

CHRISTMAS
ANNUAL.

CLIMPSSES

of the

WONDERFUL.

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The celebrated Cuvier, who, beyond most naturalists, possessed this power of discrimination, once undertook the examination of a few detached fossil bones of some animal of antediluvian date. They differed from any that had been before discovered, and plainly belonged to no animal now known to exist upon the earth ; but from these few relics, Cuvier, reasoning from analogy, ventured to predict the habits, and character, and general form of the animal. His prediction was remarkably verified by the subsequent discovery of further remains of the animal nearly or quite entire.

The elephant and the giraffe both feed on the branches of trees—the former, which has hardly any perceptible neck, reaches its food by means of its long trunk, which tears off the boughs, and, curling inward, puts them into its mouth. The giraffe attains the same object by its extraordinary length of neck.

The rhinoceros, which feeds principally by the banks of rivers, has a flexible upper lip, not prolonged into a trunk, like that of the elephant, but still with considerable power of extension, to enable it to turn round the branches of overhanging trees and the stalks of rushes, and to draw them towards its mouth. The immense weight of the elephant and rhinoceros would crush the

horny substance of a hoof formed like that of a horse to rest upon the ground: in those animals, therefore, the foot rests upon a broad pad or cushion, which slightly raises the horny substance of the toes from the ground, and the bones of the leg are of great size and strength, proportionate to the huge bulk which presses upon them.

There are some striking points of contrast between the habits and formation of the whale and those of the shark.

The shark, fierce and voracious, and thirsty of blood—the very tiger of the ocean—is armed with a triple row of sharply pointed teeth; eagerly devours whatever animal substance comes in its way; preys as greedily upon the wounded of its own species as upon the flesh of other fish or of mankind; or of the salt pork or beef with which the sailor (ever at fierce warfare with the shark) baits his hook.

On the other hand, the Greenland whale, of far greater size, and with proportionate strength, is harmless and inoffensive in its general habits. It has no teeth, but from its palate hangs down a fibrous frame-work or sieve, which consists of what is rather improperly termed "*whalebone*." The water is drawn in enormous quantities into the huge animal's vast cavern-like mouth, as he glides through the