

CAPTURE OF A RHINOCEROS FOR THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, CALCUTTA.

"C. T. B. (Zoological Gardens, Calcutta)," sends to *Land and Water* the following account of the capture of a young rhinoceros:—

"I think it would be a pity that the story should not be told of the manner in which our new young rhinoceros was caught. When our old rhinoceros died, about four months ago, I wrote to all the neighbouring princes and Powers having rhinoceros in their jungles, asking them to try and catch a new rhinoceros for us, and I have a fair collection of promises of the best intentions on the part of many great and good men to catch a rhinoceros for us this cold weather. But I luckily also wrote to an old native friend named Seyd Typmal Ali, who was a police officer under me in Chittagong thirty-five years ago, and is now a deputy magistrate of high rank stationed in the district of Backergunge, adjoining the Sunderbrun, in which a few rhinoceros are still to be found. My old friend kindly undertook the task, and having found a suitable agent in one Ramjan Ali, a hardy and intelligent man from Chittagong. Ramjan Ali was despatched in a boat into the Sunderbrun, about three months ago, with four native hunters accustomed to kill tigers and rhinoceros in that inhospitable region of swamp and jungle. In the course of time they shot three rhinoceros, the last of which was a female with a young one about eighteen months old (so far as I can guess). When the mother was shot the young one would not leave its mother's body, and the men think they might have easily caught it the first day; but they thought it was too big to be caught by hand, so they dug pitfalls in convenient places near the mother's body, and for some days tried, without success, to drive the young animal into a pitfall. At last they managed to find the young one on the side of a tidal ditch, full of rich, soft mud, into which they pushed or drove it, and as it was struggling in the deep mud one of the hunters pluckily jumped on its back and held on by its ears, whilst the others hustled it until a rope was got to secure the captive, after which he was safely conveyed on board the boat and brought to Calcutta, where he now adorns our Zoo. I have said that he seems to be about eighteen months old. He stands nearly three feet high, and from the end of his snout to the tip of his tail he must be six feet long. I am sorry that I have not taken the exact measurements, but I should miss this mail if I sent to take them. His body is as big round as that of a Shetland pony ten hands high. In fact, when you see him you cannot help feeling that the only way to catch him was to jump on his back and lay hold of his large projecting ears. I tell you the tale as it was told me by the man Ramjan Ali, who brought the rhinoceros straight to me, when of course I asked him to tell me how they had contrived to catch such a big animal. You may be sure that Ramjan Ali had never heard of Waterton's performance on the Cayman, far less could that story have reached the native huntsman who had the pluck to jump on the beast's back.

"We have now had the young rhinoceros at our Zoo for about three weeks, and I can only describe him as an "awfully jolly little beast." He is quite quiet, and allows himself to be handled, whilst his appetite for plantains knows no limit. He never got plantains in the Sunderbrun, where he was raised. He still drinks milk, and was evidently still being suckled by the mother when the mother was killed. It is most amusing to hear him talk, for he utters a whole string of loud and discordant noises, much more approaching to speech than anything uttered by any other fourfooted animal, barring perhaps the braying of a donkey, though that it is in altogether a different line. When our little fellow sees a friend approach the gate of his prison, he comes forward and begins to talk. I can almost identify the sounds by which he says "plantains." Meanwhile, my great hope and desire are that the young rhinoceros may live healthily and happily to the lasting honour of my old friend Seyd Typmal Ali, to whom we are indebted for this most welcome contribution to our Zoo."