

258
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THE
CHILD'S PICTURE BOOK
OF
WILD AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

WITH TWENTY-FOUR COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS.



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CONTENTS.

THE LION.

THE ELEPHANT.

THE TIGER.

THE LEOPARD.

THE BISON.

THE WOLF.

THE ZEBRA.

THE HYENA.

THE BEAR.

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

THE RHINOCEROS.

THE GIRAFFE.

THE HORSE.

COW AND CALF.

THE SHEEP.

THE GOAT.

THE DONKEY.

PET DOGS.

BIG DOGS.

RABBITS.

GUINEA PIGS.

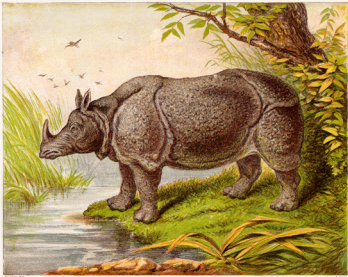
THE CAT.

PIGS.

THE PONY.

The Child's Picture Book

WILD ANIMALS.



THE RHINOCEROS.

THE Rhi-no-ce-ros is next to the El-e-phant for his great size and vast strength. There is no beast who has less fear than he, for he can stand and fight with the long sharp horn that he bears on his nose, or can toss a horse in the air with his huge head, or can tread a foe to death with his big feet. There are four kinds of the Rhi-no-ce-ros, two black and two white. Some of the black sort have two horns, and some of the white have such a long horn that they are not like the rest. The black ones are so fierce that they are the most feared by those who go out to hunt wild beasts. It is said that the hide of the Rhi-no-ce-ros is so hard and tough that a ball from a gun will not pierce it; but this is not true; it is thick, but not hard while it is on the beast, and does not grow hard and tough till it is strip-ped off, when the wild tribes of Af-ri-ca make shields and breast plates of it. A full-sized white Rhi-no-ce-ros is six yards long, and more than five yards round; its eyes are small, so small that in the light of day it is hard to see that it has eyes at all, for, like most wild beasts, it goes out at night to seek its food. Cups and mugs are made of its horn, which is thought to be of use to cure those that are sick when they drink from it. Like all such large brutes, the Rhi-no-ce-ros must have a great deal to drink, and loves to bathe in the ponds and lakes, so that once each day he goes down to some pool to drink, and wade, and roll in the mud. It is at these pools that those who hunt him go to keep watch, and, that they may do this, they build a wall of loose stones all round the spot where they lie in wait for him. The wall is four feet high, and the space which is closed round is six or eight feet wide, so that a man can kneel down and just peep over the top. Here he stays, till all at once he hears a tramp, and sees two ears with tufts of hair at the ends cock-ed up over the bush, a few yards off; then comes a great horn, and the man, who has put a soft rug on the wall, lest the gun should grate

on the stone when he pokes it over to fire, looks through some chink in the wall till the great brute comes near. Then the man must crouch, for fear the Rhi-no-ce-ros should see him. On he comes, and when he gets up to a place where he can scent the foot-steps of his foe, he lifts his head in the air to smell which way he has gone; that is the time to fire, and a good shot sent in at the right place will cause the poor beast to plunge and toss his horn from right to left, as though he tried to feel for the foe whom he does not see. Then the man must hide and keep still for his life, till the Rhi-no-ce-ros makes a rush, and goes off at full speed. He does not go far if the ball has been well plac-ed, but his deep sigh may be heard as he falls to the ground and dies.

The white Rhi-no-ce-ros is not a fierce brute; it eats grass and herbs, and does not turn on a man till it is forc-ed to fight for its own life or that of its young calf; but the black Rhi-no-ce-ros is as bold and fierce as can be. He eats grass, and shrubs, and young twigs, and tough roots, and sharp thorns, and not one of these is too hard or dry for his great jaws and strong teeth. This rough food makes his flesh less fit to eat than that of the white kind, the meat of which is so good that it is liked as well as beef, and the skin as well as the flesh makes a nice roast. The black Rhi-no-ce-ros fears no other beast, and will rush out of his lair at the cart of those who go to hunt him, when he will gore the team, throw down the great cart, break the wheels, and smash all he comes near with his horn. Should he and the Lion meet, the Lion gives way, and gets as far off as he can, and the huge El-e-phant does not like to fight him, but will yield the path; for the Rhi-no-ce-ros, though he is not so large, is so quick, and can twist and turn so fast on his great legs, that he is, at most times, sure to have the best of it; but when he is too rude, the El-e-phant will not bear it, and turns to fight. That is a strange sight, and one which may well make those who see it feel some fear. A tale is told of such a fight, when both the beasts were kill-ed; for the Rhi-no-ce-ros had plung-ed his long sharp horn in the chest of the El-e-phant, but could not get it out, till the vast brute died of the wound, and fell on his foe, whose life was crush-ed out by the weight.

The best friend of the Rhi-no-ce-ros is a small bird, which may be seen day and night perched on his broad back, where it holds with its long claws and its bent tail, as it feeds on the small flies and

"ticks" that are found on the great beast's hide. But it does more than rid him of these small pests. It warns him when there is a strange sound in the woods; and as a bird's ears are so formed as to hear a slight noise a long way off, the Rhi-no-ce-ros has time to make his way to some place where he may be safe; for as soon as his small friend knows that it is time to move, he darts up in the air and squeaks such a shrill note, that it warns him at once. It is said that when the Rhi-no-ce-ros sleeps, the bird is on the watch, and if he hears a strange sound, will peck the big brute's ears to warn him to be up and off in time. One of the tales told of this bird says that a man who went out to try to kill a Rhi-no-ce-ros was led from place to place for a whole day, for as soon as he had track-ed his game to one spot, so sure was the bird to hear him and warn his big friend to go to a new haunt. Five times this went on, and as the walk was through a soil of mud and mire, the man soon grew tir-ed of the chase. At last, he was in such a rage, that as he knew who it was that play-ed him such a trick, he watch-ed for the bird, and when he saw him rise, let fly at him with his gun, and blew him all to bits. When his small friend was dead, the Rhi-no-ce-ros had no one to let him know what to do, and he was killed in half an hour; but the man could not feel pleas-ed when he had shot the bird. He said, "I don't know how it was, but I felt a pang when I had kill-ed the poor thing." This does not seem at all strange, for brave men who go out to hunt wild beasts do not make war on small birds, and he felt a kind of love for the small thing that was so full of love and good faith.

One day, Mr. Os-well was out to hunt the El-e-phant, and had turn-ed to go home. He rode on a first-rate horse, and as he rode he saw a great white Rhi-no-ce-ros a long way off. The beast had a horn of such great length, that he thought he would try to kill him, so he put spurs to his horse till he reached the spot, and was close to the game. Then he fir-ed, and the ball went through the thick skin; but the brute did not fall, and, what was worse, did not run off. It stood stock still, with its small eyes fixed on its foe, and then stalk-ed up to him at a slow pace, made a rush, and thrust its sharp horn right through the horse, so that its point struck Mr. Os-well's leg on the other side. The horse was kill-ed, of course; but by that time Mr. Os-well had leap-ed to the ground, and, though the Rhi-no-ce-ros made off, it was soon slain.

Mr. An-ders-son gave a great black Rhi-no-ce-ros a wound in the fore-leg, and brought the brute to a stand, but in such a way that he could not kill it till he had dogs to help him to make it turn; so he left it, and tried to get back to his hut by a zig-zag way. What was his fright to find that he had gone down a wrong lane in the woods, and that he came once more to the same spot from which he set out, with the fierce brute right in front of him. She was still on her legs, but yet he could not get a shot at her where it was of much use; so he thought he would try and make her move, and took up a stone, which he hurl-ed at her with all his force. She gave a loud snort, threw up her tail, and with her head close to the ground, as she rais-ed clouds of dust with her huge feet, she rushed at him full of rage. He had not time to raise his gun and fire, when she was close on him; and as he turn-ed round to fly, she bore him to the ground with a shock that made gun and flask and pouch, as well as his cap, spin in the air and fall three or four yards off. The great beast ran with so much force that she plung-ed her head and neck in the sand, and Mr. An-ders-son got out of the way of her hind legs, much bruised and hurt. But she had not done with him yet, and he had just got on his feet, when she turn-ed and knock-ed him down a-gain, while with her horn she tore his right thigh, and with her fore-feet struck him a hard blow near the back of the neck. His ribs bent with the vast weight, and he felt faint; but when he came to, he heard her snort and plunge as she made off in the thick bush. Blind with rage and pain, the great beast went off, and Mr. An-ders-son crawl-ed home as well as he could. But he knew that she could not go far with such a wound, and next day he sent his man to look for her. The young man had not been gone long, when Mr. An-ders-son was rous-ed by a loud cry, and when he went out he saw the Rhi-no-ce-ros, its black hide stain-ed with blood from its wounds, come on its three sound legs to the place where the man, who seem-ed to have gone mad with fright, stood and shriek-ed for help. She was but six feet from the poor wretch, when Mr. An-ders-son got a shot at her, which sent her back; two more shots brought her to the ground; but she still tried to rush at him, and was but three or four feet from his gun when she fell dead.