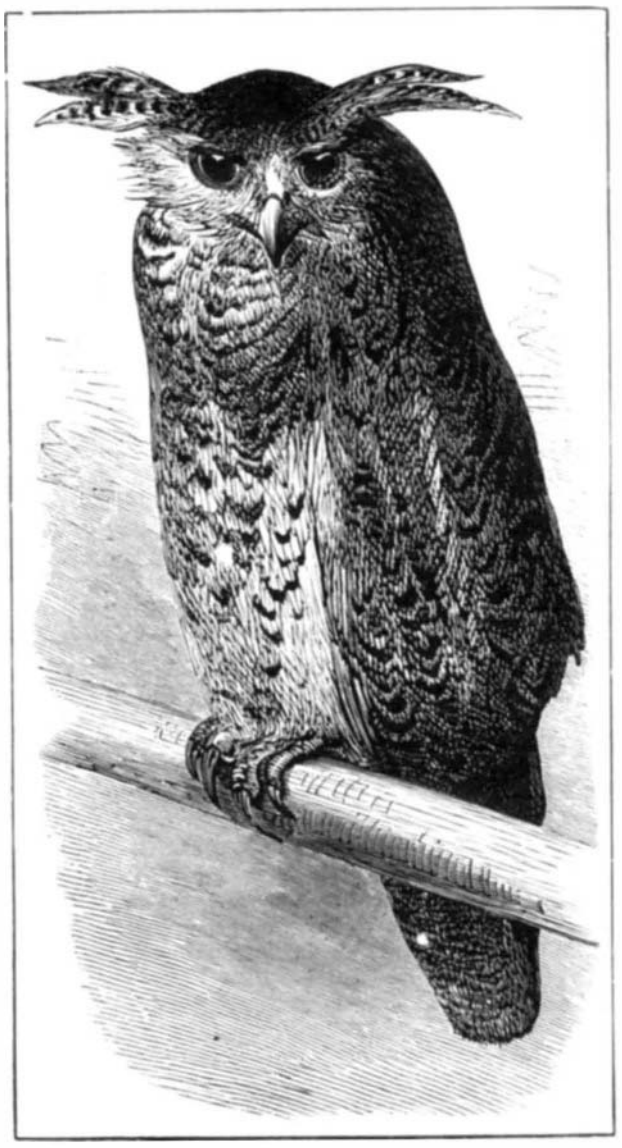
THE ORIENTAL EAGLE OWL.

Among the recent additions to the aviaries of the Zoological Society in Regent's Park is an example of the rare and little known owl of which we now give an illustration. This bird, which had not previously been received alive in Europe, was obtained in Siam by Mr. Charles Fowler, of Cheeryhinton, near Cambridge, and was presented to the Society on the 14th of last month. Its native home is said to be the forests of Karenne, in the interior of Siam. The Oriental owl belongs to the group of eagle owls, which are distinguished by their large size, and by the long tufts of feathers that spring from each side of their heads, and cause them to be commonly designated as "horned" owls. Of the habits of the species, which is found in Malacca, Java, and Borneo, as well as in Siam, little has been recorded by naturalists. But there is a closely allied species found in British India, which Jerdon, in his "Birds of India," calls the "forest eagle owl" (*Huhua Nepalensis*). Jerdon found this bird on the high forests of Malabar, where it was not very common, and was said to kill hares, various birds, cats, rats, and even fishes, and to have a low, deep, and far-sounding hoot. Other members of the group of horned owls are the great horned owl of Central Europe (*Bubo maximus*) and the Virginian owl of America (*Bubo Virginianus*), both which are also represented in the Zoological Society's collection.—*Graphic.*



THE ORIENTAL EAGLE OWL.

THE HUMPBACK WHALE.

The humpback whale, *Megaptera longimana*, is the most common representative of the mysticetes or toothless whales. It is met with in deep water all over the globe, and attains a length of from 50 to 70 feet. The fins are about 3 feet in width and 12 to 15 feet long. The tail is about 18 to 20 feet wide. In appearance it differs considerably from other members of the same family; the body is short and stout, the fore part is very thick, while the tail end is very thin, compared with the other dimensions of the body. The lower jaw is longer and wider than the upper. The back carries, at a distance from the tail end equal to about one fourth of the entire length of the animal, a fin consisting almost entirely of fat, to which the animal owes its name. Fatty growths of various form and size are also found in the center of the chin and near the shoulders. The back is lined with irregular lumps, varying in size from that of a marble to that of a man's fist. From the lower jaw twenty-five folds, of about four inches in width, extend along the neck down to the belly. These enable the animal to open its mouth very wide.

The color of the humpback varies greatly. The back is generally black, while the belly and sides are white and marbled with gray and black streaks. The fins and tail vary from a pure white to a jet black. The fins also vary greatly in form. They are sometimes long and pointed, sometimes short and thick. The tail is generally crescent shaped, but specimens have been found with short, thick tails, cut off straight at the end.

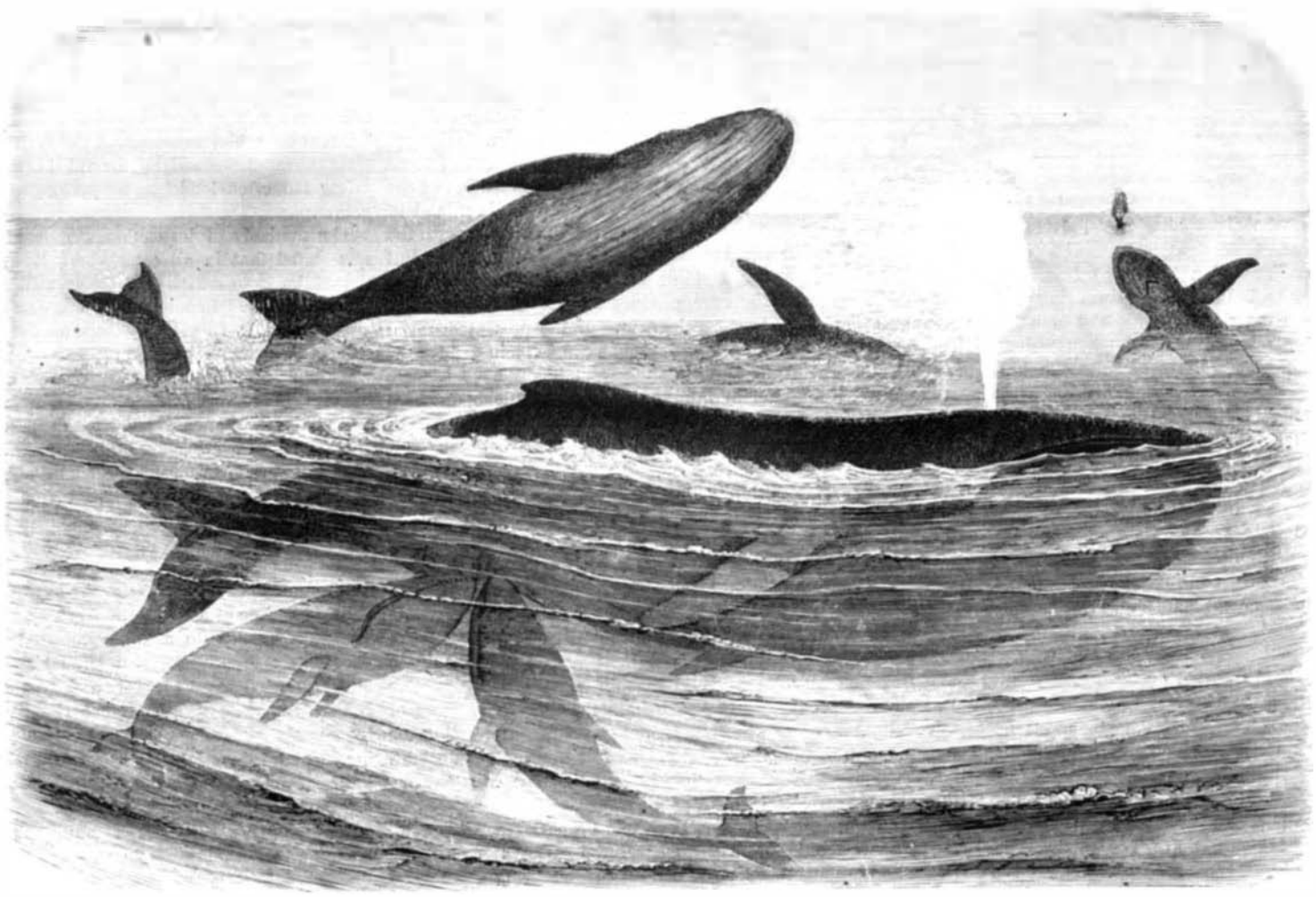
Few whales appear in larger numbers in the arctic and antarctic regions than the humpback, but it is not confined to these regions, as it is found in all latitudes. It is most probable that the polar zones are its home, and that the animals undertake annual journeys from the poles to the equator and back. They are caught in the greatest numbers on the coast of Oregon and upper California, during October and November; only a few are seen between December and April, as the animals travel from spring to December in a northerly direction, and return again between September and December.

The humpback is remarkable on account of the vivacity of its motions.

In swimming, the whole body bends together and straightens out alternately, describing an undulating line. It throws itself around in the water, swimming sometimes on the back, sometimes on the side or belly, and often it is seen to stand up vertically in the water. In fact this animal displays remarkable agility in its element, in which it seems to control its motions as perfectly as a bird in the air.

When filling its tremendous lungs it ejects, from six to twenty times in succession, a double stream of water, which rises from five to eighteen feet into the air. It feeds principally on small fish and crustaceæ.

Although the commercial value of the humpback is considerable, it is not esteemed as highly as the sperm whale or the Greenland whale, as its blubber contains considerably less oil than that of the other animals mentioned.



THE HUMPBACK WHALE.

Natural History Notes.

A Curious Case of Parasitism.—A recent number of the Bulletin of the Belgium Microscopical Society contains an account of a curious discovery made by M. Guinard, of Montpellier, of a case of parasitism on a diatom. In examining some *pinnularix* collected in cavities on the sea shore, from whence the sand had been removed for ballast, M. Guinard observed minute brown specks moving rapidly over the diatoms. Studied with an objective of a higher power, the little objects were found to be of a rectangular form, swollen in the middle, and having at each of their four angles a long hyaline appendage, which was constantly in motion. The animals were extremely agile in their movements, and were exploring every part of the frustule by means of their long, flexuous arms.

Rearing Sponges by Artificial Means.—During the past few years, Dr. Oscar Schmidt, Professor of Zoology at the University of Grätz, and a well known authority on sponges, has employed several weeks of the early summer in artificially producing and rearing the bath sponge. His labors have met with such success that his system has been adopted by the Austrian Government, and is now carried out on the coast of Dalmatia. It has for some time been a well known fact that several families of zoophytes have such great powers of reproduction, that a portion of one will grow and form on an entire new body. Dr. Schmidt has taken advantage of this property, his process being to cut the sponge into pieces, fasten each portion to a pile, and immerse it in the sea. The pieces then grow, and eventually from each one a spherical sponge is obtained. According to the estimates of Dr. Schmidt, a small piece of sponge at the end of three years will represent a value of about 10 cents. The total cost of raising 4,000 sponges, including the interest on the expended capital for three years, is estimated at $45, and the income at about $80, leaving, therefore, a net profit of $35. There is no doubt that the practice of this new branch of industry will prove a source of considerable benefit to the inhabitants of the Idrian and Dalmatian coasts.

A Toadstool with the Odor of Chlorine.—A writer in the December number of the Bulletin of the Torrey Club records his discovery of a toadstool, which was exhaling a strong odor of chlorine when found, and which has been described as a new species by Mr. C. H. Peck, under the name of *Agaricus chlorinosmus*. The writer states that "there could be no doubt that the plant was exhaling chlorine, since there is no other substance known having the same, or even a remotely similar odor." From this he draws the inference that the "chlorine was taken up from the soil by the plant, in the form of a chloride, most probably the chloride of ammonium, or possibly of sodium." As a comment on this the editor of the Bulletin calls attention to the fact that the Californian eschscholtzia is well known to have a colorless juice but with the odor of hydrochloric acid; yet this juice, on being tested, has been found to give not even a trace of chlorine, and "perhaps the same result will appear in the case of the new agaric."

The odors of different fungi, like those of flowering plants, are almost as numerous and varied as the species themselves. *Peziza venosa*, when fresh, is remarkable for a strong scent like that of nitric acid; *Agaricus odorus* and *A. fragrans* have an anise-like odor; some species of toadstools have exactly the odor of garlic acid; one has the scent of ripe nectarines; two or three smell like melilot; others like fresh meal; others like putrescent flesh; while almost all have a peculiar scent which has come to be called a "fungoid odor;" it is