

Museum Asiaticum ;

OR,

SELECT ANTIQUITIES,

CURIOSITIES, BEAUTIES, AND VARIETIES,

Of Nature and Art,

IN THE EASTERN WORLD ;

COMPILED FROM EMINENT AUTHORITIES,

METHODICALLY ARRANGED,

INTERSPERSED WITH ORIGINAL HINTS,
OBSERVATIONS, &c.

○○○○○○○○○●○○○○○○○○○

BY CHARLES HULBERT,

Author of the African Traveller, Literary Beauties, &c.

○○○○○○○○○●○○○○○○○○○

What wonders in the wide creation shine !
Order and majesty adorn the whole,
Beauty and life _____

MRS. ROWE.

○○○○○○○○○●○○○○○○○○○

London :

Published by G. & W. B. WHITTAKER, W. BAYNES and
SON, and T. BLANSHARD.

1822.

THE RHINOCEROS.

(*Smith's Naturalist's Cabinet.*)

NEXT to the elephant, this animal claims pre-eminence in the scale of creation, on account of its enormous strength, and the magnitude of its body. Its length, from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail, is usually twelve feet; its height varies from five to seven feet, and its circumference is nearly equal to its length.

Its nose is armed with a hard and very solid horn, sometimes above three feet in length, and eighteen inches in circumference at the base, with which it is able to defend itself against the attacks of every ferocious animal.

This weapon is pointed so as to inflict the severest wounds, and so disposed as to be managed with the greatest advantage: for while the elephant, the bear, and the buffalo are obliged to strike transversely with their weapons, the rhinoceros employs all his strength with every blow. The tiger, therefore, notwithstanding its extreme ferocity, seldom ventures to attack this animal; as he cannot do it without danger of having his bowels torn out.

The body and limbs of the rhinoceros are defended by a skin so hard as to be impenetrable by either a knife or a spear. This is disposed about the neck into large plaits or folds; a fold of the same kind passes from the shoulders to the fore legs; and another from the hind part of the back to the thighs. It is of a blackish colour; naked, rough, and covered with a kind of galls or tubercles.

The upper lip in this animal seems to answer in some measure the same purpose as the trunk of the elephant.

The disposition of the rhinoceros is generally quiet and inoffensive; but when attacked or provoked, he becomes furious and dangerous; and is even sometimes subject to paroxysms of fury, which nothing can assuage.

In the year 1743. Dr. Parsons published an account of a rhinoceros that was brought from Bengal into Europe. He was only two years old, and the expence of his food and journey amounted to near 1000l. sterling.

A rhinoceros, brought from Atcham, and exhibited in 1748, at Paris, was very gentle, and even caressing; he was fed principally on hay and corn, and appeared particularly fond of sharp or prickly plants, and the thorny branches of trees.

Two animals of this species were both purchased for the exhibition rooms at Exeter 'Change. One of them came from Laknaor, in the East Indies, and was brought over in the Melville Castle, East Indiaman, in the year 1790, as a present to Mr. Dundas. But this gentleman, not wishing to have the trouble of keeping him, gave the animal away; and shortly afterwards he was purchased by Mr. Pidcock of Exeter 'Change.

In the month of October, 1792, as this animal was one day rising up suddenly, he unfortunately slipped the joint of one of his fore-legs. This accident occasioned an inflammation that about nine months afterwards terminated in his death. He died in a caravan at Corsham near Portsmouth. But on the carriage arriving at the latter place, the stench arising from the body was so offensive that the mayor was under the necessity of ordering it to be immediately buried. This was accordingly done, on South Sea Common. But it was privately dug up about a fortnight afterwards, for the purpose of preserving its skin, and some of the most valuable of the bones. The persons present declared, that the stench was so powerful, that it was plainly perceptible at the distance of more than half a mile; and it was with the greatest difficulty they could proceed in their operations. The skin of this animal is now stuffed, and deposited in one of the exhibition rooms.

The other rhinoceros that was at the Exeter 'Change was considerably smaller than this. It was brought over about the year 1799, and lived not more than twelve months afterwards. Mr. Pidcock sold it to an agent of the emperor of Germany; but it died in a stable-yard in Drury-lane, about two months afterwards.

A few years ago, a rhinoceros was exhibited with other wild animals, in a caravan in Shrewsbury.

