

# THE NATURALIST

## WILD ANIMALS AND FIRE

HERE IS a generally prevalent impression, which may have dangerous consequences, that predaceous carnivora may be kept off by fires lighted at the camp or bivouac. It has probably arisen owing to the popular idea that such animals will normally attack man, and travellers have therefore assumed that their immunity from such attack in places infested by wild beasts has been due to the fire they have lighted at their camp, the fact being that it is due to the normal carnivorous animal not being addicted to preying on man.

Mr. R. A. Sterndale has related that when in pursuit of a man-eating leopard his camp was guarded by great fires, and implies that this was a measure of safety, but he then goes on to tell of a man having been seized by the throat by this animal and dragged across the fire made at the entrance of his hut, while his wife caught hold of his legs and exerted her strength against that of the man-eater. Even so experienced a naturalist as the late W. H. Hudson refers in his *Naturalist in La Plata* to "a protection as effectual as the camp-fire the traveller lights in a district abounding with beasts of prey"; and he says later on that "the fires which travellers make for their protection actually serve to attract beasts of prey, but the confusion and fear caused by the bright glare makes it safe for the traveller to lie down and sleep in the light." He therefore shares the common fallacy.

Certainly, except in the case of man-eaters, beasts of prey will, unless molested, seldom attack man by day or by night, asleep or awake. In the Decan when encamped in country abounding with tigers and leopards, I used to sleep outside, whether in shadow or in moonlight, for the sake of the cool air during the sultry nights of the hot

the burning. Yet Col. Patterson says in his *Man-eaters of Tsao* that on one occasion he "felt fairly safe as one of my men carried a bright lamp close behind me." But he tells of many attacks on camps, and says that "when the camp was not being attacked by man-eating lions, it was visited by leopards, hyenas, wild dogs, wild cats, and other inhabitants of the jungle around us." It does not appear whether fires were burning about the camps or not; but certainly travellers and sportsmen visiting neighbourhoods where there are man-eaters would do well not to trust to the protection of fires, or they may be literally rudely awakened from their suppositious safety.

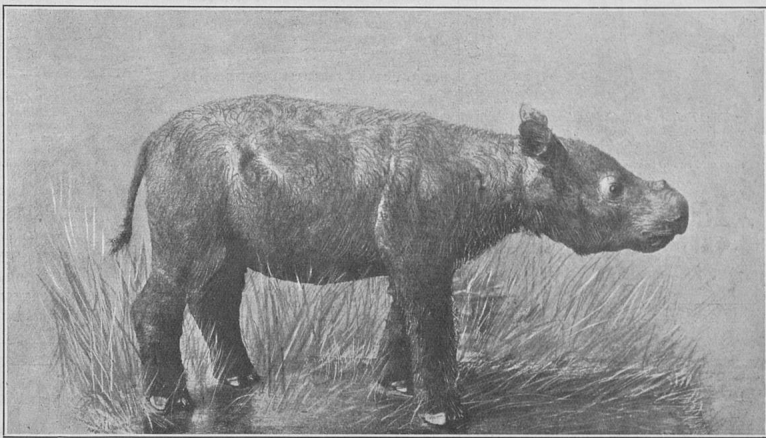
R. G. BURTON.

## THE SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS

THE five different kinds of rhinoceros existing at the present time are restricted to the tropics of Asia and to eastern and southern Africa, south of the great desert. They are the sole survivors of a great group, now on the wane, which in former times was represented by vast numbers of individuals and species which roamed over the northern hemisphere from Europe, through Asia to America.

Of the living kinds the best known is the black rhinoceros of Africa, which in the struggle for life has been far more successful than his relatives. Swift of foot and truculent in character, he has been classified by sportsmen as one of the quartette of the most dangerous of the big game animals of Africa, the remaining trio being the buffalo, elephant and lion. On the other hand, his compatriot, the white rhinoceros, is comparatively mild in disposition and inclined to peace; and he is verging on extinction. Both the black and the white rhino have two horns, and the skin is sufficiently thin and flexible to need no jointing where the neck and limbs are attached to the body.

But the best known of the Asiatic species, the Indian rhino, now restricted to Nepal and some adjacent countries to the south of the Himalayas, but not common anywhere, has only one horn, and the skin is so thick that, to admit of free movement, it is thrown into great folds, making joints, over the shoulders and loins. Akin to the Indian rhino is the so-called Javanese



NEWLY BORN CALF OF THE SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS PRESENTED TO THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM BY THE SULTAN OF PERAK

weather. At one place a panther came to drink at a trough not far from my bed one night, and next night a bear entered the precincts of the camp; and I have heard a cry from my bivouac, his further course marked by the cries of peafowl and spotted deer. But I did not have any fire to keep off the wild beasts, nor did I give any thought to the possibility of attack. Fire or light may have an attraction for wild animals, especially as indicating the possible presence of prey in the form of cattle or dogs, and a leopard may be shot by the light of a lantern over a goat picketed as bait. But the idea that fire will scare off wild beasts which have the will to attack may be dangerous to those who hold it, and I would certainly trust to no such protection in a neighbourhood haunted by a man-eater. A concrete instance of the futility of such supposed protection occurred many years ago when a small vessel anchored near Saugur Island at the mouth of the Hughli, and six Europeans went ashore in search of coconuts. They wandered inland, darkness came on, and they put up for the night in the ruins of an old temple. A fire was lighted, and it was arranged for two of the party to keep watch in turn. In the first watch a tiger rushed over the fire and seized one of the two. Such was the fury of the attack that the beast, springing off with its victim in its jaws, struck with its head the side of the pagoda, and with its prey rebounded into the fire, rolling over in the embers but then making good its escape with the victim, who was devoured not far off during the night.

It was unfortunate that the participants of this incident were unknown to another party of Europeans who five years later anchored in a ship off the same island. For they also held the fallacy that by lighting a large fire they could keep wild beasts off, as they had always heard that it would. They landed for the purpose of shooting deer, and in the afternoon sat down to eat, having made a large fire composed of ten or more whole trees. They had just begun their meal when, one of the party wrote, "I heard a roar like thunder, and saw an immense royal tiger spring on the unfortunate Munro, who was sitting down." In a moment his head was in the beast's mouth, and it rushed into the jungle with him with as much ease as I could lift a kitten, tearing him through the thick hedges and trees, everything yielding to his monstrous force. Several shots were fired, and the tiger dropped Munro, who staggered back and fell, covered with blood. He was mortally wounded, his head being torn to pieces, and he died next day in great agony."

Stories of fire-eating lions also indicate that fire will not keep off man-eating lions, and one reads of such animals being driven off by a blow with a brand snatched from

rhinoceros, which also has a single horn and a jointed skin, although the jointing is not quite so similar as in the other. "Javanese" is a misleading title, because this rhino has wide geographical range embracing Further India and the Malay Peninsula as well as the Sunda Islands.

The third kind of rhino found in Asia also bears an inappropriate title, namely, Sumatran rhinoceros in character, because, as in the case of the Javanese rhino, it is found in many countries to the east of the Bay of Bengal. It is not closely akin to either of the African rhinos. Nevertheless it carries two horns and has a tolerably flexible skin, with only one well-marked joint behind the shoulder. It is also a more hairy and altogether a very different-looking beast from its one-horned Asiatic relatives. It stands about 4ft., or a little over, at the shoulder, and its horns are usually short, the front one being seldom more than 6ins. in length, and the hind one much less. Not very much is known about its habits, except that it is a forest species ranging from sea-level up to some 4,000ft. In character it is inoffensive and timid, and is said to be easily tamed even when captured full-grown.

The Natural History Museum has recently received from H.H. the Sultan of Perak a very interesting new-born calf of this species. It is a little over 1ft. high at the shoulder and 3ft. long from the snout to the root of the tail. It is tolerably thickly covered on the body with coarse hair about an inch long, upstanding, but curved and waving at the ends. On the head the hair is short and bristly, and it is shorter still on the snout, which feels like a man's chin with a two-days' growth of beard. On the inside of the ears, on the contrary, the hair is longer and more silky. The front horn is just beginning to grow, showing as a black, shining knob; but there is no trace of the hind horn. He is no beauty, but will make an attractive exhibit when placed alongside the naked young of the other rhinos in the Mammal Gallery.

R. I. POOCK.

**SIZE OF OTTERS.**—We are indebted to Mr. Gilbert K. Smith of Dunkeld, Perthshire, for a cutting from the *Oban Times*, of February 4th, referring to a previous notice in that paper of the capture of two large otters on the shores of Clachan Sound, one of them—a male—measuring 67in. and the other—a female—63in. Supplementing the writer of the cutting, Mr. Percival Currie, states that he trapped on the shore of Killybeg in Islay a male otter measuring no less than 66in. The weights, unfortunately, were not recorded. Nevertheless the great size even of the otters killed on Clachan Sound may be imagined from the circumstance that ordinary otters have about an average length from nose-tip to tail-tip of between 3ft. to 4ft. Also it must be remembered that excess in length is always accompanied by corresponding increase in general bulk. Hence the otter from Islay must have been a veritable giant. It is well known that otters frequently take to the sea, and it is possible that the otters on some parts of the west coast of Scotland have adopted almost entirely marine habits, and that their larger size may be due to a greater and more varied fish diet than is supplied by fresh waters.

For instructions as to questions see our note on the page containing "Answers to Correspondents."

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*Switzerland.* Her Topographical, Historical and Literary Landmarks. By Arnold Lunn. The Kithing Travel Books. Illustrated. Price 7s. net. *Finishing Year. Worth While in the Orient.* By Luchan Suda. Illustrated. Price 10/6 net. London: George G. Harrap & Co.

*The Correspondence of King George the Third.* From 1760 to December, 1783. Printed from the Original Papers in the Royal Archives. By Andrew Crosse. Arranged and Edited by the Hon. Sir John Fortescue, LL.D. In six volumes. Vol. III. (1773-1777). Vol. IV. (1778-1779). Price 25/- net each. *Tim Tocsin.* Poems. By W. J. Morris. Price 1/6 net. London: Macmillan & Co.

*Spain from the South.* By J. B. Trend. With illustrations and maps. Price 10/6 net. *Burgundy Past and Present.* By Evelyn M. Hatch. Illustrated. Price 8/6 net. *Match Play and the Spin of the Ball.* By William T. Hilden. Illustrated. Price 6/- net. *The Empty Bed.* By Herbert Adams. Price 3/6 net. London: Methuen and Co.

*Electric Farming.* Or the application of Electricity to Agriculture. By R. B. Baines Matthews. Price 25/- net. *Practical Vegetable Growing.* By J. W. Morton. F.N.I.A.B. Illustrated. Price 10/6 net. *British Farmers in Denmark.* By J. R. E. Jones. Price 10/6 net. *The Mission of Inquiry to the Farmer's Agricultural Methods.* Reprinted from *The Daily Telegraph*. Price 1/6 net. London: Ernest Benn. 1928.

*Rosel Island.* An Ethnological Study. By W. R. Armstrong. Laid. By introduction by C. H. Haddon, Sc.D. Illustrated. Cambridge: The University Press. 1928. Price 18/- net.

*The Pils Fisher.* By Edward F. Spence, K.C. (E.F.S.). Illustrated. Price 6/- net. *Fisereid Fishing.* A Book of Angling Yarns. By A. Courtney Williams. Illustrated. Price 3/6 net. London: A. & C. Black. 1928.

*Gardening Without Worry.* Simple and comprehensive information for the amateur gardener. By George Barlow. Illustrated. *Things seen the Day of Naples.* By Albert G. Mackinnon, M.A. Illustrated. London: Seeley, Service & Co. 1928. Price 3/6 net each.

*A Guide to the Markets for Photographs.* Published yearly. 1928. Compiled and Edited by A. W. Board. London: The Fountain Press, 14, Bedford Lane, Fleet Street, E.C.4. Price 3/6 net.

*The N.F.U. Year Book for 1928.* Edited by Cleveland Fyfe. London: National Farmers' Union, 45, Bedford Square, W.C.1. 1928. Price 5/-.

*Hereford Breed Annual and Breeders' Guide, 1928.* Illustrated. London: The Hereford Herd Book Society, 3, Otho Street, Price 3/-.

*Schöge Schöge.* Adventures of Leo Parson in the Forest of Bolivia. By Fritz Zschawen. Translated by Arthur Chambers and F. A. Holt. Illustrated. London: Hutchinson & Co. Price 18/- net.

*Men and Monsters.* By Christian Swanjulin in collaboration with James Brandon Balen. Price 7/6 net. *Earth, Dear Earth.* Poems. By James Mackenzie. Price 6/- net. London: John Lane.

*Bernal Diaz Del Castillo.* The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico, 1517-1521. Edited from the only extant copy of the original MS., published in Mexico by Genaro Garcia. Translated with an introduction by H. B. Swinburn. Price 3/6 net. London: George Routledge & Sons. Price 15/- net.

*The Bloodstock Breeders' Review.* Vol. XVI. An illustrated annual devoted to the British thoroughbred. London: The British Bloodstock Agency, 26, Warwick Cross Road, W.C.2. Price 2/6 net.

*The Scottish Terrier.* Its Breeding and Management. By Dorothy Gabriel. With a chapter on Cairns by Kate L. Stephen. Illustrated with plates. London: *The Dog World*. Price 2/- net.

*The Feathered World.* Year Book for 1928. Edited by R. and G. O. Crompton. Lower prices. Translated by leading specialists. Illustrated. Seventeenth year. London: *The Feathered World*. Price 2/-.

*A Journal of Summer Time in the Country.* By R. A. Willmott. Laid. With the Scholastic Press, 5, New Oxford Street, W.C.1. 1928. Price 2/6 net.

*Man Rises to Parmanus.* Critical Epochs in the Prehistory of Man. By Henry Fairfield Osborn. Illustrated. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. London: Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford. Price 11/6 net.

*Schools.* 1928. Fifth year of publication. Directory of Schools in Great Britain, arranged in order of Counties. With a supplementary list of schools on the Continent referring English and American pupils published annually. London: Truman & Knickerbocker, 61, Conduit Street, W.1. Price 2/6 net.

*Hermes on The Future of Chemistry.* By T. W. Jones, B.Sc. To-day and tomorrow Series. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. 1928.

*A Social Sinner.* By Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon. Price 7/6 net. *Fables of the Fancy.* By Trevor C. Wignall. Price 5/- net. London: Kegan Paul & Grayson. 1928.

*The Compulsory Wife.* By John Glyder. London: Herbert Jenkins. Price 7/6 net.

*The Protagonists.* By Donald Sindenby. London: John Murray. Price 7/6 net.

*The Story of a Terrible Life.* By Basil Tozer. *Riddles of Crime.* By Kenneth Willers. London: T. Werner Laurie. Price 7/6 net each.

*Identified Grazing.* By William Brunton. *Journal of the Farmers' Club.* Part 1. 1928. London: 2, Whitehall Court, S.W.1. Price 2/6 net.

*The Oldenyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts.* By Henry Conners, M.R.A.S. Illustrated. An Archaeological Survey of India. Paper 42. New Imperial Series. Calcutta: Government of India Central Public Works Office. 1926. Price 23/6 net.

**SERIALS:** *The Times Year Book, 1928.* *The Zodiac, 1/-.* *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research, 6/-.* *The Student, 2/- net.*

were made by H. S. Perrey, 497 c.c. Ariel, and A. Watson, 493 c.c. Sunbeam.

**Kelly Trophy and Souvenir:** T. Morton, 497 c.c. Ariel. **Bayless Trophy and Souvenir:** H. G. Uzzell, 986 c.c. B.S.A. "Runner-up" Awards: Solo: G. B. Proe, 497 c.c. Ariel; J. H. Amott, 490 c.c. Rudge. Sidecar: G. R. Butcher, 499 c.c. Rudge; N. P. O. Bradley, 599 c.c. Sunbeam. **Senior Trophy-Bronze Team Prize:** Ariel Works Team (H. S. Perrey, G. B. Proe and T. Morton).

## News Notes

According to official figures motor cyclists contributed £1,142,569 in licence fees during the period from December 1st, 1926, to the end of August last.

During 1927 exports of motor cycles from America totalled 17,800 machines compared with 20,200 in the previous year. Owing to an unexpected rush of entries for the grass track racing meeting to be held on Saturday at Belle Vue, Manchester, the racing will require to be carried on after dusk and the track will be illuminated by flood lights and flares.

Motor cycle exports from this country continue to show a steady increase. During last month the value of machines and parts amounted to £280,405 compared with £226,006 in January, 1927, and £144,000 in 1926. On the other hand imports show a drop from £1,237 to £992, which is due doubtless to the decline in the number of American machines reaching this country.

The recent feat of a Francis Barnett rider in making the ascent of Ben Nevis (4,060ft.) in 2hr. 2min. under the official observation of the Scottish A.C.U. is the subject of an attractive booklet which may be obtained from the makers at Coventry.

It is proposed to build a racing track at Newcastle which will include gradients and hair-pin bends.

According to the Buyers' Guide published in the *Motor Cycle* there are 370 different models of motor cycles on the British market.

The next important event in the Midlands will be the trial for the Victory Cup which will be held over a course of 114 miles starting and finishing at Birmingham on March 3rd. There will be eleven observed hills and two stop and re-start tests.