

FAMILIAR
NATURAL HISTORY,

WITH

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"RESCUES OF AFRICA," &c.

AND

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THE RHINOCEROS.

THIS strange, unshapely animal is a native of Africa, the continent of India, and the islands of Java and Sumatra, where it presents different species, varies in size, colour, disposition, and some other characters. It roams through these lands by the side of the most fearful beasts, and is not behind them in the means of offence and defence. The enormous thickness of his skin, which in the Indian species lies in folds upon his body; the great size of this body, projecting on each side; his short, but exceedingly thick legs,—seem to say that nothing can resist his ponderous force. The one or two horns make him a match for all but man, who, according to the power given to him, subdues all creatures to his purposes. The toes are encased in hoofs; the neck is thick and short; the upper lip is so flexible, that it can be pushed out, and serve for laying hold of objects which it is desirable to grasp; and the nose is so formed, that it not only supports the one or two horns growing upon it, but can withstand the powerful shock which their owner must receive each time

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he uses these weapons. The horns are conical, and are solid masses of hair glued together, resembling whalebone. A certain motion can be given to them, for by drawing down the upper lip, they can be directed forwards when the rhinoceros is making an attack. They are sometimes fashioned into cups, and in India are said to shew when poison is put into them, by causing the pernicious liquor to effervesce. In Africa the poison is said to turn the light parts black.

The large stride of the rhinoceros gives him a swiftness which he could not, with his formation, otherwise possess, and his course is every where marked by the breaking down and crushing of all that opposes his progress. Generally speaking, his habits are sluggish, and he delights in marshes and swampy woods, where he lies half in and half out of the water, expressing his satisfaction with a grunt; but his hearing, and the sight of his small eyes are so sharp, that it is difficult to take him by surprise.

The dark African species is often very savage and mischievous, but the white one is said to be much more gentle.