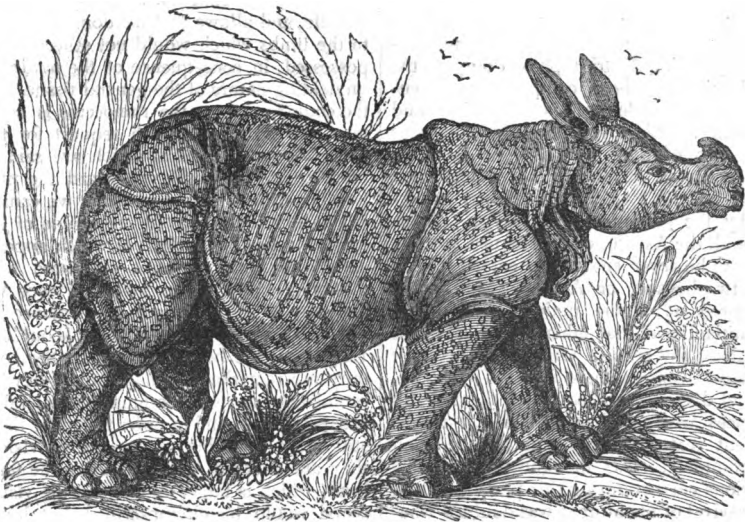


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THE RHINOCEROS.

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THE arrival of any rare or strange animal into our country is always hailed with pleasure by the scientific, to whom it affords a gratifying opportunity of obtaining correct information, and of adding to the stores of knowledge: nor is such an event without interest to the lover of nature, and especially to him who delights to trace out the power of God as displayed in the variety of his wondrous works.

A young and very small rhinoceros, as is generally known, was some time since added to the collection in the Surrey gardens: subsequently, however, the Zoological Society has been fortunate enough to become possessed of a magnificent and almost fully grown individual, which may be regarded as the most remarkable ornament of the menagerie.

VOL. II.

This stupendous quadruped, which is second only to the elephant, rarely as it is imported into modern Europe, was well known to the ancient Romans, whose triumphs it was often destined to grace, and whose love of slaughter it was often condemned to gratify in the arena of the amphitheatre, where beasts and men contended in sanguinary strife. The Romans were also acquainted with more than one species; they knew the two-horned rhinoceros of Africa, which in modern times has never been seen in Europe; and which, for a long period after the revival of literature in the middle ages, was not known to exist. The division of the species into Asiatic and African, though correct enough for general purposes, is somewhat indefinite; as there appear to be two, if not three distinct species in India, and the adjacent

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islands of Java and Sumatra, and two species in Africa.

The Asiatic species (with the exception of a doubtful species, discovered in Sumatra, in 1793, by Mr. W. Bell, surgeon in the service of the East India Company) are characterized by a single horn on the snout, and by the skin being disposed in folds over the body; while the species peculiar to Africa are characterized by two horns, (one situated behind the other, the posterior being the smallest,) and by a smooth hide without folds.

With this explanation, then, we may proceed to state that the first introduction of the rhinoceros into Europe was in all probability during the triumph of Pompey, the celebration of whose conquests were rendered memorable by its exhibition and slaughter. Shortly afterwards Augustus gave two of these beasts to be slain, in the games in honour of his victory over Antony and Cleopatra, which was followed by the subjugation of Egypt. These were all the Asiatic, or one-horned species. We are however enabled to collect that of the two-horned, or African species, two appeared at Rome under the Emperor Domitian, and that others were exhibited in subsequent reigns. On the destruction of the Roman empire there followed a long period of darkness, during which the arts and sciences were at their lowest ebb in the ancient seats of learning in Europe; and so completely was the knowledge of the previous era lost during this period, that on the revival of literature it was doubted whether the figures of the rhinoceros on coins and medals were representations of an animal really living upon earth. When, however, the Cape of Good Hope was doubled by the Portuguese, and a way thus opened to India, the one-horned rhinoceros was re-discovered; and in 1513 a specimen was sent to Emmanuel, King of Portugal. In 1685 a rhinoceros was brought to England, and subsequently three or four have been brought to Europe at different periods; of these one was exhibited in England, and died very young in 1800. The present year is remarkable for the arrival of two of these animals into our country, a very young female, and a male which has nearly attained the full size. The dimensions of the latter are as follows: height, five feet, three or four inches; length, about ten feet; girth, nearly nine feet.

The general contour of the body is extremely massive and robust; the limbs are thick, but very short, so that the belly almost touches the ground. The skin is of

amazing density, and tuberculated on the surface, where it almost approaches horn in the firmness of its texture. So impenetrable is the hide of this enormous creature that it is proof against a leaden bullet; but, as if to render the animal doubly secure, it is gathered into several deep and extensive folds or plates, so disposed as to bring to mind the armour of the knights of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One of these large folds covers the shoulders, and another the haunches. In the interstices, between the overlapping of the folds, the skin is tolerably soft and flexible, and allows that freedom of motion to the limbs which would not otherwise be possessed, in consequence of the hard and unyielding nature of the general tissue. In the countries where the rhinoceros is common, the hide is in high request for the manufacture of shields, which are said to be of great value. If we regard the proportions of this animal in detail, we cannot fail to be struck with the magnitude of the head, the size and weight of which appears extraordinary, even when compared with the huge bulk of the body. Hence the necessity of the great power displayed by the short neck, and the solid shoulders. Large as is the head, the eyes on the contrary are remarkably small, but somewhat prominent, so as to command a tolerably extensive area; and in order to render them still more available as organs of vision, they are situated, not high upon the forehead, which is large, and where the visual scope would be circumscribed, but lower down, so as to be nearer the nose, in which situation they are able to sweep over an extensive horizon without any motion of the head. The nostrils are situated laterally; the lips are fleshy like those of the ox, but the upper lip is extensible, being capable of protrusion and possessing the power of grasping to a limited degree: in this it resembles the tapir, and distantly the elephant, the trunk of which animal may be regarded as the upper lip developed to a great length. In the species to which our attention is directed, the horn which rises above the nose is single; its shape is conical, rising to a point from a broad expanded base. Its use is first as an instrument for procuring food; by its means the creature tears up the roots of shrubs and trees, on which it delights to feed. In the second place, it is an instrument of defence, rendering the animal more than a match for the elephant, and a fatal foe for the tiger. Drinking cups, handles for weapons, axes, &c., and also vessels, in which are contained charms

or amulets, are manufactured from it. The ears are moderately large, and very moveable; and the sense of hearing appears to be very acute. Such is a general outline of the rhinoceros. Quiet and inoffensive, if unprovoked, he seeks the solitude of the jungles and forests along the banks of rivers, or the borders of morasses, and fears no enemy. Like the elephant, he delights to wallow in the mud and bathe in water, rolling and plunging in the exuberance of his gigantic but unwieldy strength. When roused by the hunter's attack, his fury is irresistible: he rushes madly on the object of his vengeance, bearing all before him. His course however is straight forward, so that if the hunter be collected and active, he may avoid the enraged beast by springing to one side, and thus gain time to retreat, reload his gun, and return to the attack. In captivity, the rhinoceros is quiet and gentle, suffering himself to be patted without exhibiting any resentment. M.

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#### SIBERIAN IDOLATRY.

THE aborigines of Siberia have been for many years under the influence of the Shaman superstitions. Their objects of worship are the spirits of the air, earth, mountains, woods, waters, &c. These imaginary beings they worship without the intervention of any external images or representations. Their rites are performed in the open air, and to them they sacrifice sheep, goats, and other animals, the carcasses of which they expose on the top of high poles fixed in the ground near their tents. They have, however, rudely formed idols in their tents, a kind of household gods; and these they look upon as the guardians of themselves and their cattle. They have no definite conceptions of a Supreme Being, and offer no worship of which he is the object; nor have any of the rites they perform any reference to their character as sinners, or as needing pardon, or as seeking happiness in a future state. All their worship, sacrifices, prayers, &c., are offered for the purpose of procuring present temporal good, or for averting felt or feared temporal calamity. Their views of the future state are dark and dismal in the extreme, and their faith sheds not one ray of light upon it. In some parts of the country this superstition is melting away before the influence of the Buddhu system. The priests of this faith are upwards of 4,000 in number, and they have erected in various parts of the country temples for

the worship of their gods. There were but fourteen or fifteen temples when the missionaries went to Siberia, but several new ones have sprung up since, where the lamas have been extending their influence, and zealously stirring up their votaries to erect temples to Shigemuni, (Buddhu,) in token of the victory achieved by him over the Orgoons, the spirits worshipped by the Shamans. But many of the Buriats still halt between two opinions, adopting the lama forms of worship, and frequenting the temple services, without discarding their former idol gods. The more zealous, however, burn the Shaman household gods, and utterly renounce the rites and the names of the Orgoons.

Few or none of the common people know any thing of the Tibetan language, and most of the lamas have but a smattering of it, contenting themselves with the mere reading the books, without understanding a word they contain. They have accordingly substituted various mechanical contrivances in their services, to save themselves the trouble even of reading the books. They enclose great rolls of printed paper in a cylindrical machine called a kurdoo, which turns upon an axis, and these machines are made to revolve by the hand, or by the assistance of a windmill; the prayers contained in them being supposed to ascend to their deities, so long as the machine is kept in motion. The first month of their year, corresponding nearly to our February, is held sacred, and the lamas assemble at their respective temples during nearly the whole month. A day or two of the other months of the year, and occasional services at the tents of the people, complete their official duty. But many of them act likewise in the capacity of physicians, and, mingling their prayers and ceremonies with their prescriptions, contrive to make this at once a source of emolument to themselves, and a prop to their idolatry.—*Rev. W. Swan.*

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#### CIVILIZATION.

THE effects of the introduction of the gospel into Denmark, in the eleventh century, were such as proved its divine origin. Adam, of Bremen, an historian, thus describes it:—"Look at that very ferocious nation of the Danes; for a long time they have been accustomed, in the praises of God, to sound alleluiah! Look at that piratical people; they are now content with the fruits of their own country. Look at