

**Otters near Plymouth.**—Not long since a large otter was seen close to an enclosed pool kept as a store-pond for marine animals intended for the Crystal Palace Aquarium. Otters are not at all uncommon among the rocks in Plymouth Sound, and I well remember watching one with a telescope for a quarter of an hour as it was fishing in the sea quite fifty yards from the shore. It swam about in a kind of circle, constantly diving just like a cormorant, and bringing up a fish almost every time, which if small was eaten in the water, but if large was brought to a rock and there devoured; then the otter would again swim off and fish as before. During the quarter of an hour I saw it catch no less than twelve fish. About a week since a friend of mine went to inspect a wreck lying on the rocks in Mount Batten Bay, when he observed some boys pelting something with stones, and on going to see what it was, he found that they had killed one otter and another was at the last gasp. As they were fine animals he purchased them both and had them stuffed. No doubt the surf, during the late tremendous gales, had driven them from hiding-places among the rocks.

—*John Gatcombe; 8, Lower Durnford Street, Stonehouse, Plymouth, December 6, 1872.*

**Bats flying at Noon.**—Within the last fortnight I have, on five different days, observed a shorteared bat flying between the hours of 11 A.M. and 1.30 P.M. in the bright sunshine, catching insects with the greatest ease, and bold enough to come within a yard of my head. I tried several times to knock it down when coming towards me, but it always swerved quickly to one side. The first time I saw a bat fly in the sunshine was on the 18th of March last year at noon. I have noticed that the days were all mild, and each time there was a continuous rain during the preceding night. In future I shall consider the expression “blind as a bat” to mean quickness of sight.—*J. Sclater; Castle Eden Castle, Durham, November 7, 1872.*

[Other instances have repeatedly been recorded in the ‘Zoologist.’—*E.N.*]

**Birth of a Rhinoceros in London.**—This unprecedented event occurred in the London Docks on the evening of the 6th of December, and we learn the following particulars from the obliging keeper Mr. John Warncken. The two animals, mother and child, are the property of Mr. Rice, naturalist, of Grove Street, Commercial Road. The mother was taken in a pitfall, and was shipped, with a male of the same species, from Singapore, in the steamship “Orchis.” The ship encountered such heavy seas on the voyage that the strong teak cage of the male was broken in, and the occupant was either killed or died from injuries received. After a passage of seventy-three days, the vessel arrived in the Victoria Docks, and before the survivor could be removed from deck she gave birth to this young one. The period of gestation, hitherto unknown, has, we believe, now been ascertained to be nine months. Mr. Bartlett, of the Zoological Gardens, was at once sent for, and under his superintendence the “little stranger” was removed in blankets.

to Mr. Rice's premises. The mother soon afterwards arrived in a van, and the young one was fed with her milk. This is the only nourishment it takes; but it is so strong and vigorous that it applies to the mother repeatedly, and the keeper (who sleeps all night with it) informed us that it had sucked no less than seven times during the night previous to our visit. Descending some steps into a dark stable, we could see by the dim light of a bull's-eye lantern that the further end had been partitioned off, and covered with sacking to exclude the light. In this compartment the old rhinoceros was lying down, while the young one, pretty strong on its legs, was walking slowly towards us, and making for a square opening that led into a separate chamber in which a feather-bed had been placed for its especial benefit. The opening through which it entered is too small to admit the mother, although the keeper, who shares its feather-bed, informed us that the dam comes to the opening and looks in affectionately at her infant while it sleeps. She is very quiet, and seems little to think that with one toss of her strong and sharp horn she could send cradle and keeper through the roof of the stable. As we peeped in at a small aperture, the keeper holding the light down for us, the young one walked up deliberately to the lantern, and gave us an excellent view. In appearance it reminds one of the young hippopotamus, but has a longer head, and apparently stands higher on its legs. The face is bare, with just a rudiment of horn, but the body is covered with black hair. The ears are long and directed backwards, although occasionally twitched perpendicularly with a quasi-nervous movement.—*Correspondent of the 'Field.'*

[The species to which this interesting mother and child belong is supposed to be *R. sumatranus*, but there has been such stumbling about the name of the two-horned species of Asiatic rhinoceros, that I think it best to say little on this head.—*Edward Newman.*]

**The Young Hippopotamus.**—This inmate of the "Zoo" continues in good health and grows rapidly.

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**The Channel Islands Fauna.**—The question of what islands should be included as British Islands, in treating of their productions in making collections, either zoological or botanical, is more complicated than at first sight would appear. The term "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland" excludes the Isle of Man, which is as much a dependency as the Channel Islands and Heligoland. But the Isle of Man, geographically, should certainly be included, and the Channel Islands and Heligoland excluded. On the other hand, the Orkneys and Shetlands should certainly be included, both geographically and politically, beyond a doubt, and the Faroe Islands would certainly be included were it not for their political separation. The latter, geographically, belong to the same series as the other islands in the North of Scotland, the only difference being that the