

826

7

A GENERAL
H I S T O R Y
O F
QUADRUPEDS.

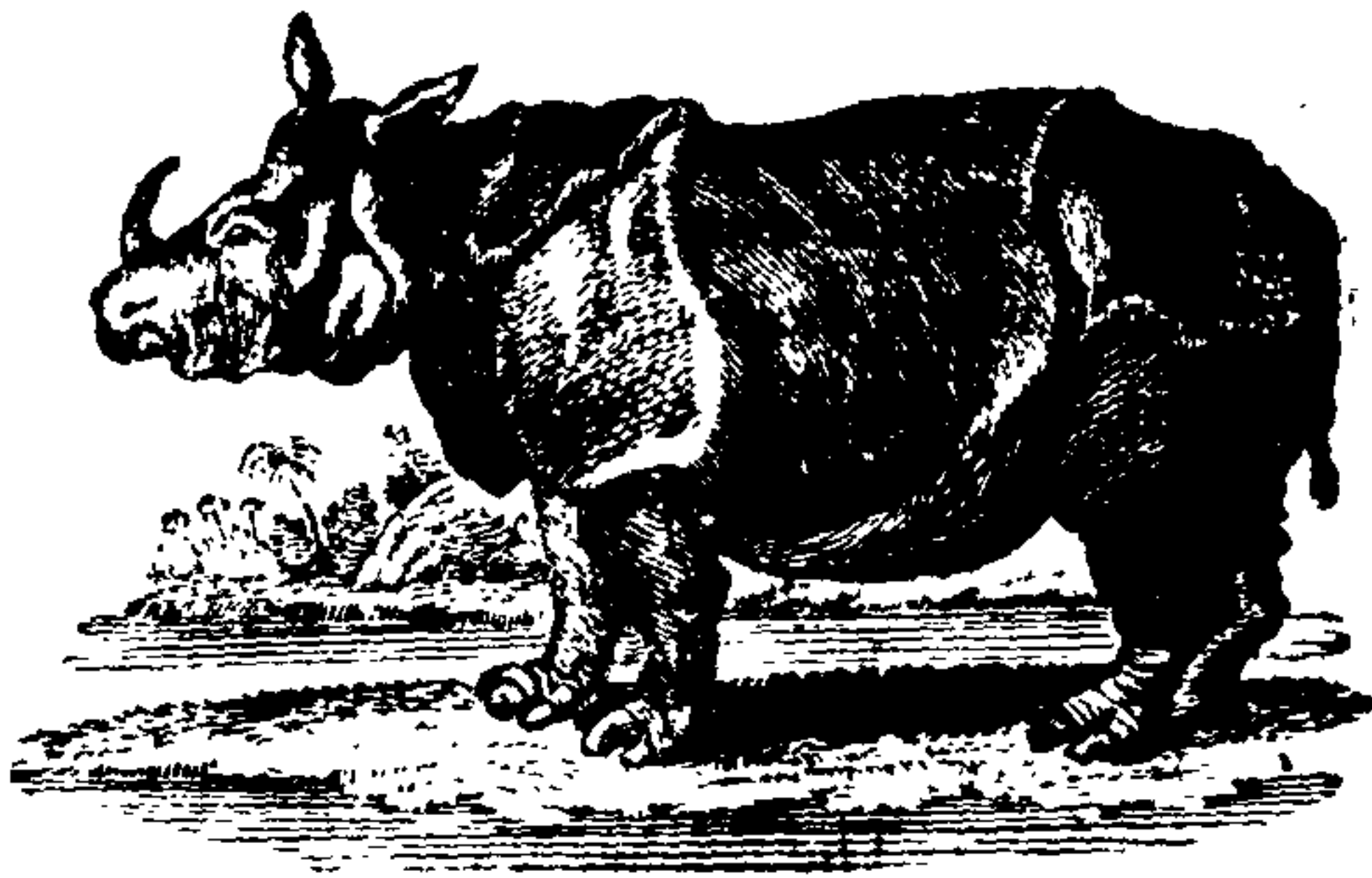
THE FIGURES ENGRAVED ON WOOD BY T. BEWICK.



NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE:

PRINTED BY AND FOR S. HODGSON, R. BEILBY, & T. BEWICK,
NEWCASTLE: SOLD BY THEM, BY G. G. J. &
J. ROBINSON, AND C. DILLY, LONDON.

1790.



THE RHINOCEROS.

We are indebted to the labours of many learned and ingenious naturalists for accurate descriptions of this wonderful creature, which in size is only exceeded by the Elephant, and in strength and power is inferior to no other animal. Bontius says, that in the bulk of its body it equals the Elephant, but is lower only on account of the shortness of its legs.

The length of this animal, from the extremity of the muzzle to the insertion of the tail, is usually twelve feet; and the circumference of its body nearly equal to its length: Its nose is armed with a formidable weapon, peculiar to this creature, being a very hard and solid horn, with which it defends itself from every adversary. The Tiger will rather attack the Elephant, whose trunk it can lay hold of, than the Rhinoceros, which it cannot face, without danger of having its bowels torn out. The body and limbs of the Rhinoceros are covered with a skin so hard and impenetrable, that he fears neither the claws of the Tiger, nor the more formidable proboscis of the
 Elephant;

Elephant; it will turn the edge of a scimitar, and even resist the force of a musket-ball. The skin, which is of a blackish colour, forms itself into large folds at the neck, the shoulders, and the crupper, by which the motion of the head and limbs is facilitated; round the neck, which is very short, are two large folds; there is a fold from the shoulders, which hangs down upon the fore legs; and another from the hind part of the back to the thighs. The body is every-where covered with small tuberosities or knots, which are small on the neck and back, but larger on the sides: The thighs, legs, and even the feet, are full of these incrustations, which have been mistaken for scales by some authors: They are, however, only simple indurations of the skin, without any uniformity in their figure, or regularity in their positions. Between the folds, the skin is penetrable and delicate, as soft to the touch as silk, and of a light-flesh colour; the skin of the belly is nearly of the same colour and consistency. The body of the Rhinoceros is long and thick; its belly is large, and hangs near the ground; its legs short, round, and very strong; and its hoofs are divided into three parts, each pointing forward. The head of this animal is large; its ears long and erect; and its eyes small, sunk, and without vivacity; the upper lip is long, overhangs the lower, and is capable of great extension: It is so pliable, that the Rhinoceros can move it from side to side, twist it round a stick, collect its food, or seize with it any thing it would carry to its mouth.

The Rhinoceros, without being ferocious, carnivorous, or even extremely wild, is, however, totally untractable and rude. It seems to be subject to paroxysms of fury, which nothing can appease. That which Emanuel, king
of

of Portugal, sent to the pope in the year 1513, destroyed the vessel in which they were transporting it.

Like the Hog, this animal is fond of wallowing in the mire. It is a solitary animal, loves moist and marshy grounds, and seldom quits the banks of rivers.—It is found in Bengal, Siam, China, and other countries of Asia; in the isles of Java, Sumatra, Ceylon, &c.; in Ethiopia, and the country as low as the Cape of Good Hope: But in general, the species is not numerous, and is much less diffused than that of the Elephant.

The female produces but one at a time, and at considerable intervals. During the first month, the young Rhinoceros exceeds not the size of a large Dog. At the age of two years, the horn is not more than an inch long; at six years old, it is nine or ten inches long; and grows to the length of three feet and a half, and sometimes four feet. The horn is much esteemed by the natives as an antidote against poison, as well as a remedy for particular diseases.

The Rhinoceros feeds on the grossest herbs, and prefers thistles and shrubs to soft or delicate pasturage. It is fond of the sugar-cane, and eats all kinds of grain.

Dr Parsons remarks, that this animal has an acute and very attentive ear: It will listen with a deep and long-continued attention to any kind of noise; and, though it be eating, lying down, or obeying any pressing demands of Nature, it will raise its head, and listen till the noise cease.

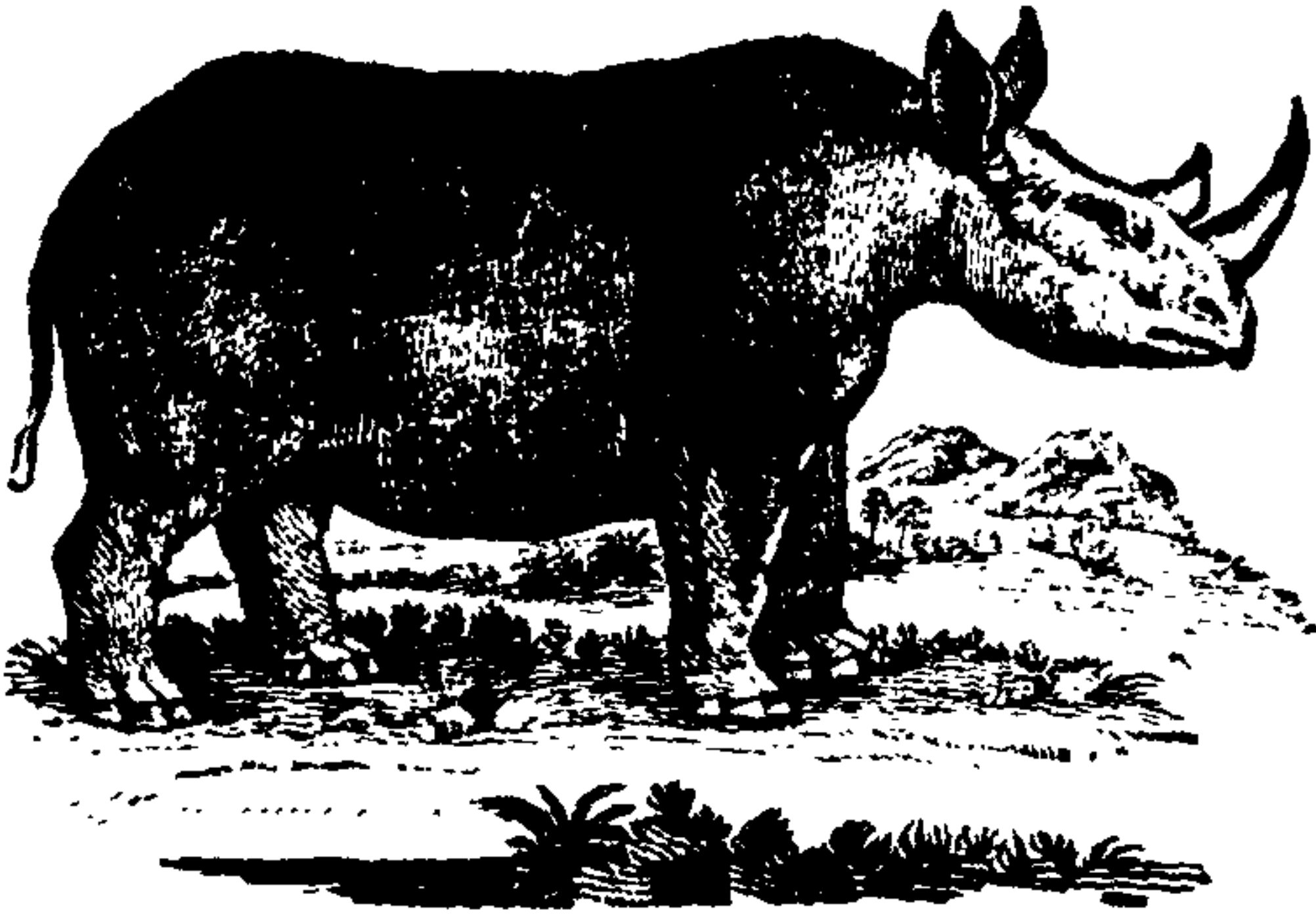
From the peculiar construction of his eyes, the Rhinoceros can only see what is immediately before him. When he pursues any object, he proceeds always in a direct line, overturning every obstruction. With the
horn

horn on his nose, he tears up trees, raises stones, and throws them behind him to a considerable distance.—His sense of smelling is so exquisite, that the hunters are obliged to avoid being to windward of him. They follow him at a distance, and watch till he lies down to sleep: They then approach with great precaution, and discharge their muskets all at once into the lower part of the belly.

The Rhinoceros is supposed to be the *Unicorn* of holy writ, and possesses all the properties ascribed to that animal,—rage, untameableness, great swiftness, and immense strength.—It was known to the Romans in very early times, and is handed down to us in some of the works of that celebrated people. Augustus introduced one into the shows, on his triumph over Cleopatra.

Its flesh is eaten, and is much relished by the natives of India and Africa.





THE TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS.

We have given the figure of this animal from Mr Sparrman, whose authenticity there is every reason to depend upon, and who has given a most exact anatomical description of this hitherto undescribed animal. Of two that were shot, he only mentions the size of the smaller of them, which was eleven feet and a half long, seven feet high, and twelve in circumference. It was without any folds on the skin, which was of an ash colour; excepting about the groin, where it was of a flesh-colour. The surface of the skin was scabrous and knotty, of a close texture, and when dry extremely hard. There were no hairs on any part of the body, except the edges of the ears and the tip of the tail, which were furnished with a few dark bristly hairs, about an inch long.

The horns of this animal are placed one behind the other, in a line with the nose: The foremost of them measures about eighteen inches in length, and is always

K

the

the larger of the two. It is remarkable, that the Rhinoceros makes use of the shorter horn only for the purpose of digging up roots, which compose great part of its food; it being endued with the power of turning the larger horn on one side out of the way. The shape of the horns is conical, with the tips inclining a little backwards; the texture of the lower part is rough, and seems as if it consisted of horny fibres; the upper part is smooth and plain, like those of an Ox. The feet are round, and do not spread much: They have three hoofs on each of them, which project but little; the middle one is the longest. The eyes of the Rhinoceros are small, and sunk into its head; in consequence of which it sees indistinctly: But its organs of hearing and smelling are very acute. At the least noise, the creature takes the alarm, pricks up its ears, and listens with great attention: If it happen to catch the scent of any person within a small distance, it rushes out with astonishing quickness; and it is difficult to avoid the impetuous attack of this powerful animal.

It has been generally said of the Rhinoceros, that its tongue is so hard and rough as to take away the skin and flesh wherever it licks any person that has unfortunately fallen a victim to its fury: Mr Sparrman says, however, that he thrust his hand into the mouth of one that had just been shot, and found the tongue perfectly soft and smooth.—From the account of its intestines, given us by the same ingenious author, we shall just mention the following, which will enable our readers to form a more perfect idea of its enormous bulk:—The stomach was four feet in length, and two in diameter; to which was annexed a tube or canal, twenty-eight feet long, and six inches

inches diameter; the kidneys were a foot and a half in breadth; the heart was a foot and a half long, and nearly the same in breadth; the liver, when measured from right to left, was found to be three feet and a half in breadth, and two feet and a half deep, as it hangs in the animal's body when it is in a standing position; it had no gall-bladder, in which it resembles the Horse. Upon opening the stomach, the contents of it were found to consist of roots and small branches of trees masticated, some of which were as big as the end of a man's finger; in the mass there appeared a great quantity of succulent plants, as well as some that were harsh and prickly: The effluvium arising from this mass was so far from being offensive, that it diffused around a very strong and not disagreeable aromatic odour. We shall conclude our account of this animal by observing, that the cavity which contained the brains was small, being barely six inches long, and four high, and of an oval shape: Being filled with pease, it was found to contain barely one quart; a human skull, measured at the same time, did not require much less than three pints to fill it.

