

THE AUROCHS AND THE BISON



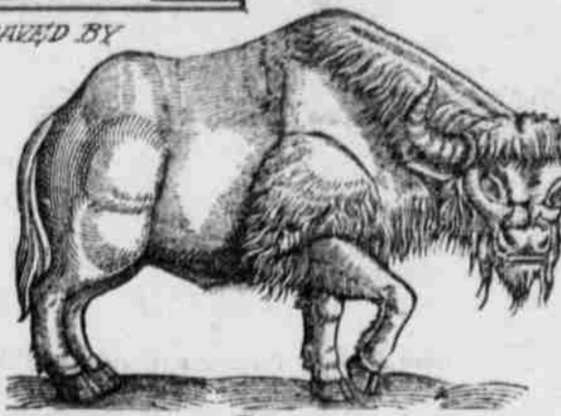
A MACHINE TO ATTACK THE AUROCHS, ENGRAVED BY ANTONIO TEMPESTA (1665-1670)

THE differentiation between these two animals is a subject of unusual interest to the sportsman-naturalist. To trace the origin of the popular misconception that the two names are synonymous, a mistake to which even some of our best-known sportsmen of today must plead guilty, we have to dive into the not always limpid depths of early mediaeval history. For the event which has probably more to do than any other with the promulgation of this error was the famous hunt given by Charlemagne to the ambassadors of Haroun-al-Rashid in the dank Hercynian woods that surrounded his hunting lodge, Heristallum. According to the original account by the monk Eginhard of St. Gall, the aurochs were of such terror-inspiring appearance to the men from the east that they could not even bear the sight of them, and fled from the emperor's side. The latter, attacked by the fiercest of these monsters, missed the vital spot, with the result that before brave Isambart could slay it the emperor was slightly wounded in the thigh and had his nether garment torn into shreds. Rushing to his side, the assembled courtiers offered to divert themselves of their own hose, but the emperor laughingly rejected their offers, declaring that he intended to show himself in his sorry plight to the fair Hildegarde, who was a great huntress herself. Needless to say, this adventure proved a mediaeval "scoop" of the gaudiest kind, but in the course of unnumbered retellings the aurochs became a wisent, as was called the European bison, and since that time a perplexing confusion has reigned between these two animals. That the true aurochs, which became extinct three hundred years ago, was an entirely different animal from the bison, whose name, alas! is also on the list of animals about to share the auroch's fate, is now a fact known to all scientific men. To the writer the poor old bison's pathetic fate appeals more particularly, for when shooting in the Rockies in the seventies of last century he still saw them in herds of ten thousand. But as the men who can claim to have seen the same marvellous sight will before long follow these lordly inhabitants of the wilds to the happy hunting grounds, the study of the past history of these two species has for some people unusual attractions. And not the least interesting phase of it is the collecting of pictures made at a time when both beasts were still roaming over the "wastes of the earth," or had but recently disappeared.

Of the earliest of all pictures of what was probably meant to be the bison, an interesting article which recently appeared in an illustrated weekly, in which the roof pictures in the Altamira Cave were reproduced, gave one a capital idea. After a gap of untold centuries we reach the various pictorial records left to us by the chisels, gravers or brushes of the classic ages. Among those who have made important discoveries respecting the distribution of the aurochs, Professor Conrad Keller, the well-known Zurich zoologist, occupies a prominent place. His discoveries in the ruins of the ancient palace of King Minos in Crete of no fewer than sixteen horn-cores and one skull of what unquestionably was the original wild ox of Europe, or aurochs, show that it lived there at one period, and that the famous legend of the minotaur has a substratum of truth. From his pages we borrow an illustration of an important fresco in Knossos depicting an aurochs in the act of impaling a helpless-looking victim, while a bold bull-fighter is actually turning a somersault over the back of the beast, a third, possibly female, looker-on attempting to seize the bull's tail, the scene being probably enacted in an arena. It is possible that the Thebes story came from the slaughter of captives in such exhibitions. Several other pictures have been recently discovered which belong to the Minoan period, i. e., between 2000 and 1500 B. C. Professor Keller's highly instructive writings contain many other illustrations of *Bos primigenius*.

Skipping tens of centuries, we reach the Bos-Idians, the most ancient of which originated in the period we touched at the outset when speaking of Charlemagne's aurochs-hunt. These exceedingly primitive pictorial records do not add much to our information; "the choice hurts one," as Germans describe that state of uncertainty in regard to what the monastic artists meant to represent by their crude attempts. Skipping a few more centuries, we at last reach, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, fairly intelligent accounts of the animal's habitat, and are furnished with drawings presenting features sufficiently distinct to indicate, even to eyes accustomed to photographic accuracy, the identity of the animal the picture means to represent.

Very curious is the circumstance, to which, by the way, nobody has so far drawn attention, that none of the French sporting books of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such as "Roy Modus," "Gaston Phoebus," "Gace de la Buigne" and "Fontaines-Guerin," mentions either the



FROM HIRSCHVOGEL'S BISON IN BARON HERBERSTEIN'S BOOK

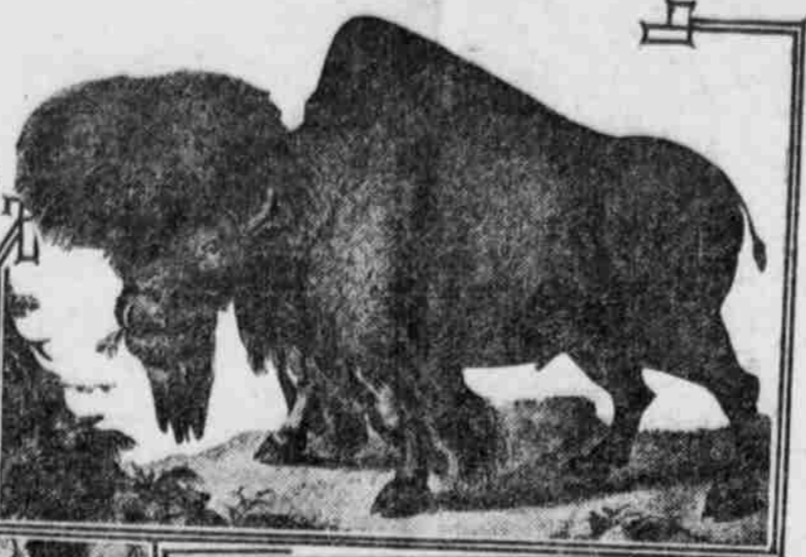


"URUS" (SAMUEL CLARKE'S "JULIUS CAESAR," 1712)

aurochs or the bison by so much as a word. As the authors of these classics were great sportsmen and close observers, this would support the theory that both these animals had already then become quite extinct in western Europe.

In the sixteenth century, when Europe, so far as art was concerned, had at last been aroused from its mediaeval stupor by the invention of printing, and an extraordinary demand had sprung up for pictorial matter illustrating recent exploration of new worlds and the various forms of the chase, there were produced quite a number of pictures of the aurochs by artists, very few of whom had ever set eyes upon a live wild specimen, though they may have seen captive ones. The one artist of whom we positively know that he had before him at least a stuffed specimen was the Viennese engraver Augustin Hirschvogel (born in Nurnberg about 1503), who illustrated the famous travel book of Baron Herberstein, the authority most frequently quoted in connection with the aurochs, for he was absolutely the last intelligent observer who saw the beast in its wild state, and left pictorial records of his impressions. Herberstein was gifted with present eyes, for he foresaw that the aurochs was doomed to speedy extinction. Hence on his several expeditions to the unknown interior of Russia as the ambassador, first of Emperor Maximilian in 1516-18, then on many different occasions as Charles V.'s and Ferdinand's emissary, he made notes about it, and, what was much more important, actually brought back with him some skins and skulls, which he had mounted in his house in Vienna, and from which Hirschvogel probably drew his celebrated picture of the aurochs. To differentiate he drew next to it a picture of a bison. As these two "portraits," which have been published scores of times, will be familiar to all interested in this matter, we will merely quote the inscriptions placed by Herberstein over the two pictures, for it is a perfectly correct differentiation. The picture of the bison has the following: "I am a Bison, am called by the Poles a Suber, by the Germans a Bison or Danthier, and by the ignorant an aurochs." Over the woodcut of the aurochs: "I am an Urus which is called by the Poles a Tur, by the Germans an Aurochs and until now by the ignorant a Bison." The inscriptions in the various editions—Herberstein's volume appeared in several languages—vary triflingly, but the above, which are taken from the edition of 1556, give the sense in the best form.

Shortly after Herberstein the Flemish painter Stradanus, who lived and worked for over fifty years in Florence (from 1553 to 1605), produced a drawing of an aurochs engaged in a terrific struggle in an arena where he was matched against a lion, two wolves and a bear. This original drawing is not the least interesting of the twenty odd ancient pictures of the aurochs in the writer's collection. In 1578 the Antwerp publisher Phillip Galle published this and one hundred and three other sporting drawings by the Florentine master, and underneath each of the engravings there is a Latin inscription. The one under the plate reproducing the drawing



"AMERICAN AUROCHS" BY HOLZLAB



"URUS IN THE PALACE OF MINOS AT KNOSSOS"

runs: "Some great lords are looking on at a spectacle in the arena. A furious lion with rearing fang and claws tears some wild beasts. He lays the wolves low and defeats the 'Taurus' in a struggle, while the bear covers away in terror." Whether the artist ever witnessed such a struggle in an arena cannot be ascertained; but it is quite possible, considering their great popularity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The blasts

were caught in pitfalls and transported great distances. The likeness is not a bad one, and in the above collection of prints there are three other pictures of aurochs, and a fifth depicting the lassoing of the bison on the island of Sardinia. A contemporary and countryman of Stradanus, one Hans Bol, produced also an interesting engraving of an aurochs hunt which forms the second print of his attractive little set entitled, "Venationis, Piscationis, et Aucupii typi," published in 1582 by the same enterprising Antwerp publishers that gave the world the last-named collection. Beneath the aurochs picture we read, in Latin elegiac couplets: "Thus with darts, swords and light arrows men everywhere drive the horned aurochs into pits." A rather

similar print was produced fourteen years after by the Nurnberg engraver, Johann Sibmacher, who etched nine other sporting plates. Then follow, in rapid succession, half a dozen "portraits" by Tempesta, the pupil of Stradanus, one of which prints we reproduce. It shows in what awe the gigantic wild bull was held, for it depicts a formidable-looking machine wherewith the bull could be attacked and brought down. Tempesta's pictures need not be taken seriously for his Roman "studio" was nothing but a workshop where apprentice hands turned out a vast mass of prints of little or no value in an enquiry of the pen, Edward Topsell, in his illustrated natural history hodge-podge called the "Historie of Foure Footed Beastes" (1607) only added to the existing confusion. "A Bison," he says, "is a beast very strange as may appear by his figure prefixed which by many authors is taken; for Urus, some for a Bugle or wild ox, others, for a Rangifer, and many for the beast Tarantus or Buffe." And to show that he really meant what he said, he affixes a picture of what is unmistakably a reindeer! Fortunately, however, he adds, as pictures of the bison and of the aurochs, replicas of the two prints by Hirschvogel out of Herberstein's "Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii," which, as we have already mentioned, are among the most correct representations published at a period when the aurochs still existed.

In England, the belief that the aurochs was a bison-like creature continued throughout the eighteenth century. The picture taken from Samuel Clarke's "Julius Caesar," published in 1712, shows what extraordinary ignorance still prevailed, the animal with antlers like an inverted umbrella being a bison, or *Bos germanicus*, and the beast in the center an aurochs. The graver of Holzlab of Zurich, continues the misconception; indeed, goes one better, for the bison is here turned into an "American aurochs." Of numerous other illustrations of our two beasts, we have not the space to speak at length. One of the most characteristic of the latter type is the so-called Hamilton Smith picture of the aurochs. This is a painting, dating, it is believed, from the first quarter of the sixteenth century, discovered in Augsburg not quite a hundred years ago. This painting has mysteriously disappeared, but an accurate copy was made. For the first "modern" picture of the bison that appeared in England we have also to go to German sources, and, strangely enough, to the same city, for it was Augsburg's most famous animal painter, Ridinger (1697-1767), who drew the first life-like picture. A countryman of his, one J. S. Muller, who lived many years in London, engraved, in 1758, a fine set of plates representing wild animals after Ridinger's drawings from nature. Among them is one of the bison, called by him the buffalo, and underneath is a lengthy and fairly correct description in English, which he also copied from Ridinger. But this and other isolated efforts have not entirely prevented the dissemination of the old mistake, for living authorities still tell us, quite seriously, that they have grassed aurochs.

POULTRY

GOOD HOUSES FOR CHICKENS

Leghorns Stand Cold Weather, Provided They Are Free From Dampness and Draughts.

We have one building 18x70 feet and one 18x128 feet made of matched pine, not doubled or lined, a pitch roof covered with two-ply roofing and dirt floors. Both buildings face the south and each has the south side covered with an equal amount of glass and muslin half-way from the eaves, the latter half enclosed with matched



Single-Comb Brown Leghorn.

These windows have been opened wide daily regardless of zero weather. Single Comb Brown Leghorns stand cold weather, provided they are free from drafts and dampness, says a writer in an exchange. Our buildings have dirt floors covered with one foot of wheat straw. The dropping boards and roosts are cleaned and disinfected with a hot spray from a force pump every two weeks. The broken straw from the floor is placed upon the dropping boards and the floor covered anew with wheat straw. The cost of the building, exclusive of land, was \$3.88 per lineal foot, 70 plus 128 feet, thus housing 1,250 layers at 62 cents per hen. The usual estimate is \$1 per hen.

HINTS OF DUCKS AND GEESE

Duckling Should Be Marketed Before Twelve Weeks Old—Same Is Said of Goslings.

A Pekin duckling weighs about two ounces when hatched, and should take on weight as follows: Three to four weeks, one pound; six to eight weeks, four to four and one-half pounds; and at ten weeks, five and one-half to six pounds. Ducklings should be marketed at from nine to twelve weeks of age. After that they take on weight slowly, and it is not profitable to keep them longer than twelve weeks.

Geese grow about as rapidly as ducks. Allowance of course must be made for the original difference in size—newly hatched goslings weighing about four ounces. Turkeys do not grow rapidly at the start, but develop much quicker after three months of age.

POULTRY NOTES

Gather eggs daily. Cull out small eggs. The goose averages about thirty eggs.

Geese do not thrive when yarded; ducks do.

The average weight of the goose is twice that of the duck.

Geese pair, but drakes will take care of four or more mates.

A hen left to shift for herself may lay in summer but seldom will in winter.

Are you figuring on entering one or two pens in a poultry show, if not, begin now.

Before packing and shipping poultry should be thoroughly dry and cold but not frozen.

Limberneck is caused by the fowls eating some dead animal matter that has bred maggots.

The goose is a grazing bird, while the duck thrives with a limited amount of green food.

Don't forget to sprinkle lime on drop boards, not too much, for it is hard on the chicken's feet.

Meat in some form must be fed poultry at least twice a week—also green food if you want results.

A good dry mash for layers: Two parts bran, 1 part cornmeal, 1 part alfalfa meal, and 1 part beef scrap.

Ducks can be profitably bred for four years, geese can be bred for many years—for a period that seems incredible.

Fifty hens with abundant room, care and proper feed will return more cash than one hundred carelessly fed and crowded.

Dust the hen with insect powder before setting, and twice more while hatching, then chicks will not be full of lice to begin with.

After hens have passed their period of profitable laying (two or three years), they may be sold at little if any loss on their first cost.

The ONCOOKER S. E. KISER Idle Boasts



Each day he tells me he has done Some splendid thing in splendid style! Each day he tells me he has won From Fortune an engaging smile; Each day he boasts about his gains, But, for some reason he conceals, In humble quarters he remains And keeps all run down at the heels.

Each day he tells me of high praise That he has gloriously earned; If what he says is true his days To good account must all be turned; But frayed cuffs still mischievously Peep from beneath his shiny sleeves, And, for some reason, only he Recounts the triumphs he achieves.

Encouraging a Good Man.

"Come in here and have lunch with me," said one business man to another as they were walking in a downtown street yesterday, shortly after the noon hour.

"What? You don't eat in there, do you?"

"Yes, this is my favorite restaurant."

"Well, by George, I'm surprised. I thought you were a man who would be more difficult to satisfy than that. I took one meal there, and then declared that I would never go into the place again. The service was wretched; the things they gave me to eat were miserably prepared, and taking it all together, it was about the worst thing I ever had in the lunch line."

"I grant that all you have said may be true, yet there is a vast good reason why the place ought to have our patronage."

"What is it?"

"Do you see the sign in front? It says, 'Ladies and Gentlemen's Restaurant.' Look at the other signs. They all read, 'Ladies and Gents.' The man who runs this place ought to be encouraged, even if his grub is bad. Come on."

He Understood.

Miss Millicent—No, Mr. Simpson. I'm sorry that I can't invite you to call again, but the fact is that I must refuse, for my own safety, to see you any more.

George Simpson—Why, why, I don't understand you.

Miss Millicent—Our family physician says that I have heart trouble, and I'm afraid that you might some time get bold enough to say something and make me fall dead.

Their engagement was announced the next day.

Suitable Companions.

For the Napoleon of finance a willing bondsman;

For the heiress who wishes to marry a title, a fortune teller.

For the man who stops drinking when he discovers that whisky is bad for him, a snake charmer;

For the champion amateur golfer, a cup-bearer.

For the man who will not wear an overcoat, a trained nurse.

Too Obedient.

"You might make a noise as if you were kissing me," she said, "just to create a commotion among the girls in the next room."

A moment later she angrily left him and went in among the girls whom she had wished to fill with excitement. He had merely made a noise as if he were kissing her.

An Opinion.

"Do you believe a poor man can succeed in politics?"

"I hardly think I care to answer your question. I will say, however, that it does not seem to be possible for a man to succeed in politics and stay poor."

A Marked Man.

"Yes, Hubbleston is a man of mark."

"Why, what has he ever done to make him so?"

"Had the smallpox."

Free Speech.

"Pa, what's a Chautauqua?"

"A place where our public men can say what they want to say without undergoing the necessity of having their speeches edited."