

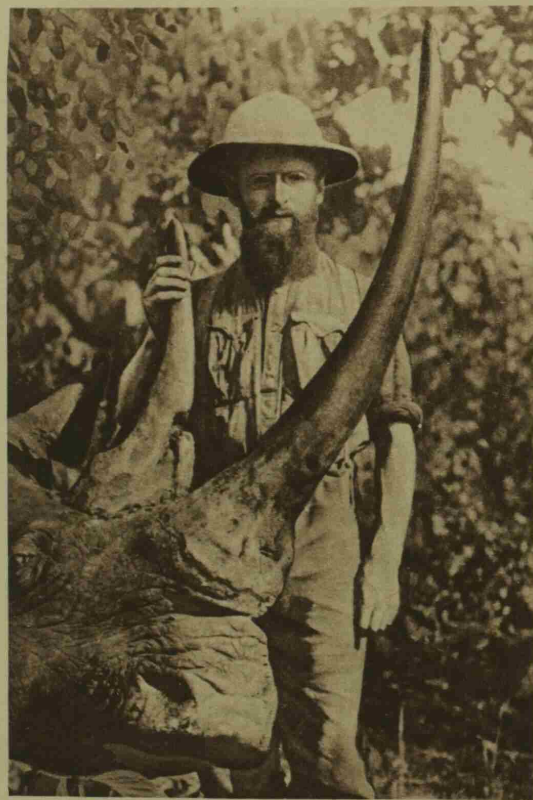
## THE WHITE RHINOCEROS: A SURVIVOR OF PLEISTOCENE GIANTS.



TAKING HIS DAILY MUD BATH (UNLIKE HIS BLACK BROTHER): A WHITE RHINOCEROS, THE GIANT OF THE SPECIES, PHOTOGRAPHED IN AN EQUATORIAL SWAMP NEAR THE SOURCES OF THE NILE.

"It is to Dr. Herbert Lang," says a French writer, M. V. Forbin, "that we owe the first scientific study of the 'white' rhinoceros. Actually the colour is light slate, and the beast is the biggest mammal on earth, with the exception of the elephant. Honorary Professor at the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Lang headed a Zoological and Anthropological Mission to Central Africa, and brought back, after five years' exploration in the great Equatorial forest, a fine collection of notes and documents of great value. . . . The great mammal here described belongs to a special class in the rhinoceros tribe. All the other kinds, whether African, Asiatic, or Malay, unicorn or bicorn, have pointed snouts, the upper lips ending in a triangular point, somewhat similar to the 'beak' of the tortoise. In the species here shown, the snout is as though it were cut off at a right angle and the lips are rectangular. Dr. Lang discovered that the lower lip is covered with a layer of horny matter, which protects the beast against the sharp grass on which it feeds. Other anatomical characteristics separate it from its African brother, the black rhinoceros. . . . The 'white' rhinoceros is the giant of the species. A male killed by Dr. Lang measures exactly 4 m. 69 (about 15 ft.), which is bigger than the larger Indian kind. The front horn is phenomenally long with some of the beasts. A female had one 1 m. 55 (about 5 ft.) long. Concerning horns, Dr. Lang observed a curious fact: they do not actually grow on the skull, but on the thick

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WITH INSECURE HORN, NOT A WEAPON BUT AN IMPLEMENT: THE SQUARE JAW OF A WHITE RHINOCEROS KILLED BY DR. HERBERT LANG.

*(Continued.)* skin with which it is covered, and which is continued without interruption under their base. Two days after death, they can be pulled off quite easily, as they are attached by little fibres. This peculiarity should attract the attention of palaeontologists; these huge horns so insecurely set are not, as was generally supposed, weapons, but merely tools which the animal uses to brush aside the grass and make his way rapidly through the jungle. In some of the extinct species we find monstrous forms supplied with bony or horny appendices, the functions of which remained a mystery until Dr. Lang's discovery. The habits of the white rhinoceros are peculiar to himself. He is a sociable creature, living with others of his kind—five to ten in number, whereas the other kinds live alone. The members of this herd never fight, as do elephants and buffaloes. They do not attack man, whereas the black rhinoceros, a really ferocious beast, attacks travellers without any provocation. The latter also feeds almost exclusively on the branches of shrubs, which it pulls off with its prehensile lip. The white rhinoceros, owing to the formation of its mouth, can only eat grass. One of its habits is its daily mud bath, whereas the black kind are quite happy in arid regions. The mud dries rapidly in the sun, leaving a layer of shiny dust, hence its common name of white rhinoceros. Formerly the species was pretty general in South Africa, but was rapidly exterminated by the settlers. Last year there were only about twenty

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to be found in the Umfolosi Reserve (Zululand), and these were nearly all killed, quite regardless of the law, during a beat organised by some hunters. In 1908 the white rhinoceros was considered to be quite extinct; but some were then discovered by an explorer in a new habitat 4000 kilometres (2500 miles) more to the north, in the region of the sources of the Nile. This marshy and unhealthy territory is unsuited to white colonisation, and we hope that these inoffensive monsters,

survivors of the gigantic fauna of the Pleistocene period, will escape total extinction. Dr. Lang thinks there are about 3000 white rhinoceros still living, and states that their existence depends on three Colonial administrations—the British Soudan, the district of Uele (Belgian Congo), and the French West African Government. 'The British and Belgians have already taken steps for the protection of the beast. Will not the French follow their example?'