

# THE ROVER.

## THE RHINOCEROS IN HIS NATIVE WILDS.

WITH AN ENGRAVING.

THE excellent plate we present the readers of the Rover this week was engraved in London for the Oriental Annual. As a specimen of art it is eminently beautiful. Being desirous of having so fine an engraving accompanied by appropriate letter-press illustration, and the writers in the neighborhood being pretty much "used up," we took occasion to write to our old friend Major Downing, of Downingville, in the State of Maine, to give us a little friendly aid in the matter. The following is his very satisfactory reply.

DOWNINGVILLE, Feb. 26, 1844.

My dear old friend—I received your letter and the picter about three days ago, and have been chawing upon it ever since. It was a new kind of business to me and I didn't know jest exactly how to take hold of it. When Lilly, Waite & Co. published my book of letters in Boston some years ago, it had picters in it, but the business was done t'other eend foremost then. That is, I didn't write the letters to match the picters, but they made the picters to match the letters. But they say it's a poor rule that wont work both ways, and I dont know but the business may be done one way as well as the other. And if I can be any help to you in this kind of way once in awhile, as you have so many of them picters to publish, I shall be very glad to do it; for I haint forgot the kindness and favor you used to show me in the Gineral's time.

When I got your picter of the rhinoceros, I took it into the house and showed it to aunt Keziah and cousin Nabby, and asked them what they thought of *that*. Aunt Keziah held up her hands in parfect astonishment, and said she thought he was the awfulest looking critter she ever see. Cousin Nabby said no; for her part she thought the whole picter was beautiful. Them birds standing in the water, and them little deers running up the mountain, and altogether it was the prettiest thing she had seen for a long time. But she said she couldn't think what they need to have them great speckled blankets spread over the rhinoceros for.

"Why," says aunt Keziah, says she, "dont you know, Nabby, they wouldn't dare to print animals without blankets or something over em, since them ministers in the Jarseys come out so against Harpers' bible."

At that I burst out a laughing, for I couldn't hold in no longer. And says I, he hasn't got a sign of a blanket on him; that is nothin but his skin; he's got a skin as thick as a pine board. And then I went to uncle Joshua's library and took down a book that told all about him, and Nabby sot down and read the whole of it.

"Well now," says I, "Nabby, I've got three extra loads of cheap literature come in to-day, right from York; and I shall have to go and help the boys and Zeb in packin and pilin away all day; and I dont see how I can stop to write about this rhinoceros for the editor of the Rover, and being you are pretty keen with a pen you must set down and do it."

Well, Nabby said she would, for she's an accomodatin creeter. "But," says she, "must I write in prose or poetry?"

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"Well," says I, "for that matter, I suppose every writer has a right to cook his own fish in his own way. But seein you've got a good deal of jingle in your head, I kind of think you'd do best in the poetry line."

"Well," says Nabby, says she, "I think so too, for it's the most poetical subject I've come across for a long time." And away she went to get her pen and ink, and I went off to work; and when I come back in the evening she'd got it all spun out as fine as silk. I send you a copy of it below, hoping it'll answer your turn first rate. Nabby says she dont want you to put her name to it; but I say go ahead and put the name on; no cloaks in literature; that's my way. In the mean time I remain your old friend,

MAJOR JACK DOWNING.

## THE RHINOCEROS.

BY NABBY DOWNING.

Of all the animals under the sun,  
That roam the earth, I doubt  
If ever you'll find a more curious one,  
Than this I am writing about.

His name is Rhinoceros—sweet sounding word,  
On purpose for poetry made,  
And *should* be familiar and greatly preferr'd  
By all who are poets by trade,

He lives in Siam and old Bengal,  
And some parts of Africa,  
And he'll whip any animal, great or small,  
And drive ten thousand away.

He is twelve feet long and twelve feet round,  
And five or six feet high,  
With a leg as stout as an elephant's,  
And a most tremendous eye.

You may pound his tough hide with all your might,  
And he never will feel the blows;  
And the terrible horn is a terrible sight,  
That grows at the end of his nose.

The baby rhinoceros, two years of age,  
Has an inch of horn or so;  
But when he grows up to be old and strong,  
This monstrous horn is three feet long,  
And can battle with any foe.

He will tear down trees full thirty feet high,  
And strip them up, they say,  
Into basket stuff quite thin and fine,  
And then on a cord or so will dine,  
As an ox will dine on hay.

He walks about on his native hills,  
And in the silent dell;  
And rolls all day in the muddy pool  
Where the mountain shadows are deep and cool,  
For he loves his pleasure well.

He's gentle and quiet as any lamb,  
If you dont provoke his ire;  
But if a war with him you wage,  
He shakes the very earth in his rage,  
And his eye-balls flash with fire.

The flame of love the rhinoceros feels,  
And grieves if his mate be missing;  
And why should not love in his heart have birth?  
For there's not another lip on earth  
Can do such mighty kissing.

For the benefit of those who may like to know what the old fashioned writers say about the rhinoceros, before the present improvements in literature came about, we subjoin the description of this animal from Nicholson's Encyclopedia.

**RHINOCEROS**, in natural history, a genus of mammalia of the order Feræ. Generic character: horn solid, perennial, conical, seated on the nose, but not adhering to the bone. This quadruped is exceeded in size only by the elephant. Its usual length, not including the tail, is twelve feet; and the circumference of its body nearly the same. Its nose is armed with a horny substance, projecting, in the full grown animal, nearly three feet, and is a weapon of defence, which almost secures it from every attack. Even the tiger, with all his ferocity, is but very rarely daring enough to assail the rhinoceros. Its upper lip is of considerable length and pliability, acting like a species of snout, grasping the shoots of trees and various substances, conveys them to the mouth, and it is capable of extension and contraction at the animal's convenience. The skin is, in some parts, so thick and hard, as scarcely to be penetrable by the sharpest sabre, or even by a musket-ball. These animals are to be found in Bengal, Siam, China, and in several countries of Africa; but are less numerous than the elephant, and of sequestered solitary habits. The female produces only one at a birth; and at the age of two years the horn is only an inch long, and at six only of the length of nine inches. The rhinoceros is not ferocious unless when provoked, when he exhibits paroxysms of rage and madness, and is highly dangerous to those who encounter him. He runs with great swiftness, and dashes through brakes the woods with an energy to which everything yields. It is generally, however, quiet and inoffensive. Its food consists entirely of vegetables, the tender branches of trees, and succulent herbage, of which it will devour immense quantities. It delights in retired and cool situations, near lakes and streams, and appears to derive one of the highest satisfactions from the practice of rolling and wallowing in mud: in this respect bearing a striking resemblance to the hog.

This animal was exhibited, by Augustus, to the Romans, and is supposed to be the unicorn of the Scripture, as it possesses the properties ascribed to that animal, of magnitude, strength, and swiftness, in addition to that peculiarity of a single horn, which may be considered as establishing their identity. This animal can distinguish, by its sight, only what is directly before it, and always, when pursued, takes the course immediately before him, almost without the slightest deviation from a right line, removing every impediment. Its sense of smelling is very acute, and also of hearing, and on both these accounts, the hunters approach him against the wind. In general, they watch his lying down to sleep, when advancing with the greatest circumspection, they discharge their muskets into his belly. The flesh is eaten both in Africa and India.

**R. bicornis**, or the two-horned rhinoceros, is similar in size and manners to the former, and is principally

distinguished from it by having two horns on its nose; the first being always the largest, and sometimes a foot and a half in length. These horny substances are said to be loose when the animal reposes, or is calm, but to be erected immovably, when he is highly agitated; a circumstance asserted by Dr. Sparman, though ridiculed by Mr. Bruce. It is however, observed by Dr. Shaw, that on inspection of the horns and the skin on which they are seated, they do not appear firmly attached to the bone of the cranium. This animal, after having devoured the foliage of trees, rips up their trunks, and dividing them with his horns into a sort of laths, fills his immense jaws with these fruits of his labor, and masticates them with as much facility as an ox does grass. Its swiftness is great, considering its bulk, but its security arises not so much from speed, as from its directing its course to thickets and woods, where sapless trees are broken by its violence, and green ones, after yielding to it, recoil upon the pursuers, and strike them from their horse sometimes with fatal consequences. In an open plain the horse speedily overtakes him, on which he makes a trust with his horn at the horse, which the latter readily evades by its agility. A man at this moment drops from behind the chief horseman, with a spear, and as the rhinoceros sees only immediately before him, wounds him in the tendons of his heels, and thus totally disables him from further motion. He is also occasionally taken by night while rolling himself in mire, in which he appears to experience a rapture which deprives him of all suspicion and vigilance: while thus abandoning himself to transport, the hunters approach and fix a mortal wound, by the spears or muskets, in his belly.

#### THE DUEL.

BY THE EDITOR OF ZION'S HERALD AND JOURNAL.

The Rev. Mr. M—— was a veteran itinerant preacher of the West. He related many incidents of his itinerant life. Among them was the following, which I give in his own words as near as possible:

About four miles from N—— is an extensive grove, well known as the scene of several fatal duels. As I passed it one morning on my way to my appointment in that town, I perceived a horse and vehicle among the trees, guarded by a solitary man who appeared to be the driver. My suspicions were immediately excited, but I rode on. About a mile beyond I met another carriage, containing four persons besides the driver, and hastening with all speed.

My fears were now confirmed, and I could scarcely doubt that another scene of blood was about to be enacted in those quiet solitudes. What was my duty in the case? I knew to well the tenacity of these fictitious and absurd sentiments of honor which prevailed in that section of the country, and give to the duel a character of exalted chivalry, to suppose that my interference could be successful, yet I thought it was my duty to rebuke the sin if I could not prevent it; and in the name of the Lord I would do it. I immediately wheeled about and returned with the utmost speed to the grove.

The second carriage had arrived and was fastened to a tree. I rode up, attached my horse near it, and throwing the driver a piece of silver requested him to guard him. While threading my way into the forest, my thoughts were intensely agitated to know how to



Engraving by J. H. Muller.

*The Rhinoceros in its native Habits.*

THE  
R O V E R :  
WEEKLY MAGAZINE  
OF  
TALES, POETRY, AND ENGRAVINGS,  
EDITED BY SEBA SMITH.  
VOLUME TWO.

NEW YORK:  
PUBLISHED BY S. B. DEAN & CO., 162 NASSAU STREET;  
AND FOR SALE BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS AND AGENTS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.  
1844.