

ANIMALS,

Principally in the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park,

Drawn from the Life and Engraved

BY

THOMAS LANDSEER:

WITH DESCRIPTIVE AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTICES

BY

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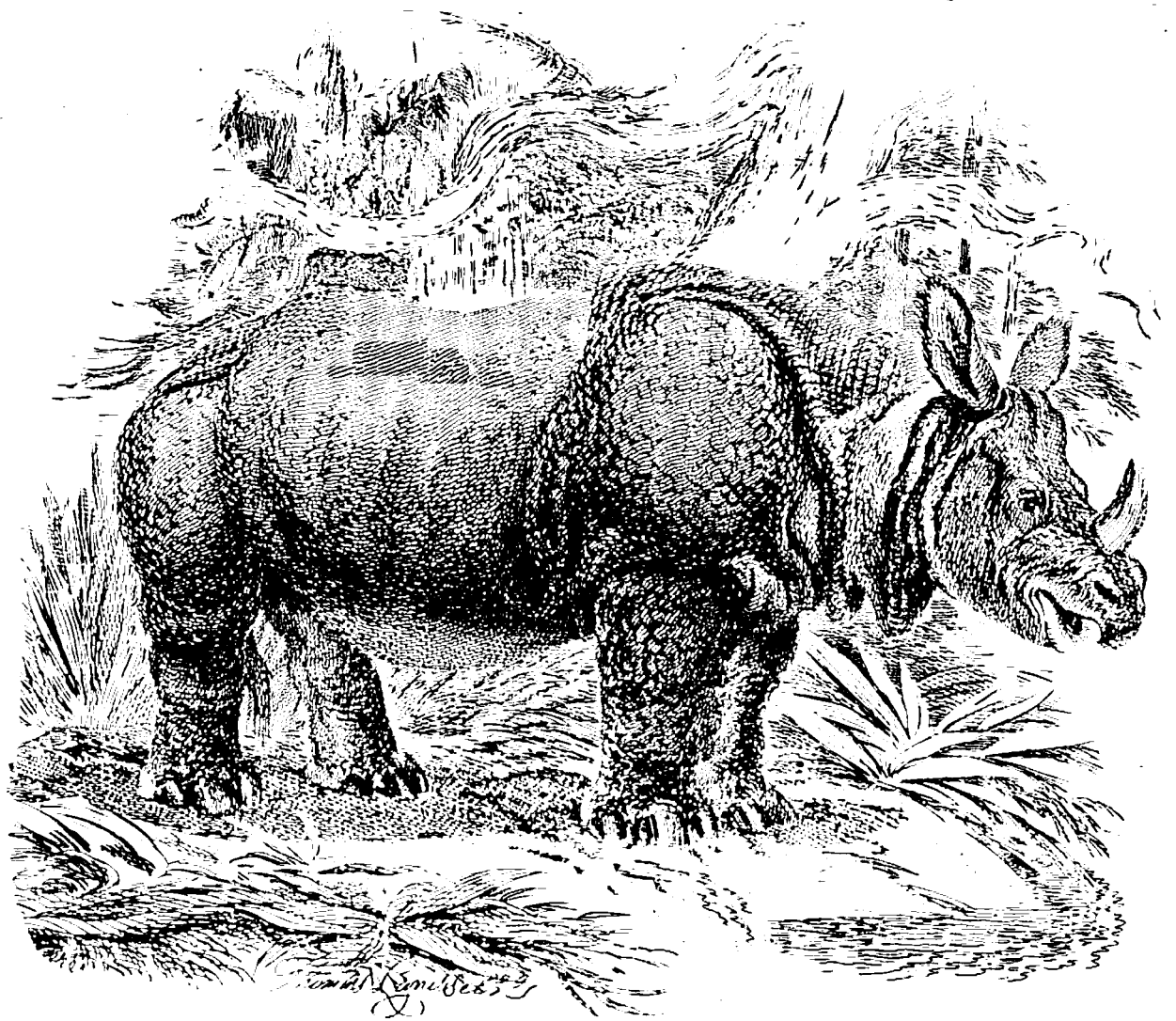
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THE INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

THIS animal appertains to a genus of which only five varieties are known to modern naturalists; namely, the Indian Rhinoceros (the *Rh. Indicus* of the ancients); the African Rhinoceros, having almost invariably two horns; the two-horned Sumatran Rhinoceros (*Rh. Bicornis Sumatrensis*), having one of the large folds of thick callous skin, proper to these quadrupeds, on the shoulder only, and on the body merely slight indications of them; a variety of the last, lighter-bodied than his Indian congener, and having his skin covered with occasional short, stiff hairs (*Rh. Sondicus* of Cuvier),—this is also found in Sumatra; and the Simus (*Rh. Simus* of Burchell), which seems, from that gentleman's notice of it in the *Journal de Physique*, (June 1817,) and in the second volume of his *Travels*, to be identical with the *Rh. Camus*,—an enormous species, nearly double the size of the common two-horned Rhinoceros of Africa. Mr. Griffith, in the Synopsis attached to his able amplification of the *Règne Animal* (to which these Sketches are largely indebted), has so classed him.

The Indian Rhinoceros, from which our drawing was taken, has one large strong horn, rising longitudinally from the ridge of the nose, just above the nostrils, and less movable than it has been discovered to be in other individuals of the same kind, conical in figure, but incurved slightly towards the forehead, and its point almost in the same line with the crown of the skull, though considerably removed from it. His eyes are very small, lateral, and set far back in the head; his ears, which in shape are swine-like, but proportionably smaller and rounder, being also placed very backward. On each of his feet he has three solid massive toes, very proper to terminate the clumsy but thick and sturdy legs which support his prodigious bulk. Perhaps none of the true quadrupeds, the Hippopotamus alone excepted, have so unwieldy and uncouth an appearance as our Rhinoceros. The skin or hide with which he is covered falls into several deep folds or plaits; that which protects the shoulder bearing an odd sort of analogy to the fixed shield which, in the fifteenth century protected the bridle-arm of our knights in jousting. The head, which is of an incredible weight, is carried unusually low, but is well set on a short, stout neck. The outline of the trunk, omitting the harsh ridges of the tuberculous skin, is very like that of the *Sus* genus. When kept in a state of confinement, as in the Jardin du Roi, it has been found necessary to keep this skin constantly lubricated, in order to prevent its chipping. On the exterior surface of his limbs, on the head and knees, the tubercles of the skin are elongated, and resemble horny threads attached in parallel lines to one another. Mr. Burchell, in his very interesting description of a gigantic African Rhinoceros, gives a minute account of the structure of the animal's horns; from which it is evident, that they are formed, in like manner, by an accretion of similar threads or cornuous fibres, more intimately mingled.* A formidable and often successful antagonist of the Elephant, whom he gores with his powerful horn either in the flanks or the belly,—and by nature protected from the claws of even the Lion,—the Rhinoceros is not slow to turn upon his hunters. Seeking his vegetable diet, however, amidst the forests

* May not this tuberculous character of the skin be, in its origin, the result of a species of *plica*, or some other analogous disease, more common to the Rhinoceros of Asia, probably, than to that of Africa?

THE INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

and the plains of the East, he rarely, when unmolested, attacks other animals. If excited, he employs his natural powers and astonishing strength wildly,—but awkwardly, and with little discernment. The African hunters, indeed, who have courage enough, Mr. Burchell tells us, to await his furious charge with vigilance and coolness, may contrive to slip aside, and even reload, before the infuriated animal can regain his view of them—an object which he accomplishes tardily and with difficulty. The individual we are describing was brought into England in 1815, and afterwards removed to Paris, where it attained upwards of ten feet in length, and five feet in height.

Like the Hog, which it resembles in so many points of structure and appetites, the temper of the Rhinoceros is vicious and uncertain. His courage seems to be the effect of mere impulse—the exertion of the lowest degree of brute instinct; his anger is madness; and his obstinacy is suicidal. Like the hog, too, he possesses exquisite keenness of scent; and his pursuers must approach him against the wind, or from the leeward, to get even within musket-shot. He ravenously devours all sorts of sweet fruits and sugar-canes which he can get at; and his motions are to the husbandman as destructive as his appetite. After bathing at noon in the rivers, or wallowing in the mud upon their banks, he destroys at night, by his monstrous bulk, and with his large heavy feet, all the products of cultivation through which his passage lies.

It should seem from Burchardt, that certain countries on the banks of the Nile and the Athara, which were formerly infested by this destructive animal, are now never visited by him; and in other regions of Africa, his disappearance has been accompanied by that of another destroyer—the still more bulky Hippopotamus; while in Hindustan, and some of the islands of the adjacent archipelago, the Rhinoceros has multiplied rather than decreased. The river banks and the forests of the great island of Sumatra swarm with them, with tigers, and wild elephants; but it is somewhat singular that the Rhinoceros is not found in the vast island of Borneo.

