



THE RHINOCEROS.

THE rhinoceros is about twelve feet long, from the tip of the nose to the root of the tail, being the next largest animal to the elephant. The skin is quite naked, and is folded into plaits at several parts of its body, and looks like rough leather. It is

so thick, that leaden bullets are often flattened against it without going through, and therefore iron ones are always used in order to kill it.

The rhinoceros has either one or two horns on its nose, which are fixed to the skin, and not to the bone of the skull. The eyes are small and half-closed, and have a sleepy look. The upper lip is rather large, and it uses it to take up its food. Its voice is something like the bleating of a calf.

There are two kinds of rhinoceroses, the one-horned, or common rhinoceros, and the two-horned rhinoceros, which has another small horn above the large one. Both are found in hot countries, and live near marshes or rivers, in which they like to swim or wallow.

The rhinoceros will not attack another animal except in self-defence, but when it does fight, it is most ferocious, and often beats the tiger. Its food consists of the coarsest vegetables, and it is very fond of the prickly branches of trees, the prickles not seeming to hurt its mouth.

This animal has a very acute hearing, and can run very fast, though its sight is not very good. When it runs through a forest, it will not get out of the way of anything, but breaks down all the bushes and shrubs, so that its path can be very easily traced.

There is a bird called the rhinoceros bird,

which always goes about with this animal, and lives by eating the insects which it finds on its skin. When the rhinoceros sleeps, the little bird sits on his back, or near him, and when anything comes to attack him, the bird chirps and wakes him, so that he can either fight, or get out of the way of danger.
