

REID MAYNE

QUADRUPEDS, WHAT
THEY ARE AND WHERE
FOUND: A BOOK OF
ZOOLOGY FOR BOYS

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Mayne Reid

Quadrupeds, What They Are and Where Found: A Book of Zoology for Boys

Preface

I have been called upon to write illustrative sketches to a series of engravings, designed by an eminent artist. In performing my part of the work I have thrown the *Mammalia* into twenty-four groups – corresponding more or less to the picture designs – and have dwelt chiefly on the geographical distribution of the animals. The *Cetaceae* and *Vespertilionidae* are properly omitted.

In the groups given there is no attempt made at any very scientific arrangement. The sketches are purely of a popular character, even the scientific nomenclature being avoided. It is hoped, however, that they may prove of service to the zoological tyro, and form as it were his first stepping-stone to a higher order of classification.

In reality, notwithstanding the prodigious *speculations* of learned anatomists, no truly good arrangement of the *Mammalia* has yet been arrived at; the deficiency arising from the fact that, as yet, no true zoologist has had the opportunity of a sufficiently extended observation of the natural habits of animals.

Now, however, that the great agent – steam – has as it were “brought the ends of the earth together,” the opportunity is no longer wanting; and it is to be hoped that a better classification may soon be obtained. Who knows but that some ardent young zoologist, who has taken his first lessons from this little book, may be the man to supply the desideratum? Who knows?

Such a result would be a proud triumph for the author of these monographic sketches.

Mayne Reid.

Chapter One.

Monkeys of the Old World

The great family of the Monkeys, or the “Monkey tribe,” as it is usually called, is divided by naturalists into two large groups – the “Monkeys of the Old World,” or those that inhabit Africa, Asia, and the Asiatic islands; and the “Monkeys of the New World,” or those that belong to America. This classification is neither scientific nor natural, but as it serves to simplify the study of these quadrupeds – or *quadrumana*, as they are termed – it is here retained. Moreover, as there is no genus of monkey, nor even a species, common to both hemispheres, such a division can do no harm.

The number of species of these animals, both in the Old and New Worlds, is so great, that to give a particular description of each would fill a large volume. It will be only possible in this sketch to point out the countries they inhabit, and to say a word or two of the more remarkable kinds.

In point of precedence, the great *Ourang-outang* contests the palm with the *Chimpanzee*. Both these creatures often attain the size of an ordinary man, and individuals of both have been captured exceeding this size; while, at the same time, in muscular strength, one of them is supposed to equal seven or eight men. It is remarkable how little is known of the habits of either. This is accounted for by the fact that they both inhabit regions still unexplored by civilised man, dwelling in thick impenetrable forests, where even the savage himself rarely penetrates.

Although many exaggerated stories are told of these great satyr apes, and many of these are only “sailors’ yarns,” yet it is easy to believe that animals approaching in structure, and even in intelligence, to man himself, must possess habits of the most singular kind. There is little more known of them than there was hundreds of years ago – indeed, we might say thousands of years; for it is evident that the Carthaginians came into contact with the chimpanzee on the western coast of Africa, and through them the Romans became acquainted with it; and no doubt it was this animal that gave origin to most of their stories of satyrs and wild men of the woods.

The chimpanzee is found only in the forests of tropical Africa – more especially along the west coast, the banks of the Gaboon, and other rivers. The ourang-outang is exclusively Asiatic – inhabiting Borneo, Sumatra, the peninsula of Malacca, Cochin China, and several others of the large Oriental islands. Of the ourang-outang there are two species – perhaps three – differing very little, except in point of size and colour.

A group of large tail-less apes, usually denominated *Gibbons*, or Long-armed Apes, come next in order. These are neither so large nor human-like as the ourang or the chimpanzee; nevertheless, they are capable of walking upon their hind legs, after the manner of bipeds. They are all long-armed apes, and generally use their fore-arms in walking, but more to assist them in clinging to the branches of trees, and swinging themselves from one to the other.

The gibbons are all Asiatic monkeys, and inhabit the same countries with the ourang, viz., the tropical forests of India and the Indian Archipelago. There are at least a dozen species of them, nearly half of which are found in the Island of Sumatra alone.

The *Proboscis* monkeys follow the gibbons. These are also long-armed apes, but with tails and sharp proboscis-like snouts, from which their name is derived. Only two species are known – both belonging to the great Island of Borneo, so rich in varieties of these human-like mammalia. One of the species of proboscis monkeys has also been observed in Cochin China. Another large tribe of Asiatic apes, containing in all nearly twenty different species, has been constituted into a genus called *Semnopithecus*. These also inhabit the Indian continent and the great islands; but they are not so exclusively tropical in their habits, since several of the species extend their range northward to Nepaul, and other districts among the Himalaya Mountains. It is a species, or more than one, of these ugly apes that is venerated by the Hindus; and they are permitted to live without molestation in the

sacred groves and temples, though they often prove most troublesome protégées to their fanatical benefactors.

In Africa, the representatives of this last-mentioned tribe are found in the *Colobus* monkeys. Of these there are about a dozen species; and from several of them are obtained the long-haired monkey skins of commerce. They are all tropical animals, and inhabit the middle zone of Africa – their range extending from Abyssinia to the shores of the Atlantic.

Another very large tribe, containing in all as many as thirty species, and belonging exclusively to Africa, are the *Guenons*. They are closely allied to the colobus monkeys, but yet sufficiently different from them in habits and conformation to be classed into a separate genus. Most of the guenons inhabit the central regions of Africa; but they are not exclusively tropical, since several kinds belong to Kaffraria, and that region indefinitely called the Cape of Good Hope.

The *Macaco* apes constitute another genus, which forms the link between the guenons and the baboons, or dog-headed monkeys. They are neither exclusively African nor Asiatic monkeys, since species of macacoes are found in both these continents. They are usually subdivided into the macacoes with long tails, and those with short tails; and there is one species which wants this appendage altogether. This is the Magot – perhaps the most noted of all the macacoes, since it was the earliest known to European nations, and is, in fact, the only species that is indigenous to Europe. It is the magot that inhabits the Rock of Gibraltar. Much has been written as to whether this monkey is really indigenous to Europe – some naturalists alleging that it reached Gibraltar from Africa, where it is also common. But it is not generally known that, on European ground, the magot is not confined solely to the Gibraltar Rock. It is also found in other parts of the south of Spain; and, it is likely enough, has existed there long enough to claim the character of a native.

In the chain of natural affinities, the *Baboons*, or dog-headed monkeys, stand next to the macacoes. These are more of a quadruped form than any yet mentioned; and, both in a moral and physical sense, they are certainly the ugliest of animals. The hideous Drills and Mandrills, so well-known in our menageries, belong to this genus; as also the Chacma, or great dog-monkey of the Cape.

There are, in all, seven or eight species of baboons, and most of them inhabit Africa. One of the most singular of them, the Hamadryas, extends its range into Arabia; while another, the Black Baboon, is an inhabitant of the Philippine Isles.

With the baboons we close our list of the Monkeys of the Old World; but, in order to complete the account of these quadruped mammalia, it is necessary to find a place for those strange creatures usually known as Lemurs. These are usually grouped by themselves, and in a classification succeed the American monkeys – to some of which they have a greater resemblance than to those of the Old World; but, as they are all exclusively inhabitants of the latter, they may appropriately be noticed here.

The *Lemurs* are animals having very much the appearance and habits of monkeys, but with long snouts or muzzles, resembling that of the fox. Hence they are sometimes called fox-apes. There are many kinds of them, however; and, although classed in a group called lemurs, they differ exceedingly from one another, some of them having the appearance of foxes, others more resembling squirrels, and still others like flying squirrels – being possessed of a similar wing-like appendage, and capable, like them, of extended flight. They are known under different appellations, as Makis, Indris, Loris, Galagos, Tarsiers, Ay-ays, etcetera, and naturalists have subdivided them into a great number of genera. They are found both in Africa and Asia; but by far the greater number of them, as the Makis and Ay-ays, belong to the Island of Madagascar. The last are not to be confounded with an animal bearing the same name – the ay-ay of America. The latter is the singular creature known as the sloth, of which there are several distinct species, all inhabitants of the great forests of tropical America.

Of the lemurs, at least thirty different kinds are known, more than half of which belong to the Island of Madagascar. A few species are found on the west coast of Africa: and the others inhabit the Oriental islands – Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, Timor, Mindanao, and the Philippine Archipelago.

Chapter Two.

Monkeys of the New World

The Monkeys of America differ in many respects from those of the Old World. In general they are smaller – none of the species being quite so large as the baboons. Their bodies and limbs are also more slender and spider-like; and their whole conformation seems intended to adapt them for dwelling in the great virgin forests of the New World. There is one particular in which they differ most remarkably from their congeners of the Old World; that is, in having *prehensile* tails. With these they are enabled to suspend themselves from the branches of trees, or swing their bodies from one to the other; and this prehensile power is far greater than could be obtained by any clutch of the hand. So great is it, that even after the animal has died from the effect of a shot or other wound, its tail will still remain hooped around the branch; and if the body is not taken down by the hunter, it will hang there till released by the decay of the tail!

Not all the monkeys of America possess this prehensile power of tail. Some are entirely without it, and approach nearer to certain kinds in the Old World; while there are a few species that very closely resemble the lemurs. These differences have led to a classification of the American monkeys; and they have been thrown into three groups, though it may be remarked that these groups are not very natural.

They are as follow: – The *Sapajous*, whose tails are not only prehensile, but naked underneath, and tubercled near the tips; the *Sajoas*, who possess the prehensile power, but have hairy tails; and the *Sajouins*, whose tails are *not* prehensile.

For want of a better, this classification may be adopted.

The Sapajous are subdivided into three genera, of which the Howlers form one. They are so denominated from their habit of assembling in troops, and uttering the most terrible howlings, so loud that the forest is filled with their sonorous voices. Their cries can be heard at a half-league's distance, and produce upon a stranger unaccustomed to such sounds a very disagreeable impression. The unusual strength of voice is accounted for by a peculiar drum-like construction of the *os hyoides*, common to all the genera of Sapajous, but more developed in some than in others; and those in whom the voice is loudest constitute the genus of *Alouattes*, or Howlers.

Of the true howlers there are about a dozen species known to naturalists. Most of them are denizens of the tropical forests of Guiana and Brazil; but some species are not so tropical in their habits, since one or two extend the kingdom of the monkeys into Mexico on the north, and southward to Paraguay.

Closely allied to the last, are the *Ateles*, or Spider monkeys. These derive their generic name from their singular spider-like appearance – caused by their disproportionately long and slender limbs, and the great length of their tails. None equal them in the prehensile power of the caudal appendage; and it is of them that that curious story is related – the story of the Monkeys' Bridge – where it is told how they pass over a stream: a number of the strongest joining their bodies together by means of their long tails, and thus forming a bridge, by which the whole troop are enabled to cross.

Of the spider monkeys there are about a dozen species; but three of these have been taken to form one of the three genera into which, as already stated, the Sapajous are divided. These three differ very little from the other spider monkeys, except in being covered with a soft, woolly hair; and, furthermore, in being much more rare than the others; at all events, they are more rarely seen, as they dwell only in the thickest forests, far remote from the habitations of man.

The third and last genus of the Sapajous is that termed *Lagothrix*. They are small monkeys, covered also with soft woolly hair; and their habitat is along the banks of rivers. They have a strange habit, not observable among their congeners, of collecting in small troops, and rolling or “clewing”

themselves up together. This they do in cold weather, or on the approach of a storm. They summon each other by means of signals and cries; and selecting the convenient bifurcation of some tree, they there form the singular group. The jaguar and other beasts of prey take advantage of this habit, and often make victims of the whole *tableau vivant!* There are three species already described, all denizens of the Brazilian forests.

The Sajous form the second group of the American monkeys. These have also prehensile tails; but the power is not so highly-developed in them as in the Sapajous, nor are their tails naked. Moreover, the bodies of the Sajous are more robust, and their limbs of stouter make.

The Sajous are well-tempered creatures, and easily domesticated. Some of the species are favourite pets – on account of their pleasing manners, and the docility of their nature. The old males, however, scarcely deserve this reputation, as they will bite freely enough when provoked.

They are not subdivided; but permitted to constitute a single genus, of which there are nearly twenty species – all of them inhabiting equatorial America.

The Sajouins form the third group; but as the name merely signifies those monkeys that have not the power of suspending themselves by the tail, it can hardly be considered a natural group, since there are very varied and numerous genera who lack this power. The group of Sajouins must therefore be subdivided into several lesser groups.

First of all we have the true Sajouins; and of these the *Saimiri* or *Titi* is the most distinguished species. This pretty little creature is about equal in size to a squirrel, and possesses all the playful disposition of the latter. Its childlike innocence of countenance, as well as its pleasing and graceful manners, render it a favourite pet wherever it can be obtained. Its rich robe of yellowish-grey, mixed with green, adds to the attraction of its presence. There are several species of Sajouins, known as the Widow monkey, the Moloch, the Mitred monkey, and the Black-handed Sajouin – all of them dwellers in the tropical regions of America. The Doroucoulis is another small species, that in the nocturnal forest often alarms the traveller by its singular cry; and an allied species of Doroucoulis constitutes, with the one above-mentioned, a second genus of the Sajouins.

The *Sakis* form of themselves another and somewhat extensive family of the Sajouins. There are a dozen species of them in all; and they possess the peculiarity of being insect-eaters. They are fond of honey, too; and are often seen ranging the woods, in little troops of ten or twelve, in search of the nests of the wild bees, which they plunder of their luscious stores.

The *Ouistitis* also constitute a genus. These, like the *Saimiris*, are beautiful little creatures – many of the species not being larger than squirrels, and marked with the most lively colours: as bright red and orange. There are many different kinds of small squirrels known by this name, or by its abbreviation – *Titi* – some of them belonging to the group of *Saimiris*, and others to the *Ouistitis*, properly so called.

Last of all come the little *Tamunus*; some of which, in beauty of colours, in playfulness of disposition, and other amiable qualities, need not yield either to the *Saimiris* or *Ouistitis*. They are equally prized as pets; and among their Creole owners have equally applied to them the endearing appellation of *Titi-titi*.

Chapter Three.

Bears

In the days of Linnaeus – that is, a century and a half ago – it was supposed there was only one kind of Bear in existence – the common Brown bear of Europe. It is true that Linnaeus before his death had heard of the great Polar bear, but he had never seen one, and was not certain of its being a distinct species. Not only has the Polar bear proved to be a very different animal from his brown congener, but other species have turned up in remote quarters of the globe: until the list of these interesting quadrupeds has been extended to the number of at least a dozen distinct species – differing not only in size, shape, and colour, but also in many more essential characteristics. Bears have been found in North America, and others in South America; some in Asia, and still others in the islands of the Indian Archipelago; entirely unlike the brown bear of Europe, as they are to one another.

As the *Brown bear* is the oldest of the family known to naturalists, I shall give him the precedence in this little monograph.

It is a misnomer to call him the brown bear of Europe, since he is even more common in many parts of Asia – especially throughout Asiatic Russia and Kamtschatka. But he is also met with in most European countries, where there are extensive ranges of mountains. In the mountains of Hungary and Transylvania – as well as in those of Russia, Sweden, and Norway – the brown bear is found. He is also met with as far south as the Alps – and even the Pyrenees, and Asturias, mountains of Spain; but the bear of these last-mentioned localities differs considerably from the real brown bear of the northern regions; and most probably is a different species.

Again, in North America – in a very remote and sterile region lying to the westward of Hudson's Bay, and known as the Barren Grounds – a large brown bear has been observed by travellers and traders of the Fur Company, supposed to be identical with the European bear. This, however, is a doubtful point; and in all likelihood the bear of the Barren Grounds is a new species, only found in that desolate region.

The brown bear is of solitary habits. During the summer season he roams about, growing fat upon roots, fruits, seeds, and wild honey – when he can procure it. At the approach of winter this animal has the singular habit of returning to his den, and there remaining dormant or torpid throughout the season of cold. During this prolonged slumber he takes no sustenance of any kind; and although exceedingly fat when going to rest, he comes forth in the spring-time as thin as a skeleton. The den is usually a cave or hollow tree; or, failing this, a *lair*, which the animal constructs for himself out of branches, lining it snugly with leaves and moss.

The brown bear is a long-lived animal. Individuals have been known of the age of fifty years. The cubs when first born are not much larger than the puppies of a mastiff. The people of Kamtschatka hunt this species with great assiduity, and obtain from it many of the comforts and necessaries of life. The skins are used for their beds and coverlets, for their caps, gloves, and boots. They manufacture from it harness for their dogs. From the intestines they make masks for their faces, to protect them from the glare of the sun; and they also use the latter stretched over their windows as a substitute for glass. The flesh and fat are among the most esteemed dainties of a Kamtschatkan *cuisine*. Even the shoulder-blades are used as sickles for cutting grass. The Laplanders, also – of whose cold country the brown bear is an inhabitant – have a great esteem for this animal. They regard its prowess as something wonderful, alleging that it has the strength of ten men, and the sense of twelve! The name for it, in their language, signifies the dog of God.

The *White*, or *Polar bear*, is, perhaps, the most interesting of the whole family: not so much on account of his superior size – since the brown and the grizzly are sometimes as large as he – but

rather from his singular habits, and the many odd stories told about him, dining the last fifty years, by whalers and Arctic explorers.

To describe the appearance of the Polar bear would be superfluous. Everybody has seen either a living individual in a menagerie, or a stuffed skin of one in a museum; and the long, low, tail-less body – with outstretched neck and sharp projecting snout – covered with a thick coat of white hair, renders it impossible to mistake the Polar bear for any other animal.

This quadruped is more of a *sea* than *land* animal. Sometimes, it is true, he wanders inland for fifty miles or so; but this he does in following the course of some river or marshy inlet, where he finds fish. His usual haunts are along the icy shores of the Arctic Ocean, and the numerous ice-bound islands of the great Polar Sea. There he roams about over the frozen banks, or floats upon icebergs and drifts; or, if need be, takes to the open water, where he can swim with almost the facility of a fish.

A proof of his natatory powers is found in the fact that Arctic voyagers have observed him swimming about in the open sea full twenty miles from the nearest land! He is equally expert as a diver; and uses this art for the purpose of capturing various kinds of marine animals, upon which he subsists. In regard to food, the Polar bear differs altogether from his congeners. He is almost wholly carnivorous in his habits. Indeed, were it otherwise, he could not exist in his icy kingdom – in many parts of which not a trace of vegetation is to be found. Fish of many kinds, birds, and their eggs, and four-footed beasts – when he can lay his claws upon them – all are welcome to his palate. Nor will he disdain to feast upon the carcass of the great whale – when chance, or the whale fishermen, leaves such a provender in his way. The seal is a particular favourite with him, and he hunts this creature with skill and assiduity. When he perceives the seal basking upon a ledge of ice, he slips quietly into the water, and swims to leeward of his intended victim. He approaches by frequent short dives – so calculating his distance, that at the last he comes up close to the spot where the seal is lying. Should the victim attempt to escape, by rolling into the water, it falls into the bear's clutches: if, on the contrary, it lies still, the bear makes a powerful spring, seizes it on the ice, and then kills and devours it at his leisure.

In swimming, the Polar bear not only moves rapidly through the water, but is also capable of darting forward in such a way as to seize a fish before it can escape beyond reach. On the land, also, he can move with rapidity – his slouching trot being almost as fast as the gallop of a horse.

Individuals have been shot that weighed as much as 1600 pounds!

Polar bears are found along the shores of the Arctic Ocean, both in Asia and America. They do not go to sleep in winter – that is, the males do not. The females with young, however, bury themselves in the snow – having formed a lair – and there remain until they bring forth their young. The cubs are often captured in these snow caves, which the Esquimaux discover by means of dogs trained for this peculiar purpose.

The *Grizzly bear* next merits attention. This formidable animal was, for a long time, supposed to be a variety either of the brown bear of Europe or the black bear of America; but his greater ferocity, so often and fatally experienced by travellers, drew the attention of naturalists upon him, when it was discovered that he was altogether distinct from either of the two. His name is usually coupled with that of the Rocky Mountains of America – for it is chiefly in the defiles and valleys of this stupendous chain that he makes his home. He wanders, however, far eastward over the prairies, and also to the Californian Mountains on the west; and in a latitudinal direction from the borders of Texas on the south, northward as far, it is supposed, as the shores of the Arctic Sea. At all events, a bear somewhat like him, if not identically the same, has been seen on the banks of the great Mackenzie River, near its mouth. Perhaps it may be the brown bear of the Barren Grounds, already noticed; and which last is, in many respects – in size and colour especially – very similar to the grizzly.

The grizzly bear is certainly the most ferocious of his tribe – even exceeding, in this unamiable quality, his white cousin of the icy north; and many a melancholy tale of trapper and Indian hunter attests his dangerous prowess. He is both carnivorous and frugivorous – will dig for roots and eat fruits

when within his reach; but not being a tree-climber, he has to content himself with such berries as grow upon the humbler bushes. Indeed, it is a fortunate circumstance that the fierce animal is unable to ascend a tree. Many a traveller and hunter have found a neighbouring tree the readiest means of saving their lives, when pursued by this ferocious assailant. Another circumstance is also in favour of those pursued by the grizzly bear. In the region where he dwells, but few persons ever go afoot; and although the bear can overtake a pedestrian, his speed is no match for that of the friendly horse.

It is almost hopeless to think of killing a grizzly bear by a single bullet. There the deadly rifle is no longer deadly – unless when the shot is given in a mortal part; and to take sure aim from the saddle, with a horse dancing in affright, is a feat which even the most skilful marksman cannot always accomplish. As many as a dozen bullets have been fired into the body of a grizzly bear, without killing him outright.

The strength of this animal equals his ferocity. He pulls the huge buffalo, a thousand pounds in weight, to the ground; and then drags its carcass to some cave or crevice among the rocks, or to a hole which he has dug to receive it. To this place he repairs from time to time, till the exhausted store compels him to go in search of a new victim. Many an incident can be related – and on the best authority too – where man has been the victim of the grizzly bear; and the Indians esteem the killing of one of these animals a feat equal to that of taking the scalp of a human enemy. One of the proudest ornaments of a savage chief is a necklace of bears' claws: only to be worn by those who have themselves killed the animals from which they have been taken.

The *Black*, or *American bear*, is one of the best known of the family; and on account of his clean smooth head, tapering muzzle, and rich black fur, he is also one of the best looking of bears. He is found throughout the whole of the United States territory – from the Canadas to the Gulf of Mexico – and westward to the shores of the Pacific. He is sometimes met with in the same neighbourhood with the grizzly, but not often: since their haunts are essentially unlike – the black bear being a denizen of the heavy-timbered forest, while the other frequents the grassy hills or coppice-openings of the prairies and mountain valleys.

The black bear is a tree-climber; and ascends the loftiest trees in search of the honey of the wild bees, or to make his lair in some cavernous hollow of the trunks. His food is usually fruits and roots, but he is also fond of young corn, and often commits serious depredations on the maize plantation. In the backwood settlements, where clearings are apart from each other, the black bear is still occasionally met with; and the chase of this animal is one of the most favourite pastimes of the backwoods' hunter, whether amateur or professional. Generally there is little peril in the pursuit – unless when the bear is wounded and enraged, and the hunter chooses to risk himself at close quarters.

There are varieties in colour. Some with white throats, and some of a cinnamon brown, have been observed; but the colour of the species is usually jet black; and on this account the skins are much prized for military and other purposes.

The *Spectacled bear* is a native of South America, and frequents the forests upon the declivities of the Andes. This was long supposed to be a variety of the black bear, but later observations prove it to be a different species. Its habits are very similar to the last, to which it is also similar in shape. In colour it differs essentially. It is black, but with a buff snout, and buff rings round the eyes, which give it that appearance whence it derives its trivial name. Its throat and breast are whitish.

There is at least one other species of black bear indigenous to South America, inhabiting the tropical forests; but very little is known of it – further than that it is one of the smallest of the tribe.

We now reach the Asiatic bears, properly so called; and we have only space to say a word about each.

The *Siberian bear* is thought to be only a variety of the brown bear of Europe, differing slightly in colour. In the former there is a broad band, or collar, of white passing over the neck and meeting upon the breast. It is, as its name implies, an inhabitant of Siberia.

The *Thibet bear* is a dweller among the Himalayas – in Sylhet and Nepaul. Its general colour is black, with a white mark, shaped like the letter Y; so placed that the shank of the letter is upon its breast, and the forks running up the front of its shoulders. It is not carnivorous, and, generally, its disposition is harmless and playful. It is easily tamed.

The *Sloth bear* is another Indian species having this peculiar marking on the breast and shoulders. This animal is one of the oddest of creatures. Its short limbs and depressed head, with the long shaggy hair surmounting its back like a bullock, give it the appearance of being deformed. On this account it was the favourite of the Indian jugglers, who, depending on its ugliness as a source of attraction, trained it to a variety of tricks. It is therefore sometimes known as the jugglers' bear (*Ours jongleur*). It has also a peculiar prehensile power in its lips; and this, with its general shaggy mien, led to the belief of its being a species of sloth – hence its common name.

The *Malayan bear* is another black species, with a marking on the breast. This mark is of a semi-lunar shape, and whitish; but the colour of the muzzle is buff-yellow. This is a very handsome species, subsisting on vegetable diet; and very injurious to the plantations of young cocoa trees, of the shoots of which it is very fond. It is also a honey eater; and roams about in quest of the hives of the indigenous bees. It is a native of Malacca, Sumatra, and others of the East Indian islands.

The *Isabella bear* is so called from its colour – being of that fulvous white known as Isabella colour. It is another of the species belonging to the great range of the Himalayas, and is found in the mountains of Nepaul. Sometimes it is observed of nearly a white colour; which led to the mistaken belief that Polar bears existed in the Himalayas.

The *Syrian bear* is a species found in the mountainous parts of Asia Minor. It is of a fulvous-brown colour, sometimes approaching to yellowish white. It is partly carnivorous, but feeds also on fruits; and is most remarkable as being the species first mentioned in books – that is, it is the bear of the Bible.

The *Bornean bear* is the last to be mentioned, though it is certainly one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful, of the genus. This beauty arises from its peculiar markings, especially from the large patch of rich orange colour upon the breast. It is a native of the great Island of Borneo, and little is known of its habits; but it is supposed to resemble the Malayan bear in these, as it does in many other respects.

In Africa there are no bears.

Chapter Four.

Badgers

The Badger is a silent, solitary, carnivorous creature, having his representative, in some form or other, in almost every part of the world; though nowhere either numerous in species or plentiful in individuals. In Europe he appears in two forms, the *Glutton and common Badger*; in North America in three, viz., *Wolverene, American, and Mexican Badgers*; and, indeed, we might say a fourth belongs to that continent, for the *Racoon* is as near being a badger, both in appearance and habits, as he is to being anything else. For convenience, therefore, let us class him in this group: he will certainly be more at home in it than among the *bears*— where most of the naturalists have placed him.

In South America we find another form of badger in the *Coati mundi*, of which there are several varieties; and there, too, the racoon appears of a species distinct from those of the north. Some writers class the coati with the civets, but the creature has far more of the habits and appearance of a badger than of a civet cat; and therefore, whatever the anatomists may say, we shall consider the coati a badger.

But a truer form of the badger than either of the above, exists in South America – extending over nearly the whole of that continent. This is the *Grison*, which, in appearance and habits, somewhat resembles the wolverene. It also is found in two or three varieties – according to the part of the country it inhabits. The *Taira* is another South American species of badger-like animal, though usually referred to the weasels.

In Africa, the badger appears in the *Ratel*, or honey badger, common from Senegal to the Cape. In Asia, in its northern zone, we have the *European badger and Glutton*; and in the south, the *Indian badger*; while in the Himalaya chain dwells another animal, closely allied to the badgers, called the *Wha* or *Panda*. In Java, we find still another species, the *Nientek*; and in the other large Asiatic islands there are several kinds of animals that approach very near to badgers in their forms and habits, but which are usually classed either with the weasels or civets.

We shall now give some details respecting the different animals of this family; among which the *Glutton*, in point of size, as well as for other reasons, deserves precedence.

The *Glutton* is the *Rosomak* of the Russians, in whose country he is chiefly found – along high northern latitudes, both in Europe and Asia. He is supposed to be identical with the wolverene of North America; and if this be so, his range extends all round the Arctic zone of the globe: since the wolverene is found throughout the whole extent of the Hudson's Bay territory. There are good reasons to believe, however, that the two species differ considerably from each other – just as the European badger does from his American cousins. It was the writer Olaus Magnus who gave such celebrity to this animal, by telling a very great “story” about the creature – which, at a time when people were little studied in natural history, was readily believed. Olaus's report was, that whenever the glutton killed an animal, he was in the habit of feeding on the carcass till his belly became swelled out and tight as a drum; that then he would pass between two trees growing close together – to press the swelling inwards and ease himself – after which he would return to the carcass, again fill himself, and then back again to the trees, and so on, till he had eaten every morsel of the dead animal, whatever might have been its size! All this, of course, was mere fable; but it is not without some foundation in fact: for the *Rosomak* is, in reality, one of the greatest *gluttons* among carnivorous animals. So, too, is his cousin, the wolverene of America; as the fur trappers have had sad reasons to know – whenever the creature has come upon a store of their provisions. The name of *Glutton*, therefore, though based upon Olaus Magnus's exaggeration, is not so inappropriate.

The glutton and wolverene are, in fact, very like the common badger in their habits; except that being much larger and stronger animals, they prey upon larger game. The reindeer, and other large

quadrupeds, are often the victims of both; and it is even said that they can overcome the great elk; but this is not confirmed by the observations of any trustworthy traveller. The young of the elk, or a disabled old one, may occasionally succumb to them, but not an elk in full vigour, nor yet a reindeer, except when they can surprise the latter asleep. Their game is usually the smaller quadrupeds; and in the fur countries no animal is a greater pest to the trapper than the wolverene or glutton. A single individual will in one night visit a whole line of traps, and rob them of the captured animals – whether they be polar hares, white or blue foxes, martens, or ermine weasels.

It is this creature that is usually represented lying in wait upon the limb of a tree, and springing upon deer as they pass underneath: but this story of its habits wants confirmation.

The fur of the wolverene is one of the *staple* articles of trade of the Hudson's Bay Company; though it is more prized among the Russians than with us – who esteem it in value as next to the ermine.

The *Common*, or *European badger*, need not be here described, since it is familiar to all. The same may be said of the two American badgers, and also that of India, all three of which are very similar in habits and appearance to the common kind.

But the *African badger*, or *Ratel*, merits a word or two. It is about the size of the true badger, and ordinarily lives on small game, as badgers do; but, in addition to this, it is fond of varying its diet with a little honey. This it procures from the nests of wild bees, common throughout the whole of Africa. The account given of the mode in which it finds these nests would be incredible, were it not that we have the testimony of reverend missionaries to confirm it. It is as follows: – In Africa there is a bird – a species of cuckoo – known as the Indicator bird, or honey guide. This little creature hops from tree to tree, itself apparently in search of the bees' nests. While doing so, it utters a shrill cry; and these cries are repeated until the honey hive is found. The ratel lies in wait for this bird; and, on hearing the cry, makes towards it, and keeps following its flights till the bees' nest is found. Should this prove to be in a tree and out of reach – for the ratel is not a climber – the animal vents his chagrin by tearing at the trunk with his teeth, as if he had hopes of felling the tree. The scratches thus made on the bark serve as a guide to certain other creatures, who are also fond of honey, viz., the Kaffir hunters and Bushmen.

Should the bees' nest prove to be on the ground, or under it, the ratel soon unearths the treasure with his strong claws, and takes possession of it, regardless of the stings of the bees, against which his thick skin defends him.

The *Orison* inhabits the forests of South America, from Guiana to Paraguay. It is quite as ferocious as any of the tribe; but its smaller size hinders it from attacking large animals, and its victims are birds, agoutis, and other small rodents – against all of which it wages a war of extermination. When surprised by the hunters and their dogs, it will battle furiously till life is extinct: all the while emitting a strong disagreeable smell, after the manner of the weasels and polecats. The *Racoon*, which we have grouped with the badgers, is both a North and South American animal; dwelling in dense forests, and making its lair in the hollow of a tree. This animal is a good tree-climber, and usually takes refuge among the higher branches when pursued. It is nocturnal in its habits, but in deep shady woods it may be seen prowling about in the daylight, in search of birds and their eggs, small rodents, fish, or frogs, all of which it eats indifferently. There are several distinct species.

The *Coati* is exclusively South American. This, unlike the racoon, sleeps at night, and prowls during the day. It is also an expert tree-climber, and has a peculiarity in this respect; viz., it descends a tree *head foremost*, which no other animal of its order can do. It is equally as fierce and carnivorous as any of the badgers; and its prey, as with the *racoon*, consists of birds, their eggs, and small quadrupeds. It feeds also upon insects; and will turn over the earth with its long proboscis-like snout. When drinking it laps like the dog. In eating, it uses its fore-paws to carry the food to its mouth, though not as squirrels and monkeys do. On the contrary, it first divides the flesh, or whatever it may be, into small morsels, and then raises these to its mouth by impaling them on its claws as on a fork!

It is not a solitary animal, but prefers the society of its companions, and usually goes about in troops or gangs. Its lair, like the racoon, is the hollow of a tree.

The *Panda* of the East Indies is an animal of very similar habits. It is found chiefly along the banks of streams that descend from the mountains; and subsists upon small quadrupeds and birds – which it is able to follow to the tops of the tallest trees. Its name of Qua, or Oua, or Wha, is derived from the cry which it utters, and repeats very often; and which is well represented by any of the syllables above written.

Chapter Five. Weasels, Otters and Civets

Fortunate it is that the quadrupeds composing this group are all animals of small dimensions. Were they equal in size to lions and tigers, the human race would be in danger of total extirpation: for it is well-known that weasels are the most ferocious and bloodthirsty creatures upon the earth. None of them, however, much exceed the size of the ordinary cat: unless we include the gluttons and wolverenes among the weasels, as naturalists sometimes do, notwithstanding that these animals differ altogether from them.

The *civets*, it is true, are not usually classed with the weasels, but form a group of themselves; however, they are much more nearly related to weasels than the gluttons; and where, as in the present case, it is desirable to divide the mammalia into large groups, they will stand very well together. In truth, the civets are much nearer in resemblance to weasels than the otters are; and these two last are generally classed together – the otters being neither more nor less than water weasels.

We shall first consider the true *Weasels*: that is, the Weasels, Stoats, Ferrets, Polecats, and Martens.

The habits of most of the species are well-known; and all resemble each other in the exceeding ferocity of their disposition. It will only be necessary to say a word about their geographical distribution, and to speak of a few of the more noted kinds.

In Great Britain, five species are natives: the Pine and Beech Martens, the Stoat, the Common Weasel (which is the type of the family), and the Polecat. The Ferret is not indigenous to the country, but has been introduced from Africa, and is trained, as is well-known, for the pursuit of the rabbit – which it can follow into the very innermost recesses of its burrow. The English species of weasels are also common to other countries of Europe and Asia.

In the high northern latitudes of the Old World, we find a very celebrated species – celebrated for a long time on account of its valuable fur – the Sable. The sable is a true marten: a tree-climber, and one of the most sanguinary of weasels. An account of its habits, and of the mode of hunting it, forms one of the most interesting chapters in natural history.

An allied species inhabits the Hudson's Bay territory, known as the American sable, and another, belonging to the Japanese islands, is called the Japan sable.

The Ermine is a species equally famous; and for a like reason – the value of its beautiful white fur, so long an article of commerce. The ermine is neither more nor less than a stoat in winter dress; but there are several varieties of it – some that turn to brown in summer, while another kind retains its snow-white covering throughout all the year. The ermine is common to Europe, Asia, and North America.

The Pekan is a larger species, belonging to North America, and semi-aquatic in its habits; while the Vison, or Mink, is a large black weasel that inhabits the borders of rivers in Canada and the United States, where it preys upon fish and aquatic reptiles.

In North America there is also a very large Pine marten, so called from its habit of dwelling in the pine forests – where it climbs the trees in pursuit of birds and squirrels. This is among the largest of the weasel tribe. In California, a new species has been described under the name of the Yellow-cheeked weasel, and in Mexico another, the Black – faced; so that North America has its full complement of these sanguinary quadrupeds. Nor is the southern division of that continent without its weasels, as there is one species or more in New Granada, one in Guiana, and two or three in Chili and Peru.

In India, there is the White-cheeked weasel, Hodgson's and Horsefield's weasels; and in Nepal, the Nepal weasel, and the Cathia. Further north in Asia, there is, in Siberia, the Vomela, the Chorok,

and the Altai weasel of the Altai Mountains; and no doubt need exist that animals of the weasel tribe are to be found everywhere. Indeed, if we regard as weasels the various carnivorous quadrupeds of the glutton and badger family, which have been described elsewhere in these sketches – including the strange Teledu or Stinkard of Java, the Helietis of India and China, the Taira and Grison of Brazil, the Ratel or honey badger of Africa, the Zorille of the Cape, the Zorilla or Maikel of Patagonia, the Sand bear of India, and the numerous varieties of the celebrated Polecat, or Skunk, of North and South America – we may well say that there are weasels, or their representatives, in every hole and corner of the earth.

With regard to the Polecats of America, they form a sort of link between the weasels and civets; and although there was long supposed to be but one kind – as in the case of the opossum – it is now ascertained that there are several distinct species, with an endless list of varieties.

The *Water Weasels*, or *Otters*, are not so numerous either in species or individuals – though there are at least a dozen of them in all, and they are widely distributed over the world.

In Britain, there is but one – the Common or European otter; and in North America, a very similar species was supposed, until recently, to be the only one inhabiting that continent. The rivers of California, however, have presented us with a second, known as the Californian otter; and the singular Sea otter, whose beautiful fur is so prized under the name of Sea otter, is also an animal inhabiting the coasts of California – as it does most part of the western seaboard of the American continent.

The Grey otter is a South African animal, and in India we have the Wargul; while in the rivers of Nepaul – a country so rich in mammalia – there is the Golden brown otter. China, in common with other Indo-Chinese countries, possesses the Chinese otter; and South America has the Brazilian Contra, and in all probability several other species.

With regard to the *Civet-Weasels* – or Civet Cats, as they are commonly called – there is a still greater variety, both in genera and species: so many, indeed, that, as already stated, they have been arranged in a family by themselves. They may be regarded, however, as large weasels, distinguished from the others by their having a sort of pouch or gland under the tail, in which is secreted an unctuous and highly odorous substance. This, in some species, as in the true civets, is relished as a perfume or scent, while in others it is an extremely disagreeable odour. The true civet is a native of North Africa; where it is kept in a tame state, for the purpose of obtaining from it the well-known perfume of commerce. An allied species, the Rasse, belongs to Java – and is there also kept in cages for the same purpose – while in Asia – from Arabia to Malabar, and among the Malays and Arabs of Borneo, Macassar, and other islands of the Indian Archipelago – still another species of civet affords a similar perfumed substance.

The Aard Wolf (earth wolf) of South Africa is usually classed among the civets, but with very slight reason. It is far more like the hyena; and is certainly nothing else than a hyena.

The Delungung of Java is a creature that bears a resemblance to the civets; and may be regarded as forming a link between these and the true cats.

The Genets constitute a division of the civet-weasel tribe; and one of which there are numerous species. They are usually pretty spotted creatures, with immensely long tails; and but for their cruel and sanguinary habits would, no doubt, be favourites. They exist in South Europe; and, under different forms and appellations, extend over all Africa to Madagascar and the Cape – as well as through the countries of Southern Asia and the Asiatic islands.

The Ichneumons claim our attention next. These are celebrated animals, on account of the strange and fabulous tales related of the species known as the Egyptian ichneumon, which, among the people of Egypt, is domesticated, and was once held as a sacred animal. Besides the Egyptian ichneumon, there are several other species in Africa – one belonging to Abyssinia, and no less than six to the countries near the Cape. The Garangan of Java is an ichneumon; and so also are the Mongoos and Nyula of Nepaul; while in the Malay peninsula is a species known as the Malacca ichneumon. The Paradoxure is usually classed with the civets, though it wants the perfumed pouch; and the Suricate or

Meer-cat, of the Cape colonists, takes its station in this group. A badger-like animal of Madagascar, the Mangu, is also regarded as a civet: so, too, are the Coatis of the New World, though these last are evidently of much nearer kin to the badgers.

Perhaps the curious creature known as the Potto, or Kinkajou, has more pretensions to a place among the civets: at all events, it deserves one in the general group of the weasels.

Chapter Six. Tame Dogs

Perhaps of all other animals the dog has been the earliest and most constant companion of man. His swiftness and strength, but more especially his highly-developed power of smelling, have made him a powerful ally against the other animals; and these qualities must have attracted the attention of man at an early period – particularly in those times when the chase was, perhaps, the only pursuit of mankind.

No animal is more widely distributed over the earth. He has followed man everywhere; and wherever human society exists, there this constant and faithful attendant may be found – devoted to his master, adopting his manners, distinguishing and defending his property, and remaining attached to him even after death.

It is a question among naturalists as to what was the parent stock of the dog. Some allege that he has sprung from the wolf; others that he is a descendant of the jackal; while not a few believe that there were true wild dogs, from which the present domesticated race had their origin. These ideas are mere speculations, and not very reasonable ones either. It would not be difficult to show, that different kinds of dogs have sprung from different kinds of animals – that is, animals of the same great family – from wolves, foxes, jackals, zerdas, and even hyenas. This can be proved from the fact, that domesticated breeds among savage tribes, both in Asia and America, are undoubtedly the descendants of wolves and jackals: such, for instance, as the Esquimaux dog of the Arctic regions, the Dingo of Australia, the Indian dogs of North America – of which there are several varieties – and also one or two kinds existing in Mexico and South America.

Naturalists deny that there are any true dogs living in a wild state. This is simply an unreasonable assertion. Wild dogs of several species are to be met with in Asia and America; and if it be asserted that these originally came from a domesticated stock, the same cannot be said of the hunting dog of Southern Africa – which is neither more nor less than a *wild hound*.

Perhaps none of the animals that have submitted to the conquest of man have branched off into a greater number of varieties than this one. There are more kinds than either of horses or oxen. We shall not, therefore, attempt a description of each; but limit ourselves to speak of those breeds that are the most remarkable – or rather those with which the reader is supposed to be least familiar. To describe such varieties as the spaniel, the greyhound, the mastiff, or the terrier, would not add much to the knowledge which the English reader already possesses.

One of the most remarkable of dogs is the huge mastiff of Tibet. He is long-haired, and usually of a jet black colour. He is quite a match in size for either the Newfoundland or San Bernard breeds, and not unlike one or the other – for it may be remarked, that these in many points resemble each other.

The Tibet dog, as his name implies, is the property of the Tibetians: especially the Bhootees – the same people who own that curious species of cattle, the *Yäk*, or grunting ox, and who reside on the northern slopes of the Himalaya mountains. It may be inferred, therefore, that the Tibet dog affects a cold climate; and such is in reality the case. He cannot bear heat; and does not thrive, even in the kingdom of Nepaul. Attempts to introduce the breed into England have resulted in failure: the animals brought hither having died shortly after their arrival.

The masters of these dogs – the Bhootees, or Bhoteas, are a singular race, of a ruddy copper colour, rather short in stature, but of excellent disposition. Their clothing consists of furs and woollen cloths, adapted to the cold climate which they inhabit. The men till the ground, and keep yäks and sheep, and sometimes come down into the warm plains to trade – penetrating even to Calcutta. The women remain at home, their only protectors being these great dogs, who watch faithfully over their

villages and encampments, and fly fiercely at any stranger who may approach them. It is said that they are especially hostile to people who have a *white* face; but this disposition is also characteristic of the dogs belonging to the American Indians – and perhaps those possessed by all savages with a coloured skin.

The Dingo, or dog of Australia, is an animal domesticated among the aborigines of that country. He is a dog of wolf-like shape, who does not bark, but utters only a mournful howling. He is used by the wretched natives both for the chase and as an article of food; and is a fierce and voracious creature – not hesitating to launch himself on the larger kinds of animals. He is especially employed in hunting the kangaroo; and sometimes terrible combats occur between the dingo and the larger species of kangaroos – resulting always in the death of the latter.

The San Bernard dog, supposed to be a cross between the mastiff and shepherd's dog, is too celebrated to require a description here. His sagacity in discovering travellers amid the Alpine snows, and guiding them upon their path, is the quality upon which the fame of this dog has been founded; but it may be remarked that many of the feats attributed to him have their origin in the fertile fancies of Parisian writers.

The Esquimaux dog is another celebrated variety. He is an animal with a fox-like face and thick coat of whitish hair, generally tinged with yellow. He is to the Esquimaux a most valuable companion: trained to draw their sledges over the surface of the snow, and enabling them to make long and rapid journeys – without which these singular people would be oftentimes in danger of perishing amid the inhospitable regions they inhabit.

The Indians of North America possess two or three varieties of domesticated dogs, evidently derived from the wolves of that region. Indeed, the common Indian dogs, found among the Sioux and other northern tribes, bear so close a resemblance to the large American wolf, that they are often taken for this animal, and in consequence shot, or otherwise killed by mistake. The Indians use them for carrying burdens: their tents and tent poles being transported by these animals on long journeys across the prairies. Their flesh is a favourite article of the savage *cuisine*; but it is too costly to be used as an every-day food; and is only served up on grand festive occasions. Like the dogs of Tibet, these Indian wolf dogs have the greatest antipathy to a white skin; so much so, that even a friend in that guise can rarely obtain either their confidence or friendship.

A smaller kind than the common one is found among certain tribes, and appears to have derived its origin from the prairie wolf – the jackal of America – while the Hare Indians of the Rocky Mountains possess a third variety; and it is known that still another exists among the tribes of Russian America. This last is short-haired and smooth-coated: therefore differing altogether from the Indian dogs of the prairies.

In Mexico, there are two or three native dogs: found there on the arrival of Europeans. One is the *Alco* – a dog remarkable for a curious hunch or protuberance upon the back and shoulders, a thick short neck, and small pointed muzzle. He is thinly covered with long hair, of a yellowish colour.

Another singular variety is the dog of Chihuahua and this is, perhaps, the smallest of all canine creatures. Full-grown specimens have been seen, whose dimensions did not exceed those of the common rat; and a singular fact, well authenticated, is, that this dog, when transported from Chihuahua to any other place – even to the city of Mexico itself – invariably becomes larger, or degenerates, as the Mexicans have it! There is also in Mexico a hairless dog. It is, no doubt, the same as that known by the name of Turkish dog; since this variety came originally from Spanish America.

In South America, there are several species of native dogs, found among the savages of the Orinoco and Amazon. They are small animals, usually of a whitish colour: but their owners follow the curious practice of dyeing them with annatto, indigo, and other brilliant dyes, for the purpose of rendering them more ornamental!

We can only find space to say that there are many other varieties of domesticated dogs, almost unknown beyond the countries in which they are found. Such are the *Quao* of Rhamgur, the Sumatran

dog, the *Poull* of New Ireland, the dogs of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego – those of the South Sea Islands; and the *Waht* that inhabits some of the ranges of the Himalayas.

It is reasonable to suppose that there is not a nation upon earth, hardly a tribe – civilised or savage – that does not possess some variety of the canine race differing from all the others.

Chapter Seven.

Wild Dogs

By *Wild Dogs*, we mean not only several sorts of true dogs, that in different parts of the world are found living in a wild state; but also Wolves, Foxes, Jackals, Hyenas, and Fennecs – for all these are but dogs in a state of nature.

First, we shall speak of the true dogs living in a wild state – that is, apart from the society of man.

It is not necessary here to go into the often-debated question, as to whether dogs were originally wolves, or what species of wolf the dog is descended from. This is all mere speculation, and answers no purpose. It is just as likely that wolves sprang from dogs, as that dogs came from wolves; and every one may perceive that two breeds of the dog species are often far more unlike each other – both in appearance and habits – than a dog is to a wolf itself. Again, foxes differ only from wolves in point of size; and a small wolf is in reality a fox, while a large fox may be equally regarded as a wolf. Furthermore, the jackal is nothing else than another form of the same animal – the wolf or dog, whichever you choose to term it; and the hyenas but a still *uglier* shape of the same carnivorous creature.

With regard to the true wild dogs – which are not regarded as wolves – we find them existing in various parts of the world. They usually live in communities, and have the habit of hounds – that is, they hunt in packs. Whether they were originally dogs in a domesticated state, and have since seceded from the society of man, is a question which naturalists are unable to agree upon.

In India there are two or three kinds of wild dogs living thus. One in the Deccan – called Kolsun by the Mahratta people – is a reddish-coloured animal, nearly as large as the common European wolf. It dwells in the forests, far remote from the villages – and of course lives by preying upon other animals – just as wolves and foxes do. Again, in the forests of the Himalaya mountains there is another species of wild dog, different from that of the Deccan. It is usually known as the wild dog of Nepaul, from its being found in many parts of that kingdom. A large community of these animals is often met with in the mountain forests – living in caves, or at the bottoms of cliffs, where there are deep crevices among the boulders of loose rocks, that afford them a secure asylum when pursued by their enemies. In these places the dogs sleep, and bring forth their young; and the puppies are taught to be exceedingly wary, and not stray far from their dens during the absence of the mothers. Indeed, so cunning do they become when only a few days old, that it is difficult to capture one of them outside its impenetrable lodging-place.

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