



BEFORE THE SHOWER-BATH

The bull elephant, above, photographed in an African swamp, is about to spray himself with water. His trunk is uplifted for this purpose, not, as might be supposed, in anger.

48

ELEPHANT, HIPPO AND RHINO

by A. RADCLYFFE DUGMORE. 1945

Elephant: the African and Asiatic species: distinctive features: stories of the elephant: the elephant as servant of man. Rhino: black, white and Indian: scarcity of the white rhino. Home of the hippopotamus: native methods of hunting: the pigmy or Liberian species.

THERE are, as most people know, two distinct species: the African and Indian or, more properly, Asiatic Elephant. Though these both come from a common ancestor, their development has made them different in many essentials, and they are both unlike the species of antiquity, the chief of which were the mastodon of North America, Europe and the American Continent, and the mammoth of Asia and northern Europe.

The African species has the following distinct features: enormous ears, about 4 feet in width and nearly 7 feet in height; the roughly corrugated trunks ending with two finger-like points of equal length; tusks running to a length of over 9 feet, and in exceptional cases to over 11 feet, and weighing up to 300 pounds each; both male and female have tusks, though those of the latter are lighter and smaller; head with graceful convex form sloping to the base of trunk; back highest about the middle (this varies); skin very rough and deeply furrowed; hind foot with three nails; height difficult to estimate, but over 11 feet, and perhaps

up to 12, females a foot or so lower. The range of elephants formerly extended over the greater part of Africa, but they have gradually been driven south from their more northern area and north from their southern range, so that today they exist chiefly in the central parts of Africa, more or less south of the Sahara and across from east to west coasts. They are very numerous in the Nile valley.

Now for the Indian species. Its characteristics are: high, domed head, much smaller ears than those of the African species and smooth trunk with only one finger-like extension instead of two; tusks are smaller than those of the African, and are seldom found on females; the front foot has five nails and the hind one four; the skin is fairly smooth; the height rather less than the African, though sometimes it has been known to reach as high as 11 feet. The Indian elephant has been employed by man for countless ages to help in all sorts of work that demands strength, whereas the African species, except in parts of the Belgian Congo, has not within recent

49

7610

pp 48-75

Elephants employed in timber work in India soon develop a nice sense of balance, enabling them to rest the huge logs of wood upon their tusks, keeping them in position by the pressure of their trunks. This fine photograph shows a group returning home in dignified procession with their loads.

The five distinct known species of Rhinoceros are confined to the continents of Africa and Asia, and, of these, the Black, or prehensile-lipped, the White and the Indian are the best known. As the African species have had the greatest amount of publicity, and are probably the most interesting, we will deal first with them, starting with the black species.

The black rhinoceros is found in many parts of Central Africa, and is perhaps most abundant in Kenya and Tanganyika. These relics of a past age weigh as much as 2 tons and stand nearly 6 feet in height. They have a well-fitted skin, which is fairly smooth, and is about half an inch thick. Strips of this tough skin are made into whips and sticks and, strangely enough, when dry and polished, look almost like clouded amber. A characteristic of both the African species is the fact that they have two horns. Most horned animals have them arranged on either side of their head; not so the rhino. He has one in front of the other, the forward one being right over the nose. These horns vary considerably both in length and shape: some are straight, some are curved, some are thick, others slender and up to 30 inches in length. Usually the front horn is the longer, and the female as a rule has the longest ones. As a matter of fact, though spoken of as horns, they are actually composed of tightly compressed bristles forming a very hard



substance. They are not attached to the skull, but grow out of the skin. Unfortunately, these horns have a high commercial value, and are bought by the Chinese for medicinal purposes, and this has led to the animals being hunted remorselessly. As they are very easy to stalk and shoot, the only thing that has saved them from extermination is the protection afforded them by game laws.

The rhino's nose, or, rather upper lip, is extended and pointed and somewhat prehensile, but perhaps its most noticeable feature is its very uncertain disposition. Some individuals are so thoroughly ill-tempered that they have given to the whole species a very bad reputation. It is all very well for certain people to say that the rhino does not charge, but it so

happens that the writer has been charged, and with ill intent, too, on several occasions. That the charge, if there is only one of the big creatures, can be avoided is true enough, provided you have the presence of mind to keep cool and stay put until the animal is within 5 or 6 feet, and then, just before contact is made, jump aside very quickly, for then the head is held low and the position of the eyes prevents him from seeing you.

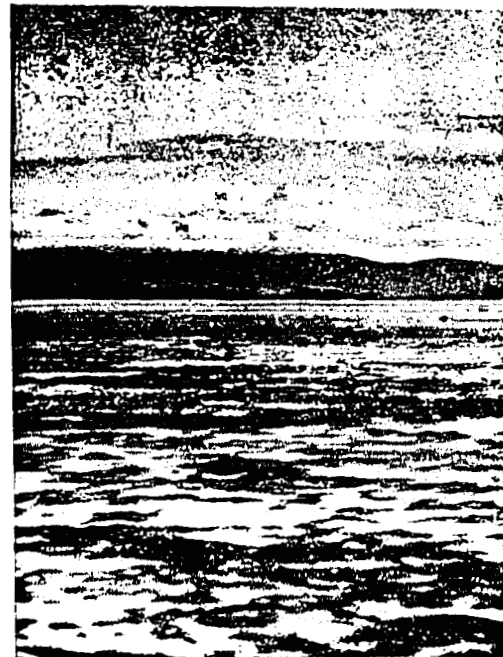
The speed at which these great and apparently clumsy beasts can travel is amazing, and must be seen to be believed, and they turn with utmost rapidity.

As a rule the rhino is found in fairly open country, where it can be easily seen, but some prefer to live in the dense forest, where they may be encountered without

the slightest warning at close quarters, and also with disastrous results. For then the sudden meeting with their old-time enemy, man, causes them to rush madly at the intruder, who, owing to the thickness of the undergrowth, is unable to get out of their way.

The food of the rhino consists of leaves: not the large, juicy ones that would seem suitable for so large an animal, but absurdly small and insignificant ones, and so far as the writer has been able to discover they do not as a rule eat grass. Like most of the larger animals, they enjoy bathing and wallowing in the mud. The birds which are found on their backs are not sentinels, as generally believed, but are there simply to pick off the many insects which are such a pest.

(W.L.)



IN ARID COUNTRY

African explorers took this photograph when their plane landed in a dry lake-bed in Kenya, causing the rhinoceros to dash away in fright. Though weighing up to about two tons the black rhinoceros is capable of a great turn of speed, and it would test the powers of a good horse to escape from its swift and violent charge. Patches of earth impregnated by salt are eagerly sought by all kinds of animals, and the two rhinos in the lower photograph have come across a plentiful supply. Animal photography is made additionally difficult by the fact that most wild life bestirs itself mainly at night. The scene shown was recorded at about seven o'clock in the morning, before the rhino's "bedtime", and the vantage point of the photographer was a tree conveniently situated close by.



Sometimes their love for water leads to disaster, because, strange as it may seem, crocodiles will actually attack them, in spite of their great size, and drag them under water to their death. In proof of this a photograph was made some years ago showing various stages of the tragedy.

Sight and Hearing of the Rhino

The eyesight of the rhino is well known to be poor, and unless an object is moving they do not seem able to make it out at a distance of much more than 40 or 50 yards. Their hearing is fairly acute, but it is on their sense of smell that they chiefly rely for their protection. They will detect the presence of man a quarter of a mile or more away if the wind is favourable. On getting the fearsome scent, they act in a most amusing manner, rushing about this way and that with tail erect, and often making horrible petulant snorts, and then suddenly off they gallop.

The writer always feels deeply grateful to the black rhino for having given him some of his most thrilling experiences (perhaps somewhat dangerous at times) and his most exciting photographs.

Once he had a rather funny experience with rhino. He was camped in northern Kenya when, in the middle of the moonlit night, he heard some animal making quite a noise very near his tent. Nothing but a rhino would cause such a disturbance and, being afraid the clumsy old creature would break up his camp, he rushed out, dressed only in pyjamas, and there sure enough was the stupid animal, meandering about, very much to the alarm of the porters. Not wanting to hurt him, the writer picked up some stones and pelted the big target, and after he had been hit a couple of times off he went at a fast trot, puffing and snorting as he went.

Rhino breed only once in every two or three years, and usually have a single calf. This stays with its mother until it is quite large. How old they are when weaned is uncertain, but the writer has seen them suckling for a few minutes between browsing on the small leaves which form their regular diet. Some of these healthy children must have weighed upwards of three-quarters of a ton.

The second largest of living quadrupeds is the so-called White rhinoceros, sometimes spoken of as the square-nosed species. It is second in size only to the elephant, and stands rather over $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, but what its weight is can only be surmised—probably about $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons.

Rarity of White Rhinoceros

In former times they were fairly common in many parts of Africa, but owing to the ease with which they can be hunted they have become very rare. Among the few remaining districts where they still survive is one region of Zululand, where the very few are being carefully protected in the hope of starting, not a herd, but a collection. There are some in Uganda north of Victoria Nyanza and in parts of the Belgian Congo, also in the Sudan in the White Nile Provinces of Mongalla and the Bahr el Ghazal. In the neighbourhood of the Yei and Meridi rivers the writer has seen signs of several, but only once had he the luck to see one, and then for but a brief moment. Unfortunately the wind was in the wrong direction, and the great beast made off with surprising speed, only giving time to realize how thoroughly ugly it was.

The name "white rhino" is rather misleading, as they are really a dull grey. Their most conspicuous feature is the remarkable length of their two horns,



CHARGING MONSTER

The black rhinoceros, so often likened to a tank, is seen making an actual charge and was photographed at a range of 15 yards with impressive result. Dodging it was no easy task, but fortunately it was accomplished without having to kill the two-ton beast.

"PREHISTORIC" SCENE OF TODAY

The black rhinoceros has got a bad reputation because, owing to its stupidity and poor eyesight, it really does charge people, occasionally with disastrous results. Mother and calf are here seen in Africa. Unlike the Indian species, the Africans, both black and white, have two horns, composed of compressed bristles which are not attached to the skull.

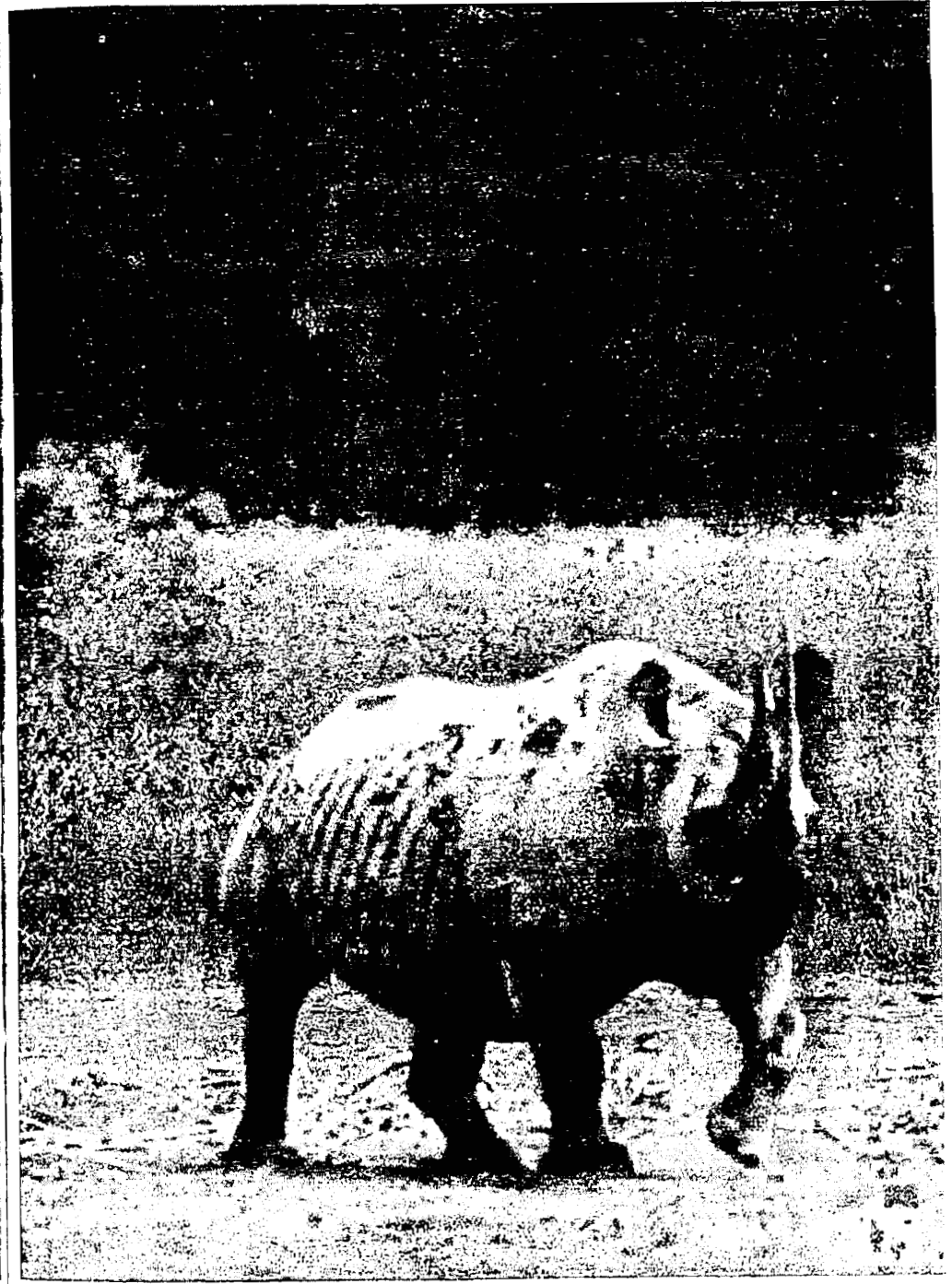
which in the female attain a length of over 60 inches, while those of the male seldom exceed 40 inches.

The protection of these rare animals is not too easy. In fact it is almost impossible to enforce game laws in so large a country where there are so few officials. The result is that the natives who prize the meat and know the value of the horns, indulge in periodic game drives in which hundreds of natives take part.

It is strange how thoroughly the white differ from the black species. They may be said to be practically harmless, for only on the rarest occasions have they been known to make an attack, and never an unprovoked one. They are very easy to stalk, provided the wind is favourable, for while their sense of smell is keen and their hearing fairly so, they, like the black variety, do not rely on their eyesight, which is very poor.

Whether they can be saved from extermination remains to be seen, but it is a well-known fact that once a species becomes very scarce it is almost impossible, except under most favourable conditions, to stem the tide that sweeps it away.

Though it is quite possible that the Indian and African rhinoceros came originally from the same stock, they have changed greatly both in appearance and habits. The two African species—that is,





THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

On an island in an African river, the "river-horses", as they are known, bask in the sun. They spend a large part of the daytime in and about the water, though when

the black and the white ones—have fairly well-fitting skins, while the Indian does not patronise a good tailor, and therefore wears ill-fitting clothes with deep folds or wrinkles and very rough studded surface. Rudyard Kipling, in an amusing fable, which gives a fanciful account of how the rhino acquired the folds in his skin, remarks on the animal's bad temper. He was referring to the Indian rhinoceros, but the comment ap-

plies even more aptly to the African variety. Certain though it is that the Indian rhino is extremely ill-humoured, his temper is not nearly as bad as that of his African cousin.

The single horn is another conspicuous feature, as against the two horns of both the African kinds, and this horn is very much shorter, anything up to 2 feet being quite rare. In general, Indian members of the tribe seem to prefer swampy country.



HAS AN "ESCORT"

At night they wander considerable distances in search of food. As seen above, egrets, perched on their backs, render service by eating ticks and leeches which infest them.

They are very shy, and always try to escape from their enemies without making trouble. In fact, they are not nearly as cantankerous as the black species. Should they, either in self-defence or otherwise, come into personal contact with man, they attack with their teeth rather than the horn. In size they are rather larger than the black species.

The range of the common Indian species is from the foot of the Hima-

layas from Nepal to Bhutan and Assam.

The Javan rhino of eastern Bengal, the Malay peninsula, Java and Borneo has a smoother skin, and only the males carry horns, while the Sumatran species has two horns and is very much smaller, being not more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high at the shoulder.

A Dwindling Tribe

Most people conjuring up a picture of an African river feel that it would not be

complete unless it contained at least one Hippopotamus. Yet today only too many of the old places will never see a hippo again. They have become very greatly reduced in numbers and are restricted to certain limited areas. Even the White Nile, where they used to be very abundant, has had its herds decimated, and the few that remain have become more and more shy. People who called themselves sportsmen used to shoot them from the steamers going up and down this second largest river of the world, but that form of so-called sport has been stopped.

Formerly the hippo was very widely distributed in Africa and, strangely enough, also in Europe, but that was a long time ago. Thirty years ago in the Tana river (Kenya) it was quite a common thing to see thirty or forty of the great beasts in one herd, leading their peaceful lives swimming about and blowing jets of water from their noses, or sleeping quietly at the surface or on the rocks. Today one would expect to see only a very occasional individual.

Hippopotamus Ivory

Though not objects of beauty, they are very interesting in their own way, and are different from any other animal, both in appearance and habits. Their bodies and heads are enormous, for their weight is estimated at about 4 tons, but with their very short legs they are only 4 feet 8 inches in height, while they are 12 feet long. Their great teeth, which weigh up to 7 lb. each, and have a length of over 30 inches, on the curve, were formerly used for dental ivory, and are still used for ivory ornaments.

The home of the hippo is always in the immediate neighbourhood of rivers or lakes or even swamps, and at night many

a traveller has been frightened by their strange roars, which are often mistaken for those of the lion. There is usually one loud roar followed by several grunts—a quite disturbing sound on a dark night. Unfortunately they are very destructive to crops, and though easily kept away by simple scarecrows, the natives, not taking precautions, frequently lose their harvest.

Hunting the Hippo

Natives regard the meat as a luxury, and hunt the hippo in various ways, with harpoons on the Nile and with poison arrows elsewhere. The meat is not at all bad, being like a cross between beef and pork. The skin makes good whips and sticks and resembles that of the rhino in being much like amber when polished.

The hippo is essentially a water-loving animal, and he is really more at home in a river than on land. He swims with surprising ease, and sleeps with only the upper part of the head and back showing. When moving hippos expose nearly half the head, and it is then that they look like a horse. This has resulted in the name of "river horse" being applied to them. They can stay under water for several minutes, and as they rise they send up a fine spray. They feed chiefly at night.

When the mother is expecting her calf she will sometimes go for miles until she finds a suitable and secluded pond. Even a small one will answer. Later she returns to the herd. The probable reason for this is fear of the crocodile, which, while it will not molest a full-grown hippo, readily attacks a young one.

The hippo differs from the rhino in having four instead of three toes.

Besides the common one, there is also the pigmy, or Liberian species, which is 2½ feet in height, and weighs 400 lb.

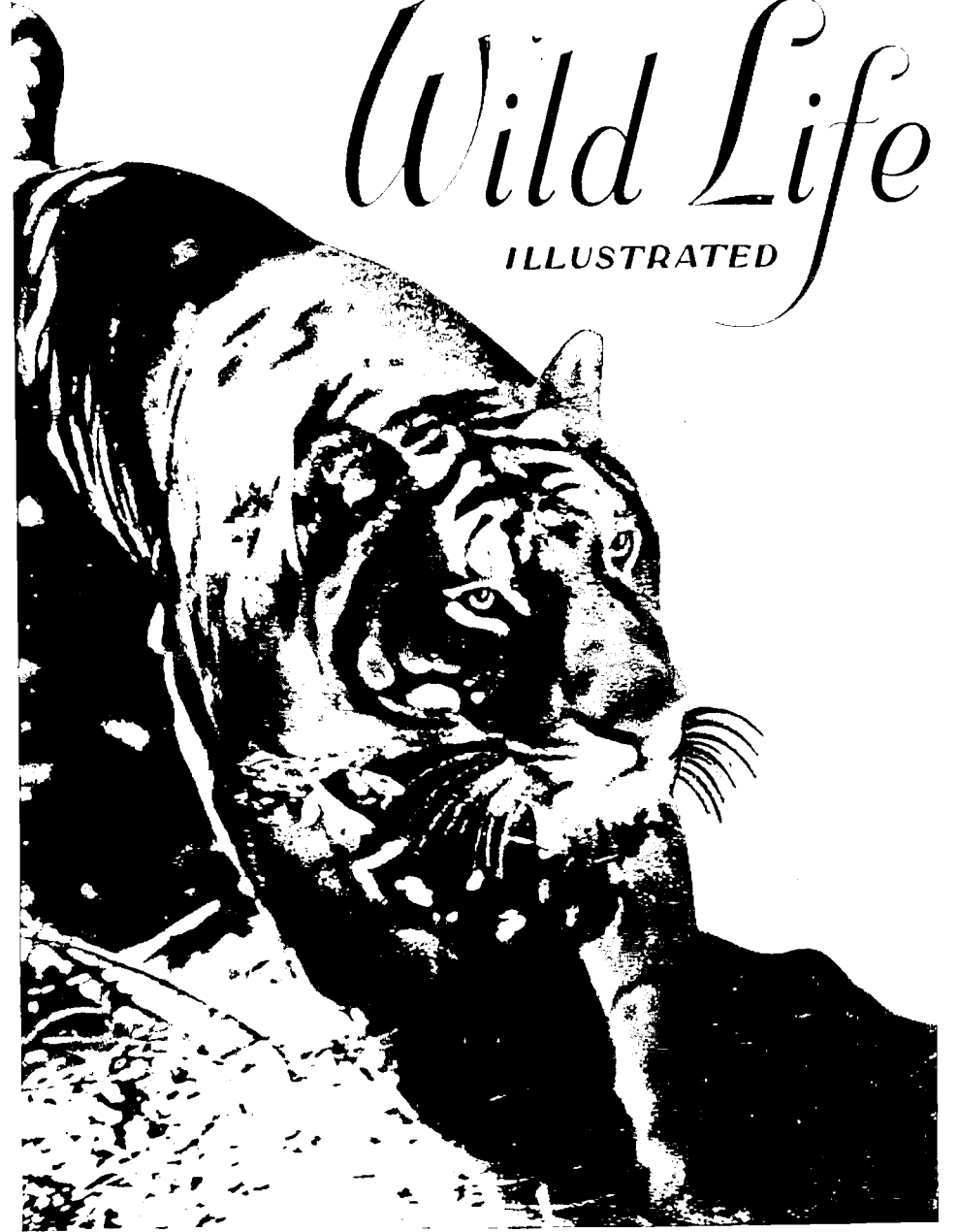


READY FOR BREAKFAST

Home of the ungainly short-legged hippopotamus is always in the immediate vicinity of water, where they live in herds and formerly were numerous. They are, like most very large animals, vegetarians. This photograph was taken in the Transvaal.

Wild Life

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