

Soon the moon, in her glorious fulness, peered over the dense tree-tops, lighting up the sombre foliage with her silvery glinting beams, and began her nightly course. Silence gradually ensued in the camp; for the elephant attendants, wearied with their day's work, which had been a hard one, one by one resigned their "cheerful" *hobble bubbles* and lapsed into the arms of the drowsy god. The elephants, however, continued to crunch their *charra* steadily, as it takes a long while for these useful beasts to fill their capacious stomachs.

Being restless from the heat—for it was still close and hot—the buzz of the millions of mosquitoes who swarmed outside my curtain, combined, kept me awake, and I lay tossing about for some hours. Ever and anon the plaintive notes of a bird that is frequently heard at night time in these jungles, were emitted from a neighbouring tree. Two low metallic tones, uttered in quick succession, was the burthen of its song. It must be a description of "bell bird," I imagine, but I have never seen it, neither have I ever met with a native who could tell me its name. They, however, say it is a bird of gorgeous plumage, and has bright scarlet and blue feathers, and is of the size of a thrush.

Turning wearily from side to side, in hopes of courting the balmy influence of sleep, a slight movement in the tall jungle, within ten yards of the head of my bed, attracted my attention. Gazing steadily into the gloom—for the noise proceeded from the shadow of a huge tree close by—I could discern nothing, and thought I must have been mistaken, or that an owl or some other night bird, in flapping past, had given me a false alarm. There it was again, however, and accompanied this time by an unmistakeable sound which "brought my heart into my mouth;" for, rising slowly on my elbow to obtain a better view, I made out the lineaments of a colossal, stupendous tusker, lazily flapping his ears!

ROBIN.

(To be continued).

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## RECORDS OF SPORT IN ASSAM.

(Continued from page 514.)

*Extracts from a Diary kept during February, March, and April, 1868.*

I left Gowhatty to march up to Deopani on the 11th February, 1868, and hoped to have good sport, as some of the jungles on the banks of the Kullung and Deopani rivers were well-known haunts of wild beasts. I reached Chunderpore the same day, and on the 12th moved across the Kullung river to Myung, a large village well situated in an extensive and cultivated plain, within an easy distance

of the Kullung river. This place is noted for its extensive bheels, its wild-duck, and its buffalo shooting; there are also tigers, deer, rhinoceros, and florikan to be met with: and as I had also to examine various traces cut for the projected Grand Trunk Road, I halted there a day. I had very poor sport. I shot a few duck, teal, and three florikan; saw no deer, and the buffaloes I came across were not worth shooting. There were many old marks of elephants and rhinoceros, but no recent ones.

*February 14th.*—Moved to Cachareegong, distance about 12 miles. In the afternoon shot a few teal, but heard no *chubber* of any kills, or of game in the vicinity.

*February 15th.*—Moved camp to Baisah Ghât. Going through the passes of the Bagra Hill, shot three pea-fowl, and on reaching the "Moree Kullung," shot a few teal.

*From February 15th to 20th.*—We marched to Nowgong, and thence to the Rupai river. On the 20th, left Rupai for Lankqua Ghât. I struck off towards the bheel, where last year General Reade and I came across rhinoceros. I had not gone very far when I came across a buffalo. Though I seldom shoot at these, yet, as this one did not seem inclined to get out of the way, I gave it two shots, one in the chest, and one behind the shoulder as it swerved round; it ran about 50 yards and then dropped down dead. I cut off and padded its head, and went on into the dense null jungle, where generally there are a herd or two of elephants and a few rhinoceros scattered about. I saw plenty of fresh marks, but did not come across the animals themselves. This ground is never hunted over, and where the beasts had managed to hide themselves, was incomprehensible. I beat up every likely spot, but was unlucky. I disturbed innumerable flocks of duck and teal, but would not waste time in trying to shoot them, as they were very wild. On leaving the null jungle behind, I entered into a fine open plain, at the farthest end of which stood several deer and buffaloes. Feeling blood-thirsty, I went through the high grass till I got to within 50 yards of two very large buffaloes. I broke the thigh of one with one ball, and wounded the other severely; the first one fell down, picked itself up, and tried to charge, but it had not a "ghost" of a chance, and two more shots killed it. I followed up the herd, came across the wounded one, and killed it too with two more shots; followed up the herd and wounded two more, but failed to bag them. Went back to the kills, cut off and padded their heads, and made straight for Lankqua. I put up several hog-deer, but missed every one. Shot three partridges, and got to the bungalow about three in the afternoon.

*February 21st.*—During the night we had very heavy rain, and as it did not leave off till 7 a.m., I hesitated about going out; however, as it cleared up, I ordered the elephants and started about 8 a.m. I had not gone half a mile when I came upon a fresh track of a rhinoceros; followed it up, but as it went into horrible ground, cut up with numerous water-courses, I left it and went back towards the old

ground where General Reade last year in one day killed two rhinos. Almost immediately I hit off another fresh track; I had a very bad and funky mahout, but a right good elephant. Within half an hour I came upon the rhinoceros standing near a piece of water, in a hollow, facing me. I got a very good shot in the chest, and another as he wheeled round behind the shoulder; both shots told and staggered the brute, but he went off faster than I could follow. By cutting off an angle, I again got within 80 yards of his broadside, and again hit hard, but he managed to get ahead of me into the heavy grass on the borders of the bheel. Here the tracking for some time was easy, as his tread was distinct enough with lots of blood upon it, but very soon he left his own line, and headed down an old run. Even here we followed for half an hour by blood alone; but presently we came upon two tracks, and could not decide which he had taken. My elephant hesitated when called upon to go along the one to the right, and as it seemed an old and unused one, I, like an idiot, took the one to the left; the very fact of the elephant hesitating ought to have told me that that was the one to follow, but I was so eager that I did not wait to think, but pushed on. Of course, we soon lost all traces of the rhinoceros, and I beat right round the bheel, and saw innumerable fresh tracks, but not a rhinoceros could I come across. By the time I had got right round the bheel it was three o'clock, and so convinced was I that the rhinoceros must be somewhere about the place where I had lost him in the morning, that I followed up our morning's marks, and, on reaching the spot, made a shikaree get down and search for foot-marks. This man unfortunately spoke, and out rushed the rhinoceros from almost the very spot where the elephant had hesitated to enter. I could not get a shot, and went after him full chase. He was still bleeding, but I could not overtake him, and the runs were so numerous and wide, that it was only by the most careful tracking we could follow at all. Thus he very soon beat us, and as evening was approaching, I went back to the place where we last started him from. He had been lying down about ten yards inside the long grass; had I entered there in the morning, I have no doubt a charge would have been the result; but the rest had refreshed him, and though there was a large pool of blood where he had been lying down, I fear the wounds he received could not have been mortal, as, though I searched about for him for several days, and made enquiries from all the villages round, I could not hear of his death. I got a deer going home. Although I had shot here before, I had never seen the large marsh-deer, but to-day I found out their haunts lay to the right of the bheels, where there was high open ground.

*February 22nd.*—I went back to the ground where I had shot the buffaloes the day before yesterday, in the hope of coming across rhinoceros *en route*, and of finding tigers near their carcasses. I saw no rhinoceros, though their marks were most numerous, and, to my astonishment, I found the bodies of the buffaloes untouched either by tigers or vultures. There were hundreds of those unclean birds about,

but until the body decomposes, they cannot get through the thick hide. Going home I came across several herds of buffaloes, and as amongst them were some fine bulls, I determined to shoot some. The easy victory I had obtained over the three buffaloes on the 20th had made me so conceited, that I thought I had but to get within a moderate distance to kill. In this I was egregiously mistaken, as I found out to my cost; three times I got easy shots, each time I hit hard, and once brought a bull down on his knees, but all three got away and were never heard of again. Considering the heavy weapons and large charges I use, this result sufficed to take all the conceit out of me. In the evening I crossed over to Tejpore, and stayed there on the 23rd, and crossed back on the 24th. My elephants had been searching the country for news of the rhinoceros, but they had none to give me: in fact, I do not believe the mahouts ever ventured into the heavy jungle.

*February 25th.*—I went all round the bheel again to-day. Two rhinoceros had been seen by some fishermen an hour before I got there. I came across their fresh marks, but the beasts themselves I could not find. Considering the number of rhinoceros that infest this bheel, my luck in not finding them is very bad. On getting round to the high ground on the west of the bheel, I saw several herds of marsh-deer. I had seen buffaloes during the day, but had not fired at them. As my camp wanted meat, I went after the deer. The jungles had been well burnt, and there were just enough of clumps of high grass left to afford shelter to the different wild beasts inhabiting this locality.

I tried to cut off a herd of five deer, and in carefully stalking them on the elephant, in rounding a patch of unburnt grass about 50 yards ahead of me, I saw the heads of three tigers all close together in the burnt grass; neither the mahout nor elephant had an idea of the noble game in front of them. I stopped the elephant carefully, and took a dead shot at the nearest of the tigers, guessing for the shoulder shot. No sooner had I fired than a large tiger bounded along in front of me, uttering loud growls, whilst a smaller one ran across me; what became of the third I never saw. I fired at the large one with the left barrel, and rolled it "head over heels," but it picked itself up and jumped into some long grass; into this I followed, and beat about for an hour without finding any signs of it. I must have passed it lying dead, as I found the remains two days afterwards within a few yards of my elephant's tracks. I was so savage not at getting anything! It is not often one sees such a sight, or gets such a deliberate shot at a tiger, and I was ready to do any foolish thing. So annoyed was I at my own (supposed) bad shooting, that I ordered the mahout to go back to where the tiger had fallen and take up the blood trail. He said, "Sir, you killed one when you first fired, and the one wounded may frighten all the elephants if it charges." Now I had not seen one fall, though I had only seen two out of three run away. So, putting this down to mere "funk" on the part of the mahout, I abused him heartily, and told him if he did not follow up the wounded animal

carefully, I would break his head. He dodged me of course, and took me back to where I had first fired, and there within 50 yards lay a full-sized tiger stone dead. It had never moved. When I say full-sized, I mean full-grown; but, including tail, it only measured 8 feet. On looking round I found a young marsh-deer lying on the ground, and told my spare elephant's mahout to take it up, but when the man approached it, it got up and ran away. My own idea is the smallest of the tigers had stalked and knocked it down, and that all were standing over it when I interrupted their meal. It was getting on towards evening, and thinking the wounded tiger had crawled away along the bed of the nullah, I padded the one killed and went homewards, and shot one deer and bagged it *en route*.

*February 26th.*—I searched all over the country after rhinos, particularly after the wounded one, but did not see one. I could not go a quarter of a mile in any direction without striking the fresh trail of one, but, follow it up as far as I might, I could not come across one. I got into the midst of very many marsh-deer, and bagged five, and certainly killed seven, but lost two in the most wonderful manner. One had its back broken, and could only turn head over heels, run a yard, then fall down, and go on rolling over and over. I was within five yards of it at one time, but it rolled down a nullah bank, and when I got to the bottom it was nowhere visible. The other I left for dead, and when I came back it was gone.

*February 27th.*—I started for Koliabar to-day, and thought I'd try for deer *en route*. I made straight for where I had seen the tigers the day before, and before leaving the high grass, a little to my right, up got such a lot of vultures. Thinking it might be the rhino, I went up to the spot and found the remains of a very fine tiger, or rather tigress, to judge by the head. It was evidently the one I had wounded, and it must have fallen dead after picking itself up and bounding into the grass; this accounted for my not hitting off its trail. I secured the head; the skin was utterly spoilt, and very little of it left. *En route* I shot two deer, and saw a lot of buffaloes, but did not go after them.

*February 28th.*—Halted to-day at Koliabar, and went out with Tye, a tea-planter. We had good *khubber* of tigers, but saw none. Tye shot very well, and got two deer and a buffalo. I got one buffalo only. We went to the ground where Tye had formerly shot rhinos, there were marks enough, and quite fresh too, but no beasts.

*February 29th.*—Tye and I went out again in the afternoon after rhinos. Where the brutes can hide themselves I can't imagine; there were numbers of fresh marks; however, we did not see one. I was very nearly shooting tame buffaloes as I came across a herd at least six miles from any village, without an attendant, and no marks to distinguish them from their brethren of the jungles; but, fortunately, not being very eager, waited for them to come close up to me. I was hiding in some heavy jungle; the shikaree urged me to fire, but as there was not a good head amongst them, I was in no hurry, and something in their movements made me imagine they were tame ones;

so I pushed the elephant right into their midst, and as they did not disperse, I found they were a herd of tame ones, turned out by the villagers for the season to be covered by the wild bulls. I then came across a very large herd of wild buffaloes and wounded two badly, but they got away for the time, though I heard afterwards they had both died. I shot a florikan *en route* home, and one or two partridges. There are mithim, or bison about here, and Tye had shot some very fine ones, as well as a good number of tigers, but we had no luck whilst I was here. I bought his two elephants, one a very staunch shikaree, but unfortunately with a young one; the other had been a good shikaree, but having been badly cut by a rhino, rather funked now.

*March 1st.*—Rode to the Deopani; saw lots of marks of game, but did not stop to shoot.

*March 2nd.*—Returned to Gotungah, five miles on the Koliabar side of the Deopani; a nice open spot, far preferable to the Deopani. This is a famous spot for elephants and rhinos, and though I shot, or rather tried to shoot, here for a whole week, I did not get a single thing. I put up rhinos every day, but always in the heavy grass; and as the jungles had not been burnt, there was no driving these brutes into open ground; so day after day I had an hour or two's excitement, but nothing came of it. I then marched back to Gowhatty, getting little or no shooting *en route*, except one alligator, which I shot dead out of about twenty badly wounded. I had no opportunity of firing at any game again until the 28th April, by which time my duties had taken me to the immediate vicinity of Luckeepore, some thirty miles to the west of Goalparrah. On this day I bagged two ducks, two partridges, and a splendid peacock. The Superintending Engineer and Major Comber, the Deputy Commissioner of Goalparrah, were with me. We put up in a very good bungalow built by the Luckeepore Rajah for the use of travellers, and he was also very civil and kind to us in every way. The only objectionable thing belonging to him is a son with sporting tendencies. This young man, mounted on a splendid male elephant belonging to his father, and armed with a small piece of ordnance in the shape of a single bore six-oz. rifle, has nearly depopulated the country of rhinos and tigers. He killed thirty-four of the former and some eight or ten of the latter in one month; and though he deserves all credit, yet; as many of the rhinos are killed by moonlight and left to die after being wounded, the country gets into a disturbed state, and the beasts are now more or less always on the *qui vive*. The Rajah has also lately caught the largest and handsomest elephant I think I ever saw; he is over 11 feet in height, and is already docile enough to kneel down and obey orders. He is worth at least Rs. 5,000. Comber got the loan of the big tusker, off which the son has shot so many beasts. I stuck to my old shikaree elephant—Luchmee. We started on the 29th, intending to shoot anything we could come across. The country was rather burnt. In the open, about a mile from the village, we came upon a huge wild boar, at which Comber made some

excellent shots, but failed to bag. We then saw a marsh-deer with one broken leg, and whilst we were consulting as to whether we should go after it and put it out of misery, my elephant began to trumpet, and I knew at once she smelt a tiger, so I called out to Comber to look out. We formed line and beat carefully, the elephants all making a most piteous noise with their trunks; mine especially kept trumpeting, and seemed in a great funk. We had not advanced far when I saw the tigress bounding along, and took a snap shot at it, but missed. Comber fired and missed. She then crossed over a nullah, and as the grass had been well burnt, we could see her now and then. Comber fired and missed; I fired and hit her in the thigh; she gave a roar and disappeared. We formed line and crossed the nullah, and beat about carefully; suddenly she came down upon us in full charge, roaring and grunting savagely. Not an elephant moved. I never saw so steady a line in my life. She picked out Comber's elephant, the largest of the lot, and made straight at him; she got to within five yards when Comber and I, firing together, rolled her over. She picked herself up as quick as lightning, ran back a few yards, and came at us again. This time she singled out my elephant, but a right and left from me and a shot from Comber sent her to the right about; she ran down the nullah bank, swam the river, and as she tried to crawl up the opposite bank, I fired and knocked her over senseless. All this time not an elephant moved, though it was a very pretty scrimmage whilst it lasted. Comber killed the tigress; she lay immovable, and we passed her and sent her home. She only measured 8 feet.

We then beat other likely patches, but turned nothing out but hog-deer, and could not get fair shots at these. We also came across a herd of buffaloes, but they were not worth firing at. Near the spot where I had shot the ducks on the 28th, we put up a marsh-deer. Comber made an excellent shot, floored her, but she picked herself up and ran up towards me; and when about 20 yards off, stood looking at me. I had a heavy rifle, No. 10 bore, and aimed between her eyes; the only result of my shot was a seam on the deer's head, extending along the whole scalp; the poor beast never moved, so I fired for the shoulder and killed it. The wonder to me was, first, that the shot had not entered the forehead, but had only grooved the skin up; and, secondly, that if the shot at the peculiar angle failed to penetrate, why it did not stun the deer. We then breakfasted, and afterwards went off to the rhino ground. It was a great pity that the jungles had been burnt to the extent they were; there was only one patch of grass surrounded on three sides by a nasty deep, treacherous river, into which large animals could take shelter. Before getting to this we came across a rhino in the open; it was too far off to shoot, but we followed it up and traced it into this clump. It was with great trouble we could cross the nullah, as it was deep and had nasty muddy banks, but we managed to get over and followed up. One knowing rhino hid until we passed it; it then charged the elephant without a fail (formerly Tye's, and which had already been cut by a rhino)

and broke back, sending the *hathee* flying, until it almost fell over into the nullah. It now began to rain in torrents and Comber and I got wet through and through. We tried several dodges to beat out the rhinos, but it was "no go;" the rhinos would not break except back, and dodge amongst grass 15 to 20 feet high. Once we made sure we should get a shot, but it was only a huge bull buffalo that came up to us, and we let him go without firing a shot. By this time we were heartily sick of the rain, and as we were some six miles from the bungalow, we retraced our steps.

*April 30th.*—It rained incessantly all day, so we stopped at home and cleaned the locks of our guns.

*May 1st.*—We marched *en route* towards Doobrie, Comber and I, across country, after what we could get; we fired very badly at some deer and missed them all. We then got into rhino ground at Tikri Killah; before long I started a rhino, but did not see it. Whilst looking about for it, Comber came across one and shot it dead, and called out to me to look out, as there was another. I saw first the ear of one rushing past me, and guessing for the shoulder, fired and brought it down, but unfortunately it turned out to be but a half-grown one. We cut off the horn—a very small one—of the one Comber killed, and went on beating. I heard a rhino making its peculiar noise; I made towards it. I came upon an immense beast, and fired right and left into it, guessing as well as I could for the shoulder; he fell on his knees to the shots, but got up and ran away, screaming. I full pelt after him, but I never overtook him; and as he went away directly from our camp, I had to desist, and to turn my face homewards; close to camp I shot a florikan. This part of the country is very different from any other part of Assam; beautiful riding ground, full of pigs, lots of hares about too. I missed one, I am sorry to say. We got to our halting-place at dusk. Comber shot a partridge and a small deer; besides the florikan, I got a peacock.

*May 2nd.*—Moved for Doobrie; Comber and I, on elephants, determined to shoot our way. Soon after starting, Comber shot a fine boar through the thigh, and I killed it for him. We had no horses and no spears, otherwise it would have been a shame to shoot it. I then shot a very old boar, breaking his back with one shot; Comber then wounded another, which we lost. We then got into heavy jungle, and Comber put two rhinos out of a mud hole; he followed one, and I fairly ran down the other on the elephant. I got a good shot behind the shoulders; the beast ran a good hundred yards and then fell down, but it took some five or six more shots to put it out of its misery. The one Comber was after escaped; we hunted about for it everywhere, but lost it. We saw a good many marsh-deer, but failed to bag any.

When we reached the churs on the river, a villager told us a tiger had killed a cow that morning near a tank; he took us up to the spot, and sure enough there were the remains of a cow. We beat all the bushes we could see round the tank, but no signs of a tiger.



I thought he had gone off into the chur, and foolishly fired at a deer; my first shot went through the ear, the second rolled it over. Whilst we were padding this, Comber's mahout called out, "The tiger, the tiger!" and sure enough there was the tiger making the best of his way to the chur. He had hidden himself under a small bush out in the open, watching a herd of cows; we had passed him, and only the shot had disturbed him. As he had been fired at before, he never gave us a chance again, but bounded away into the chur, and we lost all traces of him in the long grass. Comber shot a florikan near the telegraph station. This was the last shot I fired this past season. I have only been out once since.

(To be continued.)

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## THE MONTH.

Now that we have perused the various accounts and comments on the St. Leger horses, &c., we are more than ever confirmed in the opinion expressed in our last, that *Formosa* must be considered a very fortunate mare to have won the race, when there were so many horses of her year that could give her plenty of weight. Among our extracts will be found an article from the *Saturday Review*, taking precisely the same view as ourselves. It is difficult to conceive how John Scott could have made such a mistake about *Viscount*, who has since been utterly defeated in a race for a £50 plate!

On the whole, the two noteworthy events of the Doncaster meeting (beyond the scratching of *The Earl*) were *Blue Gown* beating in a canter so good a horse as *Vespasian* at 15lbs. for the two years, and the defeat of *Belladrum* by *Morud*, a little sister to *Rosicrucian*. The first gives us an idea how really good *Blue Gown* must be, and if both could have run, and came out fat and well, there would have been as much interest about a contest for the St. Leger between *Blue Gown* and *The Earl*, as about any race for many years past. But in that case, we take it, *Formosa* might have finished about 100 yards behind the winner! The defeat of *Belladrum* in the Champagne Stakes has since been proved, by the running at Newmarket, to have been a mistake, and it turns out that the colt was out of form at Doncaster.

The scratching of *The Earl*, of course, made a great sensation, and as very large sums had been laid out on him, the public began to speak out even more loudly than they did at *Epsom*. On this, a veterinary certificate of lameness was produced, but the feeling of the public was expressed by enquiries as to how the lameness was caused. Then that most professional of turfites, Mr. Padwick, wrote to the Jockey