crossing, so that at the present time these hounds possess a conformity of type which is not general among French packs. The cross adopted has been English foxhounds with La Vendée bitches, so as to combine the pace and resolution of the former with the tongue and good scenting qualities of the latter. The prevailing colour of the hounds is black, white, and tan, though it has been noticed that the hounds devoid of tan possess the special quality of being able to hunt in water without losing the scent. It is not according to etiquette in France to hunt with a private pack of hounds unless you have been invited, and the Duchesse d'Uzès issues about 200 invitations for the season to all the landowners and principal residents in the neighbourhood, while the "button," carrying with it the right to wear the hunt livery, is only sent to her more intimate friends.

C. B. P.

SHOOTING.

DAYS AMONG THE RHINO NEAR THE WEBBI SHEBEYLI, SOMALILAND.

MOST OF MY MEN were down with fever, and as I had given up my two ponies for the sick to ride, my feet ached again while walking over the rough stones in this the most desolate country I had as yet seen in Africa. As I looked down from a rise in the rock a vast sea of trees, or rather thorn bushes, stretched far before me, looking like the huge waves of an Atlantic swell as they rose and fell over the slopes and down into the furrows of this wild expanse. Every little space of sand devoid of stones showed the spoor of numerous rhinoceros, while under the bushes here and there could be seen the well-known oval shaped hole in the earth made by the horn of the huge beast as he tossed the dung about. The air here was literally tainted with him.

As I peered through the thin bushes I caught sight of some wart hogs grubbing up roots. Seizing my "Express" I advanced towards them, but I soon excluded the idea of having anything to do, suddenly beheld another pig-like form of gigantic size slowly pass in front of me. I crouched down behind a tiny thorn bush to witness an extraordinary performance. The rhinoceros had evidently got a whiff of our wind, for he stood for a moment with his ears pricked and his head up and snorted and grunted with evident dissatisfaction. He then began to career about in a most amusing fashion, charging first to the right then to the left, an imaginary foe, snorting all the whi'e like a steam engine. At length he made straight for the bush, under which I and three or four men were crouching, with his head up on high, and looking most vicious and formidable. I then felt that someone was making a hasty retreat from behind me, but had no time to turn round. I afterwards to been heard by the rhinoceros, for just as the huge beast neared my bush he turned sharply to the right, and galloped off broadside on as hard as he could go. I jumped up and fired the big gun, as he was quickly disappearing in the bushes. On being struck he stopped for a moment, and then began to spin round and round very quickly like a huge top, puffing, blowing, and snorting like a grampus. He then thundered off in an enormous cloud of dust. Running up, we found a copious flow of blood. But tracking dangerous game in very thick bush is risky work, and I was pleased, I own, when, after following for fifty yards through the thicket, bespattered all over with blood, I emerged on the other side in fairly open country with my rifle held in front of me at full cock, and looking out for a charge. I found the wounded beast standing under a thorn bush with blood flowing from his mouth, and, just as I was in the act of firing at him again, he lay down and immediately afterwards expired. As I walked cautiously towards him, the same wart hogs trotted past the bush, quickly exchanging rifles again, I killed a boar, which fell dead within a few feet of the dead rhinoceros. I found I had made a very good shot through the shoulder of the latter, which had penetrated to the heart.

This rhinoceros measured 11½ft. from tip of nose to tip of tail, and his girth was 9½ft. His front horn measured 12½in. round the curve. He was evidently a very old animal, and his skin was poor and covered with sores infected with ticks. By probing in a hole in the neck, I discovered something solid, which I cut out and found to be an old, solid, spherical, 8-bore bullet which was lodged between the skin and the flesh. The wound had healed up perfectly, but the dry tunnel-like hole made by the bullet remained. Loading a camel with his head, feet, tail, and a large piece of hide, we made for camp.

Next day I was up with the sun and cut in a different direction. We had not proceeded far before we cut the fresh spoor of a rhinoceros, which I determined to follow. The spoor led us east for a long way through pretty thick thorn bush. At length, when I was beginning to get tired out, I caught a glimpse of a large black object through the bushes, and on stooping down beheld Mr Borele quietly walking along in front of us, his great spear held up well to his right shoulder and his arm pits and parts of his neck tinged with a faint blush of red, which shows up stronger in some lights than in others. On and on he walked, heeding nothing and never lifting his head. How unlike an antelope, now nibbling a blade of grass, now quickly raising his head ever on the *qui vive*. We continued to walk close after him as quiet as we could, and if we were not careful we would have given a huge hearse instead of men stalking big game with beating hearts and finger on a full cocked trigger. At length he slowly turns and offers his broadside. The anxious moment has arrived. Quickly kneeling and "drawing a bead" for his heart I press the trigger. Looking under the volume of smoke I see that I have knocked him backwards into his branches. Bang! and another spherical ball goes crashing through his ribs close by the first. This last knocks him clean off his four feet, and he lies on his side plunging, snorting, banging his huge head and horn upon the ground, and kicking up the dust in his vain endeavours to regain his legs. But he is by no means done for yet. I send a ·450 solid through his neck, which quietens him, and my shikari runs down to cut his throat. But no! With a fearful effort the huge beast almost regains his feet, and, falling back into a half-sitting position, brandishes his formidable horn about in threatening fashion. Fearing if he regains his legs there will be trouble for some of us, I again take the 8-bore, and, springing right up to him, finish his awe-inspiring struggles with a bullet through the neck. As we were now a very long way from camp I sent back my "syce" on the pony to fetch a camel to carry his head and hide. This animal measured the same as the one killed the day before, namely: Length, 11½ft.; girth, 9½ft. But he had a much better hide, and his anterior horn measured 10½in., and the posterior 7½in. in length. On the whole I felt as with an incredible amount of rhinoceros spoor, but as it was now getting dark we left them alone for the day.

Next day I went down a dried-up river-bed for a mile or so, seeing endless fresh rhino tracks and a few old elephant tracks. I was pottering about, looking at the former, when I caught sight of a rhinoceros slowly walking through the bushes about half a mile off on the opposite bank of the river. I had half a dozen men with me and two ponies, as I was hoping every day to find elephants. We crossed the dry river bed, and soon found the spoor of the rhinoceros, which led us up a steep and very rocky bank away from the river, where the tracks were too difficult to follow. Presently I saw the beast again fairly close. Leaving the two ponies behind, I began to stalk him, making, however, a great noise when very close in some thick bushes and on the stony ground. The animal seemed to be walking very quickly, and I found it almost impossible to get along on the uneven ground over the dried-up water courses interlaced with thorn branches.

Suddenly coming over a small rise, I beheld barely thirty yards away, with their backs towards me, not one, but two rhinoceros, one a large animal, the other a little smaller. I cocked the elephant gun and crouched along through the thorn bushes, until the big one, hearing us, suddenly turned sideways, held his head high in the air, cocked his ears, and snorted and sniffed loudly. I was barely twenty yards from him, so, kneeling on one knee, I aimed for the heart, which at such close range I knew to be wrong, the neck shot being always the most effective: but my rifle shot high, and I had missed the neck shot at close range once before! Bang! The bullet struck him in the shoulder. There was a great snorting and rumbling of stones as I fired my second barrel at his retreating form. When through the smoke I became aware that the smaller animal was charging down upon us. However, by some miracle we all dodged behind bushes, and he thundered off to follow his friend, my men letting off sniders presumably at him, although in reality most of the muzzles were pointed up into the air. I loaded and ran on the big one's blood spoor, which was only too evident on the rocky ground. We soon found him standing behind a bush breathing heavily, when I took a steady aim and fired.

Immediately after my shikari fired the "express." It then became evident that the wounded beast meant to charge us. He tossed his head and looked defiantly at us. He was standing in very rocky and uneven ground, thinly scattered here and there with "wait-a-bit" thorn bushes on a steep slope twenty-five yards above us. Suddenly, with a shake of his ugly head, he made a most determined charge straight for the middle of the six of us. Seeing him coming in a terrific pace and so close to us I yelled "Fire," and at the same instant fired the left-hand barrel of the big rifle I held in my hand. I then half jumped, half threw myself behind a tiny bush to my right, my second Shikari doing the same, the huge beast at the same instant dashing past us a few feet off, and I felt the wind in my face as he went by. For a second after I was conscious of nothing but a huge cloud of dust and a great smoke and a rumbling of stones. The next second I saw that three men had jumped to the left out of the way and were now crouching behind bushes, but I was horrified to behold my head Shikari racing down hill closely followed by the infuriated rhinoceros. Picking up my rifle I tore after them, yelling at the man to dodge. But straight on down hill he kept until he reached a bush, round which he appeared to stumble, dodging to the right. At that instant the rhinoceros, which, marvellous to relate, had turned the sharp corner with as much dexterity as the man, caught the poor fellow with his horn behind and tossed him at least 5ft. in the air, my "express" rifle going up perhaps double that height. My Shikari being a very heavy big man was turned literally head over heels and landed some 10ft. or 15ft. beyond the rhinoceros on the open ground before the nose of the rhinoceros, which stood calmly waiting for him to fall. When he fell he lay perfectly still, and I quite gave him up for dead. The rhinoceros now commenced to give the man's head and side a series of terrific rams with his horn.

Although all this has taken a long time to tell, the events related all happened in a few seconds. Meanwhile, all the men remained crouching behind trees, calling upon Allah to save the wretched shikari. As soon as I could I rushed towards the brute as he was still butting at the man, yelling with all my might. I dare not fire at the animal, as his head touched the man, and, as he stood below me I could see nothing else to fire at, so, picking up some large stones, I threw first hogs, bit of land, and finally, I posted the animal back, and not touch my shikari. At this he stopped mauling the man, and, raising his huge, ugly head up, stared at me as though in doubt whether to charge me or not. At length he made up his mind to bolt, and galloped away to the left.

Picking up my big rifle, I fired both barrels into his ribs before he vanished in the bushes. I now rushed down to my shikari, ten yards below. He now sat up, and I saw that blood was flowing from a large cut on the side of his head. As he appeared to be unconscious, and as I could not at the moment be of any use, I left him with two men and my water bottle, and rushed to avenge myself on the infuriated rhino. About a hundred yards off we found him behind a bush, standing with his head towards and away from us. He would never do so retracing my steps and making a short detour, I got behind a thick bush with him broadside on. Fearing further disaster I ordered a volley to be fired at him. All taking aim through the bushes I said "Fire!" at the same instant firing both barrels of the 8-bore at once, and then picked up an "express." This moved him 30 yards further up the hill. Walking again I got closer, and, taking careful aim, we fired a second volley, which made the beast plunge about, but he did not shift his position. After this I waited a minute, then, seeing that the game was nearly over, I advanced very cautiously to within 10 yards of him and planted a ball in his neck. He still stood. I was aiming again, when, with two or three shakes of his huge head, he fell heavily over on his side dead. Thus died one of the most aggressive animals I have ever had to deal with, its great tenacity of life being simply marvellous. I counted eleven bullet holes in his skin when dead, my first ball having struck him just behind the shoulder; how he survived this so long I cannot imagine.

Going back to my shikari I found him still unconscious, and carried him home on a pony. However, by sewing up his cut and daily bandaging his head I eventually made him look something like his former self, but he was of very little use for the remainder of the time, as he took fever regularly every week.

This, the smallest rhinoceros I killed, measured 10ft. 2in. from tip of tail to tip of nose, and his girth measured . Had he possessed a long sharp-pointed horn instead of a short and most unusual round one, the chances of my shikari escaping with his life would have been but small.

C. V. A. PEEL.

WINTER SPORT IN THE FENS.

IT WILL SOMETIMES OCCUR, when out game-shooting in certain parts of the country, that you obtain excellent chances of sport amongst ducks, or, perchance, geese, when you least expect it, and were but ill-prepared for them. The dreary November afternoon in the fens, when H. and I were out with the hope of shooting some hares and a few brace of birds, was an apt illustration of this glorious uncertainty which gave an added zest and pleasure to our shooting that day.

On arriving at the ground, and having engaged a boy as game-carrier from the farm we stopped at, we set off, each armed with a 12-bore, our cartridges being mostly loaded with No. 5 shot, some with No. 2, and a few with cylinder, and a few single bullets, and taken with us a very good retriever belonging to H. Since we were last over the shooting there had been some very heavy rains that filled the dykes and drains enclosing the lands. This had the effect of bringing large flocks of golden and green plover there to feed, and made the task of walking the heavy clays almost impracticable.

In the first boggy bit of land fringed with reeds, we came to here rose several snipe, of which H. shot a brace very neatly, and I killed but one; afterwards bowling over a hare that lay in the long grass of the drain-side near. Following the line of the drain, towards a piece of old grass that we thought might probably hold some birds, H. made a grand shot at a teal as it rose from the reeds nearest the bank; it had evidently been alone upon some water at the point where it fell in the water, and Jock, the retriever, fetched it out for us. Taking a wide range up the strip of grass we flushed a covey of thirteen birds, out of which I killed a right and left; the remainder we marked down in a patch of wurzels a couple of fields away.

As we neared the end of the grass piece, H. put up a hare and shot her; then we made across for the wurzels in pursuit of the rest of the covey, and were almost down to the end of the first land separating us from them, when Martin, our game carrier, came hastily up from the rear and pointed excitedly to a small string of wild geese, about half a mile distant in the direction we came from. They were flying low, making no noise we could hear, most likely had risen from the bed of a creek at the sound of our guns, and would shortly settle again; this they soon did, and we at once started in their direction, telling Martin to follow at a moderate distance behind, keeping charge of the dog, so as to loose him if required to recover a wounded bird. We were acquainted with the creek in which the nine geese had alighted; it was fed from a tidal river near, and had but a very narrow channel, the greater part of its bed being filled with mud that was thickly grown over with rank vegetation. It wound its course in rather serpentine fashion, and had high banks, a circumstance that greatly favoured our approach to the geese. We were much handicapped, however, in not having more than one, namely, No. 2, in our cartridges, and regretted that we had not prepared for this emergency, as it was doubtful, unless a chance should offer at close range of a shot at the head and neck, whether we should be able to bring a goose down. Silently and quickly as possible we proceeded, until reaching the foot of a brick bridge that spanned the creek some distance below the geese, we marked down, gone down. H. then crossed the bridge, keeping under cover of the parapet as he did so; I remained on this side, and we advanced under cover of the opposite banks towards the geese. On reaching a bend of the creek a short distance up, I cautiously looked over, but failed to see the geese. H. hobbled up his head opposite about the same time, also reconnoitring. Another bit of bank, and we came to a sharp bend, and suspected the scene, thrusting forward the muzzle of my gun first, then raising my head very slowly, having previously removed my shooting cap, as I knew a tuft of hair blowing in the wind would be far less likely to alarm these wary birds, if seen, than the former.

To my surprise, though I carefully searched the creek's bed lying in front of me, I could not see a trace of the geese, and I knew the point of the bank I was at was that we had marked as opposite where the geese had lit, or disappeared in their flight below the banks. Looking across at H., I observed him making signals to me by pointing his gun into the bank below me; by this I understood the geese were there, but they were nevertheless completely hidden from my view by the long growth of weeds, &c., at the margin of the channel; straining my gaze, and gradually raising myself up the bank, so as to obtain a better view, I at last did make out the heads and necks of some of the geese, but before they had seen me, however, as they instantly rose with much rattling of wings; I fired two barrels, but only to my disappointment to hear "whack" as the shot struck on their hard wing-feathers; with B.B., I should have almost certainly killed one if not two geese, but with that light shot could not hope for more than impression at that distance.

The flock, apparently no worse, went away towards the river, whilst we, turning our backs on the creek, again made tracks for the partridges, reaching the wurzel patch without further adventure. In a couple of turns we met with them, and this time H. had the best of it, killing a brace whilst I dropped one. The remainder after a long flight stopped at a bean-stubble away in the direction of the creek the geese were in.

After taking a turn round some very wet grass lands, where we had good sport with the plover, killing between us nine green and fifteen golden, we decided to follow the birds once more before it grew dark; so went in that direction, walking the banks of a wide fresh-water drain on our way, where we sprang five teal, killing one each out of the lot. A single mallard that rose in front of me I killed cleanly, and a long shot, too.

The bean-stubble, where the birds went, next engaged our attention. After ranging some time, we were fortunate enough to get amongst them once again, this time, however, with a longer rise, for they had got wilder with shooting at. H. killed one, but the bird which fell to me was proved to be a runner and got to a low fence and ditch that bounded the further end of the stubble. It was growing dusk, and, as we were all deeply engaged in the search for it, we suddenly heard a low cackle, and, looking up, saw a small lot of geese approaching. Tumbling hastily into the ditch, though it was ankle deep in water, we each placed No. 2 cartridges in our guns and waited. There appeared to be some difficulty in obtaining a close shot if we kept frightened the geese and they held the same course, as they were very low and coming right.

Fortune favoured us this time, and when the first bird in the line appeared over our ambush he received the charge of H.'s right barrel with such deadly effect that he doubled up and sank to the ground without taking a turn over, and I saw that the remainder of him; I was equally successful with the next bird, it falling about fifteen yards away. Each fired a second barrel as the geese broke their line and mounted up in the air in confusion; only one more, however, seemed to be hit, and it left the others and went off towards the creek. We kept an eye on the bird until we saw it disappear over the bank, then, scrambling out of our ditch, we started the plucky taking "Jock" with us. Here, after some search—the channel between us—we at last found the goose, which ran in front of the dog, and finally rose heavily, turning across me as it did so; I gave it my sole remaining No. 2 cartridge, and happily dropped it. The geese, probably those we had seen earlier, proved to be Bean geese.

MARSHLAND.

SHOOTING PARTRIDGES UNDER A KITE.

IT IS NO UNCOMMON THING to hear the question asked, Is it unsportsmanlike to use a kite? And, whether the answer returned chance to be couched in affirmative or negative terms, it is almost certain to be followed by the additional query, Does it drive partridges off ground which they are in the habit of frequenting?

Now these are matters not only of general interest to the shooting world, but concerning which it is notorious that opinions differ, and differ widely. However, to avoid confusing the separate issues by dealing with the two questions concurrently, it will perhaps be more convenient to discuss each from its own individual standpoint, since it is obvious that the one has nothing inherently in common with the other.

First, then, with regard to the sportsmanlike—or the reverse—conditions attaching to the use of a kite. I am of opinion that such may very justifiably be resorted to under certain circumstances, and I think it is a mere affectation which taboos the employment of an artificial vehicle in the shape of a kite when shooting partridges otherwise accessible. Everyone has a right to his own opinion; and, of course, I am far from wishing to force my very decided personal views on this subject down other people's throats; but it certainly seems to me that using a kite when partridges are wild is pretty much on a par with using a prawn when salmon are shy. The object of the gunner is precisely identical, in both cases, with that of the angler; and as the prawn is freely resorted to by fishermen when other lures fail, without a howl of indignation being raised, surely the man pursuing a kindred sport, under equally trying conditions, is not to be censured for also, in his own peculiar line, taking advantage of the ingenuity of a modern age in order to achieve his purpose.

Towards the close of a season, or even earlier, when you are in want of game and have some unbroken coveys which you are unable to approach, and an army of beaters to drive the same is out of the question owing to financial considerations, not to mention the possible difficulty in procuring sufficient ammunition for guns, I repeat I consider a kite not only not unsportsmanlike, but a very useful and desirable adjunct to the day's sport, as it certainly tends to fill the bag provided the breechloaders are not in the hands of novices. Moreover, a famous opportunity is thus afforded of knocking down some of the old birds which have successfully run the gauntlet of powder and shot earlier in the season, and, in the long run, it should be a more profitable gains in the long run when old cocks and hens are killed off, and the ground, which would otherwise be appropriated by them, is thus left available for more vigorous breeding birds of the year. If only it were a question of what conduces to a prolific stock in the future, I maintain that the expediency of shooting partridges under a kite is abundantly justified; indeed, so far from its being a reprehensible practice in my opinion, I may go a step in the opposite direction and say that I should deem it unsportsmanlike if a man were to leave a lot of old birds and unbroken coveys on his shooting, yet all the while knowing that he would eventually pay the penalty of a sentimental dislike to the use of a most ingenious contrivance by having his stock of birds seriously reduced by a bad season.

As to the question whether a kite drives partridges off ground for which they evince a partiality. Though I have heard men of reputed standing and experience deliver themselves of most divergent opinions, my own impression is that it is one which cannot be satisfactorily answered straight off the reel with a simple aye or nay. It seems to me that the effect of a kite is not invariably the same, but varies from time, depending in the main on the frequency, or otherwise, with which it is flown over them. I have shot partridges under a kite—off and on, as the saying goes—for several years; but I have never had the least reason to think that it more than temporarily scares the survivors of a covey to fresh pastures. I have in years gone by flown a kite over the same ground as often as twice in the same week, but never found that it had any baneful effects. On the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine that its systematic use day after day on a small manor would ultimately produce the results its detractors associate with it, even when flown only periodically and with discretion.

Again, we constantly hear the objection to shooting partridges under a kite by quoting, without a shred of qualification, the old formula: Oh! it drives the birds into the next parish! Nevertheless, I have not unfrequently had my doubts as to that being the real cause of antipathy to its use. When having recourse to this artificial device to make partridges lie, silence at all times is simply indispensable if profit is to accrue to the gunner, and in nine cases out of ten, in my experience, silence is an entirely unknown quantity. The consequences of indiscretion in this respect are generally fatal. Sooner or later the attention of the coveys is diverted from the kite to the guns, and, as man is presumably the greater terror of the two, the birds naturally rise wild and out of shot; while, once in the air, and become alarmed on the wings of the breeze as well as of sheer fright, they are apt at times to fly right out of the district. Another consideration, moreover, that must not be lost sight of, is the well-known fact that it is not everyone who is an adept at shooting partridges under a kite; for their mode of flight is not a little erratic when they are well frightened, and, unless the gunner is a cool big bird of very long experience, he will, and out of sheer nervousness, be apt to miss over them. But confessions which are proverbially said to be good for the soul are, as we all know, more often honoured in the breach than in the observance. *Verbum sat sapienti.*

Nevertheless, I have enjoyed some excellent sport with the aid of this counterfeit at the close of a season. But, at the same time, I maintain that it is not advisable to employ more than one gun, more than four individuals; two guns, a man to fly the kite, and another to act as a stop at the end of a hedgerow, to which shelter the birds are almost sure to resort on being flushed. These are enough for the purpose. A well-broken, slow-working spaniel is the only other requisite; and, provided there is no laughing and talking, or giving of directions in audible tones, sport should be practically assured. The kite should be flown at a medium height, and, it is almost superfluous to add, down wind. No more incongruous spectacle is to be witnessed than guns parked in advance of the mechanical contrivance which is ostensibly being utilised as a means to an end,