

THE YOUTHFUL PONGO, AT THE ROYAL AQUARIUM.

THE GORILLA.

THE common walk of the gorilla is not on his hind legs, but on all-fours. In this posture, the arms are so long, that the head and breast are raised considerably; and, as it runs, the hind legs are brought far beneath the body. The leg and arm, on the same side, move together, which gives

the beast a curious waddle. It can run at great speed. The young, which I have pursued (says M. Du Chaillu), never took to trees, but ran along the ground; and at a distance, with their bodies half erect, looked not unlike negroes making off from pursuit; the hind legs moved between the arms, and those were some-

what bowed outwards. I have never found the female to attack; though I have been told, by the negroes, that a mother, with a young one in charge, will sometimes make fight. It is a pretty thing to see such a mother with the baby gorilla sporting about it. When the mother runs off from the hunter, the young one grasps her about the neck, and hangs beneath her breasts, with its little legs about her body. I think the adult gorilla utterly untamable. Several young gorillas my men captured alive, and they remained with me, for short periods, till their death. In no case could any treatment of mine, kind or harsh, subdue these little monsters from their first and lasting ferocity and malignity. The gorilla is entirely and constantly an enemy to man—resenting its captivity, young as my specimens were—refusing all food except the berries of its native woods, and attacking, with teeth and claws, even me, who was in most constant attendance upon them.

The strength of the gorilla is evidently enormous. A young one, of between two and three years of age, required four stout men to hold it; and even then, in its struggles, bit one severely. That with its jaws it can indent a musket-barrel, and with its arms break trees from four to six inches in diameter, sufficiently proves that its vast bony frame has corresponding muscle.

The colour of the skin in the gorilla, young as well as adult, is intense black. The colour does not appear, however, except in the face, on the breast, and in the palms of the hands. The hair of a grown, but not aged specimen, is, in colour, iron-grey. The individual hairs are ringed with alternate stripes of black and grey, which produce the iron-grey colour. On the arms the hair is darker, and also much longer, being sometimes over two inches long. It grows upwards on the fore-arm, and downwards on the main arm.

In the adult male the chest is bare. In the young males it is thinly covered with hair. In the female, the mamæ have but a slight development, and the breast is bare. The colour of the hair in the female is black, with a decided tinge of red, and not ringed as in the male. The hair on the arms is longer than that on the body, and is of a like colour. The reddish crown which covers the scalp of the male is not apparent in the female till she is almost grown up. In both male and female the hair is found worn off the back; but this is only found in very old females.

The hands of the animal, especially in the male, are of immense size, strong, short, and thick. The fingers are short and of great size; the circumference of the middle finger at the first joint being, in some gorillas, over six inches. The skin on the back of the fingers, near the middle phalanx, is callous (hard), and very thick, which shows that the most usual mode of progression of the animal is on all-fours, and resting on the knuckles. The thumb is shorter than in man, and not half so thick as the fore-finger. The hand is hairy as far as the division of the fingers; these, as in man, being covered with short thick hairs. The palm of the hand is naked, callous, and intensely black. The nails are black, and shaped like those of man, but smaller in proportion, and projecting very slightly beyond the end of the fingers. They are thick and strong, and always seem much worn. The hand of the gorilla is almost as wide as it is long; and in this it approaches nearer to man than do any other of the apes. The foot is proportionally wider than in man. The sole is callous and intensely black. The toes are divided into three groups. Inside the great toe, outside the little toe, and the three others, partly united by a web. The two joints of the great toe measured, in one specimen, six and a-half inches in circumference. The foot of the gorilla

is longer than the hand, as in man; while, in the other apes, the foot is somewhat shorter than the hand. With the exception of the big toe, the others present a great likeness to those of man, being free only just above the second phalanx; they are slightly covered with thin hair."

In 1877, a specimen was located in the Royal Aquarium, Westminster, London, and was stated to be the only living one, with the exception of one in Wombwell's Menagerie many years ago, that has been seen in Europe. It was brought from Africa by Dr. Frankenstein, of the German West African Expedition, and for the previous year and a-half had been an object of great interest and curiosity in the Berlin Aquarium. It arrived in London at the end of July. This gorilla, which had an air of juvenile antiquity about it, was three and a-half years old, three feet high, had grown three and a-half inches during 1876, and increased 11 lbs. in weight in the same period. It was coal black; the face human in expression; the form pudgy, with long arms and legs, capable of rapidly assisting locomotion. It was a docile, amusing, and performing animal; turned on a trapeze, and climbed a rope, and was largely exercised in watching the gambols of a young Chimpanzee (a year and a-half old), and the German dog "Flock." The gastronomic capacities of the gorilla were most comprehensive. Whereas in its natural state it would live on bananas, pineapples, and birds' eggs (rifled from the nest), one of its first meals at the Aquarium was rump-steak and potatoes, the guest dipping the food in the salt to obtain the requisite zest. Wine and beer were also taken with a relish. It died in the following November, at Berlin.

Du Chaillu, in his "Explorations of Equatorial Africa," gives the following description of the animal when enraged:—

"The gorilla is not gregarious. Of adults, I found almost always one male with one female, though sometimes the old male wanders companionless. In such cases, as with the 'rogue' elephant, he is particularly morose and malignant, and dangerous to approach. Young gorillas I found sometimes in companies of five; sometimes less, but never more. They are difficult to approach, as their hearing is acute, and they lose no time in making their escape; while the nature of the ground makes it hard for the hunter to follow after. The adult animal is also shy; and I have hunted all day, at times, without coming upon my quarry, when I felt sure that they were carefully avoiding me. When, however, at last fortune favours the hunter, and he comes accidentally or by good management upon his prey, he need not fear its running away. In all my hunts and encounters with this animal, I never knew a grown male to run away. When I surprised a pair of gorillas, the male was generally sitting down on a rock or against a tree, in the darkest corner of the jungle, where the brightest sun left its traces only in a dim twilight. The female was mostly feeding near by; and it is singular that she almost always gave the alarm by running off with loud and sudden shrieks. Then the male, sitting for a moment with a savage frown on his face, slowly rises to his feet, and looking with glowing and malign eyes at the intruders, begins to beat his breast, and, lifting up his round head, utters his frightful roar. This begins with several sharp barks, like an enraged or mad dog, whereupon ensues a long, deeply guttural, rolling roar, continued for over a minute, and which, doubled and multiplied by the resounding echoes of the forest, fills the hunter's ears like the deep rolling thunder of an approaching storm. As I have mentioned before, I have reason to believe that I have heard the roar at a distance of three miles. The horror of the

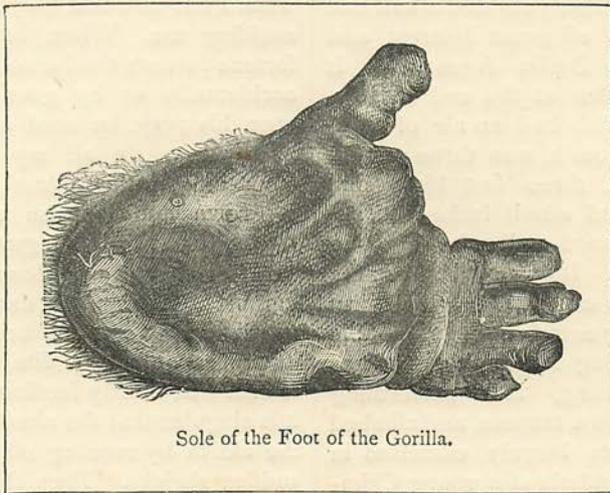
animal's appearance at this time is beyond description. At such a sight I could forgive my brave hunters for being sometimes overcome with superstitious fears, and ceased to wonder at the strange, weird 'Gorilla stories' of the negroes."

In another part of the same work, M. Du Chaillu gives a life-like picture of his first sight of a gorilla:—

"Suddenly, as we were creeping along, in a silence which made a heavy breath seem loud and distinct, the woods were at once filled with the tremendous barking-roar of the gorilla.

He was not afraid of us. He stood there, and beat his breast with his huge fists till it resounded like an immense bass drum, which is their mode of offering defiance; meantime giving vent to roar after roar. . . . He advanced a few steps—then stopped to utter that hideous roar again—advanced again, and finally stopped at a distance of about six yards from us; and here, just as he began another of his roars, beating his breast in rage, we fired and killed him."

Since M. Du Chaillu published his work, not very much has been added to



Sole of the Foot of the Gorilla.

Then the underbrush swayed rapidly just a-head, and presently stood before us an immense male gorilla. He had gone through the jungle on his all-fours; but when he saw our party he erected himself and looked us boldly in the face. He stood about a dozen yards from us, and was a sight I think I shall never forget. Nearly six feet high (he proved four inches shorter), with immense body, huge chest, and great muscular arms, with fiercely-glaring, large, deep grey eyes, and a hellish expression of face, which seemed to be like some nightmare vision—thus stood before us the king of

our knowledge of the habits of the gorilla. His immense strength is one of the most remarkable features of this animal; and certainly the muscular development of the arms, chest, and legs, is of the most extraordinary character. The stuffed specimen in the British Museum, although apparently young, gives an idea of what the gorilla would be in his native haunts. The face has a fierce appearance. The teeth show prominently from the mouth, and the canines call to mind those common in carnivorous animals.

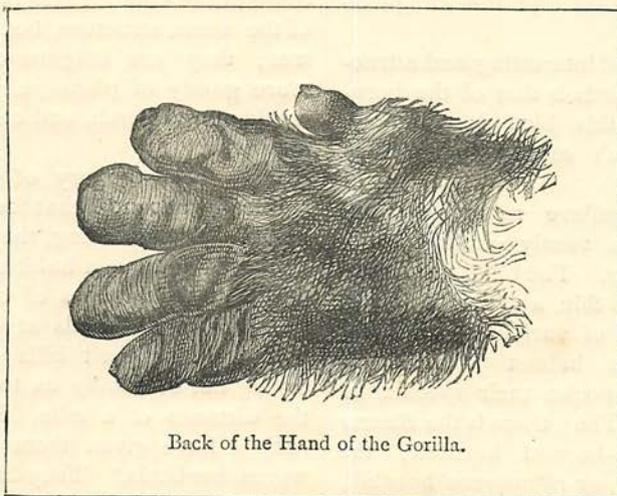
The gorilla has been the subject of

lively discussions among anatomists and anthropologists. Saint-Hilaire has created for the gorilla a separate genus, to distinguish it from the chimpanzee, a monkey which, according to him, bears more resemblance to man than the gorilla. Such is also the opinion of Mr. Wymann. Professor Owen, on the contrary, has claimed for the gorilla the honour of being placed next the human species, and M. Du Chaillu shares his opinion.

"It must be acknowledged," says this traveller, "that at first the gorilla offers in every one of its traits something more

having observed the kind of life led by the gorilla, and its mode of progression, I am convinced that in all its movements it more nearly approaches the human species than any of its congeners."

The natives of Africa have an idea that these, and other large apes, are really men; but they pretend to be stupid and dumb, in order to escape impressment as slaves. Work, indeed, seems to be the *summum malum* in the African mind, and a true African never works if he can help it. As to the necessary household labours, and the task of agriculture, he will not raise a



Back of the Hand of the Gorilla.

bestial than the chimpanzee or the orang. All the characters of the gorilla, particularly of the male, are pushed to exaggeration; the head is longer and narrower, the brain is behind, the cranial ridges are enormous, the jaws are very prominent, and possess prodigious strength, and the canine teeth are very thick. The skull is marked by the immense development of the occipital crests; but the other parts of the gorilla's skeleton resemble that of a man more than do those of any other monkey. After carefully studying the zoological characters that I have just noticed, after

finger, but makes his wives work, he having previously purchased them for that purpose. In truth, in a land where the artificial wants are so few—unless the corruptions of pseudo-civilisation have made their entrance—and where unassisted nature is so bountiful, there is small need of work.

The daily life of a "black fellow" has been very graphically described in a few words:—"He gets a large melon; cuts it in two, and scoops out the inside; one half he puts on his head, he sits in the other half, and eats the middle."