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CHAPTER LIV.

Of divers certain Animals, and other things, which have a Signification in Auguries.

ALL the Auspicia, or auspices, which first happen in the beginning of any enterprise are to be taken notice of. As, if in the beginning of thy work thou shalt perceive that rats have gnawn thy garments, desist from thy undertakings. If going forth thou shalt stumble at the threshold, or if in the way thou shalt dash thy foot against any thing, forbear thy journey. If any ill omen happen in the beginning of thy business, put off thy undertakings, lest thy intentions be wholly frustrated, or accomplished to no purpose, but expect and wait for a fortunate hour for the dispatching of thy affairs with a better omen. We see that many animals are, by a natural power imbred in them, prophetic. Doth not the cock by his crowing diligently tell you the hours of the night and morning, and, with his wings spread forth, chase away the lion? Many birds, with their singing and chattering, and flies, by their sharp pricking, foretell rain; and dolphins, by their often leaping above the water, warn of tempests. It would be too long to relate all the passages which the Phrygians, Cilicians, Arabians, Umbrians, Tuscians, and other peoples, which follow the auguries, have learned by birds. These they have proved by many experiments and examples. For in all things the Oracles of things to come are hid, but those are the chiefest which omenal birds shall foretell. These are those which the poets relate were turned from men into birds. Therefore, what the daw declares, hearken unto and mark, observing her setting as she sits; and her manner of flying, whether on the right hand or left; whether clamorous or silent; whether she goes before or follows after; whether she

waits for the approach of him that passeth by, or flies from him, and which way she goes. All these things must be diligently observed. Orus Apollo saith in his Hieroglyphics that daws that are twins signify marriage, because this bird brings forth two eggs, out of which male and female must be brought forth; but if, which seldom happens, two males be generated, or two females, the males will not go with any other females, nor females with any other males, but will always live without a mate, and solitary. Therefore they that meet a single daw, divine thereby that they shall live a single life. The same also doth a black hen pigeon betoken, for after the death of her mate, she always lives single. Thou shalt, also, as carefully observe crows, which are as significant as daws, yea, and in greater matters. It was Epictetus the Stoics' philosopher's judgment, who was a sage author, that if a crow did croak over against any one, it did betoken some evil, either to his body, fortune, honor, wife, or children. Then thou shall take heed to swans, who foreknow the secrets of the waters, for their cheerfulness doth presage happy events not only to mariners, but all other travelers, unless they be overcome by the coming over of a stronger bird, as of an eagle, who, by the most potent majesty of her sovereignty, makes null the predictions of all other birds if she speaks to the contrary; for she flies higher than all other birds, and is of more acute sight, and is never excluded from the secrets of Jupiter; she portends advancement and victory, but by blood, because she drinks no water but blood. An eagle flying over the Locresians, fighting against the Crotoniensians, gave them victory; an eagle setting herself unawares upon the target of Hiero, going forth to the first war, betokened that he should be king. Two eagles sitting all day upon the house at the birth of Alexander, of

Macedonia, did portend to him an omen of two kingdoms, viz., Asia and Europe. An eagle, also, taking off the hat of Lucias Tarquinius Priscus, son to Demaratus the Corinthian (and, by reason of some discord, being come into Hetraria and going to Rome) and then flying high with it, and afterwards putting it upon his head again, did portend to him the kingdom of the Romans. Vultures signify difficulty, hardness, and ravenousness, which was verified in the beginning of the building of cities. Also they foretell the places of slaughter, coming seven days beforehand; and because they have most respect to that place where the greatest slaughter shall be, as if they gaped after the greatest number of the slain, therefore the ancient kings were wont to send out spies to take notice what place the vultures had most respect to. The phoenix promiseth singular good success, which being seen anew, Rome was built very auspiciously. The pelican, because she hazards herself for her young, signifies that a man should, out of the zeal of his love, undergo much hardship. The painted bird gave the name to the city of Pictavia, and foreshowed the lenity of that people by its color and voice. The heron is an augury of hard things. The stork also is a bird of concord and makes concord. Cranes gives us notice of the treachery of enemies. The bird cacupha betokens gratitude, for she alone doth express love to her dam, being spent with old age. On the contrary, the hippopotamus, that kills his dam, doth betoken ingratitude for good turns, also injustice. The bird origis is most envious, and betokens envy.

Amongst the smaller birds, the pie is talkative and foretells guests. The bird albanellus flying by anyone, if from the left to the right, betokens cheerfulness of entertainment; if contrarywise, betokens the contrary. The screech owl is always unlucky, so also is the horn

owl, who, because she goes to her young by night, unawares, as death comes unawares, is therefore said to foretell death; yet, sometimes, because she is not blind in the dark of the night, doth betoken diligence and watchfulness, which she made good when she sat upon the spear of Hiero. And Dido, when she saw the unlucky owl, pitied Æneas, whence the poet sang:

*The Owl, sitting on top of the house alone,
Sends forth her sad complaints with mournful tone.*

And in another place,

*The slothful Owl by mortals is esteemed
A fatal omen —*

The same bird sang in the capitol when the Roman affairs were low at Numantia and when Fregelia was pulled down for a conspiracy made against the Romans. Almadel says that owls and night-ravens, when they turn aside to strange countries, or houses, betoken the death of the men of that country and those houses, for those birds are delighted with dead carcasses and perceive them beforehand. For men that are dying have a near affinity with dead carcasses. The hawk is also a foreteller of contention, as Naso sings:

*We hate the Hawk, because that arms amongst
She always lives —*

Lelius, the ambassador of Pompey, was slain in Spain, amongst the purveyors, which misfortune, a hawk flying over the head, is said to foretell. And Almadel saith that these kinds of birds fighting amongst themselves, signify the change of a kingdom; but if birds of another kind shall fight with them and are never seen to come together again, it portends a new condition and state of that country. Also, little birds, by their coming to or departing from, foreshew

that a family shall be increased or lessened; and their flight, by how much the more serene it is, by so much the more laudable shall the change be. Whence did Melampus, the Augure, conjecture at the slaughter of the Greeks by the flight of little birds, when he saith: "Thou see now that no bird takes his flight in fair weather." Swallows, because when they are dying they provide a place of safety for their young, do portend a great patrimony or legacy after the death of friends. A bat, meeting any one running away, signifies an evasion; for, although she have no wings, yet she flies. A sparrow is a bad omen to one that runs away, for she flies from the hawk and makes haste to the owl, where she is in as great danger; yet in love she is fortunate, for being stirred up with affection she seeks her consort hourly. Bees are a good omen to kings, for they signify an obsequious people. Flies signify importunity and impudence because being oftentimes driven away they do continually return. Also domestic birds are not without some auguries, for cocks, by their crowing, promote hope, and the journey of him that is undertaking it. Moreover, Livia, the mother of Tiberius, when she was great with him, took a hen's egg and hatched it in her bosom, and at length came forth a cock chick with a great comb, which the auguries interpreted that the child that should be born of her should be a king. And Cicero writes that at Thebais, cocks, by their crowing all night, did presage that the Bæotians would obtain victory against the Lacedæmonians, and the reason is according to the augury's interpretations because that bird when he is beaten is silent, but when he himself hath overcome, crows. In like manner, also, omens of events are taken from beasts. For the meeting of a weasel is ominous; also, the meeting of a hare is an ill omen to a traveler, unless she be taken. A mule also

is bad because barren. A hog is pernicious, for such is his nature, and therefore signifies pernicious men. A horse betokens quarrelings and fightings, whence Anchises, seeing of white horses, cries out in Virgil:

With war are Horses arm'd, yea, threaten war.

But when they are joined together in a chariot, because they draw with an equal yoke, they signify that peace is to be hoped for. An ass is an unprofitable creature, yet did Marius good, who, when he was pronounced an enemy to his country, saw an ass disdain provender that was offered to him, and running to the water, by which augury he, supposing he saw a way of safety showed to him, entreated the aid of his friends that they would convey him to the sea, which being granted, he was set into a little ship and so escaped the threats of Silla the conqueror. If the foal of an ass meet any one going to an augury, he signifies labor, patience and hinderances. A wolf meeting any one is a good sign, the effect whereof was seen in Hiero of Sicilia, from whom a wolf, snatching away a book whilst he was at school, confirmed to him the success of the kingdom, but yet the wolf makes him speechless whom he sees first. A wolf rent in pieces a watchman of P. Africanus and C. Fulvius at Minturn, when the Roman army was overcome by the fugitives in Sicilia. He signifies perfidious men, such as you can give no credit to, which was known in the progeny of Romans. For the faith which they long since sucked from their mother the wolf and kept to themselves from the beginning, as by a certain law of nature, passed over to their posterity. To meet a lion, seeing she is amongst animals the strongest and striking terror into all the rest, is good. But for a woman to meet a lioness is bad, because she hinders conception, for a lioness brings forth but once. To

meet sheep and goats is good. It is read in the Ostentarian of the Tuscians, if this animal shall wear any unusual color, it portends to the emperor plenty of all things, together with much happiness. Whence Virgil to Pollio sings thus:

*But, in the meadows, Rams shall scarlet bear,
And changing, sometimes golden fleeces wear.*

It is good also to meet oxen treading out corn, but better to meet them plowing, which although breaking the way, hinder thy journey, yet by the favor of their Auspiciu will recompense thee again. A dog in a journey is fortunate, because Cyrus, being cast into the woods, was nourished by a dog until he came to the kingdom; which, also, the angel, companion of Tobit, did not scorn as a companion. The castor, because he biteth himself sorely, so as to be seen by hunters, is an ill omen and portends that a man will injure himself. Also, amongst small animals, mice signify danger, for the same day that they did gnaw gold in the capitol, both the consuls were intercepted by Hannibal by way of ambush, near Tarentum. The locust making a stand in any place, or burning the place, hinders one from their wishes and is an ill omen; and on the contrary the grasshopper promotes a journey and foretells a good event of things. The spider weaving a line downwards, is said to signify hope of money to come. Also the ants, because they know how to provide for themselves, and to prepare safe nests for themselves, portend security and riches, and a great army. Hence, when the ants had devoured a tame dragon of Tiberius Cæsar, it was advised that he should take heed of the tumult of a multitude. If a snake meet thee, take heed of an ill-tongued enemy; for this creature hath no power but in his mouth. A snake creeping into the palace of Tiberius, portended

his fall. Two snakes were found in the bed of Sempronius Gracchus, wherefore a soothsayer told him, if he would let the male or the female escape, either he or his wife would shortly die; and he, preferring the life of his wife, killed the male and let the female go, and within a few days he died. So a viper signifies lewd women and wicked children; and an eel signifies a man displeased with everybody, for she lives apart from all other fishes, nor is ever found in the company of any. But, amongst all Auguries and Omens, there is none more effectual and potent than man himself, and none that doth signify the truth more clearly. Thou shalt, therefore, diligently note and observe the condition of the man that meeteth thee, his age, profession, station, stature, gesture, motion, exercise, complexion, habit, name, words, speech, and all such like things. For seeing there are in all other animals so many discoveries of presages, without all question these are more efficacious and clear which are infused into man's soul; which Tully himself testifies, saying, that there is a certain Auspiciu[m] naturally in men's souls of their eternity, for the knowing of the courses and causes of things. In the foundation of the city of Rome the head of a man was found with his whole face, which did presage the greatness of the empire, and gave the name to the Mountain of the Capitol. The Brutian soldiers fighting against Octavius and Antonius, found an Æthiopian in the gate of their castle, and though they slew him as a presage of ill success, yet they were unfortunate in battle, and both their generals, Brutus and Cassius, were slain.

The meeting of monks is commonly accounted an ill omen, and so much the rather if it be early in the morning, because these kind of men live for the most by the sudden death of men, as vultures do by slaughters.

CHAPTER LV.

*How Auspicias are Verified by the Light of Natural Instinct,
and of some Rules of Finding of It Out.*

AUSPICIA and Auguria, which foretell things to come by animals and birds, Orpheus, the divine, himself, as we read, did teach and show first of all, which afterwards were had in great esteem with all nations. Now they are verified by the light of natural instinct, as if from this some lights of divination may descend upon four-footed beasts, those winged, and other creatures, by which they are able to presage to us of the events of things; which Virgil seems to be sensible of when he sings:

*Nor think I Heaven on them such knowledge states,
Nor that their prudence is above the Fates.*

Now, this Instinct of Nature, as saith William of Paris, is more sublime than all human apprehension, and very near, and most like to prophecy. By this instinct there is a certain wonderful light of divination in some animals naturally, as is manifested in some dogs, who know thieves by this instinct and men that are hid, unknown both to themselves and men, and find them out and apprehend them, falling upon them with a full mouth. By the like instinct vultures foresee future slaughters in battles, and gather together into places where they shall be, as if they foresaw the flesh of dead carcasses. By the same instinct partridges know their dam, whom they never saw, and leave the partridge which stole away her dam's eggs and sate upon them. By the same instinct, also, certain hurtful and terrible things are perceived, the soul being ignorant of them. whence terror and horror ceaseth when men think nothing of these things. So a thief, lying hid in a house although no one knows

or thinks of his being there, strikes fear and terror and a troublesomeness of mind into the inhabitants of that house, although, haply, not of all, because the brightness of this instinct is not common to all men, yet possessed of some of them. So an evil person, being hid in some large building, is sometimes perceived to be there by some one that is altogether ignorant of their being there. It is mentioned in history that Heraiscus, a certain Egyptian, a man of a divine nature, could discern evil persons, not only by his eyes but also by their voice, he hearing them afar off, and thereupon did fall into a most grievous headache. William of Paris also makes mention of a certain woman in his time that, by the same instinct, perceived a man whom she loved coming two miles off. He relates, also, that in his time a certain stork was convicted of unchastity by the smell of the male, who, being judged guilty by a multitude of storks whom the male gathered together, discovering to them the fault of his mate, was, her feathers being pulled off, torn in pieces by them. The same doth Varro, Aristotle and Pliny relate concerning horses. And Pliny makes mention of a certain serpent, called the asp, that did such a like thing, for she, coming to a certain man's table in Egypt, was there daily fed, and she, having brought forth some young, by one of which a son of her host was killed, after she knew of it, killed that young one, and would never return to that house any more. Now, by these examples, you see, how the lights of presage may descend upon some animals, as signs, or marks of things, and are set in their gesture, motion, voice, flying, going, meat, color, and such like. For, according to the doctrine of the Platonists, there is a certain power put into inferior things by which, for the most part, they agree with the superiors; whence also the tacit consents of animals seem to agree with

divine bodies, and their bodies and affections to be affected with their powers, by the name of which they are ascribed to the deities. We must consider, therefore, what animals are Saturnine, what are Jovial and what Martial, and so of the rest; and, according to their properties, to draw forth their presages; so those birds which resemble Saturn and Mars, are all of them called terrible and deadly, as the screech owl, the hawlet, and others which we have mentioned before; also the horn owl, because she is a Saturnine, solitary bird, also nightly, and is reputed to be most unfortunately ominous, of which the poet saith:

*The ugly Owl, which no bird well resents,
Foretells misfortunes and most sad events.*

But the swan is a delicious bird, under Venus, and dedicated to Phœbus, and is said to be most happy in her presages, especially in the auspices of mariners, for she is never drowned in water, whence Ovid sings:

*Most happy is the cheerful, singing Swan
In her presages —*

There are also some birds that presage with their mouth and singing, as the crow, pie, and daw, whence Virgil:

*— This did foreshow
Oft from the hollow holm that ominous Crow.*

Now, the birds that portend future things by their flying are, viz., buzzards, the bone-breakers, vultures, eagles, cranes, swans, and the like, for they are to be considered in their flying, whether they fly slowly or swiftly; whether to the right hand or to the left; how many fly together. Upon this account, if cranes fly apace, they signify a tempest; and, when slowly, fair weather. When two eagles fly together, they are said

to portend evil, because two is a number of confusion. In like manner thou shalt enquire into the reason of the rest, as this is shown by number. Moreover, it belongs to an artist to observe a similitude in these conjectures, as in Virgil, Venus, dissembling, teacheth her son, Æneas, in these verses:

— *All this is not for naught,
Else me in vain my parents Augury taught;
Lo! twice six Swans in a glad company
Jove's bird pursued through the etherial Sky
In Heaven's broad tracks; now earth in a long train
They seem to take, or taken, to disdain;
As they return with sounding wings they sport,
And Heaven surrounding in a long consort.
Just so, I say, thy friends and fleet have gained
The port, or with full sails the Bay obtained.*

Most wonderful is that kind of auguring of theirs, who hear and understand the speeches of animals, in which, as amongst the ancients, Melampus, Tirefias, Thales, and Apollonius, the Tyanean, who, as we read, excelled, and whom, they report, had excellent skill in the language of birds; of whom Philostratus and Porphyrius speak, saying, that of old, when Apollonius sat in company amongst his friends, seeing sparrows sitting upon a tree, and one sparrow coming from elsewhere unto them, making a great chattering and noise, and then flying away, all the rest following him, he said to his companions that that sparrow told the rest that an ass, being burdened with wheat, fell down in a hole near the city and that the wheat was scattered upon the ground. Many, being much moved with these words, went to see, and so it was, as Apollonius said, at which they much wondered. Porphyrius, the Platonist, in his third book of sacrifices, saith that there is certainly a swallow language, because every voice

of every animal is significative of some passion of its soul, as joy, sadness, or anger, or the like, which voices, it is not so wonderful a thing, could be understood by men conversant about them. But Democritus himself declared this art, as saith Pliny, by naming the birds, of whose blood mixed together was produced a serpent, of which whosoever did eat should understand the voices of birds. And Hermes saith that if any one shall go forth to catch birds on a certain day of the Kalends of November, and shall boil the first bird that he catcheth with the heart of a fox, that all that shall eat of this bird shall understand the voices of birds and all other animals. Also, the Arabians say that they can understand the meaning of brutes who shall eat the heart and liver of a dragon. Proclus, also, the Platonist, believed and wrote that the heart of a mole conduceth to presages. There were also divinations and auspices which were taken from the inwards of sacrifices, the inventor whereof was Tages, of whom Lucan sang:

*And if the Inwards have no credit gained,
And if this Art by Tages was but feigned.*

The Roman religion thought that the liver was the head of the inwards. Hence the soothsayers enquiring after future things in the inwards, did first look into the liver, in which were two heads, whereof the one was called the head for the city, the other for the enemy; and the heads of this, or another part, being compared together, they then gave judgment and pronounced for victory; as we read, in Lucan, that the inwards did signify the slaughter of Pompey's men and the victory of Cæsar's, according to these verses:

*In the inwards all defects are ominous—
One part and branch of the entrails doth increase,*

*Another part is weak, and flagging lies,
Beats, and moves with quick pulse the arteries.*

Then, the bowels being finished, they search the heart. Now, if there were a sacrifice found without a heart, or a head was wanting in the liver, these were deadly presages, and were called *piacularia*. Also, if a sacrifice fled from the altar, or, being smitten, made a lowing, or fell upon any part of his body than he ought to do, it was the like ominous. We read that when Julius Cæsar on a day went forth to procession with his purple robe, and sitting in a golden chair and sacrificing, there was twice a heart wanting. When C. Marius Utica was sacrificing, there was wanting a liver. Also when Caius, the prince, and M. Marcellus, C. Claudius and L. Petellius Coss, were offering sacrifices, that the liver was consumed suddenly away and, not long after, one of them died of a disease, another was slain by men of Lyguria, the entrails foretelling so much; which was thought to be done by the power of the Gods, or help of the devil. Hence it was accounted a thing of great concernment amongst the ancients as oft as any thing unusual was found in the inwards, as when Sylla was sacrificing at Laurentum, the figure of a crown appeared in the head of the liver, which Posthumius, the soothsayer, interpreted to portend a victory with a kingdom, and therefore advised that Sylla should eat those entrails himself. The color, also, of the inwards is to be considered. Of these Lucan made mention:

*Struck at the color Prophets were with fear,
For with foul spots pale entrails tinged were.
Both black and blue, with specks of sprinkled blood
They were —*

There was in times past such a venerable esteem of these arts that the most potent and wise men sought

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