

WOOD'S

NATURAL HISTORY



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NATURAL HISTORY

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

BY THE

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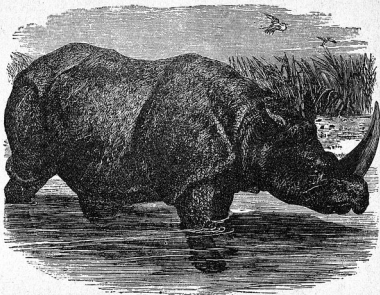
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a common amusement: In our Southern States the woods are full of half wild ones. Its tusks are terrible weapons, and capable of being used with fatal effect. They curve outward from the lower jaw, and are sometimes eight or ten inches in length. In India, where the boar attains to a great size, the horses on which the hunters are mounted often refuse to bring their riders within spear stroke of the infuriated animal, which has been known to kill a horse and severely injure the rider with one swoop of its enormous tusks.

The *DOMESTIC HOG* scarcely needs any description. It is by no means the unclean and filthy animal that moralists love to represent it. It certainly is fond of wallowing in the mire, as are the elephant, tapir, etc., but no animal seems to enjoy clean straw more than the hog. We shut it up in a dirty narrow crib, give it any kind of refuse to eat, and then abuse it for being a dirty animal and an unclean feeder.

The *BABYROUSSA* inhabits the Molucca Islands and Java. It is remarkable for possessing four tusks, two of which proceed from the upper jaw, and do not pass out between the lips, but through an aperture in the skin, half way between the end of the snout and eyes. The sockets of the two upper tusks are curved upward, and give a singular appearance to the skull of the animal. It looks a ferocious animal, nor do its looks contradict its habits, as it is very savage, and cannot be hunted without danger. Yet when taken young it can be tamed without much difficulty, and conducts itself much after the manner of a well-behaved pig.

THE *RHINOCEROS*.—There are, apparently, six species of this formidable animal, inhabiting various parts of Asia and Africa. They can be distinguished from each other by the number and shape of their horns, and the color of their bodies. Their habits are much alike.



THE INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

The rhinoceros is always a surly and ill-tempered animal, and is much given to making unprovoked attacks on man and beast, if it should happen to fancy itself insulted by their presence. Their chief peculiarity, the so-called horn, is a mass of fibres matted together, and closely resembling the structure of whalebone. Their feet are divided into three toes, encased in hoofs. The horn is not connected with the skull, but is merely a growth from the skin, from which it can be separated by means of a sharp penknife. Being made of very strong materials, it is employed in the manufacture of ramrods, clubs, and other similar implements. When properly worked it is capable of taking a very high polish, and is often cut into drinking-cups.

The organs of scent of the rhinoceros are very acute, and as the creature seems to have a peculiar faculty for detecting the presence of human beings, it is necessary for the hunters to use the greatest circumspection when they approach it, whether to avoid or kill, as in the one case it may probably be taken with a sudden fit of fury, and charge at them, or in the other case, it may take the alarm and escape.

The upper lip is used by the rhinoceros as an instrument of prehension, with which it can grasp the herbage on which it feeds, or pick up small fruit from the ground. The very tame rhinoceros in the Zoological Gardens will take a piece of bun or biscuit from a visitor's hand by means of its flexible upper lip.

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.—There is, in all probability, but one species of hippopotamus. It inhabits Africa exclusively, and is found in plenty on the banks of many rivers in that country, where it may be seen gambolling and snorting at all times of the day.

These animals are quiet and inoffensive while undisturbed, but if attacked, they unite to repel the invader, and have been known to tear several planks from the side of a boat, and sink it. They