

Letter Coryndon to Rothschild, 3 September 1893

Natural History Museum, London
Tring Archives
TM 1/1 folder 12

Salisbury, Mashonaland
3rd September 1893

[no addressee]

Sir,

I have great pleasure in reporting the success of my expedition; I have shot and preserved two fine white rhinoceros bulls.

I left camp in the beginning of June and proceeded to the rhinoceros country, & there made a big camp & proceeded to look for spoor and to examine the country thoroughly. It was very evident that there were still one or two more of the animals left and about a week after I had formed camp, I found the two bulls. After a short stalk I got up to them & shot them both, using a double 10 bore Paradox gun - this was about four o'clock in the afternoon, so that the sun had set some time by the time I had gone to camp, got the loads and formed another camp by the dead rhinoceroses; I explain this because by next morning the bodies had sweled up considerably & stiffened so that it was a matter of great difficulty getting the few measurements

[2]

I have; I succeeded besides in getting several photos with a small hand camera and some sketches which will be of considerable use to the taxidermist.

The skinning & preserving of the two rhino at once was a severe & unpleasant piece of work; I used arsenical soap plentifully for the skins together with a good deal of powdered burnt alum, the bones I had carefully cleaned, tied up in bags and labelled.

Upon my arrival in camp I consulted Mr. Duncan, the acting administrator during Dr. Jameson's absence in Victoria, and we decided that the best thing to be done was to have the skins & bones properly & safely packed and stored carefully here; and in view of the difficulty that would be experienced in setting up a rhinoceros skin merely from indistinct photos or sketches, and as I will have to go to England myself when the first of the Matabili campaign is over, I offered Mr Duncan to bring the skins & bones home myself rather than trust them to the usual heavy goods transport.

Besides that, it is not safe to send anything home along the Tuli Road in the present state of affairs, the risk of it being interrupted & destroyed is far too great.

I have to state with regard to the second rhinoceros

[3]

that a hyaena got into my camp one night and succeeded in tearing open a bag in which were tied up the small bones of the two fore legs and the tail; these bones were scattered about in the morning; I was exceedingly careful however in collecting them and do not think that more than three or four of these bones are gone, the hyaena also gnawed away a small shoulder of one of the large knobs on one of the large bones of the fore leg.

Should you be willing to purchase the second rhinoceros I would suggest the price I mentioned in my first letter, viz. £ 500 clear for both rhinoceroses; should you however be unwilling to purchase it I may mention I have several other offers.

The day after tomorrow I leave here for Matabililand with the column and I shall take the first opportunity that offers itself to return to Salisbury, repack the bones and leave for England; I am convinced that from my intimate acquaintance with the white rhinoceros I can be of material service to your taxidermist & shall be happy to give you any help in my power. In the meantime, as my contract with you is complete and as I have handed the rhinoceroses to the Company as instructed, I shall be obliged

[4]

if you would credit me with the sum of £ 250; the matter of the second rhinoceros may I think rest until I arrive in England.

With regard to my expenses, I have drawn up a complete statement showing all expenses in detail and with all receipts attached which I shall show to Mr Duncan and take with me to England.

I ought to have said that I have drawn the sum of £ 50 from Mr Duncan on account.

I regret that I have been unable to procure for you any specimens of butterflies or insects as owing to the Matabili scare my trip was cut very short.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

[sg] R.T. Coryndon

The Hon. Lionel W. Rothschild}

Coyndon

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