NATURAL HISTORY.

The Jardin des Plantes undenbtedly the finest institution of its kind of modern times, and, perhaps, equal to the Garden of ancient Athens, was founded by Lenis XIII in May, 1635, and consisted at first only of a house and 24 acres of land. Dr. Heronard, an eminent comparative anatomist in his day, was made curator in the infant institution, with the privilege of selecting an assistant, whom he supplied in the person of Guy de la Brosse. During the first year a parterce 292 feet long by 227 feet broad, compesed of the best plants to be had in Frauce, was formed. Including varieties, the specimens of genera amounted to 1800. Correspondence was immediately opened with the leading botanists of the world, and in 1640 the number of species and varieties had been increased to 2360. In the same year the garden was opened to the public. Considerable progress was made in the course of the next three years, and, in 1649, De la Brosse died, matters remaining in statu quo, with triffing exceptions, until 1052, when the grand-nephew of De la Brosse was ap-pointed, and travelled at his own expense through the provinces of France, and among the Pyrenees and Alps, for the purpose of alding new varieties of plants to the garden. In 1665 the number of species and varieties amounted to 4000. Meanwhile, however, Gaston d'Orleans, the King's brother, had founded a garden of his own, the principal feature of which was that it contained a collection of drawings of the most remarkable plants in the world. The Duke died in 1600, and the King, buying the collection, added it to his own, appointing Robert, the artist who painted them, painter to the museum of the Jardin des Plantes. Here began the era of painting as an aid to botany, and from that time to the present the most celebrated painters of Europe have been contibutors to the collection, so that at the present day one of the most valuable features of the museum is constituted by its drawings of the plants and animals of all climates and countries.

In 1671 an event of great importance occurred in the proclamation of the King regu-lating the administration of the garden and granting commissions to the professors. This was due to the efforts of Colbert, who had suggested to the King that there was no surer way of rendering the institution both useful and permanent than by founding several professorships in connection with it. Dr. Fagon was appointed to the professorship of botany, and, having filled it for several years with ability, it was finally, at his request, bo-towed on Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, then only twenty-six years of age, though a botanist of remarkable promise. This occurred in 1683, Dr. Fagon being retained in the newly-created office of Superintendent. Tournefort was the first successfully to define the genera of plants. The first great result to science of the Jardin des Flantes, though of equal importance, will

be noted in passing.
The next great name connected with the Institution is that of Antony de Jussieu, who was appointed in 1716, and, visiting Spain and Portugal the following year, brought back a large number of new species and varieties. In the absence of De Jussieu the care of the garden devolved on Sebastian Vaillant, who was the first to discover and demonstrate in a public lecture the existence of two sexes in plants, together with the phenomena of fecundation in vegetables—a second invaluable contribution to the scientific knowledge of the age. Skipping the interim of several nameless professors, history records the appointment of the great Buffon, then utterly unknown as a naturalist, though eminent in mathematics and natural philosophy, which ook place in 1739 at the dying request of Da Eay, his immediate predecessor.

At the time when Buffon entered the garden, there was as yet nothing worthy of the name of a Museum of Natural History, and the collection under his control was simply termed a cabinet. Buffon made it his first business to procure more commodious buildings for the reception of collections. Bernard de Jussieu being keeper of the cabinet-and Buffon having no fault to find with him-the new superintendent decided to create a place for Daubenton, who had been a student of botany nnoer the elder Jussien and of anatomy under Taverney and Winslow. The increasing treasures of the institution gave Buffon an excuse for enlarging his corps, and, as a consequence, Danbenton, then only 20 years of age, was inwited to Paris in 1745. After four years of combined labor-for there is no doubt that Buffon received important aid from Daubenton in the preparation of his work-the first volume of the Natural History appeared, attracting the attention of all Europe, and giving an éclat to the Jardin des Plantes which even the great discoveries of Tournefort and Vaillant had failed to give it. In the mean time, most important additions were made to the cabinet—the Superintendent having resigned a part of his own dwelling for the reception of the new collections, to the augmentation of which he gave up his own dwelling entirely in 1766. The cabinet now consisted of four large saloons, open to the public two days in the week, and with certain hours specified for the exclusive benefit of students of natural history, who were taught by Daubenton. During all this time the public still had the benefit of the labors of Antony de Jussieu, who not only lecfured two or three times a week on botany, but also employed young men to travel at his own expense for the collection of new speci-mens for the garden. In 1787, Buffon procured the use of the Hotel de Magny, with its courts and gardens; and here was constructed an amphitheatre for lectures on botany, anatomy, and the kindred sciences. With the éclat of the name of Buffon at its head, though, perhaps, Buffon was more indebted to the garden for his reputation than was the garden to him for something similar, now began the era of contributions. The King of Poland presented a valuable collection of minerals; the Emperor of Russia, having found it impossible to induce Buffon to visit St. Petersburg, invited the son of the illustrious author, and presented him with rare animals from the North fer the museum. In 1787 the cabinet of zoology was materially enhanced in value by the collection of Sonnerat made in India, as well as by that of Commerson made during the voyage of Bougainville round the world. Nor was Daubenton the only famous professor appointed by Buffon; M. de la Larepede and M. Desfontaines, both appointees of his, were the authors of valuable works on natural history; and to the latter is due the reputation history; and to the latter is due the reputation of having been the first to inculcate the importance of a min-te knowledge of the nature of vegetables, the lanctions of organs, and the phenomena of their wages of development, in order to understand fully their generic and specific idiosyncracies. Thus, will be observed, the discovery of the three great principles upon which scientific botany is based has been due to the botanical garden founded.

Passing over the period of the Revolution, during which, under M. Lakanal, the institution was dignified with the title of the Museum

has been due to the botanical garden foundad

by Louis XIII.

of animals-a note may be taken of the spiendid cabinet of the Stadtholder, which was added the same year, together with a collection of insects made in Barbary by Desfontaines. At this time all the similar institutions in Eurepe did not contain so many specimens, species, and varieties, though, notwithstanding, its most valuable features have been added since. It was in the days of the elder Napoleon that the name of Cuvier was appended to the list of professors, and to him is due the credit of having been the first to suggest and demonstrate that many of the fossil remains of geology were those of now extinct species-a fact the demonstration of which laid the foundation for intelligent study of geological fossils, and effected a complete revolu-tion in the theories of that science. In 1800, under the regime of Napoleon also, 17,000 frances in gold were paid for an English col-lection, consisting of two tigers, two lynxes, one mandril, a leopard, a panther, a hyena, and a few birds. At this time, also, began the publication of the Annals of the Museum, the first of the twenty volumes of which was

printed in 1801. In 1802 the Weiss collection of minerals was added for 150,000 francs; in 1802, also, the Gayola museum of fossil fishes was incorporated, together with M. Barral's Corsican ollection and the celebrated Verouese collection, more valuable than either. In 1803 the Australian expedition was made, which resuited in a collection that Cavier highly praised as of inestimable value. Soon after, Humboldt presented the herbarium of his travels, which consisted of 5600 species; also, M. Geoffrey his collection made during a four years' residence in Egypt, and including the mummles of several secred animals from the tombs of Memphis and Thebes. It was through there specimens that Cuvier and savigny were able to determine that the tatalus ilis of Senegal was not the ibis of the Egyptians. In 1814 M. Brenser's famous collection of intestinal animals was added; also the wax modeled fungi of the Museum, reckoned the most acourate wax-work ever made.

The above rapid notes of the progress of the Jardin des Plantes and the extent to which science is indebted for its great discoveries to the culture afforded by the institution, are sufficient to illustrate the value of zoological and botanical gardens, scientifically speaking. The Jardin des Plantes, and that only, it has been which, fostering the esprit de corps among scientific men, has kept France far in the van, so far as scientific discovery is concerned, for two centuries.

A mere catalogue of the names which the Jardin des Flantes has rendered illustrious would occupy columns-not to mention the thousands of students who regularly attend the lectures on comparative anatomy, geology, agriculture, mineralogy, zoology, botany, and the whole circle of physical sciences. Other Gardens in the Old World.

The Zoological Garden in Regent's Park, London, is a fine institution, though little to be compared with the great Museum of Paris. Another excellent institution, though exclusively botanical and horticultural, is the Royal Gardens, at Kew, of which Sir W. J. Hooker is director. In a recent report on the condition of the garden, this gentleman notes the fact that, glinough the great mass of its visitors visit it for purposes of recreation, still a large percentage have no other aim than scientific and botanical study; while many more make use of it for drawings of rare species to be in-troduced into landscapes; a multitude more to copy novel or striking vegetable productions; and a small percentage for designs to be reproduced in manufactured goods. In fact, one can scarcely enter an English gallery of art without a recognition in some of its paintings of trees, shrubs, or rare plants seen in the institution at Kew, and the same is true to a large extent of English waxwork and English designs on manufactured woollens, silks, and cottons; while professional gardeners esteem it a great priv be permitted to pass a couple of years in completing their education in connection with the institution.

In the continental cities of Amsterdam, Ghent, Antwerp, and Brussels, zoological gardens have also been founded, and are supported and conducted by zoological societies. The Antwerp Garden was founded in 1843, with a capital on the part of the Zoological Society of \$20,000, devoted to the acquiring of land and the erection of suitable buildings. The annual expenses are now about \$20,000, which are met by an admission fee of one franc, by the sale of exotic birds and animals reared in the institution, by an entrance fee of membership of 20 francs, and by an annual levy on the members of 25 france a year. The capital of the Ghent Garden, founded in a similar manner, originally but \$60,000, has been recently enlarged to \$90,000. The grounds comprise 13 acres: shareholders number about 4000; annual income is now about \$13,000; annual expenses are about \$10,000. In Brussels the grounds have been neatly planted, so as to conceal the cages mostly by overhanging vegetation.

Altogether, these institutions offer a type unknown to France. Founded by subscription, they owe nothing to the State, and derive their resources altogether from their own development. It has been proposed to annex to the collections of animals a library of Natural History and courses of public lec tures, but not one of the societies has ever been able to put the plan into practical opera-tion. In fact, created by societies simply, and so supported, there can be no expectation that they will ever rival the great Natural History Museum of Paris, upheld as it is by the central power of the State. These lesser institutions have, nevertheless, a place to take in the propagation of a knowledge of animals, and the stripping of science of its morose gravity. Half a century back, the giraffe and kangaroo were as paradoxical to the popular mind as were the uniand griffin. At present these corn animals live and walk about before our eyes, and this is some little progress. Natural His tory is, to the popular mind, no longer a cold catacomb of specimens, dead, stuffed, and ticketed, and this is greater progress still. The natural purpose of the zoological gardens at this age, when comparative auatomy has less need of Cuviers and pioneers in discovery than formerly, is undoubtedly to serve as a means for observations, facts, and experi-ments in Natural History—affording, as is the fact, the means of investigation into the laws of acclimatization, the laws by virtue of which animals pass from the savage into the domestic state, and the modifications of physique which accompany acclimatization and the transition from savageness to domesticity. Slightly modified, the same remarks apply to botanical gardens so far as they may be made subservient to discovery in botanical science.

Iron Fortifications and Great Guns.

A letter from Berlin says: - "The success which attended the experiments of last summer has induced the Prussian Government to employ large blocks of hard east-movel for the the blocks of hard cast-metal for the purpose of fornication. A foundry has been established with this object on the artillery experimental of Natural History, with twelve endowed pro-fessorships, and passing as well the Trinidad expedition in 1796, which resulted in the addi-tion of a large collection of West Indian plants to the garden, together with a large collection

was made there last Friday, in the presence of the Minister of War and numerous military and paral officers, and is unquestionably by far the greatest that has ever been attempted on the con hear. Woat is considered still more remarkable than the size of this casting was the very short time required for the process. The metal was melted in three large fornaces in the abort space of toree hours. but the ac ual casting was completed in fortyfive seconds.

"The recort adds, by way of comparison, that the casting of a steam bammer weighing one honored tons required in England forty-eight

"A bydraulic crane is used for moving these large masses, and does its work so easily that a shield weighing ferry tons has been moved several hundred yards and placed on the frame-work in ended to receive it in half an hour. The plates are not fastened together by bolts or screws, but cast in such a shape as to dovetail into each other. It is in eased to employ a combination of iron, earthwork, and masoury in the new torts, and to adopt the improved methods in the coast defenses first, as they are

exposed to the heaviest fire.

"The Woolwich gun, which has been competing at Berlin with fir. Krupp's, has shown a deep crack after the two hundred and sixty-louith round, whereas Krupp's gun has remained uncathed after four handred rounds, and his friends are of course jub lant. On the other hand, an knollsh seven och plate, three inches of seel on four laches of fron, from the Cyclops Works. Shedield, was too much for Krupp's ninety-six pounder, at least only the point of the abot came through. It has been saids since that only a reduced charge of powder was used on this occasion. The same projectile, however, and with a similar reduced charge, had knocked an eight-inch plate of and Borsig have offered to establish works for rolling plates in Prussia,"

HEAVY EXPENSE.—The total cost of the Government buildings, grounds, and improvements in Washington, D. C., including the lighting and cleansing of the streets of that city, up to June 30, TS68, according to the appropriations made by Congress, amounts, it is stated, to \$11,534,940.

-For the last nine years the average number of shipwrecks on the British coasts has been 1961 annually.

-It is said that the first Democratic speech ever delivered in Boxford, Massachusetts, was a few days ago.

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