

or money in order that professionals may teach them how to "chizzle" out an opponent.

THE NATURALIST.

THE RHINOCEROSSES AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

UNTIL WITHIN A VERY SHORT TIME the Zoological Society could boast of possessing three specimens of the Indian rhinoceros—the old female that has now been an inhabitant of the gardens for some fifteen or sixteen years, and the pair of young recently brought home by Mr Thompson the head keeper. On the exchange of the young female for the African elephant, to which I alluded a fortnight ago, it was determined to place the remaining pair in one enclosure. The proceeding, however, was not without risk. The old female (I call her old, although being only eighteen, she is still quite youthful for a rhinoceros) is subject at times to desperate fits of ill-temper, when she becomes furious, and from her enormous strength very dangerous. The young male, a mere half-grown youth of some four or five summers, would have had but a very poor chance had she taken offence at him, and used her formidable horn on his more vulnerable hide.

Every precaution, however, was taken to ensure a peaceful meeting. The pair had been accustomed to feed near together, and had made acquaintance through the bars of the inclosure. The introduction took place early one morning, long before the visitors had assembled, and when the keepers were at leisure, in case their services should be required. The young one was first let out into the inclosure containing the elephant pond, and was fed with hay. On the old one's being liberated from her den the two fed at first quietly together. After a short time the young one appeared desirous of cultivating a closer acquaintance, and his perseverance in proffering his friendship at last roused the spirit or anger of the old one. She pushed him with her horn, and catching it under his flank, pulled him along with ease. This and a few other intimations of a like kind let him know that she was not to be trifled with; so, feeling that discretion was the better part of valour, he turned and fled. Then ensued a sight such as, I should imagine, has never been seen out of the Indian jungle. The old female, that we usually regard as so lethargic, passive, and inert, pursued her lesser companion with a low, swinging trot, that broke occasionally into a full gallop. The speed with which she got over the ground, and the agility with which she turned round the corners of the pond, were marvellous, when her enormous weight of between two and three tons is taken into consideration. We all thought that the poor little fellow (he is not much heavier than four prize oxen) would come to grief. But she was evidently not desirous of injuring him; for, as she reached him in her chase, she turned aside so as not to come too violently into collision with him. Still the play was too like earnest to be agreeable; so he took refuge in the pond, whither she followed him, and these two leviathans swam, and dived, and gambolled with the ease, if not with the grace and agility, of otters.

It was delightful to see how their huge bulk and massive limbs were adapted to this aquatic pastime. Their weight, great as it must be, was buoyed up by the water, and they rolled, turned, and dived almost without an effort.

The time they remained beneath the surface was considerable, and as they floated it was surprising to see how small a portion of the head was exposed above the surface. I should think that shooting a floating rhinoceros was no easy task.

They remained in the water for about an hour, during which time the female not unfrequently put her snout under the body of the male and raised him far above the surface. By and by both were apparently pretty well tired out, and they came to land and proceeded quietly to refresh themselves with some green branches and hay provided for their delectation.

The one thing that impressed itself on the mind during these gambols (if such they may be called) was the fearful power of the full-grown rhinoceros. It is obvious that the elephant itself would probably be worsted in an encounter with this animal when infuriated. The fearful weapon on the snout, the massive head, and the enormous size of the muscles of the neck and spine by which they are both moved, give evidence of the enormous force which might be exerted were the rhinoceros roused to an exhibition of its full strength.

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