

history, of which we know so much, transferred to two paltry villages on the Hudson. The good people, however, at the spot, appear to be in happy ignorance of the incongruity. "I guess, mister," said one of them, "the city folks call Rome ain't half like this of our'n." But we must, in justice to the Yankees, admit that, with great good sense and taste, the old Indian names have been generally retained, in connection with the enduring objects of nature, lakes, rivers, and mountains, to which they were applied. They are always significant when understood, while for the most part musical, and are almost, alas! the only memorials remaining of aboriginal tribes. Mrs. Sigourney thus refers to them in a beautiful poem:—

"Ye say they all have passed away,
That noble race and brave;
That their light canoes have vanished
From off the crested wave;
That, 'mid the forests where they roved,
There rings no hunter's shout;
But their name is on your waters—
Ye may not wash it out.

"'Tis where Ontario's billow
Like ocean's surge is curled,
Where strong Niagara's thunders wake
The echo of the world;
Where red Missouri bringeth
Rich tribute from the west,
And Rappahannock sweetly sleeps
On green Virginia's breast.

"Old Massachusetts wears it
Within her lofty crown,
And broad Ohio bears it
Amid his young renown.
Connecticut hath wreathed it
Where her quiet foliage waves,
And bold Kentucky breathes it hoarse
Through all her ancient caves.

"Wachusett hides its lingering voice
Within its rocky heart,
And Alleghany graves its tone
Throughout this lofty chart.
Monadnock, on his forehead hoar,
Doth seal the sacred trust;
Your mountains build their monument,
Though ye destroy their dust."

The nomenclature of the Australian colonies exhibits no affectation of classicality; but there was much indifference at first to native denominations, now somewhat corrected, while, with execrable taste, government functionaries were flattered with having their style and title appended, *ad nauseam*, to various sites. This practice called forth some indignant lines in a Sydney newspaper:—

"I like the native names, as Paramatta,
And Illawarra and Woolloomooloo,
Nandowra, Woogarora, Bulkomatta,
Tomah, Toongabbee, Mittagong, Merro.

"I hate your Goulburn Downs, and Goulburn Plains,
And Goulburn River, and the Goulburn Range,
And Mount Goulburn, and Goulburn Vale. One's brains
Are turned with Goulburns! Pitiful this mangle
For immortality! Had I the reins
Of government a fortnight, I would change
These common-place appellatives, and give
The country names that should deserve to live."

Now that we have got near the antipodes, it may be of service to some future historian of that region to account for as odd a grouping of names as can well be imagined, in the adjoining island of Tasmania. There they are cheek by jowl: Jericho and Bagdad, Jerusalem and Abyssinia, Tiberias and Troy, Jordan

and Nile, St. Paul's River and Hell's Gates. For some time after the foundation of the colony, great difficulty was experienced respecting the supply of animal food, and parties were sent out into the bush to hunt for kangaroos, emus, and other game. One of them consisted of a marine, Hugh Germaine, and two convicts. On the spot now occupied by Hobart Town barracks, the former killed a huge kangaroo of nine feet, whose hind quarters weighed one hundred and thirty-two pounds. Fond of the sport, and relishing a roving life, Germaine and his companions took to bush-ranging as a regular occupation, and for five years never slept in a bed. Only one of the party could read. The sole books in their possession consisted of a Bible and the "Arabian Nights Entertainments." Whenever, therefore, they were in want of a name to distinguish a place, having exhausted their stock of such as Kangaroo Point and Emu Plain, they took one out of their books, and hence arose the strange denominations mentioned in close juxtaposition around their head-quarters.

DUCKS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CURIOSITIES OF NATURAL HISTORY."

DOUBTLESS many a hungry individual puts the lemon and cayenne pepper on to the inviting slices of his savoury-smelling roast wild duck, without ever bestowing a thought upon the habits of the creature he is devouring, much less upon the thousand difficulties incurred, the night watchings, and the ingenious devices which must be put in force before Mr. Duck can be captured, slaughtered, and cooked. A cautious and wide-awake bird is the wild duck. It is all very well for the treacherous Mrs. Bond to sing to her unsuspecting tame ducks, "Dilly, dilly, dilly, come and be killed." Tempted by Mrs. Bond's barley meal, they waddle out of their favourite horse pond, and submit to an easy capture, forgetting that it is Friday, and that to-morrow is market day in the neighbouring town, and that the squire's wife, who was looking at them only yesterday, has issued cards for a dinner party, for which she requires "a couple of ducks." The wild cousins of our farm-yard ducks, however, do not accept the invitation to "come and be killed" quite so readily; their motto is, "Catch us if you can;" and nobody knows better than the duck-shooter, how well they are aware that man is their enemy—that he is a duckivorous monster.

Within the last few years, our English wild ducks have changed their habits and their haunts, in a very remarkable way, and they have instinctively accommodated themselves to the march of civilization. A few years ago, there was hardly a place along our rock-bound coasts where the fisherman, who gained his livelihood with his nets in the summer months, was not sure of lucrative employment in the winter, by shooting wild fowl; and the harder the winter, the oftener the wife and children got meat for dinner during the week, purchased by the produce of the sale of the ducks. Times are now changed: where there used to be one gun out after dark, there are now fifty; and many an old Hamp-

shire gunner now looks upon his trusty long gun, hanging rusty and unused over the cottage fire, and talks of the times when "she" used to bring down sufficient birds on a single night to sink his boat level with the water. Better fire-arms have superseded his gigantic old "shooting tube," which, when fired off, had the knack of kicking his shoulder as hard as a race-horse colt; and fleets of tiny, noiseless, almost invisible "duck boats" have been built, which carry an armoury of guns, made on the most scientific principles, all for the benefit of the ducks.

Again, in former times the ducks were not disturbed by the quiet, nautilus-like sailing-boats; but now, fiery monsters, emitting steam from their nostrils, come puffing up their quiet haunts and scare them away, frightened out of their wits. Inland drainage, moreover, has taken such strides, that the poor duck, flying away from the steamer to a bog which he well remembers going to last year, finds no bog, but instead, a field of standing corn. There are, however, many retreats still left, where the ducks can live in peace and quietness; and in such localities they afford a most interesting study to the intelligent sportsman naturalist. I am indebted to a friend, who wisely makes a practice of observing the habits of the various birds and beasts he so successfully pursues with his gun, for the following details of the "life and memoir of a wild duck."

There can be nothing more striking than an Irish lake, surrounded on every side by strictly preserved game coverts, where the ducks know that they will not be molested, and therefore disport themselves in a natural manner. Creep softly near the water, and you will see the ducks floating quietly about on the lake, but always out of gun-shot reach from the land. They seem idle, lazy things, and rejoice in their conscious security; but wait till evening, and you will see a curious sight. As the sun goes down, and darkness creeps over the woodlands, the ducks begin to get restless, for it is near "evening flight time." When it is too dark for you to see clearly, and twilight has commenced, intense excitement takes place among the ducks; they quack, and call to each other; here, there, and everywhere, all is bustle, confusion, and noise. The whole scene might well be taken to represent Virgil's Stygian lake, crowded with the dim ghosts of wailing Trojan heroes. At last a pair or two suddenly rise from the water, sounding their loud call of advance, and the others speedily follow their example. They rise like a swarm of gigantic bees, or ancient Pterodactyles, into the air, take a few turns to stretch their wings, and are off for the night to the feeding grounds. In a quarter of an hour, upwards of 2000 ducks will be on the wing, leaving behind on the loch not more than two or three hundred pair, which feed about the ditches, etc. that run into the loch. The absentees disperse themselves all over the country, in flocks varying from two to five score in number; they go wherever there is food for them, their most favourite pasture ground being fields, etc. that have been lately flooded, and from which the water has not long receded.

At the first glimmer of morning, and before daylight commences, they begin to go home again. If

you are watching them from your place of ambush, you will see them come back, not in a cloud as they went away, but by parties of two and three together. They seem tired, and glad to get home; for instead of hovering and examining the loch, as they would if it were a place new to them, they come splash bang into the water, like a tired man throwing himself on his comfortable bed. As the ducks come from various distances, this "morning flight" occupies a longer time than the evening flight, in which they all start simultaneously; but yet it would seem that there is a morning "roll call" among the ducks, for in half an hour after sunrise, they are all at home in their quarters. As the sun rises, they begin to make their toilets, splashing, plunging, cleaning their feathers, and then arranging and preening them with their hand-like bills; for you must know that Mr. Mallard is a great dandy; he has a very beautiful coat of feathers to look after, and as the biped dandy has to dress his whiskers, so Mr. Mallard also has to keep the two jaunty curling feathers in his tail in order, and to get them into curl again after they have got relaxed by the night dews. Mrs. Duck's russet gown, too, has got muddy, and she must make it tidy again, the clear water on which she floats serving her as a looking-glass.

The toilet made, the ducks paddle slowly to the sides of the lake, where, if all is quiet, they squat on the bank, or rest on the stones that project out of the water. There they bask at their ease in the warm sunshine; and when sleepy, they deliberately tuck their heads under their wings, (which is the same thing to the duck as putting "his head on his pillow" to a human being,) and get a comfortable nap. Sometimes they take their nap floating on the water, if they think that there is any fox, or dog, or man about the banks. After a siesta of about a couple of hours they wake up, and lounge lazily out into the centre of the pond, where they meet their friends and acquaintances, and have a quacking chat and a game of romps, till evening flight time comes again, when they are all off in a body, to look for their suppers as usual. This, it is to be remembered, is the life of a "gentleman" duck, who lives in a fine preserve. The poor vagabond duck, who has no regular home, does not fare nearly so well.

The ducks are well worth being watched on their feeding grounds. The observer must take the greatest pains to conceal himself, and should therefore make himself as small as possible, and take his position by the side of a clump of grass, an old stump of a tree, or some object which the ducks are familiar with. Before the ducks alight, the rustle of their wings can be heard in the air as they fly round and round overhead, examining every yard of the ground, to see that no danger is nigh. As the various flights are seen coming from the loch, it will be observed that they do not fly in a regular V shape, like geese, but more in a parallel row; they generally have a leader, who flies a little in advance of the rest. Nothing can be more inspiring to the ear of the sportsman than to be lying out in ambush on a fine dark night, when it is not too cold, and to listen to the various



wild sounds around him; he will recognise the hoarse call of the mallard, and the softer replying quack of the duck, voices as different from each other as those of a primo basso and a prima donna. He will hear the wild inimitable whistle of the widgeon, the lesser cry of the teal, with every now and then the scream of the loot, or moor-hen, and the shrill piping note of the curlew passing overhead: these various cries form a natural concert of music, most grateful to the ear of the sportsman, and the lover of Nature in her wildest moods.

As the partridge is the natural wild bird that inhabits the dry arable and pasture land of this country, and as the grouse is found in heather-bearing countries, so the duck is the bird that seems to occupy a similar position in the mud-flat estuaries of rivers, etc. In almost every part of the world where there is a suitable place for ducks, there do we find them; and they procure their food by sifting with their curiously-formed bills the minute creatures out of the mud. It is very remarkable how the food of the bird affects the flesh. The "London-fed" ducks are hardly eatable, and they differ widely from the wild duck, who gets his living from the river-washed mud of an unctuous soil. A cross between the wild and tame duck makes a good variety, pretty and ornamental to look at, and excellent for the table. The nearer the sea, the more the duck tastes of fish; and ducks shot out at sea are so "fishy" that they cannot be eaten at all. Ducks that live by clear streams, moorlands watered by mountain burns,

such as we find in Scotland, etc., are thin and miserable creatures. If the reader have a choice of ducks in the market, let him always prefer the pin-tailed duck, so called because he has two long feathers projecting from his tail. Both on this account, and also because he is such excellent eating, he is called the "sea-pheasant:" they are found plentifully in Ireland. Although Ireland may be called the paradise of ducks, there are fewer strange varieties found there than anywhere else; and, odd though it may seem, there are more rare and curious specimens of the duck family killed in the neighbourhood of London than elsewhere.

The above plate represents a "decoy" for ducks, of which we shall have something to say in a future number.

A FRENCH INVASION.

Most "popular" histories of England make no mention whatever of a really memorable invasion by the French, of the United Kingdom, in the seventeenth century. In and about the year 1685, some eighty thousand Frenchmen landed on these coasts, and immediately spread themselves in various directions, and finally settled, without opposition, chiefly at Canterbury and London. These invaders were the French Protestant refugees from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

How and why France drove out these people, may be explained in a few words. Henry IV had granted, in 1598, to the professors of the Protestant religion of France, by an edict drawn up at Nantes,