

AT WHAT TIME IN LIFE DOES AN ANIMAL GROW OLD?

WHEN is an animal old? That question has occurred to many New Yorkers since the killing, at the Central Park Menagerie the other day, of two old and infirm hyenas by order of the S. P. C. A. Investigation of the subject shows that there is an astonishing dissimilarity among the ages attained by the various kinds of denizens of earth, air, and water. Whereas a certain kind of sea anemone is wasting away from old age when it has lived a few seconds, a turtle or an elephant, if report be true, can live several centuries without suffering any particular inconvenience.

At the Bronx Park Zoo there are scarcely any old animals, because when the Zoo was established, some fifteen years ago, practically all the animals placed in it were young stock. Therefore the patriarchs of the place would be looked down upon as mere children by really old animals—such, for instance, as those under the care of Head Keeper "Bill" Snyder at the Central Park Menagerie.

However, there is a turtle at the Bronx Zoo which has all the Snyder oldsters of the Central Park Zoo beaten.

"He was here when the Bronx was a wilderness, several hundred years ago," declares Curator Ditmars solemnly, "and he'll probably be here when airship trains are discharging their passengers at the gates of Bronx Park."

The patriarchs of the Central Park Menagerie are Smiles, the six-thousand-dollar rhinoceros; Jewel, the elephant; Whitey, the albino buffalo, and Miss Murphy, the hippopotamus.

Jewel, according to Head Keeper Snyder, is easily 65 years old. He first made her acquaintance when both she and he were with the Barnum & Bailey show. Jewel joined the Central Park outfit in 1897.

Smiles, the two-horned rhinoceros, who daily attracts crowds of children and grown-ups about his cage, was brought to this country in 1873, at the age of 3 years. In spite of his tender age at that time, he already knew considerable of the world, having twice toured Australia as a member of a circus. In this country Smiles had thirteen years' additional circus experience. Then he was bought for Central Park, and his strenuous days were over.

Whitey, the buffalo, was a star attraction with the Barnum & Bailey show for years. He shows no signs of infirmity, though he is reputed to be 40 years old.

"The oldest animal I ever had anything to do with," Head Keeper Snyder told a TIMES man, "was Gyp, an elephant which is still one of the drawing cards in the Ringling Brothers circus. I figure that Gyp is between 100 and 125 years old. The Ringlings got her from the Barnum people, who had exhibited her for many years. Gyp is so old that her trunk is partially paralyzed, and she has to throw her head back every time she eats. Whenever a new elephant must be tamed Gyp is hitched to it, and soon teaches the newcomer the circus rules."

"Outside of that Gyp only does very light work nowadays. She's the gentlest elephant I ever saw."

Before the Christian era men had the idea that elephants were astonishingly long-lived animals. It is perfectly true that the elephant often reaches a green old age, but not quite so green as was supposed by writers of ancient times. Some of the latter stated that elephants could live to be 500 years old. Strabo cites the case of one which reached the

respectable age of 300 years, which was set down by Pliny also as the maximum age which prosocidians could attain. But another writer, Philostrates, went Strabo and Pliny one better. He asserted that an elephant belonging to King Porus not only lived long enough to become a great favorite with that monarch, but actually survived its royal master for four solid centuries!

Aristotle declared 200 years to be the highest age which an elephant could reach. He gave their ordinary span of life as between 120 and 200 years. Buffon also placed the maximum at 200; Flourens made it 150 and De Blainville 120. It is pretty generally believed among those who have made a study of the question that elephants frequently live to be 100 years old.

At the Paris Zoological Gardens there was an elephant called Chevette, presented, full-grown, by Mehemet Ali in 1825, which lived in captivity till 1855. The rhinoceros, too, has been known to

The Killing of Two Aged Hyenas in Central Park Raises the Question, with Interesting Results.

garding horses which have reached a much greater total of years. One, belonging to a Bishop of Metz, is said to have been 40 years old when it died.

And there is a story about an English army horse, which died in 1753, having lived 35 years after being struck by a bullet. What makes this case all the more extraordinary is that the bullet was not extracted until after the animal's death.

A Shetland pony, it is said, lived to the age of 42 years; a Welsh pony to that of 60. Donkeys are supposed to be long-lived in their wild state, but when do-

hung about its neck a small piece of metal with the date 1820 inscribed on it.

It is, of course, practically impossible to find out how long fish may live when at liberty to disport themselves at their own free will in their native element, but, judging from some recorded cases of longevity, they may with reason claim to be genuine sea-going Methuselahs.

One of the most amazing "fish stories" ever handed down concerns a pike captured in the fifteenth century in a pond near Heilbronn, Germany. On this fish, it is related, was found a ring bearing this inscription:

supposed to have been caught in the River Meuse in 1610, which bore a small piece of metal inscribed "1448." If the date is to be believed, that Meuse pike was 162 years old when captured.

Buffon reported having seen a carp over 150 years old in a pond belonging to the Comte de Maurepas—nor was he the only scientist who said he had gazed upon that venerable old patriarch. And Pliny declares that, in Caesar's reservoir at Postilippo, Italy, there was a fish which lived over 60 years in captivity. Another writer claims that a salmon can live 100 years.

Galapagos Islands, have occurred there for a century.

One story relates that a tortoise in the Governor's garden at the Cape of Good Hope had been there for eighty years, and was believed to be 200 years old. A specimen at the London Zoo is thought to be 150 years of age. Then, a legend to the effect that land tortoises often reach a century or more is told in Norfolk, England, and, in the Natural History Museum at London, there is a painting purporting to show a tortoise 237 years old.

In the library of the Bishop's Palace at Lambeth, England, there was kept at one time the shell of a big tortoise which was said to have lived at the residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury from 1623 to 1730. Another, at the Bishop's Palace at Fulham, was reputed to have resided there from 1625 to 1753.

Nor is that the end of wonderful turtle yarns emanating from Bishops' palaces. In the archives of the Cathedral of Peterborough there is a document telling about

the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope, and taken by an Indian ship to England, which wore a gold collar inscribed:

"This goodie hawk doth belong to his Most Excellent Majesty James, King of England. A. D. 1610."

If this bird really escaped from England in the reign of James, 183 years elapsed between its escape and its recapture, and it had flown a distance of 8,500 miles away from its former home.

Buffon speaks of a raven 180 years old, and there is a veracious tale of a falcon, which, according to an inscription on a ring which it wore, had lived 162 years. At a swannery near Abbotsbury, Dorsetshire, England, there was a mute swan said to be 150 years old.

Prominent among long-lived birds are parrots and paroquets. Lankester tells of a specimen of the latter, belonging to a noble Florentine family, which was 120 years old, and had been in the family for a century; also of a parrot which reached the same advanced age, and had been handed down as a pet in one family for 80 years.

The hero of another paroquet story is said to have lived 93 years. It lost its memory at 60, its sight at 80. One cockatoo lived 81 years; two others, respectively, 72 and 50 years.

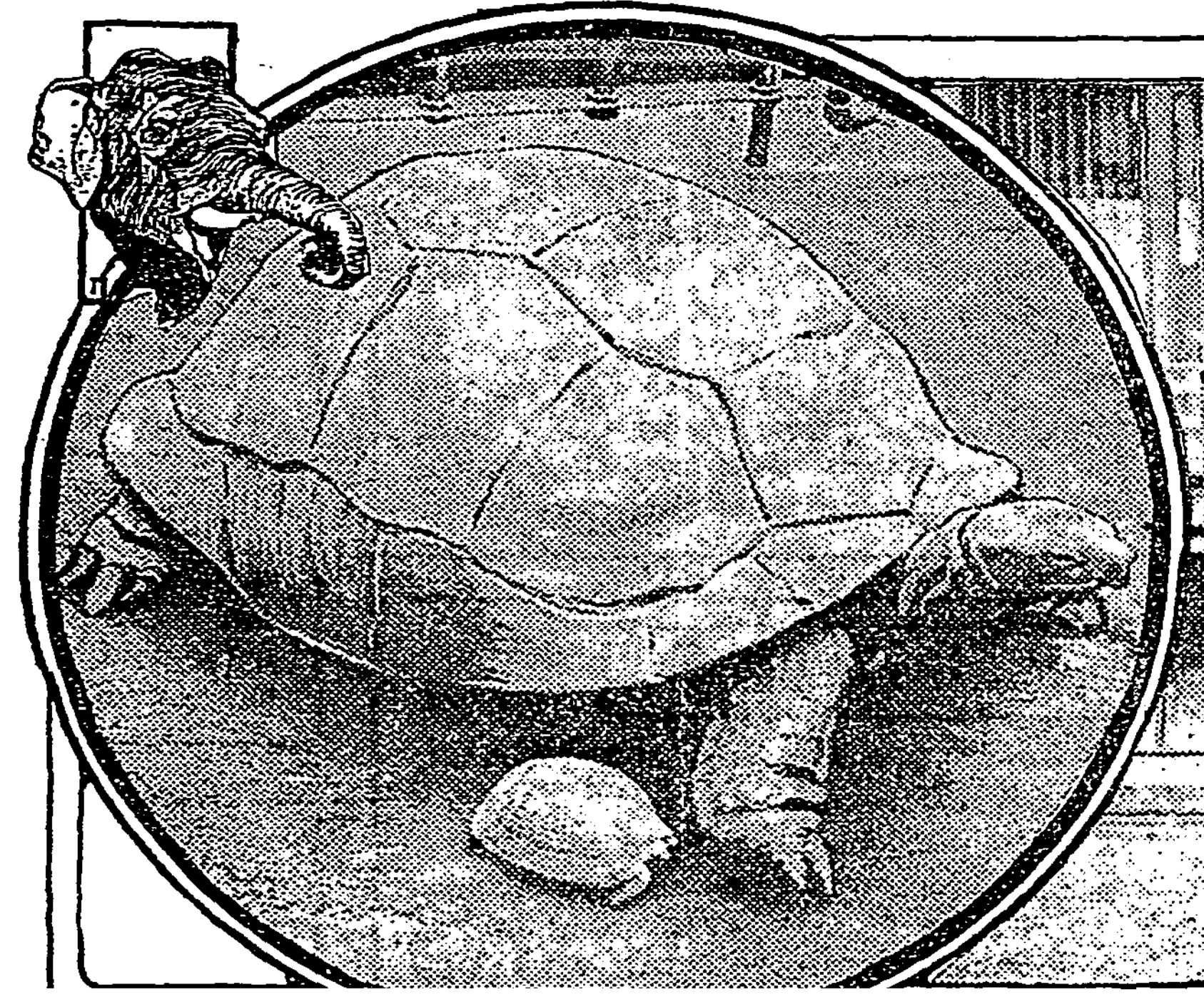
A fine old age yarn is that relating to a white-headed vulture kept for a long time at the park of the Castle of Schönbrunn, Austria, which is said to have died at the age of 118 years. From Schönbrunn also came the story of a golden eagle which was 80 when it died. But this record was bettered by an eagle at the Tower of London, which, if report be true, spent over ninety years in that gloomy stronghold.

John G. Keyser, in his "Travels in Germany," mentions an eagle which lived in captivity at Vienna from 1615 to 1719. Another good eagle story was originally printed in the Berlin Post, and copied by The London Times in 1883. It told about an imperial eagle, taken that year in Brandenburg, Prussia, ringed with a plate, on one side of which was engraved: "H. Ks. O. K., Eperjes," and, on the other side, "10-9-1827." According to that the bird was at least 56 years old. Eperjes is a town in Upper Hungary; the initials probably stand for the name of the eagle's owner.

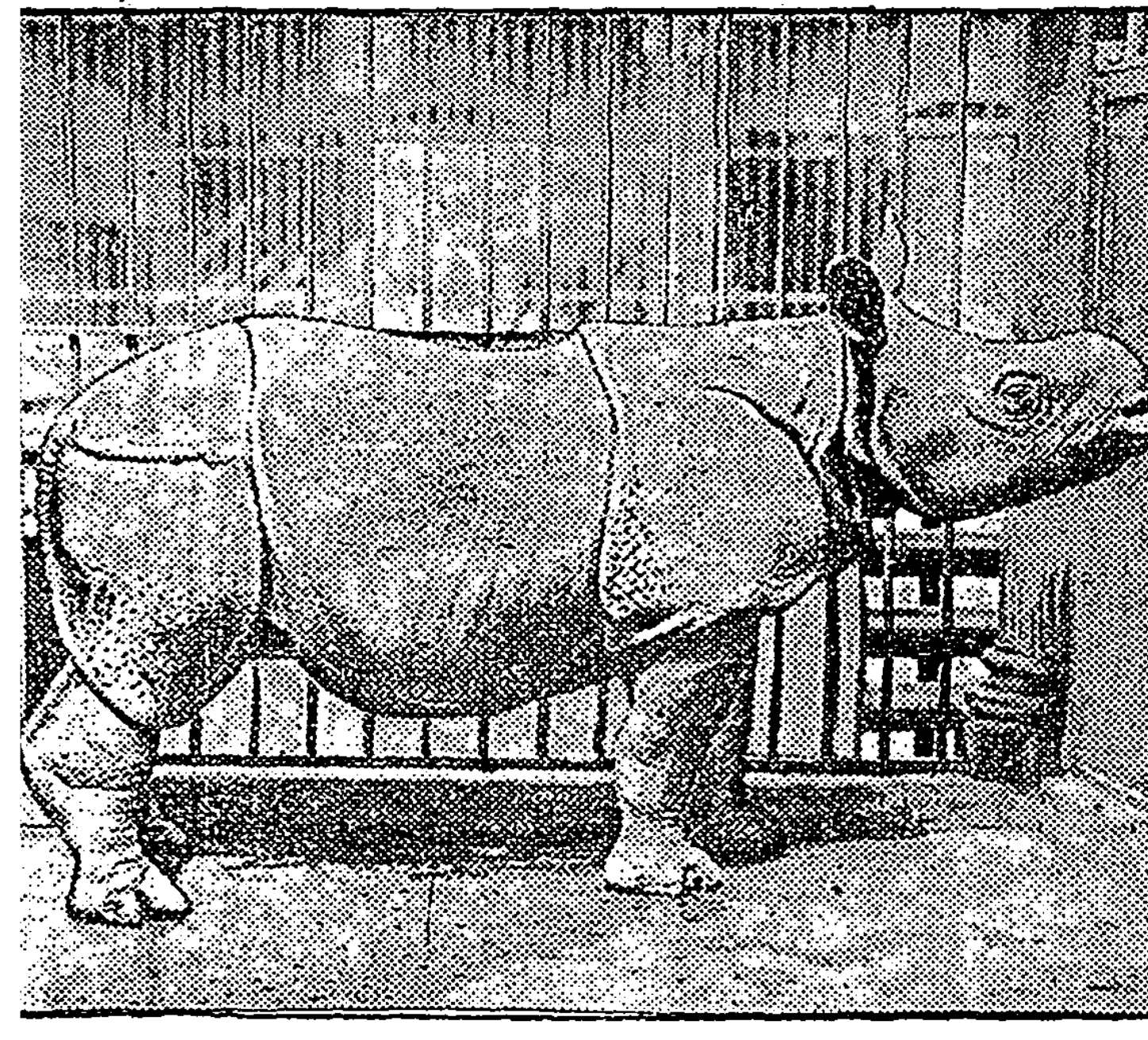
In 1887 the crew of the ship Duchess of Argyll captured near Cape Horn an albatross with a box fastened about its neck. In which was a paper stating that the bird had been taken previously by the crew of the American ship Columbus on May 8, 1840. The men of the Duchess of Argyll released the bird after placing in the box about its neck another paper relating the circumstances of the second capture.

So much for really long-lived birds. Here is a list of the ages which some other birds reach, according to an English authority:

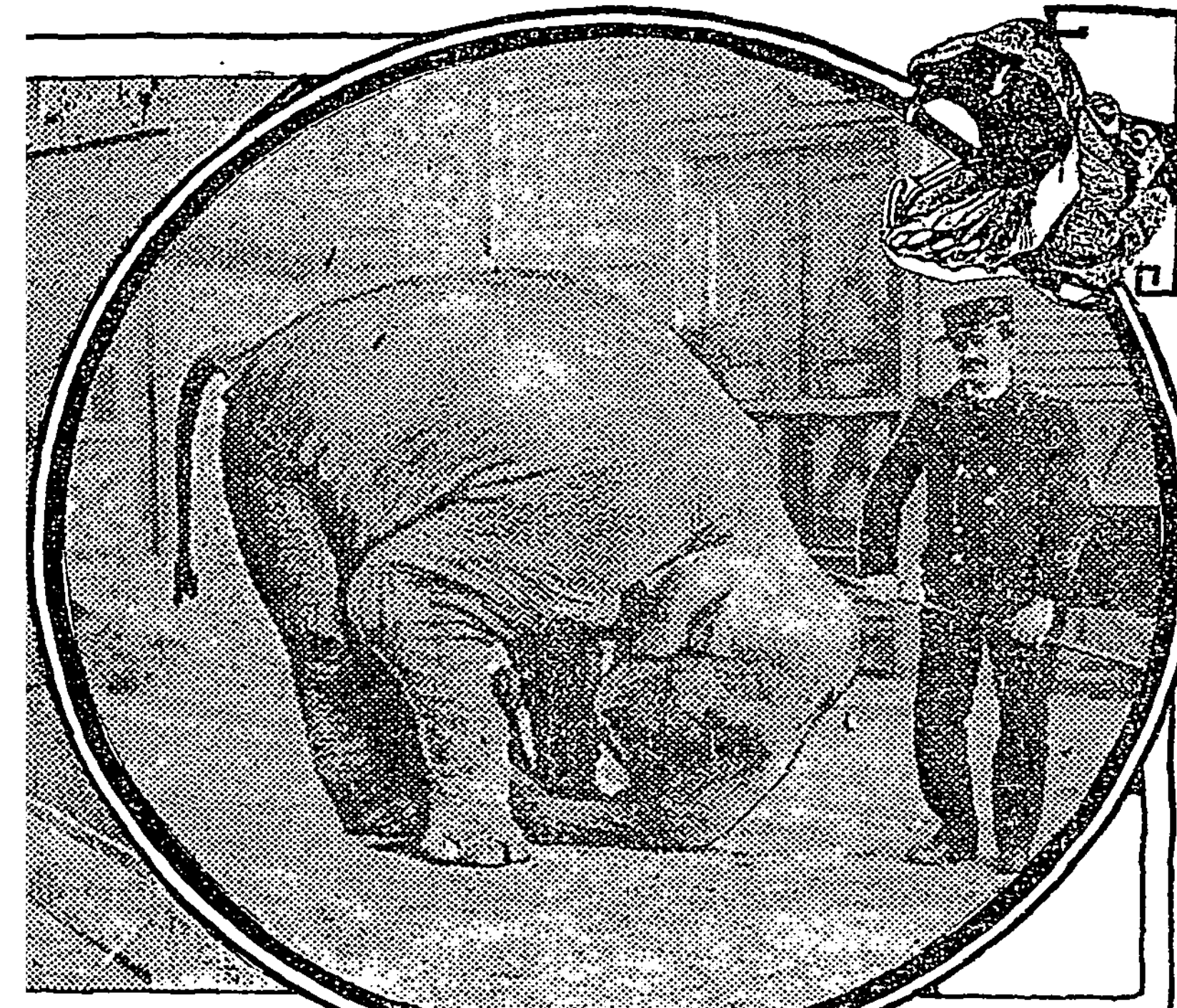
	Years.
Song thrush	17
Blackbird	20
Blue thrush	24
Nightingale	25
Goldfinch	23
Canary	20
Brown linnet	17
Bulfinch	19
Bird of paradise	28
Crow	21
Magpie	24
Sparrow	15
Buzzard	23
Sacred ibis	20
Dove	30-40
Domestic fowl	24-30



A Centarian Tortoise.



Smiles, the \$6,000 Rhinoceros.



Jewel, Who is 65 Years Old.

live many years. One Indian single-horned rhino died in the Paris Zoological Gardens after living there twenty-five years; nor did he, at the time of his demise, show any signs of weakness or senility. Another rhinoceros lived happily at the London Zoo for thirty-seven years. It is said that such animals can live to seventy or eighty years.

Aristotle declared that a camel could live a century, but Bacon reduced that figure to 40 years. As for the king of beasts, the lion, he is reputed to live 20 years, on an average, though there is one story about a lion that was one of the main attractions of a menagerie for 50 years. It is generally believed that lions live much longer in a wild state than in captivity. Tigers, it is said, live about 25 years, as do leopards and bears. One polar bear lived 37 years at the London Zoo.

To turn to animals with which we are better acquainted: The horse is supposed to be very old when he is 25, but there are plenty of well-authenticated tales re-

mesticated they generally last about 15 years.

Dogs are old when aged 16 to 18 years, though in their case also there are on record many cases of remarkable longevity. Cats, likewise, are rated as extremely old when they reach the age of 18. In 1899 a cat belonging to a clergyman in England celebrated its nineteenth birthday. It was at that time still going strong as an ardent hunter of mice, but was too weak to kill its foes after their capture.

Here is the estimated duration of the lives of some other well-known animals:

	Years.
Pig	20
Ox	20
Bull	16
Sheep and goat	12
Rabbit	8
Guinea pig	7

From 30 to 40 years has been given as the maximum age which a stag can reach. This is rendered plausible by the story of a stag killed in 1869 which had

"I am the first fish to be put in here by Emperor Frederick II."

Up to that point both of the two existing versions of the yarn agree; but they vary when it comes to dates. One version has it that the ring found on the fish bore the date 1205, and that the fish was caught in 1447, making a total of 242 years from capture to capture.

The other version, given by E. Ray Lankester in his "Essay on Longevity," assigns to the pike an age of at least 267 years, it having been captured, supposedly, in 1497, after having been put into the water in 1230 by order of the Emperor Frederick.

Notwithstanding the discrepancy in the dates of the two versions, the fact that this wild mediaeval yarn has come down to us at all would tend to show that some pike or other did indeed astonish mediaeval Germany by popping up unexpectedly wearing a certificate of great age. Further plausibility is lent to this king of fish stories by a similar yarn, relating to another fish—also a pike, by the way—

Turning to mammals—though not yet landward—we come to the whale, which, according to scientists, can reach an age to which man can never aspire. Lankester gives the maximum age of the Greenland whale as between 300 and 400 years.

Tortoises, too, do not give up the ghost until they have graced earth for an astonishingly long period. Those of the Galapagos Islands, off the coast of Peru, where tortoises especially abound, are supposed to live as long as 175 years. This has been inferred by the rate of growth of specimens kept at the London Zoo.

An additional reason for believing some Galapagos tortoises to be very old is that, in their home islands, some of the biggest of them, living near the top of a mountain, have a scarred appearance, whereas, those living at the bottom of the mountain have perfectly smooth shells. The scars on the shells are supposed to have been caused by lava hurled about during volcanic eruptions. No such eruptions, according to scientists who have visited the

a tortoise which lived at that town, in the domain of the cathedral, for 220 years. Seven different Bishops came and went, but the tortoise continued to bask serenely in the Peterborough sun. One of the seven Bishops, the document asseverates, observed the old tortoise closely for no less than sixty years without detecting any change in its appearance.

Some of the best yarns about long life concern birds. The most extravagant age assigned to any of them is 300 years, which the ancients supposed the swan could attain. Subsequent study, however, has reduced that total by about two centuries.

A German scientific journal published in 1897 a story to the effect that a golden eagle shot in that year at Eszeg, Slavonia, was found to have a ring about its neck engraved on which were the arms of a Slavonian family and the date 1346. This story was copied in newspapers of other countries and attracted much attention.

In 1793 the Gentleman's Magazine told about a hawk, captured when flying in