

fore-teeth, or of a jaw bone shewing it had, or had not, such teeth, must be waited for, and hoped with patience. It may be better, in the mean time, to keep up the difference of name.

N^o. XXXI.

A Letter from Mr. JOHN HECKEWELDER to BENJAMIN SMITH BARTON, M. D. containing an Account of an Animal called the Big Naked Bear.

DEAR SIR,

Read March
10, 1797. **I** HAVE now to communicate to you, what came to my knowledge respecting an animal, which the Mohican Indians called Ahamagachktiât Mecchquá, and the Delawares (if I recollect right) Amangachktiât. *The Big Naked Bear*. Their reports run thus: That among all animals that had been formerly in this country, this was the most ferocious. That it was much larger, than the largest of the common bears, and remarkably long-bodied: all over, (except a spot of hair on its back of a white colour,) naked. That it attacked and devoured man and beast, and that a man, or a common bear, only served for one meal to one of these animals. That with its teeth it could crack the strongest bones. That it could not see very well, but in discovering its prey by scent, it exceeded all other animals. That it pursued its prey with unremitting ravenousness, and that there was no other way of escaping, but by taking to a river, and either swimming down the same, or saving one's self by means of a canoe. That its heart being remarkably small, it could seldom be killed with the arrow. That the surest way of destroying him was to break his back-bone. That when a party went out to destroy
this

this animal, they first took leave of their friends and relations at home, considering themselves as going on an expedition, perhaps never to return again. That when out, they sought for his track, carefully attending to the course the wind blew, and endeavouring to keep as near as possible to a river. That every man of the party knew at what part of the body he was to take his aim. That some were to strike at the back-bone, some at the head, and others at the heart. That the last of these animals known of, was on the east side of the Mohicanni Sipu. (Hudson's River) where, after devouring several Indians that were tilling their ground, a resolute party, well provided with bows and arrows, &c. fell upon the following plan, in which they also succeeded, viz. knowing of a large high rock, perpendicular on all sides, and level on the top, in the neighbourhood of where the naked bear kept, they made ladders, (Indian ladders) and placing these at the rock, they reconnoitred the ground around, and soon finding a fresh track of the animal, they hastily returned, getting on the top of the rock, and drawing the ladders up after them. They then set up a cry, similar to that of a child, whereupon this animal made its way thither, and attempted to climb the rock, the Indians pouring down their arrows in different directions, all the while upon him. The animal now grew very much enraged, biting with its teeth against the rock, and attempting to tear it with its claws, until at length they had conquered it.

The history of this animal used to be a subject of conversation among the Indians, especially when in the woods a hunting. I have also heard them say to their children when crying: 'Hush! the naked bear will hear you, be upon you, and devour you.' From the nature of their conversation on this subject, I was led to believe the story had foundation. Old Indians whom I questioned on

this matter, assured me it was fact, relying on the authenticity of their forefathers' relations. Further reports respecting this animal have *in part* slipped my memory, wherefore I omit making any mention of the same.

The panther is not considered by the Indians as *such* a ravenous animal, as by the white people he is reported to be. I know but of one instance, where an Indian was nigh being attacked by one of them, but this was owing to the Indian's approaching his den. The Indian however found means of killing him, and taking the young, which he brought down to Philadelphia, which was about the year 1770. This animal, the Indians say, lives chiefly on deer, which it either by flyness catches itself, pursues after they have been crippled by the hunters, or takes from the wolves after they have caught them.

If hereafter, I shall have an opportunity of getting further information respecting the naked bear; I will freely communicate the same to you.

Believe me to be, Dear Sir,
Your truly affectionate friend, &c.

JOHN HECKEWELDER.

Nº. XXXII.

Experiments and Observations on Land and Sea Air. By
ADAM SEYBERT, M. D.

Read March
10, 1797. **A**N endeavour to add any facts or observations to a branch of knowledge, which has been treated of by many of the most enlightened philosophers of the present century, may be deemed a hazardous attempt. But although we have many accounts of eudiometrical experiments by Priestley, Fontana, Ingenhousz