

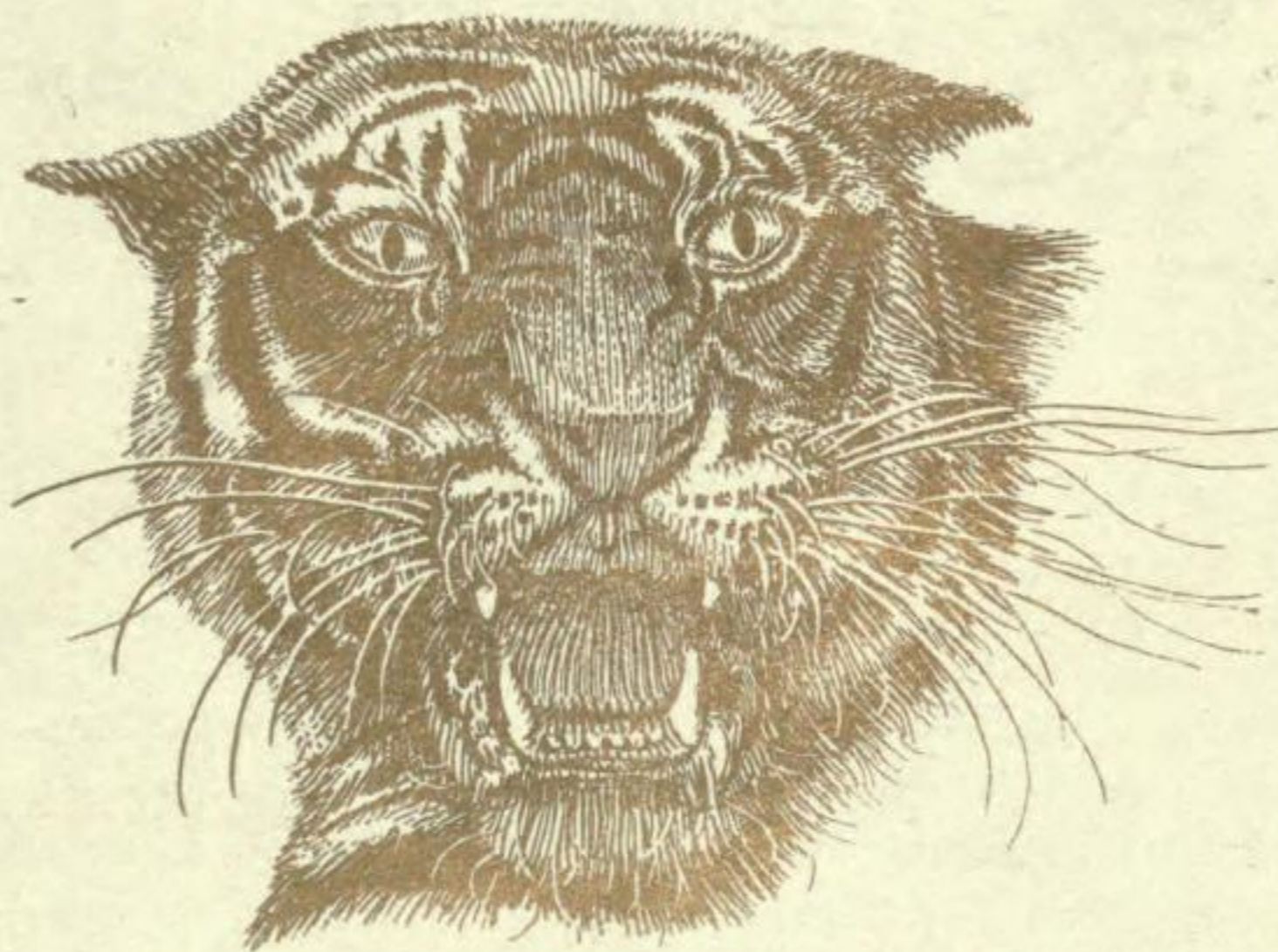
BENGAL AND ASSAM BEHAR AND ORISSA

Their History, People, Commerce, and Industrial Resources

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FAUNA

By W. M. NUTTALL



ANIMAL life in the Bengal Presidency and in the Provinces of Behar and Orissa, and Assam, is exceedingly abundant, but it varies greatly in character accord-

ing to the physical conditions prevailing in the several divisions. In regions where the rainfall is slight the fauna is of an inferior character to that found in those tracts where such soil is productive of a wealth of luxuriant vegetation.

It is true that some of the larger species of wild game are becoming extinct, and that many others have been driven from their homes in the fastnesses or forests and mountains by the ubiquitous hunter or by the agriculturist who has cleared away jungle for the cultivation of land. But the lordly elephant still roams in many forests, the beautiful tiger levies toll upon cattle, and even mankind, the agile leopard is a menace to goats, sheep, and cattle, ferocious buffaloes afford dangerous and exciting sport, and the comparatively small wild boar retains his title of the pluckiest of all wild animals in India.

It will be understood that space will permit reference to be made only to some of the principal fauna which are most commonly met with.

The elephant, the largest of the

Ungulata family, haunts forests and wild-looking jungle in many parts of the Provinces, but particularly in the territory sloping northward towards the Himalayas, or in the dense vegetation to the north and south of the Ganges River, in Upper Assam, and in the central and north-eastern portions of the Feudatory States of Orissa. Their chief habitat in these States is in the exceedingly sparsely populated and forest-clad parts of the State of Mayurbhani; in fact, it is said that practically all the elephants in Orissa have at one time or other been domiciled in those fastnesses.

The height of an adult male at the shoulders varies from 9 feet to 9 feet



DUCK-SHOOTING AT TURKOULIA.

6 inches, while that of a fully grown female is about 8 feet, although in the Calcutta Museum there is the skeleton of a male which measured 11 feet 3 inches,

Two methods of capture are usually practised in India, namely, (1) by driving and impounding the animals in stockades, and (2) by hunting them on tame elephants and subsequently noosing them, or, as the natives say, "*mela shikar*." Impounding may be carried out by driving a herd into a strongly constructed stockade, but this practice frequently involves the hardships and disappointments of following and guiding a herd for several days, and of being compelled to camp out in all weathers, frequently in jungles, in order that sight of the quarry may not be lost. The plan more generally adopted is to build a *Keddah* at one of the outlets of a salt-lick or *poong*, where obtainable, which is voluntarily visited by elephants, and for native servants to be in readiness to secure all barriers as soon as the herd has entered the enclosure.

The noosing plan appeals with peculiar force to sportsmen of a true type who believe in giving an opponent what is known as "a fighting chance." Further than that, the sport requires sound nerves and good judgment, especially as hunted animals usually make for the densest jungle, full of thorns and cane, impassable as a rule to any beast but an elephant.

Medium-sized animals are caught in this manner, but stockades enclose young and old, of all ages. Fully grown elephants, with the whole of their lives spent in the

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enjoyment of liberty, naturally enough resent the encircling ropes which threaten them with captivity and obedience to man. Their struggles for continued freedom are frequently so severe that the ropes cut their flesh, and the subsequent process of training is thus delayed by reason of the time required for the healing up of wounds, and of the more or less surly temper of an enraged beast.

Young animals are easily and quickly trained, and therefore command a ready sale throughout India, but the education of an old one necessitates the constant

in colouring and in the folds of skin covering their bodies. They inhabit grass jungle in remote localities, delighting in swamps and mud holes, and they are frequently met with in flowing rivers. As their name implies, they have one horn which usually measures from 10 inches to 12 inches in length, although a few have been obtained which reached 16 inches. This horn is, in reality, a conglomeration of hairs, liable to be destroyed by injury or disease, whereupon another one grows in its place. The skin of the animal is remarkably thick; its colour is dusky

ment has provided reserved areas for its preservation.

Wild buffaloes (*Bos bubalus*) usually inhabit tracts of swampy jungle, such as are seen at the foot of the south-eastern portion of the Himalayan range, or in the deltaic areas of the Ganges and Mahanadi Rivers and in Assam.

It possesses a well-rounded body covered with a thin, dark-brown or blackish-grey coat of hair, it has white legs, and contrasts most favourably with the domesticated type, which is frequently of a lean and scraggy appearance.

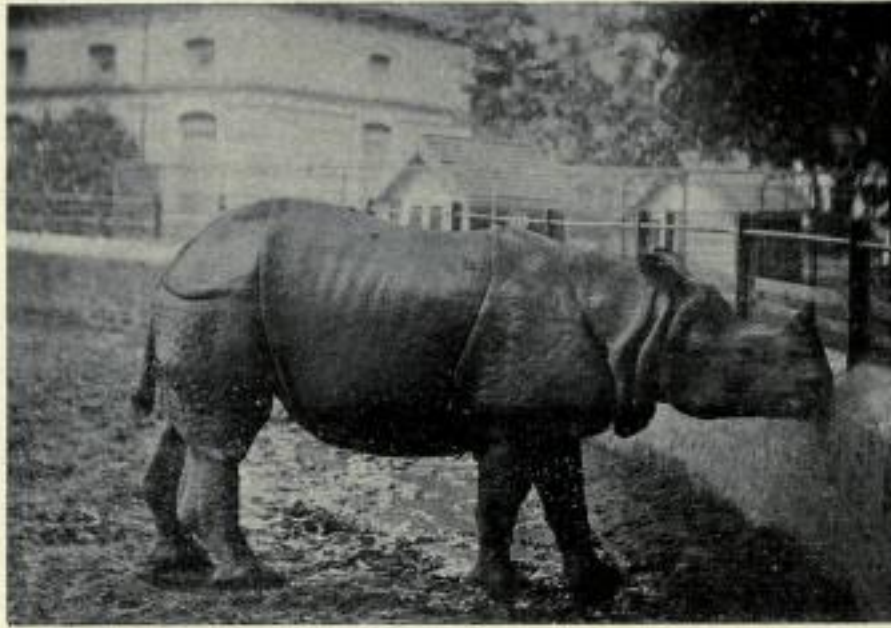
Buffaloes are remarkably savage animals, an infuriated bull having on several occasions been known to charge a line of shooting elephants, and many a hunter in India has had nerve-racking experiences both in jungle and upon open ground.

The gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is generally designated by the name *mithan* in Assam, and by bison in other parts of India. They herd together in the denser portions of the forest, but they emerge into open places occasionally, but especially when young blades of grass are sprouting after the vegetation has been burned off the land. These temporary excursions are made in the early hours of the day, and at sunrise the animals seek the glades of the forest, where they remain hidden during the day. They are, further, frequently found grazing in close proximity to elephants. Some of these animals are 6 feet in height at the shoulder, and have massive forequarters and chest, small legs and hoofs, and rather poor hindquarters. They are nearly black in colour, with reddish lower parts, and white legs from hoofs to knees and hocks.

Grasses and creepers of various descriptions form their staple food, but as they lie *perdu* during the day one must be afoot early in the morning in order to bag one.

This animal must be distinguished from the gazal, or *Bos frontalis*, which is a slightly smaller animal of the same colour and having nearly straight horns. It lives in hilly tracts, and while it is occasionally kept in captivity, it has been found that even in its wild state it will inter-breed with tame cattle.

Sambur (*Cervus unicolor*), the largest member of the deer tribe in India, is fairly numerous in almost inaccessible heights, but as the females of the species appear to be surprisingly unable to realize when they are in danger, they and their calves are indiscriminately shot by native hunters, and thus the species is decreasing.



INDIAN RHINOCEROS, ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, CALCUTTA.

attendance—and tuition too—of at least three huge *koonkees*, or tame elephants.

Tiger (*Felis tigris*).—This beautifully marked specimen of the feline family is found in almost every part of the Provinces, and the majority of them are killers of cattle and other game, while not a few are destructive to human life. Their tracks are regular "beats," several miles in length, and one native method of killing them is to set traps, in the form of a gigantic bow or arrow, on their well-defined paths. Tigers do not as a rule attack man, but Government statistics prove that very large numbers of cattle, goats, and other domestic animals are destroyed by them.

The rhinoceros belongs to the one-toed, or perissodactyle ungulates, and two varieties are met with. One of these (*R. sondaicus*) is found in Bengal—especially in the Sunderbunds—occasionally in Assam, throughout Burma, and as far as the Malay Peninsula. They differ slightly

black; its length of body is about 10½ feet; its tail measures 2½ feet; and its height at the shoulders varies from 5 feet 6 inches to more than 6 feet.

Considering its huge bulk, great weight, and its awe-inspiring and formidable head, the rhinoceros is naturally a timid beast, and will generally endeavour to escape from close quarters with human beings.

When, however, it is suddenly disturbed or wounded, it will make a series of most ferocious charges which result in death to any living creature with which it comes in contact. On the other hand it is easier to kill than many other wild animals, and is far less tenacious of life than the wild boar, which probably affords finer sport than any other inhabitant of the jungle.

The natives of Assam are very keen upon securing its flesh, as they have a profound belief in its medicinal properties, and as the species is becoming somewhat scarce in that Province the Govern-

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at a rapid rate. Although sambur prefer to roam among the hills, one may occasionally see a stray animal feeding upon open ground in the early morning, especially in Assam, where it is found upon numerous plains, but it is always within a short distance from its sheltered retreat where it rests during the greater part of the day.

It is of a fairly dark brown colour, with a whitish-yellow shade between the thighs, and the height of a fully grown stag is about $13\frac{1}{2}$ hands. The males are much darker than the females.

The handsome spotted deer (*Cervus axis*) need not be sought in any place where there is not an abundant supply of good water for drinking purposes, as it suffers from an almost unquenchable thirst. It is generally found among jungle at the base of a range of hills, but occasionally it ascends to a height of about 3,000 feet.

Among the smaller species of this family is the barking deer (*Curvulus muntjac*) whose home is on thickly wooded hills. It is not more than about 20 inches in height, and its horns do not, as a rule, exceed 5 inches in length.

Other animals of the same species are the Indian antelope (*Antelope cervicapra*), found in nearly all districts where the jungle is not particularly dense; together with the handsome little mouse deer, which is not more than 10 inches or 12 inches in height at the withers. It is found chiefly on hill ranges at an elevation of about 1,500 feet.

The Leopard (*Felis pardus*).—The two varieties of this species in India are usually known as panthers and leopards, and they differ slightly both in colour and size. The former varies in length from 6 feet to nearly 8 feet, with skins of light yellow colour, while the latter rarely exceeds 6 feet, and has darker spots placed close together. It is said that black specimens are occasionally seen in the district of Cachar in the Surma Valley in Assam. Both types destroy and eat cattle, dogs, deer, pigs, monkeys, and other animals of a smaller size, and their boldness is manifested by their entering villages and carrying away their prey from the houses of natives. They are widely distributed, and are usually found in moderately open country near cultivated areas, but they frequently conceal themselves in trees.

Striped hyenas (*Hyena striata*) common in all parts of the Indian Peninsula, prowl fearlessly in the neighbourhood of native villages, where stray goats, dogs,

and other domestic animals fall an easy prey to them, but in the absence of a living victim they are always ready to satisfy their hunger with carrion.

Other members of the feline family found in nearly every district of the three Provinces include the cheetah (or hunting leopard), the clouded leopard, the ounce, and the fishing cat.

The Indian wolf (*Canis pallipes*) is a determined hunter of various kinds of deer, as well as of sheep and goats, and

them when feeding upon the carcasses of sambur and other animals which have died several days previously. It searches during the night for food, which includes termites, or white ants, which the bear obtains from the ground by digging to a depth of from 3 feet to 6 feet.

The length of body and head varies from 4 feet 6 inches to 5 feet 8 inches; and the height at the shoulder ranges from 2 feet 2 inches to 2 feet 9 inches.

The Malayan species, only rarely found



HEAD OF RHINOCEROS, SHOT BY W. M. NUTTALL.

natives have asserted that children have occasionally been carried off by a pack of these ferocious animals.

The Indian sloth bear (*Ursus labiatus*) has long and shaggy black hair, especially on the shoulders, together with white fur, in the shape of a horse's shoe, on the chest. It has indifferent eyesight, and when charging (as it invariably does when disturbed suddenly) it is guided chiefly by its sense of hearing and scent, both of which are unusually keen. This species of bear is common in the Provinces, being met with upon forest-clad ranges of hills where there are caves or recesses, from which it emerges to take its nocturnal rambles. In Assam it is in the habit of making small *machans* in trees—similar to, but stronger than, a stork's nest—in which it sleeps during the daytime. It is not generally known that sloth bears will eat carrion flesh, and a well-known hunter in Assam asserts that he has frequently shot

in Upper Assam, is black in colour, with short hair, and an almost white muzzle.

Sus Indicus, the Indian wild boar, is one of the best-known species of game in the Peninsula. It belongs to a family which has types in nearly every country of the civilized world. It was formerly common in England and France, and is still plentiful in Russia, Spain, and elsewhere in Europe. It is a remarkably courageous animal, and more than one historian has stated that a full-sized tusker will quench its thirst at a pool of water with a tiger drinking on either side of him. Colonel Heber Percy says that in several instances an old boar has beaten off a tiger and has subsequently killed him, while the writer, shooting from the back of an elephant, wounded one, which immediately charged and inflicted injuries to the legs and trunk of his mount.

Pig-sticking is possibly the most exciting and dangerous sport in which a man

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can engage, and many hunters will, to the end of their lives, carry indelible scars resulting from their adventures.

The boar is in the habit of making small but exceedingly strong houses of grass, leaves, and jungles; these are circular in form, with an entrance on one side, and they are used as shelters during the heavy rains of the monsoon period. It usually feeds upon roots, but it has been known to dig into the earth to obtain worms, while it is not averse to carrion. In certain districts there are trees which during the months of August and September are laden with nuts, similar in shape to but harder than walnuts, and when these fall to the ground one is certain to find a number of pigs feeding upon them.

The boar is from 2 feet 6 inches in height at the shoulder, and it will frequently turn the scale at 200 lb. to 300 lb., some even exceeding this weight.

Wild dogs (*Canis rutilans*), which are very numerous in well-wooded districts in each Province, are exceedingly destructive to small game. They usually hunt in packs, exhibiting considerable intelligence in following their quarry, and it is said that a number of them have been known to pull down and kill an Indian gaur.

The jackal is no stranger to any one who is acquainted with India. Its wailing howl, repeated three or four times and followed by as many sharp yelps, resounds through the stillness of the night as the animal emerges from its jungly haunts bent upon scavenging excursions in the neighbourhood of native villages.

It is impossible to refer here to many varieties of smaller animals, including weasels, martens, monkeys, polecats, and badgers; to birds, such as vultures, kites, falcons, parrots, cranes, wildfowl, and hundreds of other species; or even to alligators, crocodiles, snakes, lizards, and other unpleasant reptiles; and it need only be added that a special article on salt and fresh-water fish will be found on another page of this volume.

The eastern portion of India, to which these notes refer, is second to none as a hunter's paradise. The majority of the haunts of large and small game can at the present time be reached in comfort in luxurious railway carriages or well-fitted steamers, and guides and beaters are always available at the nearest town or village. Opportunities for obtaining "my first tiger," or a record trophy of one of the various antlered animals, are presented in such a manner that the traveller must

be a listless hunter if he does not avail himself of them.

The city of Calcutta is an admirable place for headquarters, and all kinds of weapons, ammunition, and other equipment can be procured there at an exceedingly moderate cost.

The following notes relate to a few of the many exciting incidents which have been experienced by me during several years' enjoyment of big game shooting in the Province of Assam, and not at any great distance from my home on the Digulatarung Tea Estate, Rungarara, Upper Assam:—

"An old Assamese *shikari* of mine was killed lately by following up a wounded tiger. He had fired at it at close quarters from a *machan*, and as he felt certain that it would be found lying dead in the vicinity, he collected a number of friends to assist him in the search. The brute had lost a good deal of strength, but he had sufficient left in him to make a charge at some of the party, and in the general scurry which took place a boy fell to the ground almost within reach of the tiger. The *shikari* returned to render help, but he himself was badly mauled, being bitten at the waist, and he succumbed to his injuries on the following day." The writer is confident that a tiger can exist for two or even three weeks without any flesh food, and he supports his opinion by the following incident: "I recently got information of a 'kill,' not far distant, and as the tiger which had been seen in the neighbourhood did not appear to be at all shy, I was urged to hurry along in the hope that I might bag him before darkness set in. The 'kill' could not be seen, as it had been placed in long grass at the bottom of a broad and deep *nullah* with a high bank on either side. I therefore sat on the ground in such a position that I could see the opposite bank and jungle from which it was expected the tiger would emerge on his way to the 'kill.' I had not waited long when, as the sun was sinking on the horizon, I caught sight of a magnificent tiger—truly a monarch—standing on the opposite bank and casting his keen eyes up and down the *nullah*. Just as his gaze fell upon me I levelled my rifle and fired; there was an awful roar as he bounded high in the air, and then, rolling down the bank, bounded off into a patch of long grass. Thence he dragged himself into a mass of terrible jungle and eventually crawled into low, broken, bog-land covered with trees.

"I could at that time only obtain leave

of absence on Sundays, so on the first available day I took native *shikaris* with me to endeavour to drive the tiger out of his lair on to higher and clearer ground. The land was very broken and boggy, so it will be understood that we were keenly on the alert to prevent a surprise.

"Trees were climbed in order to give us an opportunity of seeing what might be ahead, and after a long time, spent in arduous work, we eventually drove our game out, but why he did not charge us I cannot say.

"I then became nervous about the possible fate of the villagers and decided that I would follow him up on elephants and put an end to his career. We found his tracks which led in the direction of the village, and after making circuits around them, I soon afterwards succeeded in laying him low. This was a fine tiger, although very emaciated, and I am able to state confidently that he had been without meat food for more than three weeks. My opinion was that the monster was then on his way to secure easy prey as he was far too weak to hunt and kill game on his own account. In all probability this tiger would—owing to his parlous condition—have become a man-eater. My first bullet entered his mouth, carrying away one of his fangs, and I believe that it was thereby diverted, as, instead of penetrating the brain, it passed down the throat, and then shattered the shoulder.

"Monkeys, by giving utterance to a cry totally different from their usual chatter, have frequently informed me of the presence of a tiger, and my discovery of this was made when I was returning home with a dead one on the back of my elephant.

"Luck has a good deal to do with getting a glimpse of a tiger, but in a general way I may say that experience is necessary in order that one may observe tracks, or recent lairs, or some other unusual feature which would never be noticed by an uninitiated hunter.

"I have a perfect recollection of my first tiger! It was not the tedious tracking, or the long waiting for a shot, but it was the excitement of the moment when my bullet went home!

"In later days I was in the habit of walking in a circle round the 'kill,' and I invariably found that, when I approached the place where the beast was lying in a concealed spot, he would move away to a distance and again hide himself. I therefore tried the following method, and as it was so successful I have since that

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time always adopted the same plan when sitting in a *machan* over the 'kill.' I took elephants and men, and instructed the natives to arouse the tiger while I hid myself in a tree. At a given signal they were to assemble near the 'kill,' and then march away singing and shouting, when I expected the tiger would return to the bait. The beast did so, and found everything quiet, but still hearing the men, he followed them for some distance and once more made his way to the bait to enjoy his meal, but he never finished it, as I rolled him over while my servants were still singing. The tiger was strapped on an elephant within twenty minutes of our arrival.

"I was out one day with a friend when we picked up the tracks of a very fine tiger and followed them from morning to dusk, but as it became too dark to see clearly we decided to encamp for the night and endeavour to secure our prey on the morrow.

"As soon as it was light we went to a neighbouring village and were told that on the previous day a native had shot at and wounded a large cattle-killing tiger, whose tracks we had been following in the semi-darkness not many hours before. It was a great piece of luck that there was no accident. On another occasion I followed a tigress (which was stalking pig) and upon shooting her I found that she had only three legs, one of them having been broken off at the hock joint, where a hard pad had subsequently been formed.

"People have been heard to declare that elephants appear to be dense and devoid of understanding, but such an opinion can be held only by those who have never had anything to do with them.

"I remember on one occasion that a *mahout* unconsciously dropped his knife while riding his elephant, and when the animal suddenly stopped and refused to proceed, the man was unable to discover the reason until his loss was pointed out. A really well-trained animal would have picked up the knife and handed it up to the owner.

"On another occasion my servants were engaged in driving wild elephants towards a stockade, but on nearing the entrance they broke and fled in all directions. Our only course then was to return to our camping-place of the previous night and endeavour to collect the herd on the morrow. This proved to be a difficult matter, as the journey was a long one, and it became so dark that I could not see the driver sitting on the neck of my own

elephant. One of the men shortly afterwards called out that his mount refused to proceed farther, and he suggested that we had probably arrived at the camp. I therefore struck a light and found that the unerring instinct of the so-called dense elephant had guided us to our destination!

"I have witnessed some striking incidents in noosing wild elephants. I remember seeing some *phandis* (noosing men) separate a very large female and her two daughters (one nearly full-grown and the other quite a youngster) from the herd. The mother charged the men as they approached her and actually put up a good fight with the tame elephants, but the young ones returned to the herd, the elder of the two commencing to charge while the mother and baby made themselves scarce. They relieved one another in this manner for a considerable time, in fact, until one of the daughters was captured.

"Elephants have remarkably keen scent, and I have frequently seen tame ones pointing, with their trunks high in the air, in the direction of a wild herd. They raise or lower the trunk according to the probable distance of the troop, and thus render most important assistance to the hunter.

"If a wild herd suspects danger ahead while being driven, no power on earth—not even the firing of a cannon—can make them proceed. They will wheel round and break off in a lateral direction, or return towards their pursuers, and Heaven protect the latter if they are in the course of flight.

"One day when suffering from fever I was returning along the bank of a river in the direction of my home and saw a fine male sambur standing in the stream. I felt too unwell to trouble about it, but as my *shikaris* required food for the larder I stopped for the purpose of securing him. I fired two shots without any apparent effect, but the third attempt caused him to make for the jungle. I followed a blood trail, and eventually found and killed the animal, when to my surprise I discovered that my first two shots had actually found their mark, although the sambur had remained perfectly still.

"Very fine sport can be had in shooting gaur. A friend of mine (J. W.) wounded one, but we did not succeed in bagging it until four days later, and this was only accomplished by waiting for it to return in its previous tracks.

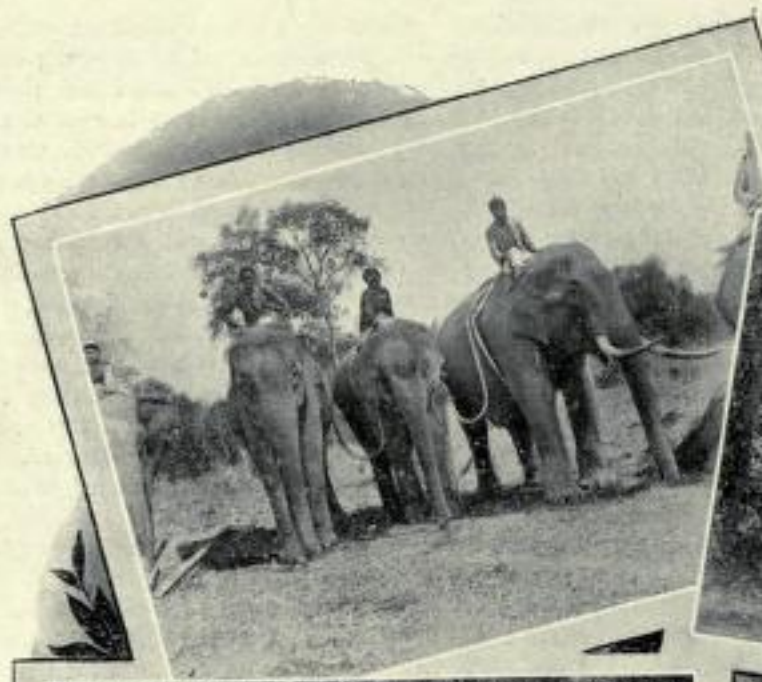
"We sent men on elephants to follow it while we searched for convenient hiding-places for ourselves. Before I had

secured a place, the beast came bounding along the track, and as he swung round a bend in the path I had barely time to step aside and get a rapid shot at him. On another occasion I crawled through an exceedingly dense patch of cane jungle, but when I was near the gaur I could only see a black shape and a switching tail. I fired, however, and he immediately turned and charged in my direction, when I managed to drop him. An examination of the place where I had come upon him showed that he had been standing in a *cul-de-sac*, caused by a fallen tree, and was therefore unable to go forward. He was nearly 6 feet 8 inches in height at the shoulder.

"I once shot what I thought was a full-grown bear resting in a tree, but I soon found that it was a large cub, and that its mother, though unseen at first, was near to it. The latter dropped from the tree and began to stalk me in the dense jungle. It moved about in a circle, gradually reducing the radius until she stood on her hind legs, towering above me, when I placed the muzzle of my gun upon her chest and fired. I have frequently noticed that bears drop or fall from great heights without any apparent ill effects.

"One of the most thrilling hunting experiences I ever had was when two friends (C. and H.) were shooting buffaloes in the jungle in Upper Assam. Mounted on elephants we left camp in the early morning, and, after proceeding for about two miles along the bed of the Kolopani River, came upon the tracks of a very large bull which had been previously seen by me and which possessed a pair of very fine horns. The ground was hard owing to the absence of rain, and this rendered it an exceedingly difficult matter to trace the spoor, but towards evening we discovered marks which had been recently made by the buffalo. It was then too late in the day, however, to pursue him further, therefore on the following morning we set off in confident hope of securing a fine trophy. Soon after we started I scented our quarry, and I at once signalled to that effect to my friends.

"It is an easy matter for an experienced hunter to tell when buffaloes are near, as they emit a very strong odour when they have been resting for a whole night. We moved along very cautiously, but suddenly there was a crash in the jungle and I caught a glimpse of the bull as he charged away from us without affording the slightest opportunity for a shot. My *mahout* then guided the elephant through



ELEPHANT CATCHING AND TRAINING.

Photos by W. M. Stall.



ELEPHANT CATCHING AND TRAINING.

Photos by W. M. Nuttall.

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the dense foliage and pointed out a huge female buffalo, which had evidently joined the male, and was lying down calmly chewing her cud. I saw her distinctly enough, but as I personally only wanted the bull, I tried to show C. where she was hiding. He advanced in the right direction, but the cow must have heard or scented him, as she rose quickly and charged in the direction of the elephant ridden by H. As the undergrowth was nearly as high as the elephants we were quite unable to see where the buffaloes had gone. I called a halt and explained to my friends that our only chance of securing them was to proceed on foot. They agreed to my proposal, and I led the way, my tracker behind me, then came my two friends, with the elephants in the rear. After we had been following the spoor for about an hour I heard the two animals in the jungle ahead, and at once sent my tracker to the remainder of the party, who had lagged behind, to caution them against a surprise rush. I then tried to get round the buffaloes with the view of making them break back towards C. and H., when there was a sudden crash of jungle and a charge of the two beasts in my direction. The bull tore off at an angle where I was standing, while the other turned back on her own tracks and nearly knocked over H., who had barely time to fire and then jump aside as she pursued her headlong flight. We subsequently found a trail of blood at the spot where the cow had been hit by H. I was very anxious to secure the bull on account of his exceedingly fine head, but as I did not wish to leave a wounded animal to succumb to its injuries, I determined to follow up the latter at the risk of losing her mate. My tracker and I therefore took the lead, and soon left my companions behind as the evening was fast approaching. The trail led us into the most impossible places, such as muddy pools where the cow had rolled in order to keep flies from her wound. This mud, thick upon the undergrowth, soon covered me from head to foot, and I became unrecognizable. On reaching a pool of water, however, we noticed that it was disturbed as if an animal had recently passed through it, and as we were thereby convinced that our quarry must be near, we crawled through exceedingly dense jungle, over fallen trees, and through pools of mud, but always on the alert, looking carefully into the thick foliage lest the wounded and infuriated beast should take us by surprise. As I was

climbing over a fallen tree my tracker pulled me back saying that he could see the cow about twenty paces ahead of us, and as she moved I managed to let her have a bullet. Suddenly she broke through the jungle, leaving a track which showed that she was bleeding profusely. My friends—who had now joined me—were convulsed with laughter at my torn clothing and muddy appearance. It seemed to be madness to follow the cow in a waning light through such jungle, but I determined to have her if possible, and arranged with my tracker that he should lead the way and should immediately step out of the line of fire if he discerned any-



A TIGRESS WITH THREE TOES.

thing. The jungle now consisted of masses of thorns and brambles, which were continually tearing our hands and faces, but as we were ascending a slight incline, my servant called out, in Assamese, 'It's coming! it's coming!' and then ran behind me. There was a terrific crashing noise, and although I was unable to see any animal I suddenly found myself flying through space, eventually falling flat on my back, half stunned, but fortunately grasping my rifle. Never shall I forget the moment when I was conscious of my position, as the brute was standing over me! I had fallen upon the slope of the incline, and that piece of luck undoubtedly saved my life, as the buffalo began to horn me most savagely, cutting and bruising the side of my face. Another servant who carried my spare rifle would have shot, but he was afraid of hitting me. Oh, the horrors of those passing seconds! Thousands of thoughts passed through my mind: I pictured myself sitting comfortably in my bungalow; I wondered where

my friends were, and why they did not come to my assistance! At last she ceased horning me and began to administer similar treatment to my tracker, who had also been knocked over. The cow then managed to get one of her horns between his back and his cartridge case, which was quickly torn off, and at the same time she inflicted a slight cut into his flesh. The buffalo then turned her attention to me again, horning me with renewed vigour, but on her hearing the approach of my friends upon their elephants she raised her head and snorted, thus giving me time for thought as to my course of action. I accordingly picked up my rifle, a .577 bore, but in doing this I must have touched her, as she treated me to a kick with one of her hind feet, knocking the weapon out of my hands. I again secured the rifle, but owing to the undergrowth I did not see any chance of making use of it. Eventually I placed the butt end on the ground between my legs and took the best aim possible in that most dangerous position, as I felt certain that if I killed her she would probably fall upon and crush me, and that, if only wounded, she would become much more infuriated. Hopeless as either way seemed to be, I fired, and the brute in bounding forward damaged the muscles of my thigh. The cow was now standing slightly behind me, bellowing furiously, and as I was unable to move on account of the numbness in my leg, I pointed the rifle behind my head and discharged the second barrel, the bullet smashing the pelvis and causing her to collapse. The native servant with my spare gun saw me crawl away and at once fired at the buffalo, but probably from excitement he nearly shot me! As it was practically dark by this time we had to grope our way homewards, thinking possibly that we might be lost, but we suddenly found the bed of a river which was known to us, and after following this for a short distance, we saw our camp fires, which sent to us one of the most inviting welcomes that has ever fallen to our lot.

"I have had several exciting encounters with large game since that day, but keen as I am on sport, I have no desire to repeat the experience of lying almost helpless under a maddened Indian buffalo.

"Bad luck seems in some mysterious way to breed bad luck, as shortly after my encounter with the buffalo referred to I had two narrow escapes with my life. Information reached me one Saturday that two wild buffaloes had been visiting cer-

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tain villages and were causing a great deal of trouble by annoying tame herds belonging to natives, and by threatening and chasing their cowherds, who had attempted to drive away the intruders. On the following morning—a peaceful Sunday which seemed to promise anything but exciting adventures—I took three elephants, one being a very staunch animal which I rode myself, and soon picked up tracks leading across a river, through

possibly owing to its extreme density, one of the pair could not force its way through and came full speed for me, and as I had only one barrel left I steadied the elephant and fired at the head of the brute when he was not more than 20 feet from me. He turned a complete somersault, and after attempting in his convulsions to stand on his head once or twice, he fell dead at the feet of my elephant. We then went in pursuit of the larger of the two

few yards, and although a large fallen tree (over which my elephant scrambled) sent the buffalo to a point at a right angle to me, it was impossible to get a shot at him. Imagine my position! I could not release my hold of the rope in my right hand, my rifle was in my left hand, there I was upon a runaway elephant with an infuriated buffalo at its heels, the two spare elephants shrieking with fright, and tearing along in front of me, to say



1. LEOPARD SHOT BY W. M. NUTTALL. 2. SOLITARY BULL MITHAN, 20 HANDS HIGH, SHOT BY W. M. NUTTALL.
3. WILD BUFFALO SHOT IN OPEN COUNTRY THATCHLAND, NORTH BANK OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA.

which we had to swim. It was evident that the wild buffaloes had turned away from the villages in the direction of their natural haunts, but unfortunately the tame animals from the village had wandered with or after them, towards the jungle, which was very dense. After following up the spoor for a considerable time we came to an open glade, where I saw the two beasts enjoying themselves in a wallow. I was about to fire when my *mahout* stopped me by calling out that they were tame animals, but during this palaver the quarry bolted into the jungle, affording me only a 'snap-shot' at one of them. The two bulls were now indistinguishable in the thick undergrowth, but

bulls by following the trails of blood which were fairly distinct, but every time we got near to him he plunged still deeper into the recesses of the forest. He apparently grew tired of these tactics, as he suddenly charged back on his tracks, snorting furiously, and this assault was so unexpected that the two spare elephants lost nerve, trumpeted, and bolted, while the one I was riding—although she had remained staunch and true in many tests—whisked round and followed her companions. What a ride we had, to be sure; it was uncertain whether we were to fall or be dragged off the elephant, be killed by the buffalo, or impaled on a branch of a tree. The bull was gaining ground every

nothing of the forest jungle with every conceivable kind of thorn and creeper to arrest one's progress, or the uncomfortable nautical roll of an elephant travelling at its fastest speed.

"Once or twice I was nearly dragged off by creepers, or ran the risk of having my eyes torn out by bamboos, but my native servant behind me was not so fortunate, as some tendrils encircled his neck and hurled him, to the ground while he still retained my spare rifle in his hand. The buffalo came on in his mad rush, nearly goring the native as he passed, yet in this most dangerous predicament in which I found myself, I could not help admiring the pluck of my pursuer. My

BENGAL AND ASSAM, BEHAR AND ORISSA

mahout succeeded—at my urgent request—in stopping the elephant for a few seconds when I managed to get a one-handed shot just as the buffalo crashed into us. The next thing I remembered was that I was trying to raise myself, as when falling I had been struck on the head by the branch of a tree. My elephant had been knocked over and was attempting to get on his legs again, and the bull, a few feet away from me, was endeavouring to stand up. Fortunately my shot had had some effect, so I seized my rifle and fired the remaining bullet into the animal's face. I immediately opened the breech for the purpose of reloading when to my horror I found that the gun had exploded, that the two barrels were wide apart, that one was choked with earth, and the other had become shortened by about 2 inches. After a hurried council with my faithful old servant, the latter rushed towards some rising ground, while I made for the jungle, only to be promptly followed by the bull.

"Placing my useless rifle at the foot of a tree, I managed to raise myself a few feet from the ground, and although this was no place of safety I had the utmost satisfaction in seeing the wounded animal staggering along and passing me in his

blind rage. We were now several miles from home, our elephants were lost, and we possessed two broken rifles. Truly our position was not an enviable one, but late at night we were met by a party of natives who had been sent in search of us. It appears that one of the *mahouts*, who was riding the elephant which had been the first to bolt, had been severely cut on the face by a sharp piece of bamboo and had fallen to the ground, but he managed to reach camp, when his blood-stained condition gave some verification of his highly imaginative story that the *Sahib's* elephant had been knocked over, and that every member of the party had been killed. The servants on the other elephant were thrown to the ground before they had travelled far, but they eventually reached home. On the day following the adventure we found the dead buffalo, but several days elapsed before we recaptured the lost elephants.

"After the mishap which had previously befallen me when I was lying beneath a buffalo, a sportsman with many years' experience advised me never to go on foot after large game in that awful jungle, and especially when animals have been wounded and the hunter is following them with light weapons. Buffaloes are, in my

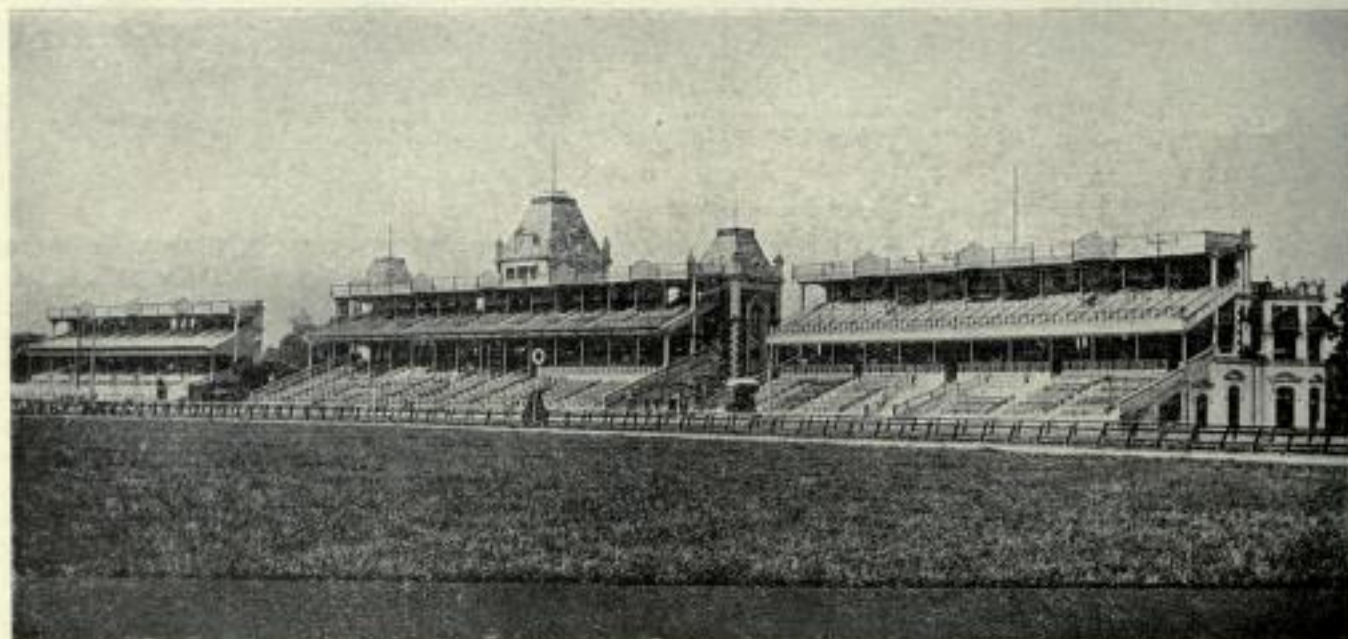
opinion, by far the most savage and dangerous of all our local wild animals.

"It will be admitted that the work of that eventful Sunday was an expensive item, but even that has not prevented me from occasionally engaging in a sport in which I take such a keen delight.

"Finally, it may be said that one's fascination for hunting dangerous large game does not arise so much from the mere fact of killing, but of tracking when it is extremely difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the age of the trail marks or as to the probable distance between pursuer and pursued. It is also produced by the existence of other inhabitants of the jungle which have to be avoided, as they frequently give the alarm of danger from one to another.

"This curious method of signalling is sometimes helpful, however, as a hunter may by it be informed of the presence of the game for which he is searching, while on the other hand squirrels with their chattering, and wild fowl uttering their shrill cries, frequently dispose of all chances of a shot.

"The jungle is an open book, full of interest to those who understand it, and happy is the man who can read its secrets."



THE RACE-STANDS, CALCUTTA.