

SOMETHING ABOUT THE RHINOCEROS.

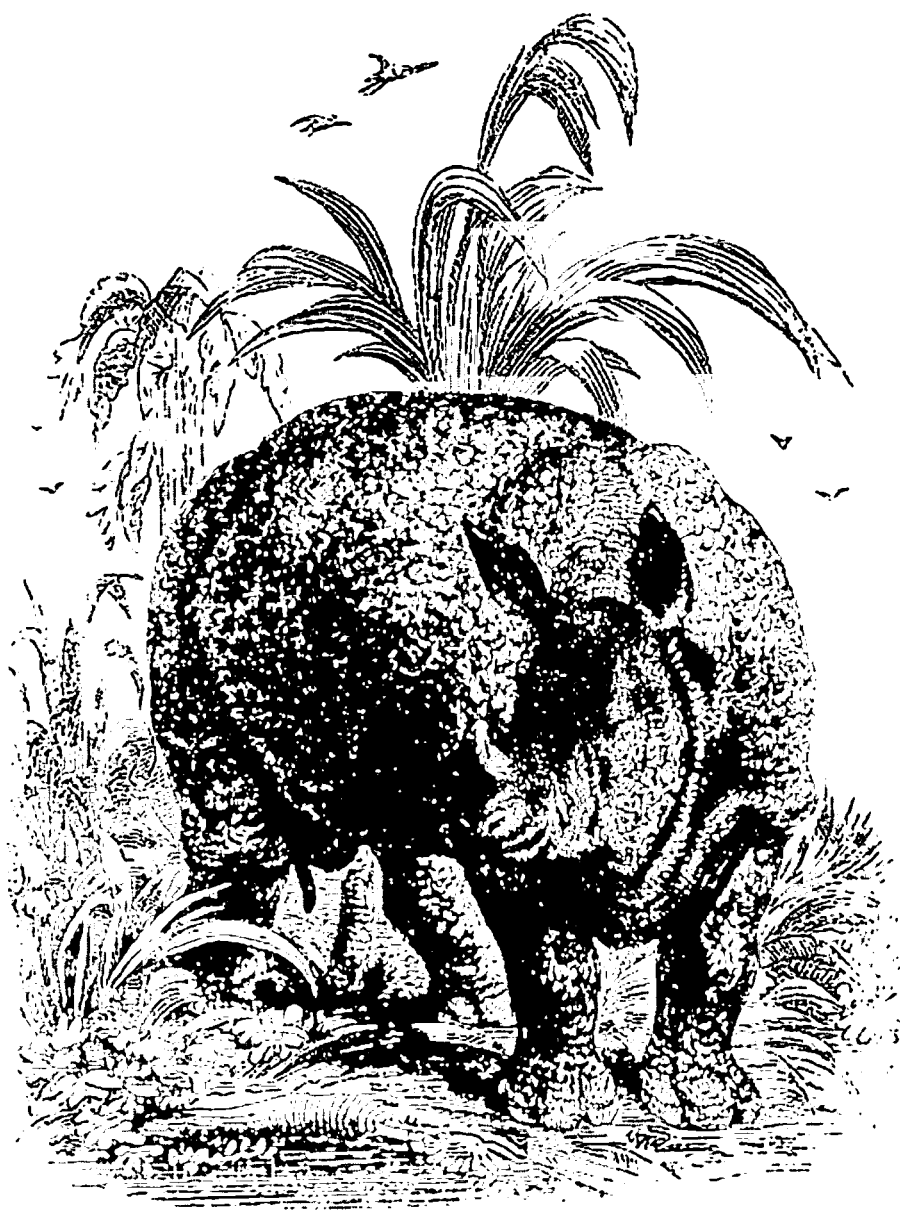
THERE is a hard word which my young readers will be likely to stumble at—it is—Pachydermatous; come, try again; now for the meaning: it is—thick-skinned. The animal here represented is said to belong to a genus of the *pachydermatous mammalia*—that is, to those who have *thick skins*. Such is the Elephant, Hog, &c.

This animal is remarkable also for a horn, not on the head, but on the nose; hence the name, from the Greek Rhiniceros. This horn is not bone, nor has it any connection with the bones of the animal any more than the claws of a cat. The horn of the rhinoceros grows on a disc or plate closely set with pores, by which it has enormous strength; it is a formidable weapon, and is used both offensively and defensively by the animal—more generally, however, in tearing its way through branches, and grubbing up the roots from the ground, on which it feeds when it can get nothing better.

The beast has a clumsy look; the legs are short and thick; the skin is of immense thickness and strength, and gathered into folds, with very few hairs, and these generally near the tail, or on the

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margin of the ears ; the bones are thick and compact, and the hide resists a leaden bullet, unless fired from a gun very close.

There are several kinds of this animal ; some have two horns. The one-horned rhinoceros is the unicorn of the ancients, and is now found on the Indian Continent. In consequence of its boldness and strength, the hunting of the rhinoceros is one of the most splendid and hazardous of the sports of the east : it is sought for in the jungles, and is often found in parties of about half a dozen, led on by the largest of the whole, as is the case with the herds of elephants.

The hunters are mounted on elephants, and as soon as a herd is discovered, the elephants are made to charge upon them, while the hunters fire : when the rhinoceros turns, it endeavours to rip up the elephant, and very frequently overturns it with its riders. The danger is, that when they are disturbed, they often become furious, and should a hunter happen to be exposed, it is very difficult for him to escape, unless he possesses great coolness and presence of mind then, if he will wait till the enraged animal makes a run at him, and will then spring suddenly on one side to let him pass, he may gain time enough to re-load his gun before the beast makes at him again.

A very curious adventure happened in India, not many miles from Bombay, in the year 1822. An officer in the British army, attended by his son, a lad only 13 years old, had gone into the jungle to shoot monkeys ; they had not been long engaged in this cruel sport, when a rhinoceros was seen at a short distance snuffing up the air and stamping his front feet in great excitement. The officer advanced at him directly, determined to kill him if possible. He had a double-

barrel gun, with which he discharged one shot after the other rapidly, and retreated behind a tree: the rhinoceros upon this, charged furiously, and in a minute drove the officer from his position, and who, in attempting to fly to another post, stumbled and fell; the furious beast made a dreadful plunge at him, and ripped up the breast of his coat, and his horn got entangled in his sash; and he was thrown over the head of the animal, and fell down insensible, when the rhinoceros turned round to despatch him. The boy, however, with admirable presence of mind, had seized his father's gun and re-loaded it, then advancing quickly to the ear of the beast, discharged one barrel, which made him reel; the boy then drew back, and discharged the second into his mouth, when he fell dead instantly.

He now went to his father and raised him up—he was dreadfully lacerated—but he succeeded in tying up his wounds, when soon after he came to himself; he then led him as well as he could to the edge of the jungle, and procured assistance. Thus he saved his father's life; and this anecdote may serve as a lesson for my young readers on coolness and courage; which they should endeavour to cultivate whenever they are able.
