

## THE RHINOCEROS.

BY GEO. JENNISON.

The rhinoceros is less bulky than the hippopotamus, but he is very much more dangerous to man. His three toes, unlike those of the elephant, which are embedded in a fleshy pad, are free and movable, and this enables him to start and turn with a speed that makes it almost impossible for the nimblest hunter to evade the wide sweep of his sharp-pointed horn. Moreover, no herbivorous animal makes so many unprovoked and inexplicable attacks on man. Instances are common of attacks on cornracks and of terrible charges through gangs of chained slaves. There is indeed one recorded case in which a rhinoceros charged a battery on the march in Cape Colony and put it completely out of action. Rhinoceroses are still common in South Africa, and exist in considerable though diminished numbers in India and Java. They had formerly a more extensive range, and one is tempted to identify the rhinoceros with the reem, that ungovernable beast which figures in the Authorized Version of the Bible as the unicorn. The claim of rhinoceros unicorn—the well-known Indian variety—to be the prototype of the unicorn would be greatly strengthened if we could first definitely identify it with the reem, with which Joseph is twice compared in the Bible. One of these comparisons throws some light on a quality that has always been attributed to the horn of the rhinoceros. It is in the passage where allusion is made to "trial by the horn of Joseph." Through the ages the unicorn's horn has been held to be a sovereign test for poisons. Intriguing maharajahs have often used a rhinoceros horn cup as a safeguard, for, poisonous in this magic vessel are said to turn milky, effervesce, and overflow the brim.

A rhinoceros horn is an agglomeration of close-living hairs of very fine texture but easily divisible, like whalebone, which it closely resembles. Nature has provided it with a cunningly wrought cellular frame fixed on a commonly developed bone of the skull that can withstand the fearful impact of the rhino's charge. The horns of the Indian varieties are short and thick, usually about 18 inches in length, whereas the black or common rhinoceros of Africa often has a horn of three feet or more. But this is nothing compared with the record length of 50, and even 20, inches of the white or square-nosed rhinoceros once found in these islands but now extinct even in South Africa. The horns are highly valued by the Zulus as the insignia of royalty, and many a war has been caused by the refusal of a vassal to hand over a particularly fine specimen to his paramount chief. A walking-stick of a single horn was deemed a worthy present to King Edward VII.

The underparts of the animal are not protected like the back with great folds of skin, and are readily cut with a knife, and the strong coat of mail, though doubtless a sufficient protection against lions, is not proof, as is popularly supposed, against a rifle bullet. It needs the wiles of Ulysses and the strength of Ajax to catch alive a baby African rhino. It may take weeks to find one sufficiently grown to feed and small enough to hold, and then the hunt is only begun. The rhinoceros has excellent ears and an acute sense of smell that call for the utmost skill in woodcraft and stalking. His eyesight is bad, but nature has provided an excellent watchman to counteract this failing. This is the red-billed ox-bird, one of the starling tribe, which attaches itself to most of the wooded inhabitants of South Africa, and so particularly to this animal as to earn the popular name "rhinoceros bird." Two dozen or so often collect upon the backs of the beasts, picking out the ticks and other little insects that infest the folds of skin, and it is rare to find a rhinoceros asleep or awake without at least a pair of these wideawake watchers. They rise with a sharp twittering note, and unless they settle again the hunt is spoiled. The rhinoceros is made suspicious—too ill at ease to rest even if his own powers foretell no danger. A mother rhino will moove off at once at a fine pace, guiding her little one with a touch of the horn on its flank. The hunter follows, perhaps for miles, before he can safely plant a mortal shot. The calf usually stays by the mother, making charges that often scatter the native followers before a well-executed tackle brings it to ground. Then it is tethered, and has to be half led, half dragged to the camp. It must be taught to suck goat's milk from a bottle, and then by slow night marches, resting in the day, it may with difficulty be brought to the coast.

The Indian rhinoceros is now almost confined to the wild lands of the seat of Nepal, where it was carefully preserved by the late Maharajah. His successor, who is something of a sportsman, once arranged a grand drive to capture calves. The country is broken and covered with jungle-grass 20 or 30 feet high, in which a row of beating elephants is lost a hundred yards away. Through this the rhinoceroses tunned in all directions, as completely hidden as rabbits in an English corn-field. An enormous army, represented to me as 3,000 cavalry and 20,000 foot, was necessary to beat them from their cover. Five hoifers were caught and immediately released. Four males were brought by Herr Hagenbeck to Europe. One, the smallest, 30 inches high, went to Belle Vue. It is now just over four years ago, and it has grown to four feet high. A cold, caught three days after arrival, caused its life to be despaired of. Its predecessor, which lived 28 years in the Gardens, had also been given up for dead in the first week. It had the run of the ship coming over, and had eaten more tarred rope and sail than was good for it.

These risks are always present. Rhinoceroses must be taken small, when they are both interesting and affectionate pets, and can be allowed their liberty. Some never grow vicious. The earliest rhino at Belle Vue had the run of the Gardens, and did not resent being chased by a boat from his wallow in the lake when he was required for exhibition. He frightened no one, and only annoyed the laundry-maids by muzzling the clean linen on the lines. Yet his successor was very wild, and in the mad fury of youth would charge the very walls until the blood flowed. The present one is growing wicked with the growth of his horns. Possibly the process of growth itself produces an irritation akin to toothache, but the health of the animal is not endangered.

The Indian rhinoceroses in particular are hardy animals, and with care accommodate themselves so well to the vicissitudes of our climate that, though probably shorter-lived than elephants, their expectation of life in a menagerie is about a decade longer, owing to the earlier age at which they join the collection. Adult elephants are easily tamed and trained, whereas a full-grown rhinoceros would pine or dash itself to death. This savagery suited the sports of the arena, and the Germans presented both the Indian and African varieties in the circus. They were caught in pitfalls or else by the means still used by the Arabs—hiding in a hollow of their runs a noose with a long, strong log attached, which catches in the brushwood and stops their passage.

The belief is widespread of instinctive animosity between elephants and rhinoceroses, and it is said that the elephant always flees from this foe. Neither history nor experience justifies the idea. The animals now, and formerly, have lived as close neighbours, and yet the evidence of fighting is extremely meagre. Elephants may have feared rhinoceroses—one in France ran miles from a sucking pig, and I have known them strain on their chains to elude a beetle.—but it is not general. An elephant in the London Gardens formed the closest friendship with a neighbouring rhinoceros; and the specimens at Belle

Vue have shared a cage. Herr Schillings gave his baby rhinoceros a goat for company, and they still live in pleasant comradeship. Company is good for all animals.

The tapir, near relatives of the rhinoceros, are particularly compassionate. They are often seen following their masters in the small towns of the Amazon basin. Their liberty is complete: they roam in the forest and return unthought. There are four varieties of tapir in South America. One of these lives high up in the Cordilleras. It is quite closely related not only to the common American species, but also to the curious Malayan tapir on the other side of the globe. At the same time it is quite distinct anatomically from Baird's and Dow's tapirs, which are found just north of Panama. This is, perhaps, the most remarkable instance of discontinuous distribution known to us, but paleontological research has proved that tapirs lived in former times over practically the whole of Europe and Asia in a form but little different from the present. At that time they must have much resembled the hornless rhinoceros and been much like the ancestors of the long-trunked elephant that we know. I have never yet had a reasoned explanation of their enigmatical colouration. The young on both sides of the world are spotted almost as fully as a leopard, but in longitudinal bands. At about six months this gives place to the adult scheme of colour, which in the American is over all a slaty black, except for a little rim of white upon the ears. Houlin's tapir in the Cordilleras adds a broad stripe of white under the chin, but the Malay variety is as distinctive as a magpie—black on head and legs and the forepart of the body, the rest all white, with the joining line as clear cut as a target. Can this be protective colouration? Does the tapir, feeding at night in thickets or wallowing in the gloomy marshes of the Amazon, hide invisible from his enemy the jaguar, and his Malay cousin, grown holder, deceive the tiger in the daytime while he takes his bath among the white and smooth-worn stones in the river bed?

## THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.

Sir,—The greatest satisfaction will be given to the passive resisters of the country by the declaration of the Prime Minister that "the Government have every intention of introducing legislation to remove the grievances of the passive resisters during the life of the present Parliament." I have been in the North and Midlands within the last few days and seen the impotence of Liberals and Radicals as the prolonged continuance of the crisis of the Education Act of 1902. They have worked hard for the Parliament Bill in expectation that it would clear the road for the thorough realisation of sound and just Liberal ideas in national education, and they have chafed not a little at what appeared to be the bewildering silence of the Government on education in the sketches they have supplied of the policy of the future. The leader of the Labour party, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, has secured us this relief, and we are grateful to him and to the Premier.

Colonel Yates asks, "Is there any such thing as passive resistance at the present time?" A letter just to hand says "fifty-eight passive resisters of Norwich have recently been before the court, and on Tuesday next their goods will be publicly sold for the eighteenth time." At Leicester sixty-eight were summoned a few days ago, and there were more to follow speedily. This was the thirty-eighth time they had been before the Bench. Amongst the number were aldermen and councillors of the borough, ministers of various denominations, together with a number of ladies and laymen. These are samples. In fact, in some centres passive resistance is as strong as ever it was. Of course the proceedings are much quieter now than they were. Many magistrates since the return of the Liberals to power have acquiesced in the justice of our plea, and therefore the accounts that appear in the general press are few, but this is no indication of the extent or quality of the passive resistance movement in the country. In carrying out their protest men are still going to prison. Others suffer regularly the distress of their goods without repurchase, and many there are who only pay the rate and the cost of the summons after public protest.

But to the hundreds that resist must be added at least a million of Free Churchmen who sympathise with them and are reluctant to work ardently for Home Rule in Ireland whilst they are themselves the victims of Home rule in English education; that is the critical fact. There is not a single Council school in the whole land where, for example, my tenets as a Baptist are taught—not one! On the other hand, there is not a Roman Catholic or an Anglican school where the tenets of those churches are not the dominating influence in teaching. And in some of them, no doubt, the frank and fascinating statements of the "Church Times" of last week are diligently inculcated, to the effect that Free Church "chapels" are "emblems of division and monuments of sin." To citizens who care for truth and charity this is bad enough, but how the evil is aggravated when those who find their religious home in these "monuments to sin" are actually rated by the authority of the Government for the imposition of such teaching.

As proof that Free Churchmen have not their "provincial tenets" taught in Council schools there is the material fact that they have already spent thousands of pounds on building their own denominational schools, and never spent more money or reared finer buildings for their religious work than they are doing now. They are contented with Council schools for giving a citizen's education, but whatever denominational teaching they wish in addition they provide it themselves entirely at their own cost and not at the cost of the State.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN CAFFORD.

25, Sunderland Terrace, Baywater, London, November 14.

## THE PROPOSED MANX REFORMS COMMITTEE'S REFERENCE TO SOCIAL LEGISLATION.

Our Ramsey correspondent says that an informal meeting of reformers was held yesterday to consider the Home Office Committee's report. Satisfaction was expressed at the proposed judicial changes and the introduction of an elective element into the Legislative Council. But dissatisfaction was shown with the proposed financial reforms as not giving the House of Keys the powers demanded, and the Committee's reference to old-age pensions was criticised.

The reference in the report to old-age pensions reads—"We agree with Tynwald in thinking that if it is to embark on a scheme of social legislation some further permanent addition to its income will be necessary. We approve of its intention to give to the island the benefits of old-age pensions, invalidity insurance, and relief for unemployment so far as this latter difficulty arises within the Islands; but in these connections we very strongly deprecate the importation of English legislative methods, cut and dried. The Island cannot afford social legislation on the English scale; it must cut its coat according to its cloth; and if it enjoys the advantages of self-government, it must not forget that thrift and economy are for poor countries the necessary concomitants of Home Rule. For such a country as the Isle of Man no scheme of old-age pensions which is not contributory appears to be preferable. Sir Ryland Adkins was unable to subscribe to this definite expression of opinion; and the benefit of invalidity insurance should, in like manner, be squared with the ability of the people to pay in reasonable measure towards the advantages they receive."

## MISS ASQUITH

Mr. F. S. Margaret Ash, the speakers held last night in London.

Mr. Oppell lever in the feared the consequences. It is next year will there was in violent form, suffrage would largely owing to the situation of mind had been do they could be in a year or two.

Miss Ash's holding that their exclusion Bill, which was voted, and was voted for their does not come amendment.

The Government was an affront land each a. To be taxed citizens for sold to their they were without preced.

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enfranchisement Commons—4 Aquith was elected, it is

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## THE CON

Miss Roberts ideal man maintained that should also they had v Conciliation sent House of change. Who was that, if disability we session came. The result

## SONGS

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## LORD E

It is anno that a marri place in the Hon. Oliver and Viscount Meischer, c