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William Swainson
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Until the nineteenth century, the investigation of natural phenomena, plants and animals was considered either the preserve of elite scholars or a pastime for the leisured upper classes. As increasing academic rigour and systematisation was brought to the study of 'natural history', its sub-disciplines were adopted into university curricula, and learned societies (such as the London Zoological Society, founded in 1826) were established to support research in these areas. These developments are reflected in the books reissued in this series, which describe the anatomy and characteristics of animals ranging from invertebrates to polar bears, fish to birds, in habitats from Arctic North America to the tropical forests of Malaysia. By the middle of the nineteenth century, this work and developments in research on fossils had resulted in the formulation of the theory of evolution.

Taxidermy

First published in 1840 as a volume in the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* – a series published between 1830 and 1844, intended for the self-educating middle class – this work was written by the naturalist and artist William Swainson (1789–1855). The first part is a treatise on taxidermy, showcasing methods of Victorian science that may appear gruesome to modern readers. It discusses the best ways to collect, preserve and present animals for scientific study. Swainson gives detailed advice, making allowances for naturalists working in different locations and searching for a range of species. The directions for skinning and mounting animals are not for the faint-hearted, but they offer a fascinating insight into the practices of the time. The work's second part is a zoological bibliography, with short biographies of notable authors. Zoological painters and engravers, such as Thomas Bewick (1753–1828), are also featured.

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WITH THE
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AND NOTICES OF THEIR WORKS.
By
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