

explanations and illustrations of this expression which have appeared in American newspapers. To have seen *the elephant* is to have had a full experience of life or of a certain subject or object. There is a book by "Doesticks" (Mortimer Thompson), called "Seeing the Elephant," devoted to describing "life" in New York, of which a reviewer remarked that *the elephant*, according to Mr. Thompson, appeared to be bad brandy. When a man had made an unfortunate speculation he would say that he had not only seen *the elephant* but felt him kick. The phrase seems to have originated in an old ballad of a farmer who, while driving his mare along the highway, met with a showman's elephant, which knocked him over, and spilt his milk and destroyed his eggs. The farmer consoled himself for his loss by reflecting that he had at least "seen *the elephant*."

And he said, "Now in future no one can declare
That I've not seen *the elephant*—neither
the mare."

In 1849-1850, to have been to California and returned was to have seen *the elephant*.

Those who sold the bonds had vanished,
those who hadn't held the town,
Little knew they of its glory over seas
or great renown,
They had nothing of the fruitage—though
alas! they held the plant,
Nothing saw they of the picture save indeed
the elephant.

He who had been in the background now
came rushing to the fore,
Terribly he trampled on them—very awful
was his roar.

—*The Rise and Fall of Gloryville.*

Montaigne strangely enough seems to suggest that "to see *the elephant*" was in his time connected with experience of life. He cites the following from "Arrien. Hist. Ind.," c. 17.

"Aux Indes Orientales la chasteté y estant en singulière recommandation, l'usage pourtant souffroit qu'une femme mariée se peust abandonner à qui luy presentoit un *éléphant*, et cela avec quelque gloire d'avoir esté estimée à si hault prix."

This then was the Indian way of "seeing *the elephant*," and of paying, as at the present day, an enormous price for the sight.

(Common), a girl is said to "have seen *the elephant*" when she has lost her chastity. French, "avoir vu le loup."

Elephant's trunk (rhyming slang), drunk.

Elevation, explained by quotation.

"They as dinnot tak' spirits down thor, tak' their pennord o' *elevation* then—women-folk especial."

"What's *elevation*?" . . .

"Opium, bor' alive, opium."—*C. Kingsley: Aiton Locke.*

"Elevated" is English for intoxicated in a slight degree.

Elfen, to walk on tiptoe lightly (New York Slang Dictionary).