

# THE OLD TOWN ZOOLOGICAL

GRAND

## *Zoological Entertainment*

IN THE

# ROYAL CIVIC ARENA,

ROYAL EXCHANGE, EDINBURGH,

On *TUESDAY FIRST, the 29th instant,*

Will be performed here for the First time, on a Grand Scale, the new and interesting  
DRAMA of

## THE WILD BEASTS ATTACKING THEIR KEEPER.

FOR the information of those who may not be acquainted with the nature of such Exhibitions, it may be necessary to state, that the Actors were led to the attempt from the great success which attended the introduction of Wild Animals upon the boards of the Theatres Royal; and however much these exhibitions have been applauded, the Actors in the Royal Exchange entertain sanguine hopes that their Entertainments will not fall short of even the best efforts of the best actors in these Theatres. The first effort of the Company in this walk, was to exhibit a grand attack of the wild and ferocious animals upon the tame, which afforded great amusement to the spectators for some time. At length a victim was singled out, and all the wild animals made a dead set at him. But he, however, proved too heavy a match for the whole Menagerie, from a consciousness of his own strength, and being well guarded by the bars of good service, and the invulnerable shield of public opinion. As in the case of the Lion Nero when baited by a host of dogs, the public thought the sport partook too much of "Cruelty to Animals," separated the combatants by sending them to Ward (the Second), when the Electors chained up the grim and *Black Britannica Mastiff* that led the attack, and put the little conceited Cur, "*Jugurtha*," that accompanied him, under the *Turf*, and neither of them have been heard of since.

Some of the former Actors, however, were resolved to have another attempt at these recreations, and being strengthened by new recruits, "young animals" from the Cowgate, and other districts, they resolved upon a representation on a grand scale.—A meeting of 18 of them was privately held, the plot was arranged, and a rehearsal took place. In strict accordance with the propensity of all savage tribes and wild animals to attack their superiors, they resolved in this instance, that the attack should be made upon their Right Honourable Keeper. The plot was based on the historical fact, that the Keeper had dared to dine in human and humane society, and not in the Menagerie, which greatly displeased the savage part of the Collection, particularly the *Hippo-potatoe-tamus*, (which, by the bye, is rather a carnivorous than a herbivorous specimen of the species). This uncouth monster complained that he had not been taken along with the Keeper to eat up the bones and scraps which he left,—and he insisted that, (as was obvious to every *Observer*,) the savage animals being in the majority, they ought, with one accord, to attack and rend the Keeper. *Hippo*, also declared, that the Keeper was too good and too learned for their Menagerie,—that he had in a metaphorical speech attempted to detract from their merits, by describing a set of animals who went at large, of the *GENUS CLIQUE*—a species, he said, that "forgot nothing, and forgave nothing," and who, on discovering a vulnerable part, if even in the heel, they, tiger-like, spring upon their victim to destruction." As there was no Tiger in the Royal Exchange Collection, and as it was well known that most of the animals partook more of the nature of the Wolf and the Fox than of the Lion and Tiger, and believing there could be no race more vindictive and relentless than themselves, they could not believe that his metaphorical speech applied to any other Collection, and they were therefore well entitled to be wroth with him for daring to describe them out of their proper Den, and came to an unanimous resolution, that if not destroyed, he should, at least, be instantly bound and gagged. At the rehearsal, and as a preliminary to the Drama, a letter was written to the Keeper, demanding to be informed if he really had dined with gentlemen, and described the Menagerie there. To this letter as they expected, the Keeper made no reply, but treated it with marked contempt, denying their right to question or gag him, and declaring that he was their *independent* Keeper, by virtue of an Act of Parliament, that he would go where he pleased, and speak when and how he pleased. The Actors having got their parts assigned them for the Tuesday's exhibition, and the Drama having been well advertised, a considerable audience attended the Theatre. Owing, however, to some of the Actors not having got their parts well learned, the company was treated to a very small encounter, led on by a young, though vigorous and talented specimen of the "*Genus Legal*," who sustained his part without that ferocity the spectators had expected. He seemed, upon the whole, unwilling to the work, and gave decided indications that he may not play at all next week. The second part, was sustained by a lank greyish-looking old Fox of the genus "*Sub-Legal*," supposed to be originally from Glasgow. The chain of this animal seemed to restrain his efforts a good deal; and although he would fain have bitten the Keeper by way of diverting the audience from his awkward position, he could not accomplish it, and, upon the whole, his attack was considered a failure. Seeing the unhappy manner in which the Drama was likely to end, a well-conditioned little creature of the "*Genus Medicæ*," with great tact, turned the tide of applause from the Actors to the Keeper. He said, with much feeling, that he hated all such beastly exhibitions, and that the Theatre should be kept for the performance of the Legitimate Civic Drama, for which it was built, and that the handbill for next week's entertainment should be thrown out of the Menagerie. Here the dignified little Keeper drew himself up in the attitude of defence, and keenly eyeing the most ferocious of the brutes, said he knew well the nature of the animals he had to contend with—that they being at present the majority of the Menagerie, he also knew he had no chance with them—had nothing but a furious combat to expect; but that, as the responsible head of the Theatre, he solemnly protested against the proposed Drama, as tending to lower the Actors in the estimation of the public; and instead of gaining them "the praise and protection of such as do well," would make them a "scoff and a bye-word" throughout the civilized globe. As the audience had come for sport, however, he would treat them to some little fun, grounded upon the plot which the "eighteen" had laid—he would merely refer to some of their names, as sufficient amusement for the remainder of the day's entertainment—First, he found a *Goose* which had lain for more than eleven years on the *Banks* of the Menagerie, but who, as the feeders well knew, had laid anything but golden eggs—more than once, they were found rotten, and brought but a small dividend of their price,—next he found the clumsy, unwashed, *Hippo-potatoe-tamus*, with a *Wight* sort of a *Hyena*, who licks his toes, and lies obedient at his side,—the two *Dunkeys*, elder & younger, were there,—the whiskered & senior chained *Ourang-outang*, although he did not expect him, was there—he had thought that all his former caressing might have ended in a different return from this animal,—the silver-working *Grampus* and the *Barber-y Mule* (both in chains) were there,—the *Grey Stot*, and *Stirk*, the *Sloth*, (genus anti-grammarian) were there,—the *Ougly-Muck*, and *Friend-S—ks*, (new importations) were there,—*Sly Wig Gawky* and the old *Chained Boar* from the Canongate, were there—the latter animal was only expected to grunt when his chain was pulled, this being considered the height of his ability. At this stage of the performance, the *Hippo-potatoe-tamus* gave a loud growl, which was speedily checked by the Keeper, who reminded him of his newly assumed character, and that although he had been accustomed all his days to wallow in the mire, now that he had got into the company of more cleanly animals, he must really try to learn better manners. This closed the performance, and the audience left on the understanding, that the second part of the Drama is to come off next Tuesday, and that the public will be supplied in good time with the names and characters of the Actors.

