

THE SING SING ANTELOPE AND THE GORGON ANTELOPE.

People visiting the menagerie of the museum at Paris hardly are aware of the wealth which is accumulated in that place. Not to mention those animals which obstinately hide from view in their sheds during the greater part of the day, there are many species of which only an imperfect view can be obtained or which are not seen to their advantage, being penned up in too narrow inclosures, the fences of which consist of wooden latticework, hiding the animals from the eye of the visitor. With these faults in the arrangement, however, it must be acknowledged the present directors cannot fairly be charged, for, having only limited means at their disposal, they cannot think of a radical transformation, and must restrict themselves to the introduction of some gradual improvements in the old menagerie of Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint Hilaire. Nevertheless, the existing state of things is greatly to be deplored, because it prevents people from justly appreciating the value of a large number of mammals, as well as birds, which are interesting as regards their manners as well as their shapes. It is certain, for instance, that the antelopes would produce a much better effect if they were permitted to ramble over vast meadows, interspersed with shrubs and bushes, for then only the magnificent Kob antelopes, a herd of which is in the possession of the museum, and which are the offspring of one male and two females given to the institution by M. Briere de l'Isle, who at the time was governor of Senegal, would be appreciated as they deserve to be.

These Kob antelopes, as shown in the engravings accompanying this article, have a robust but elegant form. Their heads are surmounted by pointed horns, diverging in the shape of the arms of a lyre, slightly bent inward at their ends, and marked with rings at three-quarters of their length. Their necks are clothed with a sort of mane. The hair of the body, though not as long as that of the head region, is, nevertheless, longer than that of many other antelopes, and is always impregnated with a greasy substance. This peculiarity has already been pointed out by Laurillard, who proposed to name the above mentioned animal *Antilope unctuosa*, or greasy antelope. The general color of the coat is a light chestnut, changing to a yellowish white toward the posterior region of the body and the inside of the limbs, and grayish white on the throat and cheeks, while the extremities of the limbs are of a deep brown. The comparatively slender tail ends in a tuft of black hair. The ears are bordered with black on the outside, and lined inside with long white hairs, and white stripes or spots are seen near the hoofs, above the eyes, and upon the upper lip and the chin.

The Kob antelope of Senegambia is scientifically called *Kobus sing sing*. According to M. De Rochebrune, it is quite common in Cayor and the Upper Senegal, and, according to M. Gray, on the banks of the Gambia—i. e., in the tropical region. Nevertheless, the specimens which were brought over to our country seem not to really suffer from the severity of our winters. In the Jardin des Plantes they spend the greater part of their life in the open air, and have no other refuge than an unheated shed. Far, however, from suffering under these conditions, they thrive admirably, and reproduce quite as well as they do in their native country. In fact, the information given by M. Huet to the Society of Acclimatisation* shows that since 1880 not less than six Kob antelopes have been born in the menagerie of the museum. It is therefore probable that this species of antelopes would become acclimated without difficulty on the banks of the great rivers of Central France, and especially in Touraine.

As many species of mammals and birds are spread over the whole of the African continent, one might be led to believe that the antelope discovered in

Abyssinia by Ruppell, and called by that naturalist *Antilopos defassa*, ought to be classified along with the Kob antelope of Senegal. Nevertheless, M. J. Murie has pointed out* that two antelope skins which were brought to Europe twenty years ago from the Upper Nile by Baron Guillaume De Harnier, and kept in the Grand Ducal Museum of Hesse-Darmstadt, possess



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neither the greasiness nor the long and tufted hair of the Kobus sing sing. Besides, their coat has less of a reddish and more of a brownish color than that of the Kob antelope of the Senegal, and these differences in the nature and the color of the hair seem not entirely to be caused by the season, for one of the two antelopes referred to was shot during the rainy season, while the other one was killed during the dry season. Nevertheless, the hair of both is shorter and darker than that of the Kob antelopes of the Senegal which are kept in the Zoological Garden of Antwerp,†

* Note published in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, in 1887.

† In consequence of these differences the antelope of the Upper Nile has been named by Kaup *Antilope Harnieri*.

and in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. The horns, however, have the same position as those of the sing sing antelope, and the same characteristics are found in the head of an antelope brought from Uganda by Captain Speke, and belonging undoubtedly to a species of antelopes called by that traveler *Antilope N'samma*.* Finally, also, the *Mehedeheh antelope*, shot by Sir Samuel Baker on the banks of the Asua, at longitude 3° 12' west of Greenwich, resembles the Kobus sing sing.

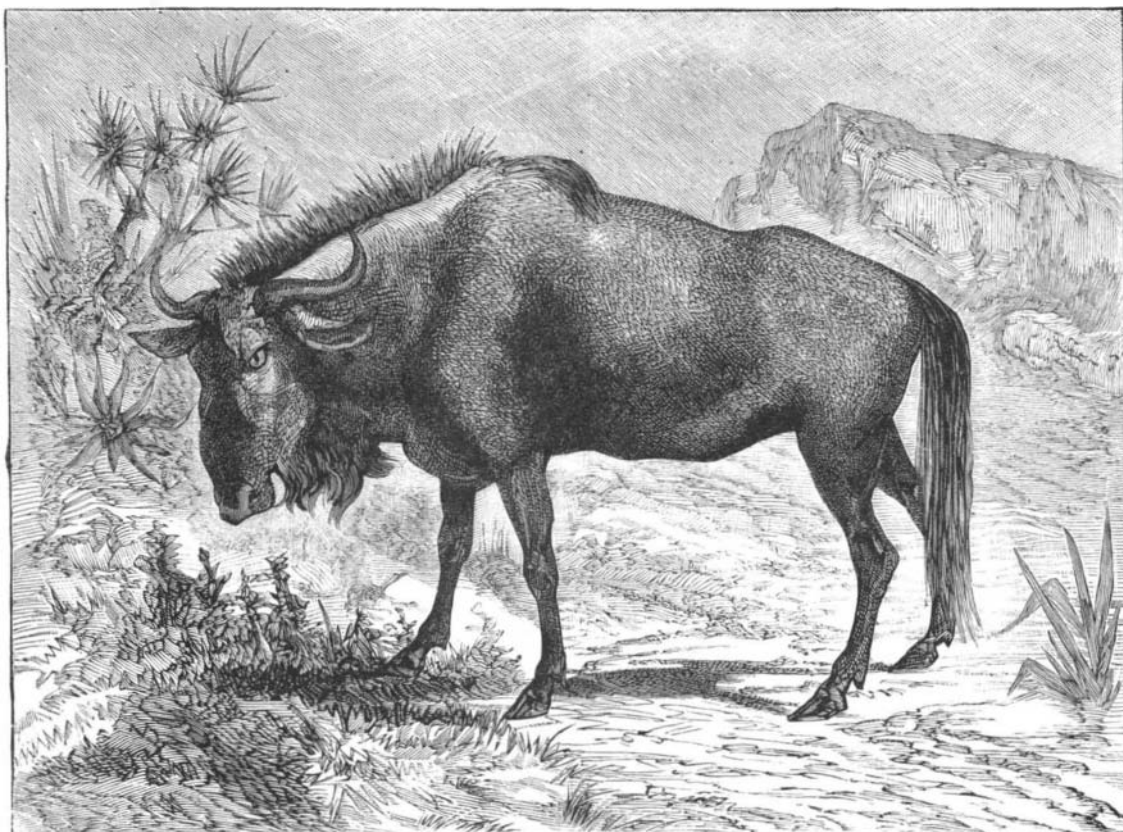
On the vast plains of Eastern Africa lives another species of the Kob antelope of shorter stature, which is called *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*, the Kobus with the crescent, on account of a white band which runs down from the os sacrum, terminating in a point upon either thigh. The coat of this antelope is of a yellowish gray color, changing to a reddish brown upon the forehead and the chanfrin, and to white upon the throat, the muzzle, and above the eyes. These antelopes, just as others of their kind, chiefly like the neighborhood of rivers, and browse on tender herbs and aquatic plants. They form small herds consisting of several females, two or three young males, and one adult male, who watches over the welfare of all. As soon as he espies some danger, he starts off at a gallop and the whole herd follows his heels. On such an occasion, these animals, which have usually a somewhat heavy appearance, are seen in all their beauty, covering, with a surprising swiftness, vast spaces of territory, until they find some swamps or a river, into which they plunge without hesitation, and in this manner, it is said, they escape the lion, their most terrible enemy. In Eastern Africa the natives do not hunt this kind of antelope, as its flesh has a very distinct goat odor.

The gorgon antelope (*Antilope gorgone* or *Catoblepas gorgone*), which also inhabits the south of the African continent, and a specimen of which may be seen in one of the inclosures of the Jardin des Plantes, differs so essentially from the Kob antelopes, the nilgauts, and the gazelles, and also from most other antelopes, that, at first sight, it is difficult to understand why naturalists should have classified it along with them under the same family name, together with the gnu, its nearest relation. Nevertheless, on closer observation, several of the essential characteristics of the *Antilopides* are found in these two odd animals, which have the head and neck of a bull and the rump and tail of a horse (Fig. 2). In an article on antelopes in general† we have spoken already of the common gnu or Sparman's gnu (*Catoblepas gnu*), and we have shortly described the species, as well as some of the habits of that animal, according to the statements made by different travelers, and checked by observations in the menagerie of the museum. It would therefore be unnecessary to recall in this place that great antelope of Eastern Africa, were it not to mention two facts which prove his aptitude of living and producing offspring under the climate of Western Europe. The Jardin des Plantes is in possession of a female gnu born in captivity, and M. Blauw has also succeeded, even under the gloomy sky of Holland, in obtaining a young one from two gnus which he keeps in a deer park. These

young ones, during the first part of their existence, had no horns, and the color of their coat was reddish gray, but gradually they have obtained the coat and the distinctive signs of the adult gnu. Their horns, after first having grown in a vertical direction, by and by curved into two diverging hooks, and at the same time increased at the base so as to form a shield on top of the head. This shield does not exist in the gorgon antelope, whose horns, although very thick at the time of birth, remain separate and curve outward, bending inward only at their ends, nor does this antelope possess any trace of the tuft of black hair which is found upon the

* Vide Speke, Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile, 1863, p. 471, and also Ph. Sclater's note in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, 1864, p. 102.

† Vide *La Nature* No. 291, Dec. 28, 1878, p. 49; No. 294, Jan. 18, 1879, p. 98; and No. 297, Feb. 8, 1879, p. 146.



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* Bulletin of the Societe d'Acclimatisation, 1887, No. 5, p. 272.

middle of the nose of the gnu, but like the latter it has a real beard grown out from its chin and falling down upon the throat, and the top of the neck bears a rough mane extending to the withers. The coat of the gorgon antelope has a different color from that of the gnu antelope, being of an iron gray running into a reddish brown on the lower parts of the body. There appear to be vertical stripes upon the neck and the flanks; but these stripes, which are not very noticeable, are not the result of a different color, as in the coat of the zebra or the tiger, but are produced merely by the position of the hair, which diverges, and the ends of which seem arranged in regular parallel lines. The mane as well as the tail of the gorgon antelope is, like that of Sparman's gnu, deeply shaded with black, and the hair of the tail touches the ground.

According to Dr. Kirk, a well known explorer, the gorgon antelope is called *kokong* by the Betchuanas and *nyumbo* by the Manganjas and the tribes which live on the banks of the Zambese. The English colonists (?) commonly call it the "blue wild beast." It is very common in that whole region of Eastern Africa, especially in the country of the Batokas and on the banks of the Shirwa, where it is found in numerous bands when it does not join the zebras which it accompanies in their ramblings. It is also found in Zululand and in the West, in Damaraland, but it does not pass the borders of Cape Colony in the south. The natives hunt it very actively, less for its meat, which is tough and has a disagreeable taste, than for its skin, parts of which are in great demand. The tail of the gorgon antelope in fact is, in the eyes of the natives, a wonderful talisman, and able to procure success in warlike expeditions.

Toward the middle of November the males of this species of antelope separate from their herds and roam around the country, always ready to pick a quarrel with other males whom they meet on their way. When they are suddenly surprised, they usually run once or twice in a large circle before taking to flight.—*E. Oustalet in La Nature.*

Launch of the City of Paris.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, October 23, the second of the Inman and International Company's steel twin screw steamers, which have been built by Messrs. J. & G. Thomson, was successfully launched from the premises of that firm at Clydebank, near Glasgow. This vessel, named the City of Paris, is a sister of the City of New York, which was completed by the same builders about four months ago, and has since made five single runs across the Atlantic. The City of New York, at the completion of her experimental run around Ireland from the Clyde to Liverpool, was fully described in our columns, and it now only remains to remind our readers that the principal dimensions of the two vessels are as follows:

Length over all, 580 ft.; length on water line, 525 ft.; breadth, extreme, 63½ ft.; and depth, moulded, 42 ft.; the gross registered tonnage being 10,500 tons. The vessels have very fine and graceful lines, and their beautiful appearance is in nowise impaired by the clipper bows with which they are provided. Each ship is propelled by two sets of triple expansion engines, and, as already remarked, they are supplied with twin screws, so that if one engine or propeller should become disabled, they can proceed with the aid of the other. This provision has more than once already been found of great value during the runs of the City of New York, the performances of that vessel not having been, so far, quite so successful or free from mishap as could be desired. It does not appear, however, that the failure to develop the contemplated speed is much, if at all, due to any shortcomings as regards the design and construction of the hull, it being almost impossible to conceive a form of body better calculated for the attainment of a high velocity through the water than that of the City of Paris and her sister. If there is any imperfection in the construction, in so far as contribution to fluid resistance is concerned, it is perhaps in the arrangement of double butt straps. Valuable as these double straps are as a source of longitudinal strength and of stiffness at the butt joints, it is yet to be feared that so many projections on the surface of the plating must be productive of an augmented skin frictional resistance, which may even exceed the highest value that has hitherto been assigned to it. We are not aware that the builders have made any allowance at all on this score, but certain it is that it is much too considerable to be wholly ignored. One of the most noticeable features in the design is the extent to which the principle of bulkhead subdivision has been carried. This alone should be sufficient to make the vessels highly popular in the Atlantic trade; for much as one may value the advantages of a speedy passage, yet it is of far more importance that a passenger steamer should be safe against the consequences of collision or other such disaster than it is to be able to save a few hours' time in making the run from port to port. The twin screw system of propulsion contributes materially to the attainment of this source of safety, as it enables longitudinal as well as transverse bulkheads to be fitted in the spaces which under ordinary circumstances

would hold a large volume of water. Hence, with a hole in one side of the machinery or boiler spaces, the vessel would still remain afloat, and be capable of steaming at a reduced speed. It has been anticipated that these qualities, combined with a very high rate of speed, will attract large numbers of passengers to the two ships, and consequently accommodation has been provided in each for upward of 2,000 persons.

As might be expected, the launching of so large and handsome a vessel attracted thousands of visitors to Clydebank. The most complete and careful arrangements had evidently been made to secure the safe flotation of the ship, and the whole of the details in connection with the same were carried out in the quietest and most skillfully organized manner. It is no simple task to slide such a monster into the water, and this fact seems to have been keenly appreciated by the builders. Three dog shores were placed on each side of the bow, and these were knocked down in pairs at a time, but ere the foremost pair were struck the vessel was lively, and even slowly in motion. The duty of christening was performed by the Hon. Lady Campbell, of Blytheswood, and the launch was in all respects successful.

The company invited, to the number of about two hundred, then adjourned to the large model room of the firm, where a very sumptuous repast was provided. The toast list which followed was short, so as to enable the party to return to Glasgow by a special train in waiting. The chair was occupied by Mr. George Thomson, Mr. James Thomson being at present in the United States, having accompanied the City of New York thither on her last trip. In proposing the toast of "The City of Paris and the Inman and International Steamship Company," Mr. Thomson said that the vessel just put into the water, like her sister, the City of New York, would, he hoped, prove a favorite among those crossing the Atlantic ferry. He was quite sure, and the City of New York had demonstrated the fact, that as regards seaworthiness, and all that pertains to the safety and comfort of passengers, these vessels were all that could be desired; and there was nothing wanting in those respects.

Mr. Taylor, of the Inman and International Steamship Company, in responding to the toast, said he would remind those who expected the City of New York to develop at once her highest speed, that the attempt to do such a thing would altogether spoil every chance of attaining the object her owners had in view, viz., that of making her an ultimate success. Some writers in the press appear very impatient because the ship has not so far done all they thought she would do. He was sorry they had made such a mistake. Some of them thought she would at once start off and beat the best performance of the Umbria, but he would remind these people that the Umbria and her sisters are improving all the time, and that they did not at first develop the speed of which they are now capable. The owners of the ships have received every assistance from the builders in their efforts to remove all hindrances to success. They hoped soon to satisfy their customers by fast steaming; for as the vessels are intended chiefly for passengers, if they do not succeed in attracting passengers, they must inevitably be financial failures. Advantage has been taken of their experience with the City of New York, and some trifling details in the City of Paris have been amended. This is the second vessel of the same name which has been built for the Inman Company.

Notwithstanding Mr. Taylor's references to other Atlantic steamers, and the gradual improvement in their speeds since they made their first voyages, there will be many, says the *Engineer*, who will still think that the City of New York might reasonably have been expected to show better results than were attained in her earliest runs. The trial trip speeds of most steam vessels exceed those of their after working life, so much so that the subject has become one of jeering comment; it being alleged that the conditions of the trial are generally so favorable as not to afford a fair criterion of actual work. It would seem, however, that the earliest trials are really made under difficulties, and that the forcing of the new machinery to its highest capabilities is attended with risk. This is, no doubt, to some extent the case; but yet the risk is commonly faced, and the maker of the engines is content to abide by the results so obtained. It is difficult to understand in what respects the conditions under which the engines of the City of New York have been so far tried differ from those existing in other newly built steam vessels, and most people will conclude, however rashly, that her performances have been disappointing. Our own impression is that the ship is short of steam; she has, be it remembered, only fifty-four furnaces, as against the seventy-two furnaces of the Etruria. The City of New York has now nine boilers; if a tenth were added, the additional six furnaces would supply just that which she now seems to lack, and there is no good reason why this boiler should not be given her. The enterprise of the owners and the skill of the builders are beyond question, and hence the perplexity which has arisen. Great things were very reasonably expected of the two ships; for why should so much

money have been spent, and such skillful service secured, unless the "Atlantic record" was to be beaten? We heartily trust that all difficulties will soon be surmounted, and that the two magnificent vessels now added to the Inman and International fleet will prove to be a great advance in the solution of the problem of swift, safe, and comfortable ocean navigation.

A New Rocket Signal.

A new signal has recently been brought out by the Cotton Powder Company, of Queen Victoria Street, London. The distinguishing features of this invention, says *Engineering*, are that no stick is required, and there is no back fire. The rocket takes the form of a metal cylinder, in the base of which is the propelling charge. Above this is a charge of tonite, and above this again a star composition. The rocket is placed in a phosphor-bronze socket, which may be screwed or let into the rail of the ship. When it is required to fire it, a firing tube is placed in the center of the rocket and to the top of this a lanyard is hooked. The propelling charge is fired by simply pulling the lanyard, and the signal is propelled upward at one impulse. The wire fuse by which the detonating charge is exploded is at the same time ignited, and this burns until the rocket has reached the maximum height, which is 600 ft. The stars are thrown out, giving a brilliant illumination, and the tonite charge then explodes. The noise of the explosion is equal to the firing of a six pounder gun, but being high, is heard at a great distance; indeed, in one instance a disabled vessel brought another to her assistance from a distance of 12 miles. These rockets are so portable and easy to fire—no match or portfire being required—that they are very suitable for boats, and doubtless many lives would have been saved had they been in use in cases where shipwrecked crews have had to take to the boats. The Board of Trade have authorized their surveyors to pass these rocket distress signals in lieu of both guns and rockets, so that many lines of steamships have landed their guns and use these signals instead. The National Lifeboat Institution are also introducing them with red stars, which is the distinctive signal to summon a lifeboat crew. A further advantage in this form of rocket is that a combination of colors and number of stars can be so arranged as to form a code on the principle of the Morse alphabet, a feature which may prove of great importance in naval maneuvers and for torpedo boat operations. The full sized rockets are 7 in. long and 2 in. in diameter. A smaller size, which is called the "rocket light signal," is also made. This has no explosive charge. Another modification of the idea consists of a sound signal, which has no stars. This takes the place of a gun.

The Galapagos.

Prof. Leslie A. Lee speaks as follows concerning the recent visit of the Fish Commission steamer Albatross to the Galapagos Islands:

The islands presented a very inhospitable look along the shores, with the black lava cropping out everywhere; but in two of them (Chatham Island and Charles Island) the interior was extremely fertile and pleasant. Collecting was always difficult; but, with the co-operation of officers and men, we obtained a great quantity of material. We naturally looked to the birds first, on account of Darwin's previous work there. We have over 250 good bird skins, besides several hundred specimens in alcohol and a few skeletons. Of the fifty-seven species before reported from there, we obtained examples of fifty or more, and we have, in addition, several which are apparently new to science. We hope, with our material, to settle some of the curious problems of these islands.

We secured specimens of all the reptiles which have been before found there, and also hope that we have two or three new lizards. The tortoises excited great interest, and it would please you to see the many large ones which are now crawling about our decks. We expect now that we shall be able to raise them in the States.

Fishing was good at all of our anchorages, and we all had sport in catching fishes over the ship's side. We got between thirty and forty species in all, including a large brown "grouper," which is there caught and salted for the Ecuador market.

One night, while running from one island to another, we stopped and drifted for a while, and put the electric light over the side. Besides many small things, large sharks came around in great numbers. More than twenty were seen at once.

A Venerable Toad.

Local antiquarians and zoologists are enchanted at present with a live toad found in the course of railway excavations at Greenock, Scotland. The toad is from 20,000 to 30,000 years old, as the stratum of clay in which it was found certainly dates from the glacial period. Its mouth is sealed up. It breathes slightly through the nostrils, and though the eyes are quite expressive, it does not seem to see.