

and that, by this means, the iniquities which he had committed would be carried away even to heaven. The document farther prescribed that he must afterwards be *publicly scourged in the synagogue*, with a scourge made of leathern thongs; and must then prostrate himself in the entrance of the synagogue, that all the people might pass over him. How these sentences were executed, his own narration shall inform us. "I entered the synagogue," says he, "which was full of men and women; for many had come together to witness the spectacle. At the proper time, I ascended a pulpit of wood, which stands in the middle of the synagogue, and, with a loud voice, read a paper prepared by my prosecutors, in which was contained a confession, that I deserved to die a thousand times for the sins which I had committed,—such as, my profanation of the Sabbath, my disregard of the faith, which I had violated to such a degree, that I had even persuaded others not to embrace Judaism, &c. When I had read this paper, I descended from the pulpit, upon which the sacred president came up to me, and whispered in my ear that I must retire to a certain corner of the synagogue. I did so, when the door-keeper told me to strip myself. I accordingly stripped my body to the waist, bound a linen cloth on my head, put off my shoes, and lifted up my arms, taking hold of something like a pillar with my hands. The door-keeper then approached, and tied my hands to the pillar with a fillet. These things being done, the precentor drew nigh, and, taking the leathern scourge, laid thirty-nine stripes upon me, agreeably to tradition. During the flagellation, a psalm was chanted. This being finished, I sat on the ground, when the Preacher, or wise man, came up, and absolved me from my excommunication: thus, at length, the gate of

heaven was opened to me,—that gate which before, shut with the strongest bolts, had debarred me from approach and admission. After this, I put on my clothes, went to the entrance of the synagogue, and prostrated myself, the keeper of the synagogue supporting my head. Then all the males who descended, young and old, lifting up one foot, passed over me to the lower part of my legs. When no person now remained, I rose from the place, and, being cleansed from dust by him who assisted me, went home."

Scarcely can the attentive reader survey such facts as these, without reflecting on the superior character of Christian sanctuaries. Our synagogues, free from the sternness and inhumanity of Jewish imposition, are mansions of wisdom, piety, and peace. Unbelievers of every class may enter them as sacred asylums, and find, not inflictions of corporal chastisement, but fervent expostulation, affectionate entreaty, and heavenly mercy. Coercion is withheld, except it be the coercion of truth and charity. In these hallowed abodes of the Most High, redeeming pity sheds its healing influence, and the rich treasury of divine benignity is open to all who are "poor and needy." They are types of that heaven to which they lead. Here, the careless, roused by strong conviction, may awake from the deep slumbers of sin and indifference, and cry, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and we knew it not:—this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" while the humble and devout worshipper, refreshed with that consolation which God only can bestow, may retire, and say, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

JOHN HANNAH.

Huddersfield, Feb. 1, 1832.

AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNICORN:

*By J. F. Laterrade.**

MAN is naturally disposed to call conceive; because his mind, brought in question that of which he cannot down from the exact sphere of his

* Translated from the first volume of the *Bulletin d'Histoire Naturelle de la Societe Linnéenne de Bordeaux*, by Jacob Porter; and inserted in the last number of Silliman's *American Journal of Science and Arts*.

knowledge, would see the limits of creative power within the narrow boundaries of human weakness: then, relying on this false principle of analogous consequences, as soon as he doubts, he has decided; as soon as he has decided, he hears no further; and so great is his error, that he very soon exults in wandering from the truth, if it is common, because it does not agree with his pride to be like his equals, if they are of an opinion contrary to what he supposes to be the fruit of his genius.

Hence literary disputes, confident assertions, and denials, a thousand times more injurious to science than doubt: hence that incredulity in natural history, which leads us to deny the existence of such species as have not come under our observation; and particularly that of the quadruped that now engages our attention.

To say that it is impossible that there should be, or, at least, should have been, such an animal as the land unicorn, would be to go astray from acquired knowledge, to credit an absurd fable, in a word, to affect singularity. Meanwhile, if we can show that the account of this animal has in it nothing remote from the ordinary laws of nature, that several authors have made mention of it, and that there is found no proof that can overthrow the ideas that have been formed respecting it, its existence is thereby established. Let us endeavour to illustrate our threefold proposition.

1. The account of the unicorn has in it no appearance of the fabulous. Let us hear our opponents themselves. "It is said," says the *Dictionnaire des Sciences*, "that this is a timid animal, inhabiting the depths of the forests, of the size of the horse, bearing in front a white horn five hands in length, and with brown hair hanging over that, which is black." The difficulty can fall only on the long horn, with which the front of our quadruped is armed. Its horizontal direction, its position, its being single, the form of the animal that carries it; these, it is said, are by no means natural. But then

the defence of the narwal, which has a horn fourteen feet in length, that has a horizontal direction, proceeding from the upper jaw, and finally belonging to an inhabitant of the waves, is certainly far less natural. Yet this is a cetaceous animal, concerning whose existence there is no doubt, and which is common in the northern seas; and the armed fox, which M. Duhamel, after M. de Mannevillette, made known to us, presents a phenomenon still more extraordinary, since it has a horn, small indeed, but placed on the back-side of the head; a most singular character, and altogether peculiar to this species.

2. Several authors have spoken of the unicorn. First, if we open the sacred Scriptures, we shall see that David and the Prophets were well acquainted with it. But as the commentaries speak of this animal only in a figurative manner, we respect their silence, and pass over a proof, which alone would, perhaps, be sufficient for our purpose. It satisfies us to know that they have made mention of it.

Pliny, whom none will suspect of connivance with the sacred writers, gives a description of the unicorn in his eighth book, adding that it cannot be taken alive.

Accordingly, Hieronymus Lupus and Balthasar Tellez found, in Abyssinia, a quadruped of the size of a horse, and whose front was armed with a horn.

Finally, the respectable Leibnitz announces, in his *Protogea*, on the authority of the celebrated Otho Guérike, that, in 1663, there was dug up, from a quarry of limestone in the mountain of Zeuniquesberg, in the territory of Quedelimborg, the skeleton of a land quadruped, flat on the back parts of the head, but the head itself elevated, and bearing in front a horn about ten feet in length and terminated in a point. This skeleton was broken up by the workmen; nevertheless, the head and some of the ribs were sent to the Princess Abbess. These details are accompanied with an engraving.

3. As yet there is no sufficient proof found of the non-existence of

the unicorn. The account of it has no appearance of fable; and several authors, at different times and among different people, have mentioned it in a positive manner, as we have just seen. What further objection then is there? That the ancients attributed to the horn of our quadruped properties so extraordinary and ridiculous, that every thing relating to it can be no more than a fable. What! it would be deemed sufficient then that falsehood or ignorance should add to real facts, compared with which they should be regarded as mere tales! it would suffice that malice should spread the poisonous venom of calumny over the sacred truth, for which it ought henceforth to have no affinity! Where then shall we be? But, without straying from our subject, what animal is there a little extraordinary, concerning which there have not been suspicions, when the night of time has removed it a little distance from us? The giraffe is an example as striking as it is recent; and the mammoth, whose remains have been discovered, has fairly overthrown such reasonings; and the shells, the inhabitants of which we have not yet been able to determine, will tell us with silent but irresistible eloquence that nature loses nothing by growing old. Besides, the bezoards, to which have been attributed properties scarcely less ridiculous than to the horn of the unicorn, do they not exist? Do not such things occur still with respect to animals that live in parched countries, where heat gives to vegetable juice a power that is unknown in temperate regions? Nevertheless, it is unnecessary to dissemble that it would be in vain for all antiquity to testify in favour of this singular production, it would be in vain that the cabinets should furnish it to the curious; these recitals would be false, these productions would be the work of imposture, if the fact were not still repeated, or if our weakness could not perceive it.

Will it be objected that the moderns have never seen this animal? How many other species are there, which they have not noticed! New discoveries sufficiently prove this. Be-

sides, the unicorn inhabits the interior of Africa, and precisely that part of it of which we know the least; and in Africa, as well as in other countries, certain animals might well appear, at first, even on the coasts, and afterwards, when the number of inhabitants was increased, be confined to the centre of the forests. A countless number of similar facts, sufficiently well known, may well excuse us from enlarging upon this. In short, let us, without being detained by unimportant discussions, come to the grand proof of the non-existence of the unicorn; let us examine attentively, and judge with impartiality.

For a long time there was exhibited a defence resembling ivory, white and channeled, of a very considerable length, and terminating in a point. It was asserted that it was the horn of a quadruped. Of this, however, notwithstanding all the researches that were made, nothing could be discovered; from time to time these defences became more numerous, no other part of the animal being united with it; finally, there was brought to Wormius the head of the narwal; then the question was decided: and because some too credulous persons had said that the tooth of a cetaceous animal was the horn of a quadruped, it was thence concluded that the unicorn had never existed, and consequently that it was only a fabulous animal, whose non-existence was mechanically demonstrated by Kamper. Without detracting from the celebrity of this great anatomist, we do not cite his demonstration, persuaded that the beauties of nature and her admirable secrets cannot be explained by the laws of mechanics only.

Nevertheless, we may remark that Wormius, cautious in his inferences, is always in doubt; that he speaks of the unicorn as he had heard it described before the King of Denmark, by an Ambassador from Congo; that Gmelin is not sure that the fossil unicorn, which is sometimes found in the earth, is the defence of the narwal; that, finally, if the narwal were unknown till of late, the unicorn after being seen by the ancients, may not yet have been discovered by us.

Finally, is it not the height of error and blindness to maintain the non-existence of our quadruped by the existence of the narwal? It must be confessed that this would be to disguise the process of nature, which seems to delight in repeating the particular animals in each class; and that it is to regard as favourable to an opinion that which is almost sufficient to overthrow it. Thus, as the ostrich among birds, and the high-bunched coffre among the inhabitants of the seas, are the representatives of the camel, and the fish zebra is of the quadruped zebra, so the unicorn of the sea seems to prove the existence of the land unicorn.

We conclude, therefore, that we have satisfactory evidence, to say the

least, that this animal may have existed, and that it is possible that he exists still; and we close by saying, with the immortal Buffon, "It is not by contracting the sphere of nature, and confining her within a narrow circle, that we shall be able to understand her; it is not by making her act according to some preconceived ideas, that we shall be able to judge of her or comprehend her; and we shall not be able to fathom the designs of the Creator by furnishing him with our ideas: instead of confining the limits of his power, it is necessary to extend them even to immensity: it is necessary to consider nothing as impossible; to look for every thing; and to suppose that whatever can exist, really does."

INFAMOUS CONDUCT OF SOME NAVIGATORS.

To the Editor of the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine.

It has often been observed, that one of the greatest hinderances to Christian Missions in heathen countries arises from the conduct of men professing Christianity, who are strangers to its spirituality and power. Heathens not unfrequently point to the profligacy of men bearing the name of Christ, in refutation of the doctrines which he taught, and which his servants labour to explain and enforce. The following instances of injustice and cruelty towards offending Heathens, perpetrated by men bearing the Christian name, should be held up to public reprobation and disgust. They are related by Mr. Stewart, in his very interesting and important "Visit to the South Seas," and occurred in one of the Washington Islands, the inhabitants of which are as yet unacquainted with the religion of Christ.

Some time since a French vessel came to anchor in the bay of Taioa, in the island of Nukuhiva. The Commander found some difficulty, from the existence, it appears, of a real scarcity, in procuring as large a quantity of live stock as he desired, and applied to the Tauga for the interposition of his authority in obliging the islanders to furnish him with more than he had yet secured. This he was either unwilling or unable to do, or exerted his influence in vain; on which the

Frenchman ordered him to be seized when on board, and had him bound hand and foot to the mainmast, his arms and legs being passed round it, and tied in such a manner that his whole weight hung upon the ligatures; and told him that he should not be released till forty hogs were brought to the ship. This took place early in the morning. In the course of six or eight hours, by great exertion, the required number, including animals of every size, was collected; when the Captain, in place of releasing the old man, demanded twenty more before he would unbind him. It was not till night that these also were gathered from the interior by seizing them wherever they could be found, and despoiling the whole valley of almost every animal of the kind. Thus, after being in torture the whole day, the prophet—"make oa!" "dead!" as in a pathetic tone he expressed it; at the same time shutting his eyes, letting his head drop on his chest, and his arms fall lifelessly beside him, "make oa i te eha a te pooe!" "dead with pain and hunger!"—was unbound, and permitted to go on shore, without any remuneration for the indignity and misery he had suffered, or pay for the hogs received.

The Frenchman gained his object.