

and unnatural, as to devour their offspring themselves.

Young cats are gay, sprightly, and full of frolic, and would be very good amusement for children if nothing was to be feared from their claws. Their play however, though always light and agreeable, is never innocent, and soon turns into habitual mischief. As they can only exert their talents on small animals, they watch birds, mice, and rats with the greatest patience, which they seize with avidity, and without being taught, become more expert hunters than the best instructed dogs. Their dispositions being naturally averse to all restraint, they are incapable of a regular education; we are told however that the Greek monks of Cyprus* taught cats to hunt and destroy the serpents with which that island was infested; but perhaps this hunting was more from their natural inclination to destroy than from obedience, for they take great delight in watching, attacking and destroying all feeble animals without distinction, as birds, young rabbits, leverets, rats, mice, bats, moles, frogs, toads, lizards, and serpents. They are without docility, and their scent, which in the dog is so eminent a quality, is very indifferent, and therefore they

* Description of the Islands of the Archipelago. By Dapper' p. 51.