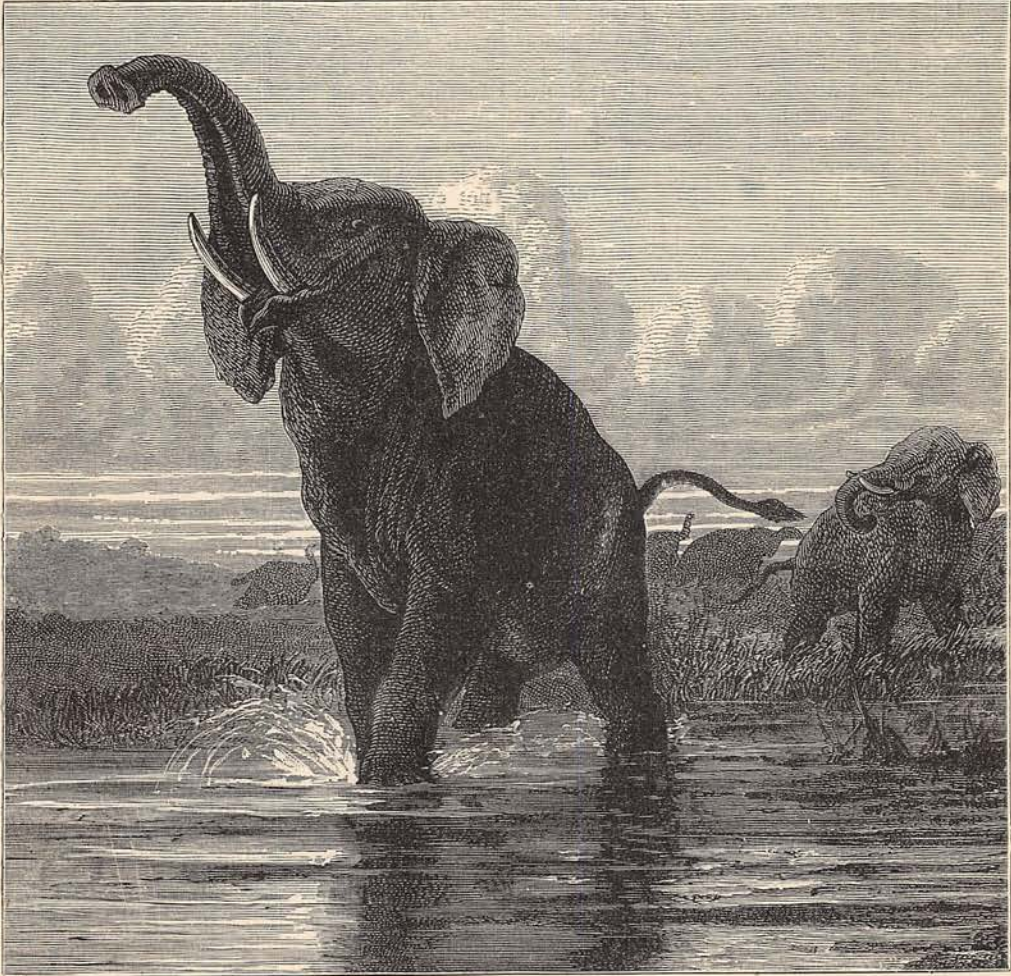


ELEPHANTS.

ELEPHANTS have suffered more almost than any other animal from the contempt which is bred by familiarity. If you go to the Zoo and see a tiger, you may be assured by physiologists, and believe it from your own common sense, that the animal is a much finer creature when it bounds through its native jungle.

with regard to him in old scientific treatises. Thus a popular idea, which survived into more enlightened times, deprived him of joints. Sir Thomas Browne, who lived in the reign of James I., mentions it among his list of "Vulgar Errours." "This absurdity," he says, "is seconded by another, that being unable to lye downe he sleepeeth against a tree, which the hunters



"THE LEADER OF THE HERD" (p. 606).

Still, as it glares at you unpleasantly through the bars—especially when it comes near its dinner-hour—you have a very high opinion of its ferocity. Physiologists may be eloquent, and give you *data* and figures; none the less you have a very exalted respect for the captive. The elephant, on the other hand, with a whole nursery on his back, picking up pennies and dining on water-biscuits, is a very poor figure, and his bulk raises nothing more dignified than laughter.

The ancients had a very different opinion of the monster. He was a favourite subject for speculation, and the most ridiculous propositions were advanced

observing doe saw almost asunder, whereon the beast relying, by the fall of the tree falls also downe itselfe, and is able to rise no more." It is easy enough to understand how this fallacy got about. The pillar-like look of the legs suggests that joints would be almost unnecessary, and, as a matter of fact, the animal gets such support from them that he rarely lies down at all. In captivity elephants have been known to sleep for months standing up, and in some menageries the keepers infer that the animal is ill if it lies down during the night. In fact, its legs support it so well that one sportsman printed an account of his firing at

an elephant over and over again, and at last, coming up to it, found that it had died standing up; and Major Rogers having lodged a bullet right in the brain of another, the animal fell on its knees, and died in that suppliant attitude.

Another popular error about the elephant is that it dislikes all other animals. This is true in a restricted sense. Elephants are very conservative, and do not like what they are not accustomed to. They are by no means cowards, but, like other animals of undoubted courage, they may be frightened by unfamiliar objects. It is known that an old woman once escaped from a bull by opening an umbrella, and in the same way a flock of elephants will fly from the yelp of a dog. Indeed, Tennent tells a story of a little Scotch terrier that seized an elephant by the trunk, and so frightened the big brute that it came at once down on its knees. The keeper had ultimately to interfere, or the elephant would have run away. The distrust which an elephant has for a horse is founded on the same grounds. Horses are such purely artificial creatures, we can scarcely wonder that other animals feel a little strangely towards them. Before the Prince started on his journey to India, his horses were taken several mornings to the Zoo, and were walked round the elephants and other animals, so as to accustom them to forms they might see a little more frequently in the East. The true antipathy, however, is not so much on the part of the elephant as of the horse. Thus horses are known to have an unaccountable dislike to camels, and to become quite impatient even at the smell of them. This antipathy is mentioned by so early an historian as Herodotus. There are, indeed, stories told of elephants attacking horses, but they do not seem to be well-founded; and it has happened more than once that a horse which had escaped from its rider in the jungle was afterwards found grazing in peace with a herd of wild elephants.

In our own days we have become sceptical about the wonderful qualities of the monster, making his acquaintance chiefly at travelling circuses, country fairs, menageries, and on other occasions calculated to impair our sense of his dignity; or if we have any curiosity left, we reserve it for a single species, better known in similes than in reality as the Rogue elephant. If people indeed were at pains to get information about the Rogue, they would learn a great deal about the whole race. For the Rogue being a kind of felon or convict, a sense of his offences will lead us to understand the usages of the society from which he is an outcast. We have spoken of a herd of elephants, and the phrase is a vague one; the proper expression, perhaps, should be a family; which gives us quite a patriarchal idea of the animal. They move about, not in casual groups, but in clans. They are all cousins or kinsmen. Of course this must rest to a certain degree on conjecture, but on conjecture strongly supported by proof. Thus a gang of twenty-one elephants were captured, and it was found that they had all the same kind of trunks—that kind differing from the ordinary variety. On the occasion of another great *battue*, where thirty-five head of this

gigantic game were bagged, they had all the same coloured eyes. They associate thus in great *troupes*, with a recognised head or leader. He is generally a male, but a strong-minded female has been known to come to the front and assume the command. Sometimes it will happen that one of the troupe becomes separated from the rest. He loses his way, or is perhaps wounded, and ultimately recovers. But he has forfeited his citizenship; he has lost his rights, and becomes a mere tenant on sufferance. The herd will permit him to browse near them, but the intimacy must not go further. The pariah then becomes desperate. He wanders about and attacks everything. He cannot join his own kin, and so he marauds recklessly. In this way he becomes more accustomed to meet men, and revenges upon them the wrongs which have been so cruelly visited upon him. It is said that he gets such an abhorrence for his own tribe, that he will not even make common cause with another Rogue, which is perhaps fortunate for the native population. There is another explanation of the Rogue elephant, which is founded on these individuals being almost always males. It is said that they are either widowers or bachelors—supernumeraries who are left unprovided for, or have lost their former partners; and naturalists have remarked a similar habit of ostracism exercised by other animals who habitually live in groups against special individuals—as in the case of the buffaloes of South America; or, according to Livingstone, the hippopotami in Africa.

One of the chief uses to which the Romans put elephants was to terrify uncivilised European tribes. Thus Polyænus states that an elephant was introduced into this country by Cæsar in B.C. 54, to the no small terror of our ancestors, though the earliest reliable account we have of an elephant in England is to be found in Baker's "Chronicle." One of the Kings of France presented one of enormous size to Henry III., in the year 1238.

With the introduction of gunpowder, elephants went out of fashion for war purposes. Instead of terrifying the troops, the troops terrified them, and a few squibs would put a whole herd to flight. Still, in their native country, they remained a source of fear to the natives. We read in "Gulliver's Travels," that in the island of Lilliput the inhabitants regarded "the man-monster" as a kind of plague: his approach caused a famine in the land. Hay is no doubt cheaper in India than in London, still as elephants generally range in herds, and as the average consumption of each animal is 150 lbs. weight of grass and vegetables a day, we can fancy what expensive visitors they are. Louis XIV. had a tame one at Versailles, and its daily bill of fare has been recorded. The items read rather curiously. Four pounds of bread, twelve pints of wine, two buckets of porridge, taken with an extra supply of four or five loaves of bread, and two buckets of boiled rice: that was its regulation board; but the liberality of strangers increased the amount of its daily food, and its consumption of penny buns was all that could be desired by the neighbouring pastrycook.

The memory and the intelligence of elephants have

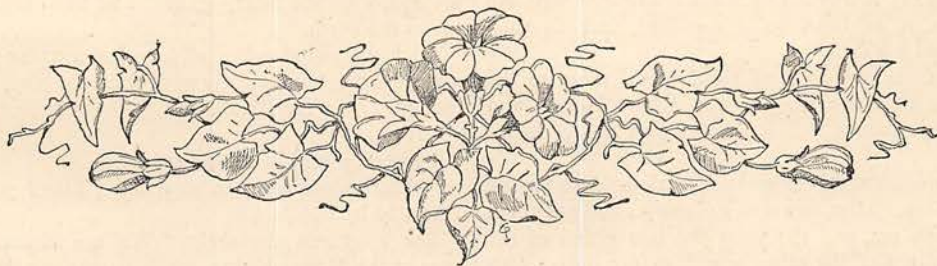
always been insisted upon. One reads the same stories in all treatises. Every one has heard of the practical joke of the Delhi tailor, and who had the worst of that joke. The poor elephant, lumbering—we may be sure—in an ungainly way down the town, looked in at the window where the tailor and his associates were at work. Perhaps to a tailor, armed with his needle, the trunk of an elephant was too tempting a sight. This one, at all events, could not resist the temptation, and drove the needle into it. The elephant lumbered away discomfited, and passed on down the street till it came to a pond of dirty water; there it took in a supply of mud, and, returning to the party of tailors, spurted it, with its trunk, all over them and their work. Perhaps a better story is of that same animal at Versailles whose *menu* we have already given. Here an artist was the offender. The artist wanted to use the animal as a model, and was particularly anxious to get it in the attitude of holding its trunk raised up in the air and with its mouth open. So he supplied a little boy with a basket of fruit, cakes, and vegetables, and gave him directions to pretend to throw the fruit, so that the animal might constantly lift its trunk and open its mouth to receive it. The plan might have succeeded but for the high moral character of the elephant, who was so annoyed at the fraud thus practised on him, that he filled his trunk with water and prepared to discharge it. The story is told as an illustration of the justice of this elephant; for instead of sousing the little boy, who evidently was only doing what he was bid, he showered all the water down on the artist, drenching the man and utterly ruining his

sketches. Probably this Versailles elephant had developed a sense of humour, as well as a passion for buns, in captivity. But water is not the only thing he ejects from that trunk. His skin is peculiar in its formation. There are, in fact, two skins, as with man himself; but then there is this difference. Our outer skin, the *epidermis*, sticks close to the under, while with the elephant it is fastened on in flakes or scales. The result is that the outer skin gets dry and irritable. When he is in this state his trunk is a great comfort to him. He waters the great tract of dry hide, very much the way they water the asphalt streets in Paris; or sometimes he covers himself with dust, which keeps off the gnats and other small insects. There is something very like irony in the notion of a gnat stinging an elephant, but the elephant finds it a serious matter. His tender skin presents him with many sore points.

It is a pity when knowledge spoils a good story, but in truth there is probably no such thing as a white elephant. Some of these animals are at times spotted over with yellowish tints, inclining to pink, and amongst the Asiatics these spots are admired. We know how the tendency of an Oriental language is to exaggerate, and thus the light-coloured and spotted elephants may have been called white. Horace, indeed, alludes to them in one of the Epodes—

“Sive elephas albus vulgi converteret ora,”

and there is a record that in the year 1633 a white elephant was exhibited in Holland; but notwithstanding these instances, we may treat the white elephant as a fable, or at least as a *lusus*.



TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

A POSTHUMOUS POEM OF ALFRED CROWQUILL.



LD Time is the drollest of wags,
And puzzles the world with his rules;
He gave all *to-day* to the wise,
To-morrow he promised the fools.

At first he made naught but *to-day*,
With its joys, its successes and sorrow,
Then to keep on good terms with the world
He promised he'd make a *to-morrow*.

The idle rejoiced at the news,
Put their hands in their pockets and slept,
Believing the promise of Time
Would be most religiously kept.

They never conceived that the rogue
Had promised to-morrow in fun,
So quietly went to decay
Leaving all to-day's work to be done.

At last they woke up but to find
To-morrow was really a myth,
And thought what they'd do, when too late,
If they had the time to do with.

They prayed to old Time to return,
'Twas merely the wasting of breath,
For they found, as he laughed and flew on,
That to-morrow was nothing but death.