

# ANIMAL BIOGRAPHY,

OR,

POPULAR ZOOLOGY;

ILLUSTRATED BY

AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES

OF

THE ECONOMY, HABITS OF LIFE, INSTINCTS, AND SAGACITY,

OF THE

*Animal Creation.*

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BY THE

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VOL. I.

MAMMIFEROUS ANIMALS.

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1. Rhinoceros. 2. Civet. 3. Ichneumon. 4. Nyl Ghau.

sition, they are in general inoffensive and peaceable. They have on the nose a solid, conical horn, not fixed in the bone: this is never shed, but remains during life. Their skin is tuberculated and exceedingly hard, but on the under parts of the body it is sufficiently tender to be cut through with a knife. The general internal structure of these animals corresponds with what is observed in the horse.

THE SINGLE-HORNED OR COMMON RHINOCEROS\*.

The Single-horned Rhinoceros is not exceeded in size by any land animal except the elephant, and in strength and power he gives place to none. His nose is armed with a formidable weapon, a hard and solid horn, sometimes more than three feet in length, and, at the base, eighteen inches in circumference; and with this he is able to defend himself against the attack of every ferocious animal.

The body of the Rhinoceros is defended by a skin so hard as to be impenetrable, except in the under parts, by either a knife or spear. It is said, that, even to shoot a full-grown Rhinoceros of advanced age, it is necessary

\* See Plate ii. Fig. 1.

**DESCRIPTION.** The length of the Rhinoceros is usually about twelve feet, and this is also nearly the girth of his body. The skin, which is of a blackish colour, is disposed, about the neck, into large plaits or folds. A fold of the same kind passes from the shoulders to the fore-legs; and another from the hind part of the back to the thighs. The skin is naked, rough, and covered with a kind of tubercles, or large callous granulations. Between the folds, and under the belly, it is soft, and of a light rose-colour. The ears are moderately large, upright, and pointed. The eyes are small, and so situated that the animal can only see what is nearly in a direct line before him.

The Rhinoceros is a native of India, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, and several parts of Ethiopia.

**SYNONYMS.** *Rhinoceros unicornis*. *Linnaeus*.—*Rhinoceros*. *Buffon*, *Pennant*, &c.—*Shaw's Gen. Zool. Pl. 60*.—*Bew. Quad. p. 175*.

to use iron bullets, as those of lead are sometimes flattened by striking against the skin.

The upper lip of this animal answers, in some measure, the same purpose as the trunk of the elephant. It protrudes over the lower one in the form of a lengthened tip; and, being extremely pliable, is used in catching hold of the branches of trees and shrubs, and delivering them into the mouth.

Although the Rhinoceros is generally of a quiet and inoffensive disposition, yet when this animal is attacked or provoked he becomes extremely dangerous; and he is sometimes subject to paroxysms of fury, which nothing can assuage.

In the year 1743, a Rhinoceros was brought from Bengal into Europe. He was at this time only two years old, and the expense of his food and journey amounted to nearly 1000*l.* sterling. He had every day, at three meals, seven pounds weight of rice, mixed with three pounds of sugar; besides hay and green plants: he also drank large quantities of water. In his disposition he was sufficiently peaceable, readily permitting all parts of his body to be touched. When he was hungry, or was struck by any person, he became mischievous, and nothing would appease him but food.

Another of these animals, which was brought from Atcham, in the dominions of the king of Ava, was exhibited at Paris in the year 1748. He was tame, gentle, and even caressing; was fed principally on hay and corn, and was much delighted with sharp or prickly plants, and the thorny branches of trees. The attendants frequently gave him branches that had sharp and strong thorns on them; but he bent and broke them in his mouth without seeming to be in the least incommoded. It is true they sometimes drew blood from the mouth and tongue; "but that," says Father le Compte, who gives us the description, "might even render them the more palatable, and these little wounds might serve only to cause a sensation on the palate similar to that excited by salt, pepper, or mustard on ours."

As an equivalent for a very dull sight, the Rhinoceros has a most acute and attentive ear. He has also the power of running with great swiftness; and, from his enormous strength and his impenetrable covering, he is capable of rushing with resistless violence through the woods; the smaller trees bending like twigs as he passes them. In his general habits and manner of feeding the Rhinoceros resembles the elephant: he resides in cool, sequestered spots, near waters, and in shady woods. Like the hog, he delights in occasionally wallowing in the mire.

The flesh of this animal is an article of food in some parts of Ceylon, Java, and Sumatra. The skin, flesh, hoofs, teeth, and even the dung, are each used medicinally. The horn, when cut through the middle, is said to exhibit, on each side, the rude figure of a man; the outlines being marked by small white strokes. Many of the Indian princes drink out of cups made of this horn; erroneously imagining that, when these hold any poisonous draught, the liquor will ferment till it runs quite over the top. Martial informs us, that the Roman ladies of fashion used these horns in the baths, to hold their essence-bottles and oils. The Javanese make shields of the skin.

The only three animals of this species that have been brought into England during the last half century, were all purchased for the exhibition-rooms at Exeter'Change. One of them, of which the skin is still preserved, came from Laknaor, in the East Indies, and, in 1790, was brought in the Melville Castle East Indiaman, as a present to Mr. Dundas. This gentleman, however, not wishing to have the trouble of keeping him, gave the animal away; and not long afterwards, he was purchased by Mr. Pidcock, of Exeter'Change, for the sum of 700*l*. This animal exhibited no symptoms of a ferocious propensity, and would even allow himself to be patted on the back and sides by strangers. His docility was about equal to that of a tolerably tractable pig: he would obey the orders of his keeper, to walk about the

room, and exhibit himself to the numerous spectators who came to visit him. He usually ate, every day, twenty-eight pounds weight of clover, besides about the same weight of ship-biscuit, and a great quantity of greens. This food was invariably seized in his long and projecting upper lip, and by it was conveyed into his mouth. He was allowed also five pails of water twice or thrice a day; and he was fond of sweet wines, of which he would often drink three or four bottles in the course of a few hours. His voice was not much unlike the bleating of a calf. This was usually exerted when he observed any person with fruit, or other favourite food in his hand; and in such cases, it seems to have been a mark of his anxiety to have food given him.

In the month of October, 1792, as this Rhinoceros was one day rising up very suddenly, he dislocated the joint of his right fore-leg. This accident brought on an inflammation, which, about nine months afterwards, occasioned his death. It is a singular fact, that in the first attempts that were made to recover the animal, the incisions which were formed through his thick and tough hide, were invariably found to be healed in the course of twenty-four hours. He died in a caravan, at Corsham, near Portsmouth.

The second Rhinoceros that was at Exeter 'Change was considerably smaller than this, and was likewise a male. It was brought over about the year 1799, and lived not more than twelve months afterwards. An agent of the Emperor of Germany purchased it of Mr. Pidcock for 1000*l.*; but it died in a stable-yard in Drury-Lane, after the purchaser had been in possession of it about two months.

The third of these animals I saw at Exeter 'Change in the month of October, 1810. It was kept somewhat more than four years afterwards, and then sold to an innkeeper of Ghent, for exhibition on the continent.

The females of this species produce only a single young-one at a birth.

## THE TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS\*.

In their habits and manner of feeding, these animals differ but little from the Single-horned Rhinoceros. M. Le Vaillant informs us that whenever they are at rest they place themselves in the direction of the wind, with their noses towards it, in order to discover by the smell the approach of any enemies. From time to time they move their heads round to look behind them, and to be assured that they are safe on all sides; but they soon return to their former position. When they are irritated, they tear up the ground with their horns; throwing the earth and stones furiously, and to a vast distance, over their heads.

The description which has been given by Mr. Bruce of the habits of the Two-horned Rhinoceros is deserving of particular notice. He informs us that "besides the trees that are capable of most resistance, there are, in the vast forests within the rains, trees of a softer consistence, and of succulent quality, which seem to be destined for the principal food of this animal. For the purpose of gaining the highest branches of these, his upper lip is capable of being lengthened out so as to increase his power of laying hold with it, in the same manner as the elephant does with his trunk. With this lip, and the assistance of his tongue, he pulls down the upper branches, which have most leaves, and these he

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\* DESCRIPTION. This species differs from the last, principally in the appearance of its skin; which, instead of vast and regularly-marked armour-like folds, has merely a slight wrinkle across the shoulders, and on the hinder parts, and a few fainter wrinkles on the sides: so that, in comparison with the Common Rhinoceros, it appears almost smooth. What, however, constitutes the chief distinction, is the nose being furnished with two horns, one of which is smaller than the other, and situated above it. These horns are loose when the animal is in a quiescent state, but become fixed and immovable when it is enraged. *Shaw. i. 202.*

SYNONYMS. *Rhinoceros bicornis. Linnæus.—Shaw's Gen. Zool. Pl. 61, from Bruce.—Bew. Quad. p. 179.*

devours first. Having stripped the tree of its branches, he does not immediately abandon it; but, placing his snout as low in the trunk as he finds his horns will enter, he rips up the body of the tree, and reduces it to thin pieces like so many laths; and, when he has thus prepared it, he embraces as much of it as possible in his monstrous jaws, and twists it round with as much ease as an ox would do a root of celery, or any small plant.

When pursued, and in fear, he moves with astonishing swiftness, considering his size, the apparent unwieldiness of his body, his great weight before, and the shortness of his legs. It is not, however, true that, in a plain, his pace is more rapid than that of a horse; for Mr. Bruce has often passed these animals with ease, and seen other persons worse mounted than himself, do the same; but by his cunning he is often able to elude pursuit. He makes constantly from wood to wood, and forces himself into the thickest parts of the forest. The trees that are dead or dry, are broken down, as if with a cannon-shot, and fall behind and on each side of him, in all directions. Others that are more pliable, greener, or fuller of sap, are bent back by his weight, and by the velocity of his motions. And, after he has passed, they restore themselves, like a green branch, to their natural position, and often sweep the incautious pursuer and his horse from the ground, and dash them in pieces against the surrounding trees.

The eyes of the Rhinoceros are very small; he seldom turns his head, and therefore sees nothing but what is before him\*. It is to this that he owes his death, and he never escapes if there be so much plain as to enable the horses of the hunters to get before him. His pride and fury then make him lay aside all thoughts of escaping, except by victory over his enemy. He stands for a moment at bay: then, at a start, runs straight forward at the horse which is nearest to him. The rider

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\* The account of Mr. Bruce differs, in this particular, from that of M. Le Vaillant, before quoted.



easily avoids the attack by turning short to one side. This is the fatal instant: a naked man, who is mounted behind the principal horseman, drops off the horse, and, unseen by the Rhinoceros, gives him, with a sword, a stroke across the tendon of the heel, which renders him incapable either of flight or resistance.

These animals frequent wet and marshy situations; but large, fierce, and strong as they are, they suffer great torment from an apparently contemptible adversary. This is a fly, (probably of the Linnean genus *æstrus*,) which is bred in the black earth of the marshes in Abyssinia. It persecutes the Rhinoceros so unremittingly, that it would in a short time subdue him, but for a stratagem which he practises for his preservation. In the night, when the fly is at rest, the huge animal chooses a convenient place, where, rolling in the mud, he clothes himself in a kind of case, which defends him against his adversary the following day: the wrinkles and plaits of his skin serve to keep this muddy plaister firm upon every part of his body, except the hips, shoulders, and legs. Here it cracks and falls off, by his motion, and leaves him exposed, in those parts, to the attacks of the fly. The itching and pain which follow, occasion him to rub himself with great violence against the roughest trees he can find.

The skin of this Rhinoceros is not so hard or impenetrable as that of the last species. In his wild state he is often slain by javelins thrown from the hand; some of which enter his body to a great depth. A musket-shot will go through him unless interrupted by a bone; and the inhabitants of Shangalla kill these animals by the clumsiest arrows that ever were used, and afterwards cut him to pieces with the very worst of knives.

In order to afford some idea of the enormous strength of this Rhinoceros, I shall quote Mr. Bruce's account of the hunting of this animal in Abyssinia. "We were on horseback (says this gentleman) by dawn of day, in search of the Rhinoceros, many of which we had heard making a very deep groan and cry as the morning ap-

proached. Several of the Agageers, or hunters, then joined us; and after we had searched about an hour in the very thickest part of the wood, a Rhinoceros rushed out with great violence, and crossed the plain towards a wood of canes that was about two miles distant. But though he ran, or rather trotted, with surprising speed, considering his bulk, he was, in a short time, transfixed with thirty or forty javelins. This attack so confounded him, that he left his purpose of going to the wood, and ran into a deep hole, or ravine, without outlet, breaking above a dozen of the javelins as he entered. Here we thought he was caught as in a trap, for he had scarcely room to turn; and a servant, who had a gun, standing directly over him, fired at his head, and the animal fell immediately, to all appearance dead. All those on foot now jumped in with their knives to cut him up; but they had scarcely begun, when the animal recovered so far as to rise upon his knees: happy then was the man that escaped first; and had not one of the Agageers, who was himself engaged in the ravine, cut the sinew of the hind leg as he was retreating, there would have been a very sorrowful account of the foot-hunters that day."

It is a remarkable fact, that the cavity which contained the brain of one of these huge animals, was so small as to be only six inches long and four deep; and, being filled with peas, was found to contain barely a quart: while a human skull, measured at the same time, took above two quarts to fill it.

The Hottentots, and even some of the colonists of the Cape of Good Hope, set a high value on the dried blood of the Rhinoceros. They ascribe to it great virtues in the cure of many disorders of the body. The flesh is eatable, but it is full of sinews.

### *THE ELEPHANT TRIBE.*

These animals have no front teeth in either jaw; but from the upper jaw there proceed two long tusks, which,

to have some perception of light, even in their subterraneous habitations; because they begin their work as soon as it is light, and consequently before the warmth of the sun can be supposed to affect them. Hence one method of destroying them consists in attending to them early before sunrise. At that time the earth or the grass may frequently be seen to move over them; and, with a small, light spade, their retreat may be cut off by striking this into the ground behind them, and immediately digging them up.

“The Mole suckles four or five, and sometimes six young-ones; which are placed considerably deeper in the ground than the common runs; and the mole-hills near them are consequently larger, and generally of a different colour from the others. These nests are to be dug up; having first intercepted the road between them and the mole-hills in the vicinity, to cut off the retreat of the inhabitants.

“The next important circumstance is, to discover which are the frequented streets, and which the by-roads; for the purpose of setting subterraneous traps. This is effected by making a mark on every new mole-hill, by a light pressure of the foot; and the next morning observing whether a Mole has again passed that way and obliterated the foot-mark. This is to be done for two or three successive mornings. These foot-marks should not be deeply impressed; lest the animal be alarmed on his return, and thus induced to form a new branch of road rather than open the obstructed one.

“The traps are then to be set in the frequented streets, so as to fit nicely the divided canal. They consist of a hollow semi-cylinder of wood; with grooved rings at each end, in which are placed nooses of horsehair, fastened loosely by a peg in the centre, and stretched above-ground by a bent stick. When the Mole has passed half-way through one of these nooses, and removes the central peg in his progress, the bent stick rises by its elasticity, and strangles him.”

## OF URCHINS IN GENERAL\*.

Urchins are animals usually of small size. There are seven known species. Of these, one is a native of South America, four are found in the East Indies, one in Siberia, and the other, the Common Hedgehog, is a native of Europe. They feed, for the most part, on roots, worms, and insects, which they dig out of the ground by their muzzle or snout. None of the species are carnivorous.

### THE COMMON HEDGEHOG †.

The usual residence of these animals, which are natives of most of the temperate parts both of Europe and Asia, is in the hedge-rows or thickets. During the day-time they lie concealed in their holes, and at night wander about in search of food, which consists chiefly of fallen fruit, roots, and insects. Naturalists have alleged that they enter gardens; where they mount trees, and descend with pears, apples, or plums, stuck upon their spines. This, however, is a mistake; for, when kept in a garden, they never attempt to climb trees; nor even to stick fallen fruit upon their spines. They also are undeservedly reproached with sucking cattle and injuring their udders; for the smallness of their mouths renders this altogether impossible.

The habits of these animals are, in many respects, in-

\* These animals have two front teeth above and below; of which those in the upper jaw are distant, and those of the lower are placed near together. On each side there are canine teeth; in the upper jaw five, and in the lower three. There are also four grinders on each side, both above and below; and the body is covered on the upper parts with spines. The tail and feet are very short; and the snout is somewhat cartilaginous.

† SYNONYMS. *Erinaceus Europæus*. *Linnaeus*.—Common Hedgehog. Common Urchin. *Pennant*.—*Hérisson*. *Buffon*.—*Shaw's Gen. Zool. Pl.* 121.—*Bewick's Quad. p.* 484.

teresting. In the month of June, 1782, says a correspondent in the Gentleman's Magazine, a full-grown Hedgehog was put into a small yard, in which was a border of shrubs and annuals. In the course of a few days he formed, beneath a small holly-tree, a hole in the earth, sufficiently large to receive his body. After a while a small shed was built for him, in the corner of the yard, and filled with straw; but the animal would not quit his former habitation until it was covered with a stone. He then took possession of the shed, and, every morning, carried leaves from a distant part of the border, to stop its mouth. His principal food was raw meat and mice. Of the latter he would eat six at a time, but never more; and, although these were thrown to him dead, he bit them all on the neck, before he began to eat any. He would also eat snails with their shells; but would leave any thing for milk, which he lapped exceedingly slow. To this, even if set six or eight yards distant from his shed, he would almost always come out half an hour before his usual time. If the person who usually fed him, neglected to do so, he would follow him along the yard; and, if the door was open, he would even go into the house. If meat was put near the mouth of his shed, in the day-time, he would sometimes pull it in and eat it. As the weather became colder, he carried more leaves into his shed; and sometimes he would not come out for two or three days successively. About the end of November he died; from want of food, as was supposed, but, most probably, from the severity of the weather.

Mr. White observed, that the manner in which the Hedgehogs ate the roots of the plantain in his grass walks was very curious. With their upper jaw, which is much longer than the lower, they bored under the plant; and gnawed the root off upwards, leaving the tuft of leaves untouched. In this respect they were serviceable, as they thus destroyed a troublesome weed; but they in some measure defaced the walks, by digging in them small round holes.

The Hedgehog has a very uncommon mode of defending itself from the attacks of other animals. Being possessed of little strength or agility, he neither attempts to fly from, nor to assail his enemies; but erects his spines, and rolls himself up like a ball, exposing no part of his body that is not covered with these sharp weapons. He will not unfold himself unless thrown into water; and the more he is frightened or harassed, the closer he shuts himself up. While in this state, most dogs, instead of biting him, stand off and bark, not daring to seize him; and, if they attempt it once, their mouths are so pricked with his spines, that it is with difficulty they can be prevailed upon to do it a second time. He is easily taken; for he neither attempts to escape, nor to defend himself by any other means than this.

This animal, which may, in some degree, be rendered domestic, has been frequently introduced into houses, for the purpose of destroying those troublesome insects, the cock-roaches and beetles, which it pursues and devours with great avidity.

A gentleman, whose kitchen in London was infested with black-beetles, was recommended to put a Hedgehog into it. He, consequently, had one brought there which had been caught in his garden in the country. At first it was, he says, very sulky, and continued folded up; but, after a while, hunger compelled it to open itself, in search of food; and it ate very heartily of apples and bread soaked in milk: it also sucked, with great eagerness, the milk out of its platter. In a little time it became so far domesticated as not to fear either cats or dogs; and even to take its food out of the hand of any one who offered it. This animal was usually kept in an upright basket, and, when the family were going to bed, it was customary to bring out the basket and put it into the kitchen. The Hedgehog then crawled up the side; and having, by that means, tipped it down, he crawled out, and began sharply to look around for his soaked bread and pan of milk. Having tasted this with great apparent delight, he used, imme-

diately, to run under a closet-door in the kitchen, which he chose as a place of retreat. Finding all safe, he returned and retreated many times, until he had finished his supper. He was, in like manner, supplied in the day-time, and, in similar manner, would throw down his basket and wander about for food. If, at night, there was much talking; if the candles were put too near, or if he perceived himself to be closely observed, he ran to his lurking-place, until the lights were removed and the room became quiet. This Hedgehog continued, for a long time, in perfect health; and he grew so fat that, after a little while, it was with difficulty he could squeeze himself under the closet-door. By his good services he well merited his board and lodging, for scarcely one beetle was left in the house; and it is supposed that he also destroyed the mice.

In the year 1799, there was a Hedgehog in the possession of a Mr. Sample of the Angel Inn at Felton, in Northumberland, which performed the duty of a turnspit, as well, in every respect, as the dog of that denomination. It ran about the house as familiarly as any other domestic quadruped, and displayed an obedience till then unknown in this species of animals.

At the commencement of winter the Hedgehog wraps itself up in a warm nest of moss, dried grass, and leaves; and sleeps out the rigours of that season. It is frequently found so completely encircled with herbage, that it resembles a ball of dried leaves; but when taken out, and placed before a fire, it soon recovers from its torpidity. The female produces four or five young-ones at a birth; which are soon covered with prickles, like those of the parent animal. The nest formed for the young-ones is large, and is composed principally of moss.

The Hedgehog is occasionally an article of food, and is said to be very delicate eating. The skin was used by the ancients for the purpose of a clothes-brush.



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