

otter, and it is plain, that the great ease with which he swims is owing to the great capacity of his body, which makes his specific gravity nearly equal to the water. Besides, he remains a long time under water, and walks at the bottom as well as in the open air; and when he quits it to graze upon land he eats sugar-canes, rushes, millet, rice, roots, &c. of which he consumes great quantities, and does much injury to cultivated lands; but as he is more timid on land than in the water he is very easily driven away, and his legs are so short that he cannot save himself by flight, if he be far from any water. His resource, when in danger, is to plunge into the water, and proceed under it to a great distance before he reappears. He commonly retreats from his pursuers, when hunted, but if wounded he becomes irritated, and faces about with great fury, rushes against the boats, seizes them with his teeth, tears pieces off, and sometimes sinks them. "I have seen, says a traveller,\* an hippopotamus open his mouth, fix one tooth on the gunnel of a boat, and another on the second plank under the keel (that is at least four feet distant), pierce the side through and through, and in this manner sink the boat. I have

\* Dampier, vol. II.