

ECCENTRICITIES
OF
THE ANIMAL CREATION.

BY JOHN TIMBS,
AUTHOR OF "THINGS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN."

WITH EIGHT ENGRAVINGS.



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THE RHINOCEROS IN ENGLAND.

THE intellectual helps to the study of zoology are nowhere more strikingly evident than in the finest collection of pachyderms (thick-skinned animals) in the world, now possessed by our Zoological Society. Here we have a pair of Indian Elephants, a pair of African Elephants, a pair of Hippopotami, a pair of Indian Rhinoceroses, and an African or two-horned Rhinoceros.

The specimens of the Rhinoceros which have been exhibited in Europe since the revival of literature have been few and far between. The first was of the one-horned species, sent from India to Emmanuel, King of Portugal, in the year 1513. The Sovereign made a present of it to the Pope; but the animal being seized during its passage with a fit of fury, occasioned the loss of the vessel in which it was transported. A second Rhinoceros was brought to England in 1685; a third was exhibited over almost the whole of Europe in 1739; and a fourth, a female, in 1741. A fifth specimen arrived at Versailles in

1771, and it died in 1793, at the age of about twenty-six years. The sixth was a very young Rhinoceros, which died in this country in the year 1800. The seventh, a young specimen, was in the possession of Mr. Cross, at Exeter Change, about 1814; and an eighth specimen was living about the same time in the Garden of Plants at Paris. In 1834 Mr. Cross received at the Surrey Gardens, from the Birman empire, a Rhinoceros, a year and a-half old, as already stated at page 21. In 1851 the Zoological Society purchased a full-grown female Rhinoceros; and in 1864 they received a male Rhinoceros from Calcutta. All these specimens were from India, and *one-horned*; so that the *two-horned* Rhinoceros had not been brought to England until the arrival of an African Rhinoceros, *two-horned*, in September, 1868.*

The ancient history of the Rhinoceros is interesting, but intricate. It seems to be mentioned in several passages of the Scriptures, in most of which the animal or animals intended to be designated was or were the *Rhinoceros unicornis*, or Great Asiatic one-horned Rhinoceros. M. Lesson expresses a decided opinion to this effect: indeed, the description in Job (chap. xxxix.) would almost forbid the

* The conveyance of a Rhinoceros over sea is a labour of some risk. In 1814 a full-grown specimen on his voyage from Calcutta to this country became so furious that he was fastened down to the ship's deck, with part of a chain-cable round his neck; and even then he succeeded in destroying a portion of the vessel, till, a heavy storm coming on, the Rhinoceros was thrown overboard to prevent the serious consequence of his getting loose in the ship.

conclusion that any animal was in the writer's mind except one of surpassing bulk and indomitable strength. The impotence of man is finely contrasted with the might of the Rhinoceros in this description, which would be overcharged if it applied to the less powerful animals alluded to in the previous passages.

It has also been doubted whether accounts of the Indian Wild Ass, given by Ctesias, were not highly coloured and exaggerated descriptions of this genus; and whether the Indian Ass of Aristotle was not a Rhinoceros.

Agatharchides describes the one-horned Rhinoceros by name, and speaks of its ripping up the belly of the Elephant. This is, probably, the earliest occurrence of the name *Rhinoceros*. The Rhinoceros which figured in the celebrated pomps of Ptolemy Philadelphus was an Ethiopian, and seems to have marched last in the procession of wild animals, probably on account of its superior rarity, and immediately after the Cameleopard.

Dion Cassius speaks of the Rhinoceros killed in the circus with a Hippopotamus in the show given by Augustus to celebrate his victory over Cleopatra; he says that the Hippopotamus and this animal were then first seen and killed at Rome. The Rhinoceros then slain is thought to have been African, and two-horned.

The Rhinoceros clearly described by Strabo, as seen by him, was one-horned. That noticed by Pausanias as "the Bull of Ethiopia," was two-horned, and he describes the relative position of the horns.

Wood, in his "Zoography," gives an engraving of the coin of Domitian (small Roman brass), on the reverse of which is the distinct form of a two-horned Rhinoceros: its exhibition to the Roman people, probably of the very animal represented on the coin, is particularly described in one of the epigrams attributed to Martial, who lived in the reigns of Titus and Domitian. By the description of the epigram it appears that a combat between a Rhinoceros and a Bear was intended, but that it was very difficult to irritate the more unwieldy animal so as to make him display his usual ferocity; at length, however, he tossed the bear from his double horn, with as much facility as a bull tosses to the sky the bundles placed for the purpose of enraging him. Thus far the coin and the epigram perfectly agree as to the existence of the double horn; but, unfortunately, commentators and antiquaries were not to be convinced that a Rhinoceros could have more than one horn, and have at once displayed their sagacity and incredulity in their explanations on the subject.

Two, at least, of the two-horned Rhinoceroses were shown at Rome in the reign of Domitian. The Emperors Antoninus, Heliogabalus, and Gordian also exhibited Rhinoceroses. Cosmas speaks expressly of the Ethiopian Rhinoceros as having two horns, and of its power of moving them.

The tractability of the Asiatic Rhinoceros has been confirmed by observers in the native country of the animal. Bishop Heber saw at Lucknow five or six very large Rhinoceroses, of which he found that prints

and drawings had given him a very imperfect conception. They were more bulky animals, and of a darker colour than the Bishop supposed ; though the latter difference might be occasioned by oiling the skin. The folds of their skin also surpassed all which the Bishop had expected. Those at Lucknow were quiet and gentle animals, except that one of them had a feud with horses. They had sometimes howdahs, or chaise-like seats, on their backs, and were once fastened in a carriage, but only as an experiment, which was not followed up. The Bishop, however, subsequently saw a Rhinoceros (the present of Lord Amherst to the Guicwar), which was so tamed as to be ridden by a Mohout quite as patiently as an elephant.

No two-horned Rhinoceros seems to have been brought alive to Europe in modern times. Indeed, up to a comparatively late period, their form was known only by the horns which were preserved in museums ; nor did voyagers give any sufficient details to impart any clear idea of the form of the animal. The rude figure given by Aldrovandus, in 1639, leaves no doubt that, wretched as it is, it must have been taken from a two-horned Rhinoceros.

Dr. Parsons endeavoured to show that the one-horned Rhinoceros always belonged to Asia, and the two-horned Rhinoceros to Africa ; but there are two-horned Rhinoceroses in Asia, as well as in Africa. Flacourt saw one in the Bay of Soldaque, near the Cape of Good Hope, at a distance. Kolbe and others always considered the Rhinoceros of the Cape as two-

horned ; but Colonel Gordon seems to be the first who entirely detailed the species with any exactness. Sparrman described the Cape Rhinoceros, though his figure of the animal is stiff and ill-drawn. At this period it was well known that the Cape species was not only distinguished by having two horns from the Indian Rhinoceros then known, but also by an absence of the folds of the skin so remarkable in the latter.

We should here notice the carelessness, to call it by the mildest name, of Bruce, who gave to the world a representation of a two-horned Rhinoceros from Abyssinia, with a strongly folded skin. The truth appears to be that the body of the animal figured by Bruce was copied from that of the one-horned Rhinoceros given by Buffon, to which Bruce added a second horn. Salt proved that the Abyssinian Rhinoceros is two-horned, and that it resembles that of the Cape.

Sparmann exposes the errors and poetic fancies of Buffon respecting the impenetrable nature of the skin. He ordered one of his Hottentots to make a trial of this with his *hassagai* on a Rhinoceros which had been shot. Though this weapon was far from being in good order, and had no other sharpness than that which it had received from the forge, the Hottentot, at the distance of five or six paces, not only pierced with it the thick hide of the animal, but buried it half a foot deep in its body.

Mr. Tegetmeier has sufficiently described in the "Field" journal the African Rhinoceros just re-

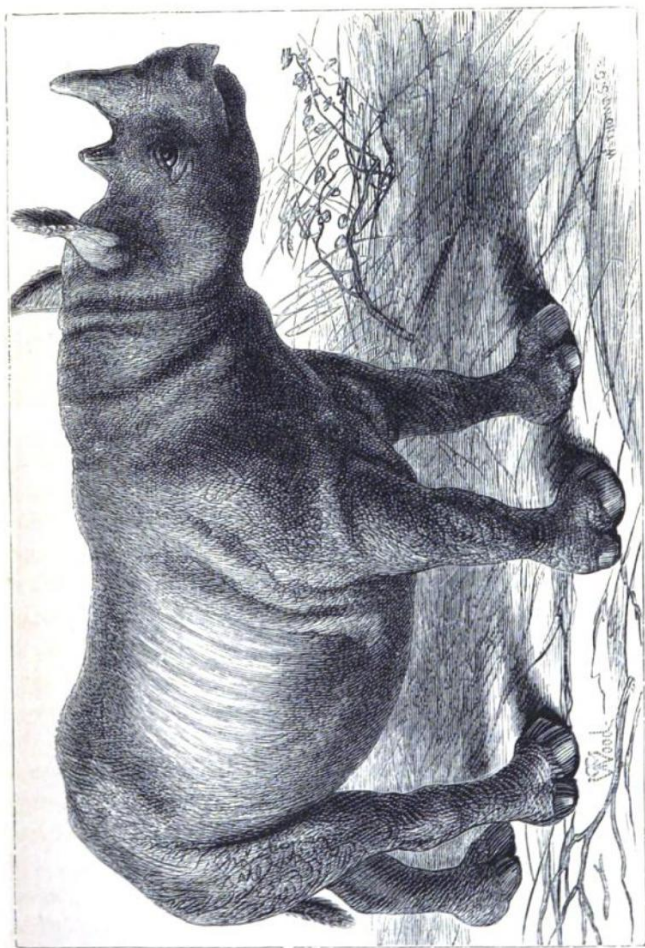
ceived at the Zoological Society's menagerie in the Regent's-park, and which has been sketched by Mr. T. W. Wood expressly for the present volume.

It was captured about a year ago in Upper Nubia by the native hunters in the employment of Mr. Casanova, at Kassala; and was sent, by way of Alexandria and Trieste, to Mr. Karl Hagenbeck, of Hamburg, a dealer in wild beasts, who sold it to the Zoological Society.

“This animal is very distinct from its Asiatic congeners; it differs strikingly in the number of horns, as well as in the character of its skin, which is destitute of those large folds, which cause the Indian species to remind the observer of a gigantic ‘hog in armour.’

“The arrival of this animal will tend to clear up the confusion that prevails respecting the number of distinct species of African Rhinoceros. Some writers—as Sir W. C. Harris—admit the existence of two species only, the dark and the light, or, as they are termed, the ‘white’ and the ‘black.’ Others, as Dr. A. Smith, describe three; some, as the late Mr. Anderssen, write of four; and Mr. Chapman even speaks of a fifth species or hybrid.

“Three of these species are very distinctly defined—the ordinary dark animal, the *Rhinoceros bicornis*, in which the posterior horn is much shorter than the anterior; the *Rhinoceros keitloa*, in which the two horns are of equal length; and the ‘white’ species, *Rhinoceros simus*. The last, among other characters, is, according to Dr. Smith,



THE TWO-HORNED AFRICAN RHINOCEROS.

distinguished by the square character of the upper lip, which is not prehensile.

“The young animal now (October, 1868) in the Zoological Society’s garden, appears to belong to the first-named species, the largest specimens of which when full grown reach a height of 6ft., and a length of 13ft., the tail not included. Its present height is $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft., and length about 6ft. In general appearance the mature animal resembles a gigantic pig, the limbs being brought under the body. The feet are most singular in form, being very distinctly three-toed, and the remarkable trefoil-like *spoons* that they make in the soil render the animal easy to track. The horns vary greatly in length in different animals; the first not unfrequently reaches a length of 2ft., the second being considerably shorter. These appendages differ very much from ordinary horns; they are, in fact, more of the nature of agglutinated hair, being attached to the skin only, and consequently they separate from the skull when the latter is preserved.

“The head is not remarkable for comeliness, especially in the mature animal, in which the skin of the face is deeply wrinkled, and the small eyes are surrounded with many folds. The upper lip is elongated, and is used in gathering the food. The adult animals are described by Sir W. C. Harris, in his ‘Illustrations of the Game Animals of South Africa,’ as ‘swinish, cross-grained, ill-tempered, wallowing brutes.’”

Mr. Burchell, during his travels in Africa, shot

nine Rhinoceroses, besides a smaller one. The latter he presented to the British Museum. The animal is, however, becoming every day more and more scarce in Southern Africa ; indeed, it is rarely to be met with in some parts. It appears that, in one day, two Rhinoceroses were shot by Speelman, the faithful Hottentot who attended Mr. Burchell. He fired off his gun but twice, and each time he killed a Rhinoceros ! The animal's sense of hearing is very quick : should he be disturbed, he sometimes becomes furious, and pursues his enemy ; and then, if once he gets sight of the hunter, it is scarcely possible for him to escape, unless he possesses extraordinary coolness and presence of mind. Yet, if he will quietly wait till the enraged animal makes a run at him, and will then spring suddenly on one side, to let it pass, he may gain time enough for reloading his gun before the Rhinoceros gets sight of him again, which, fortunately, owing to its imperfection of sight, it does slowly and with difficulty.

Speelman, in shooting a large male Rhinoceros, used bullets cast with an admixture of tin, to render them harder. They were flattened and beat out of shape by striking against the bones, but those which were found lodged in the fleshy parts had preserved their proper form, a fact which shows how little the hardness of the creature's hide corresponds with the vulgar opinion of its being impenetrable to a musket-ball. Mr. Burchell found this Rhinoceros nearly cut up. On each side of the carcass the Hottentots had made a fire to warm themselves ; and round a

third fire were assembled at least twenty-four Bushmen, most of whom were employed the whole night long in broiling, eating, and talking. Their appetite seemed insatiable, for no sooner had they broiled and eaten one slice of meat than they turned to the carcase and cut another. The meat was excellent, and had much the taste of beef. "The tongue," says Mr. Burchell, "is a dainty treat, even for an epicure." The hide is cut into strips, three feet or more in length, rounded to the thickness of a man's finger, and tapering to the top. This is called a *shambok*, and is universally used in the colony of the Cape for a horsewhip, and is much more durable than the whips of European manufacture. The natural food of the Rhinoceros, till the animal fled before the colonists, was a pale, bushy shrub, called the Rhinoceros-bush, which burns while green as freely as the driest fuel, so as readily to make a roadside fire.

The horn of the Rhinoceros, single or double, has its special history by the way of popular tradition. From the earliest times this horn has been supposed to possess preservative virtues and mysterious properties—to be capable of curing diseases and discovering the presence of poison; and in all countries where the Rhinoceros exists, but especially in the East, such is still the opinion respecting it. In the details of the first voyage of the English to India, in 1591, we find Rhinoceros' horns monopolised by the native sovereigns on account of their reputed virtues in detecting the presence of poison.

Thunberg observes, in his "Journey into Caffraria," that "the horns of the Rhinoceros were kept by some people, both in town and country, not only as rarities, but also as useful in diseases, and for the purpose of detecting poisons. As to the former of these intentions, the fine shavings were supposed to cure convulsions and spasms in children. With respect to the latter, it was generally believed that goblets made of these horns would discover a poisonous draught that was poured into them, by making the liquor ferment till it ran quite out of the goblet. Of these horns goblets are made, which are set in gold and silver and presented to kings, persons of distinction, and particular friends, or else sold at a high price, sometimes at the rate of fifty rix-dollars each." Thunberg adds:—"When I tried these horns, both wrought and unwrought, both old and young horns, with several sorts of poison, weak as well as strong, I observed not the least motion or effervescence; but when a solution of corrosive sublimate or other similar substance was poured into one of these horns, there arose only a few bubbles, produced by the air which had been enclosed in the pores of the horn and which were now disengaged."

Rankin (in his "Wars and Sports") states this mode of using it: a small quantity of water is put into the concave part of the root, then hold it with the point downwards and stir the water with the point of an iron nail till it is discoloured, when the patient is to drink it.

IS THE UNICORN FABULOUS?

TO this question we may reply, in the words of a writer of 1633, "Concerning the Unicorn, different opinions prevail among authors: some doubt, others deny, and a third class affirm its existence." The question has lasted two thousand years, and is every now and then kept alive by fresh evidences.

Ctesias, a credulous Greek physician, who appears to have resided at the Court of Persia, in the time of the younger Cyrus, about 400 years before the birth of Christ, describes the wild asses of India as equal to the horse in size, and even larger, with white bodies, red heads, bluish eyes, and a horn on the forehead a cubit in length; the part from the forehead entirely white, the middle black, and the extremity red and pointed. Drinking-vessels were made of it, and those who used them were subject neither to convulsions, epilepsy, nor poison, provided that before taking the poison, or after, they drank from these cups water, wine, or any other liquor. Ctesias

describes these animals as very swift and very strong. Naturally they were not ferocious; but when they found themselves and their young surrounded by horsemen, they did not abandon their offspring, but defended themselves by striking with their horns, kicking, and biting, and so slew many men and horses. This animal was also shot with arrows and brought down with darts; for it was impossible to take it alive. Its flesh was too bitter for food, but it was hunted for its horn and astragalus (ankle-bone), which last Ctesias declares he saw. Aristotle describes the Indian ass with a single horn. Herodotus mentions asses having horns; and Strabo refers to Unicorn horses, with the heads of deers. Oppian notices the Aonian bulls with undivided hoofs, and a single median horn between their temples. Pliny notices it as a very ferocious beast, similar in its body to a horse, with the head of a deer, the feet of an elephant, the tail of a boar, a deep bellowing voice, and a single black horn standing out in the middle of its forehead. He adds, that it cannot be taken alive; and some such excuse may have been necessary in those days for not producing the living animal upon the arena of the amphitheatre.

Out of this passage most of the modern Unicorns have been described and figured. The body of the horse and the head of the deer appear to be but vague sketches; the feet of the elephant and the tail of the boar point at once to a pachydermatous (thick-skinned) animal; and the single black horn, allow-

ing for a little exaggeration as to its length, well fits the two last-mentioned conditions, and will apply to the Indian rhinoceros, which, says the sound naturalist, Ogilby, "affords a remarkable instance of the obstructions which the progress of knowledge may suffer, and the gross absurdities which not unfrequently result from the wrong application of a name." Mr. Ogilby then refers to the account of Ctesias, which we have just quoted, and adds:—"His account, though mixed up with a great deal of credulous absurdity, contains a very valuable and perfectly recognisable description of the rhinoceros, under the ridiculous name, however, of the *Indian Ass*; and, as he attributed to it a whole hoof like the horse, and a single horn in the forehead, speculation required but one step further to produce the fabulous Unicorn."

The ancient writers who have treated of the Unicorn are too numerous for us to specify. Some of the moderns may be referred to. Garcias describes this marvellous creature from one who alleges that he had seen it. The seer affirmed that it was endowed with a wonderful horn, which it would sometimes turn to the left and right, at others raise, and then again depress. Ludovicus Vartomanus writes, that he saw two sent to the Sultan from Ethiopia, and kept in a repository at Mahomet's tomb in Mecca. Cardan describes the Unicorn as a rare animal, the size of a horse, with hair very like that of a weasel, with the head of a deer, on which one horn grows three cubits in length (a story seldom

loses anything in its progress) from the forehead, ample at its lowest part, and tapering to a point; with a short neck, a very thin mane, leaning to one side only, and less on the ear, as those of a young roe.

In Jonston's "Historia Naturalis," 1657, we see the smooth-horned solipede, "Wald Esel;" and the digitated and clawed smooth-horned "Meer Wolff," the latter with his single horn erect in the foreground, but with it depressed in the background, where he is represented regaling on serpents. Then there are varieties, with the head, mane, and tail of a horse; another smooth-horned, with a horse's head and mane, a pig's-tail and camel-like feet; the "Meer Stenbock, Capricornus Marinus," with hind webbed feet, and a kind of graduated horn, like an opera-glass pulled out, in the foreground, and charging the fish most valiantly in the water in the distance. Then there is another, with a mule's head and two rhinoceros-like horns, one on his forehead and the other on his nose; and a horse's tail, with a collar round his neck; a neck entirely shaggy—and a twisted horn, a shaggy gorget, and curly tail, are among other peculiarities.

The Unicorn seems to have been a sad trouble to the hunters, who hardly knew how to come at so valuable a piece of game. Some described the horn as moveable at the will of the animal—a kind of small sword, in short, with which no hunter who was not exceedingly cunning in fence could have a chance. Others told the poor foresters that all the strength lay in its horn, and that when pressed by them it

would throw itself from the pinnacle of the highest rock, horn foremost, so as to pitch upon it, and then quietly march off not a bit the worse!

Modern zoologists, disgusted as they well may be with fables, such as we have glanced at, disbelieve, generally, the existence of the Unicorn, such, at least, as we have referred to; but there is still an opinion that some land animal bearing a horn on the anterior part of its head, exists besides the rhinoceros. The nearest approach to a horn in the middle of the forehead of any terrestrial mammiferous animal known to us is the bony protuberance on the forehead of the giraffe; and though it would be presumptuous to deny the existence of a one-horned quadruped other than the rhinoceros, it may be safely stated that the insertion of a long and solid horn in the living forehead of a horse-like or deer-like cranium is as near an impossibility as anything can be.

Rupell, after a long sojourn in the north-east of Africa, stated that in Kordofan the Unicorn exists; stated to be the size of a small horse, of the slender make of the gazelle, and furnished with a long straight horn in the male, which was wanting in the female. According to the statements made by various persons, it inhabits the deserts to the south of Kordofan, is uncommonly fleet, and comes only occasionally to the Koldagi Heive mountains on the borders of Kordofan.

Other writers refer the Unicorn to the antelope. The origin of the name of antelope is traced by

Cuvier to the Greek *Anthalops*, applied to a fabulous animal living on the banks of the Euphrates, with long jagged horns, with which it sawed down trees of considerable thickness! Others conjecture this animal to have been the *Oryx*, a species of antelope, which is fabulously reported to have had only one horn, and to have been termed *Panthalops* in the old language of Egypt.

In his "Revolutions on the Surface of the Globe," Cuvier refers the idea of the Unicorn to the coarse figures traced by savages on rocks. Ignorant of perspective, and wishing to present in profile the horned antelope, they could only give it one horn; and thus originated the *Oryx*. The oryx of the Egyptian monuments is, most probably, but the production of a similarly crude style, which the religion of the country imposed on the artist. Many of the profiles of quadrupeds have only one leg before and one behind: why, then, should they show two horns? It is possible that individual animals might be taken in the chase whom accident had despoiled of one horn, as it often happens to chamois and the Scythian antelope; and that would suffice to confirm the error which these pictures originally produced. It is thus, probably, that we find anew the Unicorn in the mountains of Thibet.

The *Chiru Antelope* is the supposed Unicorn of the Bhotians. In form it approaches the deer; the horns are exceedingly long, are placed very forward in the head, and may be popularly described as erect and straight. It is usually found in herds,

and is extremely wild, and unapproachable by man. It is much addicted to salt in summer, when vast herds are often seen at the rock-salt beds which abound in Tibet. They are said to advance under the conduct of a leader, and to post sentinels around the beds before they attempt to feed.

Major Salter is stated to have obtained information of the existence of an animal in Tibet closely resembling the Unicorn of the ancients, which revived the belief of naturalists by adducing testimonies from Oriental writings. Upon this statement, M. Klaproth remarks, that previous to Major Salter's Reports, the Catholic missionaries, who returned to Europe from China by way of Tibet and Nepal, in the seventeenth century, mentioned that the Unicorn was found in that part of the Great Desert which bounds China to the west, where they crossed the great wall; that Captain Turner, when travelling in Tibet, was informed by the Raja of Boutan that he had one of these animals alive; and that Bell, in his "Travels to Peking," describes a Unicorn which was found on the southern front of Siberia. He adds:—"The great 'Tibetan-Mongol Dictionary' mentions the Unicorn; and the 'Geographical Dictionary of Tibet and Central Asia,' printed at Peking, where it describes a district in the province of Kham, in Tibet, named Sera-zeong, explains this name by 'the River of Unicorns,' because," adds the author, "many of these animals are found there."

In the "History of the Mongol-Khans," published and translated at St. Petersburg, we find the follow-

ing statement:—Genghiz Khan, having subjected all Tibet in 1206, commenced his march for Hindustan. As he ascended Mount Jadanarung, he beheld a beast approaching him of the deer kind, of the species called *Seron*, which have a single horn at the top of the head. It fell on its knees thrice before the monarch, as if to pay respect to him. Every one was astonished at this incident. The monarch exclaimed, "The Empire of Hindustan is, we are assured, the country where are born the majestic Buddhas and Bodhisatwas, as well as the potent Bogdas and princes of antiquity: what can be the meaning, then, of this animal, incapable of speech, saluting me like a man?" Upon this, he returned to his own country. "This story," continues M. Klaproth, "is also related by Mahommedan authors who have written the life of Genghiz. Something of the kind must, therefore, have taken place. Possibly, some of the Mongol conqueror's suite may have taken a Unicorn, which Genghiz thus employed, to gain a pretext for abstaining from an expedition which promised no success."

Upon this statement, it was observed in the "Asiatic Register," 1839, that "when we consider that seventeen years have elapsed since the account of Major Salter was given, and that, notwithstanding our increased opportunities of intercourse with Tibet, no fact has since transpired which supplies a confirmation of that account, except the obtaining of a supposed horn of the supposed Unicorn, we cannot participate in these renewed hopes."

The Rev. John Campbell, in his "Travels in South Africa," describes the head of another animal, which, as far as the horn is concerned, seems to approach nearer than the common rhinoceros to the Unicorn of the ancients. While in the Machow territory, the Hottentots brought to Mr. Campbell a head differing from that of any rhinoceros that had been previously killed. "The common African rhinoceros has a crooked horn, resembling a cock's spur, which rises about nine or ten inches above the nose, and inclines backward; immediately behind which is a straight thick horn. But the head brought by the Hottentots had a straight horn projecting three feet from the forehead, about ten inches above the tip of the nose. The projection of this great horn very much resembles that of the fanciful Unicorn in the British arms. It has a small thick horny substance, eight inches long, immediately behind it, which can hardly be observed on the animal at the distance of a hundred yards; so that this species must look like an Unicorn (in the sense 'one-horned') when running in the field." The author adds:—"This animal is considered by naturalists, since the arrival of the above skull in London, to be the Unicorn of the ancients, and the same that is described in Job xxxix. 9—'Will the Unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? 10. Canst thou bind the Unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? 11. Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?' Again, Deuteronomy xxxiii. 17—

‘His horns are like the horns of Unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth.’ ”

A fragment of the skull, with the horn, is deposited in the Museum of the London Missionary Society.

Mr. W. B. Baikie writes to the *Athenæum* from Bida Núpe, Central Africa, in 1862, the following suggestions:—“When I ascended the Niger, now nearly five years ago, I frequently heard allusions to an animal of this nature, but at that time I set it down as a myth. Since then, however, the amount of testimony I have received, and the universal belief of the natives of all the countries which I have hitherto visited, have partly shaken my scepticism, and at present I simply hold that its non-existence is not proven. A skull of this animal is said to be preserved in a town in the country of Bonú, through which I hope to pass in the course of a few weeks, when I shall make every possible inquiry. Two among my informants have repeatedly declared to me that they have seen the bones of this animal, and each made particular mention of the long, straight, or nearly straight, black horn. In countries to the east, and south-east, as Márgi and Bagirmi, where the one-horned rhinoceros is found, the hunters carefully distinguished between it and the supposed Unicorn, and give them different names. In the vast forests and boundless wastes which occur over Central Africa, especially towards the countries south and east of Lake Tsád, Bórnú, Bagirmi and

Adamáwa, are doubtless numerous zoological curiosities as yet unknown to the man of science, and among them possibly may exist this much-talked-of, strange, one-horned animal, even though it may not exactly correspond with our typical English Unicorn."

The factitious horn has been preserved in various Museums. The "Monocero Horn," in Tradescant's collection, was, probably, that which ordinarily has passed for the horn of the Unicorn, namely, the tooth of a narwhal. Old legends assert that the Unicorn, when he goes to drink, first dips his horn in the water to purify it, and that other beasts delay to quench their thirst till the Unicorn has thus sweetened the water. The narwhal's tooth makes a capital twisted Unicorn's horn, as represented in the old figures. That in the Repository of St. Denis, at Paris, was presented by Thevet, and was declared to have been given to him by the King of Monomotapa, who took him out to hunt Unicorns, which are frequent in that country. Some have thought that this horn was a carved elephant's tooth. There is one at Strasburg, some seven or eight feet in length, and there are several in Venice.

Great medical virtues were attributed to the so-called horn, and the price it once bore outdoes everything in the *Tulipomania*. A Florentine physician has recorded that a pound of it (sixteen ounces) was sold in the shops for fifteen hundred and thirty-six crowns, when the same weight in gold would only have brought one hundred and forty-eight crowns.

From what source we derive the stories of the animosity between the lion and the Unicorn is not clearly understood, although this is the principal medium through which the fabulous creature has been kept in remembrance by being constantly before us in the Royal Arms, which were settled at the Accession of George I. We owe the introduction of the Unicorn, however, to James I., who, as King of Scotland, bore two Unicorns, and coupled one with the English lion, when the two kingdoms were united.

The position of the lion and Unicorn in the arms of our country seems to have given rise (naturally enough in the mind of one who was ignorant of heraldic decoration) to a nursery rhyme which most of us remember:—

“The Lion and the Unicorn
Were fighting for the crown ;
The Lion beat the Unicorn
All round the town,” &c.

unless it alludes to a contest for dominion over the brute creation, which the “rebellious Unicorn,” as Spenser calls it, seems to have waged with the tawny monarch.

Spenser, in his “Faerie Queen,” gives the following curious way of catching the Unicorn:—

“Like as a lyon, whose imperiall powre,
A proud rebellious Unicorn defyes,
T'avoide the rash assault and wrathful stowre
Of his fiers foe, him a tree applyes,
And when him rousing in full course he spyes,

He slips aside ; the whiles that furious beast
His precious horne, sought of his enemyes,
Strikes in the stocke, ne thence can be releast,
But to the mighty victor yields a bounteous feast."

Shakspeare, also ("Julius Cæsar," Act ii. scene 1),
speaks of the supposed mode of entrapping them :—

"For he loves to hear
That Unicorns may be betrayed with trees,
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,
Lions with toils, and men with flatterers."

We have no satisfactory reason for believing that man ever coexisted with Mastodons ; otherwise Professor Owen's discovery of the retention of a single tusk only by the male gigantic Mastodon, might have afforded another form of Unicorn.

Whatever the zoologists may have done towards extirpating the belief in the existence of the Unicorn, it is ever kept in sight by heraldry, which, with its animal absurdities, has contributed more to the propagation of error respecting the natural world than any other species of misrepresentation.