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INCIDENTS OF FOREIGN SPORT AND TRAVEL

BY

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OFFICER," "A LADY'S CAPTIVITY AMONGST THE NAGAS," ETC., ETC.

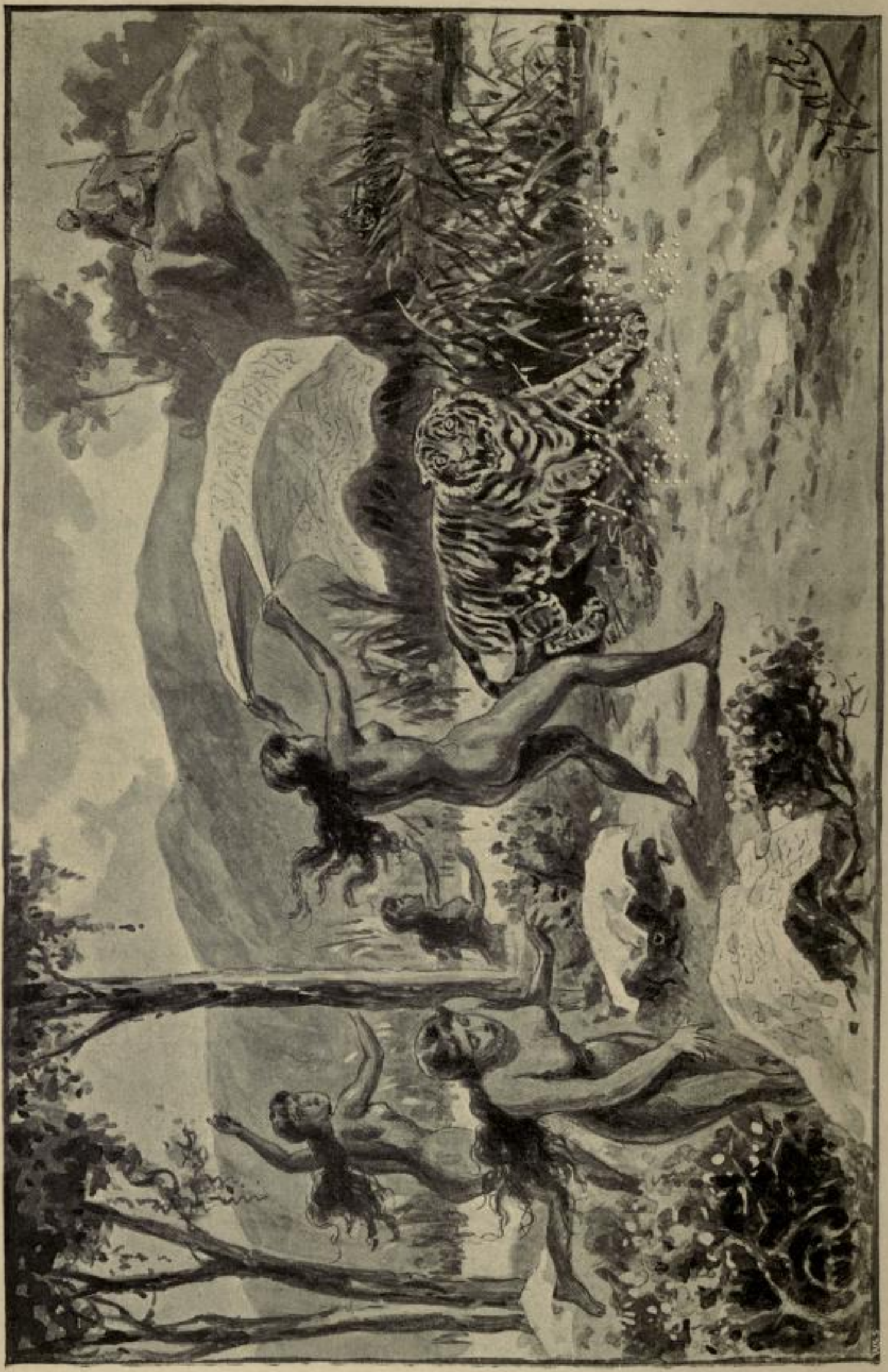
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CHAPTER II.

RHINOCEROS SHOOTING (ASIATIC).

IT is a current belief, that the skin of a rhinoceros will resist an ordinary bullet—that it is all but impervious. This is nonsense. A spherical ball out of a 12 smooth bore, driven by five drachms of black powder, if rightly placed, will kill a rhinoceros far easier than it would a buffalo; for though the skin is very thick, it is easily penetrated. I have seen a man of ordinary strength drive a “shikar” knife up to the hilt behind the shoulder of a prostrate rhinoceros. But still it is better to use heavy weapons, with large charges and hardened bullets; not on account of the denseness of the cuticle, but because the missile has to pass through an immense quantity of flesh, well covered with muscle, before it can reach a vital part. Jerdon (the naturalist) recommends steel-tipped bullets and shells. The former are of course very well adapted for slaying all pachyderms, but the latter are simply useless. I tried many kinds, notably Forsyth’s, but I never succeeded in killing a rhinoceros with one, though I fired with them at over thirty. I found the belted bullets from my two grooved rifles hardened with a mixture of quicksilver, very deadly. Shooting

downwards, I once put a ball right through a charging beast; it entered near the spine and made its exit through the abdomen. I have shot two rhinoceros right and left—killing them with one ball each—but they were very close and inclined to fight, so gave easy shots. Most elephants dread these animals very much, and few will go close to them. If a ball be placed in the centre of the shield over the shoulder, rather low down, it penetrates the heart. If behind the shoulder, the lungs are perforated, and the animal subsides in a few moments. When thus shot it runs a little way, then falls down, and in its dying moments makes a peculiar noise which can be heard a long way off, and once heard can never be forgotten. In hostilities, Indian rhinoceros do not use the horn, but their tusks, with which they can inflict fearful gashes. In Burma, the most common rhinoceros is the double horned, but two other species exist, yet are seldom come across, as they inhabit morasses that may be termed quagmires, over which a loaded elephant cannot travel: In Assam, we have but two kinds of this genus, the larger and the lesser. They are exceedingly plentiful in the Terai, at the foot of the Bhootan and Himalaya ranges, and are also found in the swamps along the base of the Cossyah and Garrow Hills. Throughout the province there are favourite localities, as well as in many of the "churs" (islands) of the Brahmapootra river. The larger Asiatic rhinoceros has only one horn, seldom eighteen inches long, generally a good deal less. This horn is said to be but a conglomeration of hairs, and is liable to be detached through either injury or disease, when another grows in its place.

The skin, as stated, is very thick, with a deep fold at the setting on of the head, another being behind the shoulder, and a third in front of the thighs. Two large incisors are in each jaw, with two smaller intermediate ones below, and two still smaller outside the upper incisors, the last are not always present. The general colour is dusky black. The dimensions of one I bagged were as follows: extreme length of body, twelve and a half feet; tail, two feet; height, six feet two inches; horn, fourteen inches. These animals delight in swamps and mud holes, and even in running streams, and "lie up" in them during the heat of the day. The lesser rhinoceros is found in the Soonderbunds, near Calcutta, and in all suitable localities on the left bank of the Brahmapootra river. I never came across it on the right bank, but doubtless it exists there too, as all these beasts wander about a good deal in search of food. In appearance it somewhat resembles the larger, but the folds are not so pronounced, and the shields have often tubercles on them, and it is said it is attracted by fire. The Burmese assert it eats it! As a rule the rhinoceros is very inoffensive. It lives in such remote localities, that none but a hunter thinks of intruding upon its habitat, but if there be any grain grown within a few miles of their outlying haunts, it will march long distances during a night to feed upon it. To get these animals in fairly open ground, the sportsman must be in their preserves at daybreak, for the beasts soon retire into impenetrable forests where there are mudholes, and in them takes their siestas. It is naturally a timid animal, more anxious to escape than fight, is very

easily killed, but if pushed hard or driven into a corner it turns to bay and if it can close, it will leave its marks for time and a day. Although the horns are contemptible as trophies, the native Assamese and Mawarries prize them greatly, and will give as much as Rs.45 a seer (2 lbs.) for them. They are also greatly prized by the Chinese. Two officers, Cock (afterwards killed in the Naga campaign) and Bunbury, just before I arrived at Gowhatty, made a good bag of these beasts, and by the sale of the horns more than repaid all their expenses. They live in apparent harmony with wild elephants, and I have seen them lying down in the same mudhole with a buffalo!

Many castes of Brahmins, Hindoos, and Mawarries will not touch flesh of any kind, living on grain and vegetables alone, but they make an exception in favour of the flesh of the pachyderm I am describing. They have often asked me to dry the tongue for them. This they pulverise, bottle it, and take a pinch or two when ill. The Assamese and bigoted Hindoos follow a sportsman about like vultures, and as soon as a rhinoceros is dead they rush upon it, fight for the tit-bits, and do not leave even a piece of the skin. This they cut into long strips, roast it over embers, and eat it as we do the "crackling" of a pig. Considering the habits of the beast, for it deposits its ordure always on the same spot until a considerable mound is formed, and the value put on the flesh and horns by the natives, I am surprised there are any left alive. If native shikaries dug a pit, and sat near one of these places of deposit, they could easily shoot the animal on its nightly visits. It was in this way that I

bagged the only rhinoceros I ever killed in Burma. But in Assam I killed a great many off elephants and a few on foot.

Jerdon says the height of the lesser rhinoceros is only from three to three-and-a-half feet, but I have killed them at least a foot higher. He was a very clever naturalist, but most obstinate, and occasionally quite wrong as to facts. Now, I mentioned to him that the Tucktoo, a Gecko I had heard every day and night of my life in Burma for thirteen years, was in existence in Assam. He flatly contradicted me. So the very next time I went to Burneyhat, the first stage *en route* to Shillong, where I often heard them uttering their cries, I got the natives to catch one for me. This they did reluctantly, for they believe them to be poisonous—but what will not a wretched Assamese do for a rupee or even a few annas!—so I took it to Jerdon, who was staying with me in Gowhatty. Again I told him that amongst many bears I had killed in the province, one had been the ordinary *Ursus labiatus*. He would have it that that was impossible, but as the beast had been killed only a short time before, and I had its skin, with the skull attached so took it to him. Now the *U. labiatus* has only four incisors in the upper jaw, whilst the *Ursus tibetanus* has six. How that individual beast found its way to the foot of the Himalayas, where I shot it, I don't know, for the ordinary bear of the country is *Ursus tibetanus*, though why so-called would be a puzzle to most sportsmen, as it is not found in Thibet at all!

General Sir Charles Reid, G.C.B., of Delhi fame, when shooting at Loqua Ghat with me, killed two

rhinoceros in one day with one ball each, and those bullets were twenty to the pound in calibre, yet the next day he lost a large rhinoceros after repeated discharges at close quarters! Truly there is great luck in shooting! One day a man will bag all he fires at; the next day, under equally favourable circumstances, he will not kill a single thing.

The two-horned rhinoceros's habitat extends from Chittagong southwards, and it is also found in Sumatra, Java and some of the other large islands. Its skin is as smooth as a buffalo's, but in habits and customs it much resembles the other species of its family. A curious variety of this rhinoceros was secured by Captain Hood, and is now, I believe, in the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park. Its ears, if I remember right, were somewhat tessellated, and I believe there is another variety called the hairy rhinoceros. I waged war against these pachyderms, why, I don't know—for I was not fond enough of the ungrateful Assamese to provide them with such choice food—but I can answer for it, that of the forty-seven or forty-eight which I killed, not an ounce of flesh was thrown away. I, however, lost a number of wounded. Whenever I was out shooting in the "dooars," I was followed secretly by "shikaries," who retrieved my wounded beasts, sold the flesh to the natives and appropriated the horns. In this way I was robbed of a magnificent one (for Assam), fully eighteen inches long and weighing three seers or more. I should have known nothing of this larceny but that two men quarrelled about the plunder, and then one went post haste to Burpettah and reported that he and his partner had

found a rhinoceros I had shot, with the above horn, which from its length was a rarity. The Commissioner sent "peelers" to have the man apprehended, but he bolted across the frontier. The late Major Cock, finding the Assamese so eager to buy the mere stumps which most of the rhinoceros he had shot were adorned with, seeing in Calcutta a lot of African rhinoceros horns for sale, several nearly three feet in length, for a trifling sum, bought the whole lot, and sent them to a tea planter to dispose of, but the Assamese would not credit that they were genuine, so would have none of them. What became of them eventually I do not know, but I often saw them lying about in the tea house in Gowhatty. Sometimes a sportsman slays a cow rhinoceros with a calf. When such happens, by all means send for the nets which every village in Assam possesses for catching wild animals—including the immensely powerful wild buffalo—and you will have no great difficulty in securing the youngster. In my day Jamrach's agent would give from Rs.1000 to Rs.1200 apiece for them. I had two, and was offered Rs.2000 for the brace, delivered in Calcutta or Rs.1600, delivery in Gowhatty, so I chose the latter offer, but discovered afterwards that if I had stuck out, I should have got a good deal more.

My first experiences of rhinoceros in Assam were at Loqua Ghat, in 1866 or 1867, when shooting with General Sir Charles Reid. I was unlucky, and failed to bag. But in June, 1867, I determined to visit the dooars, though it was very late in the season, and bets were offered that if I went there, and remained a week or ten days, I should be a dead man, a month

afterwards from jungle fever. But I never listen to croakers. Having to go to Burpettah where I had works in progress, I thought that I might as well try for game. I reached Tara-baree Ghat about 8 A.M. on June 10th. Although I had sent on my elephants several days before, and they had had ample time to get there, I found none had arrived. Thinking the mahouts might have gone to Burpettah, I sent a note to the Assistant Commissioner, and he very kindly sent over a "palanquin" for me, but as it and the elephants arrived almost together, I sent it back, and halted for the night where I was. The next day, June 11th, I awoke the people at 4 A.M., and being independent of Assamese coolies, who seldom put in an appearance before 8 A.M., I got off at 5 o'clock. I sent my baggage elephants with servants, &c., to Burpettah by the beaten track, whilst I, with two elephants, went across country, being anxious to ascertain whether there were tigers about, as reported by the native officials.

At starting, the country was quite open, with paddy-fields, not in use, and overgrown with short grass. In these I noticed a broad trail. Whether made by buffaloes or other heavy beasts I could not tell, but as the animals, whatever they might be, were going our way, I followed them up. Leaving the open ground, we entered a grassy savanna, in which were a few marshes, surrounded by thick bushes. The track abruptly turned off to the right, and directed for a very heavy patch of long grass. On examining the spoor, I saw that we were following rhinoceros and not buffaloes. In addition to my old battery I had purchased a breechloading rifle, No. 10

bore,¹ with very short barrels, a wonderfully handy weapon, and with which I killed a lot of game. We had not advanced very far when we came upon the usual mound of ordure, with fresh droppings upon it, so we knew the animal could not be far off. Our two elephants now began to show decided symptoms of funk, but the mahouts kept them straight. At last, at the edge of the "jeel," partially covered by a bush, I distinguished the body of a rhinoceros. It was standing broadside on, but the head was turned in our direction with the ears cocked forward, listening to the noise our mounts made splashing through the grass and water. Neither the mahout nor the elephant saw it, so I touched the man on the head, which was always a signal for him to promptly pull up the "hathee." I could distinguish only a form; no vital part was visible, but about where I thought the shoulder should be, I let fly. On the smoke clearing away a very large animal rushed into the "jeel" and I fired the left barrel into its shoulder. On receiving this shot, which was well placed, the mammoth pulled up and faced me. I dropped the discharged weapon and had just time to seize one of the two-grooved rifles, when with a shriek the monster charged. I gave it the contents of both barrels at a distance not exceeding ten yards. This caused it to swerve, shrieking loudly, and rush away. All this time my elephant, apparently paralysed with fear, had not moved, but the noise the pachyderm made was irresistible, so my "hathee" broke away from the mahout and ran off in a direction the very opposite of that taken by our antagonist, and went fully a

¹ By Lyell of Aberdeen.

quarter of a mile before it could be stopped. Whilst running away, I turned round and was under the impression that I saw a second rhinoceros retiring, and it must have been that one I afterwards followed, for I could not find it anywhere. An ominous noise from quite a contrary direction now struck my ear, so I hied back, and found a very large male, stone dead. It had a thick, massive horn, but only eight inches in length, weighing one and three quarter seers. We got men from a village not far off to help us to cut off the head and to put it on the spare elephant, and then rode triumphantly into Burpettah. In the "dooars," I met with great difficulties, owing to the monsoon having set in, and the nullahs and rivers being very full, but I hunted there for a week, wounded half a dozen, if not more, rhinoceros, but did not bag a single one. In returning, I got back to Gowhatty with the greatest difficulty, owing to the inundated state of the country. As a madman I was looked upon for having entered there at that season, and my death from jungle fever was avowed, but I disappointed the prophets, and I did not suffer from the exposure I had undergone in the slightest degree. With Jackson of the 43rd, I killed thirteen rhinoceros in fourteen days, and had some narrow escapes. Once, while following closely up a wounded bull, he came for me. "Lutchmee," my elephant, turned tail, and just managed to keep about a foot ahead of the assailant's snout, whose upper lip was curled up, disclosing his formidable tusks. I spun round, took a snap shot downwards, struck the junction of the head and spine, and the huge monster rolled almost heels over head. No rhinoceros has been so close to

an elephant I have been riding on, as this one. If I had had a man behind me, I feel sure my animal would have been cut, for I could not have fired as I did. In the "dooars," Colonel Cookson and I went out on foot one afternoon to pick up jungle fowl, florikan, black partridge, or in fact anything we could get. Our elephants were tired, as they had been worked from dawn to mid-day, during which time we had bagged three rhinoceros, one male and two females. A couple of attendants carrying rifles attended us, for one never knows what may be come across in that region. At the edge of the forest we hit a marsh deer with exceptionally fine horns, and in following it up, forgot time and distance, and found ourselves in a vast plain dotted here and there with bushes, which almost deserved the names of trees. Water-fowl we could see flying about, so we knew there must be marshy ground towards which our stag had retreated. So we followed and followed. At last we noticed that the sun was declining, so pulled up, but where we were, no one knew. We sent a man up a tree, but he could distinguish no land marks that were known to him, but he suddenly pointed to the north and said he saw three or four rhinoceros not far off. The grass was only about three to four feet high, so more favourable for tigers than for pachyderms, yet we thought we would just go a little way and try for a shot. We got to within one hundred yards of the game easily enough, then there was little or no cover, excepting a few conical white ant hills. My companion chose one, I another, and we crawled on hands and feet till we got about thirty paces of the animals, and then we opened fire. One

got a ball behind the ear—a chance shot I fear—and dropped, two others were wounded and charged straight at us. We were about fifteen yards apart. My ant nest was a good six or eight feet high. I was on its summit in a moment and gave each beast a shot as he passed. They ran all abroad. One fell an awful cropper into a mudhole, sending a deluge of water into the air, and falling almost on the top of a huge male buffalo, who, disturbed by our shots, was scrambling on to his legs and endeavouring to get out of his bath. The rhinoceros must have been mad with rage, for he gave the buffalo a gash across the thigh, and that beast resented it by giving its assailant a right and left with his horns on either side of the neck close to the jowl. A right royal fight then took place. The two were well matched and almost of a size. The thick-skinned animal endeavoured to close and rip, but the other used his horns as skilfully as a prizefighter would his fists, and showered blows upon the face, head, and neck of his adversary. Wherever he was attacked there were his long, powerful horns ready to interpose. We were hurrying to the scene, when the buffalo made a desperate attack, fell into the mudhole, and before he could recover himself the pachyderm ripped open the whole of his stomach as cleanly as if it had been done with a knife. The next moment we fired and the rhinoceros fell dead upon his foe, all but burying him in the slimy depths of the mudhole. A bullet through the head put the poor bovine out of misery. This was a grand exhibition and seldom witnessed, therefore I mark it with a red letter in the calendar of my memory. We reached home very late, and doubt if

we should have got to camp that night, had not our men lit fires, discharged guns and let off a rocket or two.

On April 20th, 1871, a companion and I took a hurried trip. I had to go to Baghdooar, where I had contractors who had been collecting limestone I had to take delivery of; to measure its cubical contents and to ascertain that amidst the stone material gathered, there was not any useless stuff for burning purposes. *En route* we got on to a rhinoceros trail, and on looking down into a shallow nullah there lay the brute fast asleep! He looked like a huge pig, the head being on the ground between its fore legs and feet. I was only about ten yards off, but could see no vital spot, but my mahout whistled, the sleeping beauty awoke, and I fired at its chest. Up it jumped, and came straight at us, champing its tusks, and making that peculiar cry—something between grunting and squealing—but before it could do any damage, or our elephants turn tail, our battery proved too strong and it fell dead. It possessed only a mere rudimentary horn. I was on a huge mucknah, attached to the 43rd Regiment N.I. He was very old, very deaf and half-blind, and it was probably owing to these infirmities that he was so staunch but, oh! so slow. No amount of prodding would induce him to go faster than a steady three-miles-an-hour pace, and that was exasperating when one was in chase of a stricken beast. But again, in the midst of dangers he was immovable. Of the two I think I prefer being on a beast that has speed, even if it does occasionally run away.

We were going along, on another occasion, about

a quarter of a mile from the Manass. Matagoorie, our destination, was in sight. About forty yards ahead of me was a huge rhinoceros, standing behind a very large tree. Its head and neck were invisible, but the shoulder was just exposed, and a shot from one of my two groove rifles knocked it down and it lay struggling on the ground. I fired three more barrels into it, but it got up and very slowly, went away only presenting to me its enormous stern. I told the mahout to urge his beast on, but no punishment would induce it to accelerate its pace by one inch. There I was, fifty yards behind, a dense forest a hundred yards ahead, and not a prospect of our heading the brute before it got into its stronghold, where I could not follow! But just then J., who had been loitering behind, came up on a fast elephant, ran alongside the rhinoceros, and killed it. It was an immense beast with a horn thirteen inches in length. I went on to camp, to superintend arrangements for a stay of a day or two, but J. went off to the right, came upon another rhinoceros, put seven balls into it, but lost it. When the mahouts went to bring us in the head of the slain, they came across a tiger eating a marsh deer, but as it was almost dark we could not attempt to shoot Mr. Stripes that evening. The next morning we went to look for J's. rhinoceros. His mahout, new to these jungles, failed to find the tangled brake into which the animal had taken refuge, so after wasting several hours in fruitlessly searching for it, we came upon fresh tracks and followed them up, but up to nine o'clock saw nothing. Shortly afterwards, when passing a strip of long elephant grass, J. caught a sight of a

rhinoceros and fired. It began to spin round and round, and to emit the sounds elephants dread so much, and to our astonishment, from a patch of long grass close at hand, fully a dozen more rhinoceros joined in chorus! I never heard such a pandemonium in my life! If the inmates of a lunatic asylum and a dozen menageries had been let loose, and intermingled the row could not have been more deafening! Not an elephant with us would stir a step forward, the grass was dense and high, and so full of the brutes in a state of frenzy that I did not like to force our mounts forward. After the row ceased, they were willing to enter the cover, but I was afraid of getting them cut. We tried to set the grass on fire, but the dew was still on it, and it would not burn.

When at breakfast under a tree close by, a mahout, who had been collecting brushwood, ran up, saying that there was a rhinoceros, as big as an elephant, feeding in the open close by. We left our meal unfinished, mounted our "koonkies" and went towards the spot indicated. There was a nullah close by, and had we gone on foot along its bed (which for a wonder was free of jungle), we could have come within a few paces of the brute; but instead of following this obvious course, thinking the animal would take no notice of us, we approached it on our elephants. When we were about sixty yards off, the foe saw us, turned round quickly, rushed down the nullah bank, and though we saluted it with a couple of barrels each, it got clean off. We then returned to our meal.

Finding afterwards that we could not fire the game's stronghold, we formed line, and pushed our way in very slowly and cautiously. We had not gone

fifty yards when a cow rhinoceros, followed by a young one, charged J., whose elephant swerved, but her rider fired two shots and turned his assailant towards me. I also gave her two shots; she then ran about fifty yards and fell dead. Going further in, I found myself in the midst of a whole herd of rhinoceros. There were probably a dozen or more in the grass, and five or six came at me open-mouthed, uttering their diabolical noises, but the old mucknah I was on never moved. I emptied my battery of five double guns and rifles, reloaded, firing first at one and then at another, always selecting the nearest. I knocked over two, but a third did not succumb until I caught her with the last barrel behind the ear. It was an exciting five minutes, and but for the steadiness of my "hathee" he must have come to grief.

My mahout, before I had reloaded, now wanted to push on after the wounded beasts and I had to threaten him with a broken head before he would desist. I have never seen, before or since, so many rhinoceros collected together, and so pugnacious. The survivors entered a tangled brake and got off till the next day, when the native shikaries picked up three dead and appropriated their flesh and horns, but none of the latter were large. Going back, a three-parts-grown rhinoceros charged and chased J's. elephant for some way and struck it twice, but failed to inflict any but superficial wounds. J. at last dropped it dead, but he himself was a sufferer, being much cut about and bruised from the tossing that he received in the howdah. The next day we crossed the Gatee Nullah, saw a rhinoceros, but it kept at a safe distance. Shortly afterwards we saw another, as it

entered a tope of trees. We rushed round and met it face to face and killed it at the first discharge; the beast was large and had a good horn, but the base had got injured, as under the root there were hundreds of maggots. The stench from it was awful.

The next day we first wounded and lost a rhinoceros. After that came upon one lying down in a running stream and had no difficulty in bagging it. I then knocked over another rhinoceros, but lost it. Our servants in moving camp also came across two rhinoceros and a wild mucknah elephant.

April 24th. To-day the heat was awful; there was not a cloud in the sky. About ten we hit off a trail and my mahout did a very clever bit of tracking. All these rhinoceros feed in circles, so the task of hunting them up to their lair is a tedious one. J. got disgusted and took refuge under the only tree near. I went on, and in about half an hour came upon one lying down in a patch of long grass, and as it jumped up I killed it easily. We then went on for a mile or two and came to a heavy belt of jungle, and out of this ran a cow with a calf. We were anxious to catch the little one, but J. unfortunately wounded it and it had to be killed. As the mother's udder was full of milk, our men filled two bottles with it, and said it was very good. I tasted it out of curiosity. It was very like, I should say, to a woman's nourishment in the first stage of suckling—watery and sweet. Going towards camp, I saw a rhinoceros lying down at the bottom of a nullah, partially covered over with long grass, and apparently with its feet raised in the air. I thought it was a dead one, and called out, "Here is one of our wounded rhinoceros, dead!" No sooner

had I spoken, than the apparently defunct animal jumped on to his legs and came at me open-mouthed. Fortunately the mucknah swerved and thus escaped being cut. The next instant the rhinoceros was knocked over. On the 27th we killed another. They are far easier to slay than buffaloes, but the elephants fear them more, and are far less steady than when after other game. This was a most successful trip. We killed thirteen rhinoceros, a tiger, a lot of buffalo, a bear, and many deer, besides wounding a gaur and over a dozen more rhinoceros, and other game of all sorts. I caught a young rhino, after slaying its mother, and it required fourteen villagers to bring it into camp. When I saw it the next morning it was mad with rage; so was securely tethered, yet the little vixen tried to get at everybody who went near. In the course of a few days it quieted down, ate plantains out of the hand of its attendant, and in a week followed the man about.

THE ASSAMESE.

Before concluding this chapter I may as well say a few words on the inhabitants of this vast province, which has been in our possession since 1826, but which, a few years ago, was the most backward and least cared-for of our satrapsies in the East.

The inhabitants consist of Hindoos, mongrel Bengalis, and Cacharies, who, I fancy, are descendants of the former conquerors and occupiers of the country, viz., the Burmese. The latter are a jolly drunken set, somewhat like the Burmese in

appearance, and who were not possessed of any caste till very lately. But they have been greatly oppressed by the Hindoo element. The Mozadars and other officials, all Hindoos, impress them as coolies—sparing their own people—and bully them in every way. The Hindoos (Assamese), bad as are the Bengalis, are but a poor specimen of them. They are bigoted in religion, have not a grain of pluck, and would sooner lie and perjure themselves, in a case before the courts than speak the truth. Their priesthood are debauched, and live most sensual lives, and think themselves beyond the pale of the law.

At Kamykiah—one of their temples near Gowhaty,—the number of dancing girls attached to the pagoda was over four hundred. They are professional prostitutes to a hundred priests and yet are supposed to be perpetual virgins ! The Assamese have no shame. The girls when young are not bad-looking nor badly made, but inferior in that respect to Indians, or to the Burmese. They may have heard of virtue as an extinct quality—but only as such. During one of their feasts—and I witnessed one—every man, woman and child was drunk ; debauchery was openly carried on ; women and men as stark naked as at the moment they were born, danced and wrestled together, in fact behaving generally as wild beasts. As I said before, gangs of Assamese used to follow me about when I was shooting in the dooars. I gave them every scrap of meat from the rhinoceros I killed, yet if I required a drop of milk I could get none, unless by order of the omnipotent Mozadars, although such supplies as were brought were paid for by me in person—even when I wanted to move camp, not an Assamese would be

obtainable, but the poor Cacharies, often living twenty miles off, would be impressed by force and brought in. They pestered me so by following me about, that on one occasion, when I had wounded a tiger, they, thinking it was a rhinoceros, rushed in, only to be met with the signal of danger, whoof! whoof! I don't think I should have been sorry had one or two of them met with a warm reception. I stood by, ready for any emergency, but did not tell the people what the wounded beast was until he charged upon them when I killed him with a shot in the chest. I told them the next time they ran in, if it was a tiger, I would not interfere, and if a few of them were killed and probably eaten, the others would perhaps keep further off and not interfere with my sport! The Cacharies are far pluckier than the Assamese, and there was a grand old man at Burpettah who was credited with having killed over one hundred tigers during the annual inundations. A sacred temple exists, Hazoo by name, some twenty miles to the south of Gowhaty, on the opposite bank of the river, where Hindoos, Bhuddist and even Mussulmans congregate, the attraction being not the sanctity of the shrine, but the hordes of loose women who live there in villages by themselves—not a man being allowed to associate with them in their homes. They are the finest women in the Province, wear a distinct dress, very like that worn by the better class of females in Southern India. They are tall, well proportioned and are common to any native who chooses to pay them for their favours, but one has never been known to extend her complaisance to any European, official, or otherwise

although I have known endeavours made to induce them to break their resolution. This is so different from the usage in other parts of India, that it is a marvel. In company with an officer of the police, I pitched my camp near one of their villages. They allowed us to walk about amongst their houses, and converse with them, but here further intimacy terminated.