

NATURAL HISTORY

WITH ANECDOTES

ILLUSTRATING
THE NATURE, HABITS, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS
OF
ANIMALS, BIRDS, FISHES, REPTILES, INSECTS,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

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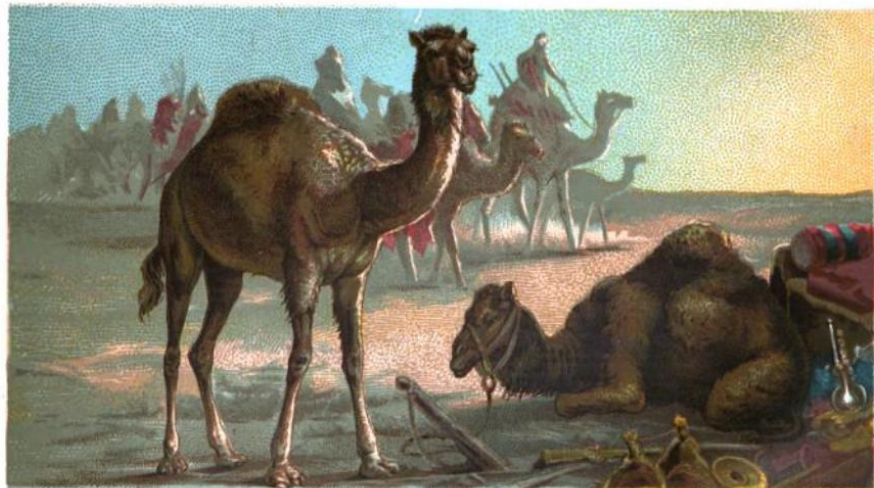
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The Rev. J. G. Wood says, "Its disposition is gentle, but when annoyed, it sometimes rushes at its antagonist, and defends itself vigorously with its powerful teeth. The jaguar frequently springs on it, but it is often dislodged by the activity of the Tapir, who rushes through the bushes immediately that it feels the claws of its enemy, and endeavours to brush him off against the thick branches." The Tapir is easily tamed and even domesticated, though it must be admitted it makes a somewhat huge pet. It is intelligent and in its own way shows appreciation of kindness and attachment to its owner. This family has sometimes been regarded as a link between the Elephant and the Rhinoceros, but in the classification here followed the Elephant forms a separate order; the Tapir and the Rhinoceros complete the sub-order of Perissodactyla or odd-toed, hooped animals. The Indian Tapir is somewhat larger than his American cousin and is distinguished by the greyish-white colour of his hind quarters, which gives him the appearance of bearing a white horse cloth on his loins.

The The Rhinoceros is found in both Asia and **Rhinoceros.** Africa, and is classified by Dr. Gray in four genera. Of these the Indian Rhinoceros, the Rhinoceros of Sumatra, and the Mahoohoo of South and Central Africa are representatives. Mr. Gordon Cumming says, "There are four varieties in South Africa, distinguished by the Bechuanas by the names of the Borèlé or black rhinoceros, the Keitloa or two-horned black rhinoceros, the Muchocho or common white rhinoceros and the Kobaoba or long-horned white rhinoceros. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are extremely fierce and dangerous, and rush headlong and unprovoked upon any object which attracts their attention. Their horns are much shorter than those of the other varieties, seldom exceeding eighteen inches in length. They are finely polished with constant rubbing against trees. The skull is remarkably formed, its most striking feature being the



INDIAN RHINOCEROS
(*Rhinoceros unicornis*)



CAMEL
(*Camelus dromedarius*)

tremendous thick ossification in which it ends above the nostrils. It is on this mass that the horn is supported. The horns are not connected with the skull, being attached merely by the skin, and they may thus be separated from the head by a sharp knife. They are hard and perfectly solid throughout. The eyes of the rhinoceros are small and sparkling and do not readily observe the hunter, provided he keep to leeward of them. The skin is extremely thick, and only to be penetrated by bullets hardened with solder." "During the day the rhinoceros will be found lying asleep or standing indolently in some retired part of the forest, or under the base of the mountains, sheltered from the power of the sun by some friendly grove of umbrella-topped mimosas. In the evening they commence their nightly ramble, and wander over a great extent of country." "The black rhinoceros is subject to paroxysms of unprovoked fury, often ploughing up the ground for several yards with its horns, and assaulting large bushes in the most violent manner." "The rhinoceros is supposed by many, and by myself among the rest, to be the animal alluded to by Job, Chap. XXXIX, verses 10 and 11, where it is written: 'Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?'" "All the four varieties delight to roll and wallow in mud, with which their rugged hides are generally encrusted. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are much smaller and more active than the white, and are so swift that a horse with a rider on his back can rarely overtake them. The two varieties of the white rhinoceros are so similar in habits, that the description of one will serve for both; the principal difference consisting in the length and set of the anterior horn; that of the muchocho averaging from two to three feet in length, and pointing backwards; while the horn of the Kobaoba often exceeds four feet in length, and inclines forward from the

nose at an angle of 45° . The posterior horn of either species seldom exceeds six or seven inches in length. Both these varieties attain an enormous size, being the animals next in magnitude to the elephant. They feed solely on grass, carry much fat, and their flesh is excellent, being preferable to beef."

Rhinoceros Mr. Gordon Cumming gives several graphic **Hunting** descriptions of his experiences with the rhinoceros, in his "Hunting Adventures in South Africa", from which work the foregoing description of the several species is taken. On one occasion after following a huge white rhinoceros, which, however, escaped him, he says, "I found myself on the banks of the stream beside which my waggons were outspanned. Following along its margin, I presently beheld a bull of the borèlé, or black rhinoceros, standing within a hundred yards of me. Dismounting from my horse, I secured him to a tree, and then stalked within twenty yards of the huge beast, under cover of a large strong bush. Borèlé, hearing me advance, came on to see what it was, and suddenly protruded his horny nose within twenty yards of me. Knowing well that a front shot would not prove deadly, I sprang to my feet and ran behind the bush. Upon this the villain charged, blowing loudly, and chased me round the bush. Had his activity been equal to his ugliness my wanderings would have terminated here, but by my superiority I had the advantage in the turn. After standing a short time eyeing me through the bush... he wheeled about, leaving me master of the field." This was not the only nor even the narrowest escape experienced by Mr. Gordon Cumming when hunting this enormous beast. On another occasion he says:—"Having proceeded about two miles with large herds of game on every side, I observed a crusty looking old bull borèlé or black rhinoceros, cocking his ears one hundred yards in advance. He had not observed us; and soon after he walked slowly towards us, and stood broadside, eating some wait-a-bit

thorns within fifty yards of me. I fired from my saddle, and sent a bullet in behind his shoulder, upon which he rushed forward about one hundred yards in tremendous consternation, blowing like a grampus, and then stood looking about him. Presently he made off. I followed, but found it hard to come up with him. The chase led through a large herd of wildebeests, zebras, and springboks, which gazed at us in utter amazement. At length I fired my second barrel, but my horse was fidgety, and I missed. I continued riding alongside of him, expecting in my ignorance, that at length he would come to bay, which rhinoceroses never do; when suddenly he fell flat on his broadside on the ground, but, recovering his feet resumed his course as if nothing had happened. Becoming at last annoyed at the length of the chase, as I wished to keep my horse fresh for the elephants, and being indifferent whether I got the rhinoceros or not, I determined to bring matters to a crisis, so spurring my horse, I dashed ahead, and rode right in his path. Upon this the hideous monster instantly charged me in the most resolute manner, blowing loudly through his nostrils; and although I quickly wheeled about to my left, he followed me at such a furious pace for several hundred yards, with his horrid horny snout within a few yards of my horse's tail, that my little bushman, who was looking on in great alarm, thought his master's destruction inevitable. It was certainly a very near thing; my horse was extremely afraid and exerted his utmost energies on the occasion. The rhinoceros, however, wheeled about and continued his former course, and I, being perfectly satisfied with the interview which I had already enjoyed with him, had no desire to cultivate his acquaintance any further, and accordingly made for the camp."

The Tame Rhinoceros. Some species of the rhinoceros, if not all, seem to be tamable. The Indian variety distinguished by the thick folds of heavy garment-like skin, which hang from his shoulders, haunches and thighs, **has been trained**

to exercise the same quiet patience which distinguishes the elephant. The paroxysms of rage which Mr. Gordon Cumming describes the African variety as venting upon a harmless bush, or employing in tearing up the earth, have been known to seize those specimens which have been imported into England, as the following account of the rhinoceros, exhibited at Exeter Change, published in the "Philosophical Transactions for 1822," will show. "This animal about a month after it came, endeavoured to kill the keeper, and nearly succeeded. It ran at him with the greatest impetuosity, but, fortunately, the horn passed between his thighs, and threw the keeper on its head; the horn came against a wooden partition, into which the animal forced it to such a depth as to be unable for a minute to withdraw it, and, during this interval, the man escaped. Frequently, (more especially in the middle of the night), fits of frenzy came on; and, while these lasted, nothing could control its rage, the rhinoceros running with great swiftness round the den, playing all kinds of antics, making hideous noises, knocking everything to pieces, disturbing the whole neighbourhood, and then, all at once, becoming quiet. While the fit was on, even the keeper durst not make his approach. The animal fell upon its knee to enable the horn to be borne upon any object. It was quick in all its motions, ate voraciously all kinds of vegetables, appearing to have no selection. They fed it on branches of willow. Three years' confinement made no alteration in its habits." The rhinoceros is said to live for a hundred years.

The Hippopotamus. The Hippopotamus introduces the second sub-order of the hoofed animals, the *Artiodactyla*, animals having an even number of toes. There is but one genus of the Hippopotamus and two species, the Hippopotamus of the great rivers of Southern Africa, and the Liberian Hippopotamus of the West. The Hippopotamus is gregarious, congregating in the deep shady pools and on the sandy