



THE GOAT.

WHAT exactly are caprices? 'Caprice' is from *capra*, a goat. If ever you have watched a goat, you will have observed how sudden, how unexpected, how unaccountable, are the leaps and springs, now forward, now sideward, now upward, in which it indulges. A 'caprice,' then, is a movement of the mind as unaccountable, as little to be calculated on beforehand, as the springs and bounds of a goat. Is not the word so understood a far more picturesque one than it was before? and is there not some real gain in the vigour and vividness of impression which is in this way obtained?" So far Dean Trench, in his "Study of Words."

What, too, is the derivation of the Tropic of *Capricorn*; or of the name of the island *Caprera*, on which the Liberator Garibaldi is passing the setting of his glorious life? Co-extensive with language, science, and history—for vine-destroyer was he not killed at the offerings of Bacchus? and was he not the witches' favoured steed, emblem also of a vice, and of the father of all vices?—the goat is not likely soon to be extinct. Varying in different lands and climates, wild and domestic, useful here and a pest there, it is surprising that some natural histories should omit mention of him.

The European goat is an interesting animal, and though obstinate in disposition, is possessed of far more intelligence than the sheep. Whether stumping along in harness and seemingly indifferent to the fate of infants behind—who by the way have been slangily yet somewhat appropriately identified with its own offspring—or promenading a stable with a patronising air, or fulfilling a mission of domestic economy like unto the cow,

every one is more or less familiar with the goat. It certainly seems accordant with the fitness of things for a goat to belong to a stable, and it may be true that its peculiar rank smell is beneficial to horses; or that they are necessary in the salvage brigade direction, as they are said to boldly face fire, and by leading the way to induce the horses to shake off the torpor of fear which would prevent their escape; but the chief reason why they are so often found in a stable is, perhaps, because they were simply introduced as pets. It will sometimes assault those whom it deems strangers, but it is said will be easily conquered if his beard can only be grasped, when it yields at once, assumes a downcast air, and bleats in a very pitiful tone, as if asking for mercy, or else acknowledging himself a fool for holding up his chin.

The domesticated goat is marked by keen eyes, long hair, and generally bent horns. In many respects the animal is valuable. Its skin is convertible to several useful purposes, and the flesh is good, though not equal in quality to that of the sheep, except in warmer climates. But the goat is chiefly prized for its milk, which is not only very nutritious, but even medicinal; it is sweet, and not so apt to curdle upon the stomach as that of a cow, and is therefore preferable for those whose digestion is but weak. It is also of a different flavour from that of a cow or sheep, having a savoury mildness. The quantity of milk produced daily by a goat is from three half-pints to a quart, which yields rich and excellent cream. If properly attended to, a goat will yield milk for eleven months in the year. Some farmers have been in the practice of adding a little goat's milk to that of the cow, which materially improves the flavour. In winter when

native food becomes scarce, the goat will feed upon turnip-peelings, potato-peelings, cabbage-leaves, and other refuse of a house.

In advocating the keeping of a goat by cottagers, Cobbett says:—"There is one great inconvenience belonging to goats—that is, that they bark all young trees that they come near; so that, if they get into a garden, they destroy everything. But there are seldom trees on commons except such as are too large to be injured by goats; and I can see no reason against keeping a goat where a cow cannot be kept. Nothing is so hardy, nothing is so little nice as to its food. Goats will pick peelings out of the kennel and eat them. They will eat mouldy bread or biscuit, fusty hay, and almost rotten straw, furze-bushes, heath-thistles, and, indeed, what will they not eat, when they will make a hearty meal on *paper*, brown or white, printed on or not printed, and give milk all the while! They will lie in any dog-hole; they do very well clogged or stumped out. And then they are very healthy things into the bargain, however closely they may be confined. When sea-voyages are so boisterous as to kill geese, ducks, fowls, and almost pigs, the goats are well and lively; and when no dog of any kind can keep the deck for a minute, a goat will skip about upon it as bold as brass."

The goat is of some commercial importance. The skins of common goats, which are soft, clean, and wholesome, are of more importance than the hair, which in England is largely used for low-class carpetings. The tallow is much purer and finer than that of the sheep, and brings a high price, being calculated to make candles of a very superior quality. In 1879 the imports of goats' hair of all kinds was 10,072,700lbs., equal to £743,615.

The destructive habits of the goat in regard to young vegetation is most grievously illustrated in the districts of Lebanon, where the sadly-reduced rep-

resentatives of the magnificent cedar are most effectually prevented from recovering their ancient numbers in the district so unique in its suitability for these noble trees. Apart from their historical and sacred associations, their high commercial value even does not save the young saplings from the peasants' goats. Thorns are his food, and his luxuries are the sweet-scented shrubs, but as summer begins, and the seedlings sprout over the mountains, the goat, with the unerring fateful instinct of his voracious stomach, devours the tender promise. The sudden vicious-like storms which ravage Lebanon accelerate the decay of trees which defy the worm, and vainly does each spring quicken around their venerable stems, while the shepherd, so anxious for backsheesh from the strangers who come from the east and the west, the north and the south, to view what remains of the trees which the Lord hath planted, allows his goats to exterminate what all other living things would spare.

There are stories concerning the goat as of other domestic animals, but this droll creature never did better than as related in the following story:—

A German brewer about to leave his premises one Sunday morning for the whole day, went the round of the place to see that every room was safely locked up, as the law required such places to be closed from Saturday to Monday. He was accompanied by three pets—a goat, a dog, and a cat; but, sad to relate (like the man who knew he had left something behind on a steamboat, which turned out to be a wife and half-a-dozen children), he came out without them. Whether the three fond ones had committed the sin of Lot's wife, and stayed to perish in the pleasant odours of the room where the wort was fermenting, the bereaved one appears not to have troubled to think; but the first visitor to the place was the excise officer, who, arriving at the brewery early on Monday morning,

beheld with an astonishment which perhaps disturbed even his German stolidity, the head of a goat, the head of a dog, and the head of a cat, projecting from three separate bull's-eye panes of the wort-fermenting room.

An examination brought about the following explanation:—The fermenting of the wort generated carbonic acid gas, fatal to animals, and the imprisoned three were in imminent danger of suffocation. The door was locked, the window fastened, the glass was thick—but,

Eureka! so was the head of the goat. The secret will follow them to the grave if ever they receive burial, but whichever conceived and imparted the grand idea which saved three fond companions, it seems certain from the position and strength of the panes that the goat smashed one, and the cat's head was thrust through into the life-sustaining air; he smashed the next, and the dog was pilloried unto life; he smashed the last, and could gaze upon his rescued comrades with sidelong looks of affection.



CHINESE GORDON.

COLONEL George Gordon, the fourth son of the late Lieutenant-General Henry William Gordon, of the Royal Artillery, was born at Woolwich, and at the early age of fifteen he entered the Royal Military Academy there. In 1852, he received his commission as second lieutenant in the Engineers. When the war broke out with Russia, he volunteered for service in the East, and in the last months of 1854 he joined the army before Sebastopol. While on duty in the trenches he was wounded in the forehead by a stone thrown up by a shot. Sir Harry Jones specially mentioned him in dispatches, and from the French Government he received the order of the Legion of Honour. On the fall of Sebastopol he joined the force that laid siege to Kinburn. Returning to the Crimea he was engaged, first in the survey of the Russian entrenchments, and next in the destruction of the docks of Sebastopol. On the declaration of peace he accompanied Major Stanton to Galatz, where he was engaged as Assistant Commissioner in laying down the new frontiers of Russia,

Turkey, and Roumania. On the completion of that duty he was employed in a similar work in Armenia.

In 1860, as Captain, he joined the army before Peking. In December, 1861, accompanied by Lieutenant Cardew, of the 67th Regiment, he made his celebrated tour, on horseback, of the outer wall of China, at Kalgan. We next hear of him at Shanghai, defending it against the Taipings, who threatened its destruction. In storming the town of Kintang, Gordon was shot through the leg; but the rebels were beaten off, and the Chinese Government, in its gratitude for his services, not only made him a mandarin of a very high order, but also gave him the rank of Ti-Tu, the highest in their army, and well did he deserve the honour. "Never," wrote the *Times*, "did soldier of fortune deport himself with a nicer sense of military honour, with more gallantry against the resisting, and with more mercy towards the vanquished, with more disinterested neglect of opportunities of personal advantage, or with more active devotion to the objects and desires of his own Government, than this officer, who, after all his victories, has just laid down his sword."