

MOUNTING BIG ANIMALS.

HOW IT IS DONE.

In a recent issue of the *World's Work* some interesting particulars were given about this by Mr. Harold J. Shepstowe. A successful taxidermist, he contends, must be something of a painter, sculptor, modeller, carpenter, and blacksmith all in one. He then gives an account of the mounting of a gigantic rhinoceros recently added to the National Museum at Washington:—

When alive the great animal weighed three tons. It took a truck and four horses to bring him from the Zoo to the academy, where he was at once attacked by the taxidermists and skinned. Pete, for that was the animal's name, died of cancer at the Philadelphia Zoo, and as he was the largest rhinoceros in captivity in the United States, if not in the world, it was decided that his skin should be preserved in the National Museum.

It took more than two weeks to skin the great animal, gallons of embalming fluid being injected into the veins in the meantime to preserve the mass of flesh from decomposition. The hide of the monster was found in places to be three inches in thickness, requiring the combined strength of six men, with a number of mechanical contrivances, to disengage it from the flesh. Only by cutting the skin in three sections could it be removed. It was then sent, to one of the largest tanneries in Philadelphia; the process of tanning occupied two months, as many as fifty men handling it at different stages.

Before the skinning, over 100 carefully-recorded measurements were taken.

The real labour in connection with the mounting of the rhinoceros was that involved in building a suitable framework, or "manikin" to receive the skin. To accomplish this a large iron framework was forged and bolted to a stout platform; around the ironwork was built a wooden skeleton, conforming roughly to the general shape of the rhinoceros. This, when completed, was padded with excelsior and tightly wound round with brass wire. On top of the excelsior was laid a thick layer of modelling clay. This latter was a close copy of the real animal, on a slightly smaller scale, to ensure a perfect fit of the huge skin.

When the skin was stretched and stitched on the clay model the task was by no means finished. The stuffed animal did not have the appearance of the animal in real life. A *papier-mâché* tusk was made, as Pete had rubbed his own off on the iron bars of his cage. The ears, which drooped, were stretched into proper shape, and given a forward alertness by means of thin sheets of lead inserted from the inside. Finally the body was tinted with several coats of filler, and ten pounds of pigment afterwards applied.

The nine months taken over this work appeared to experts a very short time. Two or three years is not an unusual time for a set group of deer or other wild animals to take before they are all in perfectly natural and life-like poses.

The largest animal ever mounted is the Siberian mammoth in the Zoological Museum in St. Petersburg. He was accidentally discovered, it may be remembered, by a Cossack in 1901, in a marvellous state of preservation; and the remarkable story of the mounting of the huge beast is also told.

THE second volume of "The Cathedrals of England" (Dennis and Sons, 20, Cheapside. Large 4to, art cloth gilt. 10s. 6d.) has appeared. It contains sixty-four artistic photographs of Ely, Chester, Oxford, Bangor and St. Asaph's, Lichfield, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Worcester, and St. Paul's, London, with useful historical notes by Arnold Fairbairn.

IBSEN: AN APPRECIATION.

By MR. W. D. HOWELLS.

In the *North American Review* for July Mr. W. D. Howells publishes his estimate of Ibsen. He maintains that

The great and dreadful delight of Ibsen is from his power of dispersing the conventional acceptations by which men live on easy terms with themselves, and obliging them to examine the grounds of their social and moral opinions.

To my experience he is a dramatist of such perfection, he is a poet of such absolute simplicity and veracity, that when I read him or see him I feel nothing wanting in the æsthetic scheme.

As to the ethical effect of the plays which I permit myself, in the company of their author, to like best, I have my doubts whether it is so directly and explicitly his intention as some of the highest critical intelligences have imagined.

His sole business is to make us feel that the basis of society, as we now have it, is hypocrisy, though an hypocrisy now grown almost involuntary and helpless, and it is not his business to do this by precept, but by example.

It is always Ibsen's meaning. Do not be a hypocrite, do not be a liar, do not be a humbug; but be very careful how and when you are sincere and true and single, lest being virtuous out of time you play the fool and work destruction.

This is what he is always saying, but this is not the effect to which he is always working. It is his prime business and his main business to show things as they are, so that you shall not only be edified, but also stirred and charmed in such sort as you never were before, and in the measure that you are capable of emotion. With Hawthorne he says, "Be true, be true, be true!"—but he adds, "Be true in time, be true from the beginning; for later you shall be true in vain, and your very truth shall become part of that great lie, that world-hypocrisy, in which civilisation lives and moves and has its being."

Ibsen does not wish to teach so much as he wishes to move, to strike with that exalted terror of tragedy which has never hesitated at its means.

He lived as he has died, "a very imperial anarchy," for, more even than agnosticism, the note of this mighty solitary, hermit in the midst of men, was anarchism. Solidarities of any sort he would not have. The community was nothing to him, and, if not quite so despicable as the majority, was still a contemptible substitute for the individuality. That was alone precious, and it was like some medicines, in doing good in proportion as it disagreed with the taste of the patient, of the fellow man. Ibsen had really a dread of being acceptable, for in the popular favour he feared the end of his usefulness.

The Origin of the Sneer.

In the *Open Court* Dr. Woods Hutchinson describes, with illustrations, the weapons and tools of the dog. He traces the resemblance in our canine or eye-teeth, and gives this interesting explanation of a common facial contortion:—

Although we have long ago forgotten that we had ever used our teeth to fight with, yet if you will stand before the glass and try to look very scornful and angry, you will see your upper lip curl up just like the dog's when he growls or snarls. And it curls up precisely at the point where it will show the canine tooth to best advantage, so that the "lip of scorn" or the sneer is really a threat of attack, by half drawing your weapon from its sheath.

Though we never think of biting anyone we dislike nowadays, yet when we sneer we make a face just as if we were going to. So hard is it for our muscles to forget old habits.

The cynic who sneers apparently deserves his doggish name.