

FROM
KABUL TO KUMASSI
TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF
SOLDIERING AND SPORT

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL
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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LADY HELEN GRAHAM
AND PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

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Jat, and others of those fine martial races which compose the King's army in Hindustan.

On the general break up of the vast masses of Transport which had been raised for the Afghan War I returned to my regiment, which had meantime been transferred to Umballa, and I was given the appointment of acting Adjutant with the half-battalion, the headquarters being at Solon, near Simla.

At Umballa I again met the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, and as many of their officers were away on leave, they were good enough to give me a place in their regimental game of polo whenever they wanted an extra hand. To play polo with the 9th was an education hard to get in those days, and whatever I know of the game is due to them. Gough, Chisholm (who fell at Elandslaagte), Cameron, Little, Jenner, and others—all well-known polo players—were amongst those from whom it was my good fortune to learn this—the finest of games.

In the spring of 1882 I obtained three months' (Afghan War) leave, and started on a shooting expedition to Assam. That country was not then known as it is now, and communications were in rather a primitive state, and it was in fact for these very reasons that I elected to go there; my imagination had been fired in the days of my solitude whilst commanding the Post at Fort Battye by reading shikar stories in the *Asian* sporting newspaper, and although I knew nothing of the country, nor, indeed, a soul in it, I started with a double 12-bore rifle, a 12-bore shot gun which fired ball, a double '500 express by Holland and Holland, and sufficient fishing tackle for the trip. To get to Assam in those days it was necessary to travel *viâ* Calcutta, and by the Eastern Bengal Railway to Kaunia, whence a combination of narrow-gauge railways, trolleys, and small steamers landed you eventually at Dhubri, on the River Brahmaputra, where you were in Assam proper. Nowadays a daily mail-boat leaves Dhubri, both up and down the river, and travelling is easy, but at the time I am writing of there were no small steamers, and passengers for

the Brahmaputra valley had to travel by the large tea-boats, which were not only irregular in their timing, but frequently stuck on sandbanks, or were delayed for days by the requirements of the tea-gardens and the loading and unloading of cargo. The pace also was very slow, as generally many laden tenders were attached.

Life on these old steamers was, however, very pleasant, and the time occupied in the journey passed very agreeably. I had no kind of idea where I should land, or, having landed, how I should set about getting any sport. The River Brahmaputra must be seen by those who wish to appreciate the apparent hopelessness of making a start anywhere from its banks. A vast sea of water lazily rolling on towards the ocean, hundreds of islands and sandbanks dotted over its surface, and as far as the eye can reach the banks covered with impenetrable, twenty to thirty foot high elephant grass. Great eddies and whirlpools everywhere, alligators basking in the sun on every open patch of sand; now and again a herd of buffalo, just visible on some low grass mounds away in the far distance;—all these sights make a weird picture, fascinating to the lover of nature, even though it is nature in its most unpleasant mood.

Years afterwards, in West Africa, when ascending the Niger north of the sixth parallel, I could not but be reminded of the similarity of the scene, although on a smaller scale, for the volume of water cannot be compared to the Brahmaputra in flood. "Where are you going to land?" inquired a fellow-passenger—a veteran tea-planter who knew most things worth knowing about Assam. "Haven't the slightest idea," was all I could say, and so we got into conversation, and my spirits did not rise as he told me it was hopeless to attempt shooting in this way. However, I was going to have a try, and a few days after leaving Dhubri I bundled my belongings ashore at a place called Mungledye, and the boat steamed away. Robinson Crusoe on his island could not have felt more lonely. There was only one European and a few natives on the beach when I landed, and even these soon disappeared, leaving me and my servant the sole occupants of the port.

Shouldering my rifle and leaving my kit to take care of itself, I started for the Civil Station, which I was told was a few miles distant, and *en route* fortunately fell in with a planter, who gave me a lift in his cart. The track lay through vast seas of the tallest, rankest grass I had ever seen, and the more I saw of it the more I recognised how hopeless it was to attempt shooting on foot; but luck was in store for me.

On arrival I called on Mr. A. J. Primrose, Indian Civil Service, Deputy Commissioner, who offered me a bed and dinner, and I soon found myself comfortably installed. It was my good fortune soon after to spend many months with him at Munipore, when he was Political Agent there in 1886, as I shall tell later. Primrose was not only the most hospitable of men, but the keenest of sportsmen, and before I had been an hour in the house he had arranged a fifteen days' trip for me. He had only just returned from a shoot himself, and had two elephants with howdahs, which belonged to a small local Raja; these he placed at my disposal, and two days later I had started on my first big game shooting expedition.

Shall I ever forget the pleasing sensation of finding myself the master of two elephants, all my belongings borne aloft above the trackless ocean of grass and occasional forest, and fifteen days ahead of me to go where I pleased. No letters! no telegrams! nothing to worry one, and glorious sport all round. My first night I passed near a small village by the side of a bheel, the Assam equivalent for the Indian jheel or swamp. Duck and snipe were plentiful, and I got a shot at a swamp deer. The natives were much amused at my *tente d'abri*, for it was the only tent I had with me, and even that I only used in case of rain; they had been accustomed to seeing the sahib logue (white officers) moving with a considerable amount of camp equipage. I had no bed, but slept on the rushes and dry grass—a dangerous practice, which I gave up after this trip.

My third day out was to prove one of the most exciting I ever spent in the jungles. I had been warned that there

were rhinoceros close to the camp, and I felt sure this must be the case, as my mahout (elephant driver) was in a state of semi-intoxication when I climbed into my howdah.

I soon discovered that, although a good man on ordinary occasions, my friend had no relish for rhino shooting, and when such was ahead he was obliged to imbibe large potions of opium to give him Dutch courage. The elephant I was mounted on was a mukna, *i.e.* a tuskless male, a staunch shikaree, but very bad-tempered, and on the advice of Primrose I kept the second elephant close to me, so that in case my own should become intractable I could change on to the other.

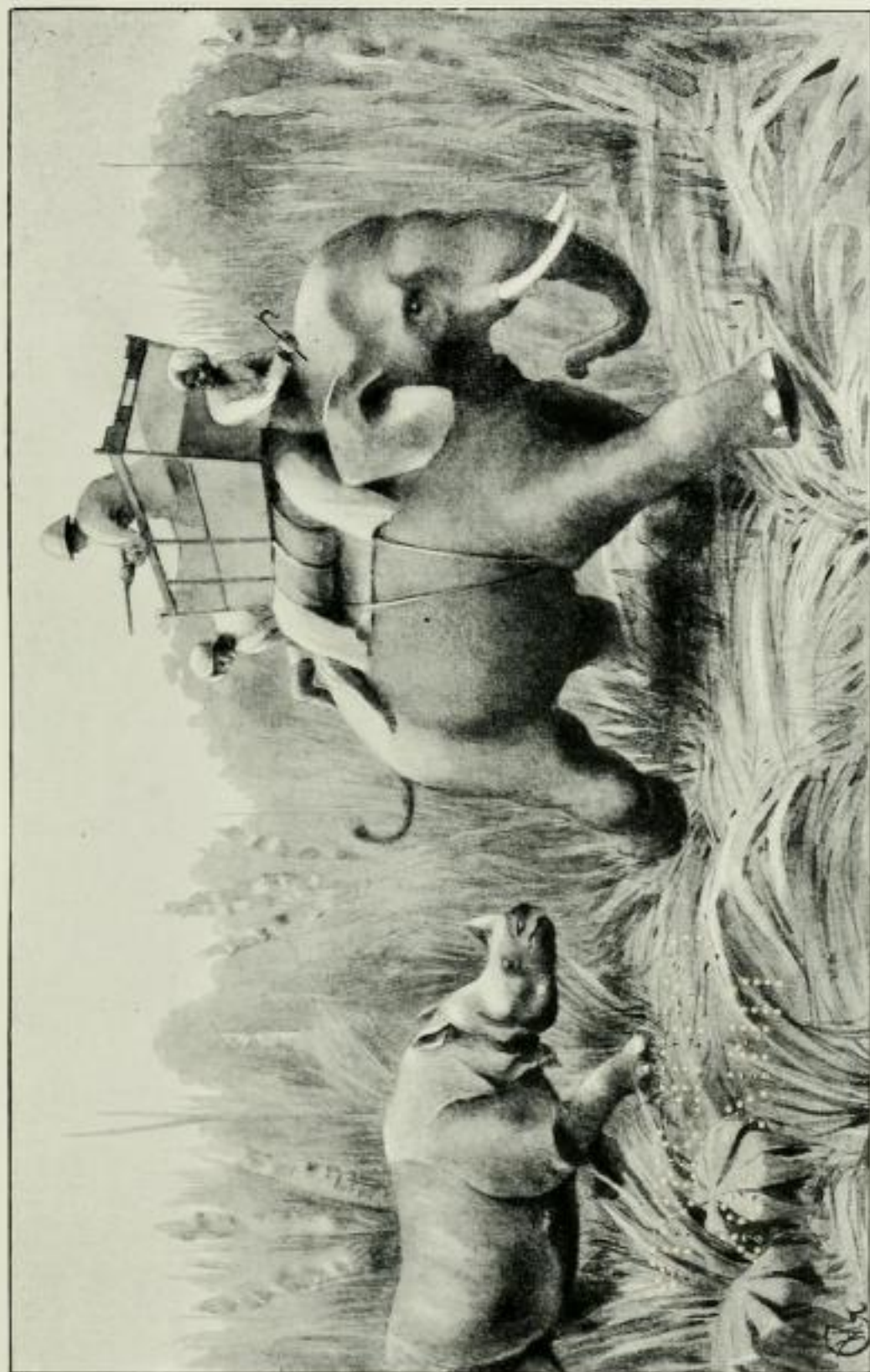
We soon found ourselves on the fresh tracks of a rhino and followed it up. Lilpoo, the mahout, I noticed would keep trying to get off the track, which was more than annoying, and I had at last to threaten him with a thrashing if he showed such abject fright; this had some effect and cautiously he moved on. Presently I spotted a great black mass only fifteen yards ahead of me, and into it I fired two barrels; in an instant Lilpoo had turned the elephant and we were literally galloping in an opposite direction. I shouted to him to stop, but finding my efforts of no avail, I gave him a gentle box on the ear, which had the desired effect and he pulled up, and once again we turned towards the rhino. We followed him up and came on blood, and almost at the same moment saw his head and caught his small eyes fixed on us. Bang! bang! went two more barrels from my 12-bore followed by a rushing mass, which passed within a few yards. Reloading quickly, and before he was out of sight, I fired two more shots. Surely, I thought, he must be down now; but no! he crashed on, and only after a big glass of whisky could I get Lilpoo to make headway again in his direction. Swaying this way and that, and after fully two hours of tracking, I saw the grass moving a few yards ahead, and instantaneously the wounded rhino charged down on us; there was no time to turn, nor would the elephant have done so, as it had now become a question of self-defence. The furious beast came crash into the mukna, and he in turn

quickly lowered his head, almost throwing me out of the howdah ; the rhino seized him under the soft flesh of the neck and at the same moment I pulled both triggers, the muzzle of the rifle almost touching the beast's spine. In the confusion it is impossible to recall all the incidents, but immediately the rhino rolled over and the elephant, finding himself free, turned again to run. Having reloaded once more I heard a noise, and the rhino, having recovered himself, and mad with pain and rage, was after us at his fullest speed. Emptying both barrels as quick as I could under the circumstances I held on, as I now found one of the girth ropes of the howdah had snapped. Ten minutes' headlong going and we reached an open bit of ground, and knowing it was hopeless to expect Lilpoo (who was shaking with fear by this time) to face the foe again, I dismounted, adjusted the gear, and got on to the second elephant.

I had only just done so when the rhino, which certainly was the most persistent animal I ever shot, emerged from the high grass from which it had been watching our proceedings, and all was at once confusion again.

I fired in all, I think, fourteen bullets, eleven of which struck him, and as evening was coming on, and neither mahout would venture into the high grass again, I gave up the chase. At dawn next morning I got the news that the rhino was lying dead within a quarter of a mile of our camp. My joy was unbounded, I had killed my first big beast ; and his horn set up as a snuff-box is now the property of the Officers' Mess of my regiment.

The moral of the tale is that it is cruelty firing at random into big animals, especially with inferior weapons, such as my 12-bore was. I was a young shikaree then, and in heavy grass it is frequently impossible to know what part of an animal you are firing at. The remedy is to use heavy rifles. I have for years now used a double 8-bore, carrying 12 drachms of powder. The argument, I am aware, is an old one, and such experienced hunters as Mr. Selous will convince sportsmen, as no humble person like myself can ever hope to do ; but at least



MY FIRST RHINOCEROS
DRAWING BY LADY HELEN GRAHAM

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I have on my side such a world-famed shikaree as the late Mr. Sanderson, whose *Thirteen Years amongst the Wild Beasts of India* is too well known to need quotation. I have carried my 8-bore in every sort of country and clime, and '303 notwithstanding, shall always use it for such game as elephants, rhino, and buffalo. A few days later I bagged my first bison (gaur), and also a leopard, which I came on suddenly in a small open swamp; I think it must have been asleep, as I managed to shoot it whilst just rising from a lying-down position. Both the latter I killed with my '500 Holland and Holland, which was a far superior weapon to a 12-bore rifle.

At Tezapore I crossed to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, and fell in with Captain Lamb of the South Lancashire Regiment, whose father was then serving in the Assam Commission, and from whom I received many kindnesses.

Lamb was one of the best shots in the Army, and though we only added a buffalo or two to the bag, we had some good mahseer fishing.

I was very sorry to leave Assam, but made up my mind to return again later on, little thinking that I should one day be quartered there on duty, with fifty elephants at my command, and a perfect country to shoot over.

The Umballa division was then commanded by Lieutenant-General W. T. Hughes, C.B., and I had the honour of being selected in August, 1882, to act as Brigade-Major, for four months; this was a great rise and an opportunity for learning Staff work which I little expected. As it was the non-drill season, I spent most of my time in the office, and as an instance of how even an Indian summer's day on an office stool may have its comical side, I must relate how one day I was very much taken unawares in a most awkward situation. I had been asked to take part in some theatricals, in which I was to figure as an old man with a long grey beard. I had written to Calcutta for the appendage to my chin, and it had just arrived by post. When I opened the parcel, as there was no one in the office, I proceeded to put on the beard, and taking

a hasty look in a small mirror which hung on the wall, I came to the conclusion that no one could detect me. I was about to replace the article in its case, when to my astonishment the door opened, and I saw before me a very smart and erect soldier—a Colonel and a V.C.—who had just arrived from Simla, on his way to Bombay. He ascertained that a young Subaltern was acting as Brigade-Major, and almost seemed to start as he beheld instead of a youngster an old grey-beard. However, suppressing his evident mirth, he asked if I was Lieutenant Willcocks. I said “Yes,” but was so puzzled I still stuck to the beard, and as he bent down to write his name in the report book, I quickly removed the hideous thing and put it in my drawer. Having signed his name the Colonel looked up and fairly jumped to find in front of him no veteran grey-beard, but a very confused-looking youth. We both laughed heartily when I explained the matter.

Whilst I was acting as Brigade-Major the Assistant Quartermaster-General of the Division was sent away on duty, and I was appointed to act for him. As a Lieutenant to hold such a high appointment, even for a short time, was to me a surprise, and I was proud to think that the General so thoroughly trusted me.

In November, 1882, Lord Ripon, who was then Viceroy of India, opened the Sirhind Canal, which starts from Rupar, on the River Sutlej. There was a great gathering of Punjab chiefs, including the Maharaja of Patiala, the Rajas of Jhind and Nabah, and the Nawab of Maler Kotla. A vast camp was pitched at Rupar, where the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab entertained a large number of guests.

As befitted such an occasion, a strong military detachment, consisting of British and Native Cavalry, Horse Artillery, British Infantry (half of my own regiment), and Punjab Infantry was detailed from the Umballa garrison to form the Viceroy's escort, and the General was pleased to appoint me Brigade-Major to the force. The duties were, of course, mostly ceremonial ones—detailing Guards of Honour,

the Red Sea. Amongst my Non-commissioned officers was a very old man, who had three smart sons also serving; they had offered to enlist on condition that their father was allowed to accompany them, and being very good specimens of Punjabis I had agreed. One of them wished to enlist in the 9th Bengal Lancers, and I mentioned it to his father. The old man was perfectly furious, and left me vowing vengeance against the prodigal who would desert his father in a strange land. Shortly afterwards the erring son came running to my tent and dashed in, placing me between himself and his father, who followed with a stick. "Where is my faithless son?" shouted the old man, "let me get at him!" But I soon arranged matters, and father and son were reconciled. Indian sons have a great reverence for their parents, and the man who would face any foe cowers before an angry father or mother, especially the latter.

During the time I was at Suakin, Lord Wolseley came round by sea to inspect the Forces. I went to luncheon one day on board his ship the *Queen*, and that was the first and only time I had the honour of meeting the ex-Commander-in-Chief; but though I never had the good fortune to meet him again, he was thoughtful enough to send me a letter of congratulation on my return from Ashanti in 1901.

On the break up of the Eastern Soudan Army, I once again returned to India, and was rejoiced to find myself reposted to the Eastern Frontiers, where I relieved an officer who hated the wild life and was only too glad to get away. The last forty miles to Golaghat had to be done in a terribly ancient, dirty, small, and leaky launch. The engines rattled so much that it was impossible to hear anyone speaking, even if he shouted. The River Dhunsiri was in high flood, and I thought every moment we should go to the bottom, as monstrous trees came down stream, one after the other, at an alarming speed. There was one lady on board, and the accommodation was limited to a tiny cabin over the stern, which was too awful for description. However, necessity knows no law, and so she had to brave it out. Our rate of progress never exceeded three miles an hour. Turning a

sharp bend the engines gave a prolonged groan and collapsed. With difficulty an anchor was heaved over and only just in time, as in another ten seconds we should have crashed into a huge tree trunk sticking out of the water, and without doubt everyone would have been drowned, as there were no means of holding on to the banks, which consisted of quicksand, and here and there rushes and high grass under water. Whilst the engines were being doctored up, I shot an alligator which ventured to show his head twenty yards from the launch, and offered a reward if anybody would take a boat out and fetch him. Three men volunteered, and, after much difficulty, succeeded in getting ropes round him and towed him past the boat, when we all held on. The animal was got on board, and amid much excitement the ropes were unloosed; but hardly had we done so, when with a mighty splash of his tail, which floored the engineer, the amphibious beast made a last dying effort and disappeared over the side. He only just missed going down the engine-room hatch, which feat, had he accomplished it, would probably have created a record. A live alligator in an engine-room would, under any circumstances, be a decided curiosity, but in the engine-room of that prehistoric little steamboat would have meant the end of its career.

My quarters at Golaghat were of the most primitive description; the floors were all mud and very damp, it was impossible to put down mats or carpets, as white ants would devour them in a few hours. My second night there I found one pair of boots half eaten and a small hillock formed under my bed. I was lent a better house on the river later on, where I was very comfortable. With the advent of the cold weather I was enabled to get some excellent shooting, and we also subscribed for and got a pack of hounds from England, and many a good run they gave us after jackals.

Tigers were fairly numerous round Golaghat, and an elephant was always kept near my quarters in case of any khubber (news) being brought in of a "kill." I sometimes took out one or two of the British Sergeants attached to the

Transport, and on one occasion a tiger was driven out by the beater elephants straight in front of one of them. I expected to see him fire, but not a bit of it, he merely gazed at the beast, who stood hesitating as to what he should do. "Fire!" I shouted, but my gallant Non-commissioned officer was so astounded by the apparition that he would do nothing of the kind. The tiger, thinking he had given him ample opportunity, then turned towards me, and as he ran past I dropped him dead. I never took Sergeant N——, out again, and I do not think he ever wished to go.

In 1885-6 the country round Dhunsiri Mukh, which is some twenty miles from Golaghat and on the River Brahmaputra, was a perfect sportsman's paradise; rhinoceros, buffalo, swamp deer, leopards, and tigers were numerous, and a few gaur (bison) were also occasionally to be met. When I recall those days with all their happy recollections, it sometimes seems as if it must have been a dream, for where could any man have had better opportunities for shooting? Then, again, there were many right good fellows, who lived, it is true, considerable distances apart; but what is distance in such countries? Everyone helped his neighbour, and ponies, servants, and traps were all at one's disposal whenever wanted. Jim Stevenson, and Burrowes of Halmirah; and Cambridge of Hautely Estate, kept almost open house, and so it was with many others. Captain (now Colonel) Malcolm Gray, the Deputy Commissioner, was fortunately a sportsman and always ready to help with his rifle.

I made a fairly good polo ground at Golaghat, and twice a week had out the British and Native Non-commissioned officers who could ride, for a game, and assisted by neighbouring planters and an occasional visitor, the polo ball was kept rolling regularly.

Early this spring I had a visit from my parson brother, who was then stationed in Kamptee, in the Central Provinces, and came up for some shooting. Unfortunately it was too early in the year and the high grass had not been burnt, so he got little sport, but it was very enjoyable having him

with me. During the time he was there an incident occurred which forcibly illustrates the strange adventures one frequently experienced in that, then comparatively unknown, part of India. As he was not accustomed to riding the long distances, which had become child's play to me, and yet wished to accompany me from Golaghat to Kohima, in the Naga Hills, through the Namba Forest, a distance of a hundred miles, I arranged to do the journey in three stages, and accordingly sent on supplies, etc. These were carried in a very light hospital dandy, and I had picked men selected, who received double wages for their work. The first stage was covered without mishap, but the second day, whilst we were riding alongside the dandy, first one and then two men said they felt ill and could go no farther. Shortly afterwards one of them began to roll on the ground and to show symptoms of cholera. Night was coming on, and we still had some miles to travel before we reached our camp ground, and we had no medicines, but instead poured brandy down the man's throat. As is the way with natives, the others lost their heads, and said their last hour had come, and that they would be eaten by tigers in the forest, and nothing we could do would persuade them to make an effort. The unfortunate man, who was by this time dangerously ill, kept up a long wail, and asked us not to leave him on the road. What a strange race ! as if we should think of doing such a thing. There was only one means of saving his life and that was to get him into camp somehow, so we removed our small stock of food, and placing it on the head of the only available man, and putting the sick man inside, my brother and I shouldered the lumbering dandy and finished the journey. Our shoulders were peeled and our backs ached for days afterwards, but we brought the man safely in, and never fail to have a laugh when we recall how we were let in.

In 1886 I had a splendid week's sport along the banks of the Brahmaputra. I had fifteen elephants with me and had arranged everything as far as I could. My first morning I came on two swamp-deer in a long bheel, where the grass never grows higher than a foot or two, and as I had shot

very few at that time I determined to dismount from the elephant and get up close to them. The grass all round me was some fifteen to twenty feet high, but by crawling along the rhino and buffalo paths, which are in fact regular tunnels through the dense undergrowth, I got to within sixty yards and could see them browsing, and was about to fire, when I spotted a fine bull buffalo feeding quietly in the open about seventy yards to my left. I had only a '500 express with me, having left my double 8-bore in the howdah; however, I fired both barrels and hit him in the face, one bullet shattering his jaw. It was a damp morning and not a breath of wind, hence the smoke hung; he saw the smoke and instantly charged in my direction. Taking to my heels I ran as fast as I could move through the tunnels, and in the direction where I had left the elephant; but Buff was too quick for me, and seeing I could not get away before he was on me, I hurled myself into the tall grass and tried to reload, but before I could get in a cartridge he was within a few paces and I thought it was all up with me, when he suddenly stopped, and I dared not move lest he should hear me. He gave two or three furious snorts which were terrifying, and then charged away to his left and again pulled up. But meantime I was up and off in search of the elephant, and was overjoyed to see the howdah towering above the jungle. I shouted as loud as I could to the mahout to make the elephant sit down, and leaping as I never did in my life, managed to crawl into the seat. None too soon either, for the buffalo, hearing the noise, was in full chase. The elephant was on her legs again in an instant and faced round. Crash! came my infuriated foe into her, and for a moment I could neither fire nor see anything, but recovering I put two 8-bore bullets into his back, and Maggie the elephant stood splendidly.

The buffalo did not fall, but stood paralysed, and after some little time we managed to get near enough for me to see him plainly, when another bullet through his neck finished him.

A couple of days later, just after I had left camp, we

crossed a bheel (swamp), and I saw a crow sitting on what I took to be a black stump sticking out of the water; however, as I approached it began to move, and up rose a rhinoceros. The bird had been sitting on its horn, which was just visible; it was, however, too far for me to get a shot at. I saw seven rhino that day.

Almost my last day's leave I saw a sight that seldom falls to the lot of anyone to witness, and I will relate it in full. Moving through the eternal sea of tall grass, I came on a rhinoceros standing in a comparatively open bit of ground with his head low in the attitude of listening. Firing two barrels from my trusty 8-bore at his head, I was delighted to see him sink on his knees, as I fondly imagined to rise no more; but the mahout for some reason lost his head and turned sharp round, and it was several seconds before I could look back again, when, to my surprise, the rhino had vanished. However, I knew he was badly hit, and followed his tracks. For two or three hours I kept on the blood trails, but still he managed to keep ahead of me, and when darkness set in I had to give it up. As I turned towards my camp I felt desperately disappointed, but determined to be after him at dawn next morning. Before daylight I had started, and about nine o'clock saw tracks of fresh blood; I had not proceeded far when I heard a peculiar moaning noise on the right, and halted the elephant. Whilst listening I was startled by the roar of a tiger, followed again by the same moan I had first heard, and then a succession of angry growls. Turning in the direction of the sounds, we moved on 150 yards, when I could just see the top of the high grass about 50 yards ahead swaying as if shaken by some big beast. Again we halted, but when I once more motioned the mahout to advance, he absolutely refused to do so. This is always one of the most annoying things in shooting off elephants, and unless you have a thoroughly trained and plucky driver you must submit to it, for he is absolute master of the animal's movements, and it is of no use losing your temper, though I fear I have very often done so. Minutes passed, and still the noise continued, and



IN ANOTHER INSTANT WE WERE WITHIN TEN YARDS OF THE TURMOIL.

DRAWING BY LADY HELEN GRAHAM

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I perceived that the beast, or beasts, whatever they might be, evidently had no idea of our presence. Eventually yielding to alternate coaxing and threats, the mahout gave a low cry of "Allah!" and my tusker, "Payne," who was quite as excited by this time as I was, rushed forward with a trumpet, and in another instant we were within ten yards of the turmoil. There, in a beaten down space of some fifteen square yards, was a rhino, half lying, half standing, covered with blood, and engaged in deadly combat with two tigers, who were endeavouring to kill him. It was all the work of a few seconds, but I can still see them all three. One tiger had his neck fearfully lacerated, evidently by the rhino's teeth; the other was also covered with blood, and the rhino himself was dreadfully mangled, every soft portion of him having been torn by his angry antagonists. It was a gruesome sight, and even the elephant stood stock still as if admiring this struggle between the savage beasts in nature's wildest realms.

It takes long to tell, but was all too short in reality, and in any case, whatever had to be done must perforce be done quickly; so bringing the double Greener to my shoulder, I fired the right barrel at the tiger on my right, just grazing his neck, and as I did so the other sprang past my elephant; he could only have been five yards from me, but I grieve to own that I missed him clean. The pace was tremendous, and I was very excited, and, yes, sad to say, I had missed or lost both tigers, and just when they seemed in my clutches. Such is life! If I live to shoot fifty more tigers, the grief of losing those two will still remain. However, there was my rhino to be tackled, and although he had already had a hard tussle for life, he was game to the end, and, springing to his feet, prepared to charge me. A bullet in his head finished his existence.

Next day I had to return to work, and rode in twenty miles on an elephant. If you care for jungle scenes and can appreciate the holy calm that reigns therein, you can hardly do so better than off the back of a hatee; in the first place he

moves so quietly ; no footfall is heard ; and then you are so well raised above everything that you not only get a long view, but at any moment may come on wild animals, who will seldom run from you if they are accustomed to seeing wild elephants in their haunts, until you are quite close up to them. Nothing alters the course you are steering ; at one moment you force your way through almost impenetrable creepers and undergrowth, then down a horribly dangerous-looking bank, and at the bottom of it you plunge into eight or ten feet of water ; then the opposite bank must be climbed, and the huge beast gets up it somehow ; it is nervous work at first, but one soon gets to know the marvellous power of an elephant to overcome almost any obstacle. Meantime you are comfortably seated, and can understand the words of the Psalmist, "Wonderful are Thy works." Yes, wonderful indeed ! for cast your eyes away to the north, across the majestic waters of the great Brahmaputra (the Son of God), and behold a scene unequalled in the world ; hundreds on hundreds of giant peaks white with eternal snow ; dark valleys, cold and grey ; a sky so clear and blue that it seems almost too beautiful to be real ; and you are looking on the Himalayas, the most stupendous of the works of creation on this planet. It is all like a passing dream, and as the memory wanders back and passes in review the scenes of many lands, you come to the conclusion that few, if any, can surpass in majesty the panorama now before you.

The life in Assam was one to keep a man fit and strong ; thousands of miles did I ride through those forests, a hundred miles in a day appearing as nothing when once I got to know the ponies and the roads ; and at the end of a two-hundred-mile ride in seventy-two hours I have dined out and sat up late. This proves the climate to be not so bad as some would paint it. The truth is that in all tropical countries the secret of health is exercise ; I go so far as to say if a man will only go to bed fatigued, and frequently even dead tired, he will rise fitter next morning than his neighbour, who perhaps only takes sufficient exercise to keep himself alive. If

you lie down because you can no longer keep awake, you will at once go into a sound sleep, and even though it may be hot and sultry, nature demands a certain amount of absolute rest for the body, and before you again wake you have put in more sound sleep than if you had lain down simply because it was a certain hour of the night. Of course, all this is supposing you have the bodily strength to endure fatigue; but my argument is that, if men will only try the recipe, their strength will at least not be less than it naturally is, but will increase. It is not so often the constitution that is at fault as the lack of energy to keep the flesh subservient to the spirit.

The tropics are not places to which many people go to recruit their health, but even in the most unhealthy parts of West Africa I have found that the observance of three simple rules will enable you to withstand any climate; he who will try them will, I feel sure, not have cause to regret it. First, never let a day pass without taking as much physical exercise as you can endure. Secondly, never keep on wet clothes a moment longer than you are absolutely obliged to; and lastly, whatever you may have to dispense with, hold fast to your mosquito curtain, and never be without it. The first rule I never neglected; the second I have carried out in every land; and the last I have rigidly observed, whether I have had a bed to sleep on or only the damp ground, often and oft without any kind of shelter, 'mid rain and storms; still in my haversack, whatever else there may or may not have been, a mosquito net was always to be found. I never had a day's fever in West Africa, and this last precaution had not a little to say to it.

