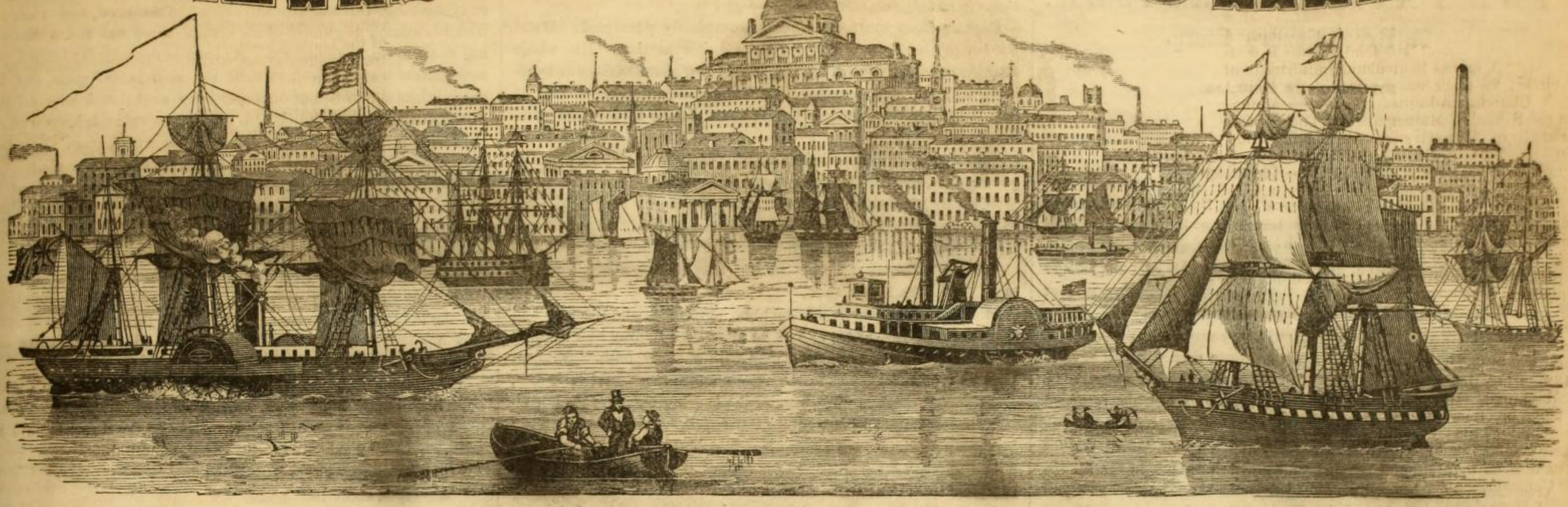
GLEASON'S PICTORIAL.



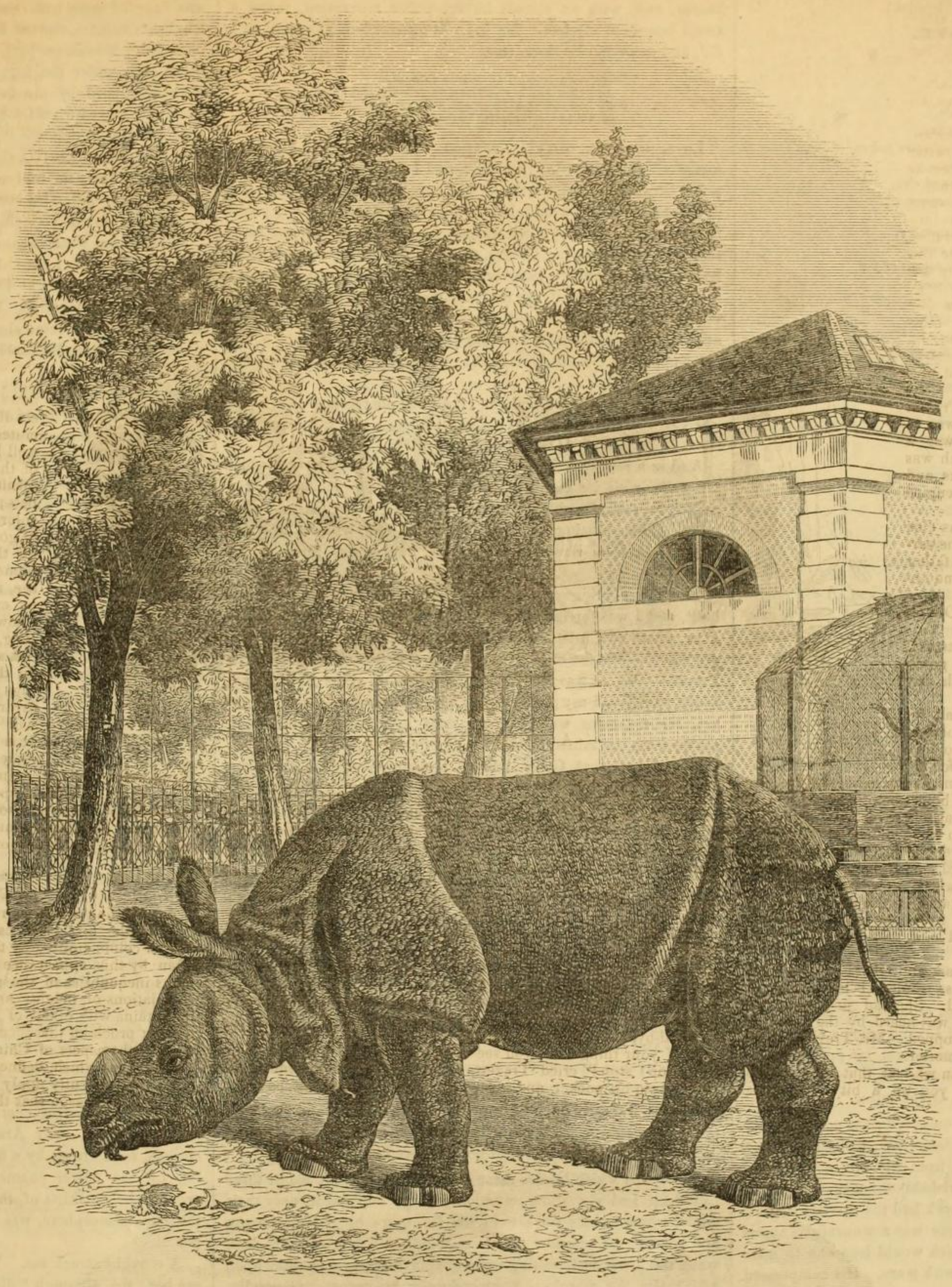
F. GLEASON, {CORNER OF TREMONT AND BROMFIELD STS.} BOSTON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1853. {$3.00 PER ANNUM. 6 CENTS SINGLE.} VOL. V. No. 23.—WHOLE No. 127.

RAIL SHOOTING.

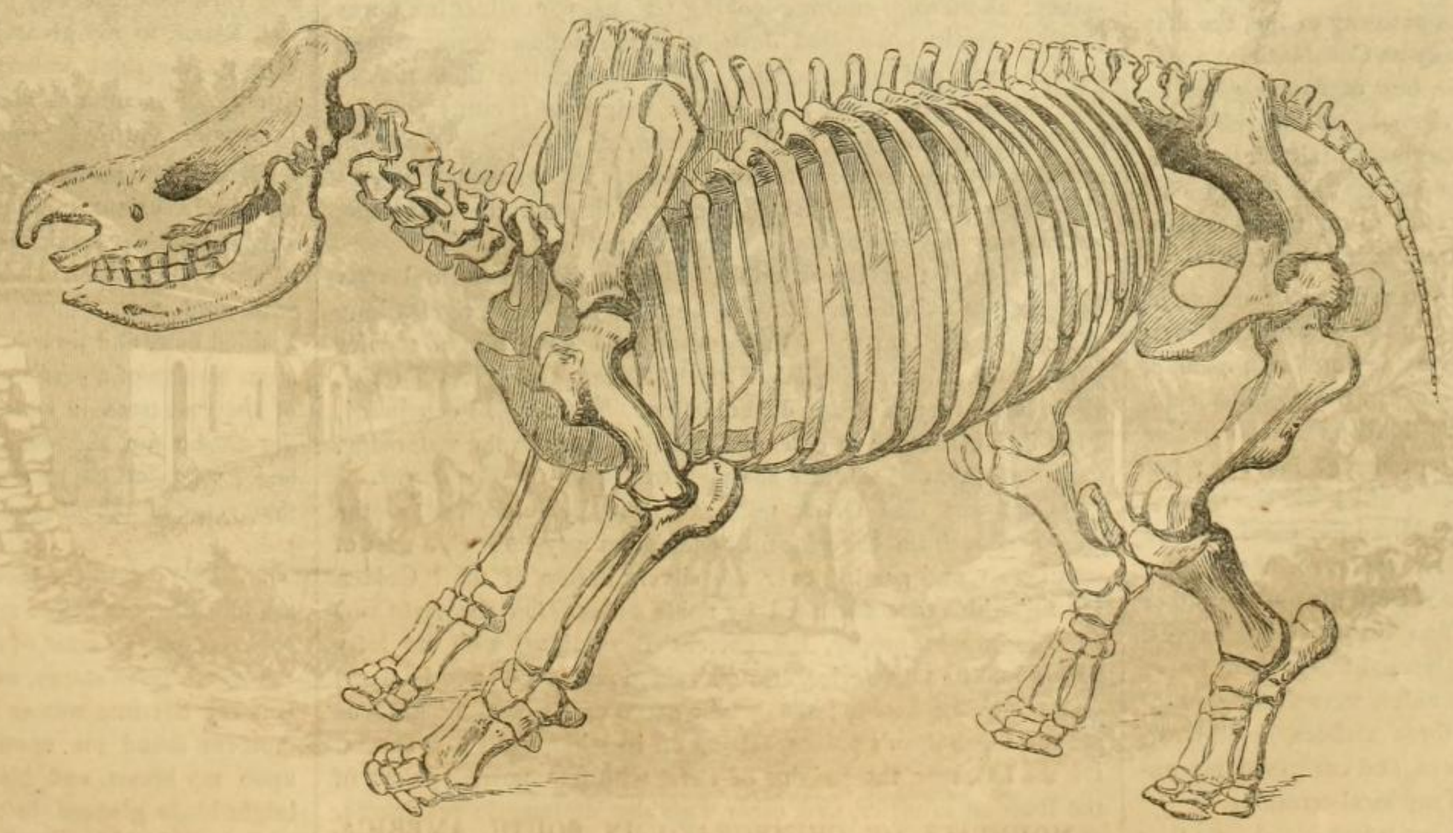
The fine sporting picture given below is another of the favorite series from our artist, Mr. Croome, of New York. Of all our land or water fowl, perhaps none affords the sportsman more agreeable amusement, early in August, when the reeds along the shores of the Delaware have attained their full growth, than the Rail. It resorts to them in great numbers to feed on the seeds of this plant about two hours before high water. The sportsman in a light skiff, and a stout, experienced boatman, enter the reeds—the sportsman standing in the bow, ready for action, and the boatman on the stern seat pushing her steadily through the reeds. The Rail generally spring singly as the boat advances, and at a short distance ahead are instantly shot down; while the boatman, keeping his eye on the spot where the bird fell, directs the boat forward and picks the bird up, during which time the gunner is loading. This marking is a difficult task for the pusher, as the reeds and the herbage are so thick, and similar in color to the plumage of the Rail, that unless it is marked with great accuracy it is useless to look for it, and in order to get good sport no time is to be lost. In this manner the boat moves steadily through and over the weeds, the birds flushing and falling, the gunner loading and firing, while the boatman is pushing and picking up. The sport continues an hour or two after high water, when the shallowness of the water, and the strength and weight of the floating reeds, as also the backwardness of the game to spring, as the tide decreases, oblige them to return. Several boats are sometimes within a short distance of each other, and a perpetual cracking of musketry prevails along the whole reedy shores of the river. In these excursions, it is not uncommon for an active and expert marksman to kill ten or twelve dozen in a tide. His success, however, depends greatly in the strength and experience of the pusher. During the greater part of the months of September and October, the market of Philadelphia is abundantly supplied with Rail, which are sold from half a dollar to a dollar per dozen. Soon after the 20th of October, at which time our first smart frost generally takes place, these birds move off to the South. In Virginia, particularly along the banks of James River, the Rail are in prodigious numbers. It is rarely to be seen east of Massachusetts. Those who have indulged in this captivating sport will fully enter into the spirit of the scene given below, and to all it must form an interesting illustration of our native sporting resources in this country.

RAIL SHOOTING.

furnished by Don Juan de Valasco, Chimbo, under the sway of the Siris, was a part of thirteen southern states. Many tribes roamed over the burning regions extending at the foot of the mountain, or occupied the mountains themselves. Among these were reckoned the Asancotos, the Chimas, the Guanujos and the Guarandas. All these nations had disappeared, when, on the 23d of June, 1802, the most celebrated traveller wished to observe scientifically the phenomena presented by an ascent to the summit of the vast mountain he was the first to describe. "It was over a narrow ridge in the midst, on the southern slope, that Messrs. Bonpland and Montufar and myself had attempted to reach, not without danger, the summit of Chimborazo. We had carried our instruments to a considerable height, although we were surrounded by a thick fog, and much incommoded by the rarity of the air. The point where we halted to observe the dip of the needle seemed higher than any point which men had hitherto reached; it exceeds, by 7000 feet, the summit of Mont Blanc, which M. de Saussure, the most learned and intrepid of travellers, was fortunate enough to reach after struggling with difficulties far greater than those we had to encounter near the crest of Chimborazo. These painful excursions, the recital of which generally excites the interest of the public, offer very few results important to the progress of science, the traveller finding himself on a soil covered with snow, in a stratum of air the chemical mixture of which is the same as in the lower regions, and in a situation where delicate experiments cannot be made with all the requisite precision." Two years after the ascent of the author of "Views of the Cordilleras," one of the most eminent scientific men of Bolivia, Don Francisco Jose de Caldas, visited the regions overlooked by Chimborazo, and gave a very interesting account of his observations, which have no less extended his reputation than enriched his country. It is these animated descriptions of Caldas, in the exact pictures produced in the "Semenario de Santa Fe de Bogota," that we must study these mountains, and read all the facts relative to the miserable life led by the poor Indians. In this fine work, reprinted in 1849 by the care of Col Acosta, we find proof of the continued belief in the Indian superstitions of the heart of these vast mountains. If you observe, for instance, heaps of stones at the foot of certain crosses planted at the base of the principal summits, these accumulated stones prove a sacrifice of the natives addressed to one of the gods of their fathers, and they hope in this way to turn away from the regions they inhabit, the terrible *nevadas*, those meteors whose fury manifests itself particularly in the months of June, July and August. At this period, in fact, there are certain days in which the impetuous winds from the east sweep through the valley, redoubling their fury each time they sweep the elevated summits These kinds of whirlwinds are always accompanied by a thick cloud, which increases in density in the higher parts, forming a great bar on the flanks of the Cordillera. On the rising ground you perceive a fine but continuous rain, which swells the torrents, and causes inundations. In the higher parts a fine sleet takes the place of the rain of the middle region, and accumulating, covers all the mountains. Towards the summits which approach the limits of vegetation, the sleet changes into snow-flakes, falling in prodigious abundance, and soon covering the whole elevated parts of the mountain. The snow or ice which surrounds the traveller, and arrests his steps as he plunges to his waist, the icy wind that scourges his face, the cloud which doubles the darkness, all tend to arrest his movements, and produce a torpidity often followed by death. All the sacrifices made by the Indians of the mountain formerly to avert the nevada, were not as innocent as those addressed to the god personified under the name of Serro. The exact Caldas speaks of the cavern of Guaya Suma, in this part of the Andes, where, according to ancient superstitions, the shades of the Incas appeared. At the commencement of the century dreadful sacrifices were still made to them, and more than one Indian was accused of having offered poor new born children as a holocaust, in spite of the efforts of the priests of the Cordillera to induce them to abandon this frightful practice. The drawings and scientific documents in which Francisco Caldas had preserved so many precious observations have disappeared, and the unfortunate traveller, himself the victim of the political dissensions of his country, perished on the scaffold, in 1816, before he was able to put the finishing hand to his works. Ascensions have been made by travellers since. In 1831, Mr. Boussingault made two ascensions, the last of which was crowned with complete success, having reached a height of more than 18,000 feet, the greatest height man has ever attained The description he gives of this effort is very interesting, but our limits preclude giving it, and we can only allude to it here. The last scientific ascensions undertaken to benefit science were those of M. Bourcier, French consul at Quito. They were undertaken in 1849 and 1850, and were completely successful. Among other curious facts, this naturalist declares, that of the mammiferæ, he saw only bulls at the limit of vegetation near the snows; stags immediately afterwards. Among birds, the condor and the humming-bird were the only birds found to occupy the same regions.



THE RHINOCEROS.



THE SKELETON OF A RHINOCEROS.

THE RHINOCEROS.

The first rhinoceros which appeared in Europe was that of which Pliny makes mention as having been presented to the Roman people by Pompey. Augustus, according to Dion. Cassius, caused another to be killed in the circus, when he celebrated his triumph over Cleopatra. Strabo had an opportunity of seeing a third at Alexandria, and has left us a brief description of it. These three animals were one-horned. Under Domitian, there came to Rome two two-horned rhinoceroses, which are seen engraved on this emperor's medals. Monuments of ancient history show us that they were brought to the capital of the empire under Antoninus, Heliogabalus and Gordius III. The decadence and troubles caused by the invasion of the barbarians, deprived Europe of a sight so difficult to be procured. At the period of the revival, the impetus given to commerce, joined to the curiosity excited by the natural productions of foreign countries, again brought about the importation into Europe of some of these animals. The first of these had but one horn. It had been sent from the Indies to Emmanuel, king of Portugal, in 1513. The latter sent it to the pope; but it died on the way on board the vessel. The celebrated painter, Albert Durer, made an engraving of it after an imperfect drawing sent him from Lisbon, and the rhinoceros was for a long time depicted from this drawing. In 1685, the second one was carried to England. In 1739 and 1741, two others appeared and were shown all over Europe. That of 1741, as it appears, was brought to Paris, in 1749, and forms the base of the description given by Daubenton of the species. In 1771, a very young one reached the menagerie of Versailles; it died in 1793. It is this of which Buffon speaks in his supplements. In 1800, a sixth individual, very young, from the Indies, and destined for the menagerie of Vienna, died at London, on its arrival, and was dissected by Mr. Thomas, who published his observations in the Philosophical Transactions. In 1818, a travelling menagerie brought another to Paris, which was observed by M. Cuvier. Since then they have been exhibited in England, but not on the continent; and consequently the one before us, in the possession of the Paris Museum of Natural History, may be reckoned as the eighth of this species which has touched the European continent since the time of King Emmanuel, and the fifteenth since the beginning of the historical period. Still, it is indisputable that these animals, now so rare in Europe, were very common there in the remote age before the continent was inhabited by man. Bones of the rhinoceros are discovered buried in the earth in a multitude of places. They are hardly less frequent than the bones of the elephant, with which they are commonly found mixed They are not only found in the south, but in the most northerly parts of Europe. The first remains of this species, of which positive mention is made, were collected in England, in 1668, near Canterbury, in the course of digging a well. In 1751, a large number of bones of this kind were disinterred in the chain of the Hartz, and their form caused them at first to be taken for those of elephants; but the celebrated anatomist, Meckel, having compared one of the teeth found in this heap with the teeth of the living rhinoceros he had observed at Paris, proved, in an explicit manner, and by the same method which has yielded us such knowledge of lost species, that the bones found in the Hartz were the bones of the rhinoceros. Thence the path was clearly opened for all the paleontological researches on this kind of fossil. Twenty years after the discovery made on the slopes of the Hartz, a much more extraordinary discovery, of which Siberia was the scene, threw a truly striking light upon the question. A fossil rhinoceros, not reduced to bones alone, but entire, with its skin, was found in the month of December, 1771, on the borders of the Wiluji, a river which flows into the Lena, below Yakoutsk, in Siberia, in 44th degree of latitude. What characterized this individual, which was covered with hair, proves that the species to which it belonged, differing from that of warm countries, the only one we now know, was created to inhabit cold and temperate regions. Unfortunately, the skin of this precious animal has not been preserved. Since that time, constant attempts have been made to discover the bones of the rhinoceros, in a multitude of countries of Northern Europe and Asia; and M. Cuvier, in his "Researches on Fossil Bones," has given minute descriptions of them; but unfortunately, no individual as complete as that of Wiluji has since been discovered.