

...les.  
...zzle  
...trils,  
...to a demand for these eggs as  
...dealers continue to order them  
...whenever they can get them. Within reasonable limits this  
...should be checked.  
H. HAMMOND SMITH.

## SKULLS OF THE SOUTHERN WHITE RHINOCEROS.

Two remarkably fine skulls, with the horns attached, of males of the typical southern race of the white rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*), now practically extinct, have recently been acquired by Mr Rowland Ward. The surface of the bone is much polished and darkened by larding and dusting; and it is probable that the specimens are at least half a century old. Unfortunately, nothing has been at present ascertained with regard to their history, but they are certainly South African, and probably came from Zululand. In both of them the front horn is large and massive, and of the typical form, with the tip recurving, while the hind one is quite small, with a very short and compressed smooth summit. One of the specimens has already been sold; the other will, I believe, be secured for the Natural History Museum. In the latter the front horn measures 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and the back horn 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length.

At present the Natural History Museum possesses only two specimens of the associated horns of the southern white rhinoceros. The first of these is a detached pair of the so-called *R. ovalis* type, that is to say, the one in which the front horn inclines forwards, and consequently becomes worn at the tip by the animal pushing it along the ground. The second pair is on a mounted skin, but these are smaller by comparison, the front one measuring 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and the back one 4in. The complete skeleton of this specimen, which came from Mashonaland, is also preserved. In addition, the museum possesses two adult and a couple of immature skulls without horns.

Of other associated horns known to me there is a pair on the mounted skin in Mr Rothschild's museum at Tring, of which the front one measures 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. and the hind one 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., the skeleton of this Mashonaland specimen being, I believe, also preserved. In the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons is a fine skull and horns belonging to an aged bull shot by R. Gordon Cumming, and purchased in 1866. In this the front horn measures in a straight line 31in. and the hind one 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. There is also a mounted head, with the skull preserved separately, in the Liverpool Museum, and in Dr J. E. Gray's *Catalogue of Carnivorous, Pachydermatous, and Edentate Mammals in the British Museum* (1869) reference is made to an adult skull, without lower jaw, at that time in the museum of the London Missionary Society, Bloomsfield-street, E.C. The head of the animal to which the latter belonged is figured in the Rev. John Campbell's *Travels in South Africa* (1822); it would be interesting to know whether this skull is still in existence. Mr F. C. Selous possesses two white rhinoceros skulls, with the horns attached, shot by himself in Mashonaland, both of which are characterised by the relatively large size of the back horn; the length of the front one being 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and that of the back one 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in the first specimen, while in the second the corresponding dimensions are 33in. and 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. respectively. In neither is the thickness of the front horn so great as in the specimens acquired by Mr Ward. As regards the relatively large size of the back horn, these skulls agree with the Mashonaland specimens in the Natural History Museum and at Tring. On the other hand, in a female skull from Zululand in the Pretoria Museum, in which the front horn measures 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., the length of the back one is only 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; while in a specimen from the same district in the collection of the Duke of Orleans at Wood Norton the dimensions of the two horns are 20in. and 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. respectively, the girth of the front horn being, however, 2in. greater than in Mr Selous's 33in. specimen.

In these respects these two Zululand skulls are of the general type of the two acquired by Mr Ward, and thus suggest that the latter may have come from the same district. It may also be pointed out that the white rhinoceros, with a practically aborted back horn, figured in my *Game Animals of Africa*, came either from Cape Colony or Zululand; and, this being so, there seems a possibility that the white rhinoceros of these districts was characterised by the back horn being shorter and the front horn stouter than in the Mashonaland representative of the species.

The only other skull carrying both horns of which I have any knowledge is one purchased a few years ago, I believe, by the American Museum of Natural History. Although it lacks the lower jaw, and is otherwise imperfect, it was purchased at a very high figure.

Any further information with regard to skulls or associated parts of horns of the southern race of the white rhinoceros, either in private or public collections, especially in this country, would be of interest. There are, doubtless, specimens to be seen in the Dutch museums.

R. L.

## NOTES AND QUERIES ON NATURAL HISTORY.

**RETURN OF THE PUFFINS TO SCILLY.**—It may interest ornithologists to know that the puffins in very large numbers have arrived at Annet this year at the exceptionally early date of

LYD EKKER 19  
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