

HEADS AND TALES;

OR,

ANECDOTES AND STORIES OF QUADRUPEDS AND OTHER BEASTS,

CHIEFLY CONNECTED WITH INCIDENTS IN THE
HISTORIES OF MORE OR LESS DISTINGUISHED MEN.

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LONDON :

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

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tilly variegated with white and black, and its noble black collar.

Those of our readers who wish further information will find it in the *Literary Gazette* for October 8, 1853. In that article it is easy to recognise the Roman hand of the *facile princeps* among living comparative anatomists. Long may it be before either of our new acquaintances in the Garden afford him a subject for dissection; but when that day arrives, we hope that he will not delay to publish the memoir.*—A. White, in "*Excelsior*" (with additions).

RHINOCEROS AND ELEPHANT.

Two genera of the bulkiest among terrestrial beasts. Just imagine the great rhinoceros at the Zoological Gardens taking it into its head, with that little eye, target hide, and bulky bones, and other items about it, to fondle its keeper!—he was nearly crushed to death. How the great thick-skinned creature enjoys a bath!

As for the elephant, he is a mountain of matter as well as of animal intelligence. Sir Emerson Tennant in his "Ceylon," but especially in his "Natural History," volumes, has given some truly readable chapters on the Asiatic elephant. We could have extracted many an anecdote, even from recent works, of the intelligent sagacity of the

* This memoir has been published, and the subject of it was this very ant-eater. Professor Owen has introduced many striking facts from the history of its structure, in his lecture delivered at Exeter Hall, 1863, and published by the Messrs Nisbet.

Indian as well as the African elephants. The account of the shooting of Mr Cross's well-known elephant *Chunie*, at Exeter Change, has been very curiously and fully detailed by Hone in his "Every-Day Book." A skull of an elephant in the British Museum, shows how wonderfully an elephant is at times able to defend itself from attack. Many a shot that "rogue elephant" had received, years before the three or four Indian sportsmen, who presented its skull as a trophy, succeeded in planting a shot in its brain, or in its heart. Think of the feelings of Lord Clive's relations, at the prospect of his sending home an elephant for a pet. The good folks, not without some motive, as the great Indian ruler conceived, other than mere love for him, had been sending him presents. Samuel Rogers, who wrote the neatest of hands, records that Clive wrote the worst and certainly the most illegible of scrawls. Instead of "elephant," as they read it, their liberal relative had written "equivalent!"

THE LORD KEEPER GUILFORD AND HIS VISIT TO THE RHINOCEROS IN THE CITY OF LONDON.*

It is strange to read in the life of the Lord Keeper Guilford, that his lordship's court enemies, "hard put to it to find, or invent, something tending to the diminution of his character," took advantage of his going to see a rhinoceros, to circulate a foolish story of him, which much annoyed him. It was in the reign of James II. his biographer thus

* "The Life of the Right Hon. Francis North, Baron Guilford, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, under King Charles II. and King James II., &c." By the Hon. Roger North. A New Edition, in three vols., 1826, vol. ii. p. 167.

records it. The rhinoceros, referred to, was the first ever brought to England. Evelyn, in his "Memoirs," says, that it was sold for £2000, a most enormous sum in those days (1685).

Roger North relates the story :—" It fell out thus—a merchant of Sir Dudley North's acquaintance had brought over an enormous rhinoceros, to be sold to showmen for profit. It is a noble beast, wonderfully armed by nature for offence, but more for defence, being covered with impenetrable shields, which no weapon would make any impression upon, and a rarity so great that few men, in our country, have in their whole lives the opportunity of seeing so singular an animal. This merchant told Sir Dudley North that if he, with a friend or two, had a mind to see it, they might take the opportunity at his house before it was sold. Hereupon Sir Dudley North proposed to his brother, the Lord Keeper, to go with him upon this exhibition, which he did, and came away exceedingly satisfied with the curiosity he had seen. But whether he was dogged to find out where he and his brother housed in the city, or flying fame carried an account of the voyage to court, I know not ; but it is certain that the very next morning a bruit went from thence all over the town, and (as factious reports used to run) in a very short time, viz., that his lordship rode upon the rhinoceros, than which a more infantine exploit could not have been fastened upon him. And most people were struck with amazement at it, and divers ran here and there to find out whether it was true or no. And soon after dinner some lords and others came to his lordship to know the truth from himself, for the setters of the lie affirmed it positively as of their own

knowledge. That did not give his lordship much disturbance, for he expected no better from his adversaries. But that his friends, intelligent persons, who must know him to be far from guilty of any childish levity, should believe it, was what roiled him extremely, and much more when they had the face to come to him to know if it were true. I never saw him in such a rage, and to lay about him with affronts (which he keenly bestowed upon the minor courtiers that came on that errand) as then; for he sent them away with fleas in their ear. And he was seriously angry with his own brother, Sir Dudley North, because he did not contradict the lie in sudden and direct terms, but laughed as taking the question put to him for a banter, till, by iteration, he was brought to it. For some lords came, and because they seemed to attribute somewhat to the avowed positiveness of the reporters, he rather chose to send for his brother to attest than to impose his bare denial, and so it passed; and the noble earl (of Sunderland), with Jeffries, and others of that crew, made merry, and never blushed at the lie of their own making, but valued themselves upon it as a very good jest."

And so it passed. What a sensation would have been caused by the sudden apparition in that age of a few numbers of *Punch*. What a subject for a cartoon, some John Leech of 1685 would have made of the stately Lord Keeper on the back of a rhinoceros, and the infamous Judge Jeffries leering at him from a window.

THE ELEPHANT AND HIS TRUNK.

Canning and another gentleman were looking at a picture of the deluge; the ark was seen in the middle dis-

tance, while in the fore-sea an elephant was struggling with his fate. "I wonder," said the gentleman, "that the elephant did not secure *an inside* place!"—"He was too late, my friend," replied Canning; "he was detained *packing up his trunk*."*

SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS AND JELLY MADE OF IVORY DUST.
—A VEGETARIAN TAKEN IN.

The biographers of James Montgomery † relate an amusing anecdote of Sir Richard Phillips, the eccentric London bookseller and author. He visited Sheffield in October 1828. "He had lived too long amidst the bustle and business of the great world, and was too little conscious of any feeling at all like diffidence, to allow him to hesitate about calling upon any person, whether of rank, genius, or eccentricity, when the success of his project was likely to be thereby promoted. The time selected by the free and easy knight for his unannounced visitation of Montgomery was *Sunday at dinner time*. He was at once asked to sit down and partake of the chickens and bacon which had just been placed on the table, but here was a dilemma; Sir Richard, although neither a Brahmin nor a Jew, avowed himself a staunch Pythagorean—he could eat no flesh! Luckily there was a plentiful supply of carrots and turnips, and—jelly. But was the latter made from calves' feet? Montgomery assured his guest that it was *not*; but, added he, with a conscientious regard for his visitor's scruples, from *ivory dust*. We believe the poet fancied the hypothesis of an

* Mark Lemon, "Jest Book," p. 329.

† "John Holland and James Everett," vol. iv. p. 283.

animal origin of this viand could not be very obscure ; it was, however, swallowed ; the clever bibliopole perhaps believing, with some of the Sheffield ivory-cutters, that elephants, instead of being hunted and killed for their tusks, *shed them* when fully grown, as bucks do their antlers !”

J. T. SMITH AND THE ELEPHANT.

That gossiping man, J. T. Smith, once Keeper of the Prints in the British Museum, and author of “Nollekens and his Times,” relates, that when he and a friend were returning late from a club, and were approaching Temple Bar, “about one o’clock, a most unaccountable appearance claimed our attention,—it was no less than an elephant, whose keepers were coaxing it to pass through the gateway. He had been accompanied with several persons from the Tower wharf with tall poles, but was principally guided by two men with ropes, each walking on either side of the street, to keep him as much as possible in the middle, on his way to the menagerie, Exeter Change, to which destination, after passing St Clement’s Church, he steadily trudged on, with strict obedience to the command of his keepers.*

“I had the honour afterwards of partaking of a pot of Barclay’s entire with this same elephant, which high mark of his condescension was bestowed when I accompanied my friend, the late Sir James Wintel Lake, Bart., to view the rare animals in Exeter Change,—that gentleman being assured by the elephant’s keeper that, if he would offer the beast a shilling, he would see the noble animal nod his head and drink a pot of porter. The elephant had no

* “A Book for a Rainy Day,” p. 92.

sooner taken the shilling, which he did in the mildest manner from the palm of Sir James's hand, than he gave it to the keeper, and eagerly watched his return with the beer. The elephant then, after placing his proboscis to the top of the tankard, drew up nearly the whole of the beverage. The keeper observed, ' You will hardly believe, gentlemen, but the little he has left is quite warm ; ' upon this we were tempted to taste it, and it really was so. This animal was afterwards disposed of for the sum of one thousand guineas."

THE ELEPHANT AND THE TAILOR.

This old story has been often told, but never so well as by Sydney Smith in one of his lectures at the Royal Institution. " Every one knows the old story of the tailor and the elephant, which, if it be not true, at least shows the opinion the Orientals, who know the animal well, entertain of his sagacity. An eastern tailor to the Court was making a magnificent doublet for a bashaw of nine tails, and covering it, after the manner of eastern doublets, with gold, silver, and every species of metallic magnificence. As he was busying himself on this momentous occasion, there passed by, to the pools of water, one of the royal elephants, about the size of a broad-wheeled waggon, rich in ivory teeth, and shaking, with its ponderous tread, the tailor's shop to its remotest thimble. As he passed near the window, the elephant happened to look in ; the tailor lifted up his eyes, perceived the proboscis of the elephant near him, and, being seized with a fit of facetiousness, pricked the animal with his needle ; the mass of

matter immediately retired, stalked away to the pool, filled his trunk full of muddy water, and, returning to the shop, overwhelmed the artisan and his doublet with the dirty effects of his vengeance."

DR JOHNSON ALLUDED TO AS "AN ELEPHANT."

"If an elephant could write a book, perhaps one that had read a great deal would say, that an Arabian horse is a very clumsy, ungraceful animal." This was written by Horace Walpole to Miss Berry, in 1791, in allusion to Dr Johnson's depreciation of Thomas Gray the poet.* It is an acute observation, well worth being wrought out. There is a grandeur and even a grace about this bulky beast and its motions well deserving the study of any one who has the opportunity. Elephants in our streets are not now so rare as they used to be. We saw three in one procession in the streets of Edinburgh in 1865.

ELEPHANT'S SKIN.

"Did any of you ever see an elephant's skin?" asked the master of an infant school in a fast neighbourhood. "I have!" shouted a six-year-old at the foot of the class. "Where?" inquired the master, amused by his earnestness. "*On the elephant!*" was the reply.

FOSSIL PACHYDERMATA.

CUVIER AND THE FOSSIL.

George Cuvier was perhaps the first man who, by his

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," edited by Peter Cunningham, ix., 319.

admirable works and researches, gave zoology its true place among the sciences.

His discoveries of the structure of molluscs and other animals of the obscurer orders are perhaps eclipsed by his researches in osteology. He has enabled the comparative anatomist to tell from a small portion of bone not only the class, but the order, genus, and even the species to which animal that bone belonged.

Mrs Lee,* in her *Life of the Baron*, gives an example of his enthusiasm in his researches.

M. Laurillard was afterwards his secretary and the draftsman who executed nearly all the drawings in his "*Ossemens fossiles*." At the time of this story he had not particularly attracted Cuvier's notice.

"One day Cuvier came to his brother Frederic to ask him to disengage a fossil from its surrounding mass, an office he had frequently performed. M. Laurillard was applied to in the absence of F. Cuvier. Little aware of the value of the specimen confided to his care, he cheerfully set to work, and succeeded in getting the bone entire from its position. M. Cuvier, after a short time, returned for his treasure, and when he saw how perfect it was, his ecstasies became incontrollable; he danced, he shook his hands, he uttered expressions of delight, till M. Laurillard, in his ignorance both of the importance of what he had done, and of the ardent character of M. Cuvier, thought he was mad. Taking, however, his fossil foot in one hand, and dragging Laurillard's arm with the other, he led him upstairs to present him to his wife and sister-in-law, saying, 'I

* "*Memoirs of Baron Cuvier*," by Mrs R. Lee (formerly Mrs T. Ed. Bowdich), 1833, p. 93.

have got my foot, and M. Laurillard found it for me.' It seems that this skilful operation confirmed all M. Cuvier's previous conjecture concerning a foot, the existence and form of which he had already guessed, but for which he had long and vainly sought. So occupied had he been by it, that, when he appeared to be particularly absent, his family were wont to accuse him of seeking his fore-foot. The next morning the able operator and draftsman was engaged as secretary."

S O W.

A VERY gross but useful animal, which can, by feeding, be stuffed into such a state of fatness as only one who has seen a Christmas cattle show in England could believe it possible for beast to acquire. Dean Ramsay, in a happy anecdote, refers to a good quality of the sow as food. He tells, that a Scottish minister had been persuaded to keep a pig, and that the good wife had been duly instructed in the mysteries of black-puddings, pork-chops, pig's-head, and other modes of turning poor piggy to account. The minister remarked to a friend, "Nae doubt there's a hantle o' miscellaneous eating about a pig." The author of "A Ramble," published by Edmonstone and Douglas in 1865, has devoted some most amusing pages of his work to an account of "Pig-sticking in Chicago," as witnessed by him during the late American war. The wholesale and scientific off-hand way in which living pigs enter into one part of a machine, and come out prepared pork, could only have been devised by a Yankee.

The essay of Charles Lamb on Roast Pig, and his his-