



## ELEPHANT STORIES.

It has often been questioned whether the bones of the mastodon and other extinct animals have been carried from warmer regions, or the race had been fitted to exist in the colder climates in which the bones are found. It seems impossible that so many huge animals could exist in countries now almost barren of vegetation, and it seems necessary to suppose that they lived in an era more favourable to the production of vegetable life; but it is also demonstrable that the animal itself was adapted to a colder climate than the present race.

In Siberia, where the remains of tusks and bones especially abound, a poor fisherman discovered a huge animal embedded in ice and frozen sand, about sixty paces from the shore, near the mouth of the Lena. For five years he visited the spot, and in March, 1804, the ice having melted around it considerably, he cut off the tusks and exchanged them with a merchant, for goods to the value of fifty roubles. Two years afterwards Mr. Adams, an associate of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Petersburg, traversed these distant and desert regions, and found the mammoth still in the same place, but much mutilated. "The discoverer had been content with his tusks, and people in the neighbourhood had cut off the flesh with which they fed their dogs. Wild beasts, such as white bears, wolves, wolverines, and foxes, also fed upon it, and the traces of their footsteps were seen around. The skeleton, almost cleared of its flesh, remained whole, with the exception of one fore leg. The spine, from the head to the tail, and the other three extremi-

ties, were still held together by the ligaments and by parts of the skin. One of the ears, well preserved, was furnished with a tuft of hairs. The pupil of the eye could still be distinguished. It had no tail or proboscis, but the places for the insertion of the muscles of the trunk were visible on the skull, and they had probably been devoured. It was a male, had a long mane on the neck; and the skin on the side on which the animal had lain was still well preserved, and of such extraordinary weight that ten persons found great difficulty in carrying it to the shore. It was of a dark grey colour, covered with a reddish wool an inch and a-half long, very thick set, and curled in locks. It was interspersed with a few bristles about three inches long, of a dark reddish colour.

Among the separate parcels of hair, which were dug from the ground where they had been trodden by the bears while devouring the flesh, were some redder than those on the skin, about four inches long, and some bristles nearly black, much thicker than horsehair, and from twelve to eighteen inches long. The scapula, which had been detached, was found at a little distance, and the two tusks were repurchased by Mr. Adams, and the skeleton erected in the Museum of the Academy at Petersburg, where it now is. It is nine feet four inches high, and sixteen feet four inches from the point of the nose to the end of the tail, without including the tusks, which are nine feet six inches, measured along the curve. The weight of the two were three hundred and sixty pounds avoirdupois."

The modern elephant has been domesticated at a very early period, but the earliest notice we have of it, is in its employment in war by an Indian nation

against the Persians under Cyrus. At a later period they were used by the Persians in war. Alexander the Great first encountered them at Arbela, and afterwards in the army of Porus, the Indian king. At first they were much dreaded by the Greeks; and the historian Q. Curtius says, "The most dismal thing of all was when these animals took up the armed soldiers with their trunks and delivered them up to their governors on their backs;" but at last the Greeks chopped their legs with axes, and cut off their trunks with a crooked weapon resembling a scythe, while "the archers slew the governors, and the beasts no longer kept any certain station in the battle, but running forwards, as if madness had seized them, they trampled under foot friends and foes without distinction."

Pyrhus, king of Epirus, had twenty elephants, which he employed against the Romans at the Battle of Heraclea, B.C. 280, and they were extensively used in war by the Carthaginians. At the siege of Panormus, one hundred and forty elephants were drawn up in line; and upwards of a hundred captured. These were conveyed across the straits to Rhegium, for the gratification of the Roman people, who, after being satisfied with the sight, commanded them to be put to death, as their maintenance was not recompensed by any services they rendered. In the invasion of Italy by Hannibal, the elephant frequently did good service; at the battle of Zama, there were eighty elephants drawn up in front of the line; and in a few years afterwards the African elephant was fighting as an auxiliary to the Roman spearmen. Julius Cæsar had occasionally the elephant in his army, and one of the medals struck to his honour, represents him in a chariot drawn by four elephants. Twenty of them graced the triumph of Aurelian (A.D. 274), and the combats of elephants was for many years a common spectacle in the Roman Amphitheatre.

In the middle ages nothing was known of the elephant in Europe, excepting through the representations on medals and pictures. In 1256 one was kept in the Tower of London, and occasionally there was one at Paris, but till about one hundred years ago they were by no means common. The Duke of Devonshire had one at Chiswick, about the beginning of the present century, which gave many pleasing instances of its sagacity. "At the voice of her keeper she came out of her house, and immediately took up a broom, ready to perform his bidding in sweeping the paths. She would follow him round the enclosure in which she was let out for exercise, with a watering pot or pail, showing her readiness to take that share of labour which the elephants of the East so readily perform. She was often required to show her ingenuity in emptying the contents of a soda-water bottle, which was tightly corked. This she effected by pressing the small bottle against the ground with her enormous foot, so as to hold it securely at an angle of about forty-five degrees, till she twisted out the cork with her trunk, although it was very little above the edge of the neck; then, without altering the position, she turned her trunk round the bottle, so that she might reverse it, and thus empty the water into the extremity of the proboscis. This she accomplished without spilling a drop; and then delivered the empty bottle to the keeper, before she attempted to discharge the contents of the trunk into her mouth."

The docility of the elephant is such, that it has been trained to do various unnatural tricks, for the amusement of the vulgar. It is, however, more interesting to observe the development of its instinct in a natural manner, and among those anecdotes illustrating its manner of resenting injuries, there are some not a little ludicrous. The story of an elephant who, as it passed along the streets of Delhi, put its trunk into the

windows, begging such eatables as they chose to give it, is well known. A tailor, instead of giving it anything, pricked its trunk with his needle, and on its return from the river, it filled its trunk with water, and putting it again into the window, spouted its contents upon the poor tailor. Another that was employed in the Anglo-Indian army, on a march, was loaded to a degree it did not feel comfortable, and frequently turned up its trunk and took off a part. This irritated the quartermaster of the brigade, who threw a tent-pin at its head. In a few days it overtook the quartermaster, and seizing him with its trunk, lifted him into a large tamarind tree, which overhung the road, leaving him to cling to the boughs and get down as he could.

An elephant may supply the place of a nurse. An Indian officer says:—"I have myself seen the wife of a mahout (or driver) give a baby in charge to an elephant, while she went on some business, and have been highly amused in observing the sagacity and care of the unwieldy nurse. The child, which, like most children, did not like to lie still in one position, would, as soon as left to itself, begin crawling about; in which exercise it would probably get among the legs of the animal, or entangled among the branches of the trees on which it was feeding, when the elephant would, in the most tender manner, disengage his charge, either by lifting it out of the way with his trunk, or by removing the impediments to its free progress. If the child had crawled to such a distance as to verge upon the limits of his range (for the animal was chained by the leg to a peg driven into the ground) he would stretch out his trunk, and lift it back as gently as possible, to the spot whence it had started."

The sagacity of the elephant is perhaps not greater than that of the dog, the horse, or even the hog, his superiority lies chiefly in the possession of a

trunk, an instrument of great usefulness, which enables him to do actions which only the hands of men can perform. It is a tapering cone of about eight feet in length, composed of about forty thousand muscles having the power of distinct action, and interlaced with each other so as to give the greatest power of mobility in every direction. On the upper side of its extremity is an elongated process, which may be considered as a finger, and on the under edge a tubercle, which acts as an opposable thumb; or the two may be compared to a pair of pincers. The trunk is endowed with great sensibility, and stout in proportion to the size of the animal, and with it the elephant can uproot trees or gather grass, raise a cannon or pick up a pin, kill a man or brush off a fly. It conveys its food to its mouth with it, and draws up gallons of water, which it pours into its throat, or showers over its body, as it feels inclined. It gives it all the advantage of a long neck, which would have been incompatible with such a large head and heavy tusks.

Elephants have no canine teeth, but in the upper jaw there are two incisors, better known as tusks. These enormous weapons are round, arched, and terminate in a point. Their capsule is always free, and they continue to grow as long as the animal lives. They vary much in size, and one in Venice is said to be fourteen feet in length; the largest in the Paris Museum is only seven, and the weight is from fifty pounds to one hundred and fifty; but one was sold in Amsterdam which weighed three hundred and fifty pounds. In the lower jaw there are neither incisors nor canines, and no more than one molar tooth and part of another are to be seen in the gum of the elephant. When the anterior tooth is worn away by mastication, its fangs and alveolus are absorbed, and the posterior tooth comes forward and takes its position; each new tooth is larger than its predecessor.

At present the Asiatic elephant only is brought in subjection to man, but there is no doubt that the elephant used by the Carthaginians and Romans was of the African species. The degraded African has not the sagacity to employ its power for his advantage, and he only seeks to destroy it for its ivory, or to eat its flesh for food. The head of the African elephant is more round than the head of the Asiatic species; and its ears are much larger. The ear of a female killed by Dr. Livingstone measured four feet five inches in depth, and four feet in horizontal breadth. The African has three toes on the hind feet, while the Asiatic has four. The feats of the elephant in the theatres of ancient Rome, as described by Ælian, Pliny, and Suetonius, surpass anything yet attempted in modern times, and leave no doubt that the sagacity of the African was fully equal to that of the Asiatic species. With the above exceptions they are much alike in form and size. Of the one hundred and fifty used by the East India Company in the war with Tippoo Sultan, not one was ten feet high, and only a few males nine feet and a-half. Dr. Livingstone says, that on the Limpopo, "they attain a height of upwards of twelve feet. At the Zougá the height of one I measured was eleven feet four inches, and in this district nine feet ten inches. Farther north we shall find them nine feet only. It is a little remarkable that a decrease in size should occur where

food is the most abundant, but tropical climates seem unfavourable for the full development of either animals or man."

Though a large animal, the elephant is a very dainty feeder. Dr. Livingstone says, that "he will stand by the makoronga tree by the hour, plucking off the fruit, though it is a plum little bigger than a cherry. He chooses the mohonono, the mimosa, and other trees which contain much saccharine matter, mucilage, and gum. He may be seen putting his head to a lofty palmyra, and swaying it to and fro to shake off the seeds; he then picks them up singly and eats them. Or he may be seen standing by the masuka, and other fruit-trees, patiently picking off the sweet fruits one by one. Quality is more requisite than quantity."

It is commonly supposed that the elephant does not breed in a state of domestication, but this is an error. They were bred in Rome, as attested by several of the ancient historians; and a sufficient number of cases have occurred in India to establish the fact, though as long as they are sufficiently numerous to be taken in herds, the greater expense of breeding them will be sufficient to discourage the attempt under the direction of man. The young elephants that are reared in India are principally produced by the wild females that are taken with calf. They are weaned at three years old, and offer a determined resistance when it is attempted to separate them from their dams.

