

PORTRAITS
OF THE
GAME AND WILD ANIMALS

OF
Southern Africa,

DELINEATED FROM LIFE IN THEIR NATIVE HAUNTS,

DURING A HUNTING EXPEDITION

FROM THE CAPE COLONY AS FAR AS THE TROPIC OF CAPRICORN,

IN 1836 AND 1837,

WITH SKETCHES OF THE FIELD SPORTS.

BY CAPTAIN W. CORNWALLIS HARRIS,

OF THE HONORABLE E. I. COMPANY'S ENGINEERS, BOMBAY ESTABLISHMENT.

DRAWN ON STONE BY FRANK HOWARD.

QUOD SPECIMEN NATURÆ CAPI DEBEAT EX OPTIMA QUAQUE NATURA.
CICERO.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETOR, BY W. PICKERING, CHANCERY LANE,

AND TO BE HAD OF

P. & D. COLNAGHI, PALL MALL EAST; W. WOOD, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN;
AND T. CADELL, STRAND.

1840.

TO THOSE

WHOM IT IS UNNECESSARY TO PARTICULARIZE,

BUT WHO WILL UNDERSTAND THE SPIRIT OF THIS DEDICATION;

MY LOVED COMPANIONS IN THE MERRY GREEN-WOOD,

WHO HAVE SACRIFICED WITH ME IN HONOR OF THE CHASTE GODDESS;

AND

WITH WHOM IN DAYS GONE BY I HAVE OFT STALKED THE FOREST AND SCoured THE PLAIN,

These Scenes in the African Wilderness

ARE,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF REGARD AND ESTEEM INSCRIBED

BY

THEIR AFFECTIONATELY ATTACHED FRIEND,

W. C. H.

INTRODUCTION.

HUNTING, from the earliest antiquity, has formed no less the favourite pastime of the mightiest monarchs, than the chosen exercise of the most exalted heroes. Poets and minstrels have made the *merrye greens-wode* the theme and burthen of their wild song. Philosophers and sages have lauded the sylvan craft, as combining exercise to the body, with delight and entertainment to the mind; whilst painters and sculptors have made it the subject of the noblest creations of their skill and genius. The ancient schools instructed those who were destined for deeds of high emprise, to contest with the swiftest of the wild beasts in speed, with the boldest in strength, and with the most cunning in craft and subtilty;—"certare cum fugacibus feris, cursu; cum audacibus, robore; cum callidis, astu." Victories gained over the savage tenants of the forest constantly formed the prelude to heroic exploits in war;—and the splendid monuments which transmitted to after ages the military achievements of the Emperors of Rome, not unfrequently blended with their most celebrated triumphs, the glories of the chase. The pages of history record the high estimation in which our own ancestors, from the rudest periods, have regarded this noble diversion. Princes and statesmen have alike been its protectors; and whilst men of the greatest genius in Europe have not disdained to share in the excitement it affords, oriental potentates have far eclipsed the more civilized nations of the globe, in the splendour and magnificence with which they have indulged in the engrossing fascinations of the field.

Of those who have taken up the unpretending Narrative of my recent adventures in the wilds of Southern Africa, to which the present volume may be considered to form an amplification, few will deny that to wander through a fairy-land of sport, among the independent denizens of the wide wilderness,—realizing, as it were, a new and fabled creation amid scenes never before paced by civilized foot,—is in itself so truly spirit-stirring and romantic, that in spite of the many hardships and privations which are inseparable from a campaign directed against the *feræ naturæ*, the witchcraft of the desert must prove irresistible. Nor will any one who reflects that the regions I traversed were either totally depopulated, or very sparingly inhabited, complain, that my attention should have been so exclusively directed to the brute creation, which presented to the traveller the most prominent as well as the most engrossing objects of contemplation. In a region "where the grim lion prowls monarch of all he surveys," my interviews with the wild races of the human species were necessarily few and far between; and it seldom fell to my fortune to have opportunities of studying the natural history of those primitive children of the desert.

Africa, it is well known, is the great nursery of many of the most noble and interesting forms that exist in the animal kingdom. Her southern regions, which extend into the temperate zone, are surrounded on three sides by the ocean; and being divided from the milder climates of the northern hemisphere by the torrid belt that intervenes, are tenanted by a vast nation of indigenous quadrupeds. The grizzled Monarch of the forest—the stupendous Elephant—and the shapeless River Horse;—the mailed Rhinoceros—the gaily painted Zebra—and the richly arrayed Ostrich;—all claim alike some portion of her savage soil as the lot of their inheritance. An endless variety of grotesque and bulky ruminants also, offer to the keen disciple of "the mighty Hunter," *quarrées* no less glorious than eccentric. The towering Giraffe, by whose lofty side man dwindles to the stature of a pigmy;—the malevolent and stately Buffalo,

"With fiery eyes and angry roar
And feet that stamp, and horns that gore."—

the mild, though ponderous Eland, enveloped in a goodly garment of its own fat;—the fantastic Gnool, with its scarcely less terrific-looking congener—the Unicorn-resembling Oryx, and the regal Koodoo;—the proud group of Aigoceri, and the graceful family of star-eyed Gazelles;—together with a whole host of subordinates, descending by fair gradations, link by link, to that tiniest of sylvan denizens, the Cærulean Antelope, and collectively filling the place which in other countries is occupied by the cervine race—all advance their hereditary title to a share in the trackless *plateaux* of that mighty portion of the earth.

The extensive field that yet remains unexplored of the great and mysterious Continent of Africa, doubtless contains a rich mine of hidden treasure, which in the progress of gradual development, will no doubt be one day fully exhausted. By the indefatigable exertions of modern travellers, the repositories of science have been already enriched with some of the choicest *exuvie* of most of the interesting forms with which we are yet acquainted: and the enterprize of others, also, has stocked our menageries, like the ark of Noah, with living specimens of nearly every variety. Widely different, however, is the graceful free-born of the desert, bounding exultingly in light and liberty over his native prairie, from the pampered cripple, pining in sad captivity, with sinews relaxed under the restraint of a prison-house. Yet it is from stunted subjects such as these, or worse still, from mummies and stuffed monstrosities, that the most popular illustrations of the African Fauna have heretofore been principally derived;—and so little likeness do some of the abortions and absurdities thus produced, bear to the brave originals, that it is frequently difficult, if not impossible, to trace in them the most remote resemblance to the actual works of the creation.

With the design, if possible, of supplying in some measure this palpable defect in our Zoological galleries, the portraits contained in the present series were originally undertaken. How manifold soever their imperfections, if viewed as productions of art, they can boast at least of being adorned with the beauties of truth, having all been delineated from living subjects, roaming in pristine independence over their native soil. "To study animals with accuracy," says the observant Buffon, "we ought to view them in their savage state;—

to accompany them into the retreats which they have chosen for themselves;—to follow them into the deep caverns,—and to attend them on the frightful precipices where they enjoy unbounded liberty." Devoted to wood-craft from the cradle, my predilection for sylvan sports has afforded me all the opportunities, alluded to by the great Naturalist, of waxing intimate with the dappled denizens of the grove and waste to an extent, which abler artists and more finished Zoologists have necessarily been denied. I have beheld the venerable and half-reasoning Elephant browsing in native majesty among his own contemporary trees, "in his huge strength impregnable;"—have torn the much-prized ivory from his giant jaws, and plucked the horn from the saucy nose of the Rhinoceros. I have stripped the proud *spolia* from the shaggy shoulder of the "king of beasts, who clears the desert with his rolling eye;"—have humbled the haughty head of the forest bull;—and though "she scorneth the horse and his rider," have despoiled the fleet Ostrich of her costly plumes. More—I have dragged forth *Behemoth*, "whose ribs are like bars of iron," from his hiding place under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed and fens,—and have ridden familiarly by the side of the towering *Zamor*, the colossal glory of the wilderness, long classed with the wild chimeras of men's brain.

The leading features of my Expedition, undertaken chiefly for these purposes, in the company of an esteemed and valued friend, have already been placed before the public in the Narrative above referred to;* and it is therefore only necessary for me now to remark, that throughout the following views, which were all executed on that occasion, my object has been to combine to the fullest practicable extent, information which might prove acceptable to the naturalist, the sportsman, and the lover of wild scenery. Adapted to one standard, and corrected by actual measurement, they comprise faithful portraits of every game quadruped yet known to inhabit Southern extra-tropical Africa, including one which has been pronounced an unique and splendid discovery of my own;† and, as neither the relative size of the animals, the characteristics of their favourite haunts, nor their manner of congregating, has in any instance been lost sight of, the series will be found to convey an accurate and tangible idea, not only of the ordinary bulk of each, and of its gregarious, monogamous, or solitary habits, but also of the aspect and geographical features of the region to which it is restricted.

Those of my readers who, like myself, have been accustomed to the trappings and luxurious magnificence of Indian hunting expeditions, and who have enjoyed the sumptuous accommodation afforded by Oriental tents and retinue, can form but a feeble conception of the ten thousand difficulties, distresses, and drawbacks—the toils, trials, and troubles, that beset the wanderer in the African desert. He who would accomplish his object under the manifold disadvantages that there exist, must be well impressed with the maxim,

Omnia vincit labor, labor enim ipse voluptas;

and I claim some share of merit for having in the domains of savage nature, not been disheartened from the exercise of the pencil under so many disadvantages. All the first sketches of my drawings were commenced either in the open air with the animal before me, in the scene of slaughter, or under the shelter of some neighbouring bush, and were completed upon my knees in the waggon, often amidst rain and wind. The indolence and apathy of our Hottentot attendants, who resemble the wild beasts as nearly in habits as in features, invariably obliged me to carry the appliances for drawing, as well as the embryo portraits upon my person; and that they should have been preserved to assume their present shape will probably excite surprise, when I add, that I often wended my solitary way from the sporting field, not only encumbered with my weapons and hunting gear, but also laden with venison, and staggering under the weight of the ponderous trophies which had fallen to my rifle.

Before concluding this introduction, I feel a proud satisfaction in publicly acknowledging the enthusiastic reception which has been accorded to my Narrative by my brother officers in India, with whom I have the gratification of knowing it has exalted me in credit and consideration; nor must I omit to express my obligation to the critics of Europe for the favourable manner in which my work has been received in my native land. It would have been too much to expect that my sylvan exploits should have enlisted the sympathies, or drawn forth the approbation of every reader, and if I am occasionally charged with lavish slaughter, I must e'en shelter myself behind the renowned deeds of bold Robin Hood and his gallant yeomen in the "greene forrest of Sherwood," or summon on my behalf the still more sanguinary exploits of the famed heroes of Chevy Chase, as transmitted in ballads of the olden time;

"And long before high noon they had
One hundred fat bucks slain;
Then having dined, the drovers went
To range the deere againe."

From those kindred and congenial spirits, however, to whom especially I have inscribed the following pages—and who will not fail to interpret aright the intent of my dedication—I feel confident of approval. They, I know, will accord to their ancient ally, that fellow feeling of which others may be niggard or unsusceptible;—neither amongst my brother votaries of the Chase, shall there be found one, who turning over these leaves, will fail to participate in the enviable feelings of liberty and excitement which pervaded my breast, whether "pricking at a righte merrye pace" with my fellow-voyageur, over the broad bosom of the flower-decked prairies of Southern Africa, or engaged in "chance medley" with the four-footed giants that divide amongst themselves the empire of that hunter's Elysium.

* Narrative of an Expedition into Southern Africa, through the territories of the Chief Moselekatse, to the Tropic of Capricorn, &c.

† Vide Trans. Zool. Society, Vol. II, Plate 39, Page 216.



XVI. RHINOCEROS AFRICANUS: - THE AFRICAN RHINOCEROS.

PLATE XVI.

RHINOCEROS AFRICANUS.—THE AFRICAN RHINOCEROS.

Rhinoster of the Cape Colonists. *Borili* of the Bechuana. *Chukuroo* of the Matabili.

GENERIC CHARACTER.—Often six feet high at the shoulder, and about thirteen in extreme length. General contour that of gigantic swine. Body very robust, clumsy, and underlimbed; feet very small in proportion, and furnished with three toes; the hocks unnaturally prominent, as though spavined. Head shapeless. Eyes lateral and extremely small; encircled by a series of deeply furrowed wrinkles, extending over a great portion of the face. Muzzle hooked, and resembling that of a tortoise; armed with two horns on the snout, placed one behind the other, over an arch formed by the nasal bones; they are solid, fibrous, consisting of an agglutination of hair, and attached to the skin only; variously fashioned; usually rough at the base, and highly polished above; the anterior from one to two feet long, the posterior generally much smaller, but capricious, attaining in some specimens the same or nearly the same length.* Ears pointed, small, approximated, and fringed with a few bristles. Hide naked, very thick, rugous, and knotty, but destitute of plaits or folds, a few loose wrinkles about the neck excepted. Usual colour olive brown, approaching sometimes to that of clay mire. Tail about two feet long, laterally compressed at the end, and furnished with a few terminal bristles.

Female similar, but smaller. Mamme two. Very common in the interior, and frequently gregarious in small groups not exceeding five or six. Inhabits variously, but is most usually met with on thinly wooded plains.

* In no two specimens of this animal which came under my observation were the horns built exactly upon the same model. Disease or accident had not unfrequently rendered the anterior horn the *shorter* of the two.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE AFRICAN RHINOCEROS.

The devilish iron engine wrought
In deepest hell, and framed by furie's skill,
With windy nitre and quick sulphur fraught,
And runned with bullets round, ordained to kill.

Spenser's Faery Queene.

"If you draw your beast in an emblem," observes Peacham quaintly enough, "show a landscape of the country natural to the beast." In accordance with which sound and excellent counsel, although not directly dealing in emblems, I have striven to display annexed the scenery "natural" to the smaller, and more common of the two species of Rhinoceros that infest Southern Africa. He is a swinish, cross-grained, ill-favoured, wallowing brute, with a hide like a rasp, an impudent cock of the chin, a roguish leer from out the corner of his eye, a mud-begrimed exterior, and a necklace of ticks and horse-flies! Nineteen times out of twenty shall you see the crusty old fellow standing listlessly in the society of Gnoos, Quaggas, and Hartebeests, upon a plain bounded by a low range of azure hills, and dotted over with mokaala trees, distributed with park-like regularity. In imitation of the pendulum of a Dutch clock, his tail is swinging mechanically from side to side—and the odds are fifty to one that, having eaten his fill, he is at that very moment in the enjoyment of perfect idleness, under the shade cast by one of the many thatched cities of the *Loxia* which are within the scope of vision. Indolent and slovenly, he would appear, notwithstanding his enormous bulk, to be a slow and dainty feeder, tasting few of the many shrubs which he approaches, or has even touched with his tortoise-like nose, as though designing to browse thereon; and whilst exclusively subsisting upon brushwood and the smaller branches of dwarf trees—he is to be found in none but wooded districts, his traces become there abundantly apparent, from his accumulated heaps of ordure, wherein he delights to roll, from his singular *trefoil-shaped spoon*, and from the extensive mutilations of his favourite bushes.

Whether from a limited sphere of vision, arising from the extraordinary minuteness of the eyes, which, resembling a pig's in expression, are placed nearer to the nose than in most other animals—or whether from an overweening confidence in its own powers—the Rhinoceros will generally suffer itself to be approached within even a few yards, before condescending to take the smallest heed of the foe who is diligently plotting its destruction. At length, pricking its pointed ears at some unusual sound, it listens with a ludicrous assumption of shrewdness—its elevated snout, armed with a double ploughshare, imparting an imitable expression of contempt. In an instant the dull and vacant physiognomy has become lighted up with the essence of all that is spiteful and malevolent. Twinkling its hoggish eyes, and turning its shapeless head inquiringly from side to side—elevating its double chin, and restlessly rolling its bemired carcase from side to side—it trots forward a few paces with the vivacity and mincing gait of a French dancing master—wheeling presently to the right about to reconnoitre the enemy. Then uttering a great blast or snort of defiance, and lowering its armed muzzle almost to the ground, grunting and trumpeting, on comes the villain with reckless impetuosity, displaying a degree of activity but ill according with such unwieldy proportions. Once roused from his apparent lethargy, throwing down the gauntlet, he charges with blind fury to the onslaught, aided no less by the length of his stride than by the propelling impetus of his body. Yet his rush is invariably a straight one, and his awkward structure preventing him from turning with facility, it is only necessary to step on one side to be perfectly secure—a bullet, hardened either with tin or quicksilver, and thrown in behind the elbow at the proper moment, being almost sure to prove fatal, after a race of three or four hundred yards. But though, glorying not in panoply of plate armour which encases the ribs of his Asiatic brother, the stupid and vicious beast is nevertheless enveloped in a suit of mail which will successfully repel any ordinary bullet—one of unadulterated lead, far from penetrating, most frequently falling flattened from his hide.

When the Dutch first established themselves at the Cape of Bon Esperance—now nearly two centuries ago, the *Zwart Rhinoster* existed in considerable numbers on the present site of Cape Town, along the base of Table Mountain; but within the Colony the species has long ceased to exist, the remnant having instinctively fled before the destructive cannonade to which it was subjected. Gregarious in fives and sixes, they are extremely abundant in the wilds of the interior, and I have, during a single day, counted upwards of sixty. The Hottentots, ever gasconading of their skill in hunting them, had long kept us on the *qui vive*, but it was not until we had reached the sedgy Molopo, that the animal's dusky form actually

appeared to me. Whilst the teams were being unyoked, I had gone out on horseback with the design of ministering to the inordinate appetites of a party of savages who had joined us on the road; and was busied in the pursuit of a troop of Hartebeests, when two colossal figures which my friends at once pronounced to be *Borili*, were descried, motionless as statues, in the middle of the level and treeless expanse. I at first endeavoured to approach, frog-fashion, upon all fours, under cover of the grass, but a strong wind setting towards them, they went off at a heavy trot, and as it was getting dark, I remounted my horse, and galloping within seventy or eighty yards—the nearest I felt disposed to venture on so short an acquaintance—treated the more bulky to a brace of rifle balls. Carrying his snout close to the ground, he did but run the faster, and by the time I had repeated the dose without any better effect, it had become so dark that I was compelled to abstain from further hostilities.

The next apparition was even more shadowy. Accompanied by a band of natives who volunteered to show me a Giraffe, I had ridden so far in advance of the waggons—then plodding at a funereal pace through the heavy forest that envelopes the foot of Kurrichane—that night overtaking me, I began to feel apprehensive of having to bivouac in the bush. My companions evidently contemplated a similar contingency, and evinced a vast longing to rejoin four of their number who had wisely tarried behind with the carcase of a *Sassaybe* that I had inconsiderately shot. Giving by signs to understand that I disapproved of the measure, we pushed on briskly towards the halting ground that had previously been agreed upon. A contumacious Rhinoceros was stationed directly in our path, and although repeatedly hailed, most peremptorily refused to make way. There was just twilight sufficient to admit of my discharging both barrels of my rifle into his unwieldy form from behind a strong breast-work of thorn bushes. Sneezing violently and wheezing, he ran off in the direction that we were taking, but presently subsided heavily in the path. We approached him with caution, and were well pleased to find that he was extinct—a volley of musquetry at the same moment in reply to my rifle, together with a bright beacon fire which suddenly blazed forth towards heaven, directing our benighted steps to the encampment.

Arriving at the *Mariqua* several days after this occurrence, we had formed the camp on a verdant spot on the river bank near to an extensive *Matabili kraal*—the captain of which, at the head of some ten of his clan, being clamorous for victuals, I willingly placed myself under his guidance, and dived into the heart of the extensive groves, where, although the sun was shining brightly, a dry cutting wind rendered the cold scarcely endurable, even under the defence of a *duffel* jacket. After running a few hundred yards, the savages, halting, pointed to a huge shapeless mass, which bore so strong a resemblance to a sleeping Rhinoceros, that without asking any questions, I poured through the trees at his indistinct outline, a broadside, which from treble the same distance, would have more than satisfied any other animal in the creation. But notwithstanding that the beast was mortally wounded, he twice contrived to cross the river, and I had no alternative—a cold one though it proved—but to wade after him through water which reached to my middle, following the bloody trail among the intricacies of the grove, until from single drops the traces became splashes of frothy crimson. Still striving to force his tottering frame through the tangled covert, the dying monster at length sank upon his knees, when another bullet behind the shoulder terminated his giant struggles, as he was tearing up the earth with his ponderous horn.

A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed as he bent no more to rise;
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk—
Nought of life left save a shivering
Where his limbs were slightly quivering.

My companion the next morning achieved a 'gentle passage of arms' with the very duplicate of this gentleman; but *his* antagonist could not be prevailed upon to surrender to superior weapons, until it had considerably disfigured with the point of its horn the stock of the rifle employed in its reduction. Aroused from a *siesta* in a thick bush by the smarting of a gunshot wound, the exasperated beast pursued its human assailant so closely, that Richardson was fain, in self-defence, to discharge the second barrel down its open throat! On our way to the *Ooli* river, a few days subsequently, having left the waggons to proceed by the direct route, I took a circuitous line to the left, and was ascending a stony eminence, when sundry discharges of musquetry accompanied by loud shouts and clamour, were followed by the sudden appearance of an infuriated female. Streaming with gore, she rushed over the brow of the hill with snorts and grunts, looming like a colossal sow—and was actually within pistol shot ere a soul was aware of her advent. No bush presenting itself behind which to hide, I threw my hunting cap to divert her attention, *Lingap* meanwhile striking his shield, and shouting with stentorian lungs until the brute turned off, when I saluted her fat buttocks with the contents of both my barrels, and she was immediately afterwards overturned by a running fire from the *Hottentots*.

As we advanced, the species became daily more and more abundant, and I shall hardly gain credence when I assert, that in the valley of *Limpopo* specimens were so numerous, that on arriving in the afternoon at our new ground, it was no uncommon thing to perceive a dozen horned snouts protruded at once from bushes in the immediate vicinity. No sooner were the teams unyoked, than the whole party in the regular routine of business, having assumed their weapons, proceeded to dislodge the enemy, and right stoutly often was the field contested. But where is the quadruped that can stand before the grooved rifle? It will take the conceit out of the most contumacious, and like a sedative, will calm his ruffled temper in a minute. Every individual came in for a share of cold lead and quicksilver; and the stubborn brute that would not quietly withdraw,

satisfied with the mercurial dose he had received, was ultimately badgered to death as a matter of course. Daily almost, two or three were thus annihilated within view of the camp; and not only during our hunting excursions was the path constantly disputed by some rebellious rascal, who refused to move on one side until the smarting of his wounds compelled him,—but when on the point of drawing the trigger at some object that I coveted, a scoundrel has frequently leapt with a grunt out of a bush not many yards removed from my elbow. I have elsewhere related, that on the occasion of my first humbling a Giraffe, my advance towards the herd was opposed by a spiteful old vixen, that twinkled her wicked eyes, and with her antiquated little calf, seemed so bent upon interference, that I had no alternative but to direct Piet van Roy to salute her with a broadside; a white turban that during the chase was torn by a projecting bough from around my hunting cap, being afterwards charged and trampled under foot by no fewer than three ungainly beasts in concert; whom I could long perceive snorting and wheezing in an abortive attempt to overtake me.

During the time that we were encamped in the valley of the Limpopo, a huge male came sauntering down one evening after we had all returned tired from hunting, and proceeded coolly to take up his position under a spreading tree, not three hundred yards from our waggons. A general move was made towards the guns, which had been slung in their accustomed places within the awning; and Andries, contriving to obtain his *roer* the first, pompously announced his intention of giving the party a lesson *gratis* in the art of Rhinoceros shooting. “*Jaa,*” said he confidently, “*daar in die veld ik zaal de schelm dood maaken.*” * Impelled by this bold determination, he crept with suitable caution against the wind, taking especial care ever to keep the trunk of a tree interposed betwixt himself and the object for whose life he thirsted; and deliberately seating himself at last upon the ground within thirty paces of the unconscious target, he levelled a full minute over a branch, and drew the trigger. The clattering together of the heavy flint and steel was the only response, and the Rhinoceros, quite in the dark as to the cause of a sound so unusual, pricked its sharp ears, elevated its snout, and, having sniffed about a little, trotted quietly on to the next tree. The foiled preceptor nimbly advanced to the position that it had vacated, and another minute’s aim produced a flash in the pan. Again the beast trotted on, and wheeling about, fronted the adversary, and commenced winking its little eyes in a most ominous manner. Still resolved to learn how a Rhinoceros *ought* to be slain, not a man interfered, and Andries, having leisurely cleared the ample touch-hole of his blunderbuss with an acacia thorn, and then by the aid thereof inserted a suitable modicum of powder, obtained with some difficulty from his gigantic ox-horn magazine—which complex operation occupied other two minutes and a half—levelled for the third time. On this occasion the bullet *did* leave the tube, and away thundered the irritated animal—the sanguinary sportsman offering large bets that Death would overtake his victim ere it had travelled an hundred yards! But from the top of an eminence we gazed at the dusky figure as it waned smaller and smaller to the perception, now trotting, now galloping over the plain below, until at length it stood stock still, and began browsing upon the bushes; whereupon the preceptor, covered with infamy, having tossed his empty gun over his brawny shoulder, cocked his only optic at his jeering messmates, and acquainted them that the failure of his experiment was solely to be attributed to the infamous quality of the *kruid*. †

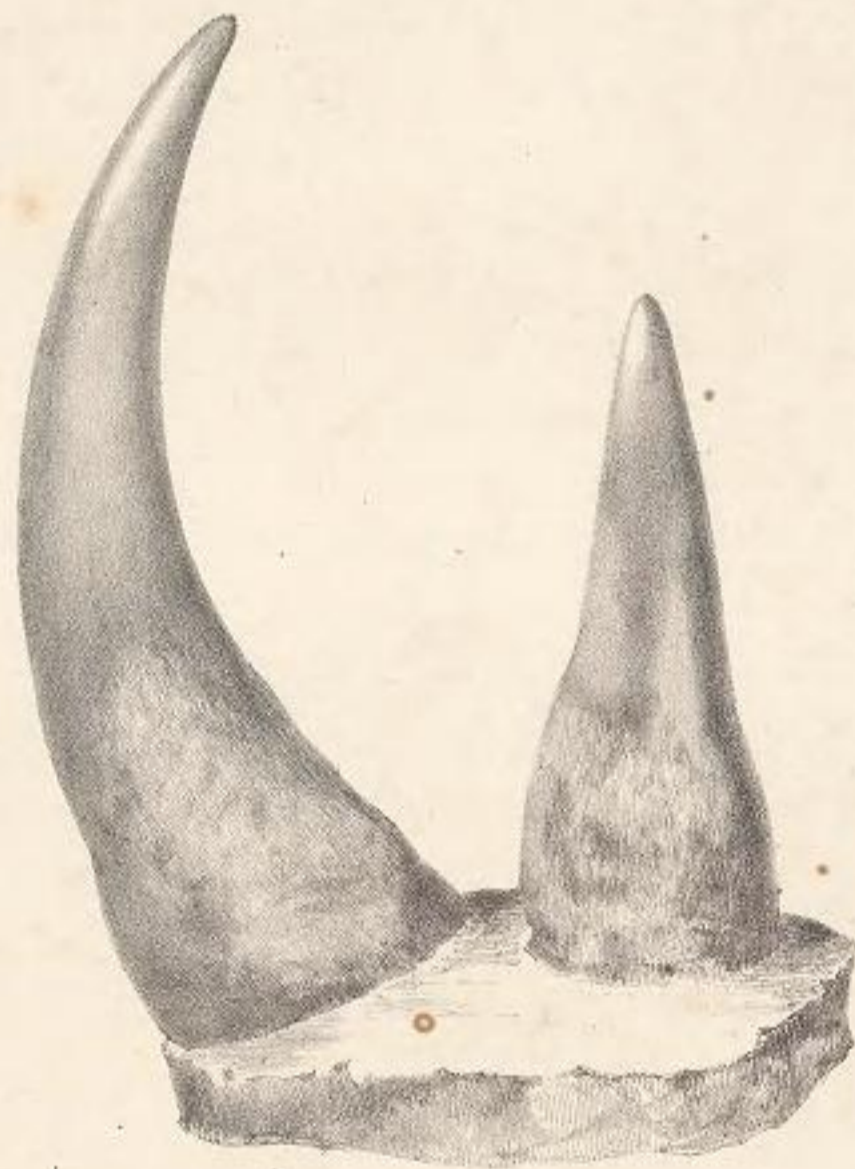
Our friend on the other hand, received upon a subsequent occasion rather an awkward lesson in the process by which the Rhinoceros conducts the war against the human species. We were leading the hot trail of a herd of Elephants, and whilst passing a little green knoll, an old lady was perceived sunning herself under the walls of a deserted stone kraal which crowned the summit. Andries had that morning drawn the dappled mare in the lottery, and being in an unusually crusty humour thereat, was resolved to mar the sport to the utmost of his poor ability. Dismounting without saying a syllable, and making fast the bridle to a tree, he boldly advanced towards the quarry—which for once in a way appeared to be most peaceably disposed—and cocking his long gun with an air of singular success, triumphantly fired a four-to-the-pound ball into the animal’s ribs. Forth she came, brandishing her ploughshare in a towering passion—and whilst not an object appeared in the whole landscape behind which to seek refuge, the mare, having broken her bridle, was trotting quietly away. A pair of tight leathern inexpressibles, which from their fashionable cut had long formed his boast, so impeded his downward progress, that he was overtaken in a trice, and the rent inflicted in their nether portion by a thrust of the animal’s sharp horn, sufficiently proved how nearly we had been bereft for ever of the valuable services of our now crest-fallen hero.

One stormy morning, when hunting was altogether out of the question, our little party was on its way to cut out the teeth of sundry elephants that had been slain the preceding day. The road lay under a ruined cattle enclosure, whence a vicious Rhinoceros, the only tenant, perceiving the difficulty with which we extricated our feet from the deep black mud—of which several pounds attached themselves at every step—resolved to take us at a disadvantage. With a grunt and a whistle, out he sallied accordingly, fully bent upon mischief; and the dampness of the atmosphere causing no less than three out of our four guns to miss fire, the assassin was actually in the middle of us, when a ball from my second barrel fortunately piercing his eye, he fell dead at our feet. Ere many days had elapsed, however, I took my revenge for this act of unprovoked aggression upon an unhappy member of the fraternity that I detected asleep in another of these stone enclosures. The walls, which were extremely extensive, had only one outlet, before which having drawn a stiff thorn branch, and taken post outside, I aroused the slumberer by a shot under the left ear. Never shall I forget his amazement.

* Angl. “Aye, I shall smash the rogue on that very spot!”

† Angl. Gunpowder.

Starting upon his legs, he ran with closed eyes full butt against the opposite wall, and finding the masonry harder than his ugly head, made divers uncouth attempts to scramble over, pawing down the loose stones, and in his bursting rage, kicking them backwards and forwards among the wild tobacco plants. A brisk fire from the gateway deterred him from following up any decided attempt in that quarter, although as he raved round and round the enclosure, and flew from one compartment to another, he eyed it perpetually. Bullet after bullet whacked against his devoted ribs, and it being next to impossible to take any aim, no less than twenty-seven had struck the miserable fellow before he finally gave in—his riddled carcase, as well as the foam which had churned around his chops, having by that time assumed a dye of crimson. Fearful indeed was the uproar that attended the division of his mutilated remains—a large party of famished Baquaina females, whose wardrobes were even more remarkably slender than usual, rushing forth like so many weird witches, and leaving in the course of a few hours nothing to attest the slaughter, saving a pool of blood!



Horns of Rhinoceros Africanus as preserved by Capt. P. Harris



XIX. RHINOCEROS SIMUS. - THE SQUARE NOSED OR WHITE RHINOCEROS.

W. L. G.

PLATE XIX.

RHINOCEROS SIMUS—THE SQUARE-NOSED, OR WHITE RHINOCEROS.

Witte Rhinoster of the Cape Colonists. *Chickore* and *Mohookoo* of the Bechuana and Matabili.

GENERIC CHARACTER.—Six feet six or eight inches high at the shoulder, and above fourteen in extreme length. General contour somewhat elephantine. Body massive and ponderous. Head shapeless and more than three feet long. Muzzle truncated, upwards of eighteen inches in breadth; furnished with two horns placed one behind the other upon the vaulted dome of the nose; the anterior robust and ringed at the base, tapering to a sharp point, and curved to the form of a cock's spur, generally exceeding three feet in length; the upper portion highly polished, and the base often so beset with bristles as to resemble a worn-out brush. Posterior horn a mere excrescence from four to six inches long, sometimes ringed at the base. Ears pointed and approximated, their edges fringed with bristles. A square massive hump rising from the neck. Eye very diminutive and lateral. Legs short and terminating in three toes. Tail about two feet long, compressed and bristled at the extremity. Hide rough, naked, and knotty; extremely thick, arranged in folds and plaits about the neck, and deeply cut with wrinkles over the face. Colour varying, usually dirty brownish white.

Female similar but smaller. Mammaræ two. Very numerous in the interior after passing Kurrichane, and usually gregarious in small parties. Inhabits variously, being found in equal abundance on open grassy plains, and in hilly or thinly wooded regions.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WHITE RHINOCEROS.

"The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre's child.
When with black cliffs the torrents boil,
He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
Till from their foam his dazzled eyes,
Beheld the river demon rise;
The mountain mist took form and limb
Of noontide hag or goblin grim."

ALTHOUGH, during the middle ages, when the western world was immersed in darkness, the remembrance of the Rhinoceros, in common with that of many other quadrupeds familiar to the ancients, had altogether passed away, the records of antiquity establish beyond a doubt that one at least of the double horned African species of this animal must have been well known to the Romans, and even swelled the pomp of triumphal processions and the tide of blood that flowed in the murderous arena.* Not many years have elapsed since the ultra-grotesque figure now introduced—long dead to science—was enrolled by the indefatigable Burchell in the catalogue of extant *Mammalia*. Forming in many respects a ridiculous caricature upon the 'half reasoning Elephant,' and ranking second only to him in point of size among the gigantic Pachydermes,

"Formá prestanti, et cornibus ingens,"

it will hardly fail to be considered a seemly companion for the monsters of Pliny, and might even take its place among the most preposterous creations of Heraldry, or the crudest offspring of a distempered fancy. But unnatural and absurd though its proportions may appear to those unacquainted with the ungainly original, we stake our credit as an artist upon the scrupulous fidelity of the portrait. Many a warm and unstiffened corse was measured with tape and two-foot rule, as *Snip* would overhaul the dimensions of a school-boy that needed a suit of holiday garments; whilst the likeness received its finishing touches from a living subject that, as if with the express design of standing for a 'full length,' politely presented its courtly figure within fifty paces of the waggon.

No quadruped with which naturalists are acquainted would appear to correspond more nearly than the White Rhinoceros with the stubborn *Reem* or Unicorn of Holy Writ. Attaining the height of nearly seven feet at the shoulder, and carrying a cranium not very dissimilar to a nine gallon cask,† he flourishes upon the extremity of his square and truncated snout, a formidable weapon some three and a half feet long, fashioned after the approved model of a cobbler's awl, and capable, when wielded by a warrior so unquestionable in pith and renown, of being made to force its way through any opposition—its companion, although certainly a horn, being nevertheless such a mere excrescence, that at the distance even of a few yards it is barely perceptible. Superadding to the almost impenetrable folds of shagreen wherein nature hath encased his ribs, a goodly outer coat acquired by constant wallowings in swamps and stagnant pools, the gentleman is but rarely to be viewed under his true complexion, which if not quite so *blond* as the prefix to his cognomen might indicate, is yet much fairer than that of his swarthy congener, and often approaches to cream colour. Notwithstanding that this is one of the bulkiest land animals in the creation, the cavity which should contain the brain is not nearly so capacious as in the human species; but in removing the horn with an axe, the brain or something very like it, was found seated in a receptacle beneath—a phenomenon in idiosyncrasy which may possibly account as well for the want of intelligence and piggish obstinacy, as for the extraordinary acuteness of the olfactory endowments.

By what means I know not, the subject of the present chapter has contrived to secure unto himself the reputation of being less bellicose than him whose portrait has already appeared. Never extremely wild, it was yet prudently careful of its person, and entertaining a very becoming respect for fire-arms, was usually ready enough to retire before the bombarding and platoon firing to which it was exposed; but being subject to the same paroxysms of reckless and unprovoked fury, we often found it fully as troublesome as its sable relative. Dull, slow, and wallowing in its ordinary state; daring, swift, and perse-

* "Namque gravem gemino cornu sic extulit ursum,
Jactat ut impositas taurus in astra pilas."—MARTIAL.

† Half a dozen persons can with difficulty raise the entire head of a white Rhinoceros upon a waggon, where it forms almost a load in itself. The horns, adhering to the skin only which covers the vaulted nose, become detached in the course of a few weeks, by the jolting of the vehicle.

vering when excited, it was wont to rush forth with loud snorts and whistles as though it had been the sole object of hostilities, whereas in reality no soul had done more than ken of its presence. Neither, like the black Rhinoceros, did it hesitate upon occasion to defend a pass with determined obstinacy, or to pursue our horses with ludicrous and fruitless industry, evincing a spitfire disposition almost peculiar to the class of which it is no unworthy member. Old Chaucer in his "Nome's Preeste's Tale" has truly enough observed,

"For natu'ly a brent desierth flee
Ere' his contrarie if he may it see;"

and it is certain that even the most ferocious and blood-thirsty of the 'prone and mute creation' when disturbed in the native haunts, unless sore pressed by hunger, are much more frequently disposed to make way for man than to oppose him. The savage natives of Africa who regard neither species with much dread, wage a successful war against them with the assagai; and pitfalls containing pointed stakes, constructed purposely for the accommodation of the unwieldy beasts were of very frequent occurrence. Strewed with huge skulls and bones, they differed from those excavated for the smaller quadrupeds in being dug singly, instead of in groups—of increased dimensions—at the extremity of a narrow path cleared through the bushes and stoutly fenced on either side with thorns; a sharp turn leading so directly upon the hidden sepulchre, that the clumsy monster, if driven furiously down the avenue, can have little chance of evading it—

"But, by the wily African betray'd,
Headless of fate within its gaping jaws,
Expires indignant."

In no region of the globe does there exist so vast a variety of herbivorous quadrupeds, and of such gigantic dimensions as in the southern regions of Africa—the poor and scanty vegetation afforded by her wide plains, rendering it matter of some astonishment how such a goodly host can find subsistence. Notwithstanding that the growth of herbage is there surprisingly rapid, and that animals of the greatest bulk undoubtedly wander over a large extent of country in quest of their daily food, one cannot help surmising that a foraging party comprising a dozen monsters such as this, 'eating grass like an ox,' would in less than a week devour every blade of which the continent south of the Tropic can boast! Gregarious in small groups, so many as six or seven might frequently be seen herding together; and in the vicinago of the Cashan mountains especially, where on our first arrival the country absolutely presented the appearance of a Zoological Garden, or a Travelling Menagerie turned loose, an abstract of the host that daily exhibited themselves would almost exceed belief. Eighty were on one occasion seen during the day's march, and on my way from our encampment in the valley of the Limpopo to a hill only half a mile distant, no fewer than twenty-two were counted, of which we were compelled in self defence to slaughter four.*

It was shortly after we had crossed the Mariqua, that the first white Rhinoceros seen by our party was numbered with the dead. Numerous savages had followed in our train with the design of obtaining a supply of dried flesh, and being already tolerably well laden with prime joints from the Quagga and Sassaybe, amongst a large mixed herd of which animals great havoc had just been committed, it is scarcely possible to comprehend the unqualified delight with which they discovered this new mountain of carrion standing stupidly under the shade of a spreading acacia—its dull heavy eye rivetted upon the earth as in a brown study. Pointing eagerly towards it, their suppressed exclamations of *Chickore! Chickore!* were accompanied by an epicurean smacking of the lips, and by many telegraphic anticipations of the farther work which awaited their already swollen abdomens. Before commencing the attack, I had approached unperceived to within thirty yards of the enemy, and being securely ensconced behind an extremely thick bush overhanging the brink of a precipitous ravine that formed a gulf betwixt us, leisurely planted a two ounce bullet behind his armpit. But this assault had no other immediate effect than to bring my antagonist square to the front, in which position he stood eyeing my place of concealment, and practising various absurd contortions of the features, until, having reloaded, I bestowed two ounces more. Snorting, groaning, and bleeding, away he then scoured—his nose close to the ground, and the whole meat-laden mob at his heels; but it was not until he had made four clumsy charges, and received as many more shots behind the shoulder, besides four times that number of assagais in his crupper and haunches, that he thought proper to deliver up the ghost. In the chase, as in war, is it that the energies of the savage are displayed to the greatest advantage—the metamorphosis from his usual apathy and listless indifference being never more complete or more sudden. At one moment might their shadowy forms be perceived stealing amid the bushes with noiseless tread; and at the next, uttering a yell of savage exultation, and bounding forward with the elasticity of a tiger, they had sheathed their slender weapons in the tough hide of the tortured quarry, and were dexterously retreating before its reckless charge.

At the close of a long and sultry march, we halted late one afternoon upon the steep bank of the Simalakate, near to where the grey arms of a clump of moss-grown mimosas, entwining, admitted through their loose tresses the last long-dancing gleams of departing sunshine. Beneath, the pensive willows laving their silvery garlands in the blue stream, over a bed of tall flowering reeds that sighed and rustled at their feet, forming the most inviting of canopies; and our two surviving dogs

* Many months after these sketches were penned, Mr. Darwin's recently published volume, forming one of the Narrative of a Voyage of H. M. Ship *Beagle*, arrived in India. From it I perceive that Dr. Smith, whilst travelling in latitude 24 degrees (two degrees north of the mountains in question), saw during one day's march with the bullock waggons, and without wandering to any great distance on either side of their track, between one hundred and one hundred and fifty Rhinoceroses, and not fewer than one hundred Giraffes. His party had, on the previous day, killed eight hippopotami in a single pool, and seen many others; and on a subsequent occasion seven lions were counted at the same time, walking on the plain around the encampment of the Expedition.

half blind with thirst, running heedlessly down to the water's edge, one of them was unexpectedly arrested by the gaping jaws of a basking alligator. The other instantly returned with his tail betwixt his legs in dreadful consternation. Then a splash was heard, and bubbles of blood rising a moment afterwards to the rippling surface of the stream, too truly told what had been the fate of his less fortunate companion. The sun was now setting, and whilst we were bewailing in no very amiable humour the loss of our valued four footed ally, an unwieldy white Rhinoceros,

"Sheathed in his iron panoply,"

came sauntering towards the waggons, evidently bent upon no friendly designs. It being considered necessary that prompt counter measures should be adopted, and neither bush nor hollow favouring my advance, I crawled towards the conspirator under cover of the long grass, and arriving within forty yards, discharged a brace of balls into his brawny shoulder.* He started, sought wildly around for some object on which to wreak his vengeance, and—his mouth streaming with blood—actually charged to within a few arms length of my concealment;

"His eye-ball glared, deep breath with hollow tone
Heaved his long flanks and burst with frequent groan."

but by crouching low, I was so fortunate as to elude his observation and his fury; and after he had trotted some hundred yards beyond my ambush, I had the satisfaction of seeing him drop suddenly down dead of his wounds.

During the time that we halted on the Tolaan, our little camp was one dark night thrown into considerable confusion by the visit of an inquisitive fellow that actually stood some time betwixt the waggons ere their sleeping inmates were aroused by the bellowing and tumult among the cattle. On this occasion, the obscurity befriending him, he had it all his own way, and got clear of the scrape without the smallest personal injury; but the following evening, as the sun was sinking below the horizon, rendered bolder by escape, he again imprudently appeared on the opposite bank of the river, within pistol shot of our position, and five bullets being immediately lodged under his short ribs, he retreated in the greatest disorder, and was picked up at no great distance the following morning.

Being one day on the hot trail of a wounded bull Elephant, whose warm life-blood was welling from fifty gaping wounds, we were tracking through a heavy forest, in momentary expectation of closing with the game, when an ill-tempered brute dashed with an astounding grunt out of a bush into the middle of our party, divers of whom were overthrown in their efforts to afford him a wide berth, although fortunately not one was injured. On another occasion, the line of march along the base of the Cashau mountains, leading through a field of tall reed grass, that waved high above the horns of the oxen, a vicious rascal, starting from his slumbers therein, at once made furiously at the leading team, crushing the dry flags before him, and terrifying the cattle by his loud snorting and hostile demonstrations. A well-directed volley cooling his courage, he retired to a suitable bush, and was there finally gathered unto his fathers. Not half an hour afterwards, whilst sitting at breakfast on the river brink, an old lady, accompanied by her calf, three quarters' grown, was perceived to be in undisputed possession of a deserted stone kraal, some two hundred yards distance from our bivouac; and these, as well as another that opposed our progress towards that night's halting ground, were duly added to the list of casualties. With this last, our friend Claas,—at best but a bungling sportsman—had a very unpleasant *rencontre*, and withal, a most hair-breadth escape—his little bandy legs encased in a pair of unyielding leathern trowsers, only barely contriving to carry his diminutive person out of reach of divers most vigorous thrusts and lunges.

A huge monster having one morning come down to drink at a pool hard by our encampment, I advanced behind the screen of a tree at the edge of the bank, and whilst his snout was still immersed in the water, wounded him severely from a distance not exceeding fifty yards. Feeling confident that the ball had pierced the tucks of his elbow, and that his minutes were consequently numbered, I followed the retreating *shamrock-shaped* spoor, in the full expectation of finding him dead.—Certain dark objects attracting observation in a thick bush, Piet and myself peeped in, and beheld no fewer than three snoring giants huddled together like so many pigs in a sty, we could not resist the temptation (who could indeed?) of treating them to a salvo, which produced one of the most alarming rushes that I have ever witnessed. Galloping heavily to a little distance, the insulted trio wheeled about with an air of consummate defiance, and perceiving their despicable assailants standing near the bush, charged impetuously back in concert, compelling us to seek refuge in the den whence they had themselves so recently been expelled, and which in their turn they now closely invested. Piet nimbly ascended a tree which arose through the middle of it, and I, making myself as small as I could, stowed away into the snuggest corner of the lair, the besiegers standing round about, grunting and charging with a vigour that I shall not easily forget, in their repeated efforts to carry our strong-hold at the point of the bayonet. Our artillery being however at length reloaded, we proceeded to batter the most forward and audacious, when his uncouth capers had the desired effect of drawing off his associates—one of them nevertheless

* This little adventure reminds me of an anecdote recounted at Litakoo by our friend Mr. Moffat, which is not more strongly characteristic of the sport than of himself. "For three several days," said that worthy missionary, "had I been vainly endeavouring, in a country almost destitute of game, to obtain food for my starving followers, when a mountain of a Rhinoceros was at last discovered, idly sunning his huge back in the very middle of a wide plain, on which stood neither tree, nor bush, nor in fact any object saving himself. Obtain possession of his carcase we must, or die outright of hunger; so, creeping onward upon my hands and knees, I contrived to steal a march upon the enemy from the rear, and to arrive within certain aim, when, levelling my two ounce Elephant rifle, and drawing the brute's attention by a low whistle, I fired the instant his broad shoulder was presented fairly towards me. Had not this shot fortunately killed my colossal adversary on the spot, as it did, he would unquestionably have slain me; but, on the other hand, we must all have starved had I left him lord of that naked plain; so there was no other course to be pursued!"

twice returning, and with lance in rest, tilting furiously at the bush, as if with the determination, at all risks, of forcing his way in. Heartily rejoiced indeed was I at length to find that they were satisfied, and that we were suffered to effect our escape in a sound skin—a piece of good fortune which at one period of the siege, I confess I saw little grounds to anticipate.

A meddling officious marplot, perpetually in the way, and always prepared for mischief, wheresoever the Rhinoceros was not required, there was he sure to be. But the pair that succeeded in giving me the greatest annoyance during all my wars with the wild beasts, were posted in a defile in the Cashan mountains, by which it was requisite that I should descend, in order to arrive within rifle range of a herd of Roan Antelopes, then a great novelty, that were grazing in a dell beneath. With this anecdote I must close my account of the obnoxious tribe. Owing to the impossibility of discharging a gun without disturbing the gemsbok, it is with no little difficulty that I escaped from the tormenting attentions of the ugly couple, who ran grunting round our party, returning continually, and trotting daintily up in the most bullying manner to within forty or fifty paces, although pelted and abused whenever they displayed their saucy snouts. For so unprovoked an outrage on the part of himself and partner, we had however the satisfaction of calling the belligerent gentleman to a serious account the following morning, when, having afforded us a gratuitous interview in a deep wooded glen, to which he had been driven by a conflagration that had laid bare the greater portion of the mountain side, he thought proper to repeat his attentions, and to his surprise and consternation was received with a general broadside! The simultaneous whizzing of seven tin bullets was followed instantly by cries and squeaks of distress. His side perforated like a cullender, the crest-fallen bravo straightway sounded his retreat, making the loose pebbles spin behind him as his heavy feet clattered less and less audibly over the stony ground. But, alas! the conviction of inferiority had arrived too late. An ominous black vulture swept in all her grand expanse of pinion from the cloudless sky, and wheeling thrice in a diminishing circlet, perched like the genius of desolation upon the bare branch of an aged tree, that extended its scorched and blackened arms over the outlet of the glen. That sign was not to be mistaken. Arriving in the pass, we found the huge bird gloating over the mortal remains of our humbled foe, who, as we had anticipated, was seated stone dead upon his knees and hams, according to the singular fashion in which, when mortally wounded, the Rhinoceros almost invariably makes his exit. Arrested by the clammy hand of Death, the unwieldy monster doubles his stumpy legs under his voluminous carcase, something in the position assumed by an elephant that is about to receive the howdah, and subsiding suddenly in full career

"His glazed eye droops, each flaccid flank extends,
And prone to earth, his ponderous neck descends."



The Horns of White Rhinoceros, as preserved by Capt. Darnley