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TRAILING ANIMALS
AROUND
THE WORLD

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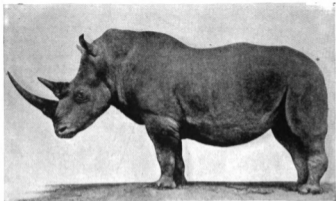
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bulbs, and birds. Meerkats are gregarious, and their burrows are grouped together somewhat like the "prairie dog towns" of the western United States.

One of the ugliest of animals is the wart hog, a striking contrast to the graceful eland which lives in the same region. Generally speaking, the wart hog looks like a large pig, the foreparts of which are covered with fairly long bristles, while the rear quarters are almost hairless. The appearance of the head is certainly such as to impress one that here is a fierce and dangerous animal. The face is broad and flat, and there are conical warts beneath the eyes, and between the eyes and the tusks. The enormous, incurved tusks may exceed a foot in length. His actions, however, belie his appearance, for under ordinary circumstances the wart hogs are not fierce and use their tusks only to dig roots. However, if attacked by a dog, the wart hog is capable of ably defending himself and may inflict very severe wounds with a few slashing strokes of his vicious tusks.

Like the domesticated pig, the wart hog likes the water and mud puddles; therefore he is usually found along the swampy and reedy places on lakes and streams. Being fleet of foot, he will run away from danger if possible, but will fight if necessary. When chased, he frequently looks for an aardvark den in which to hide. Although heading straight for it at considerable speed, upon arrival at the entrance to the hole he will reverse himself quickly and go in backward. The females and the young travel together, but the boars are doomed to a somewhat lonely existence.

If he were at all sensitive about his lack of beauty, the wart hog would be consoled by contemplating the rhinoceros. The location of this monstrous beast may at times be revealed by the tick or rhinoceros birds, which feed on insects, grubs, and other morsels from the rhino's thick hide. When danger threatens, these birds warn their host by running around his head; flapping their wings and screeching loudly before they take refuge in nearby trees. When these signals have been duly impressed upon him, the rhino usually trots a few yards, then stops to make a cursory investigation. He is a bit stupid, however, so his fear will soon subside,



Courtesy Field Museum of Natural History

WHITE RHINOCEROS—NOT REALLY WHITE, BUT SMOKY GRAY

and his rather poor eyesight will not be of much aid in discerning the enemy. When the lumbering rhinoceros decides definitely to flee, he can easily outrun a man. Even horses are forced to break into a fast gallop to overtake him.

There are five species of rhinoceros in the world, three in Asia and two in Africa. The "white rhino" of the Uganda region is about five feet eight inches high and may weigh two and one half tons or so. This is the largest land mammal now living with the exception of the elephant. The black rhinoceros is smaller in size, but is probably the most ferocious and dangerous of the rhinos. The horns differ in structure from those of most animals. They are formed of a great number of bristles of hair packed close together. The front horn is perhaps about two feet in length, and sloping backward, while the rear horn is just about a foot long, conical in shape, and usually straight. The skin of the black rhino is not folded like that of the Indian species; nevertheless it is unusually tough, and along the back and rump is quite often more than an inch in thickness. Although the natives in the Kijabe country are partial to rhino meat, the average white hunter would rather eat the meat of the eland, for rhino meat is often coarse, dry, and tough.