

## Wild Beasts and their Wonderful Ways.

The Zoological Gardens in London are world-famous, and justly so, for they contain incomparably the finest collection of animals in the world.

At this moment thirteen hundred living creatures live in the green slopes, the shaded avenues, and sunny terraces of that most pleasant place; and since the Gardens were established—twenty-six years ago—no less than fourteen thousand specimens have been exhibited within its inclosures.

The Gardens, as most of our readers know, are a large park, in which each animal is kept, as far as possible, in the circumstances which surround it in its native wilds.

Thus, the bears have poles to climb, the otters pools in which to swim, the vultures rocks to perch upon, the beavers a running stream to dam, the swans a lake to swim in.

The "Quarterly Review" continues its series of articles upon what De Quincy called "the Nation of London," by a very delightful paper on these marvelous Gardens, the writer of which displays that happy blending of accurate observation and lively fancy which has rendered the series so popular. From this article we extract some passages which one need not be a naturalist to appreciate.

### A VIEW OF THE GARDENS FROM AN ELEVATION.

From this elevated situation the whole plan of the south side of the grounds is exposed. To his right, fringing a still pool whose translucent waters mirror them as they stand, the spectator sees the collection of storks and cranes; more immediately in front of him softly tread the llamas and alpacas—the beasts of burden of the New World; farther, again, we see the deer in their paddocks, and beyond the sedgy pools of the water-fowl, set in the midst of graceful shrubberies which close the Gardens in from the landscape of the Regent's Park.

Passing over to the northern side of the terrace he sees the eagle aviary, tenanted by its royal and solitary-looking occupants; the otters swimming their merry round, and perchance the seal flapping beside his pool; while the monkeys with incredible rapidity and constant chatter, swing and leap about their wire inclosure.

Immediately beneath him the Polar bears pace to and fro, or, swaying their heads, walk backward with a firmness which a lord chamberlain might study with advantage; and close at hand the long neck of the 'ship of the desert' is seen sailing out from the gateway of the pretty clock-house. That the dread monarch of the forest and the other 'great cats' are beneath his feet, he is made aware by angry growls and the quivering sound of shaken iron bars, as the keeper goes round with his daily beef-barrow.

No one can help feeling a certain sense of strangeness at seeing these creatures of all climes scattered amid a flourishing garden—to witness beasts, ensanguined in tooth and claw, impatiently pacing to and fro between banks of scarlet geraniums or beds brilliant with the countless blooms of early dahlias—or, still more oddly, to witness birds of prey which love to career in the storm, surrounded by monthly roses.

### FEEDING THE GREAT SNAKES IN THE REPTILE-HOUSE.

The reptiles are offered food once a week, but will not always feed even at this interval. One huge python fasted the almost incredible time of twenty-two months, having probably prepared himself for his abstinence by a splendid gorge.

After a fast of seven days, however, the majority of the serpents regain their appetites. Three o'clock is the feeding time, and the reptiles which are on the look-out seem to know full well the errand of the man who enters with the basket, against the sides of which they hear the fluttering wings of the feathered victims, and the short stamp of the doomed rabbits.

The keeper opens the door at the back of the den of the voluminous serpents on our right—for of these there is no fear—takes off their blanket, and drops in upon the clattering pebbles a scampering rabbit, who hops from side to side, curious to inspect his new habitation; presently satisfied, he sits on his haunches, and leisurely begins to wash his face.

Silently the rock-snake glides over the stones, uncurling his huge folds, which like a cable seem to move as though by some agency from without, looks for an instant upon his unconscious victim, and the next has seized him with his cruel jaws. His constricting folds are twisted as swiftly as a whip lash round his shrieking prey, and for ten minutes the serpent lies still, maintaining his mortal knot until his prey is dead, when, seizing him by the ears, he draws him through his vice-like grip, crushing every bone, and elongating the body preparatory to devouring it.

The boa and the rock-snake always swallow their prey head-foremost. How is that fine neck and delegate head to make room for that bulky rabbit? thinks the spectator. Presently he sees the jaws gape, and slowly the reptile draws himself over, rather than swallows his prey, as you draw a stocking upon your leg.—The huge lump descends lower and lower beneath the speckled scales, which seem to stare with distension, and the monster coils himself up once more to digest his meal in quiet.

### HOW THE VENOMOUS SERPENTS KILL THEIR VICTIMS.

The snake strikes at the guinea-pig; again and again he dashes at it but misses his aim; now he hits it, but only to drive the poor fright-

ened creature with a score of flying pebbles before him; when at last he succeeds in piercing the sides of his victim, tetanic spasms immediately commence, and it dies convulsed in a few seconds. It is said by those who have watched the venomous snakes, that the manner of dying exhibited by their stricken prey discloses the nature of the reptile that inflicted the poisoned wound.

It is scarcely necessary to state that the popular idea that the tongue darts forth the venom is a fallacy. The poison is contained in glands which lie at the root of the fangs on either side, and, by the compression of the powerful muscles which make the head appear so broad and flat, it is forced into the fine tube which runs at the sides of the fang, and finds its exit near the point by a minute opening.—The cobra at present in the collection, with its skin a glossy black and yellow, its eye black and angry, its motions agile and graceful, seems to be the very personification of India. As we watch it when ready to spring, we suddenly remember that only a films of glass stands between us and "pure death." But there is nothing to fear; the python in the adjoining room, which weighs a hundred and twenty pounds, being incensed on his first arrival at being removed from his box, darted with all his force at a spectator. Yet the pane of glass had strength enough to bring him up, and he fell back bruised about the head and muzzle by the collision that he could not feed well for several months. The cobra that we see is the same that destroyed its keeper. In a fit of drunkenness the man, against express orders, took the reptile out, and, placing its head inside his waistcoat, allowed it to glide round his body. When it had emerged from under his clothes from the other side, apparently in good humor, he squeezed its tail, when it struck him between his eyes; in twenty minutes his consciousness was gone, and in less than three hours he was dead.

### SNAKES SWALLOWING ONE ANOTHER.

Every one has heard of the snake who swallowed his blanket, a meal which ultimately killed him. A python who had lived for years in a friendly manner with a brother nearly as large as himself, was found one morning solus. As the cage was secure, the keepers were puzzled to know how the serpent had escaped; at last it was observed that the remaining inmate had swollen remarkably during the night, when the horrid fact became plain enough; the fratricide had succeeded in swallowing the entire person of his brother; it was his last meal, however, for in some months he died. A friend informs us that he once saw in these Gardens a rat-snake of Ceylon devour a common coluber natrix. The rat-snake, however, had not taken the measure of his victim, as by no effort could he dispose of the last four inches of his tail, which stuck out rather jauntily from the side of his mouth, with very much the look of a cigar. After a quarter of an hour the tail began to exhibit a retrograde motion, and the swallowed snake was disgorged, nothing the worse from his living sepulcher, with the exception of the wound made by his partner when first he seized him.

### THE ECCENTRICITIES OF THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

The hippopotamus surges into his bath in the inclosure as we pause, and these is a rush of visitors to see the mighty brute performing his ablutions. He no longer gives audience to all the fair and fashionable folks of the town.—Alas for the greatness of this world! the soldier-crab and the Esop prawn now draw better "houses." Whether or no this desertion has embittered his temper, we cannot say, but he has certainly lost his amiability, notwithstanding that he still retains the humorous curl-up of the corners of his mouth which Doyle used to hit off so inimitably. At times, indeed, he is perfectly furious, and his vast strength has necessitated the reconstruction of his house on a much stronger plan.

Those only who have seen him rush with extended jaws at the massive oaken door of his apartment, returning again and again to the charge, and making the solid beams quiver as though they were only of inch deal, can understand the dangerous fits which now and then are exhibited by a creature who was so gentle when he made his debut, that he could not go to sleep without having his Arab keeper's feet to lay his neck upon. This affection for his nurse has undergone a great change, for on Hamet's countryman and coadjutor, Mohammed, making his second appearance with the young female hippopotamus, Obaysch very nearly killed him in the violence of his rage. He has a peculiar dislike to the sight of working-men, especially if they are employed in doing any jobs about his apartment.

The smith of the establishment happening to be passing the other day along the iron gallery which runs across one side of his bath, the infuriated animal leaped out of the water, at least eight feet high, and would speedily have pulled the whole construction down had not the man run rapidly out of his sight. We trust his temper will improve when his young bride in the adjoining room is presented to him; but she is as yet but a baby behemoth, although growing fast.

The enormously strong iron railings in front of his apartments are essential to guard against the rushes he sometimes makes at persons he does not like. Look at that huge mouth, opened playfully to receive knicknacks! What is a bun or a biscuit to him? Down that huge throat goes one hundred pounds' weight of provender daily. Surely the dragon of Wantley had not such a gullet.

### HOW GIRAFFES FIGHT.

The giraffe, in spite of his mild and melancholy look, which reminds us forcibly of the

camel, yet fights ferociously with his kind at certain seasons of the year. Two males once battled here so furiously that the horn of one of them was actually driven into the head of the other. Their method of fighting is very peculiar: stretching out their fore and hind legs like a rocking-horse, they use their heads, as a blacksmith would a sledge hammer, and swinging the vertebral column in a manner, one would think, to break it, they bring the full force of the horns to bear upon their antagonist's skull. The blow is severe in the extreme, and every precaution is taken to prevent these conflicts.

### PRICES OF WILD BEASTS.

The first rhinoceros cost £1,000; the four giraffes, £700, and their carriage an additional £700. The elephant and calf were bought in 1851 for £800; and the hippopotamus, although a gift, was not brought home and housed at less than £1,000—a sum which he more than realized in the famous Exhibition season, when the receipts were £10,000 above the previous year. The lion Albert was purchased for £140; a tiger in 1852 for £200. The value of some of the smaller birds will appear, however, more startling; thus, the pair of black-necked swans were purchased for £80; (they are now to be seen in the three-island pond) a pair of crowned pigeons, £35; four mandarin ducks, £70. It would be impossible from these prices, however, to judge of the present value of the animals. Take the rhinoceros, for example; the first specimen cost £1,000, the second, quite as fine a brute, only £350. Lions range again from £40 to £180, and tigers from £40 to £200.

The price is generally ruled by the state of the wild beast market and by the intrinsic rarity of the creature. A first appearance in Europe of course is likely to draw, and is, therefore, at the top-price; but it is wonderful how demand produces supply. Let any rare animal bring a crowd to the Gardens, and in a twelve-month numbers of his brethren will be generally in the market. The ignorance displayed by some persons as to the value of well-known objects is something marvelous. We have already spoken of the sea-captain who demanded £600 for a pair of pythons and at last took £40! On another occasion an American offered the Society a grisly bear for £2,000, to be delivered in the United States; and more laughable still, a moribund walrus, which had been fed for nine weeks on salt pork and meal, was offered for the trifling sum of £700.

### WILD-BEAST MERCHANTS.

We have said that the value of animals depends upon the state of the wild-beast market. "Wild-beast market!" exclaims the reader; "and where can that be?" Every one knows that London can furnish anything for money, and if any lady or gentleman wants lions or tigers, there are dealers in Ratcliffe Highway and the adjacent parts who have them on the premises, and will sell them at five minutes' notice. They "talk as familiarly of lions as ladies do of puppy dogs;" and a gentleman who purchased a bear of one of them, lately informed us that the salesman coolly proposed that he should take him home with him in a cab!

One wild-beast merchant informed us that one night he was awakened by his wife, hearing a noise in the back-yard, where he had placed two lions on the previous evening. On putting his head out of the window—his room was on the ground-floor—there were the lions, loose, and, with their paws on the window-sill, looking grimly in upon him.—A good whip and a determined air consigned Leo to his cage again without further trouble. On another occasion this same man, hearing a noise in his back premises, found to his horror that an elephant, with his pick-lock trunk, had let out a hyena and a nyghau from their cages, and was busy undoing the fastenings of a den full of lions! The same resolute spirit, however, soon restored order. Amateurs have not always the same courage or self-possession, and they immediately have recourse to the Garden folks to get them out of their difficulties, as a house-keeper would send to the station-house on finding a burglar secreted in his cellar. On one occasion a gentleman, who had offered a rattlesnake and its young to the Gardens at a high price, sent suddenly to the superintendent to implore immediate assistance, as the said snake, with half a score venomous offspring, had escaped from their box and scattered themselves in his grounds.

### A New Sugar Culture.

The late London papers contain descriptions of the remarkable productiveness for the manufacture of sugar and other uses of a plant lately introduced into Europe from Caffreland, called the Imphee. It is said in some of these descriptions to be identical with the Sorgho, or Holcus Saccharatus of Linnæus, which is cultivated in China for the manufacture of sugar.

The Sorghum is described in the Encyclopædia of Plants as an Indian plant, much cultivated in Arabia and most parts of Asia Minor, also in China, Italy, Spain, and the West Indies, and it is said that brooms are made of the spikes. It is described as of rapid growth, and affording abundant food for man and cattle and poultry. In some botanical work it is confounded with the broomcorn. This, however, must be a variety differing materially from the plant cultivated in the above-named countries.

The seeds of this plant, of which variety we are not informed, were last year received at the Patent Office at Washington, and distributed under the name of the 'Chinese Sugar-cane, or Sorghum Saccharatum.' It has doubtless been planted the present season in various parts of this country; with what success it is not yet time to know. The direction from the Patent Office was that it should be cultivated as broomcorn, and

planted in hills three feet by two apart and six stalks in a hill.

Mr. E. WRAY in a letter from Paris addressed to the London Times, speaks of the various plants of this species which have been heretofore introduced into Europe, and says that he has fifteen varieties which are far more valuable, collected by himself in Caffreland, which he has carefully studied, cultivated, and manufactured into sugar during a long period, and finally imported into Europe in the beginning of 1854. He adds that he has now a considerable amount of the plant under cultivation in four departments in the south of France, and that he has also introduced it into Guadeloupe, whence he has received information that it has yielded four full crops in one year from the same sowing.

We extract the following from Mr. Wray's description of the plant, which, if not exaggerated, establishes its claim to a trial in every part of this country; for it would seem that, if it cannot mature sufficiently to make sugar, it will make alcohol, or at least fodder for cattle and food for poultry in abundance. It would appear from Mr. Wray's description that the Imphee from Caffreland is of more rapid growth than that cultivated in China, of which the seed has been distributed from the Patent Office:

"These imphees vary in time of growth from 75 days up to 130 days, the most precocious taking only from 75 to 90 days to arrive at perfect maturity; others, again, 90 to 100 days, and so on up to the gigantic 'vin-bis-chu-a-pa,' which takes 130 days, and reaches a height of 15 feet.

"On the other hand, the Chinese imphee requires, even in the luxuriant soil and climate of Algeria, 150 days to complete its maturity. At the same time, being more woody in its stock and less full of juice than the Caffre varieties, it must be at once evident to every mind that the simple difference between 90 days and 150 days in the growth of a plant requiring the hot sun of summer must of itself decide the relative importance of the two for European culture.

"From this cause it is principally that the great efforts made by the French chemists and agriculturists to obtain crystallized sugar from the juice of the Chinese variety have hitherto so signally failed, and that they are obliged to convert its juice into alcohol instead.

"Perfect maturity and a peculiar process of manufacture (which I have patented in many countries) insure the most complete crystallization of the concentrated juice, and the sugar resulting cannot be discerned from real cane sugar of the colonies, to which it is equal in every respect.

The imphee yields from one to two and a-half tons of sugar per acre, according to the quality of soil and the character of the climate and season, besides molasses and grain of excellent quality; and, moreover, in some departments of France, the most precocious varieties yield two crops in the year from the same sowing.

"As your Paris correspondent very truly says, the grain furnishes a good flour for bread-making, and the green plant itself forms the most grateful and nourishing fodder for cattle which any one can desire, while its rapidity of growth (being at the rate of about 12 inches a week) is really something marvellous."—[Boston Daily Adv.]

**NEW FLOWERING SHRUB.**—The Horticulturist for January, gives a plate and notice of a shrub found in Micon county, North Carolina, said to be a nameless and undescribed variety of Rhododendron, a flower second only in magnificence to the Magnolia Grandinora. It grows to the height of four or five feet, and is easily transplanted and cultivated. It is said that no American flower exceeds this in beauty. Its color is a bright crimson, approaching scarlet, and the panicles are composed of twenty or thirty flowers, forming a conical mass nearly as large as a man's head. The leaves are evergreen of a deep color. The spot where found is on the top of almost inaccessible mountains.

**SIZE OF THE "GREAT WEST."**—Illinois would make forty such states as Rhode Island, and Minnesota sixty. Missouri is larger than all New England. Ohio exceeds either Ireland, or Scotland, or Portugal, and equals Belgium, Scotland, and Switzerland together.—Missouri is more than half as large as Italy, and larger than Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland. Missouri and Illinois are larger than England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and Kansas is larger than both! This is, indeed, a great country, and "Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm."

**A GOOD MAXIM—TRY IT.**—The more peaceably and quietly we get on the better—the better for us and others. In nine cases out of ten the wisest policy is, if a man cheats you, quit dealing with him; if he is abusive, quit his company; if he slanders you, take care to live so that nobody will believe him. No matter who he is, or how he misuses you, the wisest way is generally to leave him alone, for there is nothing better than this cool, calm, quiet way of dealing with the wrongs we meet.

### Signs of Prosperity.

Where spades grow bright, and idle words grow dull;  
Where jails are empty, and where barns are full;  
Where church-paths are with frequent steps outworn,  
Law courtyards weedy, silent and forlorn;  
Where doctors foot it, and where farmers ride;  
Where age abounds, and youth is multiplied;—  
Where these signs are, they clearly indicate  
A happy people and well-governed State.

Never suffer your children to require service from others which they can perform themselves. A strict observance of the rule will be of incalculable advantage to them in every period of life.

☞ Labor with day light; night is for sleep.