SHOOTING.

DEATH OF SIR SAMUEL WHITE BAKER.

SIR SAMUEL WHITE BAKER, one of the most distinguished explorers and hunters of the present century, has joined the great majority. He died at his residence, Sandford Orleigh, Newton Abbot, on Saturday last, at the age of 72 years. Sir Samuel Baker had for some years been in the habit of passing his winters abroad, but had decided to spend the present one at home. Up to Nov. 17 he had enjoyed his usual good health, but on that day, while out with a shooting party, he complained of a pain in his chest, and on Dec. 11 he was unable to leave his bed. From this time he gradually got worse, and on Saturday afternoon breathed his last.

Sir Samuel Baker, the eldest son of Samuel Baker, Esq., of Lyppiatt Park, Gloucester, was born in 1821, educated in Germany, and trained for the profession of an engineer. At twenty-six years of age he visited Ceylon, chiefly for the purpose of elephant hunting; he, however, also made an attempt to establish an English agricultural settlement in the vicinity of Newera Ella, conveying emigrants thither from England, and importing the best obtainable breeds of cattle and sheep. In 1854 he returned to England, and published his well-known books "The Rifle and Hound in Ceylon," and his "Eight Years' Wanderings in Ceylon." In 1855 he lost his first wife, the daughter of the Rev. Charles Martin; in the same year he was engaged by the Turkish Government in organising the first Ottoman railway.

It was not until Baker had attained his fortieth year that he commenced his distinguished career as an African explorer, when, accompanied by his second wife—a Hungarian lady, whom he married in 1860—he proceeded to Egypt with the intention of discovering the sources of the Nile, or doing what he could at his own expenses to bring assistance to Speke and Grant, who had started from Zanzibar with the same object in view. Before doing this, however, he spent twelve months in hunting in Abyssinia, returning to Khartoum in June, 1862, where he organised a party to explore the White Nile. He reached Gondokoro in February, 1863, and there met Capts. Speke and Grant, taking them the relief of which they were in great need. For this service he was awarded the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society. Following this, Baker set out on the celebrated journey in which, in spite of the opposition of slave traders and natives, he succeeded in discovering Mwuta Nzige, to which he gave the name of Albert Nyanza. The return journey was beset with difficulties, and it was not until 1866 that Baker and his wife returned to England, when he received the honour of knighthood, was created M.A. of Cambridge, decorated by the Khedive, and awarded the gold medal of the Paris Geographical Society.

With a view to taking effectual steps to suppress the slave trade, Sir Samuel and Lady Baker returned to Egypt in 1867, and in the following year joined the suite of the Prince and Princess of Wales, who were then making a tour in Egypt. In 1869 he was appointed by the Khedive Governor of the Equatorial Provinces, with the rank of Pasha, and invested with supreme power over all the countries of the Nile basin south of Gondokoro—his instructions being to stamp out the slave trade, and to open up navigation to the great equatorial lakes, and for this purpose he was to establish military stations at convenient distances along the route from Gondokoro. Owing to the opposition of the Egyptian officials at Khartoum, and the Nile being choked with vegetation, his party, much weakened by death, only reached Gondokoro in 1871, and he at once commenced building a new station, to which he gave the name of Ismailia. As soon as circumstances would permit, he pushed southwards through Unyoro, and was constantly fighting either against the slave traders or the hostile natives; he succeeded, however, in checking the slave trade, and in 1873 returned to England, and published an account of his expedition in his well-known book "Ismailia." For the services which Sir Samuel Baker rendered to geographical science, and in the interests of humanity; but to the readers of the *Field* he is perhaps better known as a mighty hunter, and a very large portion of each of his books is devoted to his adventures with dangerous game. To this journal he was, in days gone by, a frequent contributor, having written for us, in the years 1862 and 1863, a series of interesting articles, "Letters from the Danube." His latest contribution appeared in our issue of the 16th ult., and was on the subject of "rifles for big game." Sir Samuel Baker was a keen sportsman, an excellent shot; no man better understood the hunter's craft than he did, and his last work—"Wild Beasts and Their Ways," shows how closely he had studied the subject in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. As a sportsman and explorer he stood in very first rank, and he's name will be handed down to posterity in company with those of Livingstone, Gordon-Cumming, Speke, Grant, and Burton.

TWO DAYS' SHOOTING ON THE SIAMESE FRONTIER.

IN MAY, 1892, having to visit one of my Siamese frontier outposts, I made up my mind to break the journey to make two days' shooting fit in. After duly inspecting the outposts, I arrived at Nong-Y., a Karen village, some fifteen miles from my outpost, reaching there at 11 a.m. I sent for the villagers, and began inquiries into the whereabouts of a very old and fine rhinoceros that occasionally visited these parts. The villagers told me that his tracks had not been seen lately, and I then inquired what other game was about; they informed me that elephants, at some eight or ten miles off, and bison and hsine were close by. I was not very keen about bison, hsine, or elephants, so, after a long talk, made up my mind to visit a salt lick some three or four miles off, to which, if my friend Rhino was in the neighbourhood, he would be certain to have paid a visit.

Next morning we made an early start at 5 a.m., taking, as good luck would have it, plenty to eat and drink. On reaching the salt lick, we wandered round it, but the freshest tracks of rhinoceros were some four days old. We, however, found night tracks of a very fine tusker elephant. The tusks were worth getting, from the deep marks he left where he had taken his mud bath, so we agreed to track him up. A. K. (my old tracker) had arrived from Pegu, and he promptly took up the tracks. Tracking was hard, owing to the ground being covered with fallen leaves; we, however, made our way along the elephant's line of march due north. After some eight miles' tracking we came on fresh marks of the rhinoceros I was after; there was no mistaking his enormous footmarks; the tracks were those of the early morning, so, though from indications I thought the tusker was near, I gave up the chase and turned my attention to the rhinoceros. After two or three miles' tracking through very heavy jungle, we heard a most unearthly noise going on in a valley to our right, and the noise continuing, I asked my men what it was. The Karens said it was elephants; my tracker said it was the rhinoceros. Hearing this, I made up my mind to go down to where the row was continuing with more vigour than ever. A. K. led the way; the Karens dropped behind. Our progress was slow, as we had to wait for renewals of the noise to guide us. At length we got to the spot, and on stepping from behind a clump of bamboos I saw a magnificent bull bison, who was amusing himself by calling in this extraordinary way. He spotted me almost as I spotted him, and made off. However, a snap shot from my .577 Express and a steel-tipped bullet did their work, and, after he had gone for about 50 yards, we had the satisfaction of hearing him fall, while at the same time all around us there was a tremendous stampede. The jungle, however, was too dense. I could see nothing, so we made our way down to where the bull had fallen; he was an enormous beast, but had damaged his horns badly with fighting, and was covered with scars, new and old. The Karens took some of the flesh, and I made up my mind to send an elephant the next day to bring in the head.

We then made our way back to the rhinoceros tracks, but after some time we lost the tracks, owing to a heavy fall of rain, and consequently thought it best to work our way home, our guide starting in a northerly direction. Noting this, and also the fact that he appeared uncertain, and was constantly bringing us across impenetrable jungle, I halted and spoke to the man; he admitted that he had lost his way, but would not work due south as I wished him, and jeered at my little compass, which I always take with me. It was now three o'clock in the day, when we struck a path, and shortly afterwards came on a stream. Here as our guide said he knew the way; then we halted for lunch. We again made our way along the path, which was now going due east; noting this, I once more spoke to our guide, but he said it was all right, and that we would get in by 8 p.m. At 6 p.m. it began to get dark, and, to add to our sorrows, the path came to an end; the guide here admitted he had lost his way, and I now took the reins into my own hands and struck due south. At 7 p.m. it became too dark to get on, and A. K. said we had better wait for the rising of the moon, due at 11 p.m. As it had been raining heavily in the afternoon, after much trouble I induced the Karens to light a fire, and, taking off coat and shirt, sat down near the fire to dry them; the rain fortunately ceasing, I was fairly comfortable, and sat by the fire meditating on our bad luck. Fortunately I had my pipe with me, or I do not know what I should have done, having had nothing left to eat or drink. At about 10 p.m. I heard a gun shot due south, a long way off; I woke up the Karens and A. K., and suggested a move, but they did not believe that I had heard the shot, but about half an hour later a second gun shot in the same direction showed that I was right. I replied with my .577 Express, and made up my mind to start again. The moon having got up, we made a move due south this time, I led the way, and falling over wood, &c., scratched myself to a most abominable way. At about half-past one this work we came on a fair path leading east and west. In spite of all remonstrances, the guide took this path, saying he now knew the way. After about three or four miles of this work the path ended, and the men struck work, saying it would be best to wait for daylight. I accordingly made them light another fire, and we sat down to wait for day. A. K. and the Karens went to sleep, while I sat and smoked.

Directly it became light enough we made a start, and soon after came on a path leading due south. My guide again said he knew the way, and this time he was right. A couple of hours' walking brought us home. I was weary and very footsore, so after 20grs. of quinine, some soup, &c., turned in and had a good sleep. I got on and off the saddle by the following day, in the evening my bison head came in; I called up the villagers and made arrangements for the next day's shoot. It was arranged we were to go south and work for bison and hsine.

At 5 a.m. we made a start, and after marching about five miles we came on the tracks of a big herd of bison. I examined the marks of a very big bull in the herd, so we agreed to follow them up. After about two or three miles' tracking, A. K. said we were close on the herd, and I therefore took my .577 Express, loaded with steel-bullets, and followed him closely.* Suddenly, as we came out of a thick clump of bamboo, he sank down and pointed in front of him. I signalled to the men behind me to sit down, and looked up to where A. K. was. At the other end of an opening, about 170 yards or 180 yards off, I saw an enormous tiger quietly trotting across the glen. He was close to the jungle, and I had no time to change my bullets for solid lead, so made up my mind to take my chance. With the 200 yards sight up I drew a fine bead. The tiger made two magnificent bounds, and was just entering the jungle as the second barrel as he entered the thick jungle, but do not think I touched him, as I was rather hurried in my shot, and, as he was going fast, I made up my mind that I had made a mess of the business. On going up to the spot, we saw a long furrow ploughed up by the bullet. The Karens and A. K. said he was not hit, but, after careful examination of where the tiger was standing, one of the men found a few spots of blood. We followed the tracks, and where the tiger had entered the jungle found a spot or two of blood. A hundred yards further tracking, and there were pools of blood. The bullet had gone through the beast, and blood was spurting out from both sides. After about a quarter of a mile's tracking, we came on where he had lain down, and there were pools of blood. As a big storm was coming on, I had the tracking pushed on as fast as possible. After about another quarter of a mile's tracking the tiger took to water—here, too, the storm that had been threatening broke. We hunted about for an hour, but could not pick up the tracks, the blood having been washed away by the heavy rain.

After this disaster I said no more about breakfast. Shocking bad luck. Had I known it was tiger we were to come across I would have had a solid lead bullet, and the tiger would have been a dead one. The Karens tried to cheer me up by promising me they would look him up and bring me the skull, &c. Breakfast over, we started again, working our way south. When we had gone two or three miles we came on the tracks of a big Malayan bull bison. I thought this was good enough, and we followed up his tracks; they were after the rain, so we judged he could not be far off. After a mile or so of tracking I heard a whistle from one of the Karens, who pointed to a bamboo clump just to our right. I snatched my rifle from my shikari, loaded up, and went up cautiously to the clump. On peering round in search of the bison, which I supposed to be lying up close, I saw a big Malayan bear on the other side of the clump making his way towards me. I fired for his neck, and he sank down without a sound. We made our way up to him, and found him to be a very old male bear. The skin was hardly worth keeping, as he had a hole in the throat, and was quite an ugly customer. The Malayan bear, too, has very short fur, and is altogether a most ungainly and ugly beast. We, however, made up our minds to take the skin and skull of the beast. We found him to be enormously fat; this fat the Karens carefully collected in bamboos.

Having skinned the beast, we took up our minds to work homewards for bison, hsine, &c., and at about four miles from home we came on fresh tracks of hsine; there were about twelve of them in the herd, one of them a big bull. After a mile or so of tracking, A. K. thought we were near the herd, so I took up my rifle and followed him. Unfortunately, a big storm had been working up, and just at this time it burst on us. The rain is as it only can in Burmah, and the footmarks were washed away. I accordingly made up my mind that home was the best place; and next morning, as the rains had apparently set in, I thought it best to make my way back. The rains here are not mild and moderate rains, such as we get in Upper Burmah, but a ceaseless downpour from morning to night. We accordingly left at 9 a.m. by boat, on the way down missing an excellent opportunity. Four bison were down drinking at the river, but, frightened by the noise the boatmen made, galloped off before I could lay hands on my rifle, and, though I landed and followed them for a mile or two, it was no good; they were still going hard, and no chance existed of overtaking them.

PEGU YOMAHS.

THE LETTING OF GROUSE MOORS.

THIS ever green, yet somewhat unsatisfactory, subject is, to judge from the number of letters we receive, of considerable interest. The matter has been frequently discussed in these columns, but one question being not long ago, yet the letters which have come to hand during the last week or two are nearly in the same words and exactly in the same spirit as their numerous predecessors. In view of the demand upon our space, it is not desirable to open our columns to a correspondence on a question which has been worn threadbare. There is no particular reason for letting a grouse moor, for in this matter, as in every other dealing of a similar kind, the lessor and his agent are naturally desirous of giving the shooting the very best character it will bear; and if a lessee chooses to swallow *en masse* everything he is told, and if he takes the moor without making any independent inquiry, he can only be surprised if, in a good proportion of cases, actual facts do not exactly agree with the previous description. There would be the same experience had the lessee taken a couple of rooms in a lodging house without seeing them, or knowing anything about them. Of course, the man who has been in the habit of renting shootings year after year gains wisdom, and picks up wrinkles which stand him in good stead when he is looking out for a moor; but even a novice at hiring moors scarcely deserves a great deal of compassion if he be guilty of what is tantamount to "buying a pig in a poke." Men who have the means to enjoy grouse shooting are not usually hermits; they surely know someone with some experience to whose opinion they can defer, while it does not need a man with any great amount of acumen to realise the value of the legal maxim, "caveat emptor."

* Sir Samuel Baker, in his book "Wild Beasts and their Ways," says: "The battery for the heavy game should be a pair of double No. 8, weighing 14lb. or 15lb., to bun from 12drs. to 14drs. of powder, with a hardened bullet of 8oz." Unfortunately happen to be weak wristed, and although I commenced with No. 8, as suggested by Sir Samuel Baker, found the results unsatisfactory, the shoot ng being principally snap shooting; so I took to a .577 Express, built by Tolley, weighing 10lb., and burning 5drs. of powder. Finding this more satisfactory, I moulded ordinary lead, with steel tip and steel core, and found this answer well with big game. With t ger and soft-skinned game it was unsatisfactory, as it travelled through the body. For such I used the solid lead bullets.

[Advertisement.]—IMPORTANT NOTICE.—T. Ferkes, Gun Manufacturer, 119, Jermyn-street, St. James's, and 184, Castle-street, Oxford street, begs respectfully to inform his friends and the public generally that, owing to increase of business, he will shortly remove to his new and extensive manufacturing and retail premises situated at 18, Cork-street, Bond-street, W., adjoining the Empress Rooms (Hotels), as soon as the necessary alterations are completed.—December, 1893.

[Advertisement.]—A NEW SHOOTING COAT (PATENTED).—We have received for inspection the latest shooting jacket invented by Messrs Dege and Son, of 13, Conduit-street, W. The garment has indentation pleats, laced with elastic, which give ample freedom. The sleeves are novel; they are detached from the body under the armpits, and linked to it with elastic. The effect is that in lifting the shoulders for a rocketing shot the weight of the coat, cartridges and all has not to be lifted. This we think an improvement on the design we described on Sept. 10.—Vide the *Field* Oct. 22. 1892.

THE DIKKOP OF THE KALAHARI.

DIKKOP are found scattered throughout South and South Central Africa, but probably are more frequently met with in certain sparsely wooded districts on the eastern border of the Kalahari desert than in other parts. From Barkly West right up to Sochong these birds can often be seen in bodies of from five to a dozen in number. They are somewhat wary in nature, and, after the first few shots, take a lot of following up, especially if started in one of the many thickets of camel-thorn, which they are much in the habit of frequenting during certain seasons of the year.

In general appearance and in colour the dikkop, though a more bulky bird, is very like the common curlew, save that the beak is short and shaped more like that of the golden plover, though considerably larger. The eyes are large and prominent, the pupil slight; the head is thick and broad on the top—a characteristic that has gained for the bird the name of "hammerkop" from the Boers; the legs are thicker than those of the curlew, the breast is full and very fleshy, and the bird is most excellent eating.

The dikkop appears to be identical with the thick-knee, stone curlew, or great Norfolk plover, now rarely met with in the British Isles. It is placed under the same classification, Œdicnemus crepitatus, and termed by some the "thick-knee bustard." If there be any observable difference, however, between the great Norfolk plover and the dikkop, it is that the latter is somewhat longer and thicker in the legs. The habits of both birds are very similar, so far as can be ascertained, and the average sportsman can hardly be excused for confounding the one with the other, so alike are they in general appearance.

During the rainy season dikkop usually congregate in the vicinity of the temporary swamps, caused by the heavy downpour in the Kalahari, where also the native teal (Pterocyanea circia), or the blue, so-called, pochard together to feed on the tiny frogs and crustacea. These birds are also very fond of spawn and of young fish; in the summer, when the water is at its lowest, they may often be observed in couples along the banks of the Orange, Vaal, Modder, Molopo, and other rivers and streams. By the Cape Colony Game Amendment Act, 1886, they are classed under the heading of game.

Dikkop are comparatively large-bodied, and strong on the wing. No. 5 is about the smallest shot which it is advisable to use for them; they will sometimes carry on after having been tremendously hard hit. In the month of April, 1885, whilst shooting korhaan on the hills, by a station named Creefdale, I came across a flock of nine of these birds, and a lively time they gave me. First, a single bird rose from the other side of a thick clump of blue bush, about 40 yards distant. I fired quickly, and the feathers flew; but the dikkop went on just as if nothing had happened. He then dropped about 100 yards in front of me. I ran towards the spot, thinking that he would fall an easy victim to a second shot, and on the way had to pass the clump of blue bush from the other side of which he had risen. As I reached the bush three of his companions rose and flipped around the corner, in such a smart and wary style that I could not get a snap shot at them. I followed their line immediately, and five more birds rose close by. This time I got an easy right and left, killing a couple of them; the remaining three dropped among some veldt bush about 250 yards off. The birds flew very low, and appeared to sheer round every available bit of brush in their course, as if with the intention of concealing their line of flight.

After gathering the dead ones and taking good stock of where the others had just alighted, I made forward again to seek the first bird that had risen. To my annoyance I had entirely lost the spot. This is not startling: all who know the open veldt are aware that, as a rule, one part is pretty much like another, and it is sometimes difficult to remember a particular point when one's attention has been thoroughly distracted for a short time. After a long zigzag search, however, I came upon my first victim quite suddenly; he was evidently badly wounded, but had still enough go in him. Half running, half flying, he managed to slip round a large veldt bush before I could get on to him. I followed him up as fast as possible, and caught him in the act of diving into a small lump of scrub, apparently with the intention of hiding himself. The next shot was successful, and I then went back to seek for the remainder. On the way the whole lot of three flipped up. "Flip" is a word that, somehow or other, conveys a vivid impression of the dikkop's flight. I got a snap shot at the nearest, and broke the outer pinion of his wing, so he commenced to run instanter, and I followed him. As long as the bird ran it was a hard job to keep up with him, but whenever he tried to fly I generally found him on the ground. After a warm chase of about 60 yards he dived into a blue bush and stuck his head well among the roots, so, pulling him out ignominiously by the legs, I added him to the bag and went in quest of his fellows. To cut a long story short, six out of the nine were bagged before the night began to close in, which it does very quickly after sundown in those latitudes. That flock of dikkop gave me a deal of trouble from first to last, and I thought myself very fortunate in bringing three couple of them to bag.

On the way up country I killed a few of these birds in the vicinity of several well known stations; notably near Dry Harts, Leuwvan, Vanderlinden, Matsema, Vaal Kopje, Madibi, Ramatlabama, Ikoberye, Kechuenyana, Takana, and Pilans Kraal.

Madibi, however, a station between Maritzani and Mafeking, was the best for dikkop that I ever experienced. In the neighbourhood of this station, where I was encamped for some weeks, there were several thickets of large camel-thorn trees, and the ground under the wide spread of which the thickets were situated, contained sundry flocks of these birds varying from six to a dozen in number. Rarely did I return to camp with less than four couple in the bag. But the way in which those dikkop would at times flip round to the off side of the covert, run through the scrub, and rise just out of shot was aggravating in the extreme. Two or three guns would have obtained excellent sport; but it was not easy for a solitary sportsman to head the birds. There can be no denying, however, that I always worked hard on these occasions, and was thoroughly satisfied with the result.

In my humble opinion, the dikkop is to be commended as a success both in the veldt and on the table. Many a morning have I enjoyed when circumventing him on the former, and many a pleasant evening have I experienced when discussing him on the latter.

CORNUBIAN.

DEER COURSING IN THE HIGHLANDS.

NOT long ago I received an invitation to visit a Scotch deer forest; the exact locality, for certain reasons, I need not mention, but it is situate in one of the most romantic and wildest parts of the central Highlands. I was keen and enthusiastic to get within range of my first stag. I knew my host to be one of those kings among sportsmen who, a good shot himself, derives more pleasure from the success of his guests than from any prowess of his own. I knew also that he prided himself on his special breed of fast and powerful dogs, with which he coursed and killed the red deer, wounded and unwounded—a sport formerly practised in the Highlands, but which has of recent years become extinct, chiefly, perhaps because now each stag on the hill has his monetary value to the landlord. It was with no ordinary anticipations, then, that I reached the rere to shoot the following day on a Monday evening. Of my first stag and its successful termination in the death of a fine eleven-pointer, I shall say nothing, nor will I describe a successful course after an unwounded roedeer which we found in the open, and which the dogs, after a long run, ran into and killed—a feat they had often performed before, and one of no slight interest to the subject of this article, the description of a day's sport such as those who were fortunate enough to take part in it will never forget.

On the morning of this particular day we started off with four dogs, my host and myself carrying rifles. The four dogs were (1) G., a three-year-old Irish wolfhound dog, rising two years, and weighing 110lb., a model dog, full of dash and pluck, but rather wanting in speed; (2) L., a two-year-old Irish wolfhound bitch, standing 37in. and weighing 81lb., full of fire, with a wonderful turn of speed, but light in weight; (3) E., an Irish wolfhound bitch, a puppy of a year old, standing 29in. and weighing 95lb., with great power, and a curious inherited instinct for attacking a deer's legs and breaking them—an instinct known to have been possessed by one of her ancestors; and (4) K., a half Irish wolfhound, half Russian Borzoi puppy, standing 30in., and weighing 85lb., a very keen dog, with a good turn of speed and lasting power, with the habit, derived from the Borzoi sire, of killing at the point of the animal hunted. Starting, then, with these four hounds and the stalkers, we reached a spot about four miles from the lodge, whence we saw, some distance away to the west, five stags—one a royal, one a ten-pointer, and three staggies. The stags were rather over a mile from us, on the slope of the hill which bounds one side of a plain. This plain is surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, and through its centre runs a winding burn, which, starting from the south-west of the plain, makes its way to a