

WHEN IS A CHARGE ?

SIR,—The "charge" of any animal, from the elephant to the domestic hen, cannot be mistaken. If there is the faintest doubt about it then it is not a "charge." When meaning business there is a something in an animal's eye, and in its whole bearing, that once seen can never again be mistaken.

I cannot agree that no beast is dangerous until one has made it so. Females with young are often very dangerous; and males, for one month or so out of the twelve, are sometimes so aggressive that it is highly dangerous to show one's nose within a thousand yards.

Animals wounded, or missed, and not seeing the shooter, will often go straight on, but will, more often, back track. And sometimes they will come back along the bullet's line of flight.

Some insects, hornets and wasps, will come back on the line of a projectile and let the "projector" have it in the neck. This has happened to me. A bullet seems to leave some trace of its passage through the air easily perceptible to the fine senses of wild beasts, and I have amused myself in places as far apart as the Highlands of Scotland and the middle of Borneo in watching the effect of a bullet fired a long way in front of travelling deer.

When the old hind in the lead reaches the "line" one can see her wince and recoil as if hit across the nose. It is then about-turn and off on another tack.

And this brings me to the hardy annual—big rifle versus the small bore. What Sir S. Baker said in 1861 (was it?) is true to-day. If really after dangerous game, and by "after" I mean in all sorts of weather, in all sorts of rough country, and following up wounded beasts, then, if one wants to live to a green old age, the heaviest rifle that one can use comfortably is the rifle to trust in. This is not to advocate the use of a .600 or .577 on Nilghiri tahr, of course, although even with such small game I found a .577 more satisfactory and humane than smaller rifles.

The nearer one's bullet is to pure lead, except for elephant or rhino, the better the results.

Yours faithfully,

Overdale, Crieff.

.577.