

Rhinoceros Once Here

Wyoming in Tertiary Age Habitat of Beast Which Was Then Small and Slender.

It would doubtless have delighted the eyes of any aesthetically inclined pre-Adamite to see a comparatively lithesome eocene rhinoceros in his native haunts, which is to say, in the semitropical, well watered lands of early tertiary Wyoming. According to E. S. Riggs, assistant curator of the division of paleontology in the Field Museum of Natural History, the early rhinoceros, a (comparatively) graceful little creature, was one of the old settlers of (geologically) modern times in America.

The early rhinoceros had a partiality for America. Perhaps that is because he was born here. Even the rhinoceros of this degenerate age is a patriotic being, intensely resentful of

any intrusion of his adopted land. Mr. Riggs will not go so far as to say that there were no rhinoceroses in Europe in the early stages of their being, either through local development from primordial protoplasm or by reason of immigration from America. All he will say on that subject is that the rhinoceros remains found up to this time in the old world are of a later age.

Beast Plentiful in America.

At any rate, America had a plentiful supply. Mr. Riggs says that the fossil skeletons found in Wyoming indicate that the former possessors thereof were comparatively small and slender. He likened them in size to the modern tapir, a distant relative, and also,

since tapirs are not common in Illinois, to the modern sheep, but only as to size. There is not much chance of determining exactly from a lot of fossil skeletons whether the prehistoric beasts affected the style of skin that makes all the children sympathize with Indian rhinoceroses in the menagerie, but one point in the outward appearance is certain. The little rhinoceros had no horn on his nose.

It is not to be doubted that the early rhinoceros was heartily ashamed of this lack. Some of his race got over this sense of shame, but others, the more phlegmatic sort, who took up government land in Western Nebraska and through laziness lost their length of leg, pushed with their noses against the world and handed down to their descendants two warts on the most prominent part of the face. These extraneous in time became two horns, not in tandem, like those of present day African rhinoceroses, but set aside by side and divergent.

Liked the Old Swimming Hole.

Different branches of the rhinoceros family found different meanings in life, Mr. Riggs narrates. Some of them never forgot the old swimming hole of their youth and became more nearly amphibious than the semiaquatic rhinoceros of today. Others left the larger streams and sought the uplands, where they began to specialize in the skeletal structure that had already been adopted by the three-toed horse, another branch of the same perissodactyl suborder. But wherever the rhinoceros went, whether to muddy river or windswept hillside, he never forgot his early training so far as to change his diet. His teeth remain as testimony through the ages to the fact that always he ate soft,

fleshy plants, such as a moist meadow produce.

Here Mr. Riggs sees cause for the extermination of the American rhinoceros in all forms. Before the coming of the low age (which might not have hurt him much, by the way, since in one instance at least he adapted himself to a cold climate by growing a woolly coat). The rhinoceros found the air becoming for a time less moist and still less so as mountains rose up and cut off the warm, humid winds from the west. The crop of soft, fleshy vegetation failed year after year, and the rhinoceros knew nothing of irrigation and intensive farming. Therefore he died, and now he is dug up in numbers between the

Mississippi and the Rockies and exhibited in museums.

USEFULNESS.

What's the good o' lettin' malice
Get the better of good cheer?
What's the good of sacrificin'
Honest friendship to a sneer?
Grief arrives when it is due?
What's the good of huntin' trouble
When it's on the hunt for you?
What's the good of overtursta'
Bein' one's house of cards so frail?
You yourself have charished fanciee
That hard luck may soon assail.
Why keep addin' to the sorrow
Be abundantly arrayed?
What's the use o' makin' trouble
When there's trouble ready-made?
—Washington Star.

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