

ALTEMUS' YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIBRARY

ILLUSTRATED
NATURAL HISTORY

BY THE

REV. J. G. WOOD

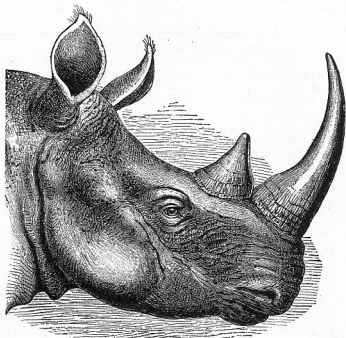
ARRANGED FOR YOUNG READERS

WITH EIGHTY ILLUSTRATIONS

Copyright 1897 by Henry Altemus

PHILADELPHIA
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

sockets of the two upper tusks are curved upwards, and give a singular appearance to the skull of the animal. It looks a ferocious animal, and it is very savage and cannot



RHINOCEROS HEAD.

be hunted without danger. Yet when taken young it can be tamed without much difficulty, and conducts itself much after the manner of a well-behaved pig.

Only the male possesses the remarkable double pair of

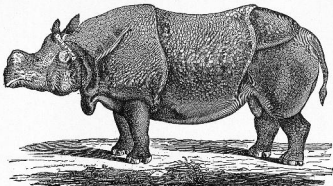
tusks, the female being destitute of the upper pair, and only possessing those belonging to the under jaw in a rudimentary degree. It lives in troops, as do most of the Hog kind, and thus does great damage to the cultivated grounds, especially to the maize, a plant to which it is very partial. It is a good swimmer, and often takes to the water in order to cross to another island. The size of the animal, when full grown, is about that of a very large Hog.

The RHINOCEROS. There are, apparently, six species of this formidable animal, inhabiting various parts of Asia and Africa. They can be distinguished from each other by the number and shape of their horns, and the color of their bodies. Their habits are much alike.

The Rhinoceros is always a surly and ill-tempered animal, and is much given to making unprovoked attacks on man and beast, if it should happen to fancy itself insulted by their presence. Their chief peculiarity, the so-called horn, is a mass of fibers matted together, and closely resembling the structure of whalebone. Their feet are divided into three toes, incased in hoofs. The horn is not connected with the skull, but is merely a growth from the skin, from which it can be separated by means of a sharp penknife. Being made of very strong materials, it is employed in the manufacture of ramrods, clubs, and other similar implements. When properly worked, it is capable of taking a very high polish, and is cut into drinking-cups.

Its organs of scent are very acute, and as the creature seems to have a peculiar faculty for detecting the presence of human beings, it is necessary for the hunters to use the greatest circumspection when they approach it, whether to avoid or to kill, as in the one case it may probably be taken with a sudden fit of fury, and charge at them, or in the other case it may take the alarm and escape.

The upper lip is used by the Rhinoceros to grasp the herbage on which it feeds, or pick up small fruit from the ground. A very tame Rhinoceros has been known to take



GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

a piece of bun or biscuit from a visitor's hand by means of its flexible upper lip.

There is, probably, but one species of HIPPOPOTAMUS. It inhabits Africa exclusively, and is found in plenty on the banks of many rivers in that country, where it is seen gamboling and snorting at all times of the day.

These animals are quiet and inoffensive while undisturbed, but if attacked they unite to repel the invader, and have been known to tear several planks from the side of a boat and sink it. They can remain about five minutes under water, and when they emerge they make a loud and very peculiar snorting noise, which can be heard at a great distance. The hide is very thick and strong, and is chiefly used for whips. The well-known "cow-hides" are made of this material. Between the skin and flesh is a layer of fat, which is salted and eaten by the Dutch colonists of Southern Africa. When salted it is called Seacow's bacon. The flesh is also in some request.

The Hippopotamus feeds entirely on vegetable substances, such as grass and brushwood. The fine animal now in the London Zoological Society eats all kinds of vegetables, not disdaining roots.

From the construction of the head, the animal is enabled to raise its eyes and nostrils above the water at the same time, so that it can survey the prospect and breathe without raising more than an inch or two of its person from the water. In order to attain this object, the eyes are very small, and placed very high in the head, while the muzzle is very large, and the nostrils open on its upper surface.

Cumming relates that the track of the Hippopotamus may be readily distinguished from that of any other animal by a line of unbroken herbage which is left between the marks of the feet on each side, as the width of the space between the right and left legs causes the animal to place its feet so considerably apart as to make a distinct double track.