

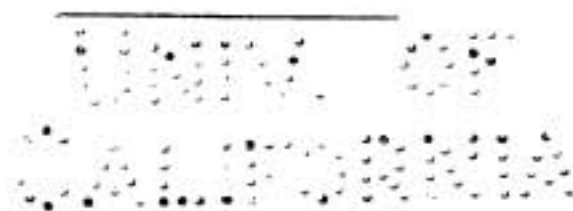
PURNEA—A SHIKAR LAND

BY

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With several photographic illustrations



CALCUTTA

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GAME FOUND IN PURNEA.

THE district of Purnea, from time immemorial, has been known to be the home of big game. About three quarters of a century ago, the jungles bordering on the Terai invited herds of wild elephants that carried on forays and depredations on the teeming paddy-fields of the district. Since then, much of the country has been cleared and brought under cultivation, consequently the intrepid marauders are now never heard of. In the Terai also, which is reported to be their permanent abode, their number is fast decreasing.

Rhinos sometimes used to be shot in the district, about thirty years ago. Though they still stray from the bordering jungles of Nepal into the district of Purnea, they have not been shot of late. There is an elephant still living that figured prominently in a rhinoshoot and was badly charged and wounded. Its entrails came out and it was through the clever treatment of a person, who also is still alive, that it recovered. The biggest rhino that stands stuffed in a standing position in the Imperial Museum of Calcutta was shot in this district by a well-known sportsman and Indigo-planter, Mr. Joe Shillingford, whose name as a sportsman, although he has passed away, is destined

to live for ever in the sporting world of Purnea, and inspire the present and future *shikaris* of the district.

Tigers, though not very common in the interior now, were once found there in large numbers. Their usual haunts now are the jungles on the banks of the big Kosi and the high-grass-jungles in the *tappus* to the north of the district. But during the rains one still occasionally hears of a tiger giving a surprise visit to a shady spot near one's residence, far removed from any thick jungle.

Leopards are still common, especially in the jungles in the Kissengunge Sub-division, and also those bordering on the Dinajpur and Julpaiguri districts. They live in isolated tracts but are often found in the thorny bushes and mango *barees* in the neighbourhood of villages, owing to their cunning habit of hiding themselves in the lowest cover where one would not even dream of meeting them. They have on occasions even carried off lambs and goats from near our Electric Power House and have not uncommonly been seen to visit our mango *barees*.

Wolves are never seen now, though I have occasionally got striped hyænas and they have been fired at by persons residing in our Guest House.

Buffaloes are rare or almost extinct towards the northern part of the district, but are found