AMUSING STORY OF TWO GOATS—SAGACITY OF THE GOAT.

THE COMMON OR DOMESTIC GOAT

Is so well known an animal that its appearance need scarcely be described. (Plate iv., b, c.) The horns are generally curved backwards, and most species are provided with a beard. The domestic goat is distributed over nearly the whole world. The naturalist Buffon has given us a graphic description of his nature and character, especially noticing his love of change, and consequent tendency to wander; his hardy constitution, which renders him insensible to heat and cold, and enables him to browse on almost every herb; and his love of standing, climbing, and even sleeping on rugged and lofty eminences. Mr. Bell, in his "History of British Quadrupeds," also says on this subject, "It will find its food in places inaccessible to almost all other animals, and live and thrive by cropping the scanty herbage which they furnish. In the mountain ranges of Europe, on the Alps and Pyrenees, the goat is found at a great elevation, approaching as near the line of perpetual snow as it can find its scanty sustenance; and it feeds on many plants which to other ruminants are distasteful and even deleterious; thus hemlock, henbane, and digitalis (foxglove) is eaten by it with impunity, and even the acid euphorbia is not rejected."

An amusing story is told of two goats who met face to face on a narrow ridge overhanging a great depth, on the ramparts at Plymouth. The ledge was far too narrow for them to pass one another, nor could they well retreat; but one of the goats sagaciously solved the difficulty by lying down, and allowing his fellow to walk over his back; and then each pursued "the even tenour of his way."

Among the foreign varieties of this useful animal the Cashmere or Thibet goat of the Himalaya Mountains stands preeminent, and will probably maintain its position so long as Cashmere shawls are prized as costly and beautiful articles of apparel. The Cashmere goat has flat, spiral curved horns. Its body is covered with long, straight, shining hair; and under this coarser outward covering is concealed a soft down or wool, from which the exquisitely fine Cashmere shawls are made. The colder the climate inhabited by this goat, the thicker and closer is its downy coat; but in general the quantity of wool furnished by one goat is only about three ounces, so that ten or a dozen goats are required to furnish the wool for a shawl of moderate size. An attempt was made, early in the present century, to introduce the Cashmere goat into France. It was attended with partial success, and the goat of Cashmere has not only been naturalized in France, but the breed has been considerably improved. Among other varieties may be mentioned the Angora goat, of a snowy white colour, with long silky hair; the Syrian goat, with very small horns, but with ears so long that the goatherds frequently crop them, lest they should incommode the goat while feeding; and the Rocky Mountain goat of North America.

That the goat is both sagacious and teachable is proved by the fact that it is often used as a "performing animal," and carried about to excite the wonder of gaping audiences. In Dr. Clarke's "Travels" we find an instance of a "learned" or performing goat of this kind. The traveller says, "Upon our road we met an Arab with a goat, which he led about the country for exhibition, in order to gain a livelihood for itself and owner. He had taught this animal, while he accompanied its movements with a song, to mount upon little cylindrical blocks of wood, placed successively one above the other, and in shape resembling the dice boxes belonging to a backgammon table. In this manner the goat stood, first upon the top of one cylinder, then upon the top of two, and afterwards of three, four, five, and six, until it remained balanced upon the top of them all, elevated several feet from the ground, and with its four feet collected upon a single point, without throwing down the disjointed fabric upon which it stood. This practice is very ancient. Nothing can more conclusively show the tenacious footing possessed by this quadruped