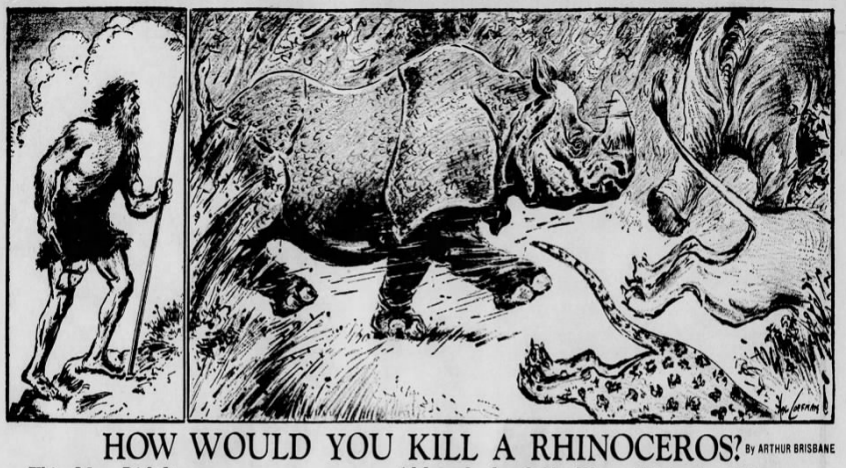


HOW WOULD YOU KILL A RHINOCEROS?

By ARTHUR BRISBANE

This Man Did It---

Although the Odds Were With the Rhinoceros

"THOUGHTS rule the world." Emerson said it; all history proves it. The Greeks beat the Persians because Persia had stopped thinking. Mussolini beat Ethiopia because Ethiopia had never learned how to think.

The primitive man in this picture, with only a spear and a sharp flint at the end of a club, conquered the "unconquerable" rhinoceros, and all other animals, because he and his descendants could think and did think, while the animals, incapable of thought, relied on their brute force or speed for safety.

The rhinoceros trusted to his thick hide and the horn at the end of his nose that, moved upward by his powerful neck, could rip open the elephant's body. The elephant trusted to his size, his powerful feet and tusks, but avoided any quarrel with the rhinoceros.

Lion and leopard let the rhinoceros alone; his tough hide was too much for their sharp teeth and claws.

Even the most venomous and powerful serpents feared the thick-skinned monster; poisonous fangs could not get through rhinoceros hide, the crushing powers of the biggest python could have no effect on the rhinoceros' body.

* * *

Nevertheless, your ancestor the cave man, primitive savage, with no weapon, at first, but a sharpened flint, made himself lord of all the animals, and now protects them from his own killing, rhinoceroses, elephants, lions, in game preserves, lest they become extinct. His problem was how to conquer them; now it is how to preserve them.

Compare this man with the animals; he had no powerful horn, no teeth like the lion, or claws like the leopard. He had small teeth, feeble hands, soft nails, but he could think and therefore he rules the earth; by and by he may learn to rule himself.

Thinking changed your ancient ancestor on the left of this picture to your modern neighbor who rides in his luxurious automobile, crosses the ocean in a ship made of iron, more than 1,000 feet long, and flies above the clouds in a machine heavier than air, that does not fall because man's thinking power knows how to keep it going with the explosive power of gas put away in the earth millions of years before men appeared.

* * *

This picture will interest your children, usefully. Ask your small boy: "If you had been on earth with no weapon but a sharp stone at the end of a club, surrounded by powerful elephants, rhinoceroses, poisonous snakes, savage lions, what would you have done about it? How could you have made yourself and other men rulers of all the animals, as our ancestors did; what would you have done first?"

Your boy might answer: "I would have climbed a tree, out of danger to think about it."

That is what our ancestors did, living on platforms over the lakes, safe from wild animals, or hiding in caves, rolling big stones before the entrance to keep out prowling beasts. Later when they had acquired the most important of all knowledge, and learned how to make a fire and keep it going, they sat around their fires that frightened the animals, discussing ways of killing them.

The first step in conquest was man's use of the heavy club. Stretched along a tree limb he might surprise, kill and eat an animal passing below, that otherwise would have been too fleet or too powerful for him. When he invented the spear, he could hurl that into the animal's body and then follow patiently on foot the trail of the blood until the animal died. Then came the bow and arrow to kill at a distance—that meant real conquest.

Man discovered that if he could steal up and cut the tendon of the hind leg of the biggest animal, that animal could no longer walk. He dug deep pits, carefully concealed, into which the giant mammoth would fall, to be killed slowly with rocks and sharp flints by feeble creatures that had trapped him. All of this was thought, nothing else.

* * *

Thinking and inventing through the ages has given to man all that he possesses—the plow, and fertilizer that adds fertility to the soil, the poison gas and exploding bombs that prove man to be still the most vicious, deadly, remorseless representative of life on earth.

It is to be remembered, however, that men of today are only 12,000 short years from the late stone age, in which stones and fire were their only allies. If they have moved up so far toward civilization in 12,000 years, they will surely develop real civilization, free from the wholesale murder of war, in the hundreds of millions of years that this planet will last, with human life upon it.

* * *

This picture has a moral.

If the man on the left with his poor equipment solved his problem, conquered all the animals, including the rhinoceros, from whom the elephant and the leopard flee in terror, we of the twentieth century ought to be able to solve our lesser problems, as he solved his by thinking.

Interesting Gravestone Lives

MORE ABOUT THAT 'FORLORN *HIC JACET*' AND EPITAPHS

Man's Last Advertisement

A NEW baby strikes; the world is spread among relatives, advertised on the society page, if the baby is fashionable. The same baby, grown old, dies, and that fact is advertised in grave letters on a tombstone. Even indifferent youth may be moved by Wordsworth's sad lines concerning a grave monument:

May no rude hand deface it,
And its fortress his 'Jacet'

An epitaph, if accurate, represents a human life, with all the vanity and unreality squeezed out of it. Usually, there are only names and dates.

One of the most ingenious epitaphs is that of the brilliant English genius Sir Christopher Wren, astronomer and architect.

In London, across the north door of St. Paul's cathedral, finest church ever built for Protestant use in England, you read:

Si monumentum quaeris circumspice which means "If his monument you seek, look around." That cathedral was his work and it was his monument; no better epitaph could have been written.

A curious epitaph was written for Baron Westbury, lord high chancellor of England, who decided that two British clergymen could not be punished for expressing doubt as to the existence of eternal hell-fire, with horrible punishment, never ending. The lord high chancellor decided that it was not blasphemy to suggest that God might be merciful, and the following epitaph was written for him:

"Richard Baron Westbury
Lord high chancellor of England.
He was an eminent Christian.
An energetic and merciful statesman.
And a still more eminent and merciful judge.
During his three years' tenure of office
He abolished the ancient method of conveying land.
The time-honored institution of the insolvents' court, and
The eternity of punishment
Toward the close of his earthly career,
In the judicial committee of the privy council.
He dismissed hell with costs.
And took away from the orthodox members of the
Church of England
Their last hope of everlasting damnation."

OLD-FASHIONED Christians in the days of Cotton Mather and before, insisted on "eternal damnation," actually believing that their bias in heaven would be greatly increased when they were occasionally permitted to look down and see friends and neighbors suffering most horribly in everlasting fire.

You read about the lord high chancellor and the Church of England pitifully clinging to its belief in eternal hell-fire, in the second volume of "A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom" by the late Andrew D. White, president of Cornell university.

Many epitaphs are humorous, although often not intended to be so; for instance:

"The widow of a man who was blown to pieces by gunpowder insisted that the following be written above his gathered fragments:

"HE RESTS IN PIECES."

And on the tomb of a missionary in India:

Here lies the body of
Rev. T. Bruce, M. A.
who lWorg labored as a Christian missionary amongst the
Rajputs.

He was shot by his chokedar.
"Well done, good and faithful servant."

DAVID GARRICK, best known and probably the best actor ever produced in England, wrote an epitaph for Oliver Goldsmith, who wrote admirably and talked ballisgly. He wrote this epitaph:

"Here lies Noll Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

Some epitaphs have a double tone. One witness probably by the mother of the "eleven" reads:

"Our pups dear has gone to
Heaven
To make arrangements for
eleven."

A Colorado citizen, for a dead friend, wrote this:

"Bill Jenkins. Died June 13, 1901
He done his damn'dest damn'dest.
Angels could do no more."

The following epitaph in the state of Maine indicates that its substance was suggested by proud Betsy Brown herself:

"Here Betsy Brown her body
lies.
Her soul is flying in the skies.
While here on earth she ottimee
upon
Six hundred skeins from sun to
sun,
And wove one day, her daughter
brags,
Two hundred pounds of carpet
rags."

A GREAT Aelotic ruler devoted all the space on his enormous sarcophagus to denouncing and threatening anybody that might move him. Nobody could touch him, his last resting place must stay exactly where he had put it in Asia. And now, how vain are hopes and plans of man; that sarcophagus, its inscription, body and all are on exhibition in a Paris museum.

Many weary mothers will sympathize with this epitaph prepared for an English woman:

"Of children in all she bore
twenty-four;
Thank the Lord there will be no
more."

Some men underestimate their importance in their epitaphs; sometimes they exaggerate their importance. Keats, a true poet, ordered written on his grave stone: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water," but thanks to his poems, his honored name will endure for centuries.

Contrast this with the well known verse about the traveler in a desert land seeing a broken stone on which was written "I am Ozymandias, King of Kings," with an invitation to look upon his works and tremble. Of all his "works" nothing remained but that piece of stone, the desert stretching all around it.

CYRUS THE GREAT, who founded the Persian empire, began his high-sounding description of himself as follows: "I am Cyrus, O Man," and went on to describe his great achievements as "King of Babylon and King of the Countries," meaning the whole world.

The one with which a single word can change a meaning from the sublime to the ridiculous is illustrated in that dignified line, "I Am Cyrus, O Man." A young girl familiar with modern slang told a younger sister that the great King Cyrus had for part of his epitaph the line "I am Cyrus, Oh, Boy," changing the tone and meaning considerably.

Little men may find consolation in the epitaphs of the great; for instance, that of Alexander of Macedonia, who conquered this world and looked angrily at the stars because he could not reach out and conquer them.

Over his grave was written: "Here a mound suffices for one for whom the world was not large enough."

Lord Byron wrote on the grave of his Newfoundland dog:

"To mark a friend's remains
These stones arise.
I never knew but one
And here he lies!"

It might be said that he who had only a Newfoundland dog for a friend deserved only a Newfoundland dog for a friend.

SOME intentionally humorous epitaphs read as follows:

"He was young
He was fair
But the Injuns
Seized his hair."

On the grave of a skillful musician, referring to celestial music or harmony, relatives had written:

"He has gone to the only place
where
His own works are excelled."

The widow of a manufacturer of fireworks liked that thought and wrote this for her husband's tomb:

"Erected by his spouse
In the memory of
A — B —
Manufacturer of Fireworks
He has gone to the only place
Where his own works are
excelled."

Accidental humor occurs in epitaphs:

A. D. 1872: I am anxiously expecting you.

A. D. 1882: Here I am.

Modern embalmers would probably deliberate tombstone jokes of this sort:

"Here lies interred P. C. Bird
Who sang on earth till 62.
New up on high above the sky
No doubt he sings like 60, too."

Daniel Webster, who lived and died in the religious days, ordered written on his tomb this line: "The gospel — divine reality."

In these days of uncertainty and doubt many will sympathize with Gertrude Hill, who wrote for his tomb:

"Thus far am I got on my journey;

READER:

Canst thou inform me
What follows next?"

Pious humility is expressed in this:

"Here repose the bones and ashes of the wickedest man in the world.

God forgive him.

Don Miguel Manara Hisantado.

Died 1684"

Some epitaphs warn survivors for instance, "as you are now, so once was he. As he is now, you soon shall be," or this:

"Art thou in health and spirits
gay?
I too was so the other day;
And thought myself of life as
safe
As thou who readst my epitaph."

Two final samples of accidental humor:

"To
The Memory of
Alva Phillips
Accidentally Shot
at
A Mark of Affection by His
Brother."

"Here lyeth ye body of
SARAH BLOOMFIELD,
Aged 14
Cut off in blooming yuthe we
can but pity."

Any husband of two wives might be interested in a tombstone that a husband had placed on his grave between the graves of his two wives. On each wife's grave was a hand pointing toward that of the husband, and under each hand the words: "He was ours."

There were two hands on the husband's grave stone, pointing in opposite directions. Underneath them: "They were mine."

THE wittiest epitaph, perhaps, was written for himself by the Frenchman Piron, who had been rejected by members of the solemn French Academy of Immortals, inferior to him in wit and intellect:

"Here lies one who was nothing.
Not even an Academician."

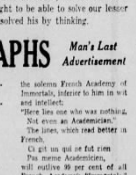
The lines, which read better in French:

Ci gît un qui ne fut rien
Pas même Académicien,

will outlive 99 per cent of all French Academy's "Immortals."

For each young American the question is "What kind of an epitaph can I deserve between now and the arrival of the undertaker?"

ARTHUR BRISBANE.



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