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AND ADVENTURE



HUNTING THE RHINOCEROS.



In his interesting book, "Sport in Burmah," Colonel Pollok relates the following adventure:—

"We started at day-break, going along the banks of a stream, and soon hit off a trail, Macdonald leading, and I

slightly on one side, ready to pour in a volley if required. We came on the beast, a male, in about an hour; Macdonald fired and hit; the beast bolted into grass about twenty feet high, and into this we followed, but the tracks were so numerous, we soon lost our quarry; beating our way through the grass, however, we came to an unusually heavy bit, and into this Mainah refused to enter, and my elephant hung back too. So we knew there was something ahead of us.

As the mahout would not drive Mainah in, Sookur called out, "Get out of the way; it is you who are afraid, and not the elephant!" and giving Lutchmee a few vigorous prods, he drove her headlong into the entangled grass. I looked about everywhere, and had perhaps gone through half the patch without seeing anything, when something induced me to look back, and there, within ten yards of me, was a full-grown rhinoceros, craning its neck and staring up at me in a peculiarly idiotic manner; a lucky shot dropped her dead, and I then saw she had a young one by her side. So leaving the carcass and the young one undisturbed, we sent an elephant back to the village for nets and men to catch the little one, and went on ourselves.

It was a nasty damp, drizzly day, with a high wind blowing, so after a

while we determined to return to camp; but coming on two quite fresh marks we could not resist the temptation, and took up the trail, Macdonald leading. We had to go farther than we expected, and soon came to very heavy grass, when Mainah turned off suddenly to the left and went off full score. I called out, "Where are you going to?—that is not the way the rhinos have gone," but I got no reply; and the elephant and his rider vanished. Sookur, after abusing Mainah's mahout, went straight on, and within one hundred yards I came upon two full-grown rhinos standing together, with their heads towards me; but the grass was so high, that all that I could see was their huge ears and a dusky form, but guessing for the chest of the larger, I fired; a shriek and a headlong charge was the result. Lutchmee spun round like a teetotum, and went off at her best pace; I had just time to turn round and let drive, as rhino's nose was actually within a few inches of my elephant. I was using a two-groove No. 10 rifle, by Lang, the bullets hardened with a mixture of quicksilver; the ball entered the back, and passing out at the belly, floored my antagonist; but the row she made frightened Lutchmee to such an extent, it was some time before I could get her back. The rhino had picked herself up, and stood at bay in some very heavy grass. Every time I went towards it, it made its peculiar cry and charged, and off would go my elephant; so seeing that the animal could not escape, and not wishing to get my elephant cut for nothing, I left it, and went back to our huts.

I picked the rhino up two days afterwards, dead, where our encounter had taken place. I bathed and breakfasted,



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and still Macdonald did not appear, but as he had our breakfast-basket behind his howdah, containing all that was requisite to refresh the inner man, even to a bottle of champagne, I knew he was all right as far as food went, but wondered at his absence. He returned about six in the evening. It appears Mainah had turned off as soon as he smelt the rhinos, and going at his best

had come. So Macdonald got off, bathed and breakfasted, and after resting his weary limbs awhile, returned by a long circuitous route—even then Mainah would not move without some men in front of him! Now what had upset this really staunch animal? I can only account for it in this way: Macdonald had a theory (knowing how fond of opium the Assamese are, and what quantities



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pace straight across country, had returned to our yesterday's camp, some twelve miles off; crossing in his course several nasty nullahs without slackening his speed, and shaking Macdonald into a jelly. The mahout appeared to have lost all control over him, but on reaching the place where we had encamped at Soonapilly he pulled up, but nothing would induce him to return the way he

they are in the habit of eating daily) that if he took some of this drug with him, and kept doling it out, the mahout's zeal and pluck would be increased. I fancy he gave no thought to the man's private supply, and so every now and then gave the mahout a bit; this, together with what the man had had previously, I believe proved too much for him; he lost his nerve and communicated

his funk to the animal he bestrode. I have seen Mainah frequently since, in several scrimmages with tigers, buffaloes, and rhinos, and he never showed the least fear again.

During that evening, the villagers brought in the young rhino, and when I saw him the next morning, he was the impersonification of all that is savage; he was securely tethered, but he tried to get at everybody that went near him.

A tiger could not have been more savage, yet in the course of a couple of days he quieted down, ate plantains out of the hand, and in a week would follow Sookur about everywhere. I sold him afterwards to Jamrach's agent for £60, and I believe I ought to have got double that; so, apart from the sport of shooting the large animals, the catching of the young ones would prove a profitable speculation."



FISH-HAWKS AND THEIR NESTS.

ONCE spent a summer at a little fishing hamlet on the New Jersey coast, and of all the strange and interesting things I saw there, nothing was stranger or more interesting than these birds of which I want to tell you. In poetry and science they are always called "ospreys." That may be a prettier word—but fish-hawks is the better name; it is the one which has been given by all fishermen on our coast, and it is more descriptive of the birds and their habits.

A broad shallow river, which was only the sea pushing back into the land, ran just in the rear of our boarding-house, and there, all day long, we could watch the fish-hawks, circling above or swooping down from great heights, or diving headlong into the water, or sitting solemn and grave upon their nests. As soon as you come within sound of the ocean, you may see these large pouch-shaped nests wedged between the bare forks of the pine, oak, and other strong trees, sometimes ten, sometimes fifty feet above the ground. They are placed, without any attempt at concealment, in the open fields, or close to the fisher's houses, or along the river-banks perhaps a mile inland; and they form a wonderfully picturesque

feature in the landscape. They are built of large sticks three or four feet long, mixed in with corn-stalks, sea-weed, and mullein stalks, piled up four or five feet in a solid mass, and lined with sea-weed. They are not hollow like a pouch, as you might judge from the outside, but are nearly flat on top, and about as deep as a dinner-plate.

Of course they are very heavy, and the weight, together with the mass of wet stuff, saps the vitality of the tree in a few years, and it gets bare and ragged.

This great weight is very necessary, however, for it enables the nests to resist the storms and high winds which sweep over our eastern shore. And strength is what is mainly needed, for the fish-hawk builds its nest as we do our houses—to last a great many years.

Ask any one of the old fishermen about them, and he will probably say first:—

"Wall, they're a curus fowl. No matter what the weather may be, they come back on the 21st of March of each year, all at once; and the 21st of September you can't see one. They go overnight, and no man from Maine to Georgia can tell where they go to."

They say, too, that the same birds come back to the same nest every year. If it has been injured by the winter's