

## NATURAL HISTORY.

### THE ONE HORNED RHINOCEROS OF INDIA.

#### *Rhinoceros Indicus.* Cuv.

An animal of this species has recently arrived in this city, the first time it has been seen in a living state, in America. He has always been of great rarity, not more than five or six having, at different periods, been brought to Europe since the year 1593, when the first living specimen was presented to the King of Portugal. One is now living in the menagerie at the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris. It would seem that he was better known to the ancients, since we have accounts of him from Pliny, Dion, Cassius, and others, from whom we learn that he was frequently exhibited in their circus and triumphal shows. The one horned kind is the only one which has been brought alive, in mo-

dern times, to Europe, though the two horned species was exhibited at Rome in the time of Domitian.

The Rhinoceros, now in the city, is quite a young animal, being about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years old, and perhaps half grown; his height is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and over 7 feet in length, and weight near 2000 lbs. He was imported from Calcutta, whither he had been brought when very young, from the interior of Asia, near the Himalaiah mountains. His form is bulky and clumsy, like that of the Elephant, though his height is much less in proportion to his length. His body is covered, or rather armed, with a hide of tough and leathery consistence, roughly tuberculated with knots, and curiously separated into large divisions, by folds or plaits, behind and across the shoulders, and again before the thighs, and across the buttocks, exactly as represented in the following figure, which was taken from the animal.



This hide is so thick as to be impenetrable even to a powerful force; and it is only in the furrows made by the folds, or in the abdomen, or near the eyes, that he is assailable. It would seem that the folds are intended to act as hinges or joints to enable the animal to turn himself, lie down, rise up, or the like, since it would be very difficult for him to perform any other than a strait forward movement, if the hide were one uniform crust, without division. Another remarkable peculiarity in the structure of the Rhinoceros, is the horn on his nose, to the bone of which it is firmly attached, and is no doubt a formidable weapon of attack or defence, as well as a serviceable instrument in searching for food. In the adult animal, the horn is said to extend to the length of nearly three feet; in the present one, it is just beginning to grow, and protrudes in a knob of 3 inches above the nose. The structure of the upper lip

is also remarkable; which, although it does not extend much beyond the lower one, is capable of being elongated to answer the purpose of a proboscis, the end of it being pointed so that he can take the smallest particle of food. While masticating, he uses the end of this lip, in a singular manner, to keep the cud he is chewing within the action of his grinders—thus serving the office of his tongue, which is short. No part of his body appears to have any hairs, excepting the tufts at the tip of his ears and tail. There are only two incisors in the lower jaw, none having yet appeared in the upper. Little is known of the habits of this strange animal; his shy and solitary manner of life, in his native haunts, preventing any opportunities of discovering his peculiar characteristics. He is usually found in the forests of Eastern India, in the regions watered by the Ganges, seeking his subsistence in the densest and most impenetrable thickets, and marshes of those districts, his coat of mail enabling him to overcome the obstacles of such situations which no other animal could approach. Pliny states, that the natural enemy of the Rhinoceros is the Elephant; and that, in their combats, he uses his powerful horn in stabbing his antagonist in the belly where he is most assailable.

The animal now with us, appears to be of a stupid nature, and exhibits no traits of intelligence or instinct beyond those of the Hog, to which he seems to be allied in manners as well as form. He appears to distinguish no one around him, and to be insensible to every thing but the calls of appetite; eats constantly, whenever food is offered to him, and almost of any kinds, roots, grain, fruit, or herbage, and is very fond of sugar. He is equally gluttonous in drinking. It is singular, however, that his natural placidity of temper should be interrupted by a fit of passion, which he is subject to every day, with the greatest regularity, and sometimes twice a day. The fury attacks him, with more or less of violence, during which, he is entirely ungovernable, runs about butting with his horn against any thing within his reach, and is only appeased by offering him some of his favorite sweet food.

According to the natural system of arrangement, the Rhinoceros is classed among the *Pachydermatous*, or thick skinned animals, along with the Hog, Tapir, Elephant, &c. There have been five distinct species enumerated, three of them, viz. *R. Sumatrensis*, *R. Africanus*, and *R. Burchellii* having two horns on the nose, and two of them the present species, *R. Indicus*, and *R. Sundaicus* with a single horn.

It is remarkable, as proving the changes which our globe has undergone, that this race of animals, which is now confined to tropical regions, has existed in former days in the more temperate and cold districts of Europe, in company with the Elephant and other tropical animals of the present day. In the year 1771, the entire carcase of a species, named by Cuvier, *R. tichorinus*, was dug from the ice in Siberia, with part of the skin still adhering to it. This animal was larger than the African species, was furnished with two horns, and was remarkable for having thick strong hair on its hide, as if it had been peculiar to a cold climate. The fossil bones of this species have been found in other parts of Europe, chiefly in France. The bones of another species, *R. leptorhinus*, Cuv. smaller than the preceding, and likewise having two horns, have been found in a fossil state in Italy ; and a third species, the smallest of the race, named by Cuvier, *R. minutus*, about the size of a Hog, was disinterred from the depth of 60 feet below the surface of the earth, at St. Laurens, in France.

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