

"Well," muttered Sam, rather sulkily, "blessed if he didn't near skiver my hoss!"

"Now, Sam, as soon as your horse gets his wind, you and I will tackle him," says Fitzgerald. "Our horses are the handiest. I wouldn't lose that fellow for a trifle. Ten to one, if we don't get him, after this knocking about, he'll make back for the scrubs again."

In about ten minutes' time Sam and his master ride side by side through the crowded camp. At last they notice their savage friend pushing his way through a thick mob of cattle some distance from them.

"Now, Sam," says Fitzgerald, "as soon as we get him fairly out, I'll ride alongside and shoulder him, and you must keep close up and play on him with your whip." "All right," growls Sam.

One or two essays are ineffectually

made to rush out into the open the huge beast, whose hot blood is now boiling within him. At last he is out, and is again racing, with Fitzgerald alongside this time, to get back into the mob.

"Now then, Sam!" shouts the squatter, as the clever bold horse, in obedience to his accomplished rider, closes on his horned antagonist, and, leaning over, presses all his weight against the scrubber's shoulder, edging him towards Peter's mob as they fly along. Sam, galloping at the creature's heels, has been waiting the word, and now commences a flagellation with his long twelve-footer, which compels the red-necked savage to keep his pace up, and gladly seek refuge among those already out.

It is now time to be making homewards, and the selected cattle are driven steadily in, and yarded for the night.

THE FRIGATE-BIRD.



HERE is a pirate of the air. He is found, far out at sea, in tropical regions, and alas for any respectable sea-bird that he may spycarrying home a small cargo of freshly-caught fish to its expectant family.

Down sweeps this swift robber, and before the poor gull or tern can make up its mind about terms of surrender, the frigate-bird has forced it to drop its fish, which is swooped after and caught up by the pirate before it so much as touches the water.

It would be a difficult thing for any bird, respectable or otherwise, to fly faster than the frigate-bird, which has longer and more powerful wings, in proportion to its size, than any other bird. If its wings were stretched out, you would see this for yourselves.

The whole bird does not weigh more than three pounds and a-half, and yet its wings often measure more than seven feet from tip to tip. These birds are so strong and swift upon the wing, that they are often seen out at sea a thousand miles from land, and they will fly straight into the eye of the wind, and, when they choose, can rise high above the hurricane and the storm.

They live principally on fish, and, when they cannot overhaul a weaker and slower bird and steal his hard-earned prize, they will take the trouble to fish for themselves. But they seldom dive for their prey. They can see a fish from an immense height; and when an unfortunate fellow happens to be swimming near the top of the water, a frigate-bird, floating in the air so high up as to be almost invisible, will suddenly drop down, and with a skim over the surface of the

water, will scoop Mr. Fish out of the waves before he has time to flap a fin.

Sometimes, you know, flying-fish try their hands, or rather their wing-fins, at flying; and at such times, if there happens to be a frigate-bird about, he generally lays in a pretty good stock of fish. He catches the flying-fish as easily as you would pull up radishes.

One of the most contemptible practices of this bird is that of stealing the young ones from the nests of other birds. Nothing pleases a frigate-bird better than a diet of tender, unfledged nestlings.

Sloane, who saw these and Tropic Birds when he came into latitude $13^{\circ} 10'$, says:—"The man-of-war bird seems very large, bigger than a kite, and black; they fly like kites, very high, and often appear immovable over the water, to wait for and catch small fish appearing on the surface: they are sharp winged, and their tail is forked. When flying-fishes are persecuted under water by dolphins, bonitos, etc., they rise and fly for some space in the air, and are often devoured by these birds in that time. We saw them first when we came near Barbadoes. These sailors guess them-



THE FRIGATE-BIRD.

He makes rather a poor figure on land; and as he is not a good swimmer, he spends most of his time in the air, where he certainly shows to great advantage, as far as gracefulness and power are considered.

But, as we see, this bird which is capable of such grand flights, living almost entirely in the air, skimming along over the beautiful ocean waves or soaring high up into the upper air above the storms and clouds, makes no better use of its advantages than to become a thief and a pirate whenever a chance occurs.

They do not stay long on land, but themselves not many days, or about two hundred leagues, off the islands when they spy them first; and it is wondered how they can direct their course to the land at nights, being so far distant; but it seems no very strange matter, because they are very high in the air, and can see land much farther than those on the deck or topmast of a ship. The reason of their flying so high may be to have a greater field before them for prey, because they may go where they see the dolphins follow or hunt the flying-fishes. They are commonly thought in the West Indies to foretell the coming in of ships.