

KIRCHMAYER

Un-Natural History, or Myths of Ancient Science;

Being a Collection of Curious Tracts on the Basilisk,
Unicorn, Phoenix, Behemoth or Leviathan, Dragon,
Giant Spider, Tarantula, Chameleons, Satyrs,
Homines Caudati, &c.

Now first translated from the Latin and edited, with notes and illustrations,

by

Edmund Goldsmid

F.R.H.S., F.S.A. (Scott.)

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II.

On the Unicorn,

by

George Caspard Kirchmayer

Preface.

AMONG the pleasant sights of Paradise, the picture of the animal creation, both small and great, obeying the nod of primeval man, is by no means the least pleasing. There one might see lordly lions, huge and strong elephants, Rhinoceroses and Monoceroses, at the word of command, making their appearance, and allowing the yoke to be placed on them by the hand of man. Again, one might see other animals with faculties innumerable, and beauty unspeakable, coming at the command of the glorious Creator, and receiving the names corresponding to their natures. This was the first meeting of the animal creation. The second was a mournful one indeed; but even it was wonderful in the extreme. For when Divine Justice changed to severe anger, on account of the grievous crimes of men, and determined to destroy the wicked from the face of the earth by a flood of avenging waters, which was to sweep away the guilt of mankind, at the instigation of the Most High many pairs of animals were collected (of fishes there was no need), and received into the ark, which had lately been built, until it was quite full.

What were your thoughts, Noah, when you acted as host to the crowds of the whole animal creation? or when the stench from the interior oppressed your senses, and, without, the heaps of dead men and animals floated about, and the huge waves threatened you with instant death. You did not, methinks, revile your God, but repeated your prayers night and day. With Him as your stay, not only could you be free from anxiety, but safe in the fullest sense of the word. God consoled you, He helped you, He was the constant guardian of you and yours. Tell us, is it not wrong to think that a single species perished and became extinct then, when such a great God took in hand the charge of all. But just as there is no kind of creature so beautiful as not to perform the filthy functions of nature, so there is nothing so sacred as to escape the violation of the audacious. Over the whole world it is a common saying that the unicorn perished and became extinct at the

flood, and that not a single individual of the Monoceros species survived. We shall correct this injustice, and shall, with God's help, find a means of putting a stop to this universal blasphemy.

On the Unicorn.

Chapter 1.

Argument.

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2. A part of Christ's Cross is called "Unicorn."
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- 8, Single-horned beetles seen by Bartholinus between Salerno and Naples.
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13. The rhinoceros, the deadly enemy of the elephant.
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15. An inquiry into the term unicorn, both as a substantive and as a creature. Various synonyms of the term.

I. The term monoceros is originally of Greek origin, and comes from *monos*, meaning one, and *keras*, meaning a horn. In the Attic method of pronunciation the word is accented on the antepenultimate syllable. Among the Latins the term unicorn (*i.e.*, furnished with only one horn) has exactly the same meaning. By some writers, such as Bartholomew, of England, Nicolas Perotta, and Eusebius, of Nuremberg, the word *unicornuus* is used

instead. Nestor, of Novarre, under the word *unicorn*, page 102, says that it can also be declined as *unicornium*. John of Japua speaks in almost the same terms, when he proves that *monocerus* and *monoceri* are possible terms. Such matters are, however, to be left to philological scholars to decide. It is our duty to explain with care and accuracy the common signification of the word. Our exertions in this respect must be conducted with greater perseverance when we consider what a great advantage it is to have truth cleared of the labyrinths of falsehood. It is my opinion, indeed, that the majority of the false stories about the monoceros, which are not only monstrous but obscure, could not have arisen except through an indistinct apprehension of what the term signifies.

II. The term unicorn is one in universal use, not only in matters of art but in those of nature. That it belongs and is applied to the first of these two classes is clearly seen by the evidence of Irenaeus, Justinus, and Tertullian, according to whom the middle part of the main beam of Christ's Cross was called "the unicorn." A passage in Deuteronomy, chap. xxiii. 17,¹ afforded Tertullian an opportunity of making this statement. The following are the words he uses in chap. xi. of the book written against the Jews:—"Christ," he says, "was therein meant to be represented by the bull, by reason of his double attitude towards men his attitude of severity to some as their judge, his attitude of clemency to others as their Saviour. The horns of this bull were the extreme points of the cross-beam, while the 'unicorn' was the middle plank of the main beam." These words of Tertullian have not, however, been able to withstand the close scrutiny of criticism.² Not only D. Georgius Calixtus, in his notice of the Cross, written at Leipsic, but Dn. Dibberrus, in his account of the Crucifixion, have given the meaning of the word. The Cross was called unicorn partly because it had a sharp curved point, partly because it was placed in the middle of the beam, as the horn is in the forehead of the animal, and had no other part of the structure to correspond to it. (See Magnus, son of Bartholinus Magnus, On the Unicorn, chap. 23, page 149, and following.)

III. The term is applied to natural products, both "mineral" and "natural." For instance, in Bohemia, Thuringia, Moravia, and in certain districts of Misnia, stones are dug from some of the mines, which possess a powerful virtue against Epilepsy, against malignant fevers and other diseases of less note.

Sennertus,³ the great doctor of Germany, is worth quoting on this point.

He says, "Among porous stones, that species deserves notice which is commonly said to be the unicorn's horn. Others call it a fossil-horn. In Thuringia, Bohemia, and other places, such horns are found, and not only horns but other bones which have the name of being good for healing wounds and broken bones, and for curing sores." Especially are the following words to be considered: "These horns, experience has taught us, possess great power, especially in curing Epilepsy, malignant fevers, plague, bowel complaints in children, and other diseases. From this circumstance they are commonly sold as unicorn's horn." The story that the whole race of unicorns perished at the Flood derives plausibility from the fact that, at the present day, horns, which were covered over with the sediment left by the waters of the Flood, and which have lain all this time buried in the earth, are in many places dug up again. With this remark, however, we will deal later on.

IV. At the present point we have to give a clear and systematic account of the different cases in which the term Monoceros is applied to animals. We cannot gain the desired haven of truth until we pass over the distortions and ambiguities that intercept our path.

Creatures that swim, that fly, that creep, that wade, besides insects, all claim the name unicorn. As far as the first of these divisions is concerned, the claim seems just, as certain Batavians, on returning from the East Indies, in 1601, brought with them a huge sea-beast, which had a large single horn. The great Clusius has left us a picture of it. (Bk. ii.)⁴ The existence of a kind of creature called the Hippopotamus is affirmed by some, but doubted by others. Whatever the truth may be, it is a fact that in the year 1576 Martin Frobisher⁵ came across a fish-unicorn among the huge ice-fields, which had a horn that protruded about two cubits in front of its nose. (*History of East India*, Book ii. chap. 26.) Olaus Magnus,⁶ Bk. xxi. chap. 10, on the Monoceros, says: "The Monoceros is a sea-monster" (I would have preferred if Olaus had abstained from the use of this word, which casts a slur on Nature) "which has on its forehead a very large horn, by means of which it can pierce and wreck vessels with which it comes in contact, and destroy a large number of persons who may be on board. But in this case, the love of a Divine Providence gives a source of escape to the seaman, for in spite of its ferocity, it has such an extreme slowness of motion, that, if seen before it reaches the vessel, the terrified sailors can easily evade its approach. "

Albertus M. Rondeletius⁷ has also made mention of this fish in his book

on the Monoceros, while there are many who have noticed it when writing on the subject of fishes. We may compare also Olearius, *Persian Journeys*, Bk. I. chap. 4, fol. 175.⁸

VI. Ælian (Bk. 17 of *History of Animals*, chap. 10), has introduced unicorns under the head of flying creatures. In the same way Duro, a writer of Persian history (as we learn from the Conon of Cornelius Nepos, and also from Athenaeus) mentions that unicorn-birds were found in Aethiopia. When Solimannus Eunuchus was bringing round his fleet to port, after having sailed over the Red Sea, there was seen on the coast of Portugal a unicorn-bird, a statement which is testified to by Lewis de Urreta, a monk of the Franciscan Order. (*History of Ethiopia*, p. 344.) The statement tendered by Thomas Bartholinus,⁹ son of Caspard, page 50 of the book above quoted, is worthy of notice: "Rome, the mother of Nations, produced a basilisk ornamented with a single horn in its head, of the same appearance as the engraver has shewn in the woodcut. He, in fact, gives a picture of the creature."

VII. Among the many races of Reptiles, several cases, and these of an agreeable nature, could, by the exercise of diffuseness be quoted from Albertus Magnus¹⁰ and Ulysses Aldrovandus.

First of all however, we must quote that passage of John Veslingius¹¹ which is a source of wonder to the anatomists of our age. In this passage he states that in the suburbs of Cairo he had several times seen one-horned vipers of a most deadly nature. The Egyptians give them the name of Mamelukes or Regias, and say that Cleopatra, in times gone by, had applied them to her breasts.

Cardanus mentions a little worm in his book on subtilties, which springs from the leaves of the nightshade, which is marked by a green and yellow tinge, and carries a horn on its forehead, more than an inch in length. It is my opinion that Cardanus had confounded the mouth and what corresponds to the cartilage. The question is whether it has a horn, whence the animal may derive its name, or only some material, stiff and prickly, which by the lapse of time becomes transformed into cartilage. There is nothing new or wonderful in this; it happens to capons, or castrated cocks, as well as to this creature. Now shall we here delay long over the horned slug of Fabius Columna, which he calls by the name "Boucampe" or ox-foot, from its characteristic feature of being bent like the curved foot of an ox, and which

is said by the Latins to be destructive to nuts.

VIII. Even among insects there are certain kinds furnished with only one horn. The species of beetles of this kind (not those double horned creatures which the German call Schröter) is admitted to be somewhat rare, and although less treated of by Authors, it is yet very common in Illyria. Next to Olaus of Worms, we must quote the words of Bartholinus, who was an eye-witness of the fact recorded and is a man of the greatest attainments. "When journeying: between Salerno and Naples," he says "we came across a creature of the kind I have described. I have called it Unicorn, in opposition to the opinion of these most learned men Aldrovandus, and Imperatus, to whom it seems to be better described by the appellation Rhinoceros." But, dismissing these instances and that of the amphibious animal called the Camphor, we must call attention to quadrupeds, and enquire whether, perhaps, the vague meaning of the word may not be explained, as the result of petty mistakes and errors, more than anything else.

IX. In this branch of our subject such variety meets our view that I can no longer wonder at the fact that authors nowhere agree with one another in describing the nature of the monoceros.

This is the reason why many are suspicious of the stories told of the creature, why very many men are sceptical on the point, and more than one is reduced to a state of misgiving on the subject. For (1) there is said to be a one-horned ass or unicorn of India. This species is very often referred to by Pliny (Bk. ii, chap. 37, Nat. Hist.) and by Aristotle (Bk. ii., chap. I; Bk. iii., chap. 2). And although Andreas Marinus, the sworn foe of the unicorn, considers this one-horned, one-footed creature in the light of a chimera, on the ground that none of the present generation of those who have travelled over the Indies, and other countries unknown to the ancients, have ever seen or heard of it, yet he is completely and fully refuted by Bartholinus (page 118).

X. Again, (2) the existence of one-horned horses is beyond all manner of doubt. It is only a very few years ago since the Elector of Saxony, the late John George I., of most glorious memory, was presented by a man named Kracchius (who had served his full term of military service in the Imperial army, and cannot be unknown to the inhabitants of Krackow) with a one-horned horse, which lost and renewed its horn annually. We shall here pass no remark on the testimony of Pliny, Strabo, and Solinus, since their

authenticity is suspected by some (though we should remind these latter that accusation is quite a different thing from refutation). John Eusebius, of Nuremberg, a great authority, Professor of Physics at Madrid, in Spain (Nat. Hist., Bk. vii., chap. 2), says he saw, at the Court of Philip, a horned horse which had been brought from India. In the stables of the Prince of Sicily, Leo Allatius¹² saw a horse some years previously, of very meagre proportions, but of the greatest ferocity. This is on the testimony of Thomas Bartholinus.

XI. There are also oxen possessed of only one horn. Any one who pleases may consult Pliny, Bk. viii., chap. 21. His inconsistency, however, in at one time stating there are only Indian asses which are one-horned, and at another that there are oxen also, cannot be got over. Still, Ethiopia and India are the native places of this creature.

Caesar, also, in his "Gallic War," states that in the Hercynian Forest, oxen were to be found which had a kind of high straight horn in the middle of the forehead. It is moreover true that in some places cows with only one horn are reared. On this point we may quote Scaliger. He says: "In the same field as I mentioned above, at the town of Zeila, in Ethiopia, there are cows of a black colour, with stag's horns. I have called these creatures therefore "Cervines." Some have the horn in the middle of the forehead, and it forms a greater angle than the foot does with the leg, when at rest." Scaliger gives us the above statement on the authority of Lewis Vertomannus,¹³ who saw, at the Sulttan's court at Zeila, cows of the description given above. Under this head it may be well to bring the one-horned wild ox of Russia, which the Germans commonly term Die Uhrochsen.¹⁴ See, on this point, Erasmus Stela Bk. I. Bartholinus, in his remarks on Ancient Russia, thinks these wild one-horned oxen to be the same as those which Caesar says he saw wandering in the Hercynian forest.

XII. But we must not pass over without mention the one-horned oryx. The oryx, to explain the word, is so-called from its power of burrowing, either from a desire of being undisturbed, or because, from a petulant nature, like a boar, it digs up the earth, not with its head or mouth, but with its feet, with the intention of covering itself over with a blacker coating, so as not to see the rising sun or moon. The greatest divergence of opinion reigns as to what class of animals we are to refer the oryx to. Pliny (Bk. iii., chap. 37) and Columella (Bk. i., chap. 1) refer it to the deer, others to the ass tribe. However that may be, the oryx is a one-horned creature. Its habitat is Syria, Palestine, and Getulia, in Africa. We learn from Juvenal and Martial that it

was considered a great delicacy. Juvenal writes:—

*Et Scythiae volucres, et Phoenicoplerus ingens,
Et Getulus oryx.*

Martial, again, Bk. 13, Epigram 95:—

*Matutinarum non ultima praeda ferarum
Saevus oryx constat quod mihi morte canum.*

The oryx has a very great power of withstanding thirst: its size is medium, and its colour very like that of the goat. The Kings of Egypt, in order to find out with accuracy the moment of sunrise were accustomed to mount the oryx, and make use of a wonderful horologue. I know, however, that the learned Salmasius¹⁵ denies that the oryx, on account of the slimness of its body, can possibly support a rider. This point, however, we have nothing to do with here.

XIII. The rhinoceros is now, if I mistake not, the only subject left to deal with. The term itself, and the conclusion of it with the monoceros, must be explained. Rhinoceros is derived from *rhinos*, a snout, and *keras* (cornu) a horn. This horn grows from its nose, and is a most deadly weapon, and the mortal dread of the elephant. Hence captious persons, who are very ready to blame others, and find fault with everything, are said to have a rhinoceros's nose. (See Martial, Bk. i., Epig. 3.)

The rhinoceros, though somewhat lower than the elephant in stature, and shorter in length, is yet his match. It has a divided hoof, a hide the colour of box-wood, and is protected by a double fold of this covering (I use the words of Camerarius,¹⁶ Book i., chap. 25), "which, like a solid breast-plate, forms an impenetrable shield." It is armed with a horn of bone like its hoof, placed on its snout, with which its custom is to strike and pierce the belly of the elephant, its irreconcilable enemy. Nature has placed an insurmountable antipathy between the rhinoceros and the elephant. In the year of Grace 1513, May 1st, one was brought to the King of Portugal. This king, two years after, for the sake of making a show at Ulyssipona, let this creature and an elephant loose together, and the Rhinoceros came off victorious. This is so much an ascertained fact that it is quite beyond the possibility of doubt.

(See Paulus Jovius, Cardanus, book x. folio 328, Scaliger, exercitation, 205, section I. Franzius, and also Thomas Bartholinus, on the Unicorn, amongst the addenda on page 147.) In the 43rd chapter of Suetonius, we are told the same thing of Octavius Augustus. Hence those that deny it, deny it in vain. In 1515, a Portuguese Knight, Damianus à Goës, saw a like spectacle at the same place, in the reign of King Emmanuel.

XIV. Care must be taken, however, not to confound the Rhinoceros with the Monoceros, a mistake the student of ancient times frequently falls into. Scaliger accuses Cardanus of this same mistake (Exerc. 205, sec. I.), in these words. "Of what ill destiny are you the victim, that in spite of the frequent castigations you receive from the rod of the grammarians, you should now fall under the censure of the naturalists? You are past any help, Cardanus, when you describe the monoceros under the heading of rhinoceros, although these creatures are quite distinct." Such are the words of Scaliger, a man for whom we have as much reverence as the great Conqueror of the world had for his own Home; for, in my opinion there is no thinker more deep or more accurate than Scaliger. Although, then, I wish his memory every good, I cannot defend him in the present instance. There is no doubt he has thrown an undeserved slur on Cardanus, who has taken quite the opposite view to that here imputed to him. (Bk. x., folio 326; Basle, H. Peter's Edition.) For after giving a definition of the rhinoceros, and clearing the way for the connection between it and the monoceros, he makes the following interpolation:—"It is clear that this creature (*i.e.*, the rhinoceros, of which he was till then speaking) is quite distinct from the monoceros, with which its only relation is a similarity of name." Unless, perhaps, Scaliger really has in his mind some other passage of Cardanus, which I can nowhere find in his works.

XV. Up to this point we have considered many kinds of monoceros, though using the term rather as an adjective than a noun. Now, after our general statement about one-horned animals, we have still to investigate what, *par excellence*, was meant to be implied by what the Latins called *unicornu*, the Greeks *monoceros*, the Hebrew *r,em*, the Germans Tag Einhorn, the French *lycorne*, the Italians *alicorno* and *lioncorno*, and other nations by other names. Now, therefore, we have to investigate what the unicorn is, where it exists, and the qualities with which it is endowed. This we proceed to do.

The Unicorn - Continued

Chapter II.

Contents.

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13. Note to the reader.

1. The unicorn (of which we are at present speaking) is a four-footed animal, with a single and very long horn on its forehead. The creature is incapable of being tamed, of a very fierce, solitary, and brave temperament, and possesses extraordinary speed. It is an inhabitant of the wild wastes of Arabia, Syria, Ethiopia, and India. It is of the size of a horse, and has that creature's mane. It has the feet, head, and legs of a stag, and the tail of a goat or hog. Its cry is of the most terrible description.

Of the form of the animal, as of everything else with the exception of

man, we are, *à priori*, ignorant. Accordingly, the definition we give is merely an enumeration of certain peculiar properties and distinctive marks, and is, at the same time, somewhat vague. We proceed as best we can, not as we ought, for that is impossible. That it is an animal, a quadruped, and carries a single horn on its forehead, is devoid of all doubt. On the nature and value of this horn we shall speak further on, in some notes to our main treatise. What follows requires the corroboration of proof.

II. We have used the words "incapable of being tamed," and "of a very fierce nature." God himself said this. In Job, chap. xxxix., v. 9-10, we read—"Will the unicorn" (N.B.—Some incorrectly substitute *rhinoceros* here and elsewhere for *unicorn* in translating the Hebrew *r,em*, but against them we have not only Luther, but the Septuagint, and French, Italian, Spanish, English, and Belgian translators, to say nothing of Drusius, Schlinder, Flacius, and others) "Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?" Hence in Psalm xxii., verse 21, the cruel persecutors of our Lord are not inaptly compared to unicorns, and placed by the side of the lion. The Messiah complains thus:—"Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns."

That it is a solitary animal is clear from many proofs. It is an infallible truth of zoology that all creatures of a fierce disposition, such as the lion, leopard, panther, and bear, delight in solitude. Special points to be noted are that it inhabits untrodden tracts and districts furthest removed from the haunts of man. With very few exceptions it has never come into the possession of man, unless in the sense that its horns, when cast, are sometimes found. The rarity of these horns makes them coveted and dear. This is my reason for believing that Idaith Aga (an Ambassador of Solyman at the Court of the Emperor Maximilian, known as Marcus Scherer before his abjuration of the Christian religion, and a great friend of Ulysses Aldrovandus) did not take the word unicorn in its peculiar and distinctive sense, when he dared to say in a full meeting of the first men of Vienna that he had seen these animals in a desert part of Arabia, wandering about in flocks like herds of cattle.

III. Its courage is shown forth by God himself to Job in the book called after him, chapter xxxix. v. 12, "Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great?" and in Numbers, chap. xxiii, v. 22, "God hath brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn." The same words

exactly, occur again in chapter xxiv. 8. We maintain that the speed of the unicorn is not inferior to that of the goat, panther, hare, horse, or dog. Psalm xxix, 6, is especially noteworthy, where we read that Jehovah "makes the cedars of Lebanon to skip like a young unicorn."¹ Any creature maybe possessed of extreme speed, when it is not overburdened with a mass of flesh. Indeed among both men and the lower animals, the strong are the swift.

IV. That it is an inhabitant of Arabia and Syria requires no further proof than that in very many passages of Sacred Writ it is made an inhabitant of Phoenicia, Syria, and Arabia. These animals, accordingly, were not altogether unknown. A clearer proof of this may be got, I believe, from Psalm xxix, 6, where it is said: "Thou maketh them (that is, the cedars) to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn." Here it is conjoined with Lebanon and Sirion in a sort of treble comparison and in a following verse² with the wilderness of Kadesh. From these quotations, I believe, the argument holds good that in this case the thing contained has some relation to the thing containing it (*i.e.* the Unicorn to the wilderness of Kadesh, Lebanon, or Sirion.) We have the authority of the most unimpeachable authorities for saying that it is an inhabitant of the wilds of Ethiopia and India. Lewis Vertomannus, of Bologna, whom Scaliger speaks of as an excellent man in his 205th Discursus, saw two unicorns at Mecca, which, he says, were sent over by the Prince of Ethiopia as the means of cementing a closer friendship with the Sultan.³ M. Paulus Venetus,⁴ from his long acquaintance with the Tartars, and more especially the Eastern tribes of them, (Bk. iii. chap. 15, on Oriental writings) says that unicorns and elephants are found in great numbers in that country. Similarly Leonard Ranchwolff writes to the effect that he had heard from a certain Persian, that the Sophy, King of Persia, brought up two or three unicorns at Samarcand. Thomas Bartholinus, in the passage quoted above, says: "Sailors and merchants who have returned to Europe from China and other districts of India⁵ bear witness to this fact. They say that when traversing the vast deserts with cautious footsteps, they have seen, in the deserts of Arabia and other solitary places, a wild beast of this description take refuge in woods and untrodden places, and not without a feeling of fear in their own hearts. But so great was its speed, they say, that it very quickly was lost to view, and prevented those who saw it from obtaining a more accurate look at it."

V. The other points, namely, those that concern its size, shape, and habit of body and cry, we shall now consider shortly, in order to make our work as brief as possible. We are not however without proofs. After Cardanus,

from whom we have above quoted a passage, we must give an extract from Scaliger, which is to the following effect:—"Unicorns are about the size of a horse; they have the head, feet, and legs of a stag, their hair and coat is of a dark chesnut tinge. They have the mane of a horse, though scantier and not so long. Their hips are covered with hair. I have seen a horn of one of these creatures at Nicea, and others at different places. One of these was yellowish, another of a dull tinge, more like the colour of box than anything else. Another was reddish. I have a piece of one in my possession, which is of a white colour." Its cry Ælian describes as most unearthly and shrill, Pliny says it is a deep bellow, while Solinus calls it terrible. The words of the late Sperlingius, in his *Lectures on Zoology* (On the Unicorn, cap. vi., part 7), apply in this instance. "The cry of this animal cannot be exactly described apart from other cries." Eusebius says:—"The cry of the cat and unicorn is disgusting, and has a weird ring about it. There is no doubt about the cry of the cat. Their cries vary with their different wants. When goaded by desire they give forth unearthly cries, and fill a house with their loud yells."⁶

VI. After what has been said on this point, we pass on to the common tradition, which has not been unopposed by authorities, as to the hoofs, feet, horn, and similar adjuncts of the unicorn. Some, for instance, say its hoof is solid, others that it is cleft. Some declare its feet are hairy, others that they are soft and smooth. Some say its horn is of the length of two cubits, others that it is more or less; and while some say the colour of this horn is dusky grey, and others black or dusky, there are even some who maintain it is of a bright hue. These points, however, are of too minor importance to require a detailed discussion. The individual varies with the locality. We can see one kind of dog in England, another in Germany, though both are of the same species. And without further words, we may say that the variety of the human race is so great that a comparison of Germans with Ethiopians, of these with Italians, of Italians with Danes, Greenlanders, Laplanders, or Muscovites, would be a source of great surprise to us. In the meantime, however, are we to admit that the unicorn is a peaceable creature in the sense that Scaliger and Vertomannus do?⁷ I, of course, agree with the Scriptures, and experience of other men, who attribute to it unsatiable ferocity; but are we to side with Bartholinus, and say that some small corruption has crept into the text of Vertomannus? Had we, however, any reason to offer for the statement of either of these authorities, we would say that the two unicorns which were seen by Vertomannus had been tamed by a long captivity and subsection, whereby their otherwise unconquerable

ferocity had been completely crushed out. There is no doubt that this is the case with lions, bears, and panthers, the fiercest of the animal creation.

VII. Such being the case, who cares any longer to be of such simplicity or obstinacy as not to hesitate to oppose his own view to so many proofs, both divine and human, for the existence of the unicorn? Who does not dread to do so? The sacred writings speak out on the subject, and in many places praise the unicorn. Shall we now stand up, and contend for the non-existence of the Unicorn? Nature herself complains, and is loud in her own defence, while from time to time she urges that the Creator of the world was not so utterly careless of the animal creation at the time of the impending Flood, as these writers try to make out. The power of procreation was not given them for no purpose. Though the individual dies, the species certainly survives. "If," says the acute Scaliger, "anything were wanting, a vacuum would be created in the forms of animal life. This would be a far greater fault in Nature, than a vacuum in space without substance." We have already fully seen how many are the species of unicorns. Lewis Vertomannus saw two unicorns called such, par excellence. This man, two centuries ago, made a minute examination of the whole of the East, both Egypt and the two Arabias, Africa, and India, as the journal of his whole journeys clearly shews. "This Vertomannus" (I use the words of Bartholinus) "on coming to Meccha, a great city in the Arabian desert, accompanied by his companions in his journey, went first over the celebrated temple of Mahomet. Having turned to one side of this temple he saw two creatures which he recognised as unicorns. This is testified to by his own words." (Bk. I. cap. 18, "On Arabia.")⁸

VIII. Is there any Prince, Duke, or King in the world, who has not either seen, or possessed and regarded as among the most precious of his possessions, a unicorn's horn? The Dresden *exotikothaumaturgematatameion*,⁹ a word which, though confused, is yet ingenious, and is used by Vechnerus, in his breviary or description of Germany, certainly is not without a specimen. There is also in Fredricksburg (the finest fortified town of the King of Denmark) a unicorn's horn, seven feet in length (Roman measure), and with a girth of seven inches. It is a conspicuous object, and has been described by D. Thomas Bartholinus, a Dane. Ulysses Aldrovandus, a man of the widest reading, in his discussions on quadrupeds (Bk. I., page 223), says, "I have seen at Rome two unicorns' horns, one which belonged to Pope Clement VII., and another, which was the property of my own nephew, the very famous prince Peter, Cardinal Aldrovandus, &c."

IX. To Historians we must either grant historical accuracy, or the fact must be proved more fully by our own efforts. Where, in truth, are we, if history does not stand on its own legs? Certain mad Thomists¹⁰ may now come and try to cry me down by bringing up at one time the difference of opinion existing among some authors when describing this animal; at another, some empty argument or other. My answer is a short one. I do not listen to them. The words of a very learned man, Aldrovandus (Nat. Hist. Quad. Bk. I. cap. 6), are worth quoting. "Those to whose minds my answers are lacking in trustworthiness, I maintain, are wanting in intellect, and I call them obstinate who do not blush to deny the evidence of their senses, since so many proofs of the existence of the unicorn are everywhere apparent." It is my opinion, nevertheless, that many of these specimens have been obtained more from desert places, than as the actual results of hunting. The horns are those that have fallen, and can easily be distinguished from other horns by their general appearance, colour, size, and shape.

X. But at this point we must once for all destroy that error, which is firmly fixed in many minds. It is said that these animals perished at the great flood, and that their bones are now dug up from the earth. But it is a fact, which must be a source of joy and congratulation to vendors of trifles, that this is a kind of mineral,¹¹ which neither by its hardness, nor weight, nor solidity, nor scent, has anything in common with the horn we are discussing, not to speak of several of its higher properties.

It is dug up in Thuringia, Bohemia, the Hercynian Forest near Elbingerod, at Hildesheim, Heidelberg, in Silesia, Moravia, and many places of Misnia. Clusius, Ferrantes Imperatus (Bk. 25), and Franciscus, his son, mention that it is found in Italy. Olaus Wormius possesses several pieces, one of which, on the authority of Bartholinus, is white, friable, soft, and of a very agreeable scent. Sennertus makes a true remark when he says:—"Why is it more likely that these horns should be found in some places rather than others in which the unicorn lived?"

XI. In order, however, to separate the gold from the dross and the true from the false, we propose to place two minor questions in the appendix, which will help us. One question is to the following effect:—Is the unicorn horn a cure for all diseases, or does it possess, even in the slightest degree, those virtues which are attributed to it? I answer:—The world is prone to be deceived. No man does an injury willingly. A just man goes to extremes occasionally. Rumour is but an echo; it doubles and trebles everything.

Many things are said in praise of great men to win their favour. Poisons are of such varied natures that: it is impossible for a single antidote to be given for them all. Men exaggerate everything by their individual treatment of rumour. Deceit is rampant in market places and such like haunts of men. The greatest doctors among the Arabians, Ethiopians, Greeks or Latins would not have been struck dumb at these most divine properties. Nothing is now praised except what comes from the Indies and the Malay islands. Every-day events, although of the greatest importance, pass unnoticed from constant repetition.¹² A most learned writer, D. Thomas Bartholinus, quotes Crato of Craffthem, Baccius, Horatius, Augenius Horstius and others, and declares that the horn of the stag and the horn of the rhinoceros are every whit as good as the unicorn's. The same decision is come to by Aldrovandus, by Andreas Marinus and Apollonius.

XII. How can the true unicorn's horn be distinguished from the false? The answer given is: If, when thrown into hot water it causes bubbles to rise; if, when poison is present, it produces perspiration; if it heals dogs that have drunk of poison; if by means of this horn, a circle may be drawn in which a lizard, scorpion, or spider being placed, it does not attempt to retreat. In all this, however, superstition and truth strive for the mastery. It is false that the 'unicorn' horn sweats, that it is the only thing that can always cause bubbles in hot water. The account which Jordanus gives of a certain Jew and other beggars,¹³ is merely a result of superstition and magic, for these men used magical incantations to prevent their spiders, serpents and scorpions from crossing a drawn line, and did not work with the help of a unicorn's horn. If there is any substratum of truth in the statement; it is not by a circle, but certain hidden qualities of which it is an allegory, that they produced the effects they did. Bartholinus, in chapter 10, and in what he says on several occasions, agrees with us, when he calls this account the greatest nonsense. Meanwhile we are safe in saying that no one denies that the unicorn's horn is an antidote to poison.

NOTE TO THE READER.

XIV. I ask for these lines a kindly reading. To the good, all things are good; to the wicked, the best things appear the worst. I have undertaken this writing by the advice of friends. I am, on the present occasion, indebted to many wise men, to whom I bear a most humble sense of reverence. To Bartholinus, son of Casparus, a man of the greatest distinction, I am under

the greatest obligation, and own it with pleasure. I neither could, nor ought to have spurned the stories alluded to herein of my own consciousness. Bartholinus's lot it was to do that before me. I have on every occasion, however, used my own talents in discriminating, and have not given a hasty credence to every chance promiscuous tale. An impartial reader will see this and if I have done anything amiss, he will impute it to me; if anything good, to God, to whom alone be glory everlasting.

AMEN.

plays, is his *Froschmunster*, an epic in the style of Homer's *Batrachomyomachia*. Rollenhagen died in 1609, aged 57.

- ⁷ This statement is the text of our next tract.
- ⁸ Rabbi David Kimchi, a Spaniard, one of the most learned Hebrew scholars of the 13th century, was the selected arbitrator between the synagogues of Spain and France in the dispute about the books of Maimonides. His principal works are *Michlol* (that is, *Perfection*), a Hebrew Grammar, printed at Venice in 1541, 8vo; *Dictionarium Talmudicum*, Venice, 1506, folio, and a work on Hebrew roots, 1555, 8vo.
- ⁹ The most curious book, on the question of the possible renewal of youth, I have met with, is "Hermippus Redivivus," which I have reprinted in this present series.
- ¹⁰ A famous sage of ancient times, said to have lived about 1380 B.C, Many works were printed from the 15th to the 17th centuries as his. One of these is probably here alluded to.
- ¹¹ Jerome Fabricius, better known as Aquapendente (the place of his birth), was the pupil and successor of Fallopius in the Chair of Anatomy at Padua. His anatomical works were printed at Leyden in 1738, folio, and his surgical writings were collected and published in 1723, folio. He laboured more for glory than interest, and his friends having made him various presents as a reward for his disinterestedness, he placed them in a cabinet with the inscription: "Lucri neglecti lucrum." He died in 1603.
- ¹² In spite of Kirchmayer, we know that the Ephemerae, of which our English genus is the may-fly, only exist a few hours when they have reached this final stage of life.

Unicorns

- 1 "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns, with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."
- 2 Balzac used to say that the obscurity of Tertullian's style was like the blackness of Ebony, very brilliant.

- ³ Daniel Sennert, or Sennertus, was the son of a shoemaker of Breslaw. He was born in 1572, became Professor of Medecine at Wittenburg, and died of the plague in 1637. His works, in 3 vols., folio, Venice 1640, or in 6 vols., folio, Lyons, 1676, are a complete compendium of Medical Science up to his day, and are far more valuable than many highly-raised modern productions.
- ⁴ The Narwhal (Monodon Monoceros), or Sea Unicorn is evidently meant. In the male, one tooth, usually the left, is developed into a long, straight-pointed tusk or "horn" of solid ivory, the surface being marked with spiral ridges or grooves. This enormous tusk varies from six to eight feet in length. Occasionally both teeth are developed into tusks. The Narwhal varies from ten to sixteen feet in length, and the tusk is generally more than half the length of the body. It has been conjectured that the horn is employed in spearing fish, or in stirring up food from the bottom; but this would place the females at a great disadvantage. As the tusks are frequently found broken, they may be weapons used for fighting, developed like the horns of ungulates through sexual selection.
- ⁵ Martin Frobisher was of a Devonshire family. In 1575 he sailed on his first voyage of discovery, and reached the latitude of 63°. In 1577, he undertook a second voyage, but returned without accomplishing his object. He subsequently greatly distinguished himself against the Armada. In 1594, he landed in Brittany, to besiege the fort of Cordon, near Brest, but was wounded, and died of his wounds at Plymouth.
- ⁶ Olaus Magnus was Archbishop of Upsala, in succession to his brother. His great work, *Historia Gentium Septentrionalium*, Rome, 1555, folio, contains much that is curious, but the author was undoubtedly very credulous. Olaus died at Rome about 1560.
- ⁷ William Rondelet was born at Montpellier in 1507, and practised medecine there. His principal work is:—*A Treatise on Fish*, 1554, 2 vols., folio. Rabelais is said to have satirised him under the name of *Rondibilis*. He died of a surfeit of figs in 1566.
- ⁸ Adam Olearius was the son of a tailor of Steenwick in the Netherlands. He became secretary to the embassy sent by Frederick to the Czar and the Shah of Persia. The journey lasted six years, from 1633 to 1639. On his return, he wrote a history of his travels, as exact as it is detailed. He also issued a collection of stories, maxims, etc., drawn from Persian authors. He died in 1671, at the age of 68.
- ⁹ There were three writers named Bartholinus, Caspard, Thomas the elder, and Thomas the younger, father, son, and grandson. This is Thomas the elder.

and are there shewed to the people for a miracle, and not without good reason, for their seldomenesse and strange nature. The one of them, which is much hygher then the other, yet not much vnlike to a coolte of thyrtye moneths of age, in the forehead groweth only one horne, in maner ryght foorth, of the length of three cubites. The other is much younger, of the age of one yeere, and lyke a young coolte, the horne of this is of the length of foure handfuls. This beast is of the coloure of a horse of weesell coloure, and hath the head lyke an hart, but no long necke, a thynne mane hangyng onlye on the syde; theyr legges are thyn and slender lyke a fawne or hynde; the hoofes of the fore feet are diuided in two, much like the feet of a goat, the outwarde part of the hynder feete is very full of heare. This beast doubtlesse seemeth wylde and fierce, yet tempereth that fiercenesse with a certain comelinesse. These Vnicornes one gaue to the Soltan of Mecha, as a most precious and rare gyfte. They were sent hym out of Ethiope by a kyng of that countrey, who desired by that present to gratifie the Soltan of Mecha.” (Voyages of Vertomannus in 1503, translated by Richard Eden in 1576, and reprinted for the Aungervyle Society 1884. Series III. pp. 56-57.)

- ⁴ Or Marco Polo. He was a Venetian by birth and travelled in Tartary with his father and uncle. On his return to Italy in 1295, he wrote an account of his journey and seventeen years' residence at the court of the Grand Khan, which was first printed at Venice in 1495, 8vo.
- ⁵ China and *other* districts of India! Bartholinus may have been very learned, but he certainly was no Geographer.
- ⁶ A fact that can be sworn to by millions.
- ⁷ Vertomannus says nothing of the kind; see extract given p. 9, note.
- ⁸ Poor Kirchmayer! How would he account for the numerous extinct species now known only from their bones, the Mastodons, Megatheriums, &c.
- ⁹ Now the Museum.
- ¹⁰ From this we may rank Kirchmayer as a Scotist. The Thomists and Scotists represented the rival orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans. Their theological disputes lasted for centuries. The names refer to their leaders, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.
- ¹¹ This passage is far from clear, but evidently refers to those stones, mentioned in Vol. 1., p. 54, as being a cure for broken limbs, ulcers, &c.

- ¹² It is not easy to see what all this has to do with the question proposed: *Is the Unicorn's horn a cure for all diseases?* It reads rather like the celebrated: "What! no soap! So he died, and she, very imprudently, married the barber, etc. etc."
- ¹³ Jordanus says a Jew and his companions drew a circle with Unicorn Horn, whence no reptile could escape.

Phoenix

- ¹ Our author seems here to suggest that Noah had something to do with the navigating of the ark. If so, I fear he must have come into collision with the orthodox believers in Scripture, almost as much as the late Doctor Colenso, who dared to express a doubt as to the very existence of that floating menagerie.
- ² Richard Simon, born at Dieppe in 1638, died there in 1712. He was a priest of much learning, and wrote a number of curious works more or less connected with religious questions.
- ³ John Loccenius was one of the professors at the University of Upsala in 1670. His most curious work is *Leges West Gothicae*, folio.
- ⁴ Kirchmayer, as we know, has been proved to be wrong.
- ⁵ The purple of Tyre.
- ⁶ Virgil.

Behemoth

- ¹ This Francis Sanchez, or Sanctius must not be confounded with the celebrated author of *De Motrimonio*. Francis Sanchez spent most of his life at Las Brocas, in Spain, and was a famous philologist, if the term can be applied to the pedantic grammarians of the 15th century. He died in 1600.
- ² "Idoneum nisi tibi elephantum puer ferat. Quid est hoc per Deos? Poculum magnum, choarum quod trium sit capax," etc.
- ³ And hence, also *barritone*.

Dragon

- ¹ 1691.
- ² Christian Becman, a forgotten Theologian, who died in 1648.
- ³ Ambrosius Calepinus was the author of the celebrated Dictionary that is indissolubly connected with his name. He died in 1510.

Tarantula

- ¹ Exerc. 109. De Subtilitate contra Cardanum.
- ² Prax., Bk. i., cap. 3.
- ³ Quaest. Nupt. 3, in Nuptiis Schumacheri.
- ⁴ Dier. Genial., bk ii., cap 7.

Chameleons

- ¹ Consult Caleb John de Mey "*Sacred Physiology*," page 150.