

NATURAL HISTORY.

ACCOUNT OF AN ORANG OUTANG.

From Clark Abel's "Personal Observations made during the progress of the British Embassy through China, and on its Voyage to and from that country in 1816-17."

THE Orang-Outang, on his arrival in Java from Baitavia, was allowed to be entirely at liberty, till within a day or two of being put on board the *Cæsar*, to be conveyed to England: and whilst at large, made no attempt to escape, but became violent when put into a large railed bamboo cage for the purpose of being conveyed from the island. As soon as he felt himself in confinement, he took the rails of the cage into his hands, and shaking them violently, endeavoured to break them in pieces; but finding that they did not yield generally, he tried them separately, and having discovered one weaker than the rest, worked at it constantly till he had broken it and made his escape. On board ship, an attempt being made to secure him by a chain tied to a strong staple, he instantly unfastened it, and ran off with the chain dragging behind; but finding himself embarrassed by its length, he coiled it once or twice and threw it over his shoulder.

This feat he often repeated, and when he found that it would not remain on his shoulder, he took it into his mouth.

After several abortive attempts to secure him more effectually, he was allowed to wander freely about the ship, and soon became familiar with the sailors, and surpassed them in agility. They often chased him about the rigging, and gave him frequent opportunities of displaying his adroitness in managing an escape. On first starting, he would endeavour to outstrip his pursuers by mere speed, but when much pressed, eluded them by seizing a loose rope, and swinging out of their reach. At other times he would patiently wait in the shrouds, or at the mast-head, till his pursuers almost touched him, and then suddenly lower himself to the deck by any rope that was near him, or bound along the mainstay from one mast to the other, swinging by his hands, and moving them one over the other. The men would often shake the ropes by which he clung, with so much violence, as to make me fear his falling, but I soon found, that the power of his muscles could not be easily overcome. When in a playful humour, he would often swing within arm's length of his pursuer, and having struck him with his hand, throw himself from him.

Whilst in Java, he lodged in a large tamarind-tree near my dwelling; and formed a bed by intertwining the small branches and covering them with leaves. During the day he would lie with his head projecting beyond his nest, watching whoever might pass under, and when he saw any one with fruit, would descend to obtain a share of it. He always retired for the night at sun-set, or sooner, if he had been well fed; and rose with the sun, and visited those from whom he habitually received food.

On board ship he commonly slept at the mast-head, after wrapping himself in a sail. In making his bed, he used the greatest pains to remove every thing out of his way that might render the surface on which he intended to lie uneven; and having satisfied himself with this part of his arrangement, spread out the sail, and lying down upon it on his back, drew it over his body. Sometimes I pre-occupied his bed, and teased him by refusing to give it up. On these occasions he would endeavour to pull the sail from under me, or to force me from it, and would not rest until I had resigned it. If it was large enough for both, he would quietly lie by my side.

If all the sails happened to be set, he would hunt about for some other covering; and either steal one of the sailor's jackets or shirts that happened to be drying, or empty a hammock of its blankets. Off the Cape of Good Hope, he suffered much from a low temperature, especially early in the morning, when he would descend from the mast, shuddering with cold, and running up to any one of his friends, climb into their arms, and clasping them closely, derive warmth from their persons, screaming violently at any attempt to remove him.

His food in Java was chiefly fruit, especially mangostans, of which he was excessively fond. He also sucked eggs with voracity, and often employed himself in seeking them. On board

ship his diet was of no definite kind. He ate readily all kinds of meat, and especially raw meat; was very fond of bread, but always preferred fruits when he could obtain them.

His beverage in Java was water; on board ship, it was as diversified as his food. He preferred coffee and tea; but would readily take wine, and exemplified his attachment to spirits by stealing the captain's brandy-bottle. Since his arrival in London, he has preferred beer and milk to any thing else, but drinks wine and other liquors.

In his attempts to obtain food, he afforded us many opportunities of judging of his sagacity and disposition. He was always very impatient to seize it when held out to him, and became passionate when it was not soon given up; and would chase a person all over the ship to obtain it. I seldom came on deck without sweetmeats or fruit in my pocket, and could never escape his vigilant eye! Sometimes I endeavoured to evade him by ascending to the mast-head, but was always overtaken or intercepted in my progress. When he came up with me on the shrouds, he would secure himself by one foot to the rattling, and confine my legs with the other, and one of his hands, whilst he rifled my pockets. If he found it impossible to overtake me, he would climb to a considerable height on the loose rigging, and then drop suddenly upon me. Or if, perceiving his intention, I attempted to descend, he would slide down a rope and meet me at the bottom of the shrouds. Sometimes I fastened an orange to the end of a rope, and lowered it to the deck from the mast-head, and as soon as he attempted to seize it, drew it rapidly up. After being several times foiled in endeavouring to obtain it by direct means, he altered his plan. Appearing to care little about it, he would remove to some distance, and ascend the rigging very leisurely for some time, and then, by a sudden spring, catch the rope which held it. If defeated again by my suddenly jerking the rope, he would at first seem quite in despair, relinquish his effort, and rush about the rigging screaming violently. But he would always return, and again seizing the rope, disregard the jerk, and allow it to run through his hand till within reach of the orange; but if again foiled, would come to my side, and taking me by the arm confine it whilst he hauled the orange up.

This animal neither practises the grimace and antics of other monkeys, nor possesses their perpetual proneness to mischief. Gravity, approaching to melancholy and mildness, were sometimes strongly expressed in his countenance, and seem to be the characteristics of his disposition.

When he first came amongst strangers, he would sit for hours with his hand upon his head, looking pensively at all around him; or when much incommoded by their examination, would hide himself beneath any covering that was at hand. His mildness was evinced by his forbearance under injuries, which were grievous before he was excited to revenge; but he always avoided those who often teased him. He soon became strongly attached to those who kindly used him. By their side he was fond of sitting; and get as close as possible to their persons, would take their hands between his lips, and fly to them for protection. From the boatswain of the *Alceste*, who shared his meal with him, and was his chief favourite, although he sometimes purloined the grog and the biscuit of his benefactor, he learned to eat with a spoon; and might be often seen sitting at his cabin door enjoying his coffee, quite unembarrassed by those who observed him, and with a grotesque and sober air that seemed a burlesque on human nature.

I have seen him exhibit violent alarm on two occasions only, when he appeared to seek for safety in gaining as high an elevation as possible.

On seeing eight large turtles brought on board, whilst the *Cæsar* was off the Island of Ascension, he climbed with all possible speed to a higher part of the ship than he had ever before reached, and, looking down upon them, projected his long lips into the form of a hog's snout, uttering at the same time a sound which might be described as between the croaking of a frog and the grunting of a pig. After sometime, he ventured to descend, but with great caution peeping continually at the turtle, but could not be induced to approach within many yards of them. He ran to the same height, and uttered the same sounds, on seeing some men bathing and splashing in the

sea; and since his arrival in England, has shown nearly the same degree of fear at the sight of a live tortoise.

Such were the actions of this animal, as far as they fell under my notice during our voyage from Java; and they seem to include most of those which had been related of the Orang-Outang by other observers. I cannot find, since his arrival in England, that he has learned to perform more than two feats which he did not practise on board ship, although his education has been by no means neglected. One of these is to walk upright, or rather on his feet unsupported by his hands; the other, to kiss his keeper. I have before remarked with how much difficulty he accomplishes the first, and may add, that a well-trained dancing dog would far surpass him in the imitation of the human posture. I believe that all the figures given of Orang-Outangs in an unproprioed erect posture, are wholly unnatural.

Some writer states, those Orang-Outang which he describes gave "real kisses;" and so words his statement, that the reader supposes them the natural act of the animal. This is certainly not the case with the Orang-Outang which I have described. He imitates the act of kissing by projecting his lips against the face of his keeper, but gives them no impulse. He never attempted this action on board ship, but has been taught it by those who now have him in charge.

I shall enter into no speculation respecting his intellectual powers, compared with those of men; but leave the foregoing account of his actions as a simple record of facts, that may be used by other observers to estimate the rank which he holds in the scale of sagacity.

AFFECTION BETWEEN THE DOG AND THE HORSE.

A gentleman in town hired a droskey and horse from a well-known establishment here to convey himself and friends to Tweedside for the fishing. Before leaving, a white pointer dog was observed to be loitering about the vehicle, and when starting continued to follow, or rather to take the lead in running before the horse; no threats, nor exercise of the whip, could put it away, and it was soon seen that a mutual attachment existed between the horse and dog. When the dog, which was seldom, lagged a bit behind, the horse became restive and uneasy; but when its canine favourite took the lead, no whip was necessary to make him go on with happy glee, always following the dog with his eye, who, in return, barked in gladness before him. When the horse was put to stable at Gatonised Villa, the dog refused to enter the kitchen to get supper; but faithfully and devotedly followed the noble quadruped to his stall, nor would he leave the stable, so long as the horse was allowed to remain: and to show that the attachment was reciprocal, the writer of this went the following morning to the domicile of the favourites, and by way of making the dog leave the stable, pretended to beat him with a stick, when the horse turned, and had he been free the consequences might have been serious. The same affection was exhibited during a week's stay, and the same warmth of feeling evinced between both on the return of the party to town.—*Correspondent of Mercury.*

THE TRAVELLING POWER OF ANIMALS.

A LADY residing in Glasgow had a handsome cat sent to her from Edingburgh, (distant forty-two miles;) it was conveyed to her in a close basket and a carriage. The animal was carefully watched for two months; but, having produced a pair of young ones at the end of that time, she was left to her own discretion, which she very soon employed in disappearing with both her kittens. The lady at Glasgow wrote to her friend in Edinburgh, deploring her loss, and the cat was supposed to have formed some new attachment. About a fortnight, however, after her disappearance from Glasgow, her well known mew was heard at the door of her Edinburgh mistress, and there she was with both her kittens; they were in the best state, but, she herself was very thin. It is clear that she could carry only one kitten part of the way and then went back for the other, and thus conveyed them alternately; she must have travelled one hundred and twenty miles at least. She must have also journeyed during the night and must have resorted to many other precautions for the safety of her young.