

put such colour on a strip of canvas. In the midst stands an island, on that a big factory, which would shock the sentimental traveller sadly, could he recognize it; but a dense grove of poplars leaves nothing visible except the tall chimney—which does not smoke, to-day at least. Further on, at the mouth of the valley proper, the ruins of "Petrarch's Château" come in view, crowning a lofty hill upon the right; it was the residence of his friend and patron, Philippe de Cabassol. Here the poet and the bishop held their long talks far into the night, until the servants turned out with torches to seek them in the oak-woods. There is not so much as a bramble about the ruins now, apparently. A few yards beyond lies a cluster of "hotels" and cafés and factories—the village of Vaucluse.

It is not really disappointing—at least, not much. If they could only suppress those tall chimneys, which do not smoke to-day, the rest would not be obtrusive, putting sentiment aside. And the standing wonder of the Sorgue claims all attention. You can scarcely find time to laugh at the famous monument raised in Petrarch's honour by the Athénée Society of the department in 1804; it was designed after the model of Trajan's Column at Rome, but somehow it "came out" in the likeness of that object which diverts the passer-by at Ladgate Circus. You hasten to the river. At this point it has been in existence, as one may say, a very few moments; it has flowed three hundred yards, or less; and the bridge that crosses it is a hundred feet long, with no room to spare at Midsummer! Is there a phenomenon like this in the world? An exquisitely pretty stream it is, bounding and tumbling in mad haste over a bed green as a meadow. Pliny noted this peculiarity in his account of the "noble fountain in Gallia Narbonensis"; adding that cattle were so fond of the weed they browsed upon it with their heads under water. That breed of cattle appears to be extinct. Leaving the bridge, you run the gauntlet of old women and deformed natives who make a blameless livelihood by selling photographs, immortelles, bouquets of dried flowers, pamphlets on Petrarch, and lattes on Laura. The naked hills close in, descending to the very margin of the river. The few yards of ground comparatively flat are occupied by a café, which announces on a big placard that here, and not elsewhere, stood Petrarch's house. It may be so; these people have long memories. Here—perhaps—was the spot which Petrarch likened to the *cella* where Cicero used to practise oratory. "So much at least is certain—that my little house lends itself to study." It lends itself nowadays—the site at least—to drinking beer under a striped awning. And half a dozen French tourists are taking advantage of the opportunity. This was not the "transalpine Parnassus sacred to Apollo." Another café stands upon that memorable spot—always subject to "perhaps." It was backed, Petrarch wrote, "by rocks and thickets inaccessible, where birds alone can make their way." The enterprise of the nineteenth century has made a mock of the birds, and planted a paper-mill in their inaccessible retreat. In fact, one really cannot fix one's mind upon poetic legend and sentiment when factory succeeds café in a procession uninterrupted, and aged or decrepid persons offer you a bunch of dyed weeds at every step. It is well to make the best of things. These industrial establishments might be a great deal uglier, and a great deal more conspicuous; for they stand upon the very verge and enroach upon the stream, half-hidden from above by trees and rocks clothed in verdure. But their chimneys protrude, and presently one gets vexed. This hallowed spot which kings used to visit has become what they call a "rising place." Sympathetic tourists are welcome, but bagmen preferred. The marvel of a river which will carry a boat ten yards from its source and a steam-launch within a hundred has been fatal to its romance. It may represent what you please to enthusiasts; but the *enfant du siècle* recognizes "water-power" running to waste.

Happily the marvel remains unimpaired, and very much of the beauty too. Dismissing, as best one may, those cafés and chimneys, one climbs a rocky path towards the *fontaine*. There yawns a cave, the Trou de Couloubé, where dwelt a dragon in times past, that behaved after the manner of dragons. It would still be imprudent to hint a doubt—did not St. Véran destroy the monster? Was he not canonized for that public service? They have some awful legends in these parts. Behind the cliff ahead stand the ruins of Beaume de l'Hôte, beside the fathomless pit of Aven, which swallowed the bodies of the victims whom the châtelain enticed to his abode. Historic stories also are terrible enough. The Malendrins, a peculiarly ferocious banditti, took refuge here when hard-pressed; they looted Petrarch's house in his absence and burnt it to the ground. So—it is less than ten minutes' walk—astonishing how close nine factories and cafés unnumbered can pack!—we reach the famous grotto from which springs the Sorgue, a river at birth. In this summer season it is a round pool beneath the cliff, barred in front by a slab of rock; but when the water rises to its fullest, in autumn and spring, it swells to the roof of the cavern, and pours over the slab in a cataract. At such times the fig-tree is submerged—that most renowned of all living fig-trees, which clings to the bare stone above the grotto, and thrives from generation to generation without soil or water visible, excepting such floods. M. Reboul estimates the outflow at 50,000 litres the second—say, 13,000 gallons. The pool is some thirty feet deep on the near side, but beyond, its bottom falls altogether. M. Reboul could not sound this inner gulf within a line of a hundred metres. There is strong reason to think that the under-

ground lake communicates with Mont Ventoux, near forty miles away. A great chasm opened in that range in 1783, and the crystal waters of the Sorgue ran muddy for a long while after. Persons who care nothing for Petrarch or even for his Laura may take interest in a wonder like this.

NOTES FROM THE ZOO—RHINOCEROSSES.

RHINOCEROSSES are now so common in menageries and so many have been seen at the Zoo that it is difficult to realize that until the early years of this century only about half a dozen of these animals had been seen in Europe since the time of the Roman Empire. Yet so it was, and consequently the accounts of the earlier authors teem with the most marvellous stories, not only of the appearance, but also of the manners, of these creatures. But, if their stories were marvellous, their pictures were even more wonderful, most of them representing an impossible creature clothed in what was apparently intended for a highly ornamented suit of armour. The first of these wonderful drawings is said to have been made in Lisbon in the year 1513 from a rhinoceros sent from India to Emmanuel, King of Portugal, and was engraved at Nürnberg by Albert Dürer; and here we may add that the King, after trying all sorts of experiments to prove the ferocity of this rhinoceros, sent the unfortunate animal by sea as a present to the Pope; but "in an access of fury it sunk the vessel on its passage." The following are examples of the stories to which we refer. One voracious author informs us that "a full-grown rhinoceros measures fourteen feet from the ground to the highest part of the back, and the legs are so remarkably short that, with all this height, the belly comes near the ground." It is, perhaps, hardly surprising that an animal of this immense size should be able to "toss up a large bull," as we are told the "old ones" were in the habit of doing whenever opportunity offered. From another source we gather that the rhinoceros—the African black rhinoceros, apparently, in this case—was most distinctly an animal to be avoided, as "when he attacks a man he lays hold of the middle of his body, and throws him over his head with such force that he is almost always killed with the fall. This done, he comes and licks him, and his tongue is so rough and hard that it brings off the flesh from the bones. He likewise serves other animals in the same manner after he has killed them." This being so, it is reassuring to learn that "he very rarely attacks mankind, unless he is provoked or meets with a person with a red garment," and that "when he is seen running along, it is pretty easy to avoid him, because he cannot turn about very readily, so that when he is about eight or ten feet distant, a man needs only go one side, and then he will be out of his sight." The rhinoceros, however, though so fierce and untameable, had apparently one soft spot in its heart, which often led to its destruction, for "it is said by Albertus, Isidorus, and Alumnus, that above all creatures they love virgins, and that unto them they will come, be they never so wilde, and fall asleep before them, so being asleep they are easily taken and carried away." Finally, the horn of the rhinoceros was supposed to possess wonderful medicinal properties and to be an antidote to poison—a belief which held its ground until quite the end of last century, for Dr. Brookes, writing in 1763, says "It has been usually said that the horn of a rhinoceros will fall in pieces when poison is poured therein. At the Cape they have cups made of the horn, which are mounted in gold and silver. When wine is poured therein it will rise, ferment, and seem to boil; but when mixed with poison, it cleaves in two, which experiment has been seen by thousands of people."

Rhinoceroses, of which five or six species are known, are found only in the African and Indian regions; and though they vary much in appearance, they all of them have large unwieldy bodies, supported on short legs, with three toes on each foot, skins which are thick and unyielding—so much so, in the Asiatic species, as to "necessitate the formation of deep folds to enable them to move their limbs with any facility"—and either one or two horns, which differ from those of other mammals not only in their position (placed as they are on the animal's nose), but also in their structure, as they are "composed of modified and agglutinated hairs." At the present time there are five individuals at the Zoo, representing three species, one African and two Asiatic, namely, one common African black rhinoceros (*R. bicornis*), two hairy-eared rhinoceroses (*R. lasiotis*), and two Indian rhinoceroses (*R. unicornis*). Three of these are old inhabitants of the Gardens, one of the Indian rhinoceroses having been presented to the Society so long ago as July 25, 1864, while the female hairy-eared rhinoceros was purchased in 1872. This animal, "Begum" by name, is said to have been captured in rather a curious way, having had the misfortune to walk into a quicksand, from which it found it impossible to extricate itself. And, lastly, the African black rhinoceros has lived in Regent's Park since 1868. This animal is specially noticeable as being, to quote the official "Guide to the Gardens," "the first specimen of this animal brought to Europe since the days of the Romans."

Though a far larger number of Asiatic than African rhinoceroses have been seen alive in Europe, the latter are, we imagine, far better known in this country—by report, at least—than are their Asiatic congeners, the result of their being found very

plentifully in what was, without exception, the finest game country in the world, and thus, naturally, being fully described in every book relating to travel or sport in South Africa. Much has been written about the number of species of rhinoceroses found in Africa, some authors contending for as many as five species; but the best authorities are satisfied with two, the black rhinoceros—so called, though in reality it is of a dark slate-colour—and the white or square-mouthed rhinoceros; both of them are two-horned and smooth-skinned; but the former, among other points of difference, has a long pointed and prehensile upper lip, and feeds on leaves and branches, while the latter has a short upper lip and feeds on grass. The black rhinoceros is found all over the continent—the animal in the Zoo was captured in Upper Nubia—and is therefore in little present dread of extermination; but the range of the white rhinoceros is—or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, was—limited to Southern and South Central Africa, with the unfortunate consequence that it has been practically, if not absolutely, exterminated. On this subject Mr. Selous made some interesting remarks in an article which appeared in the *Field* on August 16 last. He says:—

It was within a mile of this spot (near the river Se-who-who, in Mashunaland) that two years previously (*i.e.* in 1883) I shot two white rhinoceroses (*R. sinus*), the last of their kind that have been killed, and perhaps that ever will be killed, by an Englishman. They were male and female, and I preserved the skin of the head and the skull of the former for the South African Museum in Cape Town, where they now are. I shall never cease to regret that I did not preserve the entire skeleton for our own splendid Museum of Natural History at South Kensington, but when I shot the animal I made sure I should get finer specimens later on in the season. However, one thing and another prevented my visiting the one spot of country where I knew that a few were still to be found, and now these few have almost, if not quite, all been killed, and to the best of my belief the great white or square-mouthed rhinoceros, the largest of terrestrial mammals after the elephant, is on the very verge of extinction, and in the next year or two will become absolutely extinct; and if in the near future some student of natural history should wish to know what this extinct beast really was like, he will find nothing in all the museums of Europe and America to enlighten him upon the subject but some half-dozen skulls and a goodly number of the anterior horns. In 1886 two Boer hunters got into the little tract of country where a few white rhinoceroses were still left, and between them killed ten during the season; five more were killed during the same time by some native hunters from the Matabele country. A few were still left, as in the following year, 1887, myself and some English sportsmen saw the tracks of two or three in the same district, but could not find the animals themselves. Some of these last remnants of their race may still survive; but it is not too much to say that long before the close of this century the white rhinoceros will have vanished from the face of the earth. . . . The subject of the extinction of this huge quadruped has a melancholy interest for me, who remember that less than twenty years ago it was a common animal over an enormous extent of country in central South Africa.

The extermination of the white rhinoceros is, perhaps, not to be wondered at, as it is one of the inevitable results of the extension of the settlements in South Africa; but that no museum in Europe or America should possess a specimen—if we except the young mounted specimen, about the size of a large pig, in the British Museum—is curious, and very much to be regretted, and we are pleased to see that Dr. Selater has called attention to the fact in the columns of *Nature*, "in the hope that the attention of the several exploring parties now traversing Mashunaland and Matabeleland may be called to this subject, and that in case of a straggling survivor of the white rhinoceros being met with, it may be carefully preserved for the National Collection at South Kensington." He draws attention to the following differences in the forms of the heads of the two species. First, the different formation of the lips already mentioned; secondly, the size and shape of the ears; "in *R. bicornis* the ear-conch is much rounded at the extremity, and edged by a fringe of short black hairs which spring from the margin. In *R. sinus* the ear-conch is much elongated and sharply pointed at its upper extremity, where the hairs which clothe its margin constitute a slight tuft. While the upper portion of the ear-conch is much more expanded in *R. sinus* (than in *R. bicornis*), in the lower portion the two margins are united together for a much greater extent, and form a closed cylinder, which rises about three inches above the base." Thirdly, the shape of the nostrils, "which in *R. sinus* are elongated in a direction parallel to the mouth, while in *R. bicornis* they are more nearly of a circular shape"; while, lastly, the eye in *R. sinus* appears to be placed further back in the head than in *R. bicornis*. Another point of difference, mentioned by Mr. Selous, is that the square-mouthed rhinoceros walks and runs with its nose close to the ground; while the black rhinoceros carries its head high in the air. In conclusion, we can only say with Dr. Selater that "the country in which alone (as it is possible, but by no means certain) the last stragglers exist being now within the British Empire, it is clearly our duty to endeavour to obtain and preserve examples of the great white or square-mouthed rhinoceros for the use and information of posterity."

MONEY MATTERS.

THE crisis in South Africa, and the bank failures which are the outcome of it, are less serious, no doubt, than the crisis in the River Plate countries; but they contribute largely, nevertheless, to the very apprehensive feeling which has prevailed in the City for some weeks past; and the gross mismanagement

which has been brought to light by the failures intensifies their effect. The Union Bank of Cape Town, though it had but a small paid-up capital and a very small reserve, was established more than forty years ago, and did a large and, as was generally supposed, a very flourishing business, the smallness of the paid-up capital being made up for by the fact that the liability of the shareholders was unlimited. The breakdown reminds us of the collapse of the City of Glasgow Bank. The whole of the capital and reserve were swept away, and in addition 411,000*l.* was lost. That is to say, the liabilities exceeded the assets, without counting the capital or reserve fund at all, by over 411,000*l.*, and practically the loss is due to the unwarranted credits given to a Mr. Lippert. In April of last year his liabilities to the Bank, so far as were known to the Directors, were over 142,000*l.* But the cashier gave him further credits amounting to over 152,000*l.*, raising his total liabilities to somewhat over 295,000*l.* Somewhat later the Directors made him further advances amounting to 110,000*l.*, and in March of the present year they made still further advances, bringing up the total amount of credit given to Mr. Lippert to the enormous sum of 478,913*l.* The interest which accumulated on this vast sum somewhat exceeded 75,542*l.*, so that when the Bank closed its doors Mr. Lippert's total indebtedness to it amounted to 554,455*l.*

The failure of this institution caused a run upon the Cape of Good Hope Bank, partly because it was said that the largest shareholders of the one were also the largest in the other, and partly because it was believed that the Cape of Good Hope Bank had lost heavily on account of advances made to speculators in land and gold ventures. The run continued for about a month, when at last the Cape of Good Hope Bank had also to close its doors. At a meeting of the shareholders called by the chairman, he acknowledged that half the capital had been lost. He added that the De Beers Diamond Company had offered assistance, and that the majority of the Board were in favour of accepting it; but that he himself felt prohibited from doing so, as a clause in the Trust Deed required the shareholders to be called together whenever half the capital disappeared. In conclusion, the Chairman stated that, according to the best estimate which could be framed so soon, the total bad debts amounted to 264,000*l.* But he expressed a hope that in the end twenty shillings in the pound would be paid. The Official Liquidator now estimates the minimum loss at 464,000*l.*, and recommends a call of 30*l.* per share. The Bank is over half a century old, it had a paid-up capital amounting to 175,000*l.*, and it had a reserve fund of 40,000*l.*, making together 215,000*l.* The nominal value of the shares is 40*l.*, of which 10*l.* have been paid-up, and there remains a liability of 30*l.* on each share, which, if all paid up, will produce the sum of 625,000*l.* No one ventures to hope, however, that if a 30*l.* call is made it will all be paid up—firstly, because, as already stated, many of the shareholders are already shareholders in the unlimited Union Bank, and, secondly, because many others have suffered from the collapse of speculation in land and mining property, and from the depression which has ensued upon these failures. As a matter of course the suspension of the Cape of Good Hope Bank caused a run upon several other institutions. It is said that the Natal Bank was saved only by the intervention of the Government, and for a while fears were entertained that other banks would be swept away. It is hoped now, however, that no further failures will take place. In the meantime the shareholders are threatened with ruin. Those of the Union Bank are in the same situation as the shareholders of the City of Glasgow Bank were: that is to say, they are liable to the last penny they have in the world, and the great majority of them no doubt will be reduced to absolute poverty. The shareholders in the Cape of Good Hope Bank are liable only to the extent of 30*l.* per share; but even that, it is to be feared, will, if not actually ruin, at all events greatly impoverish, the majority of them.

The evil consequences of the failures are not confined to the shareholders. In the case of the Cape of Good Hope Bank, the Standard Bank of South Africa offered 10*s.* in the 1*l.* to the depositors, and it was believed that the Government would also aid, if aid were absolutely required. That may to a very large extent relieve the depositors, but to some extent they must suffer, and the other customers of the two banks will suffer still more. The wealthy amongst them will find no difficulty in getting accommodation from other banks. But there are many customers no doubt who, without being wealthy, are yet desirable clients of a bank, and who will not so easily be able to open accounts with institutions they do not know. For a while, therefore, they will be unable to obtain the accommodation they require, and they may thereby be placed in extremely embarrassing circumstances. But the worst effect of all is the shock that two such failures have given to credit throughout South Africa; the suspicions they have spread that other banks are perhaps not much better managed than those that have been brought down; and the fears that will continue for a considerable time that the difficulties of all kinds which must follow such failures and such a shock to credit may have other consequences at any moment. Enterprise throughout South Africa, therefore, has been checked by these failures. Property has gradually depreciated, and depression has been increased. In London, too, the shock has been felt—firstly, because it has reduced still further the value of all South African securities; and, secondly, because it has induced the fear that institutions and houses trading with or interested in South Africa