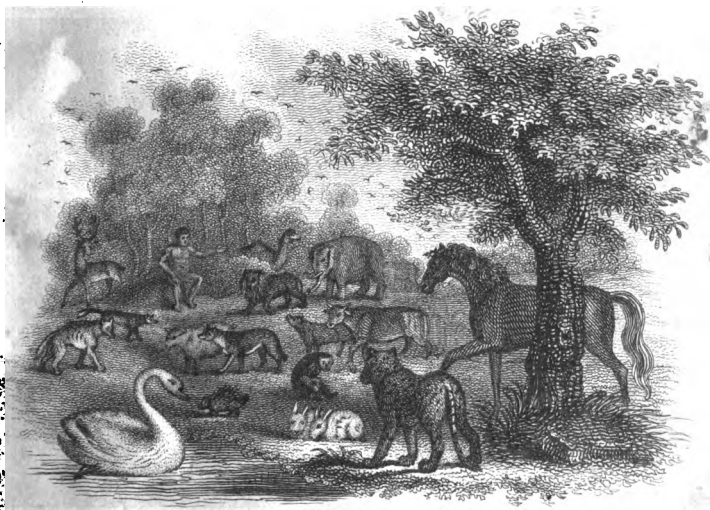


THE  
NATURALIST'S CABINET,  
OR  
*Interesting Sketches*  
OF  
*Animal History,*  
VOL. I.



*Published by James Currier,  
London.*

THE  
NATURALIST'S  
CABINET:

Containing  
INTERESTING SKETCHES

OF  
ANIMAL HISTORY;

Illustrative of the  
NATURES, DISPOSITIONS, MANNERS, AND HABITS,  
OF ALL THE MOST REMARKABLE  
*Quadrupeds, Birds, Fishes, Amphibia, Reptiles, &c.*  
IN THE KNOWN WORLD.

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REGULARLY ARRANGED, AND ENRICHED WITH NUMEROUS  
BEAUTIFUL DESCRIPTIVE ENGRAVINGS.

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"Who can this field of miracles survey,  
And not with *Galen* all in rapture say,  
Behold a *God*, adoré him, and obey!"

BLACKMORE.

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SIX  
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BY THE  
*REV. THOMAS SMITH,*

Editor of a New and Improved Edition of *Whiston's Josephus, &c. &c.*

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ALBION PRESS PRINTED:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES CUNDEE,  
*Ivy-Lane, Paternoster-Row.*

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1806.

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Performances of an elephant at Exeter 'Change.

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draughts, and the noise it made when emptied into her mouth was exactly that of pouring water or any other liquid from one vessel into another. On being asked if she chose any more? she signified her assent, and drank as much and in the same manner as before. She then, without bidding, took up the pail by the handle, and returned it to the keeper, with a polite inclination of the head.

I am informed, that this animal's daily allowance of food consists of one truss of hay, one do. of straw, a bushel of barley-meal and bran made into a mash, about thirty pounds of potatoes, and six pails of water.

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## THE RHINOCEROS.

NEXT to the elephant, this animal claims pre-eminence in the scale of creation, on account of its enormous strength, and the magnitude of its body. Its length, from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail, is usually twelve feet; its height varies from five to seven feet, and its circumference is nearly equal to its length.

Its nose is armed with a hard and very solid horn, sometimes above three feet in length, and eighteen inches in circumference at the base, with which it is able to defend itself against the attacks of every ferocious animal.

This weapon is pointed so as to inflict the se-

## General description—Disposition.

verest wounds, and so disposed as to be managed with the greatest advantage: for while the elephant, the bear, and the buffalo are obliged to strike transversely with their weapons, the rhinoceros employs all his strength with every blow. The tiger, therefore, notwithstanding its extreme ferocity, seldom ventures to attack this animal; as he cannot do it without danger of having his bowels torn out.

The body and limbs of the rhinoceros are defended by a skin so hard as to be impenetrable by either a knife or spear. This 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. It is of a blackish colour; naked, rough, and covered with a kind of galls or tubercles. It is said, that even to shoot a full-grown rhinoceros, it is necessary to make use of iron bullets, those of lead having been known to flatten against the skin. Between the folds and under the belly, however, the skin is soft, and of a light rose colour.

The upper lip in this animal seems to answer 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 very pliable, is used in catching hold of the shoots of vegetables, &c. and delivering them into its mouth.

The disposition of the rhinoceros is generally quiet and inoffensive; but when attacked or pro-

voked, he becomes furious and dangerous; and is even sometimes subject to paroxysms of fury, which nothing can assuage.

In the year 1743, Dr. Parsons published an account of a rhinoceros that was brought from Bengal into Europe. He was only two years old, and the expence of his food and journey amounted to near 1000*l.* sterling. He had every day, at three meals, seven pounds 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 very peaceable, readily suffering all parts of his body to be touched. But when hungry, or irritated, he became mischievous, and nothing would appease him but food. When angry, he would jump up against the walls of his apartment with great violence, and make repeated efforts to escape; uttering a peculiar cry, somewhat between the grunting of a hog and the bellowing of a calf. He was not at this time taller than a young cow.

A rhinoceros, brought from Atcham, and exhibited in 1748; at Paris, was very gentle, and even caressing; he was fed principally on hay and corn, and appeared particularly fond of sharp or prickly plants, and the thorny branches of trees. The attendants frequently gave him branches that had very sharp and strong thorns on them; but he bent and broke them in his mouth without seeming in the least incommoded. Sometimes, indeed, they drew blood from his

mouth and tongue, "but that," says our author, "might only serve to give a poignant relish to the animal's palate, and might answer the same grateful ends in seasoning his banquet, that spices do in heightening ours."

The eyes of the rhinoceros are small, and so situated that he can only see what is nearly in a direct line before him. But, as an equivalent for this defect, Dr. Parsons remarks, that this animal has a most acute and attentive ear. He will listen with a deep and long-continued attention to any kind of noise; and although he be eating, or lying down, he will raise his head, and listen till the noise ceases.

Notwithstanding the clumsy and unwieldy appearance of this quadruped, he is said to run with great swiftness, and from his strength and the impenetrability of his covering, he is capable of rushing with resistless violence through woods and obstacles of every kind; the smaller trees bending like twigs as he passes them. In his general habits and manner of feeding he resembles the elephant: residing in cool sequestered spots, near waters, and in shady woods. But he imitates the hog in occasionally wallowing in the mire.

In some parts of Asia, these animals are frequently tamed, and carried into the field of battle to strike terror into their enemies. They are, however, in general so unmanageable, that they injure the cause they are designed to serve, and

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Medicinal virtues attributed to the rhinoceros.

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in their fury it is not uncommon for them to turn on their masters.

The flesh, hoofs, teeth, and even the dung, are used medicinally by the Asiatics. 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; under the idea, that when these hold any poisonous draught, the liquor will ferment till it runs over the top. Goblets made of the horns of the young, are esteemed the most valuable. Professor Thunberg, when at the Cape, tried them, both wrought into goblets and unwrought, both old and young horns; with several sorts of poison, but he did not observe the least motion or effervescence; when, however, a solution of corrosive sublimate was poured into one of them, there arose a few bubbles, which were produced by the air that had been inclosed in the pores of the horn, and was now disengaged from it.

The only two animals of this species that have been brought into England during a considerable number of years, were both purchased for the exhibition rooms at Exeter 'Change. One of them came from Laknaor, in the East Indies, and was brought over in the Melville Castle, East Indiaman, in the year 1790, as a present to Mr. Dundas. But this gentleman, not wishing to have the trouble of keeping him, gave the animal

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Manners and death of a tame rhinoceros.

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away; and shortly afterwards he was purchased by Mr. Pidcock of Exeter 'Change.

He exhibited no symptoms of ferocity, but would obey the orders of his keeper, to walk about the room, and exhibit himself; and would even suffer himself to be patted on the back or sides by the numerous spectators who came to visit him. His daily allowance of food was twenty-eight pounds of clover, besides the same weight of ship biscuit, a prodigious quantity of greens, and from ten to fifteen pails of water which were given at five pails a time. His food was invariably seized in his long and projecting upper-lip, and by it conveyed into the mouth. He was very fond of sweet wines, of which he would often drink three or four bottles in the course of a few hours. His voice was somewhat like the bleating of a calf. It was most commonly exerted when he observed any person with fruit or other favourite food in his hand, and was probably indicative of his anxiety to have it given him.

In the month of October, 1792, as this animal was one day rising up suddenly, he unfortunately slipped the joint of one of his fore-legs. This accident occasioned an inflammation that about nine months afterwards terminated in his death. He died in a caravan at Corsham near Portsmouth. But on the carriage arriving at the latter place, the stench arising from the body was so offensive that the mayor was under the neces-



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*Disinterring a rhinoceros.*

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sity of ordering it to be immediately buried. This was, accordingly done, on South-Sea Common. But it was privately dug up about a fortnight afterwards, for the purpose of preserving its skin, and some of the most valuable of the bones. The persons present declared, that the stench was so powerful, that it was plainly perceptible at the distance of more than half a mile; and it was with the greatest difficulty they could proceed in their operations. The skin of this animal is now stuffed, and deposited in one of the exhibition rooms.

The other rhinoceros that was at Exeter-Change was considerably smaller than this. It was brought over about the year 1799, and lived not more than twelve months afterwards. Mr. Pidcock sold it to an agent of the emperor of Germany; but it died in a stable-yard in Drury-Lane, about two months afterwards.

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**DOUBLE-HORNED RHINOCEROS.**

**THIS** species of the rhinoceros differs from the last in the appearance of its skin; which, instead of vast and regularly marked folds, resembling armour, has merely a slight wrinkle across the shoulders and on the hinder parts, with a few fainter wrinkles on the sides; so that, in comparison with the common rhinoceros, it appears almost smooth. The principal distinction, how-

ever consists in the nose being furnished with two horns, one of which is smaller than the other, and situated above it. These horns are said to be loose when the animal is in a quiet state, but when he is angry, they become firm and immoveable.

Le Vaillant asserts, that when these animals are at rest, they always place themselves in the direction of the wind, with their noses towards it, in order to discover by their smell the approach of any enemies. When irritated they tear up the ground furiously with their horn; throwing the earth and stones to a vast distance, over their heads.

Mr. Bruce's account of the manners of these animals is too interesting to be omitted in a work of this description: "Besides the trees capable of most resistance," says this traveller, "there are, in the vast forests within the rains, trees of a softer consistence, and of a very 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 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 he can 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 possesses an astonishing degree of swiftness, considering his size, the apparent unwieldiness of his body, his great weight before, and the shortness of his legs. He has a kind of trot, which, after a few minutes, increases in a great proportion, and takes in a considerable distance; but this is to be understood with a degree of moderation. It is not true that in a plain he beats the horse in swiftness. I have passed him with ease, and seen many, worse mounted, do the same; and though it is certainly true that a horse can very seldom come up with him, this is owing to his cunning, and not to his swiftness. He makes constantly from wood to wood, and forces himself into the thickest parts of them. The trees that are dead or dry, are broken down, as with a cannon shot, and fall behind him and on his side in all directions. Others that are more pliable, greener, or fuller of sap, are bent back by his weight, and the velocity of his motions. And after he has passed, restoring themselves like a green branch to their natural position, they often sweep the incautious pursuer and his horse from the ground,

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Bravery in self defence.

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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. To this he owes his death, and never escapes if there is so much plain as to enable the horse to get before him. His pride and fury then make him lay aside all thoughts of escaping, but by victory over his enemy. He stands for a moment at bay: then, at a start, runs straight forward at the horse, like the wild boar, which, in his manner of action, he very much resembles. The horse, however, easily avoids him by turning short to one side; and this is the fatal instant: the naked man, with the sword, drops from behind the principal horseman, and, unseen by the rhinoceros, who is seeking his enemy, the horse, he gives him a stroke across the tendon of the heel, which renders him incapable of further flight or resistance.

“In speaking of the great quantity of food necessary to support this enormous mass, we must likewise consider the vast quantity of water which he needs. No country but that of Shangalla, which he possesses, deluged with six months rain, and full of large and deep basons, made in the living rock, and shaded by dark woods from evaporation, or watered by large and deep rivers which never fall low or to a state of dryness, can supply the vast draughts of this monstrous crea-

ture: but it is not for drinking alone that he frequents wet and marshy places: large, fierce, and strong as he is, he must submit to prepare himself against the weakest of his adversaries. The great consumption he constantly makes of food and water, necessarily confines him to certain limited spaces; for it is not every place that can maintain him; he cannot emigrate or seek his defence among the sands of Arabia."

The double-horned rhinoceros has a formidable adversary in a fly, bred in the black earth of the marshes; and this insect persecutes him so unremittingly, that it must eventually subdue him, were it not for a stratagem which he practises for his preservation. In the night when the fly is at rest, the rhinoceros chuses a convenient place, and there rolling in the mud, clothes himself with a kind of case, which defends him against his adversary the following day. The wrinkles and plaits of his skin serve to keep this plaster firm upon him, all but about his hips, shoulders, and legs, where it cracks and falls off, by motion, and leaves him exposed in those parts. The itching and pain which follow, occasion him to rub himself in those parts against the roughest trees; and this is probably one cause of the numerous pustules or tubercles that are perceivable upon his skin.

The pleasure he receives from this employment, and the darkness of the night, deprive him of his usual vigilance and attention; and the

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Method of killing the rhinoceros.

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noise he makes is heard at so considerable a distance, that the hunters, guided by this sound, steal secretly upon him; and while lying on the ground, wound him with their javelins in the belly, where the wound is mortal.

The assertion that the skin of this rhinoceros is hard or impenetrable like a board, is very incorrect. In his wild state he is 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 Abyssinians kill him with the clumsiest arrows that ever were formed, and cut him to pieces afterwards with the most wretched knives.

Of the strength of the rhinoceros, even after being severely wounded, some idea may be formed from Mr. Bruce's account of the hunting of this animal in Abyssinia: "We were on horseback," says our author, "by the dawn of day, in search of the rhinoceros, many of which we had heard making a very deep groan and cry as the morning approached; several of the Agageers then joined us: and after we had searched about an hour in the very thickest part of the wood, one of them rushed out with great violence, crossing the plain towards a wood of canes about two miles distant. But though he trotted with surprising speed, considering his bulk, he was, in a very little time, transfixed with thirty or forty javelins; which so confounded him, that he left his purpose of going to the wood, and

ran into a deep hole, ditch, 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; when 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.

“ After having dispatched him, I was curious to see what wound the shot had given, which had operated so violently upon so huge an animal; and I doubted not it was in the brain. But it had struck no where but upon the point of the foremost horn, of which it had carried off above an-inch: and this occasioned a concussion that had stunned him for a minute; till the bleeding had recovered him.

Mr. Sparrman informs us, that, having opened one of these animals, he found the stomach to be four feet in length and two in diameter, to which was annexed a tube or canal, twenty-eight feet long, and six inches diameter: the heart was eighteen inches in length, and the kidneys the same in

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*Description of the hippopotamus.*

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breadth: the liver, when measured from right to left, was three feet and a half in breadth, and about thirty inches deep, as it hangs in the animal's body when in a standing position. The cavity in the skull, which contained the brains was, however, but small; being only six inches long and four deep.

The Hottentots ascribe many medicinal virtues to the dried blood of the rhinoceros, and some of them appear remarkably fond of its flesh, though it is hard and full of sinews.

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*THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.*

**THIS** animal, when full-grown, is equal, or even sometimes superior in size to the rhinoceros: being sometimes found to measure nearly eleven feet in length, and nine in circumference. Its form is very uncouth, the body being extremely large, round, and clumsy; the legs very short and thick; the head large; the mouth prodigiously wide, and disproportionable; the eyes and ears small; and the tail about a foot long, taper, and sparingly scattered with hair. The whole animal is covered with short hair, thinly set, and is of a brownish colour. The hide, which bears some resemblance to that of a hog, is in some parts two inches thick, and sufficiently heavy to load a camel.

From the unwieldiness of his body and the