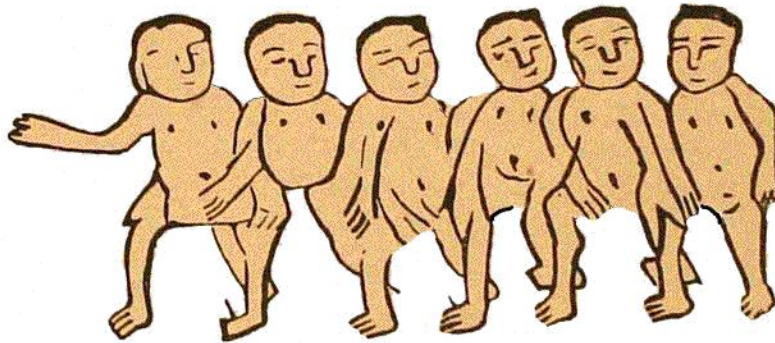


The idea that Rhinoceros horn acted as an antidote to poisons, was ancient in India. Hence, no doubt, arose the belief that the Narwhal ivory, supposed to be that of the Unicorn, which beast was in reality the Rhinoceros, had the same properties. The story no doubt travelled together with that of the animal. Drinking-cups, elaborately carved out of Rhinoceros horn, were used in the East, and were supposed to detect or neutralize poisons poured into them. The forms of these cups have been largely copied by the Chinese, in ivory-white porcelain.

Rhinoceros horn is still used in Chinese medicine, and is to be seen hanging up, together with Antelopes' and other horns, in every druggist's shop in Canton.

Chinese medical prescriptions are excessively long, containing a vast number of ingredients, most of them inactive. It is only lately that English prescriptions have been shortened, and they still sometimes contain a good deal which is super-



“ The Small Men's Country is to the eastward of Tai Tong. The inhabitants are nine inches high.”

fluous. A certain air of mystery is still preserved about them. Herbalists still practise upon the uneducated in London, in a style in some respects not very different from that of the Chinese physician.

A large variety of most amusing mythical animals are figured in Chinese works on natural history. Many of them are familiar and classical, such as the Cyclops; and the Pigmies, who are described as going about arm-in-arm for mutual protection, for fear the birds should mistake them for worms and eat them. The story is evidently identical with that of Homer, where the Pigmies are described fighting with the Cranes, on the shores of Oceanos. In Japanese pictures of the Pigmies, the “little men” (sho jin) are represented as walking arm-in-arm on the seashore, with the cranes hovering over them ready for the attack. The measured height of the Pigmies is usually given in classical accounts, just as in the Chinese.