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GUIDE
TO THE
GALLERIES



OF
M A M M A L I A

(MAMMALIAN, OSTEOLOGICAL, CETACEAN)

IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY).

ILLUSTRATED BY 57 WOODCUTS AND 2 PLANS.

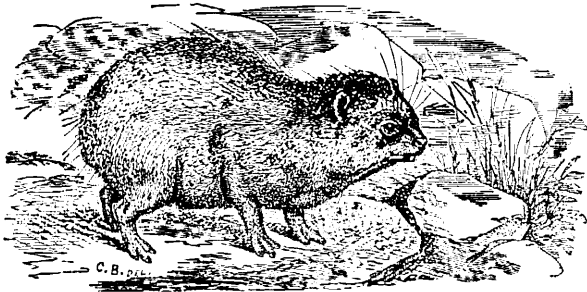
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of Rodents, and their soles are covered with fleshy pads, which enable them to adhere to, and climb with safety up, smooth surfaces of rocks or trees. These animals are entirely vegetable feeders, some dwelling among rocks, others climbing up trees. Among the

Fig. 14.

The Coney (*Hyrax syriacus*).

Rock-Coneys may be specially mentioned the *Hyrax syriacus*, which is the "Coney" of our English translation of the Bible.

Suborder PERISSODACTYLA.

The Perissodactyla, or Odd-toed Ungulates, are represented at the present day by three well-known animals, the Rhinoceros, Tapir, and Horse, which have in common many important characters, chiefly in their teeth and limb-bones, which will be better explained in connection with the skeletons exhibited in the Osteological Gallery. Whilst in Miocene and Pliocene times this Suborder was represented by a very large number of different forms, it is now so deficient in species and individuals that it must be supposed to be in a more or less decadent condition.

Of the Rhinoceroses there are five or six known species, all large animals, with such thick and unyielding skins as to necessitate in some the formation of deep folds to enable them to move their limbs with any facility, and with three toes on each foot. The horns, which are placed on their muzzles, differ essentially in structure from those of other Mammals, being composed of modified and agglutinated hairs.

This group is now restricted to the African and Indian regions, but in former times they were spread over all Europe, Asia, and

America. One of them (*R. tichorhinus*), a native of Europe and N. Asia, was invested with a coat of thick woolly hairs, just like its contemporary, the Mammoth. Specimens of the following species are exhibited on the left of the Saloon:—

The Indian Two-horned Rhinoceros (*R. niger*), a native of the Malayan peninsula, one of the rarest of the genus. The Common African Black Rhinoceros (*R. bicornis*), found all over Africa. It is distinguished from the next species by its elongated and prehensile upper lip, smaller size, and different habits. Its two horns are very variable in length, the front one being generally much the longer of the two, but in some specimens the posterior horn is as long as or longer than the anterior; these latter specimens were formerly considered to be a distinct species, to which the name of "Keitloa" has been given.

The so-called White Rhinoceros (*R. simus*) of S. Africa, with a square upper lip, is a large and very distinct species, which, in spite of its name, is as dark in colour as other Rhinoceroses. Its anterior horn is very slender, and has been found to attain a length of over four feet, one of 4 ft. 9 in., the longest known, being on the top of Case 53; this animal, feeding chiefly on grass, uses its horn rarely, either for digging or for attack. It is now almost exterminated, and it is only quite recently that the Museum has been able to obtain the fine specimen exhibited; it was of a milder and more timid disposition than the "black" species, and capable of being tamed.

The large Indian Rhinoceros (*R. unicornis*), a one-horned species from North-eastern India, of which a full-grown male is exhibited.

On the Wall-cases 45, 46, 53, and 54, is a series of Rhinoceros horns representing variations of growth.

The Tapirs (*Tapirus*) (Cases 35 and 36) are swamp-loving animals, excellent swimmers and divers, of which one species occurs in Malaysia and the others in Central and South America—a distribution which shows that at some former period of the world's history they ranged all over the intervening countries, through China, Kamtschatka, and North-west America. In fact a fossil Chinese Tapir has been discovered in which the teeth are so perfectly preserved as to show that the species can only have become recently extinct. Of the five species of Tapir known the Malayan has a white back, while the rest are nearly uniformly

[Cases
35 & 36.]