

characters, vindicate its claim to be placed in the present Order.\*

Another species belonging to it descends to still lower food, and like the bee-eater,† devours bees and wasps and other insects, I allude to the *bee-falcon*;‡ but in general the aquiline race attack vertebrated animals, reptiles, fishes, and birds of every wing, and many quadrupeds, and the giant vultures satiate their ravenous appetites upon any carcasses that their piercing sight, from the great heights to which they ascend, can discover. Humboldt says, that the Condor§ soars to the height of Chimborazo, an elevation almost six times greater than that at which the clouds that overshadow our plains are suspended.||

In the book of Deuteronomy we have a very animated and beautiful allusion to the eagle, and her method of exciting her eaglets to attempt their first flight, in that sublime and highly mystic composition called Moses' Song; in which Jehovah's care of his people, and methods of instructing them how to aim at and attain heavenly objects, are compared to her proceedings upon that occasion. *As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so Jehovah alone did lead him.* The Hebrew lawgiver is speaking of their leaving their eyrie. Sir H. Davy had an opportunity of witnessing the proceedings of an eagle after they had left it. He thus describes them:—

“I once saw a very interesting sight above one of the crags of Ben Nevis, as I was going on the 20th of August in the pursuit of black game. Two parent eagles were teaching their offspring, two young birds, the manœuvres of flight. They began by rising from the top of a mountain

\* Règne An. i. 339.

† *Merops apiaster.*

‡ *Pternis apivorus.*

§ *Sarcorhamphus Gryphus.*

|| Zool. i. 29. See above, p. 115.