

THE SIGHT SEEKER'S GAZETTE.

NO. 4.—THE BRITISH MUSEUM.]

This interesting national institution originated with the celebrated physician, Sir Hans Sloane. By his will, Sir Hans directed that after his decease, which occurred in 1753, his valuable library and extensive collection of *verts* should be offered to the legislature for purchase towards establishing a National Museum. This was effected the Act of 26 Geo. II., which also empowered Government to purchase the famous collection of Harleian Manuscripts, and enacted that, with the Cottonian Library, presented to the nation in the reign of William III., the entire should form one general collection.

In 1754, Montagu House, in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, formerly the town mansion of the Dukes of Montagu, was purchased as a repository for the collection.

The arrival of the Egyptian Antiquities in 1801, and the purchase of the Townley Marbles in 1805, rendered the old mansion inadequate to its increased acquisitions. New buildings were therefore erected, subsequently enlarged in consequence of the donation in 1823 from George IV. of his predecessor's library, as also of numerous individual presentations. The old building of the Museum continues to form the general frontage.

The readers of **CLEAVE'S GAZETTE** may rely upon the correctness of the subjoined descriptive catalogue of the primary objects of attraction contained in the Museum, inasmuch as it is compiled from the official reports prepared by the principals of the several departments of the institution.

On entering the spacious court of the Museum, and sheltered by an Ionic colonnade, the visitor's attention is attracted to—

A portion of a Canoe discovered in 1834, embedded in the banks of a stream at South Stoke, Sussex, and therefore surmised to have been the property of some Aborigine of England.

A large wooden Idol from Otaheite.

A sepulchral Stele, with some architectural fragments, part of the Elgin Collection.

Crossing the quadrangle, and previous to ascending the steps of the Museum, we perceive the Skulls and lower Jaws of the Spermaceti and Whalebone Whales, from the North Sea; together with several bones of the Southern Whale, from the Cape of Good Hope.

The Entrance Hall contains—

A marble statue of Shakspeare, by Roubilliac—bequeathed by the English Roscius, Garrick.

A statue of the Hon. Anne Seymour Damer. This lady was noted for talent as a sculptor, and is here represented as holding in her hands a unique figure of the Genius of the Thames.

A gilt figure of Gaudma, a Burmese Idol; with a symbolical representation of his foot.

Near the staircase is Chantrey's statue of the illustrious Sir Joseph Banks. The figure is seated in an arm chair, holding a scroll in the left hand.

In the passage leading to the Gallery of Antiquities are three specimens of **Rhinoceroses** from South Africa.

On the first landing-place is a Llama from South America, where it is used as a beast of burthen; and immediately above is a specimen of the Stag.

On the second landing-place are a Musk Ox, from Melville Island, and a Polar Bear; procured in the Arctic expeditions.

Over the Musk Ox is a Striped Antelope from the Cape; and on the Bear's case, the Elk from Sweden.

Between these stands the trunk of an arborescent Fern forty-five feet in height, from the mountains eastward of Silhet, in Bengal.

By the side of this is the stem of another arborescent Fern, and a species of South American Palm.

On the upper landing-place are a male and female Giraffe, or Cameleopard, from South Africa; another Giraffe (the first ever brought to England); a young Indian Elephant, and a Malay Tapir.

(To be continued.)