

BARTLETT'S LIFE AMONG
WILD BEASTS
IN THE 'ZOO'

BEING A CONTINUATION OF
WILD ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY

THE HABITS, FOOD, MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT
OF THE BEASTS AND BIRDS AT THE 'ZOO'

WITH
Reminiscences and Anecdotes

BY
A. D. BARTLETT
LATE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S GARDENS
REGENT'S PARK

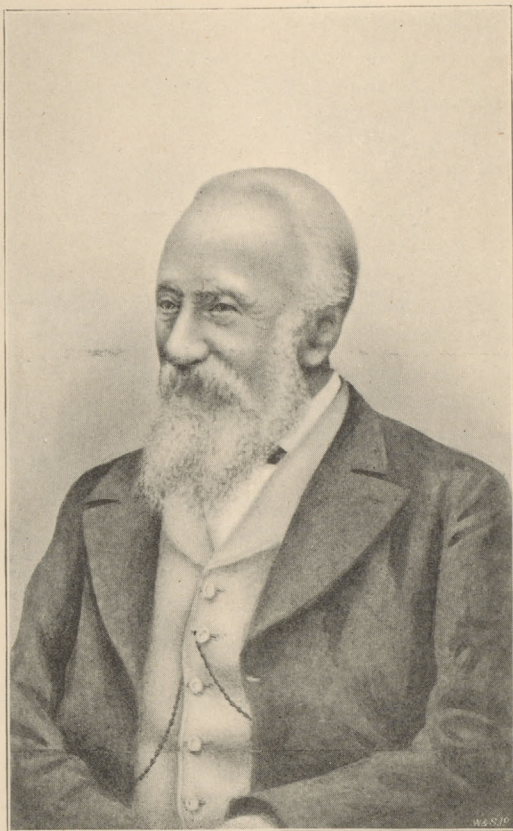
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LATE CURATOR OF THE MAIDSTONE MUSEUM, AND OF THE SARAWAK MUSEUM
ETC.

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ABRAHAM DEE BARTLETT,
NATURALIST,

Born October 27, 1812.

MANY YEARS SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S
GARDENS, REGENT'S PARK.

Died May 7, 1897.

THIS PORTRAIT WAS TAKEN ABOUT 1886-7.
REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF GAMBIER BOLTON, ESQ., 1898.

APPENDIX II.

LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE, ETC.

FROM among the correspondence I have selected some of the most interesting letters, which will form a series by themselves, they having no reference, one with another, to any particular subject.

Respecting the letters from Charles Darwin I took the liberty of writing to his son, Mr. Francis Darwin, upon the subject, and in answer he says—

“DEAR SIR,—I regret very much that up to the present I can only find the few letters I now send. Either I or my assistant have been systematically through my father’s innumerable portfolios, and I have little hope of discovering any more. There were of course many more, and I cannot imagine where my father put them.

“Yours faithfully,

“FRANCIS DARWIN.”

“August 24, 1860.

“DEAR SIR,—I have directed a copy of my *Origin of Species* to be sent to your address to the Zoo rooms in Hanover Square, and I hope that you will do me the favour to accept it. If you will read article on Hybridism, at page 264, you will see why I am anxious about the embryos in eggs from first crosses. I was very glad to see a donkey with a wild ass in the Gardens, for I infer from this that you intend rearing a hybrid; if so I hope that you will look carefully for stripes on the *shoulder and legs in the foal*: you will see why I am so anxious on this head, if you will read the little discussion in the *Origin* from p. 163—167.

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"I will let you hear about the Moscow rabbits¹ after I have heard from the young lady who brought them, whether she consents to their being sent to the Gardens. If you should hear from Hunt anything about the record of the gestation of the *Canidae*, or about the parents of hybrid jackals, perhaps you will be so kind as to inform me.

"I was much interested by the facts you kindly communicated to me, and remain, dear sir,

"Yours very faithfully,
"CHARLES DARWIN."

"May 21, 1861.

"DEAR SIR,—The bearer will deliver three rabbits (if none dead on voyage) from Madeira. Will you take charge of them for me, and show this note to Mr. Sclater? They are zoologically very interesting, for they have run wild on a little island of Porto Santo, since the year 1420; and judging from two dead ones seen by me, they have become greatly reduced in size and modified in colour and in their skeletons. I want much to see them alive, and to try whether they will cross freely with common rabbits. I am going immediately to leave home for two months. Would there be any objection to your keeping them for some time and matching them with some other breed; or if you think fit, first try and get some purely bred?

"I may perhaps be mistaken, but I was very much surprised at many of the characters of the two dead specimens which I saw.

"If any one should die, I should like its skeleton. Pray forgive me troubling you, but I know not what to do with them at present.

"If worth consideration, I would of course pay for their keep.

"In haste,

"Dear sir,

"Yours very faithfully,

"CHARLES DARWIN."

With reference to the above rabbits, Mr. C. Darwin writes²—"The two little Porto Santo rabbits, whilst alive in the Zoological Gardens, had a remarkably different

¹ These Moscow rabbits were deposited in the Society's Gardens on September 30, 1860.

² *Animals and Plants under Domestication*, vol. i. p. 114.

appearance from the common kind. They were extraordinarily wild and active, so that many persons exclaimed on seeing them that they were more like large rats than rabbits. They were nocturnal to an unusual degree in their habits, and their wildness was never in the least subdued; so that the Superintendent, Mr. Bartlett, assured me that he never had a wilder animal under his charge. This is a singular fact, considering that they are descended from a domesticated breed. Lastly, and this is a highly remarkable fact, Mr. Bartlett could never succeed in getting these two rabbits, which were both males, to associate or breed with the females of several breeds which were repeatedly placed with them."

The two rabbits above-mentioned were deposited in the Society's Gardens, May 21, 1861, and entered as two females, but Mr. Darwin says they were males.

"January 30, 1865.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You have two rabbits of mine from Porto Santo. Will you be so good as to have one of them killed, taking great care that the skull and vertebræ are not broken, and sent as soon as you can, addressed—

'C. DARWIN, ESQ.,
'Care of Down Postman,
'Bromley, Kent.'

Per rail.

"I shall be very much obliged if you will inform me whether you have got young from these rabbits with the females of other breeds?

"I want to beg one other favour; I want to examine under the microscope the tipped feathers of *Galus sonneratii*. Could you send me one or two?

"Believe me, my dear sir,

"Yours very faithfully,

"CHARLES DARWIN."

LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE

“February 9, 1865.

“DEAR SIR,—I wrote to you above a week ago to ask you to send me immediately the body of one of my Port Santo rabbits, together with some information. I have not received the rabbit, nor any acknowledgment of my letter from you. I now request you will be so good as to write to me by return of post.

“Dear sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“CH. DARWIN.”

“February 14, 1865.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I am very much obliged for your note, answering so fully all my questions, and for the feathers of the *Gallus*. The rabbit has arrived safely, but most unfortunately for me the entrails have been taken out. If you catch the other, will you be so good as to send it unmutilated to me ‘Care of the Down Postman, Bromley, Kent.’

“With my thanks, believe me,

“Yours faithfully,

“CH. DARWIN.”

“December 9, 1866.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Would you have the kindness to send me on a slip of paper the name of the three or four *Tringa*-like birds in the Aquarium, which never, except once, assumed the proper summer plumage. Please just add whether you have known this with more than the three or four individuals, which you showed me.

“I much wish I could persuade you to try with different-coloured worsted or rags, whether the Bower-bird prefers gay colours.

“I thank you most sincerely for all the interesting information which you so often give me.

“My dear sir,

“Yours very faithfully,

“CH. DARWIN.”

“December 19, 1866.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I was with Mr. Wood this morning, and he expressed himself strongly about you and your daughter’s kindness in aiding him. He much wants assistance on another point, and if you could aid him, you would greatly oblige me. You know well the appearance of a dog when approaching another dog with hostile intentions before they come close together. The dog walks very

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stiff, with tail rigid and upright, *hair on back erected*, ears pointed and eyes directed forwards. When the dog attacks the other, down go the ears and the canines are uncovered. How could you anyhow arrange so that one of your dogs could see a strange dog from a little distance, so that Mr. Wood could sketch the former attitude, viz. of the stiff gesture with erected hair and erected ears. And then he could afterwards sketch the same dogs, when fondled by his master and wagging his tail with drooping ears. These two sketches I want much, and it would be a great favour to Mr. Wood and myself if you could aid him.

"My dear sir,

"Yours very faithfully,

"CH. DARWIN.

"P.S.—When a horse is turned out into a field he trots with high elastic steps, and carries his tail aloft. Even when a cow frisks about she throws up her tail. I have seen a drawing of an elephant, apparently trotting with high steps, and with the tail erect. When the elephants in the Gardens are turned out and are excited so as to move quickly, do they carry their tails aloft? How is this with the rhinoceros? Do not trouble yourself to answer this, but I shall be in London in a couple of months, and then perhaps you will be able to answer this trifling question. Or if you write about wolves and jackals turning round, you could tell me about the tails of elephants, or of any other animals.—C.D."

"January 5, 1867.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks about *Limulus*. I am going to ask another favour, but I do not want to trouble you to answer it by letter. When the *Callithrix sciurea* screams violently, does it wrinkle up the skin round the eyes like a baby always does? When thus screaming, do the eyes become suffused with moisture? Will you ask Sutton to observe carefully? Could you make it scream without hurting it much? I should be truly obliged some time for this information, when in spring I come to Gardens, or Sutton could write to me.

"Yours very faithfully,

"CH. DARWIN."

"February 16, 1867.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I want to beg two favours of you. I wish to ascertain whether the Bower-bird discriminates colours. Will you

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have all the coloured worsted removed from cage and the bower, and then put in all in a row, at same distance from bower, the enclosed coloured worsted, and mark whether the bird *at first* makes any selection. Each packet contains equal quantity. The packets had better be separated and each then put separate, but close together; perhaps it would be fairest if the several colours were put alternately, one thread of bright scarlet, one thread of brown, etc. etc. There are six colours. Will you have the kindness to tell me whether the bird prefers one colour to another? Secondly, I very much want several heads of the fancy and long-domesticated rabbits to measure the capacity of skull. I want only *small* kinds, such as Himalayas, small Angora, silver-grey, or any small-sized rabbit which has long been domesticated. The silver-grey from warrens would be of little use. The animals must be adult, and the smaller the breed the better.

"Now when any one dies would you send me the carcase, named? If the skin is of any value it might be skinned, but it would be rather better with skin, and I could make presents to any keeper to whom the skin is a perquisite.

"This would be great assistance to me, if you would have kindness thus to aid me.

"My dear sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"CH. DARWIN."

"September 15, 1871.

"MY DEAR SIR,—As on many former occasions, I am going to beg earnestly for a little information. Judging from the structure of the beak and published accounts, I imagine that the common goose does not sift the water out of the sides of its beak like a duck. Is this so? Does any species of goose sift the water in a partial manner, as well as use its beak in tearing or biting herbage? I am trying to trace gradation in structure and habits, and this would be a very useful piece of information.

"The common goose has lamellæ on the borders of the beak, partly confluent, and which seem to serve as teeth. Now has any goose quite a smooth beak? or has any goose (and this would be more useful to me) less developed lamellæ, knobs or teeth, than the common goose? If your son Edward has a specimen not very expensive of any such goose, *i. e.* with beak nearly smooth (if such exists), I should be much obliged if he would send it to me in a paper parcel.

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"As you are so busy, perhaps your son Edward would be so kind as to answer for you any of the above questions on which you can give me information. The beak of the Shoveller Duck which I procured from your son is one of the most beautiful structures which I ever saw.

"My dear sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"CH. DARWIN."

"Sept. 16, 1871.

"DEAR SIR,—I am very much obliged for your note and the specimens. I have kept two of the geese, and will the first day I send to the station return two.

"You say in your note that the Egyptian Goose throws the water, like a duck, out of the sides of the beak. Now it would be *especially* useful to me to know *positively* whether this goose can graze or tear off the herbage like the domestic goose. Will you ask your father, if he does not know, whether he could turn one of these geese out on a plot where there is fresh grass, and see whether it can use its beak well in biting off or plucking herbage.

"I shall be glad also to hear whether the Spur-winged Goose of Africa can sift the water, which does not seem possible from what you say about its beak.

"Dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"CH. DARWIN.

"Mr. E. Bartlett."

"Herne Bay, Sept. 19, 1871.

"MY DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter which I received here yesterday I do not believe the common goose sifts the water out of the sides of the bill like a duck. But some species of geese that feed more in the water may use the bill partially in this manner, but most species of geese feed on the land; but I think the Black-and-white Goose of Australia is the bird most likely to have the lamellæ less developed than any other goose. We have the bird alive in the Gardens. I have written to my son Edward, and asked him to look at the bird and report to you. On the other hand I think the Snow Goose of North America has the lamellæ stronger than any other goose; they are, in fact, like powerful well-developed teeth. I have forwarded your letter to my son Edward, and you may depend you will hear from

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him. I shall be home in a few days, and again think over the matter.

"Yours faithfully,

"A. D. BARTLETT.

"Chas. Darwin, Esq.

"P.S.—The Black-and-white Goose of Australia has the webs of the feet less developed than any other goose."

"Sept. 20, 1871.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you truly for your letter and trouble which you have taken for me. When you return to the Zoo Gardens, if you can ascertain, or observe, whether any goose *sifts* the water, as well as uses its beak for tearing, I should be greatly obliged by being allowed to quote you. I hope that I may hear from your son Edward.

"Yours very faithfully,

"C. DARWIN."

"Zoo, Sept. 20, 1871.

"DEAR SIR,—I have examined a number of the geese in the Gardens and find they vary in structure of lamellæ.

"The Egyptian Goose, *Chenolopex ægypticus*, has the lamellæ well-developed on both mandibles, and uses the bill in the water like a duck by throwing the water out at the corners. (Does it graze like our goose?) The Black-and-white Goose, *Anseranus melanoleuca*, of Australia, and the Spur-winged Goose, *Plectrophanes gambensis*, West Africa, have merely the smooth ridges inside the mouth of the upper mandible and very slight points on the lower ridge. I cannot say if these birds use the bill like the duck, but will ascertain; the latter bird has less lamellæ than the former of the two.

"The *Chloephaga melanoptera*, or Andian Goose, has very slight lamellæ like the Bernicle, Ruddy-headed and Canadian and this genus.

"I will forward to you some skins for examination, and the price I will put as low as possible, so that you will be able to select any of the specimens you may think proper.

"I am, etc.,

"E. B."

"Oct. 15, 1871.

"DEAR SIR,—I hope that you will excuse me troubling you, but I should be *greatly* obliged if you could send me pretty soon (as my

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MS. must go to the printer) any information on the Egyptian Goose, both sifting the water and biting or tearing like a common goose the herbage.

"Dear sir,
"Yours faithfully,
"CH. DARWIN.

"Mr. E. Bartlett."

"70, Delancey St.,
"R. P., N. W.,
"Oct. 16, 1871.

"DEAR SIR,—The Egyptian geese feed in the water, they do not move their heads from side to side (laterally) like the ducks that sift the food; their mode of tearing and biting the herbage is much the same as the common goose.

"I am sorry not to be able to send more particulars as I have had but little opportunity of watching the birds.

"I am, etc.,
"E. B."

"Zoo, May 16, 1872.

"DEAR SIR,—I turned a snake loose into the yard with two of Grote's Porcupines; one of them shook his tail at the sight of the snake, the other did not, but gnashed his teeth and appeared much inclined to bite the snake. I then tried the Crested Porcupine; he did not shake his tail, but set his spines up, and I thought he would attack the snake with his teeth; he walked round the snake and appeared angry, but did not touch it. I then put the snake into the yard with the little Java Porcupine, but he was evidently frightened of the snake, and kept as far from it as possible, but did not rattle his tail. I believe from what I saw that the Porcupine if hungry and in a wild state met with a snake he would kill and eat it.

"Yours faithfully,
"A. D. BARTLETT.

"C. Darwin, Esq."

ASSOCIATED HABITS.

I take these notes from Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions*, p. 47.