

SCIENCE READERS

BOOK III

THE BABY
ANIMAL ZOO

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AND
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CHAPTER XVII

THE YOUNG HIPPO AND THE BABY RHINO

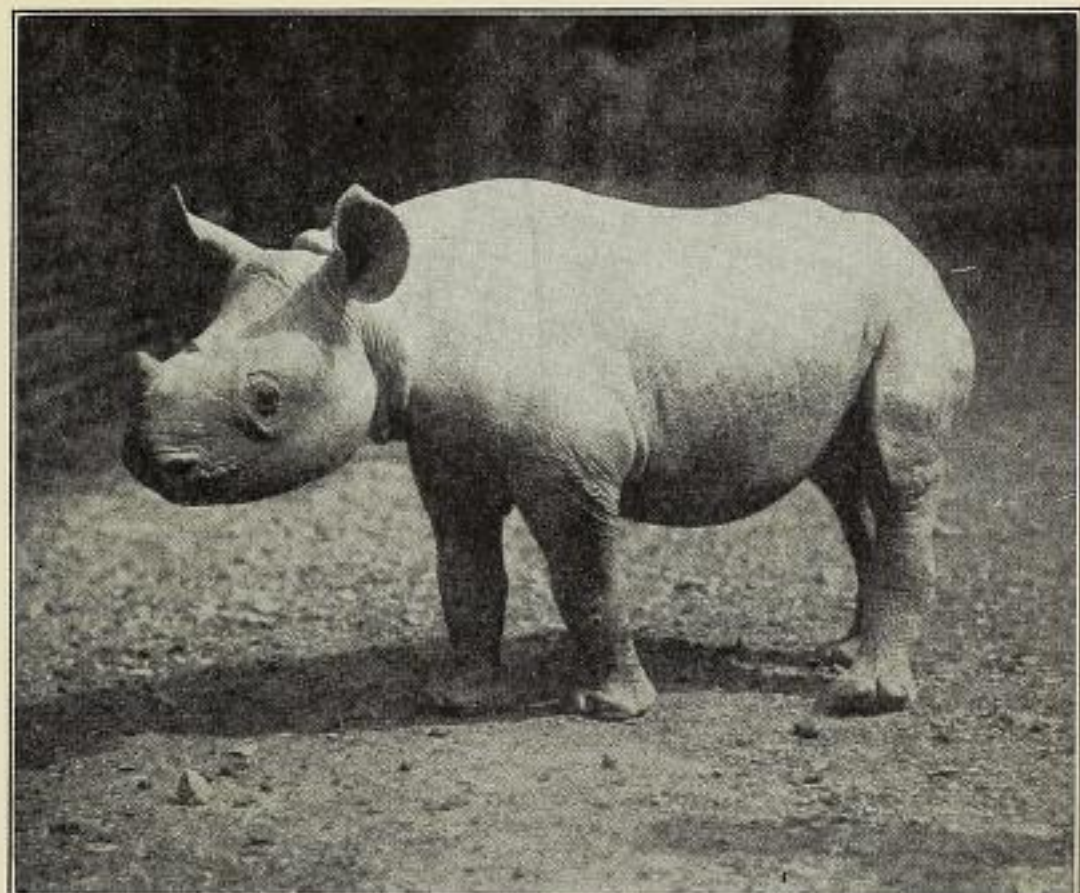
“I LEARNED how to spell two words yesterday,” said Daniel.

“What are they?” asked F. G.

“‘Hippopotamus’ and ‘rhinoceros,’” said Daniel; “but if I saw those animals, I would not know them apart.”

“They are alike and very different, too,” said F. G. “Suppose we go to the zoo this morning and look them over.”

On the way F. G. told Daniel something of the big animals they were going to see. “‘Hippopotamus’ means *river horse*,” she said. “The hippopotamus lives in the water and eats the reeds, grass, and river plants along the banks, but the rhinoceros lives in the woods and browses on the stems, roots, and leaves of the underbrush. Sometimes we speak of the hippopotamus as a *hippo*



— *New York Zoological Society*

Baby Rhino has a Bunch on his Nose where the Horn grows

and of the rhinoceros as a *rhino*.

“ ‘Rhinoceros’ means *horned snout*. Some rhinos have one horn on their noses and others have two. He is the only animal that has a horn on his nose. The hippo and rhino both have thick gray skins like the elephant. They are next in size to the elephant, but the hippo weighs more than the rhino. Some of them weigh three or four tons.”

“The hippo likes to sleep in a pool in the daytime with his head just out of the water. In Africa they go in herds, several together. At night they roam on the banks and about the fields. Sometimes they eat the gardens of the natives. The hippo is a lazy looking fellow as he floats about on the water, but he can travel a long distance if he is hungry.

“Now in this other cage we will see our old warrior, the rhino,” said the keeper. “He is the ugliest beast in the zoo, but he is a true soldier, for he has a sword on his nose.”

When Daniel saw the rhino he thought the keeper was right. He had even less beauty than the hippo. His skin was slate-colored like the hippo's, but it was very thick and wrinkled with plates on the sides and back. The rhino was about as tall as a man and as long as an elephant and his legs were thick and clumsy. His little weak eyes were set deep in his head.

“He does not see well,” said the keeper, “but his scent is very keen. The hunters



— *New York Zoological Society*

Some Rhinos Have Two Horns

must always keep themselves where the wind will not take their scent toward him, for he smells danger at a long distance. That great horn on his nose will tear a man or a beast to pieces. He can drive off a lion or an elephant with his horn, or dig up bushes and small trees."

"Can he run?" asked Daniel.

"Can he?" laughed the keeper. "You ought to see him tear through the brush ;

rocks and stones will not stop him. The only way a hunter can get away from him is to dodge to one side. The rhino cannot turn quickly but goes straight ahead. It is hard to kill him, for the skin on his back is several inches thick. The natives use the rhino skin for shields.

“Once when I was hunting in the jungle, I crept within shooting distance of a rhino that was in the bushes. The wind did not carry my scent, and he could not see well enough to know that I was not a stone or a tree. On his back were the little rhino birds that feed upon the insects that live in the folds of his skin. Suddenly they heard me and flew away with sharp little cries. Then the rhino turned his head and scented me. He gave a shrill squeal and set off in the other direction and was soon out of sight.

“Rhinos are much disturbed by mosquitoes and insects. They bury themselves deep in the mud of the river banks to escape them. There are very tender parts about the ears where they suffer greatly.”



The Baby's Bath

— *New York Zoological Society*

“Did you ever see a baby rhino?” asked F. G.

“Yes, the father and mother rhino live together in the jungles with their baby. They say you can never capture a baby rhino without first killing the mother. When she walks through the jungle, she makes the baby go first and guides him with her horn. They feed

at night in the bushes and lie in the mud through the day."

"Did you ever have a baby rhino here?" asked Daniel.

"Yes, this one was brought to us from Africa when he was quite small. He had no horn on his nose then but a bunch where one grew later. When he was small he often charged and made a dive with his nose when he was teased, but most of the time he was playful and loving. He has grown into this good old rhino who lets people alone if they do not disturb him."

"Now, which would you rather have, Daniel," asked F. G., "a hippo or a rhino?"

"Well," said Daniel, "I believe I would rather have a soldier with a sword than a big fat river horse."

Things to Think About and Do

1. How would you feed a hippo?
2. How is he like an elephant?
3. Can you give any reason why these animals should be protected?