road and street, highway and gully, Calcutta is disgorging herself of her population.

An hour ago, the roads were bare strips of heated earth, devoid of life, until the water-carriers sprung forth from their hidden haunts, and, scattering the grateful fluid around, laid the dust, and gave a sensation of pleasant coolness to a panting populace. Now, as if by magic, impelled by one spontaneous desire "to eat the air," as is the oriental figurative designation, all the world and his wife emerge from their muggy dwellings, be they humble or palatial, and make straight for the strand. Here are the governors, the princes, the great men and the mighty men, the captains, the high church dignitaries, cotton lords and merchant princes, high and low, the European and the indigenous, the white man and the black, with a somewhat imposing preponderance of that medium tint which claims affinity to each, sallying forth, and one and all directing their course to the appointed Mall, with a seeming spirit of determination that nothing could dispel.

Away they go! equestrians, male and female, making for the bright green velvet sward that so gladdens the eye of the visitor to the city of palaces, whether from sea or up country. There are equipages of every form and build, from the disjointed, rattling chariot of oriental cast, to the graceful phaeton of English build. Here is the primitive "kranchee," which in aspect can only be likened to a hackney carriage of the days of good Queen Bess; but, in place of an unwieldy ponderosity, exhibiting a fragile combination of particles whose right of cohesion for five consecutive minutes would disconcert the brain of any philosopher—a reticulated compilation devoid of paint and springs, and drawn by two ponies that are yoked at a precautionary distance from each other, in true oriental fashion. It is loaded with a freight of holiday-making "bāboos," who have chartered it in the black town, and are now sallying forth to behold the pale faces of the western world. Here go palankeen carriages innumerable, principally loaded with the discoloured community, the Eurasians of the City of Palaces, who adopt European customs to the utmost, and who sedulously attend the Mall; the gentler, if not the fairer sex, habited in the whitest of muslin dresses, and with their dark Eastern eyes laying themselves out to captivate the heart of a Gonsalvez, a Silvester, or a De Cruz, who prance along on their well-spurred steeds.

Then there are the palankeen carriages with the sedate but demi-tinted merchants, who have forsaken the buggy, and whose carriages, calling daily for them at their offices, when business closes, jog leisurely along to the general rendezvous. Here are more stylish ones, drawn by a pair of horses, and with a driver habited in the disguise of an English coachman of the old school, by a fraudulent desire to give the character of a great-coat with a great many capes, but wearing a single cape adorned with a series of horizontal stripes. The horse-keepers sport livery turbans and belts; the horses trot at considerable speed under their plated harness; the varnish is very bright, the blinds are let down, and there sits the well-pleased owner, in his white jacket and with bare head, his sable wife, in the most brilliant of yellow and pea-green bonnets, beside him, enjoying themselves to the very utmost.

But the palankeen carriages are outnumbered by the more purse-accommodating *buggy*, which swarms in every stage of splendour and decay. Here is the venerable trap that has seen some fifty summers, with its lofty old-fashioned body, and with an eccentric excrescence protruding from the hinder panel for the stowage of umbrellas and canes, with its straight shafts and normal hood, designed for protection from a sun ever at the meridian, up to the graceful and elegant half-side-sweep turnout, with its low body and roomy amplitude, court-ing repose, and looking the very picture of a luxurious vehicle. Look, there goes one of these modern vehicles, with not a straight line in the design to affect the æsthetic taste; everywhere is the curved line of beauty, with perfections of finish and a startling dash in style. See how noiselessly it rolls along, drawn by that fast trotting waler, and impelled by the hand of the young civilian or staff officer, whose occasional glance at the vacant seat beside him speaks volumes to those recently imported maidens whose idiosyncrasies are for the marriageable state. Not less "swell" are the buggies of the merchant princes, their partners or assistants; but they are more frequently of a more practical kind of beauty, with higher wheels, and cane panels, for the sake of lightness.

Then we come to the crush of pilentums, barouches, sociables, phaetons, and the other thousand and one species of four-wheeled vehicle that is to be met with on this cosmopolitan course. There is the Governor-General, in his open barouche drawn by four horses, and with scarlet-liveried postillions, outriders, and military escort; there are the governors and high officials in their dashing equipages, drawn by imported English horses, or, when the vehicles are smaller and lighter, by the more sparkling and attractive Arabians; here are the affluent native princes, who, while adhering to their native costume, have dropped into the western customs in the matter of stylish and luxurious equipages; but great are the anomalies that they exhibit—jewelled velvet robes and embroidered garments, with the most fashionable and costly vehicle that money could produce, set off by a bevy of dissolute tag-rag and bob-tail, in squalid attire, clustering on every side.

And now let us take a more leisurely survey of the Mall itself. Passing the Ochterlony Monument and the Government House, the Town Hall and all the palatial edifices that run from the banks of the Hooghly to Chowringhee, we come to the strand which skirts the river's now golden waters. Here is the Hyde Park of the East. Have we not our drive by the Serpentine, where, in place of the Lilliputian cutters, are thousands of stately ships, not only princely merchantmen of frigate build, the pride of Great Britain, the admiration of the world, but real frigates, and vessels that bear the flags of a hundred nations? And how tempting do they look, those stately ships, in all the glory of the brightest paint and formidable array of imaginary ports, with the tautest of rigging, and snowy awnings, to tempt the old Indian exile to become one of the "homeward-bound." There, on the left, is Hyde Park, bereft of its stately forest trees; but have we not the varying green ramparts and parapets of the mighty fortress, with its formidable array of guns, guarded by the British sentinel? Have we not the drive, more especially devoted to equipages, but which flirtation-bent equestrians love to invade? And is there not a "Rotten Row" for fair riders, and the broad expanse of brilliant sward for the fleet hoofs of the Arab, the Australian, the thorough-bred English, and the Cape? And, lastly, have we not our band-stand, where, on so many nights in the week, the votaries of the Mall, even as they take their drive, are regaled with the melodies of a Bellini, a Labitsky, or a Strauss?

Now, let us make a pause, and have an eye to the eccentricities of the scene. We have seen how grandeur and elegance drive side by side with unassuming lowliness; now let us see how Orientalism adapts itself to Western customs. Let us watch the equipages, as they whirl and dash along, taking it for granted that those which have now subsided in the "ambulative sequence" are tolerably free from adventures.

On the Calcutta Mall the art of driving is of strictly defined limits, for in the oriental mind the popular notion is to go ahead, be it to the right hand or to the left, irrespective of all collateral contingencies—a fallacy inordinately provocative of grief, and a source of much profit to the coach-builder and horse-dealer. Thus, a mild Hindoo, whose vaulting ambition never soared to any other capacity than that of cutting grass, has been elevated to the grade of a horsekeeper, when his master, instituting a trap, and on economy bent, has exalted him still higher—to the vehicle's wool-sack; and there, invested with a whip and intrusted with the ribbons, he is directed to take "a drive on the Mall," which is achieved, or otherwise, with an eccentric irregularity quite alarming to behold.

But if the land Oriental is fertile in woe, what would be the Calcutta Mall without its decimating and destructive British tar? What so effective to clear the way as the coming of a buggy full of jovial seamen, bent on a land cruise, affording a pleasing episode of every evening's entertainment during the cold-weather months, when the river is full of shipping? Here comes a specimen. Jack has chartered a buggy, and his crew, as he quaintly tells you be-

fore starting, consists of "three Europeans and one Lascar;" the latter, instead of having a berth aft, is made to sit on the jib-boom, as Jack designates the shaft, so that he may keep a good lookout for squalls, as he feels he has some intricate navigation before him, and he reckons on a stiffish breeze and perhaps a wreck before dark. They get under weigh, and, cracking along under full sail, make straight for the Mall, with a sincere and laudable desire to steer clear of all craft, as "port," "starboard," "keep her helm up," and such-like ejaculatory exclamations from the "master," who, with crossed legs and well-smoked clay, directs the navigation, can amply testify. But the helmsman, with his rudder-lines run slack to a most unprofessional extent, is deaf to all entreaties. He has just run down a water-carrier, fouled a "kranchee," capsizing it most effectually, and has now carried away the paddle (as he terms the wheel) of a family-laden palankeen carriage, shivering many a spoke, tilting the vehicle, and terrifying the minds of the occupants thereof. But Jack goes ahead; he claps on fresh sail, as he terms the application of the whip, and makes straight for a little palankeen carriage, bearing a portly Parsee. But the driver is an experienced "old whip," and his tiny pair of swiftly-trotting Pegu ponies soon escape from the danger. A civilian's barouche is next endangered; but we see no more, for Jack sails out of sight; and we feel convinced that a crisis will occur, and that the Lascar will be left to carry home the fragments.

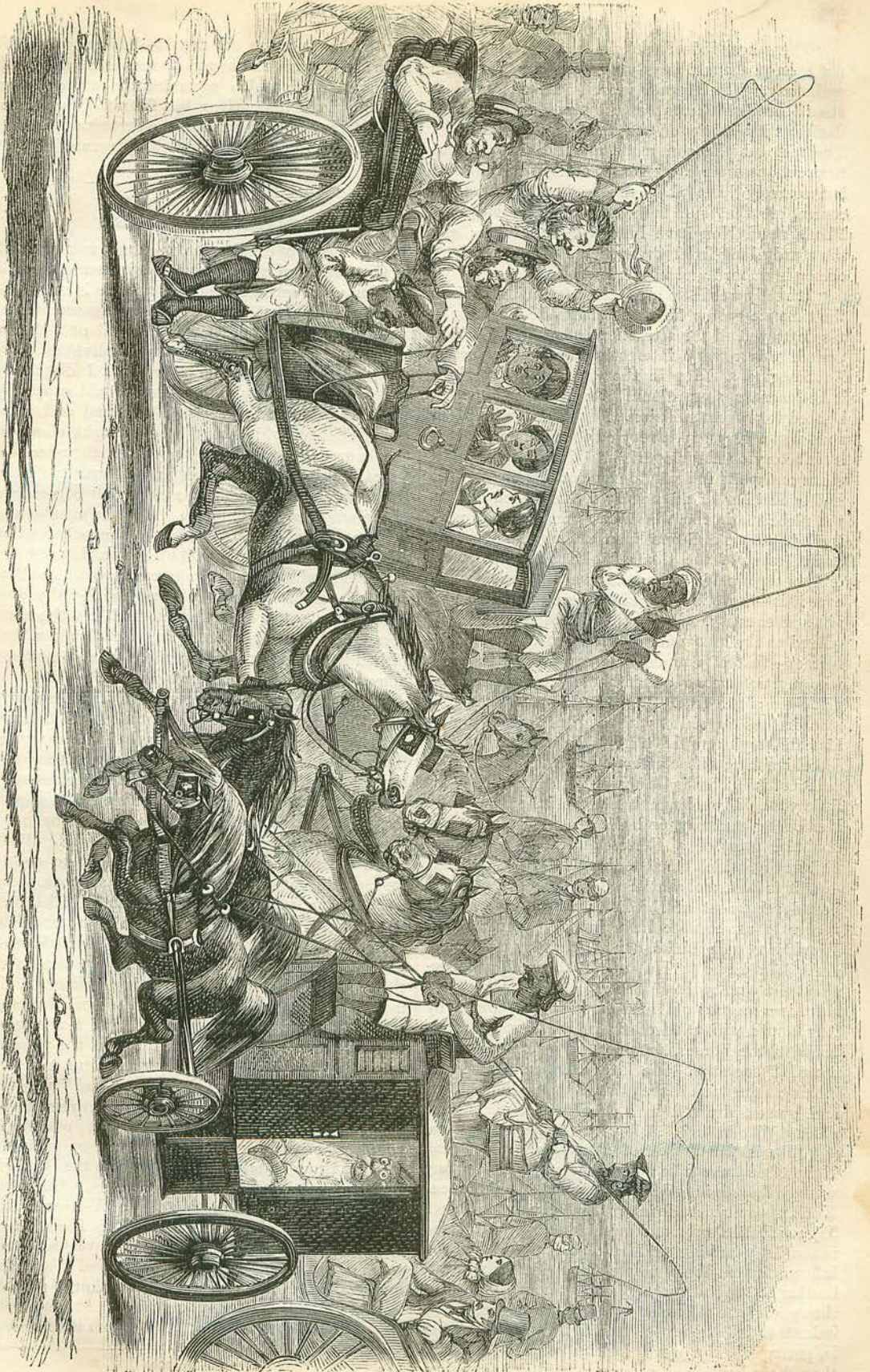
Thus is the air eaten on the Calcutta Mall. The majority veer homewards before it gets quite dark; but the more fashionable linger about the band till the royal anthem gives warning to horse-keepers to light the lamps, when the crowd disperses, and nought is heard on the Calcutta Mall but the howl of the jackal, or the even more hideous howl of the perambulating watchmen of the night.

Dr. Russell in his "Diary," published since the foregoing description was written, gives his first impressions of this strange scene.

"When it was getting dark, D—— came round for me in his buggy, to perform the great ceremony of Calcutta life—to take the evening turn on the Esplanade, or the Course. The Esplanade lies in front of Chowringhee, and it is therefore in front of the Club. In the midst, on the right of us, is a bad imitation of the Nelson monument, in Trafalgar Square, with Nelson removed from the top. Before us is the Fort.

"Is this a limbo in which all races, black and white, are doing penance on the outside of strange quadrupeds and in the interior of impossible vehicles? The ride in Rotten Row, the dreary promenade by the banks of the unsavoury Serpentine, the weary gaiety of the Champs Elyseés, the Bois de Boulogne, and the Avenue de St. Cloud, the profound austerity of the Prater, are haunts of frivolous, reckless, indecorous, loud-laughing Momus and all his nymphs—Euphrosyne, and Phryne, and others—compared with this deadly *promenade à cheval à pied*, where you expect every moment to hear the Dead March in Saul, or to see the waving black ostrich plumes sprout out of a carriage top.

THE CALCUTTA MAIL.



"These are, indeed, solemn processions, which not even youth and beauty, or their simulants, can make gay. The ground is well watered; no dust rises beneath the tramp of the many horses. But darkness has set in on the faces of the multitude. The moment the sun made a decided bow to the horizon, out came carriages, phaetons, and horses; but scarcely have they revolved twice in their course, ere that sun has vanished into darkness. Phœbus and Nox have here a sterile union; and the sturdy long-lived Crespuscule of our southern climes is unborn and unknown here.

"It really was little more than ten minutes from the time we got on the Course, ere the darkness to me destroyed all the attractions of what, for a brief period, was a very interesting and novel scene. But imagine a drive in the dark—not twilight—but darkness so profound that lamps must be lighted to prevent collision. For the ten minutes or so it was a very gay, a very curious, but not a very satisfactory or assuring sight. I think the most stern and patrician of Roman consuls must have had something of an uneasy feeling when he saw the plebeians in the Via Sacra, presuming to walk forth in purple and fine linen among the offspring and relatives of the Conscript Fathers. But here on this esplanade, or race-course, or corso—whatever it is—there is something more than such pretentious equality. It is, that there is such insult offered as the arrogance of the most offensive aristocracy—that of complexion—can invent to those who by no means admit themselves to be the plebeians of the race. See, there is a feeble young man dressed in white, with a gilded velvet cap in his hand, trying to drive a vehicle, which looks like a beehive from the cluster of his attendants on all points of it. That is Chuck-el-head Doss, the great little young Bengal merchant, the inheritor of old Head Doss's money, and the acceptor of the less doubtful gain of a Germano-Hindoo-Christianic philosophy, which teaches him that, after all, whatever is best, and that the use of the senses is the best development of the inner man. Is he a bit nearer to us because he abjures Vishnu, accepts Providence, and thinks our avatar very beautiful? Ask 'Who he is.' 'He's one of those nigger merchants—a cheeky set of fellows, all of them.' Then there is a morose old man in a chariot drawn by four horses, with two well-dressed fellows with their backs to the horses, outriders and runners, and a crowd of servants. He is a handsome worn-out-looking man, with a keen eye, lemon-coloured face and gloves, dressed in rich shawls and curious silks. Who is he? A few Europeans bow to him.

"He is the Rajah of Chose—a great rascal. None of us know him; and they say the Company were jockeyed in giving him such an allowance. You feel some historic interest when you are shown Tippoo Sultan's son and grandson; but your friend is too busy looking at Mrs. Jones, to give much information on these points, or to direct your attention to anything so common-place (to him) as the appearance of some natives on the Course. And indeed, to tell the truth, the fair face of Mrs. Jones is, perhaps, better worth looking at, in the abstract, than those bedizened natives. Still it is striking,

for the first time at all events—but I suppose the impression soon dies away—to see the metaphysical Mahratta ditch which separates the white people, not only from the natives, but from the Eurasians. They drive and ride in the same throng, apparently quite unconscious of each others' presence."

#### WILD AND TAME.

THE influence of civilization upon man is chronicled in the records of history; but the influence of civilization upon certain races of animals is more obscure, and has not been taken cognizance of perhaps so much as it deserves. We all of us know something about the civilization of individual pets: it is not to that case, however, that I direct my remarks. What my observations would especially point to here is the series of gradual and more occult changes which have been brought about in the course of hundreds, sometimes thousands of years, and by virtue of which the characteristics of a race are so modified that we lose all cognizance of the wild progenitors from which the members of it have descended. Already the domestic cat has afforded the readers of "The Leisure Hour"\* one example of what is meant to be conveyed. Another case of similar import is furnished by the dog. Less obscure, but still well marked, are the cases of modified race, the change due to civilization, furnished by the pig, the sheep, the cow, and, perhaps more than all, the domestic barn-door fowl.

There are two ways of testing this no less difficult than interesting subject. Firstly, in some cases, historical records exist of what the characteristics of certain animals were, in ancient times when the process of reclaiming them first began; secondly, the naturalist has it often in his power to appeal to modern records, of what tame animals have become when allowed once more to run wild. Both these means of investigation are open to us, as respects the common barn-door fowl: suppose, then, we examine them. When barn-door cocks and hens began to be so inconsiderate as to abandon their native forests, and, for the sake of a little good living, to lay eggs and get fat for the benefit of their civilized but gormandizing protector, is more than naturalists, at this late period of the world's history, are able to determine; however, as regards those pioneers of civilization, the Greeks, testimony enables the inquirer to form a pretty accurate guess. In neither the "Iliad" nor the "Odyssey" does old Homer say anything about cocks and hens, which is strange, if he really was cognizant of their existence. Getting up of mornings by times to mingle in the fray, as the Homeric heroes are represented to have done, what more natural than the assumption that cock-crow should have been the signal. Neither does Hesiod (another very old Greek author) say anything about them; but, in addition to the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," Homer is the reputed author of another poem, the "Batrachomyomachia." At any rate, whoever the author of it, that poem with a long

\* See No. 359.