DOMESTIC ANIMALS, BIRDS, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered."—Genesis ix. 1—2.

The Bible tells us that the animal creation was delivered into the hands of man for his use and benefit, and that man was to be acknowledged as its master by every living creature; such was the decree of the Almighty Creator.

But as there are various kinds of animals, so the brute creation in various ways and degrees are adapted to minister to human wants or employ human energy. Against the lion and the tiger, and nearly all the flesh-eating animals, man has to exert his strength and prowess, as against his enemy. They are foes whose attacks are to be guarded against, and whose approach must be watched and noted, that they may be destroyed, or at least driven back into the wilderness, which is their natural abode. Others, like the fishes, are pursued through the water with nets and lines, and many cunning engines and stratagems, that they may furnish meat for man, or that the various substances of which their bodies are composed may minister to his necessities. Thus the great whale ships sail out every year to catch the mighty whale of the Northern seas, that the oil he furnishes may light up the darkness of many a chamber in the long wintry nights; and thus the horny substance that supplies the place of teeth in the huge jaws of the giant of the deep is devoted to many purposes in various manufactures; for whalebone plays an important part in the dress of the present day. And there is a third and very large division, that not only furnishes man with articles of food and raiment, but is made to live with him, and to form, as it were, part of the community on the farm and on the plain; and this class, losing its wildness and ferocity, and becoming tame and obedient, comprising creatures like the horse, ox, and sheep, who know their masters, and willingly submit to their sway, is known under the general name of The Domestic Animals.

The general features that distinguish the domestic from the wild animals are these: They live in herds or flocks, being of a sociable disposition, and not inclined to fight savagely and devour one another, like many wild animals, as, for instance, the fierce cat tribe. They have a singular power of bearing changes of climate and different degrees of heat and cold, and are consequently found spread over a great space on the surface of the earth. Thus, for instance, in the cold island of Iceland, in the far north, where no tree will grow, and the ground is covered during the greater part of the year with ice and snow, a breed of strong useful horses is found; and in the dry Indian plains, where the sun's rays beat down so fiercely that Europeans can hardly bear the fierceness of the heat, the horse bears his rider swiftly and bravely across the field, and the wild native warrior learns to fight on horseback. In the highlands of Scotland, amid the barren wilds and bleak hills, the hardy oxen manage to pick up a living; and in the burning forests of Central and Southern America, where the ground cracks and breaks with the heat, and during half the year the ground is parched to a desert for want of moisture, numbers of horned cattle run wild, and live in all the happiness of liberty.