

WILD ANIMALS,
THEIR
NATURE, HABITS, AND INSTINCTS
WITH
INCIDENTAL NOTICES
OF
THE REGIONS THEY INHABIT.

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DOMESTICATED ANIMALS CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO
CIVILIZATION AND THE ARTS.

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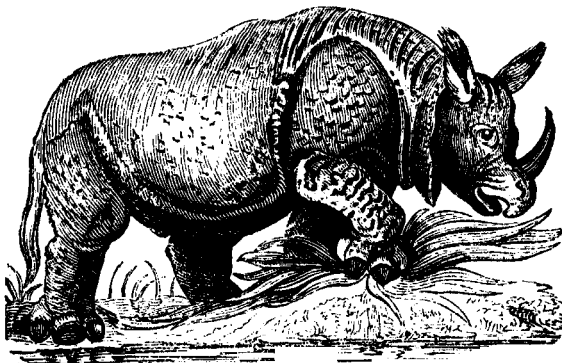
his supposed relative, the swine, and even the lordly Elephant, he is fond of wallowing in the mud. He does this by an instinctive impulse, and it affords relief against parasitical insects, and the humming population of warm humid districts.

THE RHINOCEROS, (*Rhinoceros Indicus.*)

A FIRST view of the Rhinoceros suggests the idea of an enormous hog, to which he bears some resemblance in the shape of his skull, the smallness of his eyes, and the singular construction of his ears; but in his general contour, and clumsy legs and feet, he rather assimilates with the Hippopotamus or Elephant.

Next in size to the last-mentioned animal, he widely differs from him in natural powers and intelligence; for the Creator has assigned to this unwieldy creature nothing that elevates him above the ordinary rank of quadrupeds. His skin is apparently deprived of all sensibility, neither has he a proboscis, serving instead of hands; he has only a moveable lip, with a strong horn attached to it, and to this, his means of address and dexterity are limited. Yet, superior in brute force to most of his companions, he retains a certain elevation from the strength and magnitude of the offensive weapon with which he is endowed. This weapon is peculiar to himself, and is more advantageously situated than the horns of ruminating animals, for these solely defend the superior portions of the head and neck. But the horn of this fierce creature preserves from injury the muzzle, mouth, and face; and hence the Tiger, who does not scruple to attack the ponderous

Elephant, and seize on his proboscis, will scarcely venture to insult this creature, well knowing that one stroke of his long horn would suffice to lay him in the dust. The Rhinoceros is also cased in armour, or rather in a skin so thick, and so impenetrable, that he neither regards the claws of the Lion, nor the Tiger, nor even the sword or shot of the hunter. This skin is different from what envelops almost every other species of mammalia; it is thicker than that of the elephant, of a dark hue, and impervious to insects. He can neither dilate nor contract it, but then it is rolled up into large folds about the neck, the shoulders, and the crupper, in order to facilitate the motion of his head and limbs, which last are massy, and terminated by large feet.



INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

These animals eat voraciously. The one that was brought from Bengal to London, in the year 1739,

though not above two years of age, consumed daily seven pounds of rice and three pounds of sugar, besides hay, green herbs, and large quantities of water. In coming over, the expense of his food and journey amounted to nearly one thousand pounds. No country but that of Shangalla, his wild and ancient empire, deluged with six months' rains, and full of large rocky basins, screened from evaporation by dark woods, or watered with deep flowing rivers, could supply his enormous draughts. Hence he is necessarily restricted to certain localities; for it is not every place that could maintain him; to migrate is impossible, or to seek an asylum among the sands of Albara. But it is not only for the sake of thus refreshing himself, that he frequents these humid places. Large, fierce, and strong as he is, he must submit to defend himself from the weakest of all adversaries. This adversary is a fly, probably of the genus *æstrus*, which attacks the Rhinoceros, as well as the Camel, and many other animals, and would, according to Bruce, easily subdue him, were it not for the expedient of rolling in the mud, and thus encasing himself, as with a coat of mail.

The great strength of this formidable species, is especially displayed, when hotly pursued by the hunters. A few years since, a party of Europeans, with their native attendants, set forth on this hazardous sport. They had not proceeded far, when they fell in with a herd of seven, led apparently by a chieftain of giant port, and indomitable strength. When first charged by the hunters, the leading Elephants on which they rode, instead of using their tusks, wheeled round, and received the blows of

their opponents on their backs. These blows brought them immediately to the ground with their riders; but as soon as they had risen, the brutes were again ready, and again brought them down: thus did they combat, till four out of the seven Rhinoceroses were killed, when the rest made good their retreat.

Yet it is rare to meet with them in large companies; they are generally solitary and savage. Even then it is dangerous to attack them, for their sense of smelling is so exquisite, that they readily discover whether any one approaches, and on the first suspicion betake themselves to flight, or rush furiously on the enemy. It is therefore hazardous to rouse them up, for the Rhinoceros, when under the influence of fear or anger, moves with astonishing celerity, considering his unwieldiness, his great weight in front, and the shortness of his legs. At first he sets off in a kind of trot, which soon increases to a gallop. When pursued, he runs invariably from one wood to another, and forces himself into the thickest part. Trees of considerable magnitude are broken down as if with a cannon-shot, and fall on either side. Such as are young, pliable, and full of sap, are bent back by his enormous velocity and weight, and after he has passed, restoring themselves by their natural elasticity, sweep the incautious pursuer and his horse from the ground, or dash him against the trees; but should it happen, that he makes towards the plain, and the well-mounted hunter is able to get before him, there is little probability of his escaping. Pride and anger cause him to stop short, and he apparently resolves on victory or death. He stands for a moment, as if to summon

all his courage, and then rushes furiously on the horse. Woe to the rider, if not well practised in this kind of sport. But if calm, collected, and nothing daunted by the terrible charge of the enormous enemy, he turns short on one side, the victory is won. In a moment, his armed companion (for a huntsman never goes alone,) springs from behind him, unseen by the Rhinoceros, who is intent upon attacking his supposed enemy, the horse, and gives him a stroke across the tendon of the heel, which renders him incapable of further flight or resistance. It is terrible to witness one of these enraged animals when hotly pursued, or pursuing. The greatest intrepidity and coolness are requisite, to meet him in open war, and hence the hunters generally prefer to steal upon him unawares. For this purpose they conceal themselves among the bushes, where he loves to hide, watch till he lies down to sleep, or wallow in the mud, and then fire directly at his cars, where alone he is vulnerable.

Yet even this fierce creature has been tamed. M. Cuvier mentions a captive specimen which came under his immediate notice. The creature was young, very gentle, and obedient to his keeper, though subject occasionally to violent fits of passion, during which it was necessary to keep out of his reach. The cause of this occasional violence could not be traced, unless to a natural longing for that liberty which he had never enjoyed, and which excited in him an effort to break his chains, and to burst from his unnatural confinement. The offer of food soon calmed him; he acknowledged those who were most liberal, and as soon as they approached

he stretched forth his long upper lip, opened his mouth, and put out his tongue. His prison being small, he had little opportunity to display the extent of his faculties, and his keeper took no other pains with his education, than to induce him to forget, or to misconceive, his own strength, and implicitly to submit to his master's will; but, judging by the attention he bestowed on everything around him, and by his quick perception of different persons, it might fairly be presumed, that his sagacity would have been more developed under favourable circumstances. His great strength, and the apprehensions constantly entertained that, in one of his paroxysms, he might break his prison, procured him at all times very gentle treatment. Nothing was required without an appropriate reward, and the slight movements that were allowed him made hardly any exertion necessary. He was able merely to turn his head to the right, and to lift up his leg. Nor was it without cause that the power of this enormous animal was thus restricted. The one which Emanuel, king of Portugal, sent to the Pope, in the sixteenth century, destroyed the vessel that contained him; another noticed by Buffon, at Paris, was drowned in like manner, during his voyage to Italy.

The Rhinoceros, when free to select his pasturage, feeds chiefly on thistles and thorny shrubs, which he prefers to the richest pasture. He is also fond of sugar-cane, and different kinds of grain. Not being carnivorous, he neither disturbs the small, nor fears the largest animals, but lives in peace with all, even with the tiger, who often accompanies, without daring to molest him. This peaceful disposition

render the alleged combats between the Elephant and Rhinoceros doubtful. Such combats must of necessity be rare, since there is no exciting cause of hostility; besides, no antipathy has ever been observed to exist between them. Pliny is, I believe, the first who notices their having been led to combat in the brutal shows of the amphitheatre, and hence, most probably, the erroneous opinion, that such is their natural disposition. But every action without a motive is unnatural; it is an effect without a cause, and for this anomaly we have no precedent in animal biography.

By comparing what we know of these colossal animals, in their wild condition and captive state, we may gather sufficient data on which to form a tolerable estimate of their true character. They are endowed with such amazing powers of body, as to repel, if not to overcome, the active ferocity of the Lion, and the ponderous strength of the Elephant; but, at the same time, they seek their subsistence, not by the destruction of animal life, but in the profuse banquet of the vegetable world. That they will resist aggressions none can doubt; and on him who wantonly molests them in their ancient empire, they inflict the most tremendous vengeance; but, if left to the ordinary bent of their own disposition, never has the huge inmate of the African marshes been known to seek occasion to exercise his strength to the injury of any living creature.

The Rhinoceros is hunted for his skin, which makes the stoutest and best leather. His flesh, too, is excellent, and his horn is used for various purposes. The Indians and Negroes esteem every part

to be endowed with some extraordinary qualities; one portion is with them an antidote against poison, another, a specific in medicine: most of these virtues are probably imaginary,—but there are many things in high repute, which have no other value than what is derived from public opinion.

Naturalists recognise four species of Rhinoceros, the one-horned and two-horned of Africa, and two similar species belonging to India.

THE ZEBRA, (*Equus Zebra.*)

WHETHER we consider symmetry of shape, or brilliancy of colour, the Zebra is perhaps the most elegant of all quadrupeds. He unites the figure and gracefulness of the horse, with the light and bounding movements of the Stag. His skin is varied with black and yellow belts, regularly and exactly disposed, and as nicely separated as those of a striped stuff. They extend not only over the body, but over the legs and thighs, the head, and even the ears and tail; so that, at a distance, the Zebra appears as if artificially adorned with ribands, in a manner the most regular and elegant. In the female, these bands are alternately black and white; in the male black and yellow; the hair is short, close, and fine, and its lustre augments the beauty of the colours.

These animals inhabit Africa, and are supposed to extend from Abyssinia to the Cape.

Two fine specimens are now in the Zoological Gardens, London, where they enjoy fresh air, and display their graceful movements.

We know little concerning the natural history of