

CURIOSITIES
OF
NATURAL HISTORY.

Second Series.

BY
FRANCIS T. BUCKLAND, M.A.

STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD; ASSISTANT SURGEON 2D LIFE GUARDS;
AUTHOR OF CURIOSITIES OF NATURAL HISTORY, FIRST SERIES, ETC.
EDITOR OF THE LATE DR. BUCKLAND'S BRIDGEWATER
TREATISE ON GEOLOGY AND MINERALOGY.



NEW EDITION.

LONDON :
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1861.

the figure of a lion, with the date '6—48' in Arabic numerals; on the reverse, amid several illegible letters, the fragmentary words, 'Arg Procon. Latia Mo.' may be deciphered, surrounding two large letters in the centre, one of which is the Greek 'Π' with an 'R' interwoven with it. We understand that the whole of this curious matter is to be brought before some antiquarian society in the regular mode, with all the necessary testimony as to facts particular of the discovery. But while those learned gentlemen are puzzling themselves as to the pro-consulship in which this coin was cast, and calling in the aid of the geologist to account for its locality, our quick-minded readers will instantly jump to the honest conclusion that this crocodile, who found his burial amid the sands of New Jersey, had, 2,000 years ago, half digested some Roman soldier in the rivers of Africa, ere he floated westward for a new meal, with the poor fellow's last coin still preserved in his maw."—*New York Literary World*, October, 1848.

While thinking about alligators and crocodiles, a letter was put into my hands from my cousin, Charles Buckland, Esq., who holds a high and responsible situation in the Civil Service of India. When he went out, I requested him to record for me all remarkable facts in natural history (and he is no bad observer) which came under his notice. He writes to me as follows:—

“It chances that I am now at Burdwan, where there

is a native rajah who keeps a really good menagerie. He has two rhinoceroses, who live in a large walled enclosure, in the centre of which is a reservoir of water, and five crocodiles live in this lake. The said crocodiles are fed with young pigs, which are turned into the enclosure ; and when, unconscious of their danger, they go down to the water to drink, they fall into the jaws of the 'grim alligators.' There is, however, one full-grown pig now in the enclosure, who has grown up there, having survived the perils of his early youth in this dangerous place. It seems that he all at once took a fancy to the rhinoceros, and when the rhinoceroses went down to drink, he went with them, and managed to escape under their legs from the rush of the alligators. Since his first escape, he only goes to drink under the protection of the rhinoceroses, with whom he is on the most familiar terms. I was told that he looks on with perfect unconcern at the fate of the young pigs which are now sent in to feed the crocodiles, and never attempts to associate with them or warn them of their danger."*

Now many may think this an unlikely story, but, barring my cousin's observation, I can assert that the pig is one of the most "talented of beasts." I have had conversations with men who have trained "learned pigs," and have learnt their secret, which I am not at liberty to divulge. Suffice it that, from what I learned

* Appendix, page 354.

MEDICAL USE OF "MONKEY PEAS."—PAGE 201.

Our ancestors used very nasty kinds of medicine. Here is a receipt for a compound of which "Monkey Peas" form the chief ingredient. "A strange medicine, and rare secret, for consuming the web in the eye. Take nine little worms with many feet, by some called Swine lice; if they be touched they become round as a button; they are to be found within the bark and wood of old timber trees; stamp them with a little juice of woodbine or betony, then stain the same well, and let the party that hath the web in his eye drink it in a morning something warmed. *This was told me for a very truth by one that had proved it divers times.* Century of Inventions, 1655." A gentleman, who lately took a country practice, found in the surgery an old drawer full of common centipedes, dried; these, also, were formerly given, in a state of powder, I believe, as antispasmodics.

PECULIAR BONES OF A FISH.—PAGE 204.

As in the bladder wrack we find air bubbles contained in the substance of the plant itself, so in a remarkable fish, the *Platax Arthriticus*, we find the bones are lime, and there enlarged into round masses of solid bony structure. Now these formations are of great use to the fish, for he lives in the boiling surf of tropical coral reefs, and additional weight is given to his bones to keep his body down in the water, and prevent his being dashed to pieces by the waves. Surely there is no end to the beautiful and merciful designs we find in the handiwork of the great Creator.

CROCODILE AND PIG.—PAGE 229.

Since the publication of the first edition, I have received this note from my cousin:—

"Sad to say, one rhinoceros died, and the survivor did not afford sufficient cover to poor piggy, and the alligators ran him down and ate him; so there is a tragical end to my story after