



A YOUNG TIGER BEING BOTTLE-FED

THE LONDON ZOO

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had toured most of Europe and all Great Britain with the Bostock and Wombwell menagerie. Dixie had hauled caravans through snow drifts, pulled snow ploughs, worked on the farm, and faced thousands of circus audiences. As for her keeper, he has worn every kind of costume from that of a farm hand to that of a clown just as the circumstances required. Dixie came to Whipsnade in 1932 and her circus career was yet fresh in her memory. Whenever she saw a garden chair she was reminded of her late days in the circus ring when she used to take tea with the clown, or make one of an elephant orchestra. She was tempted to sit on the chair with disastrous results. Similarly her keeper had to forget many of the late vocal signs and gestures which gave Dixie her cue for tricks, which while quite in order in the circus ring, were incompatible with the more staid environment of a zoological park. In Dixie's early days at Whipsnade she would begin to dance when she heard music, and on one occasion she waltzed with a saddleful of visitors on her back at the sound of a distant band. Dixie is now more staid and has forgotten this and many other echoes of the circus ring.

THE ELEPHANT HOUSE

Rhinoceroses are also exhibited in this house. These animals are massively built mammals distantly related to the horse. This kinship was much more apparent in prehistoric times when rhinoceroses roamed all over the world, and were represented by a large number of species. Some were big, bulky creatures covered in wool, and able to live amongst snow where they grubbed, like reindeer, for moss. Others were light, 'horsy' animals suggestive of Shetland ponies. The largest mammal the world has ever seen was an Asiatic rhinoceros standing seventeen feet high at the shoulder.

In modern rhinoceroses, which are confined to Asia and Africa, the skin is from half an inch to one and a half inches thick. There are three toes on each foot, and the one or more horns upon the nose are formed of compressed hair. Rhinos are exclusively vegetarian, Asiatic kinds being swamp dwellers, whilst those of Africa affect open country, feeding on grass or leaves.

The Indian rhinoceros is distinguished by its single horn, and the pleats or folds of the skin. It is rare and strictly preserved in the few Indian states it frequents. The horn was in olden times much valued for the manufacture of drinking

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cups, such vessels being alleged to detect poison poured into them. To-day the horn is in great demand amongst Chinese as a tonic, and commands fourteen pounds per pound weight. As will be seen when feeding the Indian rhinoceros it bears a couple of short but sharply pointed tusks. The smaller rhinoceroses of Burma and Malaya bear two horns upon the nose, and often show a considerable quantity of hair.

The African species all have relatively smooth skins, and carry two horns. The famous 'white rhinoceros' of Africa weighs over two tons, and sometimes carries a horn a yard long. It has never been shown in any zoo.

When quite young rhinoceroses are very docile and playful, becoming attached to their keepers. On reaching maturity, however, all rhinoceroses become untrustworthy and dangerous, and visitors are urgently warned against attempting any familiarities with them. Despite their clumsy appearance they can move, upon occasion, with startling agility.



AFRICAN RHINOCEROS