
THE BLUFF GARDENS.

AS we are to have a flower, animal, and bird show at the Bluff Gardens, it would be well if we could make it instructive as well as amusing. Every naturalist who has yet visited Japan has left it with the conviction that a rich mine of undiscovered floral wealth exists here, and it is more than probable that if we could prevail on the Japanese to take an interest in our show, they might exhibit some rare if not hitherto unknown varieties of birds or animals. Now that Darwin's "Descent of Man" is in every one's hands and every one's mouth, society is characterized by a livelier interest in animated nature than it has ever hitherto felt. It may not be pleasant to abandon beliefs in regard to our origin which certainly have had the effect of inspiring us with a thousand in-

centives to virtue, and which undoubtedly, if withdrawn from the list of our prerogatives, will leave us bereft of our greatest source of pride. But *à priori* objections weigh little against a severe induction from facts, and though Darwin's views contain only a theory, it is a theory which is finding greater acceptance every day amongst those most qualified to judge of it. Be all this as it may, careful observation ought to detect variations in the representatives of species in this country, and we hope that some among us may be qualified to make it. The ignorance in which the majority of men are brought up in respect of natural history never forces itself more lamentably upon us than on occasions of this kind, and it is then, through not only then that the memory of hours of which no account whatever can be given, rise up reproachfully and tell us how we have wasted them. In Bacon's "Atlantis" a curious anticipation was made of the quasi-scientific gardens now so common in the great cities of Europe. His idea was that it should be a "tryal place for beasts and fishes" where their habits could be observed, nor is it without special interest to us here that he places the site of his new Atlantis in or near Japan. We may not be ripe for the conversion of our experimental lounge on the bluff into a zoological garden, or even for making there a choice collection of rare plants, trees and shrubs. But we certainly do well in making it as attractive as possible, and Mr. SMITH's idea—for we believe it is his—of having shows of animals, fruits and flowers, is one not only creditable to his fertile brain, but which really promises to prove of service to us. That there are some strange varieties of the anthropoids here is abundantly clear to any one who will be at the pains to look for them. The scintillations of intelligence which distinguish them in Borneo have been somewhat more developed here, and we have only to review the published gibber of one of them which has lately appeared under the signature "Mumpos," to assure ourselves that if a missing link between the Bushman and the pithocoid ape has not a furtive resting place here, we are, at all events, not far from some trace of his habitat. We must trust that the Committee will do their utmost for the advancement of science on this occasion, and that a cage and clothing will be appropriated to this object, if money or roots will avail to allure him. Perhaps there is no object within the sphere of natural history so eagerly looked for as an example of our progenitors in their more ambitious yet still simious stage, and however shocking to our sensibilities the view of this odious relative may be, no intelligent and enquiring mind can be otherwise than instructed by the sight of an object which informs us equally of the degradation we have escaped by the infinitely wise law of natural selection, or that to which we are still subject by the law of reversion, should we fall away into habits calculated to induce such depravation.

It is understood that the entries for animals have been unusually numerous, and there has of late been an appalling abundance of little black and tan terriers about the settlement. Whether the coming exhibition is the cause or the consequence of this, is a question worth consideration, but one upon which we have no certain data for forming a conclusion. It is well known that in England changes of the ministry are invariably preceded by strong northerly gales, and enormous hailstones equally invari-

ably succeed the dissolution of Parliament. What a mysterious message nature may intend to convey to man by these evident yet inscrutable sequences of cause and effect, transcends our philosophy at present. It is enough that we note the facts, and wait humbly and patiently for some subsequent explanation of their import. But we cannot forget the salamanders of Japan, portentous batrachians inhabiting the warm springs which abound in this country. They used to be seen in Nagasaki years ago, and certainly were objects of high interest. What temperature they can withstand, or what may be their conduct under an excessive temperature, is unknown. Experiments might be made on these subjects of enquiry. A boiling cauldron could be fitted up and the salamanders placed in it. If they survived, they would rank with the various worthies who have passed unscathed through a similar ordeal. If they died, their cooked remains could be advantageously disposed of in the refreshment rooms. It is always wise to have an alternative.

The mouse that always trusts to one poor hole
Can never be a mouse of any soul.

Then again as regards rats. These rodents increase here in a most remorseless manner, and set man at utter defiance. But whether our enemy is the *mus rattus* or the *mus decumanus* is not known to us. Judging from the prodigious noise and scuffle constantly heard among the rafters and over the ceilings of our houses, it is more than probable that the *mus giganteus*, which is so well known in India, inhabits this country. No animal of the size of the ordinary rat could possibly account for the noise we speak of, and it might be well of some light were thrown on this matter.

As regards the *Simiade* or apes, Darwin is very clear that the present race of mankind springs from the Catharine branch, or the apes of the Old World, as distinguished from the Platyrrhine branch, or apes of the New World. Whether the Japanese are prepared for the announcement of this discovery or not, it is impossible to say, but if they heard the impolite allusions constantly made to the police as they now appear in foreign clothes, the shock of the announcement might be somewhat broken by showing that suspicions of a common progenitor have already crossed the minds of many who have no pretensions to be naturalists or philosophers. Now, it is pretty certain that the *Troglydites niger* is confined to Africa, and it is hardly possible that the Asiatic orang-outang (*Simia satyris*) should be found in this country, though, as he before hinted, the gibber of "Mumpos" announces the existence of a domiciled pithocoid, who, if we could only discover him, might be found to bear some resemblance to an extremely low and repulsive human type. But the existence of the mandril, (*Simia mamon* or *mormon*) although it is of African origin, must in all probability be recognized here. We do not wish, however, to weary our readers with a scientific nomenclature. It is better to recall something to them which, at least pictorially, they can remember, and thus we may remark that the well-known "Happy Jerry" of Exeter Change belonged to this species, and that this genial and aspiring creature was inordinately addicted to spirits and water, a characteristic which—we speak in all seriousness, and without doubting that the reflection is a sound one—Darwin adduces as one among a thousand other evidences of a common origin to man and the apes.

Mar. 23, 1872.]

THE JAPAN W

There are some pretty analogies, too, in nature, which would be very pleasing and instructive could we but be brought face to face with them. There is a delightful insect called the *Coccus*, which attaches itself to a plant, sucks the sap, but never otherwise moves; quite like some of the foreign servants of the Japanese Government. Some effort should be made to procure a few of these insects, or any others which might afford analogies for many of the strange anomalies we witness every day in this country.
