

THE FLYING FROG.

The flying frog is a native of East India and the islands of the Sunda Archipelago. Several species of these frogs have long been known, but it was not until a few years ago that Wallace discovered that the skin connecting the toes of this frog serves not only for swimming, but for flying also. Wallace thought he had discovered an entirely new species, but subsequent researches have proved the identity of this frog with the so-called paddle frog previously known.

As will be seen from the accompanying engraving, the toes of the flying frog are very long, and are connected by a skin, which is laid in numerous folds when the animal is at rest, but which, when spread, covers a larger area than is taken up by the body and limbs of the animal. The individual captured by Wallace was altogether about four inches long. The skin between the toes of the hind feet measured four and a half square inches, while the area taken up by the extended skins of all four feet exceeded twelve square inches. The ends of the toes are provided with concave disks, the peculiar construction of which permits the frog to take a firm hold of the branches. Another peculiarity of this frog is the power to inhale and store in the body a large volume of air. By this means the body is considerably distended, and its weight, compared with its bulk, reduced. This faculty and the large surface offered by the membrane between the toes, enable the frog to fly short distances from branch to branch. In appearance the flying frog is extremely beautiful. The back and legs are of a lustrous green color; the belly and toes are yellow; the skin between the toes black and decorated by yellow stripes. With the exception of the folds in the web of the feet, the surface of the entire body is smooth.

THE FENNEC, OR SAHARA FOX.

The fennec is an inhabitant of Africa, being found in Nubia and Egypt. It is a very pretty and lively little creature, running about with much activity, and anon sitting upright and regarding the prospect with marvelous gravity. The color of the fennec is a very pale fawn, sometimes almost of a creamy whiteness. The tail is bushy, and partakes of the general color of the fur, except at the upper part of the base and the extreme tip, which are boldly marked with black.

The full grown animal is quite small, measuring scarcely more than a foot, exclusive of the bushy tail, which is about 8 inches long.

It is said that the fennec, although a carnivorous animal,

delights to feed upon various fruits, especially preferring the date. It is also said that it can climb the trunk of the date palm and procure for itself the coveted luxury.

This creature presents a strange medley of characteristics that have been a stumbling block to systematic zoologists, and it has been frequently transferred by them from one portion of the animal kingdom to another. Now, however, it



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is admitted that the fennec belongs to the genus *Vulpus*, being a congener with the various foxes of the Old and New Worlds.

Like veritable foxes, the fennec is accustomed to dwell in subterranean abodes, which it scoops in the light sandy soil of its native land. Its fur is of considerable value among the natives of the locality wherein it is found; it is said to be the warmest found in Africa, and is highly prized for that quality.

The fennec is a quaint little creature, wearing an air of precocious self-reliance that has quite a ludicrous effect in so small an animal. The color of its eyes is a beautiful blue; and the whisker hairs which decorate its face are long and thick in their texture and white in color. The fennec is identical with the fox-like animal named "zerda" by Ruppell and "cerdo" by Illiger.

KNOWLEDGE cannot be acquired without pain and application. It is troublesome, and like deep digging for pure waters; but, when once you come to the spring, it rises up to meet you.

Utility of Toads.

In our last issue we published an appeal, all the way from India, for the crow, which our farmers a little later will strive to annihilate, and, failing in that, will contrive all sorts of devices for scaring them from their fields. Now comes an appeal from our own land in behalf of the toad. A writer in the New York *Tribune* notices the fact that

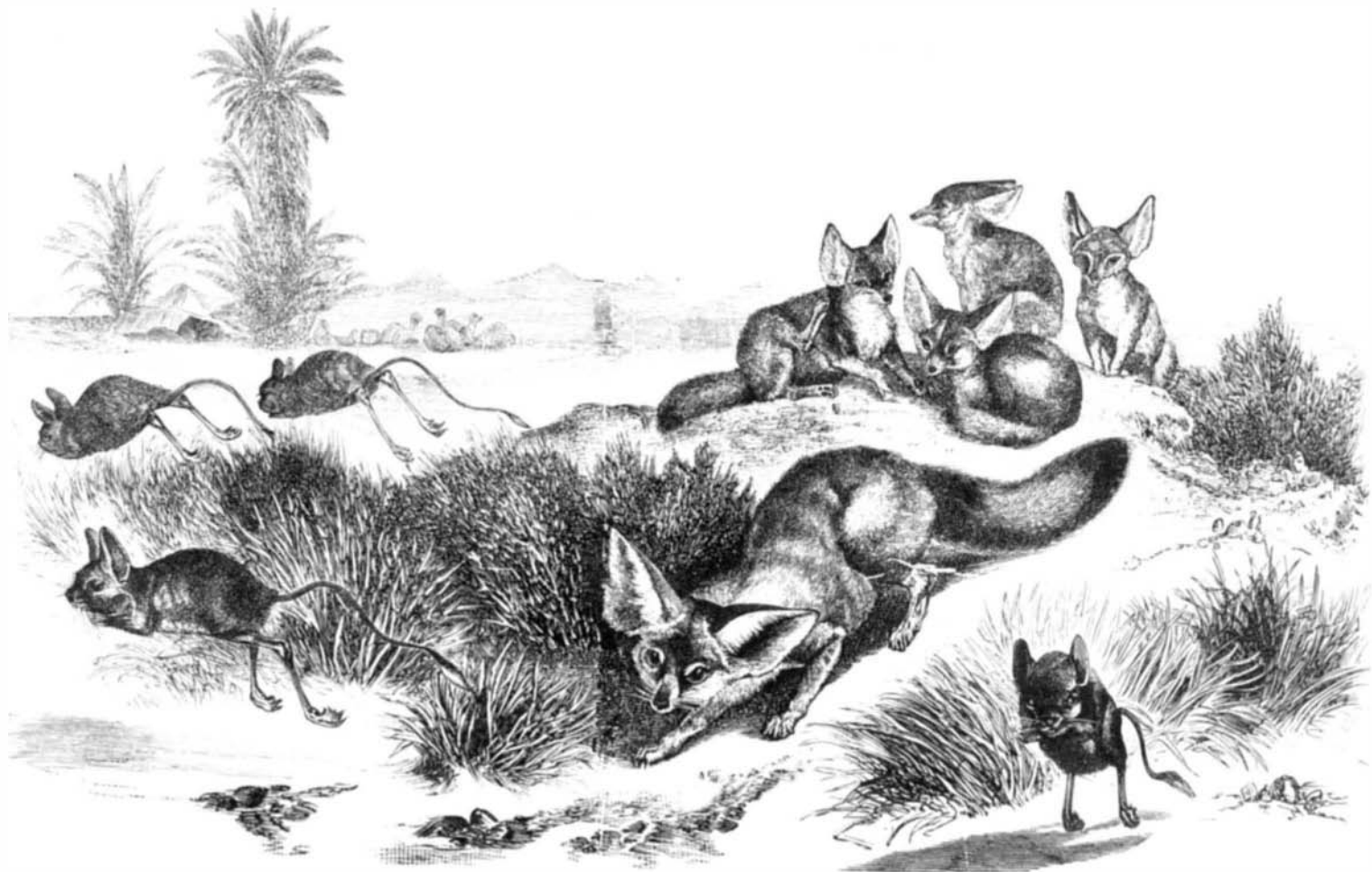
many gardeners already appreciate the valuable services of common toads for their insect-destroying propensities, and afford them protection, while as many more, perhaps, are ignorant of their usefulness. To the latter class it should be known that toads live almost wholly upon slugs, caterpillars, beetles, and other insects, making their rounds at night when the farmer is asleep—and the birds too—and the insects are supposed to be having it all their own way. English gardeners understand these facts so well that toads are purchased at so much a dozen and turned loose, and the best of it is the toads generally stay at home, so the gardener is not troubled with buying his own toads over again every few days.

The toad can be tamed, and will even learn to know its master, and come when called; the writer has not only had such pets himself, but could give other instances of toad-taming that have come under his observation. Toads can be made very useful about the house, and will do not a little good in destroying cockroaches, flies, and other household pests. They are sometimes known to eat worms, which they

grasp by the middle with their jaws, cramming in the writhing ends of the unfortunate articulates by means of their front feet. Insects are seized and conveyed to the mouth by means of the rapidly darting tongue, which always secures the victim as it is about to fly or run away.

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES.

A New Natural Order of Plants.—If not an entirely new order, at least a very anomalous member of the vegetable kingdom, has been discovered by Dr. Beccari, in New Guinea. It is described and figured in the third part of Dr. Beccari's *Malesia*. At first sight one would take it for an orchid, and on a little closer inspection one would be inclined to regard it as an orchid with six free stamens. The plant, which has been called *Corsia ornata* (the genus name in honor of the Marchese Corsi Salviati), is a brittle, straw-colored, root parasite, from 6 to 8 inches high, with a stoloniferous root emitting long fibers, and bearing scales and buds. The stems are somewhat clustered or tufted, and clothed with variable scales increasing in size upward, the upper ones sheathing at the base, and about an inch long. Each stem is unbranched,



FENNEC.—(Vulpes Zairensis.)