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Miscellany.

HISTORICAL.

EXTRACTED
FOR THE STAR.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE
RHINOCEROS.

NEXT to the Elephant, the Rhinoceros is accounted the largest quadruped. It is usually of the size of a small or midling Elephant; has a rough, hard, wrinkled skin, very thick, and almost proof against any weapon;—resembling, in colour and appearance, the bark of an elm. Some part of it is spotted with black & grey, and in many places, it folds over in deep furrows, which appear like scales. From its nose proceeds a pyramidal horn, growing upwards, and ascending in a curve. It is perfectly solid and without cavity, and in colour is of a lighter and darker brown, or even black, according to its age. When full grown, it measures between three and four feet from the root, and weighs near 500 pounds.—This horn or snout seems formed to turn up the earth, in order to

its feeding on the roots of plants, as well as for its defence; for it can be turned upwards, downwards or sideways: yet it is of so hard a substance, that the point will pierce any thing like a sword; and the Rhinoceros is said to sharpen it against a flint, or other hard stone, that he may be prepared whenever he is attacked by any enemy. The eyes are small, and placed pretty forward. The ears large, and not unlike those of an ass. The back is not prominent, like the elephant's, but hollow, & appears as if adorned with a natural saddle. The sides are swelled out, and the belly sinks down pretty much. The legs are short, and thick in proportion. The feet are round behind, having hoofs forward, which, by two divisions, are separated into three parts on each foot. The tail is in shape like that of an ox, and has, sometimes, black hairs at the end; the ears have also some scattered hairs on them.

This large creature is found in the island of Java, in divers parts of the East Indies, and in Africa. The ancients have spoken very little of it. Pliny contents himself with saying it has a horn on its nose, that it whets it against a stone, before it engages the elephant, to which, it has a natural

antipathy.

antipathy, and that they are nearly of the same size; but that the Rhinoceros has shorter legs, and that the skin is the colour of the box tree. The reason that so little notice is taken of this animal, by ancient naturalists, is, as *Ælian* says, because all the world had seen them in the shews which the Emperor exhibited for the amusement of the people. *M. D'Herbelot* tells us on the authority of the famed *Sharrif Ab Edrifi*, that there are numbers of these creatures in the Isle of *Rami*, on the Indian sea; from whence the Indian kings are furnished with its wonderful horn to drink out of, it having the singular virtue of sweating at the approach of poison. He adds, that the horn, being split in two in the middle, represents the profile or outlines of a man as if drawn with chalk, and some of them also, those of birds. — The tongue of this animal is covered with a rough membrane, resembling a file, which flays every thing he licks. As we have animals that make a grateful repast upon thistles, whose small points are agreeable to the nervous filaments of the tongue; so the rhinoceros eats with pleasure, the branches of trees, bristled all over with the largest thorns. Travellers relate that they have frequently given him those whose points were very sharp and long, and it was wonderful to see with what dexterity and greediness he immediately licked them up, and chewed them without the least seeming inconvenience. Sometimes, indeed, his mouth would be a little bloody; but that seemed even to render the

taste more agreeable; and those small wounds, to appearance, made no other impression on his tongue, than the particles of salt or pepper do on ours. If they touch any flesh with their tongue, it carries all before it, leaving the bone quite bare; so that this is a very dangerous weapon.

Father Borri relates, that when he was at *Nuocmon*, in the province of *Pulucambi*, in *Cochin-China*, the governor went out to hunt a Rhinoceros, that was in a wood near their dwelling place. The governor had with him above an hundred men, some on foot, some on horseback, and eight or ten elephants. The beast came out of the wood, and, seeing so many enemies, was so far from giving any tokens of fear, that he furiously encountered them all, who, opening, and making a lane, let him pass through. He came to the rear, where was the governor, mounted on an elephant, waiting to attack him. The elephant endeavored to seize him with his trunk, but could not, by reason of the rhinoceros' swiftness; and besides, the elephant was forced to be strictly on his guard, lest the rhinoceros should slip his horn into his belly, and rip him up, as they often do in their fights with the elephant. The Gov. well knowing that he could not pierce the rhinoceros on the back, by reason of the thickness of his hide in that part, or any where but on the side near the belly, watched an opportunity when he should take a leap, and by that mean expose the place which alone was penetrable. This the creature presently did, to avoid

a stroke, aimed at him by the elephant, and the governor immediately cast a dart, which dexterously struck him through from side to side; upon which the beast fell down, amid a loud shout of the people, who had begun to be in pain for the governor's safety.— They then laid the body upon a pile of wood, and setting fire to it, leaped and danced about, whilst the hard skin was burning and the flesh roasting, cutting pieces as fast as it roasted, and eating them with great satisfaction. Of the heart, liver and brains, they made a more dainty dish, and presented it to the governor, who was upon a rising ground, diverting himself with their merriment. In all engagements between the elephant and rhinoceros, the victory of the latter chiefly depends upon the good fortune of striking the former, with his horn, in the belly; for if he fails in this, the elephant is generally too hard for him, by means of his proboscis.

As the Rhinoceros is but seldom seen, we may conclude either that they are as scarce as the elephants are numerous, or else, which is more probable, that they chiefly harbor in deserts and unfrequented places, their common diet being thistles, docks, and other coarse fare. Some have imagined that the unicorn, so often mentioned in scripture, is no other than the rhinoceros; but on a close examination, there are but little grounds for such a supposition; for if authors may be credited, there are various one horned animals in Africa, which have an equal, and some a far better, right to this

conjecture, as coming nearer to the commonly received notion of the figure and shape of the unicorn. But there are not wanting others, particularly DALE, who, on the contrary, think that the rhinoceros is the only one horned quadruped, and that the accounts of all others are fictitious.

On the whole, the rhinoceros is a very noble creature; and tho' vastly inferior to the elephant in strength, docility, and those other qualities so remarkable in that animal; yet superior to it in beauty of skin and comeliness of shape; and both alike serve to display the wonders of providence in the creation.

FROM THE *FARMER'S WEEKLY MUSEUM.*

Common Sense, in Disabilla.
NO. IV.

HE IS SHUT UP.

THEN he is either unfortunate, and ought to be pitied; unskilled in the business, and will profit by the lesson; or a rogue, and never ought to run at large. He has certainly one solace. Misery loves company; he has enough: in N. York, in Boston, in almost every seaport, and in the country are numbers of this monastic order, who, secluded from the world, are devoutly praying for the forgiveness of their debts. "I told you so," says common sense. You were forewarned of all this difficulty. Money was plenty; business going on briskly; it was easy getting credit; a man might trade upon