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OR

GENERAL ABSTRACT OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

EMBELLISHED WITH SEVERAL HUNDRED ENGRAVINGS.

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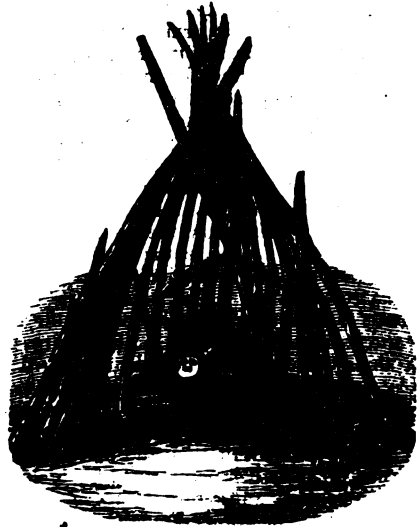
1834-5

sent himself with despatching the barge to prosecute the further search, while he returned to Kotzebue Sound. The barge proceeding to the north-eastward succeeded in exploring the line of the coast as far as point Barrow, 128 miles beyond Icy Cape; and the crew having erected a post for Captain Franklin returned to the ship.

Captain Beechey remained within the Blossom at Chamisso Island, occupied in surveying the coast and harbours of Kotzebue Sound, until the approach of winter rendered it necessary for him to hasten his departure. During his stay, he made several excursions, and procured many interesting fossil remains. He had also an opportunity of remarking the habits and peculiarities of the natives, or western Esquimaux, as they are called, in contradistinction to their eastern brethren. Their deserted huts were frequently found in many places, and traces of a recent residence were often visible. He particularly notices their burial-places, and the mode which they have of disposing of their dead. The corpse is deposited, with the head to the westward, in a sort of coffin formed of loose planks, and placed upon a platform of drift-wood, which is sometimes raised to the height of two feet. A double tent of spars of drift-wood, put together closely, is erected over this as a covering to secure the body from the depredations of foxes and wolves: but the rapacity of those animals succeeds before long in breaking through this feeble protection. The body is generally dressed in a frock made of eider-duck skins, and covered with hides of deer or sea-horse. The coffin and planks are sometimes omitted, and the corpse then rests simply on the drift-wood. We give on the opposite column a representation of one of these graves.

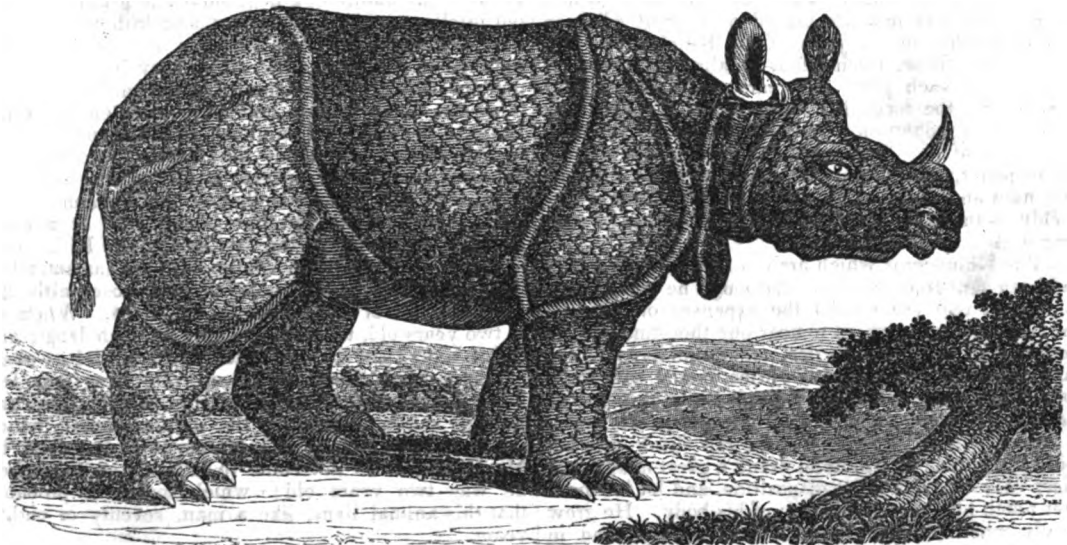
The Blossom quitted the sound on the 14th of October, and having repassed Behring's Strait, stood to the southward, and reached the harbour of Francisco, in California, on the eighth of November. Here Captain Beechey had intended to recruit his supplies; but the inadequacy of the means which it afforded compelled him to proceed first to the Sandwich Islands, and thence

to Macao, where he procured sufficient stores to enable him to prosecute the voyage. The ship left Macao on the 30th of April, 1827, and after visiting the great Loo Choo, passed through Behring's Strait, and reached the rendezvous this time by the 5th of August; still there was no trace of Franklin, and they accordingly stood forward to the northward. The unfavourable stage of the ice prevented them from proceeding so far as they had gone the former year; and after the loss of their barge, and a narrow escape of wreck on the part of the ship, they were compelled, by the early setting in of the winter, to take a final leave of the Polar Sea, and retrace their course to England, which they reached on the 8th of September, 1828, after an absence of three years and a half, and a voyage of 73,000 miles.



WESTERN ESQUIMAUX GRAVE.

NATURAL HISTORY.



THE RHINOCEROS.

"After the elephant, the Rhinoceros is the most powerful of all quadrupeds. 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 length; he is therefore like the elephant in bulk; and if he appears much smaller, it is because his legs are much shorter in proportion to those of the elephant; but he differs widely

from that sagacious animal, in his natural faculties, and his intelligence; having received from Nature merely what she grants in common to all animals; deprived of all feeling in the skin, having no organ answering the purpose of hands, nor distinct for the sense of feeling, he has nothing instead of a trunk but a moveable upper lip, in which centres all his dexterity. He is superior to other animals only in strength, size, and the offensive weapon which he carries upon his nose, and which is peculiar to him. This weapon is a very hard horn, solid throughout, and placed more advantageously than the horns of ruminating animals; these only protect the superior parts of the head and neck, whilst the horn of the Rhinoceros defends all the exterior parts of the snout, and preserves the muzzle, the mouth, and the face from insult; so that the tiger attacks more readily the Elephant, in seizing his trunk, than the Rhinoceros, which he cannot attack in front without running the danger of being killed, for the body and limbs are covered with an impenetrable skin; and this animal fears neither the claws of the tiger nor the lion, nor even the fire and weapons of the huntsman; his skin is a dark leather, of the same colour, but thicker and harder than that of the elephant; he does not feel the sting of flies; he cannot contract his skin; it is only folded by large wrinkles on the neck, the shoulders, and the buttocks, to facilitate the motions of the legs, which are massive, and terminate in large feet, armed with three great claws. The skin of the two-horned Rhinoceros is much more easily penetrable than that of the single-horned. He has the head larger in proportion than the elephant, but the eyes still smaller, which he never opens entirely, and they are so situated that the animal can see only what is in a direct line before him. The upper jaw projects above the lower, and the upper lip has a motion, and may be lengthened six or seven inches; it is terminated by a sharp edge, which enables this animal, with more facility than other quadrupeds, to gather branches and grass, and to divide them into handfuls, as the elephant does with his trunk. This muscular and flexible lip is a sort of trunk very incomplete, but which is equally calculated for strength and dexterity. Instead of those long ivory teeth which form the tusks of the elephant, the Rhinoceros has his powerful horn, and two strong incisive teeth in each jaw. These incisive teeth, which the elephant has not, are placed at a great distance from each other in the jaws of the Rhinoceros. He has, besides these, twenty-four smaller teeth, six on each side of each jaw. His ears are always erect; they are, for the form, like those of a hog, only they are larger in proportion to his body; they are the only hairy parts of it. The end of the tail is like that of the elephant, furnished with a tuft of large bristles, very hard and very solid. Huge and seemingly unwieldy as the Rhinoceros is, he has the power of running with very great swiftness.

The Rhinoceros which arrived in London in 1739 had been sent from Bengal. Although he was young, (being but two years old,) the expenses of his food and his voyage amounted to near one thousand pounds sterling; he was fed with rice, sugar, and hay. They gave him daily seven pounds of rice, mixed with three pounds of sugar; which they divided into three parts. He had also a great quantity of hay and green grass, to which he gave the preference. His drink was nothing but water, of which he drank a great quantity at once. He was of a quiet disposition, and let his manager touch him on all the parts of his body. He grew unruly when he was struck or was hungry; and in both cases he could not be appeased without giving him something to eat. When he was angry, he leaped forward with impetuosity to a great height, beating furiously the walls with his head; which he did with a prodigious quickness, notwithstanding his heavy appearance.

"This Rhinoceros when he was two years old was not much higher than a young cow who has not yet borne young; but his body was very long, and very thick. The tongue of this young Rhinoceros was soft, like that of a calf; his eyes had no vivacity; they were like those of a hog in form, and were placed very low; that is, nearer the opening of the nostrils.

"Mr. Parsons says, that he has observed a very particular quality in this animal; he hearkened with a sort of continual attention to any noise; so that, if he was even sleepy, employed in eating, or in satisfying other urgent wants, he started instantly, raised up his head, and gave attention till the noise had ceased.

"It is certain that some Rhinoceroses have but one horn on the nose, and others two. In the two-horned Rhinoceros, one of the horns is smaller than the other, and is situated above it. When the animal is quiescent these horns are loose, but they become fixed when it is irritated. There are single horns of three feet and a half, and perhaps of more than four feet in length. Commonly, these horns are brown, or olive colour; yet some are grey, and even white. They have only a small concavity, in form of a cup, at their basis, by which they are fastened to the skin of the nose; the remaining part of the horn is solid, and very hard. It is with this weapon that the Rhinoceros is said to attack, and sometimes to wound mortally, the largest elephants, whose long legs give to the Rhinoceros, who has them much shorter, an opportunity of striking them with his horn under the belly, where the skin is tender and more penetrable; but when he misses the first blow, the elephant throws him on the ground, and kills him.

"The horn of the Rhinoceros is more valued by the Indians than the ivory of the elephant; not so much on account of the matter, of which they make several works with the chisel, as for its substance, to which they attribute diverse virtues and medicinal properties. The white ones, as the most rare, are also those which they value most. Cups made of this horn are used to drink out of by many of the Indian princes, under the erroneous idea that when any poisonous fluid is put into them, the liquor will ferment, and run over the top.

"The Rhinoceros, without being ferocious or carnivorous, or even very wild, is nevertheless untameable. He is of the nature of a hog, blunt and grunting, without intellect, without sentiment, and without tractableness. These animals are also, like the hog, very much inclined to wallow in the mire; they like damp and marshy places, and seldom leave the banks of rivers. They are found in Asia and Africa, in Bengal, Siam, Laos, in the Mogul dominions, in Sumatra, in Java, in Abyssinia, and about the Cape of Good Hope. But in general, the species is not so numerous, or so universally spread, as that of the elephant. The female brings forth but one young, and at a great distance of time. In the first month, the Rhinoceros is not much bigger than a large dog; he has not, when first brought forth, the horn on the nose, although the rudiment of it is seen in the fœtus. When he is two years old, this horn is only an inch long; and in his sixth year, it is about ten inches; and as some of these horns have been seen very near four feet long, it seems they grow till his middle age, and perhaps during the whole life of the animal, which must be long, since the Rhinoceros described by Mr. Parsons was not come to half his growth when he was two years old; which makes it probable that this animal lives, like a man, seventy or eighty years.

"Without being useful, as the elephant, the Rhinoceros is very hurtful, by the prodigious devastation which he makes in the fields. The skin is the most valuable thing of this animal. His flesh is excellent, according to the taste of Indians and Negroes. Kolben says, he has often eaten it with great pleasure

His skin makes the best and hardest leather in the world; and not only his horn, but all the other parts of his body, and even his blood, his urine, his excrements, are esteemed as antidotes against poison, or a remedy against several diseases; probably, however, all those virtues are imaginary.

"The Rhinoceros feeds upon herbs, thistles, prickles, shrubs, and he prefers this wild food to the sweet pasture of the verdant meadows; he is very fond of sugar-canes, and eats all sorts of corn. Having no taste whatever for flesh, he does not molest small animals, neither fears the large ones, living in peace with them all, even with the tiger, who often accompanies him, without daring attack him: I doubt, therefore, whether the battles betwixt the elephant and the Rhinoceros have any foundation; they must, however, seldom happen, since there is no motive for war on either side; and, besides, no sort of antipathy has been observed between these animals. Some have even been seen in captivity, living quietly together, without giving offence or provocation to each other.

"The Rhinoceroses do not herd together, nor march in troops, like the elephant; they are wilder, and more solitary, and perhaps more difficult to be hunted and subdued; they never attack men unless provoked; but then they become furious, and are very formidable: the steel of Damascus, the scimitars of Japan, cannot make an incision in his skin; the darts and lances cannot pierce him through: his skin even resists the balls of the musket; those of lead become flat upon his leather, and the iron ingots cannot penetrate through it: the only places absolutely penetrable in his body armed with a cuirass, are the belly, the eyes, and round the ears; so that hunters, instead of attacking this animal standing, follow him at a distance by his track, and wait to approach him at a time that he sleeps or rests himself. There is in the King of France's cabinet a fetus of a Rhinoceros, which was sent from the island of Java. It was said, in a memorial which accompanied this present, that twenty-eight hunters had assembled to attack its mother; they had followed far off for some days, one or two men walking now and then before, to reconnoitre the position of the animal. By these means they surprised her when she was asleep, and came so near in silence, that they discharged all at once their twenty-eight guns into the lower parts of her belly.

"We have seen that this animal has a good ear; it is also affirmed that he has the sense of smelling in perfection; but it is pretended he has not a good eye, and sees only before him: that his eyes are so small, and placed so low, and so obliquely, and have so little vivacity and motion, that this fact needs no other confirmation. His voice, when he is calm, resembles the grunting of a hog; and when he is angry, his sharp cries are heard at a great distance. Though he lives upon vegetables, he does not ruminate; thus it is probable, that, like the elephant, he has but one stomach, and very large bowels, which supply the office of the paunch. His consumption, though very great, is not comparable to that of the elephant; and it appears, by the thickness of his skin, that he loses less than the elephant by his perspiration."

It is supposed by some that the Rhinoceros is the unicorn of the scriptures. It is generally admitted that the various qualities therein assigned to that animal are combined in the Rhinoceros, viz. rage, untameableness, and strength. The Rhinoceros, likewise, has a single horn, thus corresponding in this particular. There is, however, as has been seen, a species of this animal which has two horns; and it appears that the unicorn sometimes had two:—"His horns are like the horns of a unicorn." We leave the subject for each one to judge for himself, remarking as we leave it, that there have been various opinions as to the unicorn, some supposing it to be the wild goat, others the wild bull, others again the wild ass, and so on.

BIOGRAPHY.



ST. ROCHE.

We give the following article relative to a Catholic saint, merely to show what some men believe.

All that Butler can affirm of him is, that making a pilgrimage from Montpellier to Rome during a pestilence, he devoted himself to the sick, became infected, made a shift to crawl into a neighbouring forest, bore incredible pains with patience and joy, returned to France, practised austere penance and piety, and died at Montpellier.

In the "Golden Legend" he is called St. Rock; and it relates that when infected by the pestilence, and lacking bread in the forest, a hound belonging to one Gotard daily took bread away from his master's board, and bare it to Rock, whom Gotard thereby discovered, and visited, and administered to his necessities; wherefore the hound came no more; and Rock was healed by revelation of an angel; and with touching and blessing he cured the diseased in the hospital, and healed all the sick in the city of Placentia. Being imprisoned, and about to die, he prayed that he might live three days longer in contemplation of the Passion, which was granted him; and on the third day an angel came to him, saying, "O! Rock, God sendeth me for thy soul; what thou now desirest thou shouldst ask." Then St. Rock implored that whoever prayed to him after death might be delivered from pestilence; and then he died. And anon an angel brought from heaven a table whereon was divinely written, in letters of gold, that it was granted—"That who that call eth to Saynte Rock mekely, he shall not be hurte with ony hurte of pestylence;" and the angel laid the table under Rock's head; and the people of the city buried St. Rock solemnly, and he was canonized by the pope gloriously. His life in the "Golden Legend" ends thus: "The feast of Saynte Roche is alwaye holden on the morowe after the daye of the assumpcyon of our lady, whiche life is translated out of latyn in englysshe by me, Wyllyam Caxton."

There is an entry among the extracts of the churchwardens' accounts of St. Michael Spurrier-gate, York, printed by Mr. Nichols, thus: "1518. Paid for writing of Saint Royke Masse, 0l. 0s. 9d." His festival on this day was kept like a wake, or general harvest-home, with dances in the churchyard in the evening.†

• Brand.

† Fosbroke's Dist. of Antiq.