

Palmer Cox Funny Animals



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CHICAGO



THE LION AND RHINOCEROS

LION once had vainly tried
To cross a river deep and wide;
For sickness had beset him sore,
Had shrunk his form and stilled his roar,
And made him fear the chilling flow,
That tumbled to the sea below.

An old rhinoceros, at last,
Who through the water often passed,



And did of friendship nothing lack,
Gave him a seat upon his back;
Then, with the lion, started o'er,
To leave him on the distant shore.

Now, other beasts, from either side
The novel spectacle had spied,
And kept the earnest wish alive,
The old rhinoceros would dive;
Or, when he reached the current strong,
That through the channel swept along,
Would overboard
his burden throw,
And rid the country
of their foe.

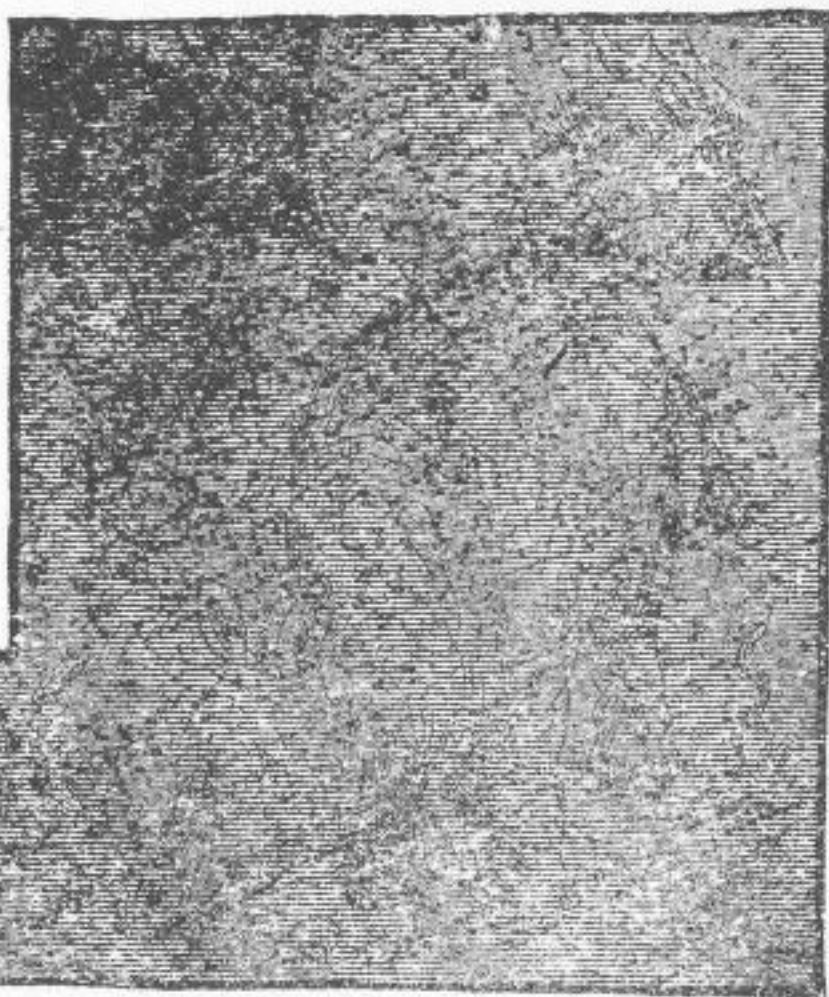


But when upon the distant strand,
They saw the thankful lion stand,
With scarce a hair upon him wet,
And safe to chase or govern yet,
In anger every creature yelled,
A meeting on the spot was held,

And plots against the beast were laid,
Who dared to give the lion aid.

"If he's a fish," one speaker cried,
Let him beneath the water bide;

With clams and muscles
at his toes,
And eels and leeches
at his nose,
And not come crawling
round us here,
To aid a rogue
that others fear.



If he's indeed a beast of prey,
He should on land contented stay,
And not be keeping us in doubt
Which way to class the plated lout."

Thus things went on, from day to day.
At last they made a bold assay;
Combined to give, in minutes few,
The old rhinoceros his due.

But while the fight was under way,
And dark and doubtful seemed the day,
The lion, now both sound and strong,
As luck would have it came along.

moment there he viewed the fight,
And quickly guessed the motive right;



"This mean, combined attack," said he,
"Is what he gets for aiding me

My sturdy friend of former day
Must have support without delay.
Though working well among his foes,
With stamping feet and tossing nose,
He needs assistance from a brother,
And one good turn deserves another."

With that he bounded to the fray,
And soon confusion marked his way.
The roar that from his throat arose
Made creatures tremble to their toes.
The howling band was forced to yield,
And left them masters of the field.
And ever after, side by side,
The couple journeyed far and wide,—
Friends, tried and true, as friends can be
Who live by force and robbery;
While other beasts, by night and day,
Took care to give them right of way.

