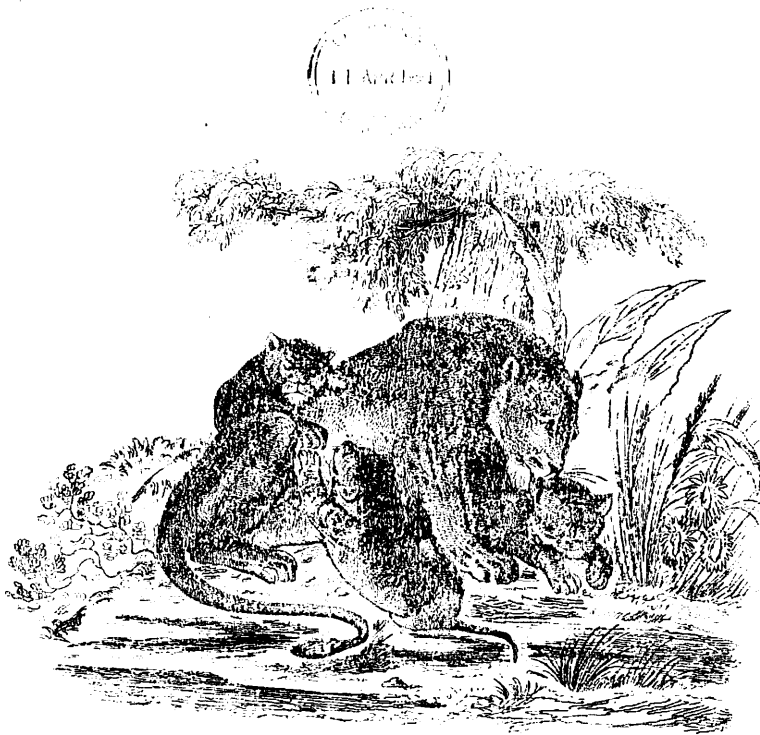


OLIVER GOLDSMITH'S

*History*  
OF THE  
*Natural World*

THE ANIMAL KINGDOM DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED  
WITH 200 COLOUR ENGRAVINGS

FOREWORD BY GERALD DURRELL



STUDIO EDITIONS  
LONDON

1990

1-256

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Oliver Goldsmith's *History of the Earth and Animated Nature* was first published in 1774, the year of his death. It was an instantaneous success and many editions were produced throughout the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The original is very large, with many hundreds of thousands of words and to produce this edition economically we have greatly abridged the original text. In particular we have omitted the first section of the book on the earth and the races of mankind entirely and we have concentrated on the animals, birds, fish, insects and other creatures that Goldsmith describes so beautifully.

Goldsmith was not a natural historian by training. He drew heavily on previously published works, in particular Buffon's massive and impressive scientific works of the eighteenth century, but as Gerald Durrell writes in his introduction to this edition, "Although he plundered other men's works and stole shamelessly, he knew, as a good alchemist should, the art of turning base metal into gold, of turning dull prose into fine, elegant writing."

Goldsmith had little regard for the scientific classifications of other naturalists, adopting a haphazard system which contained a multitude of errors. In the light of recent scientific developments this system seems even more simplistic. However, since it is for his fine prose, not his scientific prowess that Goldsmith would wish to be remembered, we have not attempted to correct his inaccuracies and his original system of scientific classification has been maintained.

The majority of the colour plates are taken from Charles d'Orbigny's *Dictionnaire Universel d'Histoire Naturelle* whose great twenty volume work was published in 1849. D'Orbigny's illustrators contain some of the best known names of the nineteenth century, a period when French natural history illustration was at its height. Their quality is superb.

Other illustrations include the colour plates by J. Stewart, taken from the Blackie & Son edition of Goldsmith published circa 1873, and the A. Fullarton & Co. edition published in 1848. The black and white illustrations are taken from Bell's *A History of British Quadrupeds* published in 1874, *The Watercolours and Drawings of Thomas Bewick*, the 1810 edition of *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature* by Oliver Goldsmith (1774), the Blackie & Son edition of Goldsmith published circa 1873, Kirby's *Elementary Text-Book of Entomology*, Marchington's *A Portrait of Shooting*, Yarrell's *A History of British Fishes* and Cassell's *Popular Natural History*.

The captions to the illustrations have been taken from the original plates. The Latin nomenclature has been left as it appeared in d'Orbigny's *Histoire Universel d'Histoire Naturelle*. Many of these have variations, or have been altered later, and also differ from present-day scientific descriptions. For some of the rarer species it has not been possible to identify common names, and in these cases only Latin names are given. The colour illustrations, taken from the Blackie and Fullarton editions of Goldsmith, were not originally published with Latin names, and therefore only appear with common names.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Publishers would like to thank the following for their help in preparing this edition:

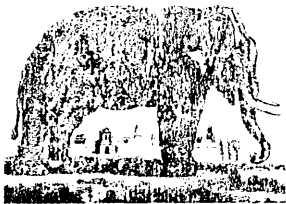
Gerald Durrell for his foreword, and all those who have given editorial help – Geoffrey N. Swinney, S. Peter Dance, The Zoological Society of London, The Department of Invertebrates, London Zoo, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

is easily tamed, but it is a disagreeable domestic, as well from its stupidity and figure as its scent, which, however fragrant in small quantities, fails not to be ungrateful when copiously supplied.

## OTHER ANIMALS

### THE ELEPHANT

In every respect the noblest quadruped in nature is the Elephant, not less remarkable for its size than its docility and understanding. All historians concur in giving it the character of the most sagacious animal next to man; and yet, were we to take our idea of its capacity from its outward appearance, we should be led to conceive very meanly of its abilities.



The elephant is seen from seven to no less than fifteen feet high and of all quadrupeds is the strongest, as well as the largest; and yet, in a state of nature, it is neither fierce nor formidable. Mild, peaceful, and brave, it never abuses its force for its own protection, or that of its community, but appears to be a social friendly creature, delighting to live along the sides of rivers, to keep in the deepest vales, and to refresh itself in the most shady forests and watery places. It cannot live far from water and fills its trunk with it either to cool that organ, or to divert itself by spurting it out like a fountain.

The elephant's chief food is of the vegetable kind, but with its broad and heavy feet it destroys much more than it devours; so that it is frequently obliged to change its quarters.

With a very awkward appearance, it nonetheless possesses all the senses in great perfection. Though the minuteness of its eyes may at first sight appear deformed, yet, when we come to examine them, they are seen to exhibit a variety of expression.

The elephant is not less remarkable for the excellence of its hearing. Its ears are extremely large, and greater in proportion than even those of an ass; they serve also to wipe its eyes. It appears delighted with music, and very readily learns to beat time, to move in measure, and even to join its voice to the sound of the drum and trumpet. This animal's sense of smelling is not only exquisite, but it is in a great measure

pleased with the odours that delight mankind.

But it is in the sense of touching that this animal excels all others of the brute creation and perhaps even man himself. The organ of this sense lies wholly in the trunk, which is an instrument peculiar to this animal, and that serves it for all the purposes of a hand.

To the rest of the elephant's encumbrances may be added its enormous tusks, which are unserviceable for chewing and are only weapons of defence.

The hide of an elephant is as remarkable as any other part. It is not covered over with hair, as is the generality of quadrupeds, but is nearly bare.

It is not to be wondered at, that an animal furnished with so many various advantages both of strength, sagacity, and obedience, should be taken in to the service of man. We accordingly find that the elephant, from time immemorial, has been employed either for the purposes of labour, of war, or of ostentation; to increase the grandeur of eastern princes, or to extend their dominions.

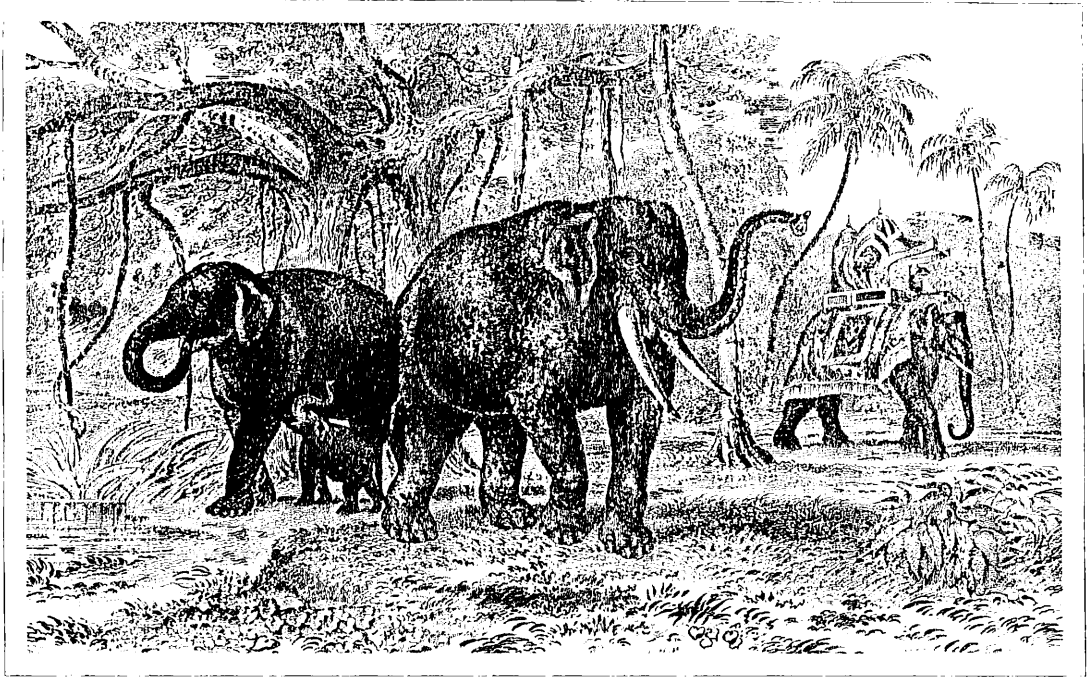
The elephant alone has never been seen to breed; and though he has been reduced under the obedience of man for ages, the duration of pregnancy of the female still remains a secret. Aristotle, indeed, asserts that she goes two years with young; that she continues to suckle her young for three years, and that she brings forth but one at a time; but he does not inform us of the manner in which it was possible for him to have this information.

The elephant, when once tamed, becomes the most gentle and obedient of all animals. It soon conceives an attachment for the person that attends it, caresses him, obeys him, and seems to anticipate his desires. It perfectly distinguishes the tone of command from that of anger or approbation, and acts accordingly.

In Delhi, an elephant passing along the streets put his trunk into a tailor's shop, where several people were at work. One of the persons of the shop, desirous of some amusement, pricked the animal's trunk with his needle, and seemed highly delighted with this slight punishment. The elephant, however, passed on without any immediate signs of resentment; but coming to a puddle filled with dirty water, he filled his trunk, returned to the shop, and spurted the contents over the finery upon which the tailors were then employed.

### THE RHINOCEROS

Next to the elephant, the Rhinoceros is the most powerful of animals. It is usually found twelve feet long, from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail; from six to seven feet high; and the circum-



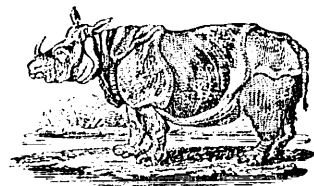
ference of its body is nearly equal to its length. It is, therefore, equal to the elephant in bulk; and if it appears much smaller to the eye, the reason is that its legs are much shorter. Its head is furnished with a horn, growing from the snout, sometimes three feet and a half long; and but for this, that part would have the appearance of the head of a hog; the upper lip, however, is much longer, ends in a point, is very pliable, and serves to collect food, delivering it into the mouth: the ears are large, erect, and pointed; the eyes are small and piercing; the skin is naked, rough, knotty, and, lying upon the body in folds, after a very peculiar fashion: there are two folds very remarkable; one above the shoulders, and another over the rump: the skin, which is of a dirty brown colour, is so thick as to turn the edge of a scimitar, and to resist a musket-ball: the belly hangs low; the legs are short, strong and thick, and the hooves divided into three parts, each pointing forward.

Such is the general outline of an animal that appears chiefly formidable from the horn growing from its snout; and formed rather for war, than with a propensity to engage. This horn grows from the solid bone, and so disposed, as to be managed to the greatest advantage. It is composed of the most solid substance: and pointed so as to inflict the most fatal wounds. The elephant, the boar, or the buffalo, are obliged to strike transversely with their weapons; but the rhinoceros employs all his force with every blow. Indeed, there is no force which this terrible animal has to apprehend: defended, on every side, by a thick,

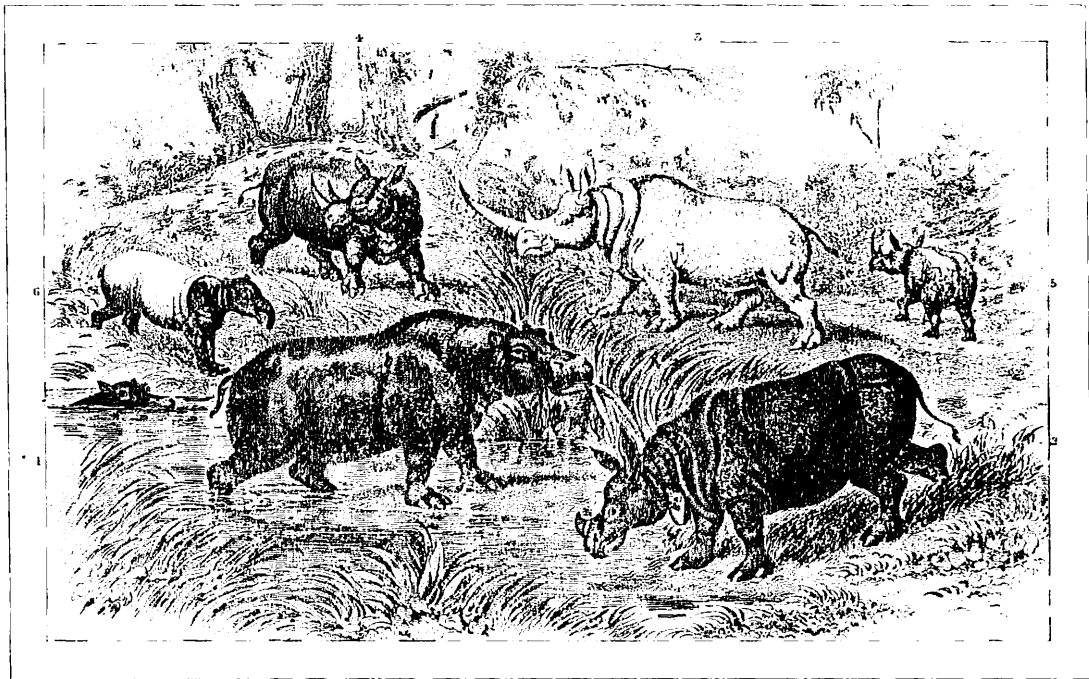
ASIATIC ELEPHANT MALE, FEMALE (J. Stewart)

horny hide, which the claws of the lion or the tiger are unable to pierce, and armed before with a weapon that even the elephant does not choose to oppose.

The rhinoceros is a native of the deserts of Asia and Africa, and is usually found in those extensive forests, that are frequented by the elephant and the lion. As it subsists entirely upon vegetable food, it is peaceful and harmless among its fellows of the brute creation; but, though it never provokes combat, it equally disdains to fly. It is every way fitted for war, but rests content in the consciousness of its security. It is particularly fond of the prickly branches of trees, and is seen to feed upon such thorny shrubs as would be dangerous to other animals, either to gather, or to swallow. The prickly points of these, however, may only serve to give a poignant relish to this animal's palate.



There are some varieties in this animal, as in most others; some of them are found in Africa with a double horn, one growing above the other: this weapon, if considered in itself, is one of the strongest,



1 HIPPOPOTAMUS 2 INDIAN RHINOCEROS 3 MUCHOCO WHITE RHINOCEROS 4, 5 TWO HORNED AFRICAN RHINOCEROS 6 MALAY TAPIR (J. Stewart)

was always submissive to his threats. It had a peculiar cry, somewhat a mixture between the grunting of a hog, and the bellowing of a calf.

and most dangerous, that Nature furnishes to any part of the animal creation. The horn is entirely solid, formed of the hardest bony substance, growing from the upper maxillary bone. Many are the medicinal virtues that are ascribed to this horn, when taken in powder, but these qualities have been attributed to it, without any real foundation, and make only a small part of the many fables which this extraordinary animal has given rise to.

The rhinoceros which was shown at London in 1739, and described by Doctor Parsons, had been sent from Bengal. Though it was very young, not being above two years old, yet the charge of his carriage and food from India, cost near a thousand pounds. It was fed with rice, sugar, and hay; it was daily supplied with seven pounds of rice, mixed with three of sugar, divided into three portions; it was given great quantities of hay and grass, which it chiefly preferred; its drink was water, which it took in great quantities. It was of a gentle disposition, and permitted itself to be touched and handled by all visitors, never attempting mischief, except when abused, or when hungry; in such a case, there was no method of appeasing its fury, but by giving it something to eat. When angry, it would jump up against the walls of its room, with great violence; and, many efforts of escape, but seldom attempted to attack its keeper, and

## THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

The Hippopotamus is an animal as large, and not less formidable than the rhinoceros; its legs are shorter, and its head rather more bulky; it is above seventeen feet long, from the extremity of the snout, to the insertion of the tail; above sixteen feet in circumference round the body, and above seven feet high; the head is near four feet long, and above nine feet in circumference. The jaws open about two feet wide, and the cutting teeth, of which it has four in each jaw, are above a foot long.

Its feet, in some measure, resemble those of the elephant, and are divided into four parts. The tail is short, flat, and pointed; the hide is amazingly thick, and though not impervious to weapons is impenetrable to the blow of a sabre; the body is covered over with a few scattered hairs, of a whitish colour. The whole figure of the animal is something between that of an ox and a hog, and its cry is something between the bellowing of the one, and the grunting of the other.

This animal, however, though so terribly furnished for war, seems no way disposed to make use of its prodigious strength against an equal enemy; it chiefly resides at the bottom of the great rivers and