

NOTES ON SOMALILAND.

BY CAPTAIN P. Z. COX.

PART. I.

(Read before the Bombay Natural History Society on 16th January, 1900.)

“ Ou y revient toujours ! We come with hearts grown fonder,
 “ Back to the life which each of us loves best.”

Thus did the students in “ The Artist’s Model ” apostrophize their old Studio in the Quartier Latin ; and it was with sentiments very much akin to theirs that I contemplated the pleasant prospect of returning to Somaliland once more.

It is difficult to say exactly what there is about “ The Horn of Africa,” as it has been sometimes called, which seems to endow it with such a peculiar charm for all who have once made its intimate acquaintance. In the first place, no doubt, a man is generally attracted thither by the glowing reports of some friend of the Big Game shooting to be had there, but the mere acquisition of duplicate shikar-trophies is hardly sufficient to account for sportsmen returning there time after time when they might be equally well exploring fresh fields. It is not, I think, that Somaliland possesses any one particular attribute unshared by other localities ; more probably it is the sum-total of its qualities as a country to sojourn in, which makes it so attractive—its perfect climate, once the traveller is quit of the arid maritime plain ; the undeniable comforts of camel transport ; the cheery character of the native ; and last but not least, the infinite variety of animal life and scenery which is ever present to the vision. Kashmir and the Himalayas generally, I always used to think, were hard to beat ; there you have the scenery and the climate, but the eyes may have to rest content with scenery unadulterated for days together ; animal life is not in evidence to the same extent and in the same variety as it is in Somaliland.

The Natural History of the country was, I imagine, originally held to lie within the “ sphere of influence ” of this Journal, partly because, as an offshoot of the Aden Agency, the Protectorate appertained to the Bombay Presidency for administrative purposes, and partly no doubt, as being a favourite hunting resort for sportsmen from India—many of them members of our Society.

The first of these reasons cannot be said to exist any longer, for the Bombay Presidency and the Somali Protectorate have recently severed their anomalous official connection, and the political infant, somewhat forlorn and badly nourished hitherto—the natural result, perhaps, of being put out to nurse at birth, has now thrown off the cloak of her Cinderella childhood and has been called upon by the maternal Government in London to figure among her sister Protectorates of the African Continent as a self-supporting term in our vast Imperial system.

The second, and more sentimental reason, I am happy to say, still exists, and so long as Somaliland survives as a hunting-ground for Indian shikaris, I trust that no apology is needed for presuming that she retains her position within the pale of the Society's interest, at any rate by courtesy, if no longer of right. It is in this belief that I venture to record the following impressions dealing with the present conditions of sport and the experiences of a recent expedition, in the hope that they will not be unwelcome to readers of the Journal who have shot in the Protectorate in days gone by or contemplate doing so in the near future.

To one who had known the country and the people intimately a few years ago, alike in the jungle and at the ports, the return to old haunts and familiar faces had a peculiar interest, and one was naturally quick to notice the changes which the march of time and civilization and the advent of a new régime had wrought in the aspect of affairs generally. Changes there were many, but it is only my province here to touch upon such as have affected the conditions of sport, or the character and habits of the Somali,—more especially the class from which followers for hunting expeditions are usually recruited.

In former days, when the stream of sportsmen was not quite so continuous as it is now, intending visitors used generally to enlist the good offices of the British officials on the coast in arranging for the purchase of camels, or for the disbursement of funds, as required, to the "chef de caravan" deputed to undertake it. This form of assistance was readily accorded in time past, but latterly the ever increasing influx of shikari parties has made even such friendly help too great a tax upon the officials' time, and the Administration has consequently found it necessary to inform inquirers that it can no longer be afforded. Mahomed Hindi, too, the worthy old Hindustani merchant at Berbera, who was always ready to undertake any odd jobs in the way of agency for sportsmen, has recently joined the majority, and at present the traveller who contemplates an expedition and has not a reliable man of his own acquaintance on the spot, must entrust his preliminary *bundobast* to that enterprising Aden firm, Messrs. Cowasjee Dinshaw Brothers, who have recently deputed a Parsee representative to Berbera, especially for buying camels and supplies for sporting expeditions, on commission. This arrangement has its advantages, the chief of them being that funds can be lodged with the Agent, and men paid off in the jungle, or supplies requisitioned from the Coast, by cheque on Berbera; one is thus saved the great inconvenience of carrying to the interior a quantity of cash in rupees. On the other hand the system necessarily entails some increase of expenditure, seeing that the Commission Agent, not being a Somali, or a connoisseur of camels, has to employ a "dital," or middleman, to purchase for him, and thus the commission of each has to be included in the price eventually charged to the sportsman.

The Berbera "Travellers' Bungalow," for into such has the bungalow formerly occupied by the Royal Engineer Officer on Military Works duty, now been converted, is another new departure, and a great boon it is during the trying day or two necessarily spent at the coast, when travellers are fitting out for or returning from expeditions to the interior. On disembarking at Berbera one need no longer be bothered with the pitching of tents or by anxiety for the welfare of the inner man, but can give undivided attention to the thousand and one details that have to be seen to, and that with all the more energy from the comforting knowledge that a spell of punkah and a cool drink are at any moment within reach.

From the lofty point of view of national principle, it is no doubt a gratifying thought that, as Britons, we do endeavour to maintain an open door policy as regards hunting grounds in odd corners of the Empire, and that any accredited sojourner in our territories in search of sport, be he Jew or Gentile, can look for the same measure of courtesy and assistance from the local representatives of Her Majesty as is extended to any of her own subjects. This fact is, I know from experience, by none more appreciated than by the Nimrods of divers nationalities who nowadays flock in such numbers to Somaliland. But from the less exalted and more personal stand-point from which I am writing, that of the sportsman of limited means, to whom money is a more or less serious consideration (and I think I may presume that at all events the majority of my readers fall within this category)—there is a striking reverse to the shield, which cannot but force itself upon our notice. This very open door policy, these praiseworthy efforts to eliminate difficulties and make everything plain-sailing for the traveller in general, have a somewhat discomfoting trend for us in particular. They mean on the one hand the rapid sophistication of the Somali, and on the other the attraction to the country of a class of sportsmen which will, in the inevitable course of things, eventually elbow us out, and oblige us to seek fresh fields for our energies elsewhere.

As for the native, (I mean the more or less enlightened coast Somali) he watches each shake of the local kaleidoscope with an appraising and critical eye; he sees each new creation in turn, the Travellers' Bungalow, the professional Commission Agent, the registered Chef de Caravan, take shape before him, and hugs himself contentedly as he hastens to the sea-shore to welcome to his hunting grounds the latest type of the genus Nimrod, more than ever replete with the almighty dollar, who will pay and ask few questions and be regally lavish with his baksheesh. In his service the son of the soil quickly grows wise and waxes fat; he preserves indeed a lingering regard for the old master with whom he used to hunt on primitive lines, and even uses his name affectionately as a peg to hang his shikar yarns upon; but change him for the more up-to-date article—Allah forbid! why should he? On the contrary, he greets the new-comer joyously, and runs up prices in the

local live-stock market to suit his capacious purse. And after all, one cannot blame the Somali for gathering rosebuds while he may, and, personally, I grudge him his harvest less than any other Oriental within my ken, for he has such gentlemanly ideas of disposing of it. Burton calls him "avaricious"; grasping, he may be, but he has none of the hoarding instincts of the miser. He loves money it is true, but he loves it to spend, and for what it can give him, and, most of all, for the dignity which it brings him. Dignity is everything to a Somali. When he has to a certain extent become sophisticated, and has sown the usual crop of wild oats, all his feelings seem to centre themselves upon this point in his character. His first aim, when he has reaped plentifully from one or two successful expeditions to the interior, is to fit himself out with a dignified position in his small social world; to buy more camels or perhaps a new wife, so that he may fill his quiver and become a power in his clan. When he has improved his status to this extent, and probably augmented his little property by raiding his neighbours, he is ready again to take a spell of service when it offers, but as he gets older he likes to do this in a gentlemanly way and in a suitable position. During this middle phase of his career, *i. e.*, while his family and his flocks are increasing, he turns his spare attentions to religion, and essays to increase his importance by the acquisition of a little odour of sanctity. To this end he picks up a smattering of extracts from the Koran, and prays, with absent-minded glibness, the orthodox five times a day; believing, I think, that his labours in this direction work off any little venial sins that he may have committed during the gleanings of his harvest; and as he spreads his prayer-mat or tells his beads, he strokes his chin with smug complacency, and thanks Allah and the Prophet that he is what he is. If he has no ultimate chance of becoming a registered "Headman" (in which case there is no limit to his ambitions), he retires comparatively early into private life, and reverts to pastoral and predatory pursuits. I think if a number of Somalis of the better type were asked what was the Ultima Thule of their ambitions, nine out of ten would reply that it was to have plenty of live-stock (more especially camels), and a sufficiently numerous male progeny to constitute a "Rer" or clan of fighting-men, bearing, and so perpetuating, its own distinctive name. But I am getting off the track and beginning a disquisition on Somalis in general. We were speaking of the effect of civilization on the coast Somali: let us now take stock of the modified type of sportsman which the same civilization attracts. He is a man who does not see why he should not get his sport and his pleasure with the maximum amount of comfort and the minimum of trouble to himself, and when he finds that by the mere matter of paying accordingly he can almost reduce the pastime to a question of "I touch the button, you do the rest," so much the better; he is willing to pay. How far this latter principle has begun to pervade the sport as well as the photography of to-day, will be believed when I mention

that there was quite recently in Somaliland a shooting party of six or seven guns organized, it would seem, on the "personally-conducted tour" system, by a well-known caterer for the tastes of the travelling public.

The members of the party apparently had no further care than to pack up their carpet-bags and transport themselves and their guns to the rendezvous. At the end of the sea journey they were met by the contractor's representative, who handed to each a ready-made caravan, completely equipped with stores, camels, followers, and shikarries, and "every requisite" for a successful expedition. The several parties were then distributed singly or in couples about the country, and on getting back to the Coast at the end of the period contracted for, they simply returned the balance of their paraphernalia to the contractor's "man on the spot," and took the first ship home with their spoils. They were thus saved a good deal of time and much bother, and I have no doubt paid well and willingly for economy of the one and immunity from the other. All of them, as far as I know, were good sportsmen, and had no other wish than to play the game; and one member of the party, who was on three months' leave from England, told me that he had only approached the contractor a few hours before leaving London and that he could not possibly have carried through the trip at all, in the short time at his disposal, had he been obliged to make his own *bundobast*. As it was, he had had a delightful two months in the country, during which, by dint of hard work and fortune's favours, he had made a most comprehensive little bag, including specimens of nearly all the big game of the country.

Our own ideas on the subject may not be altogether in harmony with those of the participators in the enterprise, but there are two ways of looking at most things, and I have simply mentioned the circumstance as a sign of the times. The idea, however, opens up a vista of further possibilities in the same direction, and for us I think it points the moral that when a happy hunting ground has reached a stage in its existence when the enterprising but vandal attention of the Tourist Agent is directed to it, it is a hint to us to think of turning our energies and attentions elsewhere.

But let not my croaking dishearten any reader who may be planning an expedition to Somaliland in the near future. There is yet time before the débacle, and there is still plenty of game, in spite of reports to the contrary—but I would urge him to go soon. Large bags of lions cannot be made as of old, I admit, but they are by no means scarce, and, as regards other game there seems little diminution; consequently there is no reason why any sportsman, who does not aim at making a very long bag, should not pick up specimens of everything he wants in the way of big game during three or four months spent in the country. Only, if he would save himself time and expense, let him realize the importance of making his arrangements and

getting his camels collected some weeks beforehand, in order that at the last minute he may not be at the mercy of "rings" in the local market.

My present sojourn in the country was undertaken under unusually pleasant auspices. H. H. The Gaikwar of Baroda had commissioned an old friend of mine, Dr. Donaldson-Smith, a traveller well known to European Geographers for an excellent piece of exploration which he carried out in Central Africa some four years ago, to lead an expedition to Somaliland for the purpose of making collections in various branches of natural history for the new State Museum at Baroda, in which the Maharajah takes a lively and liberal interest. I was fortunate enough to obtain permission to take leave and accompany the expedition, and my companion and I accordingly arranged to rendezvous at Aden, he starting from London and I from India. Things did not open very well for me, as on arrival at Aden, a few days too early for the tryst, I was landed unexpectedly with two unfortunate fellow-travellers of the gentler sex, one of them the partner of my joys and sorrows, on the quarantine island in the harbour. Only those who have partaken of the hospitality of Flint Island can form any idea of what it is like. Short commons on occasion I rather welcome, it corrects the system and reduces the weight. Absolute discomfort, when there is any reason for it, I can put up with; but close confinement under the most unpleasant conditions, and semi-starvation within hail of plenty, were, I admit, hard to bear with becoming composure, and must have been infinitely more so to my fellow-sufferers. However, the dreary days of quarantine came to an end at last, and in the meanwhile my shooting companion, accompanied by a taxidermist, had arrived from England; but so also had six gallant officers, likewise bound for Somaliland and burning to get under way, making nine of us all told. The presence of so many sportsmen almost reminded me of the rush for ground in Kashmir at the beginning of the season, and had I been one of that other six I might have been somewhat exercised thereby, but with the comforting knowledge that we had plenty of time before us, and that there was no need to compete for ground with anybody, we took things leisurely and let them get ahead, for it was no part of our present plans to make a large bag of big game in general or one species in particular. What we contemplated was to visit the habitat of each species in turn, according as season or circumstances made convenient, and while obtaining one or two good specimens of each, to exploit the locality generally for birds, butterflies, *et hoc genus omne*, moving on when additions to the collection began to get too few and far between.

I do not propose to give any continuous narrative of our progress, the mere itinerary of such an expedition would differ little from a dozen others and would have no interest for the general reader, but I will chronicle such incidents and unscientific natural history notes as may seem worth recording under the head of the species to which they refer,

THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT.

(Elephas africanus.)

The shooting of elephants within the circumscribed area known as the "Aden Reserve" is now absolutely prohibited, and as regards the rest of the Protectorate, for some time past the imposition of heavy dues on ivory brought out of it has served in some measure to check their extirpation, but the stable door was not really shut until the horse had been stolen,—sufficient steps were not taken in the first instance to put a stop to the indiscriminate and unsportsmanlike slaughter of them that for some time went on.

Elephants are wanderers at all times, and more than usually so in Somaliland, where food and water are scarce, and where they have to go long distances in search of both one and the other; and in the course of these wanderings there are still one or two herds, I am glad to say, which ring the changes at certain well-known water-holes in the Protectorate. I fear, however, that the Anglo-Abyssinian Demarcation Treaty has, indirectly, numbered their days, and that in another five years there will not be an elephant on this side of the Shebeyli River. Some of my readers may be aware that the boundary laid down by that agreement transferred from the British to the Abyssinian sphere a large slice of the Gadabursi country in the S.-W. corner of the Protectorate, including the tract known by Somalis as "The Barrowa." This Harrowa is a long shallow valley, heavily forest clad, running from west to east and surrounded by hills and broken highlands—an ideal sanctuary for game, and as such all the elephants in the country seemed to look upon it, either when fleeing from the snare of the hunter or when driven back by the approaching heat and consequent scarcity of food and water, from their wanderings towards the Coast. The outskirts of this valley are frequented by the villages of Ughaz Nur, an old Sultan of the Gadabursi tribe, who gave the Coast Administration in days gone by a good deal of anxiety owing to his intrigues with the Abyssinians, whose bands of marauding soldiery he was supposed to pass surreptitiously over the border, and allow to levy blackmail upon his weaker brethren, or to shoot down elephants. While his country was under our influence, however, it was possible, to some extent, to check the wholesale slaughter of these grand brutes by putting moral pressure upon him, and by seeing that rifles did not get into his hands, but now that, by the arrangement of 1897 above mentioned, both he and his country have passed under the sway of the Lion of Judah, the Harrowa valley must surely soon cease to be the blessed retreat to the Somali elephant that it has been in the past. In fact, when in the vicinity, at Jifa Medir, a few weeks ago, I heard that the same old Chief's son, Aysa (to whom I remember I took a great fancy when he piloted myself and a friend during a short shooting trip in the Harrowa some five years ago, and whose perfect knowledge of the jungles made him an invaluable as he was a pleasant companion), had obtained through the Abyssinians a large bore elephant gun, of French manufacture; and that

accompanied by a posse of Abyssinian sepoy, he spends his days shooting down the elephants for their scanty ivory. I did come across one herd on our present expedition, when on a short excursion by myself to the Marar Prairie, where I was looking for Hartebeest. They were on their way southwards from the water-holes of Gebili, in the Protectorate, which they had, I heard, been frequenting for some time past. There was no tusker among them, so they were spared any attentions from me, but the Somalis, who used the same water-holes (which at that dry season were frequented by the flocks of villages for 20 miles round), said that when this herd came to water they were absolutely defiant of human beings, and that natives had to retire and wait till it pleased the elephants to depart, as nothing would move them till they had leisurely finished their "wash and brush up." Poor beasts! long may they maintain their present independent attitude and immunity from persecution.

THE RHINOCEROS.

(*Rhinoceros bicornis*.)

Rhino are still fairly plentiful as you get well into the Haud—the waterless belt running right across the Protectorate from west to east. I even heard of one or two stray beasts near Burao, at the entrance to the Dolbahanta country, but I think that is the extreme limit of their distribution towards the N, and E. I have never heard of one in the Reserve, and they do not seem to cross the Haud northwards, but become more plentiful as you get further south.

In the case of the elephant his ivory is his ruin, and a fine pair of tusks must ever be a coveted prize to sportsman and savage alike, but the Rhino, fortunately for him, is not so valuably furnished, and thus enjoys comparative immunity from persecution. The non-professional hunter should ordinarily be content with two or three good specimens, and the Somali does not pay him much attention. True, he likes the skin for making whips and shields, but he does not appreciate him as an article of food, and I do not think the destruction under the former head amounts to anything very considerable, so that in Somaliand at all events the Rhino should survive long after the elephant has become extinct.

As an item in the list of big game he sometimes affords sufficient excitement, as he habitually charges when wounded, and not infrequently when unwounded and entirely without provocation; but on the whole he would appear to be much less formidable than the elephant, and more easily brought to bag, if bullets be at all properly placed. On this subject I am going to propound a mild heresy. Most authorities recommend the shoulder shot, or the lung shot, as being the most efficacious for the Rhino, and this is what one would naturally expect; but for quickly putting one of the tribe out of action, try the centre of the belly, the lower down the better. I should not presume to suggest the experiment from my own *limited*

acquaintance with the animal ; but Dr. Donaldson-Smith gave me the hint as the result of very extended experience with troublesome Rhinos under divers conditions, and though I was sceptical on the subject at first, my doubts were ere long removed by a somewhat disastrous encounter ; the manner of which seems worth recording, whether as demonstrating what to avoid in one or two details incidental to the quest of *Rhinoceros bicornis* or as furnishing a good example of the red-letter days which occasionally, and generally so unexpectedly, figure in the log-book of a hunting-trip such as ours. The events of the two days in question were not entirely furnished by the Rhino, but I may as well give the whole of them : —

On the 8th March, I had tracked up a pair of lions and eventually bagged one of them. After taking off the skin I left the carcass of the slain where it fell, and that night tied up a bait hard by, in the shape of an old broken-down camel, in case the male should haply return to see what had become of his mate.

March 9. Donaldson-Smith and I were up with the lark, and went down to see if the camel which we left out last night had been killed. Yes, good luck to it, it had ; not much, however, of the carcass had been eaten, only one hind-quarter ; but on the other hand the remains of my lioness of yesterday had been taken away, and from a cursory examination of the tracks round the kill more than one lion seemed to have been at work. I had had my "day out" yesterday, so we had arranged before starting out that D. S. should take the shot to-day, if we came up with a lion together, and we now proceeded to take up the track of the animal that had dragged the lioness's carcass away, D. S. taking his gun-bearer, Abdi, with him, and I my Midgan boy Mahomed. The track led us through patches of high sun-bleached grass with intervals of bare, sandy ground between, and an occasional mimosa bush, and we had not gone more than half a mile when Mahomed suddenly stopped and pointed ahead, and at the same moment I saw the lion peering at us over a high tussock of grass, with his head and left shoulder exposed, about 50 yards away. I was on the left of the Midgan and could have had an easy shot, but Donaldson-Smith could not see him distinctly from where he was, and had to shuffle behind Mahomed, who was between us, towards me, before he could get a clear view of him. He had just done so, and was raising his rifle to fire, when the Midgan, who had hitherto remained in a squatting position, for some unaccountable reason stood up right in front of him, obliging him to bring the rifle down again ; and at the same instant the lion whisked round and vanished like magic in the grass. We were both too disgusted for words. On going up to the spot where we had seen him, we found no sign of the carcass of my lioness, but by following up the original trail we soon discovered it under a dense bush among the high grass, about 100 yards away. The lion had evidently heard us and had left his gruesome meal to come and see who the

intruders were. We continued to track for some way but his spoor showed that he was going at a canter and we came to the conclusion that having been twice disturbed by human beings within the last 24 hours he would in all probability go for a long distance, especially as the day was yet young and the weather cool ; so we decided to try our luck with a fresh lion, and after delaying a few minutes to extract the "lucky bones" (which I forgot yesterday) from the lioness's carcase, we returned to the kill, intending to pick up one of the other tracks. There was such a maze of footprints round the dead camel that we took some time to unravel it, but in the end we found to our chagrin that all the tracks had been made by the same lion, who must have prowled round and round for some hours before he finally hardened his heart and tackled the camel. Judging from the direction from which he had come, the size of his tracks, and his appearance, I had no doubt that he was the mate of the lioness I shot yesterday, returned to make a cannibal meal off the carcase of his late consort, whose flesh he evidently found more to his taste than that of the emaciated camel that he had first killed. So much of the latter remained that we thought the lion would in all probability return again to-night for another repast, and so turned our attentions to a fresh Rhino track which we had come across while tracing back the spoor of the lion ; but after following it a short distance, D. S., who was out for the first time, after being laid up for a week with a strained back, began to feel that he had had enough, and was obliged to return to camp, leaving me to try my luck with the Rhino. I took his gun-bearer Abdi and my Midgan boy with me, and told my Arab camelman to follow our tracks with my riding camel, keeping a quarter-of-a-mile or so behind. It was not long before I came on fresh droppings, and a few minutes later it became obvious that the Rhino had winded us for he turned down wind, and the tracks showed that he was going at a trot. Soon after 11 o'clock, Abdi being then on the track, we heard the cracking of a twig close by, and pulled up to listen, and a moment later I caught sight of a swaying, yellow mass, showing above a clump of high grass, beneath the shade of a low overhanging mimosa bush, about 20 yards ahead. It was evidently the upper half of the Rhino's back, yellow with the sandy soil in which he had been rolling, and I thought I could make him out, standing almost facing me, with his near shoulder exposed, and his head, which I could not see, turned away to his right. Presuming that he must have seen and heard us, as we had him, I aimed at the point of the shoulder and fired. There was a violent commotion in the grass ; he seemed to be trying to spin round, and I gave him the other barrel in much the same place, thinking that if he charged I could take my "Paradox" from Abdi, who was by my side ; but when I turned to do so, there was no Abdi ; he had done the vanishing trick, and at the same moment out burst the Rhino, puffing like a steam-engine, and coming stright for me. There was no time to reload,

and I felt that I was in for "beans" of sorts, but providentially the beast changed his mind at the last moment, swerved off to the right of me, and disappeared in the grass. I felt positive about my first shot and fairly so about my second, and so did not think he would go far, but it was impossible to see a dozen yards ahead owing to the height of the grass, and the only thing to be done, therefore, was to pick up the track again. I accordingly proceeded to collect the rest of my party and found the two of them hiding behind a big tussock of grass and endeavouring to squeeze themselves into mother earth, like a couple of wounded quail. When we had first come in view of the Rhino, the boy Mahomed was behind me and had no weapon with him, so that he had every right to make himself scarce, but I thought Abdi might have waited to give me the "Paradox," and altogether I was not in the best of tempers, but after giving him a piece of my mind, in terms more forcible than polite, I hastened to resume the trail. But, alas, there was not a vestige of blood, and the beast had gone clean away. It was two mortal hours before we got in touch again, and during that time my boys were continually impressing on me that there was no blood and that we should never see the Rhino again: but having no doubt whatever in my own mind about his being wounded, these insinuations only served to nettle me and put me on my mettle, and made me the more determined not to stop without another interview; and so we trudged silently along. It was 2 o'clock before we came up with him again, Mahomed Midgan being on the trail at the time and I close on his heels, in the same heavy grass and bush jungle as before. There had been no sign to show that we were getting near and the trail apparently went straight forward, when, as we came up level with a small gap in the grass, to the left of our general direction, we suddenly saw the Rhino standing there, waiting for us. He charged out instantly, passing within a few feet of me and making for the Midgan, who on seeing him had darted away to the right. Neglecting, from force of habit, I think, my comrade's recent counsel about the vulnerability of the Rhino's belly, I gave the latter a bullet in the shoulder as he passed me, and this caused him to pull up and turn his attention to me, but he had just given me time to dodge behind a friendly sapling, and evidently lost sight of me, for he began tearing round in circles, as if he knew not whom to devour. While employed in these gyrations he raised such clouds of dust from the loose red loamy soil under foot, that it was impossible to see him at all distinctly, but during one lucid moment I did manage to make him out dimly and got in another shot; and then the devil must have possessed me, for I again aimed at the shoulder. This time he did stumble, but was up again in a moment, and I lost sight of him in a whirlwind of blinding dust. Suddenly there was a report from Mahomed's direction, and a moment later I heard the Rhino rattle past through the grass behind me, in the direction from which

we had come, but I could see nothing. The Midgan had been carrying my Paradox gun loaded, and presuming that he had fired it in self-defence, I thought no more about it, and on hearing the beast pass me, jumped up and started in pursuit. After going some 200 yards, I met Abdi and my camel man just emerging from cover, and they told me that the Rhino had broken back in their direction, and had fallen to his knees as he passed, but that he had quickly recovered himself and gone on again. I fully expected therefore to find him *hors de combat* at no great distance, and we were just beginning to pick up his track when we heard loud groans coming from behind us, and then I bethought me of Mahomed Midgan and the shot I had heard. We ran back as quickly as we could in the direction from which the sounds were coming, and there we found the boy lying on the ground with a heavy mimosa bush on the top of him, groaning and looking very sorry for himself. He was soon extricated from the thorns, and on further examination I found that little or no damage was done; he was bruised and scratched, and evidently a good deal shaken, but happily no bones were broken. According to his story, when he first saw the Rhino and darted aside to my right, he had reached but flimsy cover, and after my second shot he was endeavouring to better himself by making for a large mimosa bush close by, when the brute caught sight of him and came for him instantly. He had just reached the bush when he was overtaken, and the Rhino brought him and the mimosa over together and at the same moment the "Paradox," which he was carrying on his shoulder, was knocked up into the air by the animal's horn and fell to the ground beside him. From this moment the boy was saved any further attentions from his assailant, who now proceeded to pound the gun with his feet, or horn, eventually exploding one barrel. Such was the boy's version of what had happened. On picking up the gun out of the sand, I found with infinite disgust that it was completely out of action. The barrels had been first bent almost double, close to the fore end; one cartridge had afterwards been discharged, and the bullet had torn open the barrel at the bend. But for this, I might somehow have straightened the barrels and used the gun for shot, but, as it is, it is absolutely useless—a good gun which I could ill spare. However, it was no time for sad reflections. A few minutes later I had Mahomed safely mounted upon my riding camel, and telling the camel-syce to bring him along in our wake, I and Abdi hurried after the Rhino.

The travelling was now easy enough: there was plenty of blood, both on the track and high up on the grass, and when we got to a little clear ground we found that his off shoulder must be broken, as he was going on three legs and dragging the other. One would hardly have expected him to go far in this condition, but nevertheless on he went, mile after mile, hour after hour, and showed no signs of stopping. At 4 o'clock we were many miles from camp, and all more or less beat, having been going hard since the early morning; so I thought it best to knock off for the day. Accordingly we made

tracks for home, getting in just before dark, tired and hungry. When I told Donaldson-Smith the events of the day, he at once remarked, "Why didn't you aim for the belly? If you had only done that at the second meeting, you would have had no more trouble." I cursed myself for my perversity, and promising to take his advice on the morrow, I turned in early, after giving orders for two camels to be ready at daybreak with a couple of days' food for myself and four men. Next morning I was up betimes, and started off with my little lot to the place where we had left off tracking the night before, Donaldson-Smith lending me his '577, taking 7 drams, which he guarantees to be a "rhino stopper," and begging me to take his advice and aim for the middle of the belly, low down. The sun's hateful majesty was very much in evidence yesterday, and I expect touched me up, as I had a bad head on waking up, and so determined to ride my camel until the tracks became fresh. I took Mahomed Midgan up behind me. He was very stiff after his shaking of yesterday, too much so to walk with us; but he asked to be allowed to accompany me on the camel, so as to be in at the finish, a request which I thought showed very proper feeling! I also took his dog along with me thinking he might be of use. It was marvellous how the Rhino had plodded on. He had come to a standstill once or twice during the night, but had never lain down, and was still going. One or two checks in the high grass brought us to noon. It was then about time to give the baggage camels a rest, as they had been out 5 hours and it was very hot and sultry, so I halted them for an hour, and had forty winks myself, for which I felt much the better, as it took away my head trouble which had been very bad all the morning. About 1-30 we got on the trail again. It soon led us into very heavy cover, high grass with clumps of tangled creeper thicket, in which it was impossible to see a dozen yards ahead—just the place in fact for a wounded Rhino to take sanctuary in. It was very difficult to keep the track, or move at all quietly, but Abdi was in form to-day, and we struggled along with as little crashing of branches as possible. The dog Jenaada too came in useful in this labyrinth; he did not help us with the tracking, but he kept running on ahead and returning to us, and I thought he would very likely give us warning when we were coming to close quarters. We had been going thus for about an hour, when a violent sneeze hard by told us that our friend was wide awake and had winded us. We could see nothing on account of the dense cover, and in a moment all was still again, but Jenaada heard the sound too, and ran off enquiringly to our left front to see what it was. He soon returned, however, and from the direction to which he faced, and the way he sniffed the air, we had little doubt that the Rhino had broken back. We could not follow directly as it was impossible to get through the network of undergrowth that intervened, so I had to go back about 100 yards on our track, and then work round through a little clearing to my right, hoping thus to get a view. As a matter of

fact I met the beast face to face, and he instantly put his head down and came for me, but a shot from the '577 as he came on, made him swerve off to my left, and then, remembering at last my comrade's advice, I let him have the left barrel in the belly, as he presented his broadside. This seemed to crumple him up altogether; he slowed down at once, stopped after a few yards, stood quivering for a moment, and then sank on his knees and in a minute was *hors de combat*. On my going up to my gallant quarry, the reason for all the trouble he had given was apparent. The two shots which I had fired at our first meeting (when, as I say, I felt positive I was shooting at the point of his near shoulder) were nicely placed in the right buttock! The second two bullets, fired at our second interview, when the Midgan was hurt, were both fairly in shoulder, but a little too far forward. The shoulderblade was shattered to pieces, but in spite of that he had travelled at least 15 miles, and had died game at the end of it. The caravan, which was not far off, came up on hearing my shots, and we were soon all at work on the carcase. I only wanted the head, but the boys were bent on taking slabs of skin for whips and shields, so that it was 5 p.m. by the time we had finished—too late to get back to headquarters. Moreover, I thought the carcase might have feline visitors during the night, so we made a small zereba close by, and spent the night *sub jove*.

Thus ended a sufficiently exciting tussle with a plucky foe, and I gathered one or two useful hints from it. First and foremost—always keep your second barrel in reserve till you see whether you are to expect a charge or not, and secondly—if you can get him broadside, the belly shot is more immediately effective than the shoulder, unless of course you are using a very powerful rifle; the reason probably being that in this part of the Rhino's anatomy there is such a number of nerves and blood-vessels that a bullet planted therein causes him a violent shock to the system.

On his 16 months' journey to Lake Rudolph, a few years ago, Dr. Donaldson-Smith found Rhino in many places a perfect pest. They would frequently rush out at members of his caravan, walking innocently along a jungle path, and would even charge through the line of camels; a camel on one occasion, too stupid or too lethargic to get out of the way, being disembowelled by one. Several of his retainers too were more or less damaged by them during the expedition; but it seems difficult for a Rhino to use the point of his horn with good effect against a fallen man, and the injuries among his party were invariably limited to a severe bruising and shaking. The Doctor on these occasions found that the belly shot never failed to bring up a Rhino, and his encounters with the species became of such frequent occurrence that familiarity at length bred contempt, and when the trusty '577 was at hand, a charging Rhino became a matter of little concern—rather of pleasurable excitement.

(*To be continued.*)