

IN THE ZOO

REPRESENTING TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OF OBSERVATION
AND STUDY OF THE ANIMALS IN THE
NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL PARK

BY

W. REID BLAIR, D.V. Sc., LL. D.

DIRECTOR AND GENERAL CURATOR
NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL PARK

FOREWORD BY

MADISON GRANT

PRESIDENT NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PHOTOGRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED BY

ELWIN R. SANBORN

PHOTOGRAPHER EXTRAORDINARY TO THE NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL PARK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NEW YORK · LONDON

1929

alive some of the wariest and also the most dangerous of wild animals, keeping them alive and successfully transporting them to some zoological garden.

If wild animals were listed upon the exchanges of the world like corn and cotton, we might find our newspapers recording the activities of the market somewhat as follows:

"An early smash in the kangaroo market yesterday, occasioned by the arrival of a heavy shipment of prime kangaroos from Australia, was followed by a sharp recovery and before the end of the day the offerings had all been absorbed by the eastern zoological gardens, and the dealers on the wild animal exchange were talking of \$1,500 aard-varks and \$8,000 rhinoceroses by August."

Various causes determine the cost of the inhabitants of the Zoo. The cost of animals is based upon their rarity, difficulty of capturing, and the expense incidental to their care and transportation from the jungle to the Zoo.

The most expensive animal in the Zoo is the Indian rhinoceros. A young rhino, say two or three years old, delivered in New York is worth about \$8,000. During the late war, giraffes soared amazingly and for a time good specimens were unobtainable. This was because the region wherein the lanky, long-necked animals are usually ensnared was within the zone of hostilities and expeditions could not enter it. Probably the finest pair in captivity to-day is that in the Zoological Park, valued at \$15,000. The market price of good specimens at the present time is about \$1,500 a yard, measuring from the feet to the top of the horns.

An elephant costs from \$2,500 to \$4,000 and a hip-

lay quietly on the floor of the car while the rope was slipped from her head, and when the car was rolled back to her quarters, walked out placidly and stretched herself on the floor of her cage, perfectly at ease.

These are exceptional cases. The majority of the hoofed-animal patients struggle desperately when restraint is attempted and nearly all of the large cats are extremely savage and resent any interference vigorously.

On several occasions in her young days our African rhinoceros, "Victoria," required surgical attention for an abscess that had developed on her left cheek, affecting the lower jaw-bone. She showed a mild temper but whenever any attempt was made to restrain her, her physical energy and activity proved all out of proportion to our estimate of her strength. In the early stages of the development of the growth, she yielded readily to the surgeon's knife and to subsequent dressings. Several operations at infrequent intervals reduced the swelling but did not completely arrest the progress of the growth, although a perfect cure seemed to be effected each time. A further recurrence of the trouble convinced us that a more thorough operation was necessary.

Elaborate preparations were made and a force of men was assembled to aid in the operation. A professional anæsthetizer, a dozen keepers, ropes, patent hobbles, mattresses, pails, absorbent cotton, a varied assortment of surgical instruments and appliances, and two and a half pounds of chloroform and ether were arrayed on one side, and a twelve-hundred-pound rhino on the other. "Victoria" fought a noble fight that morning, with malice toward none, and she emerged from the anæsthesia groggy and triumphant. Had it been

possible, without the slightest doubt she would have returned thanks that the operation was a complete success.

The occurrence of broken bones among the monkeys and apes is not infrequent, but as these animals usually yield obediently and without much protest to any operation or treatment, recoveries are the rule after an interval of three or four weeks in the hospital. The causes of these fractures, so frequent among these animals, are often puzzling to account for. It is difficult to understand just why so agile and surefooted an animal as a monkey, baboon or ape should suffer such an accident as a fractured leg or arm. Of course it is not so hard to understand when the subject is a long-legged wading bird like a flamingo, crane or stork, with whom a sudden thrust might cause some fragile bone to snap. Even the mountain sheep, goat or antelope might easily break one of its long bones if the animal's foot happened to get caught in the crevice of a rock; but when an elephant by merely making a misstep can fall and fracture one of the heavy thigh bones, it seems extraordinary, to say the least. Our African elephant "Sultana" slipped off the sloping incline of her outside yard, fell about ten inches, and in this seemingly trifling accident fractured the right femur and two ribs. Of course a broken leg in an elephant is beyond repair and there is only one thing to do in such cases, and that is to have the animal humanely destroyed, and as quickly as possible.

Although usually not a difficult task, the extraction of the aching tooth of an ape or a monkey often proves to be an interesting operation. Some time ago a chimpanzee that was always friendly with the doctor required such an operation. When its cheek began to be