

THE
ILLUSTRATED
NATURAL HISTORY.

BY THE
REV. J. G. WOOD, M.A.

WITH FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY ORIGINAL DESIGNS,

BY WILLIAM HARVEY.

ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

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Sub-family *d. Rhinocerina.*

RHINOCĒROS.—(Gr. 'Ρίϋ, or ρίς, a nose ; κέρας, a horn.)

Unicornis (Lat. *Unus*, one ; *cornu*, a horn), *the Rhinoceros.*

There are, apparently, six species of this formidable animal. Their chief peculiarity, the so-called horn, is a mass of fibres matted together, and closely resembling the fibres of whale-bone. Their feet are divided into three toes, incased in hoofs. The best description of the various species of the AFRICAN RHINOCEROS is given in Cumming, vol. i. p. 250.

“Of the Rhinoceros there are four varieties in South Africa, distinguished by the Bechuanas by the names of the ‘borèle,’ or black rhinoceros, the ‘keitloa,’ or two-horned black rhinoceros, the ‘muchocho,’ or common white rhinoceros, and the ‘kobaoba,’ or long-horned white rhinoceros. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are extremely fierce and dangerous, and rush headlong and unprovoked at any object which attracts their attention. They never attain much fat, and their flesh is tough, and not much esteemed by the Bechuanas.

RHINOCĒROS.



Bicornis (Lat. *bis*, twice; *cornu*, a horn), the *Two-Horned Rhinoceros*, or *Rhinaster*.

Their food consists almost entirely of the thorny branches of the wait-a-bit thorns. Their horns are much shorter than those of the other varieties, seldom exceeding eighteen inches in length. They are finely polished with constant rubbing against the trees. The skull is remarkably formed, its most striking feature being the tremendous thick ossification in which it ends above the nostrils. It is on this mass that the horn is supported. The horns are not connected with the skull, being attached merely by the skin, and they may thus be separated from the head by means of a sharp knife. They are hard, and perfectly solid throughout, and are a fine material for various articles, such as drinking cups, mallets for rifles, handles for turners' tools, &c. &c. The horn is capable of a very high polish. The eyes of the rhinoceros are small and sparkling, and do not readily observe the hunter, provided he keep to leeward of them. The skin is

extremely thick, and only to be penetrated by bullets hardened with solder. During the day, the rhinoceros will be found lying asleep, or standing indolently, in some retired part of the forest, or under the base of the mountains, sheltered from the power of the sun by some friendly grove of umbrella-topped mimosas. In the evening, they commence their nightly ramble, and wander over a great extent of country. They usually visit the fountains between the hours of nine and twelve o'clock at night, and it is on these occasions that they may be most successfully hunted, and with the least danger. The black rhinoceros is subject to paroxysms of unprovoked fury, often ploughing up the ground for several yards with its horn, and assaulting large bushes in the most violent manner. On these bushes they work for hours with their horns, at the same time snorting and blowing loudly; nor do they leave them in general until they have broken them into pieces. All the four varieties delight to roll and wallow in mud, with which their rugged hides are generally encrusted. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are much smaller and more active than the white, and are so swift that a horse with a rider on its back can rarely overtake them. The two varieties of the white rhinoceros are so similar in habits, that the description of one will serve for both, the principal difference consisting in the length and set of the anterior horn; that of the common white rhinoceros averaging from two to three feet in length, and pointing backwards; while the horn of the long-horned white rhinoceros often exceeds four feet in length, and inclines forward from the nose.

“Both these varieties of rhinoceros attain an enormous size, being the animals next in magnitude to the elephant. They feed solely on grass, carry much fat, and their flesh is excellent, being preferable to beef. They are of a much milder and more inoffensive disposition than the black rhinoceros, rarely charging their pursuer. Their speed is very inferior to that of the other varieties, and a person well-mounted can overtake and shoot them.” The description of the famous rhinoceros birds is very interesting.

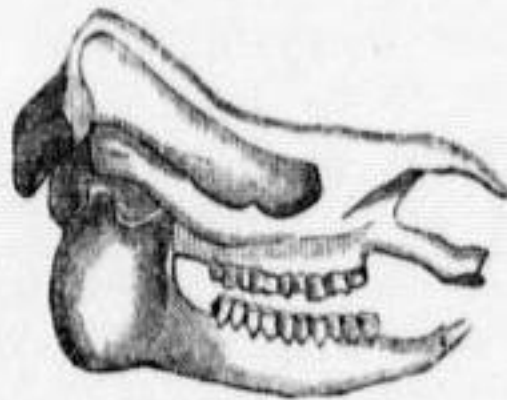
“Before I could reach the proper distance to fire, several ‘rhinoceros birds,’ by which he was attended, warned him of his impending danger, by sticking their bills into his ear, and

uttering their harsh, grating cry. Thus aroused, he suddenly sprang to his feet, and crashed away through the jungle at a rapid trot, and I saw no more of him. . . .

“These rhinoceros birds are constant attendants upon the hippopotamus and the four varieties of rhinoceros, their object being to feed upon the ticks and other parasitic insects that swarm upon these animals. They are of a greyish colour, and are nearly as large as a common thrush: their voice is very similar to that of the mistletoe thrush. Many a time have these ever-watchful birds disappointed me in my stalk, and tempted me to invoke an anathema upon their devoted heads. They are the best friends the rhinoceros has, and rarely fail to awaken him, even in his soundest nap. ‘Chukuroo’ perfectly understands their warning, and, springing to his feet, he generally first looks about him in every direction, after which he invariably makes off.”

The Indian Rhinoceros is chiefly remarkable for the very deep foldings of the skin. Goblets, made of its horn, were formerly in high estimation as preservatives against poison. The Indian kings were accustomed to have their wine served up in these goblets, as they imagined that if any poison were introduced into the cup, the liquid would boil over, and betray its presence.

The upper lip is used by the rhinoceros as an instrument of prehension, with which it can grasp the herbage on which it feeds, or pick up small fruit from the ground. The very tame rhinoceros in the Zoological Gardens will take a piece of bun or biscuit from a visitor’s hand, by means of its flexible upper lip.



SKULL OF THE RHINOCEROS.