

AN  
ENCYCLOPÆDIA  
OF  
RURAL SPORTS;  
OR,  
A COMPLETE ACCOUNT,  
HISTORICAL, PRACTICAL, AND DESCRIPTIVE,  
OF  
HUNTING, SHOOTING, FISHING, RACING,  
AND OTHER  
FIELD SPORTS AND ATHLETIC AMUSEMENTS  
OF THE PRESENT DAY.

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“OUTLINES OF THE VETERINARY ART,” “CANINE PATHOLOGY,”  
ETC. ETC. ETC.

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ILLUSTRATED BY  
SIX HUNDRED ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD, BY R. BRANSTON,  
FROM DRAWINGS BY ALKEN, T. LANDSEER,  
DICKES, ETC.

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LONDON:  
LONGMAN, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.  
1840.

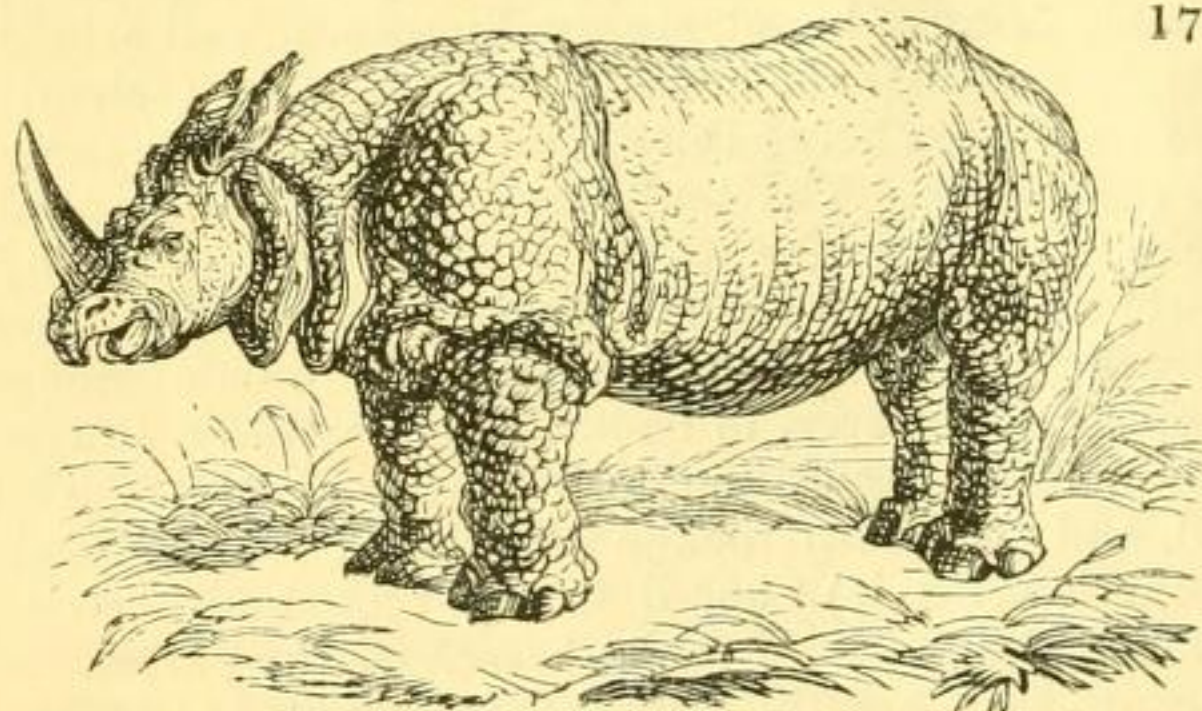


the manner of the English cockpit. This is an amusement much in fashion among the natives of rank, and they bet large sums on their birds, as they lounge luxuriously around, smoking their hookahs. Elephant fights were announced as the concluding scene of this day of strife. The spectators took their seats in a long verandah. The narrow stream of the river Goomty runs close under the palace walls, and on the opposite bank, a large, open, sandy space presented a convenient theatre for the operations of these gigantic athletes.

80. "*The elephants educated for the arena are large powerful males, wrought up to a state of fury by constant feeding with exciting spices. On the spacious plain before us we counted several, parading singly to and fro, their mahouts seated on their backs, which were covered with a strong network for the driver to cling by in the conflict. In attendance upon every elephant were two or three men, armed with long spears, a weapon of which this animal has the greatest dread. We soon discovered two of the combatants slowly advancing towards each other from opposite sides of the plain. As they approached, their speed gradually increased, and they at length met, with a grand shock, entwining their trunks, and pushing, until one finding himself over-matched, fairly turned tail, and received his adversary's charge in the rear. This was so violent, that the mahout of the flying elephant was dislodged from his seat; he fortunately fell wide of the pursuer, and escaped with a few bruises. Five or six couple were fought, but showed little sport; the sagacious animals instantly discovering when they were over-matched.*" Indian cattle appear to be, according to this authority, of the same description as in London. "Before breakfast," he says, "I went into the cattle fair with Colonel Stevenson, and bought a handsome, though small, mule for the mountain journeys. The price was eight rupees, for which sum a fine camel may be purchased. We took a native bargainer with us, and I was much amused by the manner in which the buyer and seller arranged their bargain. The business of chaffering was carried on through the medium of their hands, concealed under a cloth; certain movements of the fingers having corresponding prices. It was a matter of some minutes, and much shaking of heads, though no verbal altercation, was gone through on both sides, before the bargain was concluded. We next inspected some elephants for sale; and the dealers descanted upon their good points as largely and as knowingly as Tattersall could do on those of a horse." Captain Mundy's account of the necessary points of value agree exactly with those of Captain Williamson; as a large head, large ears, arched back, sloping quarters, deep flank, long trunk well mottled, short legs, and the forearm bowing out well in front. The flat bunch of hair at the extremity of the tail is also a great desideratum.

#### SUBJECT. 1. *Hunting the Rhinoceros.*

81. *The rhinoceros (Rhinoceros unicornis Linn.)* in size and strength is inferior only to the elephant. The Indian and African species of this genus differ in their leading characters, both as to the number and form of their teeth. The incisors are either altogether wanting, or there are four in each jaw, two very strong, and two small and weak. Canine teeth they



RHINOCEROS.

17

have none, but the cheek teeth are seven in each jaw on each side. The Indian species (*fig. 17.*) has one horn only; that with two horns is most common in Africa. The horns of both present a singular character; they do not envelop a bony axis, like the horns of ruminating animals, nor do they partake of the osseous nature of the horns of stags; but they appear to be formed of horny fibres, like thick hairs closely agglutinated together. Some incline to think this to be the unicorn of the ancients. Bewick's general account of

the rhinoceros runs thus: — "The body, from the muzzle to the tail, is twelve feet long, and in circumference it is nearly the same; thus, were it not for the shortness of its legs, it would be little inferior in size to the elephant. The body and limbs are covered with a skin so hard and impenetrable, that he fears neither the claws of the tiger, nor the more formidable proboscis of the elephant; it will turn the edge of a scimitar, and even resist the force of a musket ball. It is of a blackish colour; and, as seen by the figure, forms itself into large folds at the neck, the shoulders, and the crupper; by which means the motion of the head and limbs is facilitated. Round the neck, which is very short, are two large folds; there is also a fold from the shoulders, which hangs down upon the forelegs, and another from the hind part of the back to the thighs. The body is every where covered with tuberosities or knots, which are small on the neck and back, but larger on the sides; the thighs, legs, and even the feet, are full of these incrustations, which have been mistaken for scales by some authors: they are, however, only simple indurations of the skin, without any uniformity in their figure,



or regularity in their position. Between the folds, the skin is penetrable and delicate, as soft to the touch as silk, and of a light flesh colour; the skin of the belly is nearly of the same colour and consistency." The rhinoceros is occasionally ferocious in the extreme, and indeed at no time can he be approached with safety. Between him and the elephant a great antipathy is said to exist; but the former seldom willingly attacks the latter: on the contrary, it would appear from some statements in which Mr. Williamson confided, that if a herd of elephants encounter this formidable animal, they retreat, if possible, without hazarding a battle. Major Sully also informed the same gentleman, that he once witnessed from a distant hill a most desperate engagement between a large male elephant and a rhinoceros, in which the former was worsted, and fled. Barber, however, appears to consider that the terror is mutual. "When we had gone," says this latter gentleman, "a short way, a man came after us with notice that a rhinoceros had entered a little wood near Bekrâm, and that they (the hunters) had surrounded the wood, and were waiting for us. We immediately proceeded towards the wood at full gallop, and cast a ring round it. Instantly, on our raising the shout, the rhinoceros issued out into the plain, and took to flight. We followed it for nearly a koss, shot many arrows at it, and finally brought it down. This rhinoceros did not make a good set at any person, or any horse. They afterwards killed another rhinoceros. I had often amused myself with conjecturing how an elephant and rhinoceros would behave if brought to face each other; on this occasion the elephant-keepers brought out the elephants, so that one elephant fell right in with the rhinoceros. As soon as the elephant-drivers put their beasts in motion, the rhinoceros would not come up, but immediately ran off in another direction." Major Smith also relates that a hunting party of Europeans, with their relative attendants and elephants, met with a herd of seven rhinoceroses, apparently led by one, much larger and stronger than the rest, which boldly charged the hunters. The leading elephants, instead of using their tusks as weapons, suddenly wheeled round, and received the thrust of the rhinoceros's horn on the posteriors — the blow brought them and their riders to the ground. No sooner had they risen than it was repeated; and in this manner did the contest continue, until four of the seven were shot, when the rest retreated.

82. *Hunting the rhinoceros is also undertaken by shecarries, or native sportsmen, in India, for the skin of the animal, which is much valued for its durability and impenetrability. A shield made from it is able to resist a leaden bullet; it will also take a very fine polish. "The shecarries, who lie in wait for the rhinoceros, are ordinarily furnished with jinjals, or heavy matchlocks, such as are commonly appropriated for the defence of mud forts, and may be properly classed with the arquebus of former times. They carry balls from one to three ounces in weight; and having very substantial barrels, are too heavy to fire without a rest. Many have an iron fork, of about a foot or more in length, fixed by a pivot not far from the muzzle, which being placed on a wall, in a bush, or even on the ground, serves to support it, and enables the shecarrie to aim with great precision, which he seldom fails to do. To the power of an iron ball, discharged from a jinjal, even the rhinoceros must submit; though sometimes he will carry off one or more balls, and wander many hours before he drops. The aim being taken from a tree, or from some inaccessible situation, in which the shecarrie feels himself secure, and a steady cool sight can be taken, rarely proves incorrect. Levelling with precision at the eye, the thorax, or under the flap of the shoulder, all which are principal objects of the attack, he generally inflicts a fatal wound. The rhinoceros now becomes desperate; roaring, snorting, stamping, and tearing up the ground both with his horn and his feet, as bulls are wont to do, butting at trees, and at every object that may be within his reach. The cautious shecarrie waits with patience for his last gasp; sensible that, while a spark of life remains, it would be highly imprudent to venture from his state of safety, or to approach the ferocious prey. Oxen are ordinarily used to drag the carcass away, which is the common mode of conveyance; horses not being employed in India, except for riding among the natives, and because elephants and horses are so afraid of even a dead rhinoceros, as to render it peculiarly difficult to induce their approach within either sight or smell of one. Elephants that have been long taken, and which in all probability may have in some measure forgotten their old enemy, do not in general evince such extreme dread; though, when they do venture, it is always with very evident distrust, and after much evasion."* (*Oriental Field Sports*, vol. i. p. 169.)

#### SUBJECT. 2. *Hunting the Tiger.*

83. *The natural history of the Bengal or royal tiger* offers to our notice an almost isolated species of the *Felinæ*, distinguished from the other species by his transverse striping (*fig. 18.*). "Compared with the lion," says Mr. Griffith, "he is thinner and lighter, and has the head rounder. The upper part of the body is yellow, the under part white. The whole internal face of the ears, and a spot on the external surface round and over the eyes, the end of the muzzle, cheeks, throat, neck, chest, belly, and internal sides of the limbs, are white; and the tail is annulated with black on a whitish-yellow ground. The eye pupils are generally said to be round, and indeed we have never observed it otherwise; but, in the instance mentioned by Major Smith, they assumed an elliptical figure."