

THE ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

THE old proverb that couples "great cry and little wool" has become susceptible of such almost universal application among the quacks of all professions with which New-York has of late years so plenteously abounded—venders of goods, healers of disease, teachers of art and science, and keepers of all manner of exhibitions—that, as a general rule, we are inclined to set that down incontinently as most worthless, about which the greatest flourish of trumpets is made and kept up. Nothing short of the most clear and convincing testimony would induce us to entrust the well-being of our dental arrangement, to the skill which is self-proclaimed every day in yards of puffing advertisements, whether they come in the shape of anonymous letters, or editorial paragraphs; and the larger and more outrageous the placard that sets forth the merits of any wonderful show, the less are we tempted to draw forth our quarter from its snug resting-place in the right-hand pocket of our best black sur-tout—where, by the way, we always carry our loose change—when we happen to have any. The judicious reader will observe, however, that the proposition with which we have set out, is put forth only as a general rule; there are particular cases to which it has no applicability, and in which the language of glorification may be used to almost any given extent without exceeding the limits of truth and propriety. Such a one is that of the grand menagerie, recently opened by some enterprising persons in the Bowery. We have seen the zoological collections of London and Paris, as they existed some eight years ago; and whatever may be the state of the case now, there certainly was no superiority in either of them at that time to the establishment in question—taking all things into consideration. The number of animals at the "Jardin de Plantes" was, undoubtedly, greater; but they were not so fine specimens, or in as excellent condition. The collection in the Zoological Gardens of London is said now to be most admirable, for extent as well as for the space allotted to the different animals, and the pains that have been taken to assimilate their condition, as closely as possible, to that in which they moved and had their being while yet free denizens of air and earth and sea. In all these respects, the menagerie of the Regent's Park may be superior, for aught we know, to that which forms the subject of this notice; but if the creatures are the same that formerly inhabited the Tower, (and this we have understood to be the case,) they are not, generally speaking, equal in size, beauty and vigour, to their American contemporaries; and as for the arrangements for the comfort and convenience of the animals themselves, as well as of the spectators, there is no comparison between the Tower and the Institute. This last is actually a credit to the city. The entrance is through a spacious hall, on one side of which is the office of the treasurer, and at its extremity a pair of folding-doors; these being opened disclose a grand saloon, perhaps a hundred feet in length and thirty or forty in breadth, with a gallery on each side; the whole brilliantly illuminated by three superb chandeliers of cut glass. Immediately over the entrance is a transverse gallery, furnished with music-stands, gas-lights, etc, for the band, which is always in attendance, and is really quite a good one. The space beneath the longitudinal galleries on either side, is partitioned into a number of dens, or cells, or small square chambers, well secured in front by iron bars; these are the domicils of the tigers, hyenas, leopards, lions and other "such small deer" which constitute the attraction of the visitors; and they are certainly, without exception, the finest specimens we have ever seen; full-grown, active, healthy and apparently on the best possible terms with themselves and all the world—except when feeding-time approaches. The whole establishment is a picture of cleanliness, and the most fastidious *petit-maitre* that ever stepped from a band-box, could not exhibit more scrupulous purity of habitation or of person, than the occupants of the several cages. One very agreeable consequence of this vigilant attention to the cardinal virtue of tidy housekeepers, is the total absence of that unpleasant, wild-beast sort of odour, which we have always heretofore perceived in menageries, and which, until now, we supposed inseparable from the presence of the carnivorous quadrupeds. At the end of the saloon, in a cage of superior dimensions, is the unwieldy rhinoceros; the clumsiest, ugliest, most ferocious-looking, and withal the most restless monster of them all. He seems to have no conception of the possibility of being quiet for a moment—except indeed when one of the keepers indulges him by scratching his distorted snout—and his little red, fiery eye rolls perpetually with a most ominous glare of pure unadulterated malice. He is flanked on either side by an elephant: one very large, but rather sulky and ill-natured, and the other of less imposing bulk, but quite courteous and amusing. In their disposition they both display a most commendable humility, accepting even the smallest donations, as an apple or a bit of candy, with every appearance of thankfulness, although it is evident that a barrel of the fruit, or a hundred weight of the saccharine concretion would barely furnish them with an hour's amusement. Over the rhinoceros is another large den, in which a lion, lioness and tiger pass their days in social harmony; and on either side of them is a pair of leopards. Next to the female elephant is a fine large Polar bear, that has a particular fancy for pounding the floor of his apartment with his fore paws, wearing the while an expression of remarkable gravity on his hairy visage. Not far from him is a gnu: a rare and singular animal of the antelope species, with the legs and body of a mule and the head of a goat. On the other side is a little household of apes and monkeys, playing off all manner of pranks with the most solemn countenances imaginable, and seemingly actuated from morning till night by nothing but the very wildness of caprice. At the side of their habitation is a pair of beautiful zebras; and next to them a couple of dromedaries, presenting the antipodes of ugliness. But we have not space to enumerate all the creatures; the splendid tigers, majestic lions, tumbling bears and snarling hyenas. It is time to bring this notice to a conclusion, and we can but refer, very slightly, to the ostrich and the lioness with her three cubs. The former is a very large specimen of the monstrous bird, and its plumage is in excellent condition. The leonine family are uncommonly interesting in their playful gambols, and it is quite affecting to see how gingerly the mother tumbles them about, and how proud she seems to be of her royal progeny.

If we had not already bestowed too much of our room upon this exhibition, we could enlarge upon the uproar that ensues when feeding-time arrives; the deep-toned roar of the lions—the shrieks of the hyenas—the chattering of the monkeys, and the horrid snarling of the leopards and the tigers. We flatter ourselves that something could be made of it, in the way of graphic description. But there is a limit to all things, and our readers may conceive, from the difficulty of finding it under which we labour at present, how much of pleasure and instruction is to be derived from an occasional visit to the Zoological Institute. J. I.