



THE CIVET.

THE CIVET—(*Viverra Civetta*.)

The locality of this animal is in the north of Africa. The length of the elongated body is from two to three feet; the tail is about half as long as the body; the height, from ten inches to a foot. The hair of the body is long, brownish grey, with numerous interrupted transverse black bands, or spots of the same colour. The hairs on the ridge or middle of the back, from between the shoulders, are longer, and can be raised or depressed, at the pleasure of the animal. The legs and the greater part of the tail are black; the upper lip and sides of the neck are almost white. Each of the eyes is surrounded by a black patch. Two or three black bands pass from the base of the ears, obliquely, towards the shoulder and neck, which last has a broad black patch.

The civet is very voracious. One that Barbot had at Guadeloupe was, from the carelessness of the servant, kept without food for a whole day; on the following morning the animal gnawed its way through the cage in which it was confined, came into the room where M. Barbot was writing, and staring about with sparkling eyes for a few seconds, made a leap of five or six feet at an American parrot that was perched on a piece of wood inserted in the wall for the purpose. Before his master could run to the relief of the bird, the civet had torn off its head, and begun to feast on his prey.

The Dutch used to keep numbers of civets alive at Amsterdam, for the purpose of collecting the perfume when secreted. When a sufficient time had been allowed for the process, the animal was put into a long wooden cage, so narrow that it could not turn itself round. The cage being opened by a door behind, a small spatula, or spoon, was introduced through the orifice of the pouch, which was carefully scraped, and its contents put into a vessel. This operation was performed twice or thrice a week; and the animal was said to produce most civet when irritated. The quantity depended chiefly on the quality of the nourishment it took, and the appetite with which it ate. In confinement its favourite food was boiled meat, eggs, birds, and small animals, and particularly fish.

Civet, as a perfume, was formerly in high repute in Europe. Massinger makes one of his characters say—

Lady, I would descend to kiss thy hand,
But that 'tis gloved, and civet makes me sick.

Cowper, in whose time not only ladies but gentlemen were highly scented, avows a similar feeling:—

I cannot talk with civet in the room.
A fine-puss gentleman, that's all perfume,
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show?
His odoriferous attempts to please
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees.
But we that make no honey, though we sting
Poets are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
'Tis wrong to bring into a mixed resort
What makes some sick, and others *à la mort*.
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such a one should keep himself away

On this subject, Mr. Piesse observes: "In its pure state, civet has to nearly all persons a most disgusting odour; but when diluted to an infinitesimal portion, its perfume is agreeable," except in certain cases. "It is," he adds, "difficult to ascertain the reason why the same substance—modified only by the quantity of matter presented to the nose—should produce an opposite effect on the olfactory nerve; but such is the case with nearly all odorous bodies, especially with ottos, which, if smelled at, are far from agreeable, and, in some cases, positively nasty—such as otto of neroly, otto of thyme, otto of patchouly; but if diluted with a thousand times its volume of oil, spirit, &c., then their fragrance is delightful."

MISCELLANEA.

A TOOTH of a mastodon has been dug up near the Ashley river in South Carolina. It is 11½ inches long, 6 inches in diameter and weighs more than 5 lbs.

A VIOLET ink for rubber stamps is made by mixing and dissolving aniline violet 2 to 4 drachms, alcohol 25 ounces. The solution is poured on the cushion and rubbed in with a brush.

THE TELEPHONE.—The proprietors of the speaking telephone are putting instruments into use in Providence, Rhode Island, to a limited extent, selecting a few specimen cases to insure the instrument a full test for practical purposes. Some small telephones which have been introduced are not over 5 in. in length, and they weigh less than ½ lb.; but they do all the work for practical purposes of larger instruments.

TYPHOID FEVER IN THE PRINCE OF WALES' HOUSEHOLD.—Prince Albert Victor of Wales, the heir presumptive, is now, as our readers are aware, suffering from typhoid fever,—the third of his line who has been thus afflicted within a period of sixteen years. The fever was, it is believed, contracted at Sandringham; and this is a circumstance which will, of course, require careful local sanitary investigation. Typhoid fever being essential a preventable fever, due to causes which, by perfect sanitary arrangements, may be held at bay, it is, we believe (says the *British Medical Journal*), proposed that Dr. Seaton, the head of the medical department of the Local Government Board, shall make a searching examination of the water supply and other sanitary arrangements at Sandringham. Since the serious illness from typhoid fever of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the water supply of Sandringham has been remodelled at considerable cost and trouble. It is stated, however, that at the time of the recent visit of the Prince and his family for some days to Norfolk, the works connected with the newly-arranged water supply were out of order, and recourse was had for a while to the source from whence the water was drawn prior to the Prince's purchase of the estate.