

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM
SCIENCE HANDBOOKS

BRANCH MUSEUM, BETHNAL GREEN

ANIMAL PRODUCTS

THEIR PREPARATION, COMMERCIAL USES
AND VALUE.

BY

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The wild hogs of Brazil (*Dicotyles labiatus* and *D. torquatus*) live in herds of sometimes as many as sixty individuals. The flesh is one of the best of Brazilian game.

The peccaries of America are, however, much inferior to the wild hogs of Europe and Asia as an article of food, and are said to be only made palatable by the removal, immediately after death, of a singular dorsal gland which is found above the posterior vertebræ.

The hide of the TAPIR (*Tapirus Americanus*), when tanned, makes excellent boot soles, and is highly prized by the Indians for the manufacture of shields. The durability and resistance of this hide is proverbial. The flesh, when roasted, closely resembles beef, and is even compared to veal, especially if it be young. The fatty protuberance on the nape of the neck is alleged to be a delicacy worthy of the table of a modern Lucullus. The feet and cheeks, boiled to a jelly, are also considered delicious.

RHINOCEROS.—Prof. W. H. Flower, F.R.S., lately read a paper before the Zoological Society on some cranial and dental characters of the existing species of rhinoceroses. It gave the result of the examination of fifty-three skulls of rhinoceroses, contained in the Museum of the College of Surgeons and the British Museum, and described the principal characteristics of the five forms under which they could all be arranged, viz. :—1. *Rhinoceros unicornis*, Linn. (including *R. stenocephalus*, Gray); 2. *Rhinoceros sondaicus*, Cuv. (including *R. Floweri* and *R. nasalis* of Gray); 3. *Ceratorhinus Sumatrensis*, Cuv. (including *C. niger*, Gray); 4. *Atelodus bicornis*, Linn. (including *A. keitlon*, A. Smith); 5. *Atelodus simus*, Burchell. It was also shown that the skull of a rhinoceros, lately received at the British Museum from Borneo, was that of a two-horned species not distinguishable from *C. Sumatrensis*.

The African species have two horns, the Indian, with the exception of the Sumatra species, but one horn.

Dr. Barth mentions having often met with the rhinoceros in Central Africa, but only in the eastern part of the country.

Livingstone notices the Kòuabaoba or straight-horned rhinoceros (*R. Oswellii*) which is a variety of the white (*R. simus*, Burchell). Although four species of the rhinoceros are enumerated by Dr. Smith, Livingstone is of opinion that there are only two, and that the other supposed species consists simply of a difference in size, age, and direction of the horns.

The rhinoceros must at one time have been very numerous in the Cape Colony. There are still a great many in the north-eastern part of Great Namaqualand, the northern part of the Kalitari and Bitchouanaland, and the country along the Limpopo. There are said to be four distinct species:—1. The *Rhinoceros Africanus*, the common black rhinoceros with two horns of unequal length, once roaming in the immediate vicinity of Cape Town; 2. the *Rhinoceros Keitloa* or black rhinoceros with two horns of nearly equal length; 3. the *Rhinoceros simus* or common white rhinoceros; and 4. the *Rhinoceros Oswellii*, or long-horned white rhinoceros, the most rare of all.

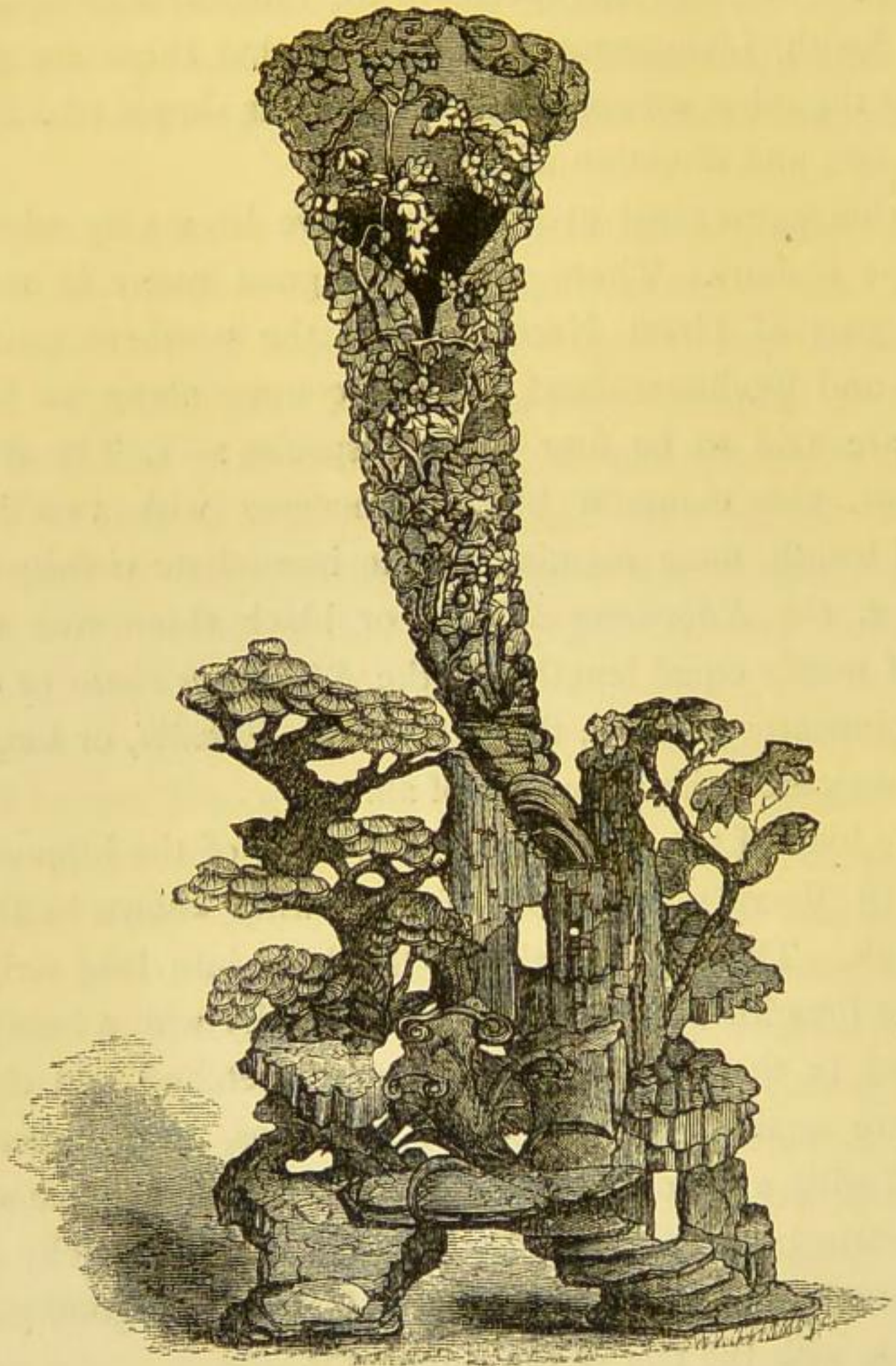
Of the hide of the rhinoceros (as well as of the hippopotamus) the Dutch Boers make a sort of horse-whip known by the name of jambok. They first of all cut the hide into long strips three inches in breadth which are hung up to dry with a heavy weight appended to them. When thoroughly stretched and dry, these strips are again cut into three divisions, then tapered and rounded with a plane, and a polish given with a piece of grass, which renders them semi-transparent like horn. A jelly from the skin is much esteemed in China and Siam, and a good gelatine is also made with the feet of the rhinoceros.

The illustration on the next page represents a carved rhinoceros horn from Siam, shown at the London International Exhibition of 1862.

There are in the Animal Products Collection of the Bethnal Green Museum, in Case 169, sections of rhinoceros horn and

examples of its commercial applications formed into tazzas, umbrella handles, walking sticks, whips, and other uses.

There is also a good skull with the horn *in situ* of the Indian rhinoceros and three specimens of horns of the rhinoceros of



CARVED RHINOCEROS HORN, SIAM.

different sizes. These horns are not attached to the bone, but merely rest upon it. They are composed wholly of horny matter, and this is disposed in longitudinal fibres; so that the horn seems rather, as Prof. Owen observes, to consist of coarse bristles

compactly matted together in the form of a more or less elongated sub-compressed cone.

When turned in the lathe and fashioned into drinking-cups, these are held in high repute in Southern Africa by the colonists. The Dutch Boers firmly believe, according to the ancient creed, that if any noxious fluid were poured into a cup of this description, it would instantly foam and boil over the brim. Captain Burton in his "Central Africa" says:—

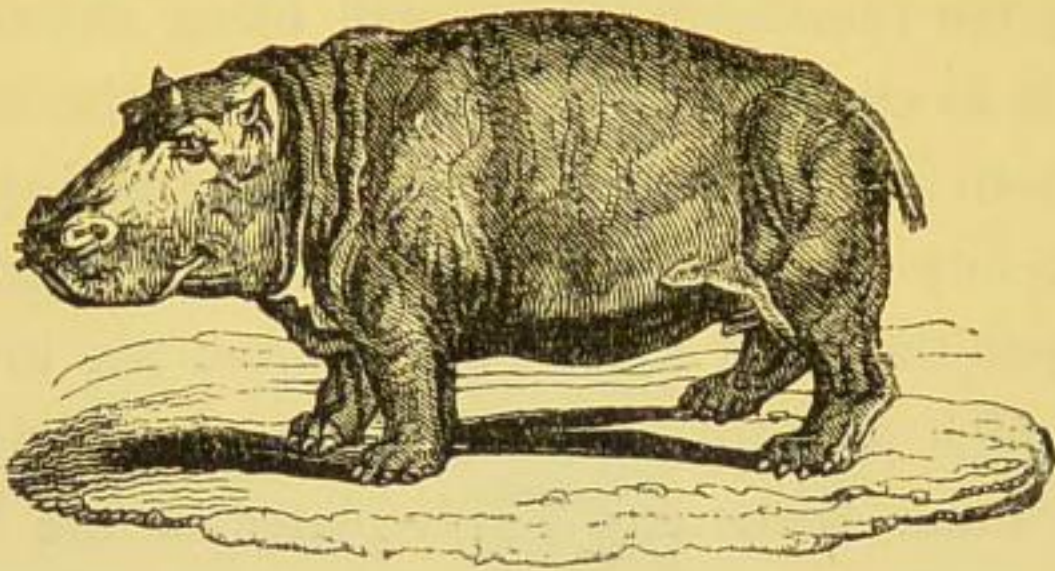
"The gargetan (karkadan?), or small black rhinoceros with a double horn, is as common as the elephant in the interior. The price of the horn is regulated by its size; a small specimen is to be bought for one jembe or iron hoe. When large the price is doubled. Upon the coast a lot fetches from six to nine dollars per frasilah, which at Zanzibar increases to from eight to twelve dollars. The inner barbarians apply plates of the horn to helcomas and ulcerations, and they cut it into bits, which are bound with twine round the limb. Large horns are imported through Bombay to China and Central Asia, where it is said the people convert them into drinking cups, which sweat if poison be administered in them; thus they act like the Venetian glass of our ancestors and are as highly prized as that eccentric fruit, the *coco de mer*. The Arabs of Muscat and Yemen cut them into sword-hilts, dagger-hafts, tool-handles, and small boxes for tobacco and other articles. They greatly prize and will pay twelve dollars per frasilah, for the spoils of the kobaoba, or long-horned white rhinoceros, which, however, appears no longer to exist in the latitudes westward of Zanzibar island."

A long perfect horn sometimes sells in China as high as £20, but those that come from Africa do not usually fetch above £6 or £7 each. The principal use of these horns is in medicine and for amulets, for only one good cup can be carved from the end of each horn, and consequently the parings and fragments are all preserved.

3½ tons of these horns were imported into London in 1874.

Good sound rhinoceros horns of 28 to 32 inches long will fetch 4s. to 5s. per lb.; smaller ones, from 13 to 25 inches long, 10d. to 1s. 6d. per lb.

HIPPOPOTAMUS.—This thick-skinned animal (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) is a native of Africa, and is well known now to most persons by the specimens to be seen in the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park. It is popularly termed the sea-cow by the Dutch



HIPPOPOTAMUS AMPHIBIUS.

settlers of Southern Africa. The interest attaching to this animal from an economic point of view is rather limited, being chiefly confined to a local use of its skin and flesh in Africa and the limited application of its powerful teeth or tusks as a substitute for true ivory.

Livingstone found the Kafue river (in 16°) full of hippopotami, the young being perched on the necks of their dams. About a thousand of these large animals must have been slaughtered yearly to meet the demand for this ivory.

The flesh of the hippopotamus is delicate and succulent. The layer of fat next the skin makes excellent bacon, technically denominated hippopotamus "speck" at the Cape. Dr. Schweinfurth says that when boiled, hippopotamus fat is very similar to pork lard, though in the warm climate of Central Africa it never attains a consistency firmer than that of oil. Of all animal fats it appears to be the purest, and, at any rate, never becomes rancid, and will keep for many years without requiring any special process