

LOS ANGELES HERALD

Boys & Girls Magazine Section

Sunday June 14, 1908

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE RHINOCEROS



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How the Great Clumsy Beast Lives in the Jungles of Africa

THE huge, clumsy animal known as the rhinoceros has always been a subject of great interest to civilized people, because it is one of the immense creatures still living.

Thousands and thousands and thousands of years ago the rhinoceros was not large when compared to the mammoth or some other large animal, but the days of the mammoth and gigantic saurians are past, so we have to be satisfied with peering at smaller things like the rhinoceros, elephant and hippopotamus.

The rhinoceros lives away down in Africa, and one species, known as the longhorned, is all over with the lion, who is able to do very little damage to the rhinoceros, because of his heavy skin, a skin so thick and tough that when it is dried it can be cut into strips and used as walking cases.

Although the rhinoceros moves very slowly when seen in a zoological garden, yet in his native wilds he is not only ferocious, but very rapid in his movements, so rapid, in fact, that he is usually able to outrun an ordinary horse. Many hunters have lost their lives because they imagined that the rhinoceros could not run rapidly.

are of hard ivory and the longest is generally about three feet in length. The animal keeps this horn very sharp and uses it as a weapon. When the rhinoceros is attacked, say by a lion, the only thing he can do is to blunder around in his clumsy fashion until he gets a chance to hunt the lion with his nose. Once the sharp horn gets stuck into a lion's body it is all over with the lion, who is able to do very little damage to the rhinoceros, because of his heavy skin, a skin so thick and tough that when it is dried it can be cut into strips and used as walking cases.

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It is a very peculiar thing, but it is a fact that practically all great animals always have smaller animals as companions or attendants, which act as sentinels and give warning of approaching danger. The rhinoceros, strange to say, is always accompanied by one or more white birds, which sit all day long perched on his back.

It is a little bird called by ornithologists Buphaga Africana, and known to hunters as the rhinoceros bird. This little fellow clings to the animal's hide by means of its long claws and elastic tail, feeding on the insects that infest the leathery skin. In doing this it renders great service to the huge brute, but trifling as compared to its other duty. It acts as a sentinel to warn its movable feeding place of approaching danger.

While it is sitting it is ever on the alert, and at the first sign of the hunter it flies up in the air uttering its warning note, which is

ever quickly heeded, the rhinoceros starting off at once in the direction taken by its watchful friend. When the rhinoceros is asleep, and the bird, hearing the approach of the hunter, fails to awaken him by its voice, it will arouse him by pecking the inside of his ear.

Some species of the rhinoceros are inclined to peace, and will rarely attack man save in defense of their young or their lives, while others, and more particularly the kisthu, will attack man or being simply to gratify their love for fighting. The lion never risks an encounter with the rhinoceros, save when absolutely necessary for his own safety, and it is seldom the elephant cares to measure strength with him, for the larger is far less quick in his movements than the smaller.

A colonial African hunter once witnessed a battle between these huge animals, but in this instance the impetuous rage of the rhinoceros proved his downfall, for, haring driven on his terrible horns up to the hilt into the nostrils of the elephant, he was unable to extract it, and the latter, falling, crushed the life out of his assailant in the desert. A traveler once saw a fight between a gigantic male elephant and a black rhinoceros that was ended by the flight of the former.

WHAT GLOVES ARE MADE OF

IT IS pretty well known by this time that "kid" is a more technical name, as applied to gloves, as the quantity annually consumed of leather bearing this name is largely in excess of what could be supplied from the skins of all the young goats that are annually slaughtered.

There is hardly a country in the world that does not supply some sort of materials which are made up into gloves, and many of which pass for kid in the retail store.

Of real kid skin, the greater part is absorbed in the manufacture of women's gloves. Men's gloves, therefore, are frequently made

of fine lamb skin, which is better than the second rate kid.

The genuine, fine kid skins are mainly of French origin, and those obtained from mountain sheep of the Pyrenees and France are world famous for their excellence. All the best conditions of climate, air and soil appear to unite in exactly the degree required to secure perfection in the skins of these animals. The conditions are equally favorable, although the skins of great excellence are produced throughout the mountain ranges of Southern Europe. Their production is the principal industry among the mountaineers.

Great pains must be taken to secure the softness and delicacy of texture and freedom from blemish which form the value of the kid skins.

The diet is the most important factor, and mother's milk is required to keep the kid in perfect condition. If the animal is allowed to eat grass its value declines, as the skin immediately begins to grow harder and coarser in texture. To keep the skin in perfect condition the young kid is kept closely penned and carefully guarded against injury from scratches, bruises, and so on.

As soon as the kids have reached the age at which their skins are in the best condition for the gloves, they are killed and the skins are sent to traveling peddlers, who bear them to the great centers of the tanning industry at Grenoble, Annancy, Millau and Poitiers.

Fine lamb skins are raised in great quantities in Southern Europe and throughout Hungary, Servia, Bulgaria and Roumania. The American government buys most of their lamb skins at Vienna or Mulhouse.

London is the chief market of all the fine rhinoceros skins. Here may be found the Cape sheep skin, tough and durable from the Cape of Good Hope; roil and calf skins from Buenos Ayres and other cities of South America; hog skins from Mexico and Brazil; antelope from India, Brazil, Colorado and Africa.

Of late years many of these skins have been brought directly to New York, and American buyers no longer find it necessary to go to London.

While fine lamb skins are the staple in men's gloves, cat skins are rapidly coming into favor, and fine calf skins are extensively used.

Such has a grain peculiar to itself, which, while not visible to the ordinary buyer, can be instantly perceived by the expert.

Calf skins are good looking, soft and pliable, but are apt to crack. This fault is not found in calf skins, which are durable and handsome and in many respects make model gloves. The wrinkles are objectionable, but these disappear when the gloves are on the hand.

The "jacks" of Venezuela contribute the majority of deer skins at present. The center comes from the antelope of the West.

Heavy leather gloves are obtained from elk, dog skins are used in a moderate extent, Patana, or Calcutta or hides, are also used.

Every invoice of heavy skins contains more or fewer reproductions, and the kind of leather that will be evolved from a stray mouse, monkey, llama or kangaroo is deposited upon the skins that accompany it.

Dog skins are occasionally made up into gloves, but their use is very uncommon. Everything that goes by the name of dog skin nowadays is likely to be Cape sheep.

There is a common belief that rat skins are largely made into gloves, but manufacturers laugh at the story, and denounce it as a pure fabrication.

Stories About Cats

A Maine lad tells of the remarkable sagacity of a cat which he owns. The feline has a great fondness for the flesh of birds, and in order to make her quest for the same successful, employs a stratagem.

Evidently understanding that birds like the angle-worms, also collect a number and bury them in the ground. She then hides near by, and when the birds alight to secure their coveted morsel, she springs from her concealment and pounces upon them. Many a bird thus falls a prey to pussy's shrewdness.

Same Kind of a Job

"Be you Doctor Smith?" asked a tall, lean specimen, walking into the office of a fashionable practitioner.

"I am," replied the doctor.

"Well, look a here, old fellow," remarked the visitor, "I'm glad to find you at last. Dye remember in '08, when you was in Kansas, how yer set a feller's arm an' didn't charge him for it?"

"Yes," said the doctor, with the prospect of a big fee rising before him.

"In the filler, an' I've fixed the other arm, an' I come ter have it fixed on your same terms."