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SOUTH AFRICAN MAMMALS

A SHORT MANUAL FOR THE USE OF FIELD
NATURALISTS, SPORTSMEN AND TRAVELLERS

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Order UNGULATA.

This is a large order containing the true "hoofed" animals, and excluding under the more modern and generally accepted classification the Elephants and Rock Rabbits. The digits of the forefeet never exceed four in number, and the carpal and tarsal bones interlock. There are no clavicles.

There are three sub-orders, the *Perissodactyla*, containing the Tapirs, equine animals and Rhinoceri; the *Artiodactyla*, containing the Pigs, Hippopotamidæ, ruminant animals; and the *Lipoterna*, embracing certain extinct forms which need not concern us further.

Sub-Order **PERISSODACTYLA.**

This group contains the Rhinoceri, equine animals and Tapirs (which last are not found in Africa). Middle toe larger than the others; this may be the only functional digit, as in the case of the equines. Toes of the hind foot never more than three in number. Dorso-lumbar vertebræ 23 or more in the living forms. Premolar and molar teeth in a continuous series with massive crowns. Dentition frequently complete, viz., incisors 3-3, canines 1-1, premolars 4-4, molars 3-3 = 44. Stomach simple; gall-bladder not present.

Family RHINOCEROTIDÆ.

Genus **DICEROS.**

Large and clumsy animals with thick skins almost devoid of hairs, these being found only on the tail and ears. Eyes extremely small for the size of the animal.

There are two horns growing from the upper surface of the face; these horns are not attached to the skull, nor are they of bony growth.

The feet have three toes, each provided with a broad hoof. The number of teeth varies considerably, ranging from 28 to 38. Trouessart separates the two African species into a genus of their own, *Diceros*, retaining *Rhinoceros* for the Asiatic animals.

Diceros simus. *Square-mouthed Rhinoceros.*

Witte Rhenoster.

This animal—commonly known as the White Rhino—is now very scarce, being at present only found in Zululand (where it is even uncommon and where a special reserve exists for its preservation), parts of Rhodesia and Central Africa. Formerly it was common in Bechuanaland and Mashonaland. This is by far the largest of the two Rhinos found in South Africa, and is indeed the second largest terrestrial mammal alive to-day; it is further distinguished by its slightly paler (slaty) coloration and square upper lip. The tail is provided with a tuft of stiff bristly hair. There are two horns on the face which vary much in size and shape. The total length of the head and body is about 13 feet; tail 2 feet. Height at shoulder 5 feet 6 inches to 6 feet 6 inches. Length of front horn 35 to 50 inches. Record $62\frac{1}{2}$ inches; rear horn 17.8 inches.

The White Rhino is found in open grass veld and is of somewhat solitary habit. It feeds at night or during the early mornings, and evenings after sunset, and sleeps during the hot part of the day. Its pace is fair for the bulk of the animal, but no match for a horse. The food of this species consists entirely of grass. Its sight is bad but its hearing and scent are correspondingly good. Only one young one is born at a time.

Diceros bicornis. *Black or Prehensile-lipped Rhinoceros*
Zwarte Rhenoster.

The common Rhinoceros at one time roamed the country from Cape Town to the Zambesi. At present it is not found south of the Zambesi except for a few in the Eastern Transvaal, Zululand and the Portuguese territory. Northwards it extends to Somaliland, being still common in East Africa.

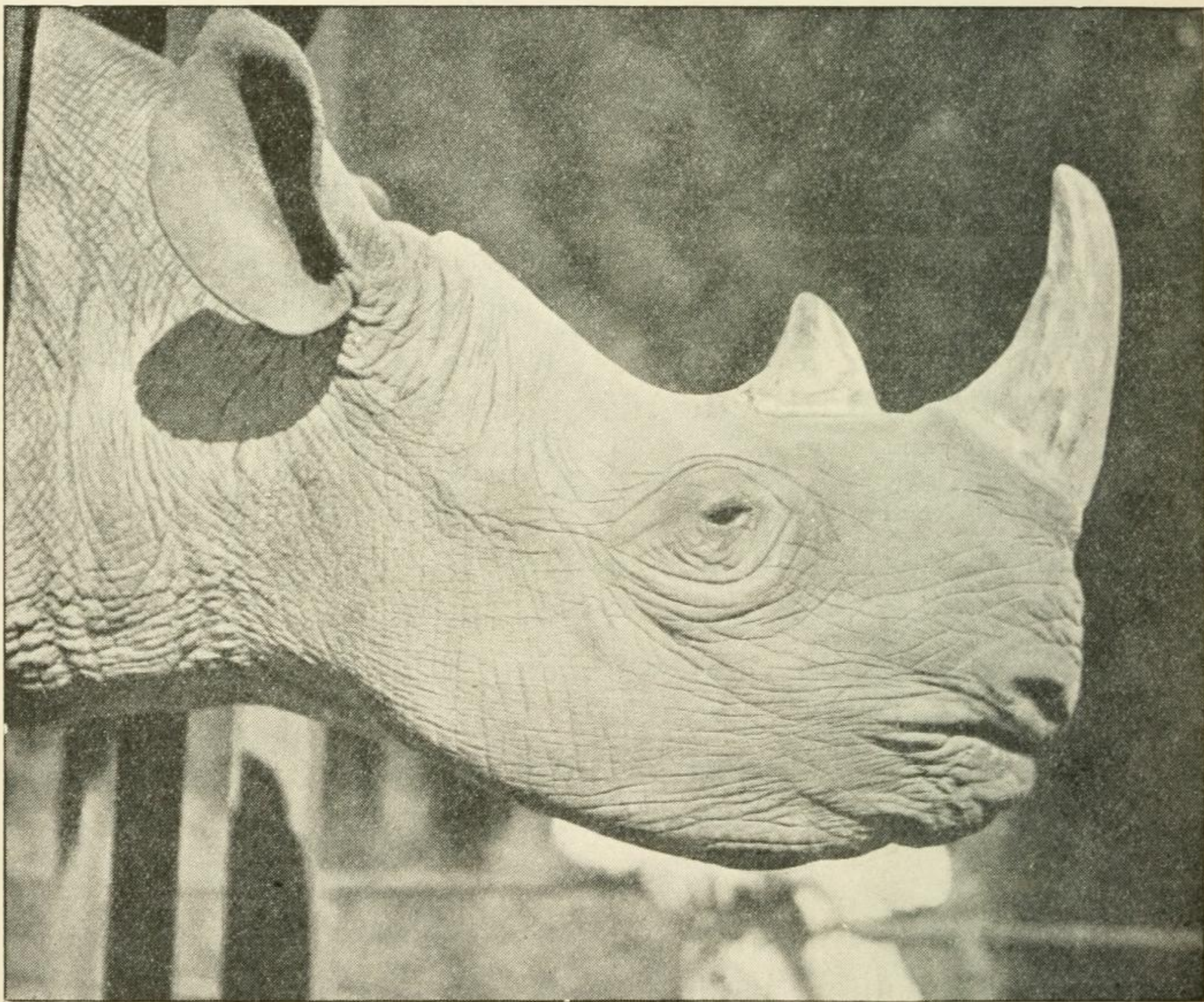


FIG. 50.—Head of Black Rhino.

It is smaller than the White Rhino and has the upper lip attenuated in the middle, forming a flexible or prehensile organ, wherewith to facilitate the grasping of the reeds, leaves, plants, &c., which form its food. The

terminal two-thirds of the tail is provided with bristles. It also has two horns, which are variable in length and shape, but never apparently attaining anything like the length of those of a White Rhino.

Length 10 feet. Height at shoulder about 5 feet. Length of fore horn 18 to 20 inches on the average, the record being $41\frac{1}{2}$ inches; rear horn 7 to 8 inches, record 19 inches.

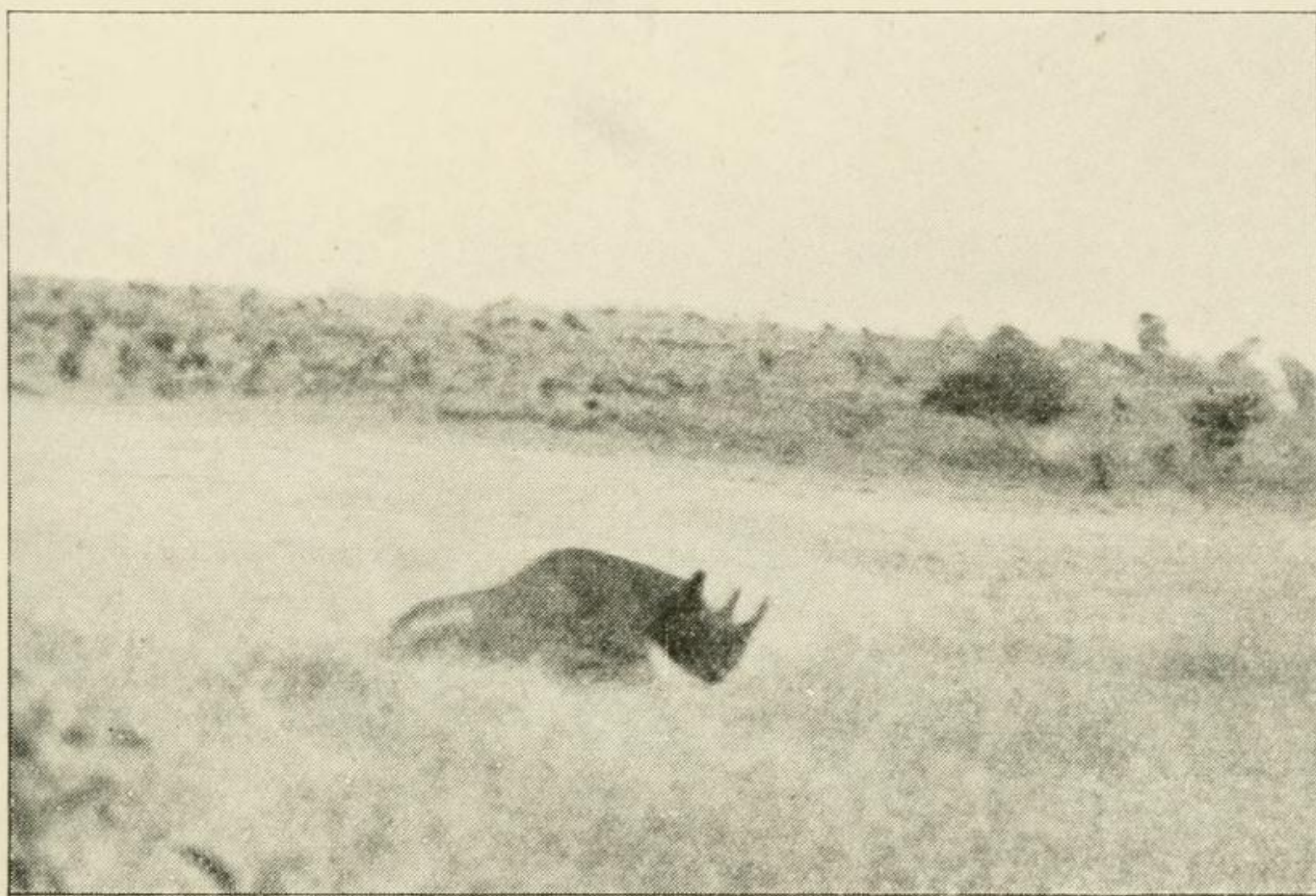


FIG. 51.—Wounded Rhino—"German" East Africa.

Unlike the White Rhino, the Black Rhino is usually found in bushy country, and is also of a solitary disposition. In habits it resembles the former, excepting in its diet, which consists almost exclusively of leaves, twigs, roots, &c., but seldom of grass. A great deal has been written on the pugnacious nature of the Black Rhino, most hunters saying it will charge without provocation. Its small eyes are bound to give the creature bad eyesight, but its hearing is well developed, and I expect they vary individually as much as any other animal. Mr. Dugmore, in his beautiful book on "Camera

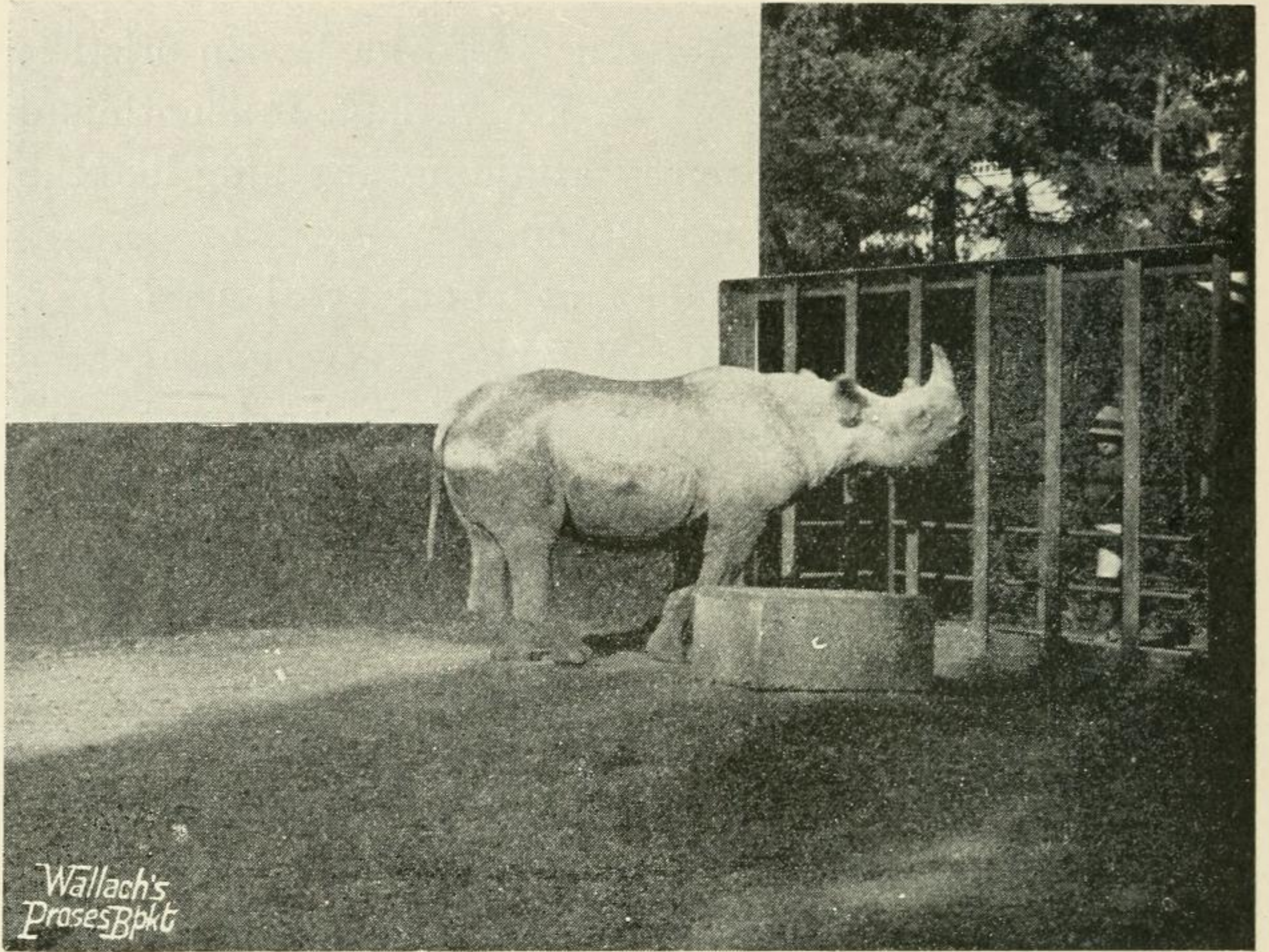


FIG. 52.—Young Black Rhino, six years old (male). (Note the prehensile lip.)

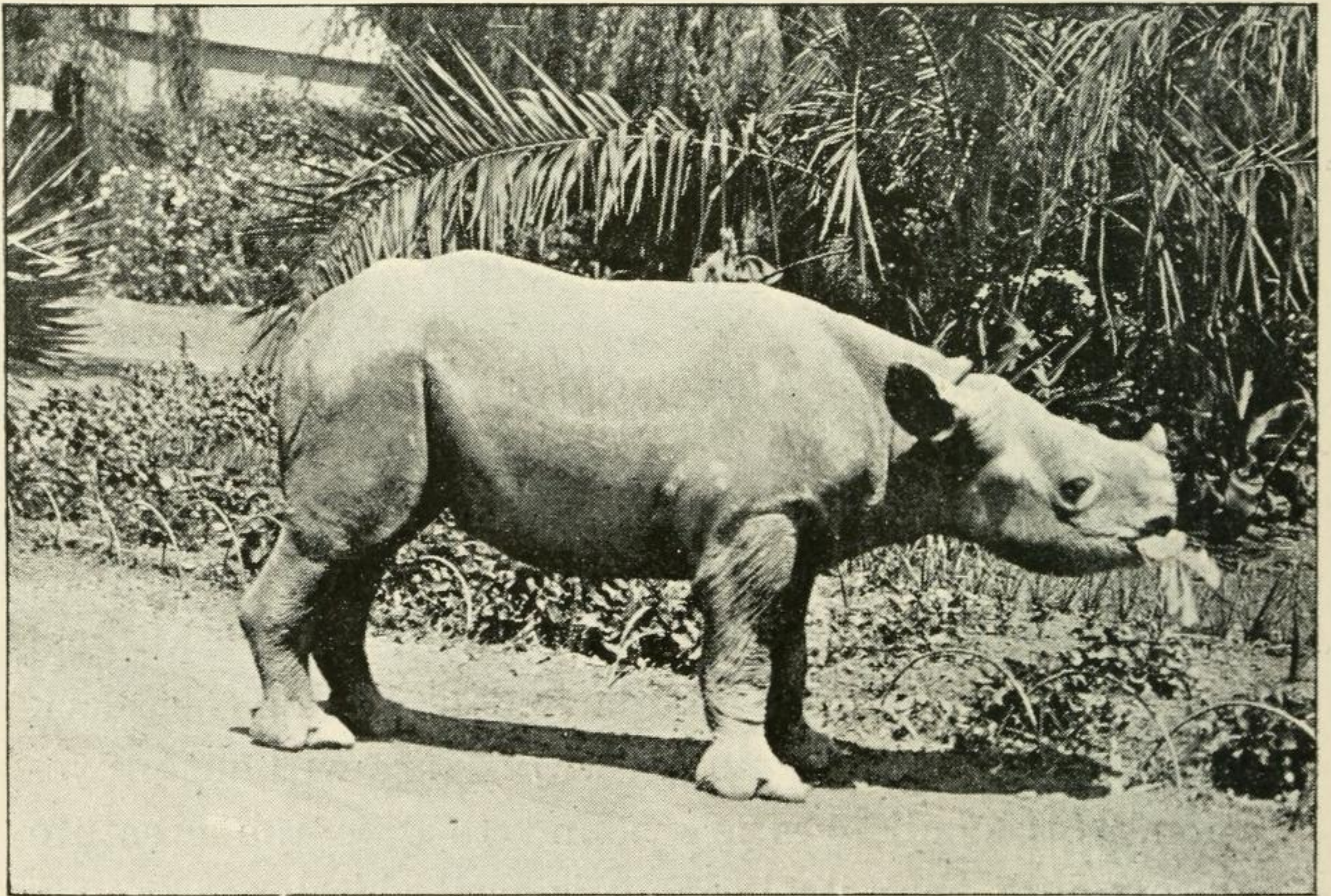


FIG. 53.—Baby Rhinoceros from N. Rhodesia.

Adventures in East Africa," states that in one district of East Africa the Rhinos were quiet and docile or timid animals, in another quite the reverse, charging for no apparent reason. The National Collection possesses two of these animals, a bull from German East Africa and a cow from South Central Rhodesia. The former is becoming very troublesome now, although quiet enough for the first eight years of his life in captivity; the latter is quiet and tractable, and will follow one about like a dog.

Family EQUIDÆ.

Head lengthened, neck adorned with a mane; tail with long hairs; naked patches (chestnuts) on the insides of the forelegs; mammæ two in number. Feet encased in a horny box or hoof. Dentition: Incisors 3-3, canines 1-1, premolars 4-4, molars 3-3 = 44. The first premolar is small and drops out early in life, not being replaced, so that the mature dentition totals 40.

The true Quagga was striped as far as the shoulders only and has long been totally extinct.

Hippotigris burchelli, Gray. *Burchell's Zebra.*

Bonte Quagga.

The main characteristics of the Burchell's Zebra (which has been split up into a number of varieties, species or geographical races—call them what you will) are:—

(1) A more equine appearance than that of the Cape Mountain Zebra; shorter ears, and no dewlap.

(2) The presence of the so-called shadow stripes—a paler stripe in the white field dividing the black stripes.

(3) No gridiron pattern on the back, and the hair on