

**NATURAL HISTORY,  
FOR INFANT  
SCHOOLS, PART II**

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Natural History, for Infant Schools, Part II by Various

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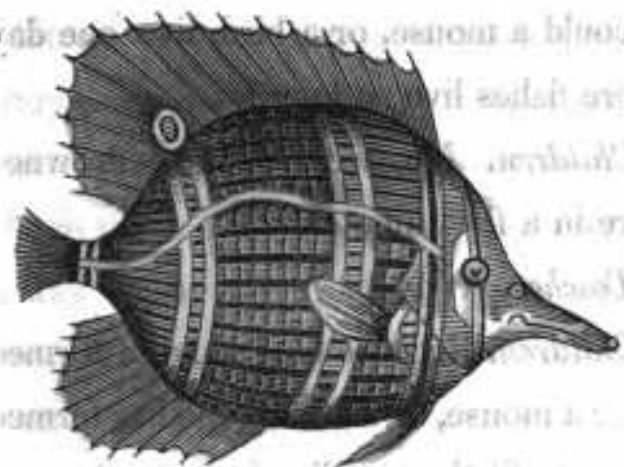
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**VARIOUS**

**NATURAL HISTORY,  
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# NATURAL HISTORY.



## FISHES.

**Teacher.** To which class of animals do fishes belong?

**Children.** To the fourth class.

**Teacher.** Where do fishes live?

**Children.** Some live in seas, some in rivers and lakes, and some in small streams and ponds.

**Teacher.** Fishes live a long time; some

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have lived an hundred years. Could you, or could a mouse, or a bird, live one day where fishes live so long ?

*Children.* No, we would be drowned there in a few minutes.

*Teacher.* Why ?

*Children.* Because God has not formed us, or a mouse, or a bird, as he has formed fishes, to fit them to live in water.

*Teacher.* One night a little mouse, in hunting for something to eat, tried to run along the edge of a basin which had water in it ; but down the poor mouse fell into the water, and could not get out again. Can you think how it managed to keep itself from being drowned ?

*Children.* No.

*Teacher.* When it felt that the water

was deep enough to cover its head, it fixed itself on its hind legs, so as to keep its body upright; and then, placing its two fore feet under its chin, it held its head above the water for three hours. When it was taken out of the water, it was so tired, it could scarcely move, but was soon rested, and ran away quite lively. How do you think that little mouse could know that it was not made like a fish, and so would die if its head was in water?

*Children.* God taught it to know that.

*Teacher.* The wise and good Creator of animals fits each kind for the place in which he chooses that kind shall live, and gives to each what we call *instinct*. The little mouse had not *reason*, so it could not have learned, as you, who have *reason* can, the

difference between itself and a fish; but God directed it by the *instinct* he had given to it, how to do what would save its life. Do you know if a fish has bones?

*Children.* Yes, it has bones.

*Teacher.* The bones of a fish are strong, though softer than the bones of other animals, and some fishes have only cartilage, that is, gristle, instead of bones. Of what shape are fishes?

*Children.* They are not all shaped alike.

*Teacher.* No, but most of them are



larger in the middle than towards the head and tail. Look at the picture of a fish, and you will understand what I say.



That shape suits best for moving fast in water. Most fishes have large mouths, and a great many teeth. Where are your teeth fixed?

*Children.* In our jaws.

*Teacher.* Some fishes have as many as two hundred teeth fixed not only in the jaws, but on the roof of the mouth, and all over the tongue. Some are shaped like a sugar loaf, some like a wedge, some like a hook, and some are as fine as the bristles of a brush. A fish, called a Chetoden, has such fine teeth; look at the picture of it on the first page, and tell me what does its round mouth look like?

*Children.* Like the bill of a bird.

*Teacher.* It is a pretty fish, with brown bands, edged with white. It lives in the

seas of India. Insects are its food. When it is hungry, it swims to the top of the water, where insects are flying about, and from its long, round mouth, it shoots a drop of water, so as to reach an insect, and bring it down with the drop into its mouth, where the bristling teeth hold it fast. How does a Chetoden know in what way it must use its mouth, which is so different from other fishes ?

*Children.* God chooses it shall eat insects, and gives it the right kind of mouth to catch them with, and teaches it how to use that mouth.

*Teacher.* Fishes have not as much instinct as some other animals have ; but when they begin to live, God gives them as much as they need have, so that the

youngest knows as well as the oldest does, how to do every thing that a fish need do ; but it does not know any thing else. Can a fish see ?

*Children.* Yes, a fish has eyes.

*Teacher.* The eyes of a fish are fixed deep in its head, and are formed for seeing well in water. A fish has not eyelids, to move up and down, but some have along the eye a fine skin, which falls like a veil when the fish has need to cover his eyes. A fish, called an Eel, God chooses shall work its head into mud and sand, to get insects and worms to eat ; so he kindly forms its eyes with a thin horny cover over each, which serves to keep out the sand, and for spectacles, to see through. Most fishes have their eyes on the sides