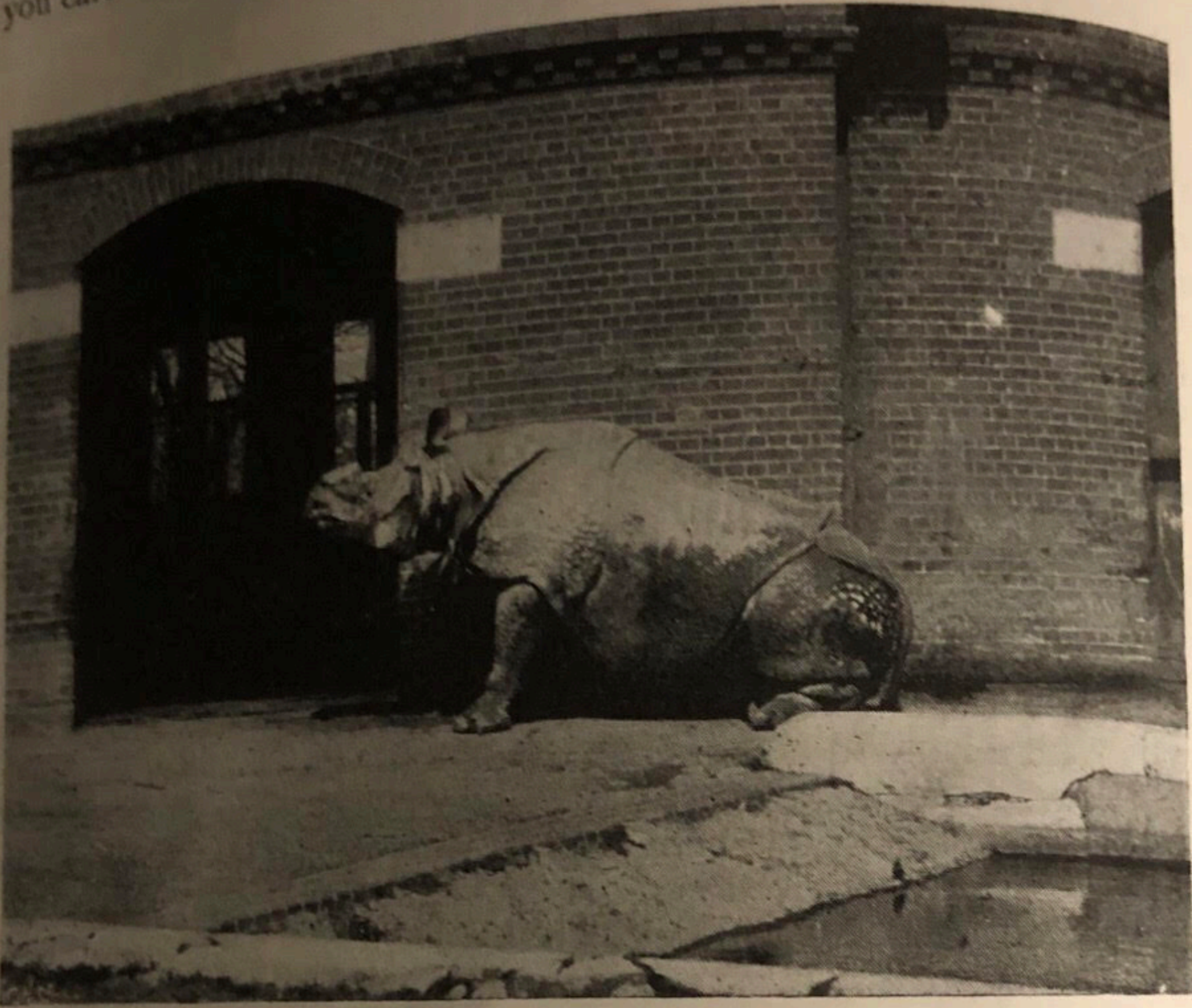


THE HIPPO AND THE RHINOCEROS.

32

ready to heed the voice of the master, though, goodness knows, it is no easy task to get that huge body of his in motion. He shows his tongue as long as you like, and also as much as you care to see of his inside, viewed through his open jaws. And if he receives



THE RHINOCEROS AT HIS OWN FRONT DOOR.

handful of grass in return for showing you these polite attentions, he is very happy. Only, he must not be approached directly, but always through the medium of his friend the keeper. That is the law in the house of the hippos.

Some years ago a horrible accident occurred at the Paris Zoological Gardens. A hippopotamus went mad and attacked its keeper, who was cleaning its cage. Help came when it was too late. The enraged river-horse had closed with him and severed his carotid artery with one stroke of the teeth. Apropos of this, I went to our own Zoo and called upon Mr. Bartlett.

"Well," said he, after he had read the news, "I am not a bit surprised that the man's throat was cut. Presently I will show you a head of one of our dead hippos, and you will see for yourself that it is possible. Have we ever had any accidents with our own hippos here? Never, though we have had one or two narrow escapes. Obaysch—the first hippopotamus that came to the gardens—was presented by the Viceroy of Egypt in 1851—he died in 1878. Well, for some reason or other, the brute got attached to me—I believe it was because I talked to him whenever I saw him. We were the greatest of friends, and he was so docile that I used to ride on his back. In 1852 I was engaged in mounting a specimen hippo for the Crystal Palace, and went into Obaysch's den to make some measurements. Thinking no evil, I was busy with the tape, when it suddenly slipped, and the brute turned round on me with a furious snort, gnashing his jaws fiercely. I rushed for my life and escaped through the rails, the keeper who was with me doing the same. It was a very near thing for both of us. I remember one or two other stories of our hippos here. Well one day a stray dog strolled casually into the gardens, and stopped before the rails of the hippo's outside enclosure. The



THE RHINOCEROS IN HIS BATH.