

SHOOTING.

RHINOCEROS SHOOTING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

THESE ANIMALS, handicapped as they are by defective vision, lay low, and considerable money value, are rapidly approaching extinction in South Africa. They are only to be shot in Mashonaland and in some parts of the Lobomo range, on Umzeela's boundary or within his territory. Three distinct species formerly roamed through the South African "veldt," even to its southern limit, wherever suitable conditions as to food and water were met. The two most numerous living specimens were not to be found till the traveller approached the "fair Limpopo," if we except a few in the Adolla Bush of the East Province of the Cape, which were different of approach on account of the virulent nature of the "blunk." The largest of the three species was the black rhino; the second sort was the black; and the other was the even-horned rhino. I have ceased for some years to come in contact with the white rhino, but so lately as 1885 found the two other varieties fairly represented in parts of the Lobomo range.

The "white" rhinoceros, as I observe, has no claim to his name as regards colour, in which respect he only differs by a few shades from the other kinds mentioned, although indeed I once killed a specimen sporting a dirty dark "buff coat," no doubt a "heavy swell" among his compeers. The white rhino is a grass-eater and consequently to be found in those parts of the bush, although, for the most part, he usually prefers the "bush" quarters. He is considerably larger than the other kinds, and a large bull would weigh about four tons at least. I fancy, and, although on very short legs, he is from 6ft. to 6ft. 6in. from the girth to his foot to the top of his horns. The horn varies in adults from 2ft. 6in. to 2ft. 2in. in length, and behind it is a rudimentary horn, or rather horny lump. This species is the very epitome of grotesque, unorthodox ugliness, and is very correctly drawn by the late Capt. Harris, who published lithographs of the game he met with here many years ago; and if one could be sent to Europe, it would be a most valuable addition to my library. I did the hippo on his first appearance in English society—no specimen of this kind, or I believe of any kind of African rhino, having as yet appeared in Europe.

This rhino has a of a pacific disposition, or rather seldom initiates hostile charges upon his prey, but is a most persistent, and only take leave of their intended victims with life. One of these brutes put me in considerable bodily fear by pursuing me round and round an immense ant heap, from the shelter of which I had fired at and wounded her by foolishly trying a "shot" of this kind. This animal is very much more than very high, but so hard and slippery that I thought it safe to do nothing but attempting an ascent, as a slip would have proved fatal; and so pursued and pursued went circling round at best paces for some time, rhino's sharp horns sometimes looking ominously near. This sort of thing continued till I nearly the enemy halted, and gave time to reload the M.L.S. Bore short single rifle in my hand with a handful of powder and a huge conical shot with a steel core, when I made a good shot at the point of her shoulder diagonally towards the opposite hip, upon receipt of which the beast sprang off furiously for a hundred yards or so, and fell dead. The recoil from this shot nearly upset me, but I had more than filled my hand with fine C.H. powder; but the shot traversed the whole length of the animal, and bulged out the skin on the thigh, where it lodged.

The flesh and bacon of this kind of rhino are very good when duly salted and partially dried, as his head is some 5ft. long, and the muzzle is carried with the foot of the ground, from which it cannot be lifted much higher, and a strange, weird-like appearance is given to the animal by the position of the ears, which look as if they were perched on the withers, while the little dull eyes are as near the nose as in the usual place.

The black rhino, which is a most voracious a very different animal, and hardly so large, with a head carried imperceptibly high. The head, with semi-protrusive lip, resembles that of his Asiatic relation very much, and his temper resembles nothing else in his diabolical aggressiveness and continual irritability. His horn seldom exceeds 4ft. in length, and his vision is superior to him man, and although Kafirs will eat him and be thankful, white men seldom taste his flesh twice. These fellows feed exclusively on virulent thorn shrubs, and grind up pretty thick branches with ease and satisfaction. They need to be extraordinarily numerous to do any good on the ground, from which more or less plentiful throughout those interior districts, and the horrid "wait-a-bit" thorn covers ground luxuriantly. Their habit of blindly charging anything coming between "the wind and their nobility" was formerly a constant source of anxiety to any traveller passing through the interior of the interior, and some terrible massacres had occurred some times from their savagery in this line; indeed, I have twice saved my equipment from destruction from these brutes by being fortunate enough to hear them crashing and puffing along in their onset just in time to take a shot or two. For years, however, no more danger from them has been to be apprehended. More's the pity, I say, as they afforded grand sport.

The even-horned rhino inhabits stony ridges and ranges as a rule, and was never very plentiful, although always to be found in the proper bush, and in choice of food, general formation, and temper he very much resembles the black rhino. He is, however, considerably smaller—in fact, very little larger than the Asiatic rhino. The Boers call him "de klen blaauwvle" ("little blue one") from the bluish tint of his hide. He carries two horns of equal length, one behind the other, on his cheeky-looking nose. These horns are not so long as the point, and very sharp, but do not exceed a foot or so in length.

The two last-named species may still be found in numbers sufficient for more sport, in several parts of the Lobomo range to the north-east of the Transvaal, as the localities they affect there are unimpeachable for horsemen, and Boers do not care to hunt them on foot.

All rhinos drink at least once in twenty-four hours, and if the sport is taken up from one of these drinking places, it is easy enough to follow it to the place which the animal has selected for his long drink, which is usually not more than four or five miles from the water. Here, if all goes well, he will be found, and doing during the hot hours of the day, sometimes prone, but generally on his feet; and then the application of a shot rather high through or behind the shoulder, according to the position he is in with reference to the water, sets him off with a frantic rush, during which he suddenly collapses in a cloud of dust. There, if good wind these animals may often be approached as near as a man likes, if the birds which are generally creeping over them in search of ticks do not sound the alarm note. But if an unfortunate whiff of gun smoke be blown towards the animal, they either both off at once and are lost, or make their way off, charging about in search of the enemy, who, however, is seldom exposed by these purblind brutes. While they are cutting these capers, a nice shot may usually be obtained if a man does not get frustrated by estimates of his own power. I have seen a rhino, when it really is, as even a shot badly placed generally sends the beast about his business, only to pull up goodness knows where, but probably fifteen or twenty miles away.

These animals are not very tenacious of life, as the lungs are enormous, and can hardly be seen, but with a frantic rush, the shot always, I think, proves fatal, very speedily. There, if a wounded rhino should always be followed up for a fair distance, and the chances are in favour of bagging him.

To give some idea of the numbers once to be found along the Limpopo, I may mention that within the space of a couple of

square miles or thereabouts, and just where the Notwami river flows into Limpopo, in one day before noon, killed nine of them, two of which were of the so-called "white," and the others of the black species. I should never have gone in for such a bout, especially as the low thorns there afforded no shelter from attack, but that a commando of Sechilli's people, numbering about two hundred and fifty men, on the way path there, and encamped near me, and their leader, Kosi Linsky, requested me to shoot some large game for his people, who were hungry, and unable to kill for themselves. Stipulating that the horns and portions of the skin should be returned to me, I was accordingly allowed to go, and went to work with a will, especially as I knew that these warriors would do nothing but gorge for at least twenty-four hours, and would then become somewhat, and leave me in peace till they marched again.

As it happened, the death of these rhinos probably saved the lives of a Boer hunting party homeward bound, headed by the Piet Scharz, who passed nearly within sight during the time the Kafirs were all busy cutting up and devouring the meat, and attending to nothing else. Sechilli and the Boers being at enmity at the time, it would have gone hard with this hunting party if it had not been for the assistance of some of the Kafirs, who would certainly have been the case had they not been so pleasantly occupied at the time in squabbling, gorging, and hanging up meat. One unfortunate fellow of the party, however, named Maeytyns, who had remained behind at Sechilli's kraal to trade corn for his gun, was shot and killed by the Kafirs, who were then passing by, and then they murdered, and his wagon, ivory, horses, oxen, and other property taken.

To a steady man unconscious of nerves, rhino shooting is, I take it, not very dangerous work, although when one happens to get mixed up with a fatal party, such as I took place in, it is tolerably exciting too. The onset of these fierce brutes is a fine exhibition of animal passion; and if a man sees the direction taken by the assailant, danger is easily avoided, as these fellows always keep a straight line, and seldom attempt a second charge upon anything they have once touched. So long as the assailant's intentions happen, as rhinos often rush out of a thicket before they are viewed, and that with such rapidity as to give inadequate time to avoid the charge by springing off the line of attack.

I will remember an accident thus happening to an acquaintance of mine, who was riding slowly along on the spur of a somewhat cheap horse with a fatigued party, such as I took place in, in this case the horn of the assailant passed through my friend's thigh, through the saddle, and went into the horse's body as far as its length allowed. Horse and man were carried some distance on the rhino's horn, and then he jerked it them off, and puffed away at a top gallop, leaving the rider to his fate. The horse was killed, but, owing to the horn being round and smooth, it merely separated the muscles of the rider's thigh from each other without laceration, and, although the wound looked ugly enough, it soon got well, and in less than a month my friend was again in the saddle.

In spite of a heavy, stiff body of immense weight, and very short inelegant legs, these animals can get a terrific pace, and their staying power is unlimited. When they once make up their mind to make a bolt, off they go at a splendid trot, and the best horse on good ground has to do his best to bring his rider into close quarters, and then rhino breaks into a gallop which leaves the pursuer far behind, with a poorish chance of catching him again, unless he resumes his trot very shortly. For more fun, when the animal has taken the direction I was pursuing, I have tried to pass in front of him on several occasions, and he failed, although occasionally well mounted. Something of course, it is to the facility with which he dashes through obstacles which both a horse and man, even allowing for all that, the pace a rhino can go is simply marvellous.

There is a popular belief, I believe, that the hide of these animals is moist, as on the living organism, it is an error. When it is still moist, as on the living organism, it is an error. When it is still moist, as on the living organism, it is an error. When it is still moist, as on the living organism, it is an error.

As regards the error I have alluded to, I remember a case in point. At a post-prandial conversation at an hotel in Pretoria with some English gentlemen who were bound "up country" on sport interest, the rhino was the subject of conversation, and one of the more aggressive-looking person in flame-coloured hair and a black coat suddenly interposed, and rudely remonstrated with me for deluding these nice comers with the idea that it was possible to kill a rhino with anything like such a weapon as a man could handle. For a moment or two I felt as if I were in a bad way, but, as the object of the conversation was the rhino, I merely called in some Boer hunters, who were encamped close at hand, and they confirmed what I had said on the subject to the satisfaction of everybody but the reverend gentleman, who departed growling and hugging his own convictions.

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Rhinos, as a rule, are worth about 215 each, as a great number of whips can be cut out of the hide. Long horns, too, fetch fancy prices now; but when they were procurable in commercial quantities they realised about 8s. per lb. A few specimens may still be shot by a man who will "go" for them, within reach of such civilisation as is to be encountered in the Transvaal, but wholesale sport of this kind is a thing of the past in South Africa.

CARIBOU SHOOTING IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

Sir,—In your issue of Dec. 31 there is an account by L. B. of his trip to Newfoundland during the past year, and, having for two seasons hunted over the same district, I have a few remarks to add. I have very great interest in the matter, and, I am sure, to many other men who have visited that country in search of sport.

Will L. B. kindly give us a little more information through your columns as to the following points:—(1) Where a large migrator last autumn? Did he see any signs in the velvet at the beginning of his trip, or any of them which he shed his horns before he broke up his party?

(2) Did the majority of the horns he saw have horns, or were they?

(3) Points do not permit for much in a caribou's head. The smallest one I have seen is that of a caribou, and I have seen several of the finest and most heavily patterned specimens I have ever seen.

I congratulate L. B. on having secured a bear, as they are not numerous in that part of the province, and I have never seen one, and only once did I come across the track of one.

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A MORNING WITH THE QUAIL IN THE PUNJAB.

THE PUNJAB is a wide arid; so I may as well explain that the district more particularly alluded to in this sketch lies south of the Beas River, on the Beas Doab Canal, about sixty miles from Lahore, on the Punjab State Railway, and about thirty miles from the terminus for the hill stations of Dalhousie, Dharmisala, and the well-known tea district of the Kangra Valley. Quail visit us twice a year—namely, about the commencement of April and the middle of September, and perhaps the best sport is to be had during the latter period, as the birds are then ready to set. When klubber (news) of their arrival is given, no time must be lost, as in a few days the whole country, which, far and eye can see, is moving with golden grain, will be but a dry and dusty stubble plain for many miles, and unless fair cover for the birds is available, good shooting is by no means as pleasant shooting as it might be.

"Well, old fellow," said my friend S. to me, as we sat over the day after-dinner coffee, "what do you say to a pot at the quail the day after to-morrow? I hear they're in, and the shikari has been round to see the quail this afternoon, and wants to know if the shikari is going out or not?"

"I'm with you, you day like," is my ready reply; and as I always like S. to make the arrangements for our sporting expeditions, I add, "Of course you'll tell the shikari to have the 'call birds' out in the night." This he willingly agrees to, and we both agree to go out in the morning, and to be ready at the first word "call birds," which perhaps it will be well to explain. Quail are, as all Indian sportsmen well know, the most pugnacious of birds; indeed, all over India the natives are in the habit of training them for fighting purposes, as our ancestors used to breed cock-fighting, and many cock-fights are held in an Indian village in the present day when two famous fighting quail meet in the ring. "Call-birds" are tame quail, which are kept by the native shikaris in order to attract the wild birds. The former, placed in wicker cages, are put out in the night time into a patch of corn, and are allowed to peck at the grain, and to be ready to start their way in flight in a dead line for the nets, which no sooner have they touched than they fall into the folds below, where they immediately become hopelessly entangled. I have known a fowler secure over a hundred birds in one drive in this simple and ingenious manner. However, I must apologise for this digression, and

Five o'clock a.m. found S. and I quietly starting away from our bungalow on the appointed morning to the spot chosen by our friend the shikari. Fifteen minutes' riding saw us at our destination, and, after being told that there were hundreds of birds—every acre of ground was full of them, and that the shikari had soon found our line of four beaters, and each taking up an opposite position, started off through a promising patch of fast ripening corn. "Whirr! whirr!" scarcely have we made dozen steps than a covey of quail rise five fathoms ahead. "Bang! bang!" and I see a bird with my left, and another with my right. "Whirr! Whirr!" What a noise these little birds can make when they rise almost under one's feet, and how annoyed I feel to see S. bring down a couple of birds right and left, while I miss an easy shot with both barrels. On we go through the grain, with our enthusiastic beaters accompanying us, and we are soon out of the corn, and are disencumbered. "Ah!" when a quail proves too much for our skill, I have heard a good shot remark, "No one ought to miss a quail if he is steady; the birds fly straight as a dart, and ought always to be brought down." This remark may be true enough in theory, but it is going away from the fact that it is often a puzzle for the shikari to get a quail to rise, and that is my experience.

S. is shooting splendidly; he always does shoot well, but this morning he is surpassing himself. "Sixteen without a miss," he presently cries, as another bird falls dead before his unerring aim. "No other shikari's eye is very straight," says my attendant; and, though I am a little envious, I cannot help but admire his aim, and make up my mind to shoot more carefully than I have been doing. There is a sarcasm in my boy's remark which is rather painful. Just as S. is about to let drive at his seventeenth bird, which has risen within twelve yards, one of the beaters strikes violently at the quail, and the bird is shot. "Whirr! whirr!" and I miss twice, and miss twice. I pardon his language to the miserable beetle, who had attempted to catch a quail that would not rise, but feel with him that it was hard lines to have one's record spoil. However, S. is a good-tempered fellow, and in five minutes is shooting again, and in five minutes more he has secured another quail, and is improving, and two more birds are added to my score. "Bang!" "Oh, hard hit," I cry, as one of S.'s birds, after a rapid flight, hovers in the air for a moment, and drops like a stone in the corn away to my right. Away goes one of our boys (we have no dogs), and in a few minutes more the quail is shot, and the shikari helps remarking "Achecha" (good); for to mark the exact spot in a cornfield where a quail falls is no easy task.

The birds have now scattered themselves, and our shots become few and far between as we struggle along. "Back to the right of the corn, away go quail in every direction. Bang! bang! bang!" We stand still, moving in our cartridges, and dropping birds into the open until our barrels feel on fire. "By Jove, what a glorious corner!"

"What a glorious corner!" "We both burst out at the same moment. "Must be a dozen birds there," says S., and I say to go to help the boys to pick up the fallen. "Thirteen!" "Ah! I well, you take seven, and give me six, old fellow," though as I speak a feeling comes over me that perhaps I only ought to take five. S. seems quite satisfied, however, and we make the division of the quail, and separate to go to the next patch of corn, and are becoming difficult to flush; so by mutual consent we turn our steps homeward, beating all the small bushes on our way, and starting a solitary bird or two from cover, which the inexperienced "griffin" would not credit as capable of concealing a

At last we reach the road and count our bag. "Thirty-nine," cries S. "Twenty-six here," is my answer. "Ah, well, sixty-five birds before eight o'clock is not a bad bag on the whole," and with this remark we jump on our ponies, and make the best of our way to the station, where we arrive at the usual hour, and guns. Giving an order to the khansamaal to reward the shikari with a rupee (only 1s. 4d. at present rate of exchange) on his arrival, away I go to my tub, lamenting that the dreaded "hot season" is now so fast approaching, and about to put an end to our sport, and all our sporting excursions. E. J. B.

Dharmisala, Punjab.

[Advertisement.]—TELESCOPE SPORTS.—By Royal Letters Patent.—The success attending our efforts to improve the Rifle Telescope has resulted in many imitations being placed in the market, all without our consent. We have therefore, in order to protect our rights, and to give the most perfect system of sighting. The following points are submitted for the consideration of sportsmen:—(1) The telescope is made of brass, and is 100 yards, with the eye in clear. The Sight can be detached in a second by simply pressing a spring catch. It is lighter and more compact than any other of the kind. (2) The telescope is made of brass, and is 100 yards, with the eye in clear. The Sight can be detached in a second by simply pressing a spring catch. It is lighter and more compact than any other of the kind. (3) The telescope is made of brass, and is 100 yards, with the eye in clear. The Sight can be detached in a second by simply pressing a spring catch. It is lighter and more compact than any other of the kind.