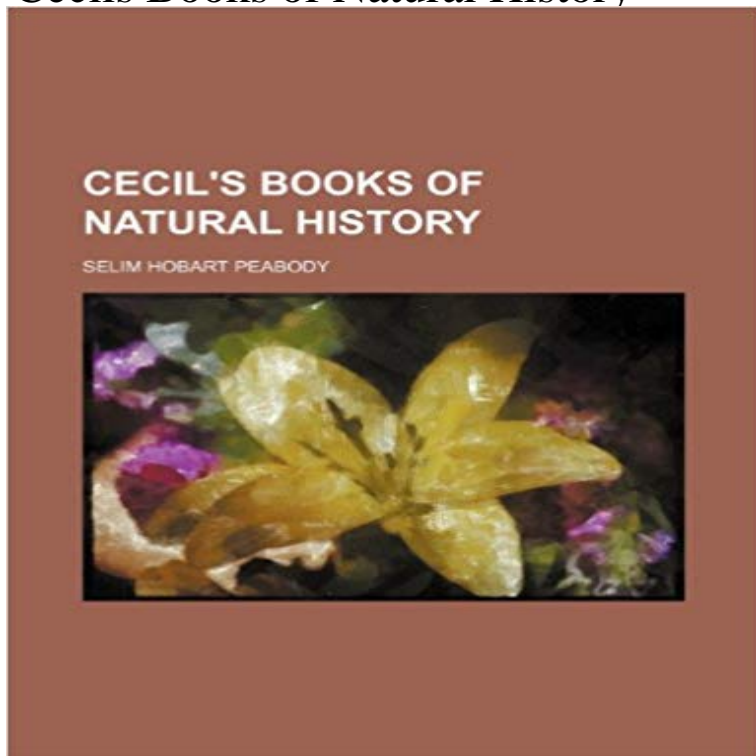


Cecil's Books of Natural History



This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1884. Excerpt: ... where no intruders are allowed to enter. If a trespasser is found, a general fight begins, in which all ages and sexes join in great fury. One traveler, who was not suitably armed, was glad to get upon a rock, which the seals could not climb; there he was kept a prisoner for several hours. The father of the family is very strict in his discipline, and treats his wives quite harshly; if a mother should drop her cub, when carrying it away, the old fellow at once turns upon the culprit, and punishes her fault with a bite. These animals seem very intelligent, and have a great variety of tones, by which they converse with each other, and even express their meaning so distinctly that men understand them. The most strange and fearful of the seal family, though not the largest, is called the walrus, morse, or sea-horse, *Trichechus rosmarus*. The feature peculiar to this animal is a pair of long tusks, of the finest ivory, which project downward from the upper jaw. These are sometimes two feet in length, and weigh upwards of SEALS IN HERDS. 95 ten pounds each. The ivory is so fine and hard that dentists formerly held it in great demand for making artificial teeth. In fight, these huge tusks become dangerous weapons, piercing through the planks of a boat, and even driving away the polar bear. The walrus is sometimes twenty feet long, and as large round as a large ox. It is covered with short brown hair. It feeds upon sea-weed, shell-fish, fish, and small seals. The large herds in which the walrus gather, present a curious sight. When a walrus comes out of the water, it lies down on the shore, and does not care to stir. But the next one comes up, and wants a place. As it is not convenient to climb over the

first one, he butts him along, forcing him to make room, and ...

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