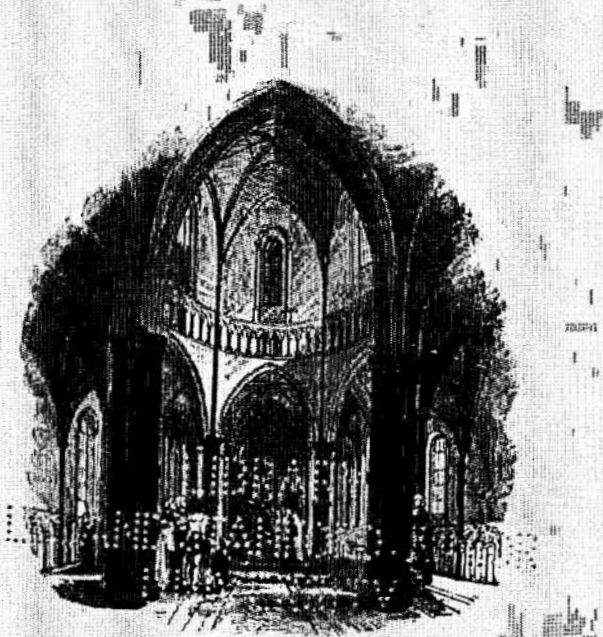


L O N D O N .

EDITED BY CHARLES KNIGHT.

VOLUME V.



Interior of the Temple Church.

LONDON :
HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

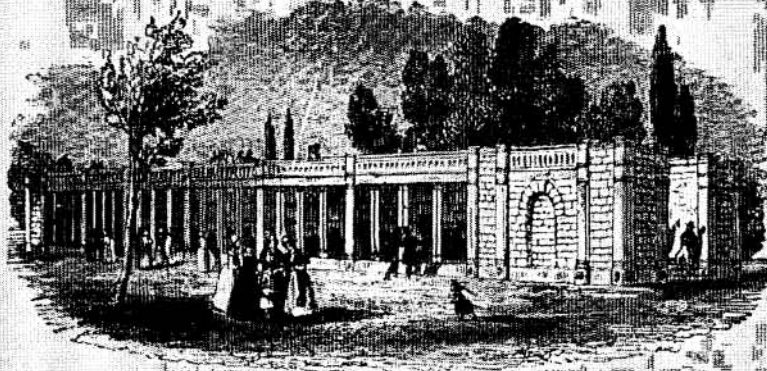
1851.

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THE NAMES OF THE AUTHORS OF EACH PAPER.

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[The Carnivora Terrace, now in course of erection.]

CXVII.—THE GARDENS OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

If one were desired to name the most delightful lounge in the metropolis, difficult as the task of selection might seem to be amidst so many attractive spots, the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park must, we think, be the chosen place. Equally suited to the young and the old, the solitary and the gregarious, the cheerful and the melancholy, the ignorant and the learned, all are here sure of enjoyment at least, and it will be strange indeed if instruction, in some shape or other, does not follow. Pacing its broad terrace-walks, or winding about among its leafy passages, here idly pausing to glance at some newly-blown flower, there (where the unoccupied seat woos us) at some picturesque combination of tall waving trees, reflected with all their restless lights and shadows in the clear waters of the little lake at their feet, like a second green world below; leaning now against the parapet of the bridge over the tunnel to gaze on the comparatively comprehensive view of the demesne thence obtained, with the mounts, and dells, and islands, and lawns, and parterres, and rustic habitations so harmoniously intermingled; and, now, descending to the stern-looking depths beneath, where, with the carriages of fashionable London rolling incessantly over your head at the distance of but a few feet, you may imagine, without any great exertion of the fancy, that you have accidentally wandered into the remote subterranean habitation of some hermit, who, in this gloom, finds his eyes more naturally turn their glance inwards to the contemplation of his own nature, to whom this deep silence is dear, since it enables him the better to hear the voice of his own heart;—thus or similarly occupied, we might saunter through the

mity he has enjoyed ; but he certainly looks " every inch a king " of the animal tribes.

Near the Repository is a long range of kennels, for a most complete and valuable collection of dogs, who are at present enjoying the air at the length of their tethers in front. Here are the watch-dogs from Thibet, the Grecian greyhound, the Persian sheep-dog, Spanish bloodhounds, a dog from the Celestial Empire, a Spanish mastiff, the famous dog of Mount St. Bernard (of which so many romantic stories are told, in relation to its services to travellers and others lost in the snows of those Alpine regions), Australian and Newfoundland dogs, &c. Our way now lies through a long and narrow leafy avenue, the extremity of which is lost in the distant foliage, and from which we turn off to the ostrich-house, where at present are kept a pair of nyl-ghaus, the largest and most magnificent of antelopes, and whose strength is commensurate with their appearance. Their temper, unfortunately, is none of the best, and woe to that animal who, meeting them in their own dense Indian forests, shall be the object of their wrath, as they bend their fore-knees, and advance in that position to the spot from whence they make their tremendous spring. The wapiti deer (the ass of his family, both in stupidity and voice, which is not unlike the bray) is still grander in his appearance than the nyl-ghau antelope, his common height being four feet and a half at the shoulder, or a foot higher than the common stag. This deer is kept in the building, with a dark passage running through the centre, before incidentally alluded to, which lies still farther westward (the direction we have been pursuing), with other deer, the elephant, the Brahmin bull and cows (most interesting animals), and a Cape buffalo, which, unlike the lion, carries, as it were, written upon his visage and entire appearance, a most suggestive history of ferocity and irresistible violence. That solid mass of horn covering his forehead, like a broad band rising toward the centre into a kind of double hemispherical shape, must make his head impregnable, a perfect battering-ram, whenever it shall please him so to use it. And many are the stories told by Thunberg, Bruce, and other travellers, showing that the buffalo has not the smallest indisposition to do so with or without provocation. The elephant-house is the next object of attraction, in which we find the stupendous Indian elephant, and that comparatively rare animal in England, the one-horned, or Indian rhinoceros—the original, no doubt, of the popular unicorn. The horn of the animal here is merely a bony protuberance over his nose, in consequence of his habit of rubbing it against the sides of the cage ; in other respects it is one of the largest and finest animals of the kind ever exhibited in England. The horn is shown in its natural state in the following engraving. A curious trait of this animal—a portion, no doubt, of those natural instincts given to it for its defence in its ordinary state of life—is its liability to excitement from hearing any unusual noise. When in the yard at the back, the sound of the roller on an adjoining walk has made it rush towards the fence in that direction with great violence, and rear itself up. Considering its alleged hostility to the elephant, the juxtaposition here is curious ; and has led, through accident, to a very striking disproof of the notion. One day the rhinoceros got into the elephant's apartment, and so far from quarrelling, the two seem to have made a sudden and eternal friendship. One



[Rhinoceros, from the specimen in the Gardens.]

of the most entertaining things in the Gardens is to see the two enjoying a bath in their pond in the spacious court-yard behind, or to see, what we ourselves missed on our visit, but has been described by others, how quiet the rhinoceros will stand whilst his great friend scrubs his back with his trunk, and occasionally gratifies himself by a sly pull at his tail, to make the rhinoceros turn his head, if his attention be taken off by visitors.

We are now approaching the extremity of the Gardens, where, completely embosomed in the green-wood, are various buildings scattered about, as that for the peccary sties, where are two of the most interesting of the swine family—the famous wild boar of our royal and noble hunters, for killing which a Saxon lost his eyes, under the rule of the Conqueror—and the collared peccary, from South America—really a beautiful little pig, with slender delicate legs and feet, intelligent aspect, and particularly clean appearance. Here also are the houses of the superintendent and head keeper; the former having one of its rooms devoted to the reception of a variety of small tender quadrupeds, as the flying opossum, the brown coati-mundi, the golden agouti, porcupine, Indian tiger-cat, jerboas, &c. &c. And, lastly, a remarkably lofty building appears before us, with an enclosed yard on the left, where the trees, fenced to a most unusual height, and with a projecting guard at the top of each fence, seems to imply we have got among some creatures from the scene of Swift's geographical discoveries—that mysterious land of Brobdingnag, which not all British skill, and capital, and enterprise, have yet been able to find the way to. And when we do get within the building, and behold the scene shown in our engraving, when we perceive it is the giraffe-house and park that we have been gazing on, it is difficult to resist the impression, that these most beautiful and delicate, but, to the very eyes that behold them, almost incredibly tall creatures cannot belong to any part of our planet with which we have been hitherto familiar. There are now four here; two adult males and one female, and one young one born in the Gardens, and enjoying, we are happy to say, excellent health. The female also is again with