

THE TREE BRITON.



A Home Friend and Evening Companion.

VOLUME I.

“TRUTH IS STRONG, AND MUST PREVAIL.”

“The Purity of the Press the Safeguard of Society.”

LONDON:
WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH, 24, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
PARTRIDGE AND OAKEY, 34, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
HANBURY AND CO., 79, EDGWARE ROAD;
MILAND'S LIBRARY, 35, CHAPEL STREET, BELGRAVE SQUARE
NEWLING, LIVERPOOL; BEILBY, BIRMINGHAM; HARRISON, LEEDS; C. A. JOHNSON, BRIGHTON;
CURRY, BRISTOL; CURRY AND CO., DUBLIN; PATON AND RITCHIE, EDINBURGH
AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1851.

THE TRUE BRITON.

A Home Friend, and Evening Companion.

TRUTH IS STRONG, AND MUST PREVAIL.

No. 6.]

MARCH 15, 1851.

[Price 1d.

CONTENTS.

Visits to the Zoological Gardens (the Rhinoceros). No. VI.—A Chapter on Glass.—Lucy Bredinfield. Part VI.—Retirement.—Poetry.—The Flitting (concluded).—The Treasury.—Our Scrap Book.—Observations on Incendiarism.—Ballad.

Opinions of the Press on "The True Briton" since No. V. was issued.

"A cheap and, at the same time, a good periodical has long been wanting. . . . 'The True Briton' holds out a hopeful promise, and from what we can judge of the little already published, we have every confidence in recommending it to our readers."—*Lynn Advertiser*.

"A praiseworthy vehicle of instruction, in a popular form."—*The Weekly Times*.

"A neatly printed publication. . . . The Queen, the Church, Religion, the Lords, the Commons, and all will be maintained by its advocates."—*Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News*.

"The literary talents of the contributors are publicly known, and the soundness of the judgment of the editor fully displayed in the management of the work. We strongly recommend this cheap publication to universal patronage."—*Kentish Gazette*.

"It bids fair to receive, as it well merits, a liberal support from the public. . . . It is well got up in every respect, and the names of its contributors, and the articles that have already appeared, give promise of a valuable addition to cheap literature. . . . We heartily welcome the appearance of this 'Home Friend and Evening Companion,' and recommend all to secure in it a really valuable little library."—*Cheltenham Examiner*.

"It is well written, containing articles calculated to cherish sound principles and good taste."—*Weekly Chronicle*.

"An apparently successful attempt to offer to the public a cheap, attractive, and beneficially instructive, 1d. periodical. It is sure to do good."—*Sussex Express and Surrey Standard (Second Notice)*.

"THE PURITY OF THE PRESS, THE SAFEGUARD OF SOCIETY."

LONDON:

WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH, 24, PATERNOSTER-RROW;

MIDLAND'S LIBRARY, 35, CHAPEL-STREET, BELGRAVE-SQUARE;

KENNEDY, EDINBURGH; W. CURRY AND CO., DUBLIN; AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

MACINTOSH, PRINTER, GREAT NEW-STREET, LONDON.

THE TRUE BRITON.

VISITS TO THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

No. VI.

BY "A BROTHER OF THE QUILL."

THE RHINOCEROS.

IN our visits to the gardens of the Zoological Society, we had so frequently passed and repassed the rhinoceros that we began at last to look upon him quite in the light of an old friend.

Time was when he was an object of much interest, and in the zenith of his popularity, he received with the greatest affability the caresses of visitors, whom he graciously permitted to rub his nose, stroke his hideous face, and even minutely to investigate the curious folds of the leathern coat, called by courtesy his skin; happily he departed this life ere the fickle tide of public favour had turned. For fifteen years a favoured guest of the Zoological Society, it would have been hard indeed had he lived to see himself supplanted, by his great rival, the hippopotamus. The severe winter of 1849 and 1850, brought on inflammation of the lungs, which terminated fatally: ascribed to the damp and fog arising from the canal near his dwelling, and accelerated perhaps by the fact of one of his ribs being broken, from which accident a pressure, most injurious to those tender organs may have arisen. This fracture was not discovered till after death had ensued, and was brought to light by a *post mortem* examination of the animal's remains; and could only be accounted for by the supposition, that the bone had been snapped in twain, by the weight of the unwieldy beast himself, in laying heavily down to rest.

Many writers affirm that the rhinoceros is the natural-born enemy of the elephant, to whom he often gives battle. Buffon, however, expresses a doubt whether there is any truthful foundation for these alleged combats, as in captivity no sort of antipathy has been observed to exist between them; and he declares that the rhinoceros neither fears the larger animals nor molests the smaller, but, having no taste for flesh, lives at peace with all.

Certainly, the most amicable relations subsisted between these beasts in the Zoological Gardens; the larger enclosure, containing a huge tank of water, deep enough to afford a capacious and luxurious bath for both, was common property, though the precaution was observed of never allowing them to occupy it at the same time. When it was the elephant's turn for recreation in this said paddock, or play-ground, the rhinoceros would generally appear in the small space railed off in front of his

lodging-house, and old Jack, the elephant, would thrust his trunk through the iron railing between them, and softly stroke and tickle the ears of his compatriot, occasionally bestowing a sharp pull on his tail, which practical joke was taken in very good part by the other, who would frisk about in an ungainly, clumsy manner, and return the compliment, by gently taking the elephant's trunk between his muscular flexible lips, bestowing on it a caress which varied between a sly nibble and an affectionate kiss.

The following amusing account of the rhinoceros' first bath, extracted from "Leaves from the Note-book of a Naturalist," induces us to opine that the rhinoceros did not profit much by the wisdom of his friend the elephant, who exhibits in all circumstances of difficulty the most sagacious wisdom: not so the rhinoceros, who,—partaking more of the nature of the hog,—without intellect, and without sentiment, though docile enough, is considered perfectly unstructable:—

"The rhinoceros walked in well enough, down the gradual descent, and when he got out of his depth swam boldly to the opposite extremity. Once there, however, he seemed to have no idea of the possibility of returning, but remained plunging, and making fruitless efforts to get out over the raised stone coping, while he was in the deep water, where the wall went sheer down, and there was no foothold. It was rather a nervous time for those who witnessed the violent and ungainly efforts of the brute; for it was feared he would then and there tire himself out, and sink exhausted. At last, when almost overcome by his useless toil, he was half forced, half coaxed round, and when his head was turned towards the entrance, he swam thither till he found a footing, and then walked out."

Buffon remarks the acute sense of hearing bestowed upon this beast, and the continued attention with which he hearkens to any unusually loud sound. Mr. Thompson, whom we have quoted above says, that

"The noise of the roller, when the gardeners were rolling the gravel walk, had the most exciting effect upon him; the moment he heard the noise he would rush down the enclosure till he was brought up by the strong iron railing, which those who witnessed these paroxysms fancied must go down like reeds before him."

He also tells us that on one occasion the animal did effect his escape, but was guiltless of any mischief, beyond "terminating his ramblings" with a *pas seul* in a bed of scarlet geraniums, where his capture being effected he passively submitted to be led back to his place of confinement.

The old rhinoceros dead, he was succeeded by a young female, purchased by the Society, of the same species, "Indicus," or of Asiatic origin. She was installed in the same quarters occupied by her pre-

decessor, and appears to be possessed of a like phlegmatic and peaceable temperament.

During the past summer we had not bestowed on her more than a cursory glance, as she stood winking and blinking in the sunny enclosure before her dwelling; but we compensated for former neglect by visiting her one cold winter's day, when she occupied more seasonable quarters. She was beguiling her time by taking an afternoon nap, and though she pricked up her ears in answer to the familiar "Betsey, Betsey," of her keeper, she did not think fit to arise from her snug bed of straw, till he resorted to the expedient of turning the tap which supplied her drinking-trough with water. No sooner did she hear the trickling sound than she was up in an instant, instinct perhaps reminding her of her birth-place on the river banks, the rhinoceros generally inhabiting the vicinity of some large stream or damp marshy tract of country.

The first rhinoceros ever seen in England was sent from Bengal, in 1739. Although but two years old, the expenses of his voyage and of his food amounted to nearly 1,000*l*. His daily rations consisted of seven pounds of rice, mixed with three of sugar, a great quantity of hay and green grass, to the last of which he gave the preference; his consumption of water was enormous, as he drank a great quantity at once. He was of a quiet disposition, and allowed his keeper to touch him on all parts of his body; but if he were struck, or even when assailed by very moderate pangs of hunger, he would become unruly, and in either case would refuse to be pacified, without a peace offering, in the shape of something to eat. When angry he would leap forward with impetuosity, to a great height, striking the walls furiously with his head, which he did with prodigious quickness, notwithstanding his heavy appearance.

The rhinoceros is found in many parts of Asia and Africa; those we have mentioned were natives of the first-mentioned quarter of the globe, but we do not despair of seeing one or more specimens of the African rhinoceros in these gardens, since the zeal of Mr. Murray, our Consul at Cairo, and of Mr. Mitchell, the Secretary of the Society, has succeeded in overcoming the thousand and one difficulties they had to contend with, in procuring and bringing over to this country the far-famed Hippopotamus.

Four varieties are found in South Africa only—the Borète, or common black rhinoceros—the Keitloa, or two-horned black rhinoceros—the Muchocho, or common white rhinoceros; and Koboba, or long-horned whiterhinoceros: and though difficult, nay almost impossible, as it is by the most lengthy description, to convey to the minds of our readers an accurate idea of the peculiar form and shape of this most wonderful of gigantic

"Lachyderms," still, with Mr. Cumming's vivid narration before us, we will do our best to point out some of the most striking features in the appearance of this animal.

Second to the elephant only in strength, power, and magnitude, he is at least twelve feet in length, from the extremity of the snout to the tail, six or seven feet in height, and the circumference of his body is very nearly equal to his altitude. Like the elephant in bulk, he does not present nearly so striking an appearance, from his legs being so much shorter in proportion to those of that noble quadruped. His head is large, and of a very peculiar shape, as the upper jaw projects above the lower, and the upper-lip, which may be extended six or seven inches, is muscular and flexible, and calculated by its strength and dexterity to rank almost with the trunk of the elephant, as the sharp edge with which it is terminated enables the rhinoceros to gather branches of trees, grass, and the like, and divide them into handfuls with equal facility.

The Asiatic rhinoceros is of a dark slate colour, while the African varieties are either black or white; delighting to roll and wallow in mud, their rugged hides are generally encrusted therewith. The skin, which is so thick and hard that he cannot contract it, being folded by the skillful hand of Providence in large wrinkles on the neck, shoulders, and haunches, to facilitate the movements of the legs, which are massive, and supported by huge feet, divided into three great claws. So nearly impenetrable is it that he does not feel the sting of flies, and this stout leathern cuirass defies even the bullets of the hunter, unless they have been previously hardened by solder.

The eye is small and sparkling, and so situated that the animal can only see what is in a direct line before him. His ears exactly resemble those of a pig, but are larger in proportion to his body, and in repose he lazily flaps them to and fro after the manner of his said prototype. His tail is insignificant-looking, and the tip adorned with a tuft of hard wiry bristles.

But his most striking feature and weapon of offence and defence is a very hard horn, solid throughout, which, unconnected with the skull, is attached to the skin immediately above the nose. That of the black rhinoceros seldom exceeds eighteen inches in length, while that of the common white measures, on an average, from two to three feet, and points backwards. The anterior horn of the rarer species of the last-named colour often exceeds four feet in length, inclining forwards from the nose. The posterior horn of either species is never more than six or seven inches long. It is capable of a very high polish, and cups made of the horn of the white rhinoceros are much valued by the Indian princes, under the erroneous idea that

if any poisonous fluid is put therein the liquor will ferment and overflow the brim.

Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are extremely fierce and dangerous, rushing headlong and unprovoked at any object which attracts their attention, and so swift are they that a well-mounted horseman can very rarely overtake them. The flesh of this kind is tough, and not much esteemed, even by the hungry natives of Africa. The white are of a milder and more inoffensive disposition, and much inferior in speed to their darker brethren; they attain an enormous size, their heads being a foot longer than that of the Borète; feeding solely on grass they carry much fat, and their flesh is excellent.

Unlike the elephant they never associate in herds, but are met with singly or in pairs, but Mr. Cumming adds, that,—

“In districts where they are abundant from three to six may be found in company, and I once saw upwards of a dozen congregated together on some young grass, but such an occurrence is rare.”

The calf, when born, is not much larger than a Newfoundland dog. One authority states that a rhinoceros has not attained “half his growth when two years old,” and Buffon remarks, that “it is probable that this animal lives, like men, seventy or eighty years.”

The rhinoceros hitherto has been almost universally allowed to be the animal alluded to by Job, xxxix. 9, 10, 11; but the greatest hunter of the day, from whom we have quoted largely, though he inclines to this popular belief, also mentions that the one of the brute creation most resembling the fabulous representatives of the unicorn, is

—“the Oryx, or Gemsbok, the most beautiful and remarkable of the Antelope tribe. Its long straight horns, when seen *en profile*, so exactly covering one another as to give the appearance of one. It possesses the erect mane, long sweeping black tail, and general appearance of the horse, with the head and hoofs of an antelope.”

This seems almost conclusive, but our limits forbid our entering on a further discussion of this knotty point, which, we doubt not, will ere long be more ably treated of, and decided on by one or other of the distinguished naturalists of the day.

A CHAPTER ON GLASS.

By C. LE GRAND.

THE interest excited at the present moment by the rapid erection of the “Crystal Palace,” designed for the forthcoming exhibition of the produce of industry of all nations, induces us to believe that a few words on the history and origin of glass may not be unwelcome to our readers.

Composed chiefly of sand and salt, glass is an article of which we can scarcely exaggerate the value, for now that it has become so indispensable to our daily comfort, business, and pleasure, we are apt to forget, while we are in the enjoyment of this luxury, that the time is not long passed away since its use was so rare amongst us, that even the palaces of our sovereigns could not boast of glass windows, far less could the mansions and cottages of their subjects. Thus it is with all benefits which have become necessary and habitual to us.

It was not till the thirteenth or fourteenth century that glass came into common use in England. Pages might be filled with conjectures as to the reasons for the long period that elapsed after the first discovery of this ornamental and useful article, and the time when it came into general use; for that it was known and employed among the ancients there can be no doubt.

Tradition states, on the authority of Pliny, that on the shores of Galilee, 3000 years ago, the crew of a merchant vessel, driven to land by adverse winds, first perceived on the spot on the sands where their fire had been kindled, a transparent and beautiful substance, which much excited their surprise and admiration. They had in their vessels a cargo of nitre or saltpetre, and, for the convenience of cooking, they had placed some lumps of this in their fire to support their kettles and saucepans, and this mixed with the glittering sands of the beach of the Holy Land, and formed the glass. This sand has since been found to be peculiarly adapted to the formation of glass, which seems to give rather more than a shadow of truth to Pliny's story. It is also confirmed by a fact, which we learn from history that the cities of Tyre and Sidon each contained a glass house, and the account of these buildings is the first record of glass having been converted to a practical use. The Egyptians certainly were acquainted with it, for many of the mummies of Egypt are adorned with glass-beads, and in the days of the Roman Emperor, Adrian, the city of Alexandria could boast of a glass manufactory. Of course, the more civilized Romans were not long without possessing themselves of this substance as an ornament at least; among the ruins of Herculaneum, fragments of glass have been found, and the Emperor Nero is said to have given an immense sum for two drinking cups of this material. However, the Romans do not seem to have made any advances in the manufacture of glass, probably conceiving that a substance composed of such cheap materials, so easily obtained, and moreover of so brittle a nature, was not worth the trouble of introducing into more general use. To their magnificent ideas, gold and silver were more fitting materials of which to form drinking-cups and other vessels.

We learn, nevertheless, from an anecdote of the Emperor Tiberius, that the artificers of Rome had not ceased to test the qualities of glass, in hopes of discovering some mode of preparing it by which it should be rendered less fragile, fully expecting that by perseverance it would be proved, that, like those precious metals, it would, when properly fused, become *malleable*, or capable of bearing a hammer. After infinite labour an artisan constructed a vase of this *malleable* glass, and presented it to the Emperor Tiberius, who, to test its worth, flung it with violence to the ground. The vase