

ANIMAL LIFE.

BIRDS AND BEASTS WHICH WASH.

IN most parts of England, as well as in the West, certain dates in the week are set aside by general consent as "washing day." It may be a Monday in Cumberland, and a Tuesday in Yorkshire. But whichever it may be, the intelligent traveller will behold from the window of his railway carriage fifty or sixty miles of what Yorkshire terms "weshin" adorning the closes by the farms and cottages in ostentatious cleanliness, and should destiny take him to the furthest corner of the Lizard promontory in Cornwall, he will find that imperious custom has ordained that the rocks of the coves furthest west are made into drying grounds once a week in obedience to the same unwritten law.

Though animals have no "things" to wash, many of them are extremely particular as to bathing at frequent intervals. To some the bath is a pleasure, and to others mainly a duty; while there are many instances in which, though the creature has no clothes to wash, the business of cleaning, drying, and "ironing," the fur or feathers is a long and tiresome one, though never neglected. In countries under the Equator, where the temperature and weather are almost uniform day by day, it is probable that the washing hour is almost as fixed as the drinking hours are. But even the author of "The Naturalist on the Amazon" has failed to note whether this is the case. For one thing, it is very difficult to tell what the habits of animals in the tropical forests are, on account of the immense size and height of the trees, and the growth of parasitic plants upon them. It is possible for birds and the smaller animals to drink, and perhaps to bathe, without ever descending to the earth, finding the water in the aerial cisterns of the immense flowers of the trees and climbers, or in the hollows of the gigantic stems, in both of which it is said

that water insects and even molluscs are found, living in these strange water tanks in the upper storeys of the tropical forest. It is rather curious that birds are far more devoted to bathing than are beasts. From the falcon to the sparrow, birds delight in

haunted rivers. It is said that a number of Indian monkeys watched a party of Europeans in a boat, who washed their hands and brushed their teeth. Next day the monkeys were seen to come to the riverside, and go through the form of washing



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A VETERAN RHINOCEROS AT THE ZOO.

This animal, which has been forty years in the Royal Zoological Society's Gardens, always seems to obtain the highest satisfaction from his daily bath.

bathing; yet they have far more trouble to get their feathers dry than beasts have to dry their fur. Monkeys never wash or bathe, though they have, as a rule, every chance to do so. Possibly experience has taught them to be afraid of crocodiles, which are pretty generally distributed on monkey-

their hands, and of brushing their teeth with bits of stick. A large illustration of an orang-outang washing its hands in a pool appeared in an old-fashioned natural history published some sixty years ago; but there is no evidence that this is other than an artist's imagination. Of the cat tribe, large and small, only the tiger and jaguar, and perhaps the little "fishing" cat bathe for pleasure. The tiger will sit with only its head out of the water on a blazing hot day in an Indian jungle. Sir Samuel Baker, after beating for a tiger the greater part of the day, found and shot one in this position, thoroughly enjoying itself. They will also nearly immerse themselves when they come down to drink at night, and leave a long dripping trail on the sand behind them when they emerge. That the Polar bear enjoys a bath *per se* as well as the use of the element for swimming and as a hunting ground no one can doubt. At the Zoo, when the old Polar bear's bath was being filled with fresh water it would stand with its mouth open, letting the water run through its jaws, and when the bath was full would play all kinds of tricks, revelling in the water. One of its antics was to float on its back in the water, and then catch hold of its heels with its forepaws and roll over in a ball. It would also turn over backwards on the edge and fall in with a resounding splash. Though foxes are never seen to wash, and there is no record of the wolf doing so, nearly all dogs bathe, and some do so, not only for coolness, but for cleanliness. There is more than one instance on record of criminal dogs, which had been killing sheep, taking a swim to aid them in getting



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THE ELEPHANT IN THE HEIGHT OF HIS ENJOYMENT.

The elephant, too, takes the greatest delight in his ablutions, and, besides going into his tank head over ears in water, will squirt himself all over with hundredweights of water. In India, these animals are never tired of bathing, and are carefully scrubbed with brick by attendants afterwards.

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rid of the blood marks. Among the few other "washing animals" which are carnivorous is a well-known species of racoon. It is not only devoted to bathing and sunning itself, but has an odd habit of taking its food to the water and giving it a thorough washing before eating it. It will dabble anything which it takes a fancy to in the water. One which had a family at the Zoo washed its unlucky kittens so often that they died. But as a rule it is the mammals with little or no hair which use the bath most often. This may be partly because the others fear catching cold with wet fur clinging to them, though, on the other hand, this seems to make little difference when caused by rain. But the "pachyderms," most of them hairless, such as the wild pigs, the elephant, the various species of rhinoceros, and also the Indian buffalo seek water, and sometimes mud baths, with the greatest eagerness. In hot climates this is partly to obtain a coating of mud to keep off the stings of flies and insects. Red deer and reindeer will do the same. But the elephant or rhinoceros vastly enjoy a bathe in clean water, even in England, where there are no insect pests to annoy them. An old rhinoceros, like the veteran of which a picture is given, which has been forty years in the Zoological Gardens, will splash about with almost infantile



A RAVEN IN HIS BATH.

The raven is one of the cleanliest of birds, and is a good example to many humans. He, however, cannot be said to look dignified as he sits in his bath with every feather "bottle brushed."

exuberance in his bath, and the elephants will squirt themselves all over with hundredweights of water. In India they will retire quite under the surface if allowed to enter a river, only putting their trunks out.

A possible reason why birds are so fond of bathing is that they have no means of licking themselves clean with saliva. For this reason they wash themselves with water, and are very generally provided with an oil receptacle for anointing the feathers afterwards to prevent catching cold. The oil receptacle is a little gland, sometimes as large as a nut, above the tail. In a little cygnet, for instance, this gland is very large, and the tiny bird extracts the oil, which it rubs on its beak, and even on the crown of its head, and then, using its extraordinarily flexible neck, rubs the oil over its back, belly, and flanks. Frequent washing is as necessary to water birds as to land-birds, or even more so, for the latter use earth or dust baths. A family of geese on a northern river will select a shingle bar, and shaking all their feathers loose, splash, wet, and rinse them thoroughly. They then stand in a row, all at the same time, and shake their wings to the wind to dry them, and then oil and arrange them, after which considerable fatigue they will all adjourn to the dry land and go fast asleep.



THE PIGEONS' MORNING BATH.

This photograph, taken by an amateur, shows how his white fantails enjoy their daily dip under the garden hose, which is turned on for their special benefit.



A FAMILY PARTY.

Swans are specially clean members of the feathered race, and the cygnets take a great pride in their personal appearance, continually washing themselves and preening their feathers with the oil provided by Nature for the purpose.