XII. Singular instance of the attachment of birds of prey to their young

M. Cronstedt

To cite this article: M. Cronstedt (1799) XII. Singular instance of the attachment of birds of prey to their young, Philosophical Magazine Series 1, 3:10, 176-177, DOI: [10.1080/14786449908676979](https://doi.org/10.1080/14786449908676979)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14786449908676979>

Published online: 18 May 2009.

Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

Article views: 2

View related articles [↗](#)

XII. *Singular Instance of the Attachment of Birds of Prey to their Young.* By M. CRONSTEDT. From New Transactions of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, Vol. X.

MR. Cronstedt resided several years on a farm in Sudermania, near a steep mountain, on the summit of which two eagle-owls (*Strix bubo* L) had their nest. One day, in the month of July, one of the young owls having quitted the nest was caught by some of his servants. This bird, considering the season of the year, was well feathered; but the down appeared here and there between those feathers which had not yet attained their full growth. After it was caught, it was shut up in a large hen-coop, and next morning M. Cronstedt found a young partridge lying dead before the door of the coop. He immediately concluded that this provision had been brought thither by the old owls, which no doubt had been making search in the night-time for the lost young one, and might have been led to the place of its confinement by its cry. This turned out to have been actually the case; for M. Cronstedt found that the same mark of attention was repeated every night for fourteen days. The game which the old ones carried to it consisted chiefly of young partridges, for the most part newly killed, but sometimes a little spoiled. One time a moor-fowl was brought to the young owl, so fresh that it was still warm under the wings: a putrid stinking lamb was also brought. M. Cronstedt supposes that the spoiled flesh had already lain a long time in the nest of the old owls, and that they brought it merely because they had no better provision at the time. He and his servant tried to watch several nights, in order that they might observe through a window when this supply was deposited; but their plan did not succeed, and it would appear that these owls, which are very sharp-sighted, had discovered the moment when the window was not watched, as food was found to have been deposited for the young before the

the

the coop that very night. In the month of August this care ceased ; but that period is exactly the time when all birds of prey abandon their young to their own exertions. It may be readily concluded, from this instance, how much game must be destroyed by a pair of these owls during the time that they rear their young. This observation is applicable to the whole race of owls, in general ; and these may be considered therefore as the most destructive of all the birds of prey. As the eatable-birds of the forest repair chiefly in the night-time to the fields, they are particularly exposed to the acute sight, smell, and claws of these birds of the night ; and even the swift-footed hare seldom escapes them.

XIII. *A short View of the Mitchillian Theory of Fever, and of Contagious Diseases in general.*

CERTAIN exhalations from marshes and swamps, and from collections of putrefying vegetable and animal substances, induce diseases attended with different degrees of malignity, according to circumstances. There is a great similarity at least in the diseases induced by the exhalations from marshes and from putrefying substances: it ought to be so ; for the noxious quality of the former is in consequence of their containing the latter ; and hence such diseases, though improperly, have been called putrid.

What is the peculiar substance, or what the substances in these exhalations that cause what are termed contagious diseases ? What the mode of action ? Animal and many vegetable substances, especially those which contain gluten, give similar products when decomposed by the putrefactive process.

Can hydrogen gas be the deleterious product ? No—its base combined with different substances makes a great part of our aliment : with carbon it forms fat—with oxygen,