

THE

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WEEKLY MAGAZINE

OF

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EDITED BY SEBA SMITH.

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1844.



The Rhinoceros in its native Abode.

From the Journal of the Expedition

to the North Pole, 1845-46

THE ROVER.

THE RHINOCEROS IN HIS NATIVE WILDS.

WITH AN ENGRAVING.

THE excellent plate we present the readers of the Rover this week was engraved in London for the Oriental Annual. As a specimen of art it is eminently beautiful. Being desirous of having so fine an engraving accompanied by appropriate letter-press illustration, and the writers in the neighborhood being pretty much "used up," we took occasion to write to our old friend Major Downing, of Downingville, in the State of Maine, to give us a little friendly aid in the matter. The following is his very satisfactory reply.

DOWNINGVILLE, Feb 26, 1844.

My dear old friend—I received your letter and the plecter about three days ago, and have been chewing upon it ever since. It was a new kind of business to me and I didn't know jest exactly how to take hold of it. When Lilly, Waite & Co. published my book of letters in Boston some years ago, it had plecters in it, but the business was done o'ther eend foremost then. That is, I didn't write the letters to match the plecters, but they made the plecters to match the letters. But they say it's a poor rule that wont work both ways, and I dont know but the business may be done one way as well as the other. And if I can be any help to you in this kind of way once in awhile, as you have so many of them plecters to publish, I shall be very glad to do it; for I haint forgot the kindness and favor you used to show me in the General's time.

When I got your plecter of the rhinoceros, I took it into the house and showed it to aunt Keziah and cousin Nabby, and asked them what they thought of *that*. Aunt Keziah held up her hands in perfect astonishment, and said she thought he was the awfulest looking critter she ever see. Cousin Nabby said no; for her part she thought the whole plecter was beautiful. Them birds standing in the water, and them little deers running up the mountain, and altogether it was the prettiest thing she had seen for a long time. But she said she couldn't think what they need to have them great speckled blankets spread over the rhinoceros for.

"Why," says aunt Keziah, says she, "dont you know, Nabby, they wouldn't dare to print animals without blankets or something over em, since them minsters in the Jarseys come out so against Harpers' bible."

At that I burst out a laughing, for I couldn't hold in no longer. And says I, he hasn't got a sign of a blanket on him; that is nothin but his skin; he's got a skin as thick as a pine board. And then I went to unole Joshua's library and took down a book that told all about him, and Nabby sot down and read the whole of it.

"Well now," says I, "Nabby, I've got three extra loads of cheap literature come in to-day, right from York; and I shall have to go and help the boys and Zeb in packin and pillin away all day; and I dont see how I can stop to write about this rhinoceros for the editor of the Rover, and being you are pretty keen with a pen you must set down and do it."

Well, Nabby said she would, for she's an accommodatin creeter. "Bot," says she, "must I write in prose or poetry?"

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"Well," says I, "for that matter, I suppose every writer has a right to cook his own fish in his own way. But seein you've got a good deal of jingle in your head, I kind of think you'd do best in the poetry line."

"Well," says Nabby, says she, "I think so too, for it's the most poetical subject I've come across for a long time." And away she went to get her pen and ink, and I went off to work; and when I come back in the evening she'd got it all spun out as fine as silk. I send you a copy of it below, hoping it'll answer your turn first rate. Nabby says she dont want you to put her name to it; but I say go ahead and put the name on; no cloaks in literature; that's my way. In the mean time I remain your old friend,

MAJOR JACK DOWNING.

THE RHINOCEROS.

BY NABBY DOWNING.

Of all the animals under the sun,
That roam the earth, I doubt
If ever you'll find a more curious one,
Than this I am writing about.

His name is Rhinoceros—sweet sounding word,
On purpose for poetry made,
And *should* be familiar and greatly preferr'd
By all who are poets by trade,

He lives in Siam and old Bengal,
And some parts of Africa,
And he'll whip any animal, great or small,
And drive ten thousand away.

He is twelve feet long and twelve feet round,
And five or six feet high,
With a leg as stout as an elephant's,
And a most tremendous eye.

You may pound his tough hide with all your might,
And he never will feel the blows;
And the terrible horn is a terrible sight,
That grows at the end of his nose.

The baby rhinoceros, two years of age,
Has an inch of horn or so;
But when he grows up to be old and strong,
This monstrous horn is three feet long,
And can battle with any foe.

He will tear down trees full thirty feet high,
And strip them up, they say,
Into basket stuff quite thin and fine,
And then on a cord or so will dine,
As an ox will dine on hay.

He walks about on his native hills,
And in the silent dell;
And rolls all day in the muddy pool
Where the mountain shadows are deep and cool,
For he loves his pleasure well.

He's gentle and quiet as any lamb,
If you dont provoke his ire;
But if a war with him you wage,
He shakes the very earth in his rage,
And his eye-balls flash with fire.