

ANIMAL BIOGRAPHY,

OR,

POPULAR ZOOLOGY;

ILLUSTRATED BY

AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES

OF

THE ECONOMY, HABITS OF LIFE, INSTINCTS, AND SAGACITY,

OF THE

Animal Creation.

BY THE

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MAMMIFEROUS ANIMALS.

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The females of this species are very prolific. They breed three or four times in the year, and produce several young ones at a birth. The Indians are extremely partial to the flesh of Armadillos as food; and they apply the shells to various uses. Chiefly, however, they paint them of different colours, and make them into baskets, boxes, and other small utensils.

THE RHINOCEROS TRIBE.

We now come to a race of animals of huge size and bulk, inhabitants only of tropical climates. They are dull and sluggish in their manners; but in their disposition they are in general inoffensive and peaceable. They have on the nose a solid, conical horn, not fixed in the bone; this is never shed, but remains during life. Their skin is tuberculated and exceedingly hard, but on the under parts of the body it is sufficiently tender to be cut through with a knife.—The general internal structure of these animals corresponds with what is observed in the Horse.

THE SINGLE-HORNED OR COMMON RHINOCEROS*.

The Single-Horned Rhinoceros is not exceeded in size by any land animal except the Elephant, and in strength and power he gives place to none. His

* See Plate ii. Fig. 1.

DESCRIPTION. The length of the Rhinoceros is usually about twelve feet, and this is also nearly the girth of his body. The skin, which is of a blackish colour, is disposed, about the neck, into large plaits or folds. A fold of the same kind passes from the shoulders to the fore-legs; and another from the hind part of the back to the thighs. The skin is naked, rough, and covered with a kind of tubercles, or large callous granulations. Between the folds, and under the belly, it is soft, and of a light rose colour. The ears are moderately large, upright, and pointed. The eyes are

nose is armed with a formidable weapon, a hard and solid horn, sometimes more than three feet in length, and, at the base, eighteen inches in circumference; and with this he is able to defend himself against the attack of every ferocious animal.

The body of the Rhinoceros is defended by a skin so hard as to be impenetrable, except in the under parts, by either a knife or spear. It is said, that, even to shoot a full-grown Rhinoceros of advanced age, it is necessary to use iron bullets, as those of lead are sometimes flattened by striking against the skin.

The upper lip of this animal answers, in some measure, the same purpose as the trunk of the Elephant. It protrudes over the lower one in the form of a lengthened tip; and, being extremely pliable, is used in catching hold of the branches of trees and shrubs, and delivering them into the mouth.

Although the Rhinoceros is generally of a quiet and inoffensive disposition, yet when this animal is attacked or provoked he becomes extremely dangerous; and he is sometimes subject to paroxysms of fury, which nothing can assuage.

In the year 1743, a Rhinoceros was brought from Bengal into Europe. He was at this time only two years old, and the expence of his food and journey amounted to nearly 1000*l.* sterling. He had every day, at three meals, seven pounds weight of rice, mixed with three pounds of sugar; besides hay and green plants: he also drank large quantities of water. In his disposition he was sufficiently peaceable, readily permitting all parts of his body to be touched. When he

small, and so situated that the animal can only see what is nearly in a direct line before him.

The Rhinoceros is a native of India, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, and several parts of Ethiopia.

SYNONYMS. *Rhinoceros unicornis*. *Linnaeus*.—*Rhinoceros*. *Buffon*, *Pennant*, &c.—*Shaw's Gen. Zool. Pl. 60*.—*Bew. Quad. p. 175*.

was hungry, or was struck by any person, he became mischievous, and nothing would appease him but food.

Another of these animals, which was brought from Atcham, in the dominions of the king of Ava, was exhibited at Paris in the year 1748. He was tame, gentle, and even caressing; was fed principally on hay and corn, and was much delighted with sharp or prickly plants, and the thorny branches of trees. The attendants frequently gave him branches that had sharp and strong thorns on them; but he bent and broke them in his mouth without seeming to be in the least incommoded. It is true they sometimes drew blood from the mouth and tongue: "but that," says Father Le Comte, who gives us the description, "might even render them the more palatable, and these little wounds might serve only to cause a sensation on the palate similar to that excited by salt, pepper, or mustard on ours."

As an equivalent for a very dull sight, the Rhinoceros has a most acute and attentive ear. He has also the power of running with great swiftness; and, from his enormous strength and his impenetrable covering, he is capable of rushing with resistless violence through the woods; the smaller trees bending like twigs as he passes them. In his general habits and manner of feeding the Rhinoceros resembles the Elephant: he resides in cool, sequestered spots, near waters, and in shady woods. Like the Hog, he delights in occasionally wallowing in the mire.

The flesh of this animal is an article of food in some parts of Ceylon, Java, and Sumatra. The skin, flesh, hoofs, teeth, and even the dung, are each used medicinally. The horn, when cut through the middle, is said to exhibit, on each side, the rude figure of a man; the outlines being marked by small white strokes. Many of the Indian princes drink out of cups made of this horn; erroneously imagining that, when these hold any poisonous draught, the liquor

will ferment till it runs quite over the top. Martial informs us, that the Roman ladies of fashion used these horns in the baths, to hold their essence-bottles and oils. The Javanese make shields of the skin.

The only three animals of this species that have been brought into England during the last half century, were all purchased for the exhibition-rooms at Exeter 'Change. One of them, of which the skin is still preserved, came from Laknaor, in the East Indies, and in 1790, was brought in the Melville Castle East Indiaman, as a present to Mr. Dundas. This gentleman, however, not wishing to have the trouble of keeping him, gave the animal away; and not long afterwards he was purchased by Mr. Pidcock, of Exeter 'Change, for the sum of 700*l*. This animal exhibited no symptoms of a ferocious propensity, and would even allow himself to be patted on the back and sides by strangers. His docility was about equal to that of a tolerably tractable Pig: he would obey the orders of his keeper, to walk about the room, and exhibit himself to the numerous spectators who came to visit him. He usually ate, every day, twenty-eight pounds weight of clover, besides about the same weight of ship biscuit, and a great quantity of greens. This food was invariably seized in his long and projecting upper lip, and by it was conveyed into his mouth. He was allowed also five pails of water twice or thrice a day; and he was fond of sweet wines, of which he would often drink three or four bottles in the course of a few hours. His voice was not much unlike the bleating of a calf. This was usually exerted when he observed any person with fruit or other favourite food in his hand; and in such cases, it seems to have been a mark of his anxiety to have food given him.

In the month of October, 1792, as this Rhinoceros was one day rising up very suddenly, he dislocated the joint of his right fore-leg. This accident brought on an inflammation, which, about nine months after-

wards, occasioned his death. It is a singular fact, that in the first attempts that were made to recover the animal, the incisions which were formed through his thick and tough hide, were invariably found to be healed in the course of twenty-four hours. He died in a caravan, at Corsham, near Portsmouth.

The second Rhinoceros that was at Exeter 'Change was considerably smaller than this, and was likewise a male. It was brought over about the year 1799, and lived not more than twelve months afterwards. An agent of the Emperor of Germany purchased it of Mr. Pidcock for 1000*l.*; but it died in a stable-yard in Drury-Lane, after the purchaser had been in possession of it about two months.

The third of these animals I saw at Exeter 'Change in the month of October, 1810. It was kept somewhat more than four years afterwards, and then sold to an innkeeper of Ghent, for exhibition on the continent.

The females of this species produce only a single young-one at a birth.

THE TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS*.

In their habits and manner of feeding, these animals differ but little from the Single-horned Rhinoceros. M. Le Vaillant informs us, that whenever they

* DESCRIPTION. This species differs from the last, principally in the appearance of its skin; which, instead of vast and regularly marked armour-like folds, has merely a slight wrinkle across the shoulders, and on the hinder parts, and a few fainter wrinkles on the sides: so that, in comparison with the Common Rhinoceros, it appears almost smooth. What, however, constitutes the chief distinction, is the nose being furnished with two horns, one of which is smaller than the other, and situated above it. These horns are loose when the animal is in a quiescent state, but become fixed and immovable when it is enraged. *Shaw*, i. 202.

SYNONYMS. *Rhinoceros bicornis*. *Linnaeus*.—*Shaw's Gen. Zool. Pl.* 61, from *Bruce*.—*Bew. Quad.* 179.

are at rest they place themselves in the direction of the wind, with their noses towards it, in order to discover by the smell the approach of any enemies. From time to time they move their heads round to look behind them, and to be assured that they are safe on all sides ; but they soon return to their former position. When they are irritated, they tear up the ground with their horns ; throwing the earth and stones furiously, and to a vast distance, over their heads.

The description which has been given by Mr. Bruce of the habits of the Two-horned Rhinoceros is deserving of particular notice. He informs us that “ besides the trees that are capable of most resistance, there are, in the vast forests within the rains, trees of a softer consistence, and of succulent quality, which seem to be destined for the principal food of this animal. For the purpose of gaining the highest branches of these, his upper lip is capable of being lengthened out so as to increase his power of laying hold with it, in the same manner as the Elephant does with his trunk. With this lip, and the assistance of his tongue, he pulls down the upper branches, which have most leaves, and these he devours first. Having stripped the tree of its branches, he does not immediately abandon it ; but, placing his snout as low in the trunk as he finds his horns will enter, he rips up the body of the tree, and reduces it to thin pieces like so many laths ; and, when he has thus prepared it, he embraces as much of it as possible in his monstrous jaws, and twists it round with as much ease as an ox would do a root of celery, or any small plant.

When pursued, and in fear, he moves with astonishing swiftness, considering his size, the apparent unwieldiness of his body, his great weight before, and the shortness of his legs. It is not, however, true that, in a plain, his pace is more rapid than that of a horse ; for Mr. Bruce has often passed these animals

with ease, and seen other persons worse mounted than himself, do the same ; but by his cunning he is often able to elude pursuit. He makes constantly from wood to wood, and forces himself into the thickest parts of the forests. The trees that are dead or dry, are broken down, as if with a cannon shot, and fall behind and on each side of him, in all directions. Others that are more pliable, greener, or fuller of sap, are bent back by his weight, and by the velocity of his motions. And, after he has passed, they restore themselves, like a green branch, to their natural position, and often sweep the incautious pursuer and his horse from the ground, and dash them in pieces against the surrounding trees.

The eyes of the Rhinoceros are very small ; he seldom turns his head, and therefore sees nothing but what is before him*. It is to this that he owes his death, and he never escapes if there be so much plain as to enable the Horses of the hunters to get before him. His pride and fury then make him lay aside all thoughts of escaping, except by victory over his enemy. He stands for a moment at bay : then, at a start, runs straight forward at the Horse which is nearest to him. The rider easily avoids the attack by turning short to one side. This is the fatal instant : a naked man, who is mounted behind the principal horseman, drops off the horse, and, unseen by the Rhinoceros, gives him, with a sword, a stroke across the tendon of the heel, which renders him incapable either of flight or resistance.

These animals frequent wet and marshy situations ; but large, fierce, and strong as they are, they suffer great torment from an apparently contemptible adversary. This is a Fly (probably of the Linnean genus *æstrus*) which is bred in the black earth of the

* The account of Mr. Bruce differs, in this particular, from that of M. Le Vaillant, before quoted.

marshes in Abyssinia. It persecutes the Rhinoceros so unremittingly, that it would in a short time subdue him, but for a stratagem which he practises for his preservation. In the night, when the fly is at rest, the huge animal chooses a convenient place, where, rolling in the mud, he clothes himself in a kind of case, which defends him against his adversary the following day: the wrinkles and plaits of his skin serve to keep this muddy plaster firm upon every part of his body, except the hips, shoulders, and legs. Here it cracks and falls off, by his motion, and leaves him exposed, in those parts, to the attacks of the Fly. The itching and pain which follow, occasion him to rub himself with great violence against the roughest trees he can find.

The skin of this Rhinoceros is not so hard or impenetrable as that of the last species. In his wild state he is often slain by javelins thrown from the hand, some of which enter his body to a great depth. A musket-shot will go through him, unless interrupted by a bone; and the inhabitants of Shangalla kill these animals by the clumsiest arrows that ever were used, and afterwards cut him to pieces with the very worst of knives.

In order to afford some idea of the enormous strength of this Rhinoceros, I shall quote Mr. Bruce's account of the hunting of this animal in Abyssinia. "We were on horseback (says this gentleman) by dawn of day, in search of the Rhinoceros, many of which we had heard making a very deep groan and cry as the morning approached. Several of the Aga-geers, or hunters, then joined us; and after we had searched about an hour in the very thickest part of the wood, a Rhinoceros rushed out with great violence, and crossed the plain towards a wood of canes that was about two miles distant. But though he ran, or rather trotted, with surprising speed, considering his bulk, he was, in a short time, transfixed with thirty or forty javelins. This attack so con-

founded him, that he left his purpose of going to the wood, and ran into a deep hole, or ravine, without outlet, breaking above a dozen of the javelins as he entered. Here we thought he was caught as in a trap, for he had scarcely room to turn; and a servant, who had a gun, standing directly over him, fired at his head, and the animal fell immediately, to all appearance dead. All those on foot now jumped in with their knives to cut him up; but they had scarcely begun, when the animal recovered so far as to rise upon his knees: happy then was the man that escaped first; and had not one of the Agageers, who was himself engaged in the ravine, cut the sinew of the hind leg as he was retreating, there would have been a very sorrowful account of the foot-hunters that day."

It is a remarkable fact that the cavity which contained the brain of one of these huge animals, was so small as to be only six inches long and four deep; and, being filled with peas, was found to hold barely a quart: while a human skull, measured at the same time, took above two quarts to fill it.

The Hottentots, and even some of the colonists of the Cape of Good Hope, set a high value on the dried blood of the Rhinoceros. They ascribe to it great virtues, in the cure of many disorders of the body. The flesh is eatable, but it is full of sinews.

THE ELEPHANT TRIBE.

These animals have no front teeth in either jaw; but from the upper jaw there proceed two long tusks, which, in a state of nature, are chiefly employed in tearing up trees for food, and as weapons of defence against their enemies. They have a long, cartilaginous, prehensile trunk, which is capable of laying hold even of the most minute substances. Their body is thinly scattered over with hairs. No more than *one* species has hitherto been ascertained.