

# COMPARATIVE PHYSIOGNOMY

OR

## RESEMBLANCES

BETWEEN MEN AND ANIMALS

BY

JAMES W. REDFIELD, M. D.

//

With his hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face,  
As he would draw it. SHAKSPERE.

ILLUSTRATED BY 330 ENGRAVINGS.



NEW YORK:  
W. J. WIDDLETON, PUBLISHER.

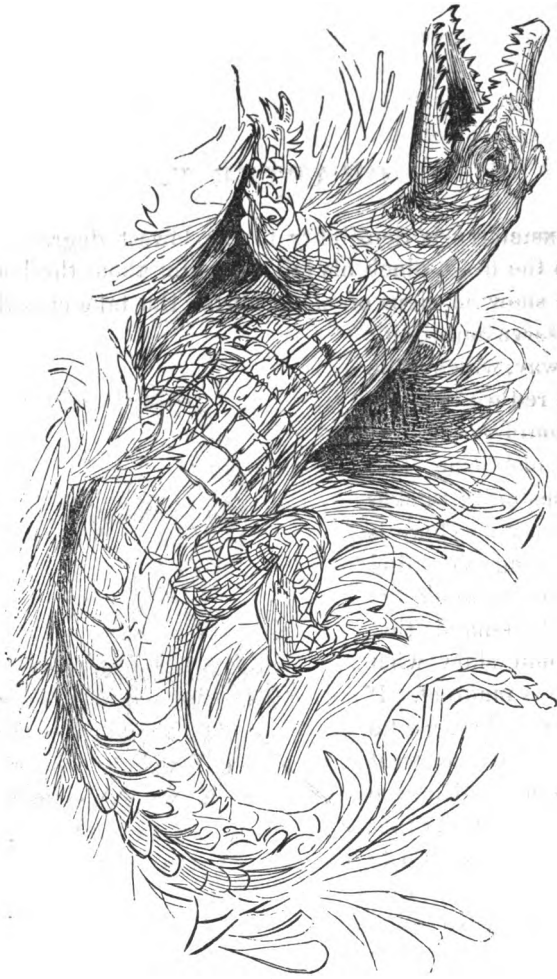
1866.

## CHAPTER V.

INSENSIBILITY is Sensibility in the lowest degree. Knock him on the head, pinch his tail, beat him about the body, and he will show no signs of being hurt. But take care that you do not serve Sensibility in this way, which is the way to reduce it to the condition of its negative and to make the shell of Insensibility thicker than at first. There is such a thing as treating a rhinoceros tenderly : but truth demands that we should show what stuff he is made of. If it seems to thee, gentle reader, that we treat some of our subjects too plainly, remember that *sensation* is pleasant to all animals ; and that the degree that is awakened by a touch in some, is only awakened by a blow in those that are protected by a shell.



In the rhinoceros, feeling is kept under. As hardness is the *summum bonum* of a mere animal existence, he has a happy life of it. He may be considered to have attained, very nearly, to the full stature of a perfect beast ! But before we can come to a conclusion in regard to him, we must comprehend his two essential qualities, insensibility and appetite.



Insensibility, it should be observed, has a partiality for the tail. In fact, Nature has provided this posterior appendage expressly for its accommodation. This is fully illustrated in the alligator, not to mention the similar animals that are now extinct. Insensibility is nearly synonymous with stupidity, and oblivion is the bliss which it longs for, and to which it finally attains. People who believe in annihilation resemble

animals with very long tails, with the exception of this latter appurtenance. Tails are peculiar to animals—are worn as badges of honor in the order of beasthood. They are in many instances more or less scaly when the body is not at all so, as we see in the mouse, the opossum, and the beaver; and the habit of the lemur, of gnawing off the end of his tail, shows that very little sensibility resides there. It shows also that there is an antagonism between Appetite and Insensibility. But the latter in beasts is superior to the former. Insensibility lords it over a wide domain. When he would show his power, he makes an extensive sweep, as may be observed in the use which animals make of their tails when they are enraged. He holds the supremacy over every passion, and “blind rage” is no more blind than he.



But, like all other sovereigns, he is dependent on his vassals. Appetite is his principal servant. He is supplied with the grossness that is essential to his existence through the demands of Appetite, which himself is obliged to supply. Thus the alligator sweeps his prey into his mouth with his tail; and the brandishing of the tails of lions, tigers, &c., is from the same cause. It is the mighty lord Insensibility that sways

this sceptre of power—turning living bodies into dead carcasses, flourishing it about the body to keep his vassals in fear, and extending it over the head to keep his principal servant in subjection.

Thus much of Insensibility. We come now to speak of Appetite. It resides as far as possible from its lord and master, for it is the very opposite. Of course, then, it occupies the head, and has the same relation to the anterior extremities



that the other has to the posterior. Appetite is essential attractiveness, drawing everything into relation and conjunction with Sensibility. It refines and softens the skin as much as Insensibility hardens it, and does always the very reverse of what its master does. It begets Sensibility, which feels intensely, suffers pain, and is carried to the degree of torment. Who, if he has not felt it, has not heard, of the *feeling* of hunger and of *tormenting* thirst? Appetite, therefore, is the very opposite of Insensibility, and, to indicate this, is assigned to an opposite position in the body.

When Appetite grows strong, it dispenses with Insensibility altogether. It makes use of teeth, tongue, claws, &c., to surprise its food, and tosses up its head in perfect contempt of the pretensions of its former lord. It grows bold, saucy, and

independent, and says of the tail, that it is "no great shakes, after all!" The consequence of this is, that it turns out as Appetite says: Insensibility is obliged to withdraw from the tail into the body, that he may receive a portion of the nourishment that Appetite would otherwise appropriate entirely to its own use. He reasons, with regard to the state of the case, by the method called *à posteriori*. He considers himself the rightful sovereign; and though he does what he can to conciliate Appetite, he has no notion of consenting to a rebellion.



He makes a virtue of necessity, and becomes on familiar terms with the servants that he was formerly in the habit of chastising. He lets down his dignity wonderfully—deserts the tail, which, "like a pile without inhabitant, to ruin runs," and takes up his residence in the back.

But the less of a gentleman he becomes, the more selfish is

he. He converts the body into a fortification; he builds on a larger scale, and in a style of greater magnificence, than before—a sure index of his waning fortunes. He is swayed by fear, and what he does is an indication of it; he substitutes grasping cupidity for the title of sovereign in just the degree that his sceptre is in danger of being wrested from him; he parts with his courage and magnanimity as a prince with his sceptre and his crown. Fear draws him into close communion with Appetite, and enlarges headquarters for his reception. Finally, he becomes the very slave of Appetite, and takes up his residence in the head, which is gradually enlarged for his accommodation. When this is the case, we may ascertain it by the fact that there is no tail left. He may be called, first and last, *Endurance*, because, as he suffers nothing, he suffers anything you please. He is the common ground for all sorts of impressions: he is at first the pavement, then the stepping-stone, then the marble hall to the palace of the soul; and finally he is the luxurious carpet, upon which, though there is less danger, men tread more softly than on stones. What we have described is Endurance, indicated by the brain and nerves of sensation, upon some of which impressions are made more lightly than on others.

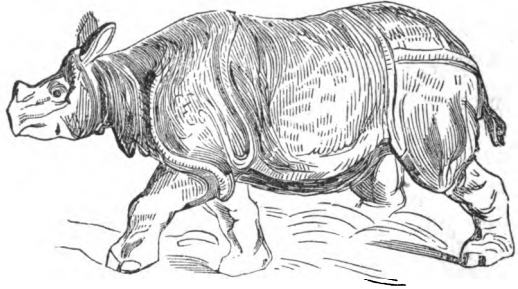
We are now prepared to speak more particularly of the rhinoceros. Insensibility has lost all dignity in him. You see by his looks that he is supremely selfish, and that Insensibility in him would sacrifice pride rather than the services of Appetite. By remaining in the tail when the servant was likely to become independent of his master, the latter would vacate entirely, and the whole animal economy would be destroyed. Here master and servant dwell peaceably together, in the back and head, surrounded by the tokens of unbounded prosperity; while the tail hangs idly, having been resigned for things more substantial and enduring.

The condition of the rhinoceros, for a beast, is truly a happy one. The means of subsistence are before him, but never a great way off. Not so with those animals that have a predominance of insensibility in the tail, as the alligator, or that have a predominance of laziness, like the bear. “Proud and

lazy" is an epithet that can not be applied to the rhinoceros. Insensibility keeps such good pace with Appetite, that his food is always under his nose. He is ever reaching forth for the supreme good—the gratification of Appetite, and the closing up of the avenues of Sensation. His belly is therefore of the largest dimensions, and is fortified around with shields and bucklers, so that the vulnerable part is long in being discovered. He keeps his servant busily at work in closing the avenues outside and in. As he has so much selfishness, it is appropriate that he should be formed specially for *self-defence*. The sign of this is the most prominent feature in his countenance. As Self-Defence follows Attack, he must invariably, in every controversy, have the last word. It is impossible to find anything new about him, for he is fortified against encroachment, and is encased in the old. He has but one logic for all who dare to assault him, and his last word is always the same. He assures you that "facts are stubborn things," and the toughness of his hide inclines him to deal in these, and makes it impossible that any other should have an impression upon him. He puts effects for causes, and in going forward supposes that he is going backward; and this he dignifies with the name of reasoning! But this is more the case with those who resemble alligators—where Insensibility attaches greater dignity to the tail—than in him. What you attack in the rhinoceros is "cut and dried." It has stood the test of time and of innumerable assaults, and why should he change it? He knows how to give you mathematical demonstrations, for it is his business to *fortify* himself. This is his *fort*, and he applies it to the erection of defences against all who war with him, whether the weapons be spiritual or carnal. It is against the *possibility* of an attack that he fortifies himself, and he is therefore impregnable. He is prejudiced: what can you do with him? His motto is, "In peace prepare for war, that no enemy may be tempted by your weakness to pounce upon you!" This is the dictate of fear, and also of Insensibility, when there is no danger to be apprehended. But when it shows no fear of reason, and takes reason for its counsellor, it serves a noble use.



The man who resembles the rhinoceros is either one of the wisest or the most senseless of individuals. Look at that countenance, and say if it is not destitute of Sensibility. Was there ever anything so stupid? You may anticipate the time when, like the hog, he will testify his content-



ment with a grunt. But let us turn from this example of the brute creation to another that is very like him, and yet in a certain sense the very opposite.