

THE
ORIENTAL ANNUAL,

OR

Scenes in India;

COMPRISING

TWENTY-TWO ENGRAVINGS

FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

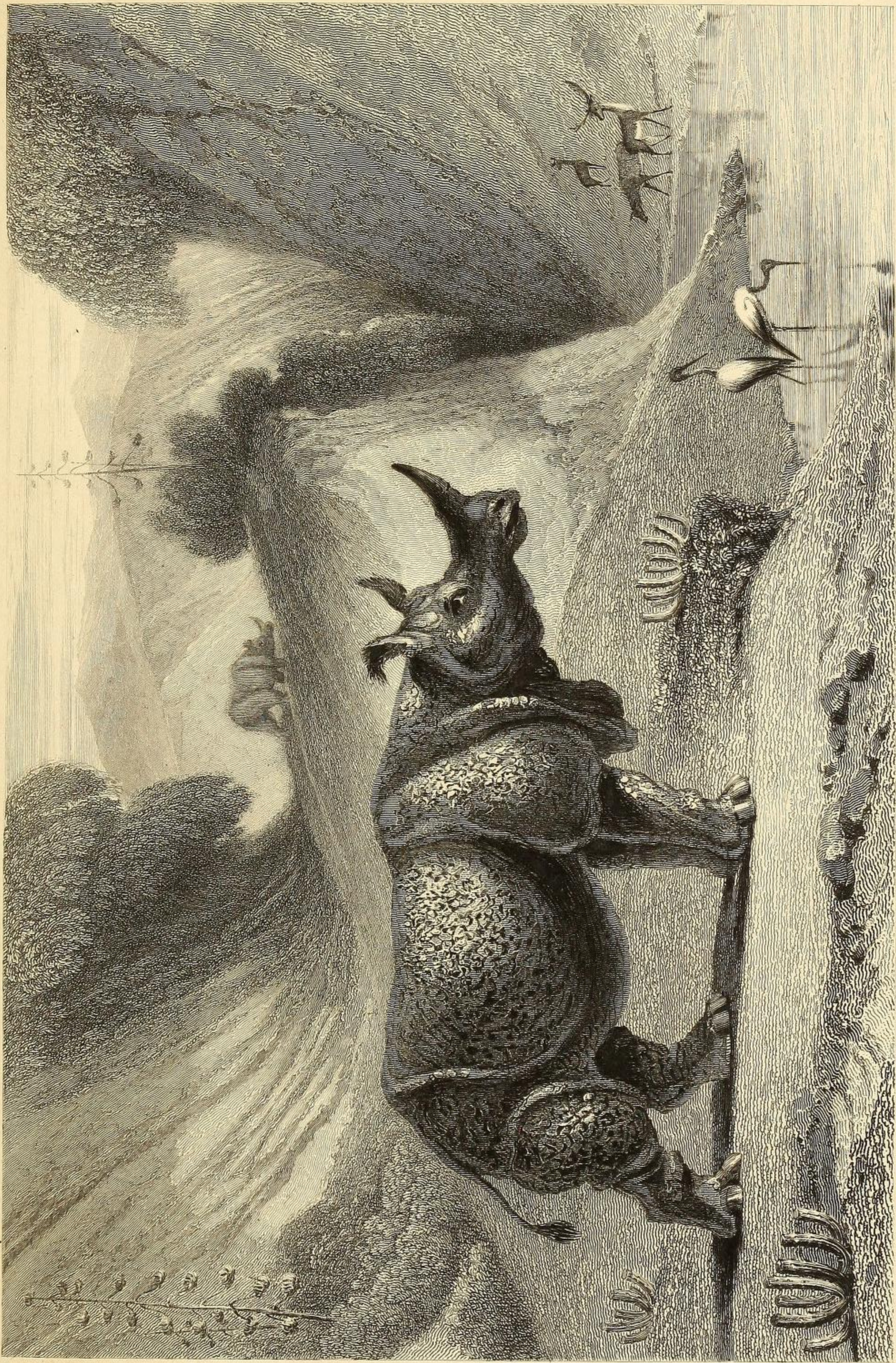
BY WILLIAM DANIELL, R.A.

AND

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT

BY THE REV. HOBART CAUNTER, B.D.

LONDON:
BULL AND CHURTON, HOLLES STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1835.



Drawn by W. Daniell, R. A.

Engraved by J. Redaway.

The Rhinoceros.

London Published Oct. 7. 1834. by Bull & Co. 26. Holles Street, Cavendish Square.

Printed by J. Taylor.

the growth of ages, afford but an imperfect protection.

These forests, which cover the bases of the hills, are filled with all kinds of game, especially pea-fowl, and it is a beautiful sight to behold those splendid birds come at sunrise from the deep recesses of the woods, as they do in large flocks, and completely cover the valleys. The wild elephant is found in the lower regions of the mountains, and so is the rhinoceros, though less frequently. Of the latter animal we were fortunate enough to obtain a view, which is by no means a usual thing, as it is not gregarious like the elephant, and therefore much more rarely met with. We had turned the angle of a hill that abutted upon a narrow stream, when, on the opposite side of the rivulet, we saw a fine male rhinoceros; it was standing near the edge of the water with its head slightly bent, as if it had been just slaking its thirst in the cooling stream. It stood, apparently with great composure, about two hundred yards above us, in an open vista of the wood. Mr. Daniell, under the protection of a lofty intervening bank, was able to approach sufficiently near to make a perfect sketch of it; after which, upon a gun being fired, it deliberately walked off into the jungle. It did not appear in the least intimidated at the sight of our party, which remained at some distance, nor at all excited by the discharge of the gun.

There are two species of this animal, the *bicornis* and the *unicornis*; the latter supposed to be the unicorn of scripture. The former is, I believe, peculiar to Africa: it is never known in India, where the

one-horned rhinoceros alone is found. Its size is only inferior to that of the elephant, although it is considerably smaller. Its bulk, however, is greater in proportion to its height, and, from its superior courage and activity, it is a much more formidable creature. Its head resembles that of a pig, and it has two small dull eyes which give it an appearance at once stupid and intractable. Its length, not including the tail, is from eleven to twelve feet, and the circumference of its body about the same; though it is said sometimes to exceed this standard. It occasionally attains to the height of seven feet, and is amazingly strong, while its skin is so hard and thick as to be generally impervious to a musket ball. The hide is curiously divided into sections, and the different divisions are adapted with such exquisite precision as to have the appearance, at a short distance, of a beautiful coat of mail. It is extremely rough, and offers so complete a resistance to the touch, as not to yield in the slightest degree to the strongest pressure. The only vulnerable parts are the belly, the eyes, and near the ears.

This animal is of very sequestered habits; it traverses the most impenetrable jungles alone and is the terror of every creature with which it comes in contact, although it seldom attacks unless provoked by aggression. The horn upon its nose, which is thick and pointed, curves upwards towards the forehead, forming an acute angle with the bone of the snout, and projecting from it about thirty inches. It is a most fearful weapon; so much so, that even the colossal elephant has been occasionally laid prostrate by a well

directed stroke from the armed head of this terrible adversary. The horn does not adhere to the bone, but when the animal is in its ordinary state, stands loose between the nostrils; the moment, however, that the rhinoceros is excited to resistance by the approach or attack of a foe, the muscular tension is so great that the horn instantly becomes immovably fixed, and he is able to dart it into the trunk of a tree to the depth of several inches.

The upper lip of this animal is of great length and remarkably pliant, acting like a short proboscis, by which he grasps the roots of trees and other esculent substances, and it is capable of contraction or expansion as circumstances may require. "With this lip," says Bruce, "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 directly abandon it, but, placing his snout as low in the trunk as he finds his horn 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 as he can of it in his monstrous jaws and twists it round with as much ease as an ox would do a root of celery."

The female generally produces only a single young one at a birth, which attains to a full state of maturity in about fifteen years. The rhinoceros is of a savage disposition and seems to exist merely to gratify a voracious appetite. When excited, it displays paroxysms of fury which render it highly dangerous for any one to approach. As it is of a temper

much less mild than the elephant, it is far more formidable when exasperated, on account of its greater activity and more desperate ferocity. The voraciousness of this creature is extraordinary: it will consume as much as an elephant. A young one, only two years old, sent from Bengal in 1739, cost a thousand pounds sterling for food, including the expenses of its passage.

Before we entered the pass of the mountains which separates them from the plains, we were obliged to obtain permission from the Rajah of Serinagur to visit his capital. This permission was readily granted, though it caused some delay, as the formalities even of a petty Rajah's court are invariably more numerous than agreeable; we nevertheless contrived to spend the intervening time pleasantly enough in the valleys through which our route lay to the Coaduwar Ghaut. The Rajah sent an escort with two hirkarrahs* to conduct us from this place, where the mountains began to close in upon our path, exhibiting to our view that grandeur of form and majesty of aspect for which this mighty range is so preeminently distinguished. At this pass, upon the summit of a tabular hill which is ascended by steps cut in the rock, is built a small neat village, flanked by a strong barrier and gateway. The walls on either side the portal are very massy and the entrance narrow. The valley by which the hill is immediately bounded is protected towards the plains by a rapid stream, which taking a circular direction nearly encloses it on two sides, rushing down into the lower

* A hirkarraha is a messenger.

confined to the higher classes. The poor are buried in various ways: sometimes they are burned, sometimes cast into the nearest river, and they are not unfrequently left upon the peak of some solitary mountain to be devoured by the vultures.

In certain districts the inhabitants expose the bodies of their friends and relations in a similar manner to be eaten by carnivorous creatures, with only this difference, that the corpses are laid out with great ceremony within a walled area, being placed upon iron gratings over a deep vault and left uncovered, in order that they may be the more readily devoured. A similar practice prevails among the Parsees at Bombay, who are a remnant of the Guebres, or ancient fire-worshippers. In order to exclude the horrible sight of the carnial within, those cemeteries are surrounded by a lofty wall, in which there is a large aperture to admit dogs, jackals, and other beasts of prey, that crowd daily in great numbers to these disgusting receptacles for the dead.

The animals found in the Himalaya mountains are neither so numerous nor so fierce as those on the plains. In the lower regions of the hills the elephant is sufficiently common and the rhinoceros is sometimes seen, though not frequently. Tigers and leopards inhabit the forests but rarely frequent the higher situations. There are deer of various sorts and very numerous. Wild hogs are by no means rare, though neither so large nor so fierce as in the level country. Buffaloes are also indigenous to this sequestered region, but they confine themselves to the bases of the mountains. Hares, monkeys, jack-

sent a boat into one of the creeks to obtain some fresh fruits which are cultivated by the few miserable inhabitants of this inhospitable region. Having reached the shore the crew moored the boat under a bank, and left one of their party to take care of her. During their absence, the lascar, who remained in charge of the boat, overcome by heat, lay down under the seats and fell asleep. Whilst he was in this happy state of unconsciousness, an enormous boa-constrictor emerged from the jungle, reached the boat, had already coiled its huge body round the sleeper, and was in the very act of crushing him to death, when his companions fortunately returned at this auspicious moment, and attacking the monster severed a portion of its tail, which so disabled it that it no longer retained the power of doing mischief. The snake was then easily despatched, and found to measure sixty-two feet and some inches in length.* The immense size of these snakes has been frequently called in question, but I know not why it should when the fact has been authenticated by so many eye-witnesses. Nor was it unknown to ancient historians; for Suetonius, in the forty third chapter of his Lives of the first Twelve Cæsars, mentions that the Emperor Augustus over and above the regular shows, gave others occasionally for the purpose of exhibiting any extraordinary object of which he might have

* The original picture, painted by Mr. W. Daniell, is in the possession of le Baron de Noual de la Loyrie; and that of the "Favourite of the Harem," also by the same artist, is the property of R. W. Cox, Esq. of Lawford, Essex.

obtained possession ; amongst these he mentions a rhinoceros, a tiger, and a snake, seventy-five feet long—*quinquaginta cubitorum*.

This wild tract extends a hundred and eighty miles along the bay of Bengal, and is filled with tigers and alligators of the largest kind, together with other creatures of similar power and ferocity. There are two passages through it, the northern Sunderbund passage, and the Balliaghaut passage. The first opens into the Hoogley sixty-five miles below Calcutta, the other into a shallow lake on the eastern side of the city. The navigation of these channels extends more than two hundred miles through an impenetrable jungle divided by creeks occasionally so narrow, that in some places branches of trees almost meet on either side, and in others you sail upon an expanded river beautifully skirted with wood. Alligators innumerable are seen sleeping along the shores, looking like huge trunks of trees. It is scarcely possible to imagine them to be alive until they are disturbed, when they scramble with surprising activity into the stream and sink. Great numbers of natives who frequent the banks of the creeks that divide the Sunderbunds, to cut wood and collect salt, are yearly devoured by these and other beasts of prey ; indeed, the tigers are so ravenous, that they have been known to swim off to boats and attack the crews at a considerable distance from the shore.

Notwithstanding these perils, many devotees erect their rude huts in this region of desolation. In spite of the charms which they pretend to possess, and their