

THE WILD BEASTS, BIRDS AND REPTILES OF THE WORLD

THE STORY OF THEIR CAPTURE

BY P. T. BARNUM.



NEW YORK AKRON, O. CHICAGO
THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY

1911

CHAPTER LI.

THE RHINOCEROS HUNTERS.

THE blood of the Texan was roused, and, heedless of the fearful risk he ran, he wheeled his mustang and sped toward the native village on a dead run. The distance was short, and the yell which he sent out as he thundered down the slope was the same that had rung through the mountain gorges of Arizona when charging upon the dusky marauders of the border.

The Korahs had not yet recovered from the panic caused by the rescue of the lad, and the sight of the white man, swinging his Winchester over his head, must have made them think the whole party had returned to attack them. They scattered as if from before a smoking bombshell.

Jack headed for the hut from which Dick Brownell had dashed a few minutes before. He supposed several of his captors were still there, but they had all hurried forth in pursuit, and were still out of doors.

A native woman and two children were within, and when the white man, leaping from his saddle, bounded through the small door, they were transfixed with terror.

Jack saw the canvas where it had been spread in one corner, probably to serve as a bed for some of the inmates. In a twinkling, he had snatched it up, ran out, and was in the saddle again.

The intelligent mustang needed no guidance. Hardly was his master on his back, when he whirled about and went up the slope like a whirlwind.

There really was no peril involved in the act, for not a spear or arrow was sent after the Texan, who swung the fluttering canvas aloft, and uttered a shout to which his waiting friends replied with a delight no less than his own.

The exploit was begun and ended so quickly, that it was over before the bewildered natives could interfere. But for the stirring events immediately preceding, the charge of the Texan would have led him to as certain death as if he had plunged over a precipice a thousand feet high.

Dick Brownell expected a rasping like the scraping of a lion's tongue over the naked hand, for the part he had played in the business, but not one of his companions uttered a word of reproof. The feeling of impatience on the part of Jack Harvey and Mr. Godkin had vanished long before, and they were too grateful for the outcome to utter any words except those of gratulation.

Then, too, Dick could not be made to regret more keenly his remissness than he now lamented it, and the most that was done in the way of rebuke was a smile and shake of the director's head, when the lad, relating his story at the request of his friends, told how he had persisted in hunting for the missing canvas until by mere accident he came upon it.

Dick said that, while his captors offered him no violence, they showed an ugly disposition after reaching the little cluster of huts, which caused him much misgiving. The whole proceeding was such a daring one on their part that our friends believed they meant to hold the lad for ransom. They thought the white hunters wealthy, for, indeed, they had considerable possessions with them, and if it had proven impossible to arrange a ransom, it is likely they would have put their prisoner to death.

The first thing done by the party on reaching camp was to restore the canvas cover to its proper place over the wagon. It had been the cause of some lively work on the part of the hunters, and more than once it had looked as if it would involve them in serious difficulty, but, thank Providence, all had come out well.

Diedrick and his friends took good care of the camp during the absence of the white men, but the anxiety of the Hottentot for the recapture and return of the missing youth led him to venture to the top of the nearest elevation, where he carefully surveyed all the country in his field of vision.

The horsemen were not in sight, but he observed them soon after, on their return, and was quick to discover that one of the ponies bore two riders. That was enough, and it may safely be said that none rejoiced more heartily over the rescue of Dick Brownell than did his African friend.

But, while the native was scanning the country on all sides, he made a discovery which turned the excitement of his employers into a new channel. He caught sight of an animal, at no great distance, in the tall grass along the river, which he believed was a rhinoceros, and, since Mr. Godkin had announced, but a short time before, that he was ready to give his attention to that species of game, the expectation was that it would now be done without further delay.

Rhinoceros hunting is attended not only with great danger, but is so delicate and difficult that many a failure has been made by veteran hunters who have bagged all other kinds of game. Before telling you about the perilous adventures in which our friends became involved on the afternoon of Dick Brownell's return from captivity, I must give you some idea of the work they undertook.

In the first place, there are four varieties of rhinoceros found in South Africa. They are known as the *borele*, or black rhinoceros, the *keitloa*, or two-horned black species, the *mochoch*, or ordinary white rhinoceros, and the *kobaoba*, or long-horned white rhinoceros. The black species is smaller than the others, but is ten-fold fiercer and more dangerous.

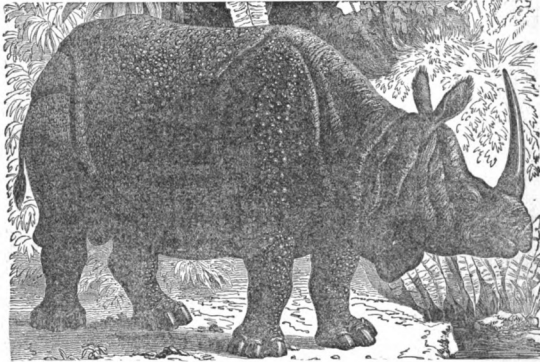
The Asiatic rhinoceros is smaller than the African, has his hide in looser folds, and two of the species have but a single horn.

The square-nosed white rhinoceros is the largest known. He is not white in color, but shows a dirty resemblance to that hue. They have been found eighteen feet in length, and I have known them to be with a circumference still greater.

Set not in the bone, but in the skin of its blunt nose, is the horn, sharp, hard, curved, and more than a yard long. Just behind this is a smaller horn, but equally sharp and hard.

The eyes of the beast are very small, its ears are long, and tipped with scrubby bristles, and its sense of hearing and smell is so acute that it is almost useless for a hunter to approach him from the windward. Besides this, despite its enormous bulk (the rhinoceros ranks next to the elephant in size), he is so swift of foot that it takes an unusually good steed to overtake him.

The long-horned white rhinoceros is the rarer of the two and is found far in the interior and mainly to the eastward of the Limpopo. Many of them have horns four feet in length, curving forward, while the horn of the *mochoko* bends backward and is rarely more than two-thirds the length of the other. A survey of the head and front of one of these creatures will satisfy you that he holds the championship for ugliness in the way of looks.



RHINOCEROS OF INDIA.

The Javanese rhinoceros is not so bulky as the Indian species, and has longer legs. It is mischievous, but less dangerous than those I have named.

When I add that the rhinoceros is nocturnal in his habits, that he is a terrible fighter when aroused, and that he has one of the most alert of small birds to warn him of danger, you will admit there are many obstacles to success in hunting him.

The point where Pongo and Diedrick had located the game was fully a mile to the northward of the camp, and at no great distance, therefore, from the elevation which was used as an observatory on the first arrival of our friends in this section.

They had not seen the beast distinctly, but it seemed to have been aroused by thirst and was pushing its way through the tall grass from the river to its resting-place during the day-time.

There was enough uneasiness over the Korahs to make Mr. Godkin unwilling to leave the camp without full protection. The natives might feel revengeful enough to watch for some chance for stealthy work, while afraid to attack openly.

The director, therefore, decided that he and Pongo would stay behind, leaving the cousins and Jack Harvey to prosecute the hunt with only Diedrick as their companion. These four knew enough of the nature of the animals to render unnecessary any instructions or hints. Mr. Godkin said he would accompany them on the morrow, leaving the inference that he had no faith in their meeting with success before that time.

The preparations for the hunt were quickly completed. The air had grown quite warm, but enough coolness remained from the storm of the night before to render the day one of the finest experienced since entering that section.

Jack Harvey, I need not say, carried his lasso with him, though there was little probability of any chance for its use. Bob Marshall had borrowed the glass of Mr. Godkin, for that was likely to do them service.

The first proceeding was to ride to the elevation from which the two natives had seen what they believed was the rhinoceros. Diedrick remembered the exact spot and at once turned his keen eyes in that direction.

He was gazing toward a portion of the broad stream which swept by the camp, and between him and the water was a growth of grass, taller and denser than that which had sheltered the baboons, and spread over a much greater area of territory.

It was near the middle of this that the natives discerned some large animal moving, which they believed was a rhinoceros, though the view was too indistinct for them to be certain.

Every eye followed the course Diedrick pointed out, and the glass was freely used, but nothing could be discovered of the animal, though, as a matter of course, there were many places where a score of such beasts might have been concealed beyond detection. It was the fact that the brute was in motion which had revealed it to the African, who happened to look at the point when not scanning the plain for his absent friends.

"There's only one thing to do," said Dick Brownell. "We have set out to hunt for a rhinoceros, and we have got to hunt him. We haven't reason to believe he means to hunt *us*."

"I don't suppose he is a great way from where he was seen," remarked Bob, "for he won't move around much until night-time."

"Come ahead," said Jack Harvey, giving rein to his horse; "we'll go straight for the spot, and we'll know inside of half an hour whether the critter is there or not."

CHAPTER LII.

THE BUPHAGA AFRICANA.

THE well-mounted hunters had but a comparatively short distance to ride, when they dashed into the tall grass, amid which grew a great deal of the native rice, of which the hippopotamus, as well as the rhinoceros, is so fond. The ponies, of necessity, slackened their pace, for, knowing how quick the big game is to detect danger, the time had come for the exercise of extreme caution.

Conscious that the proceedings had now reached a stage in which the Hottentot was the most competent director, Jack Harvey fell to the rear with the boys, all preserving silence, and the three keeping sharp watch of their native leader.

All at once, Diedrick raised his hand as a signal for the others to halt. Although they saw nothing, there could be no doubt that he had detected something important.

Just in front, the grass, which was five or six feet in height, became more dense and abundant. The party could see but a short distance, and, of course, it was beyond the power of the native to discern anything that was not manifest to his friends.

Several minutes passed, during which all were silent and listening. Diedrick then turned and explained that, while he saw nothing, he was of the belief that more than one of the animals was close to them. A gentle wind was blowing from that point, which was fortunate for the hunters, since, were the direction different, the sagacious beast would be quick to scent his danger.

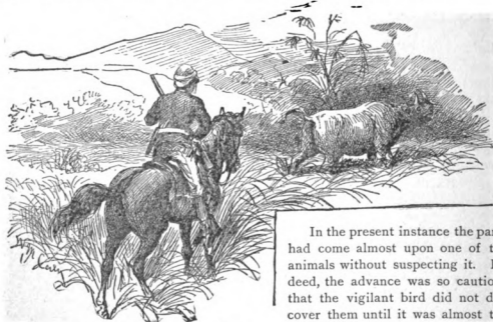
Diedrick proposed that he and one of the boys should make a circuit, which would take them around to a point a half mile away. Then, if any rhinoceros was between the parties, he would discover his danger and make off toward those in waiting, who, if they used ordinary discretion, would gain a chance of bringing down some of the gigantic game.

This understanding was scarcely reached when a small bird suddenly rose from the grass at a distance of less than a hundred yards, and, darting straight up in the air, gave utterance to a sharp peculiar note, that could be heard a long way off.

The Hottentot muttered impatiently in his own language as he faced about to explain the cause of his anger.

The bird, which had just risen, was the *buphaga africana*, or rhinoceros bird, the most devoted and faithful friend of the rhinoceros. It constantly attends the beast, feeding on the insects which infest its muddy hide. While thus employed, it is on the lookout for enemies of the animal. The instant it detects the approach of the hunter, it flies above the beast, uttering the sharp cries which he understands at once.

Many hunters claim that if the rhinoceros happens to be asleep when danger appears, the little friend will peck the inside of his ears until he awakens.



"HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE VAST BEAST."

feet from the ground, when it descended and circled about in great excitement, all the time emitting the cries of warning. The horsemen could not see the rhinoceros, but he was plainly heard as he went crashing through the grass with a speed which the best steed would find it hard to surpass when impeded by the luxuriant vegetation.

"Let's dash into the grass and charge upon him," proposed Dick, when told that they were so close to the brute. But the Texan shook his head.

"The fellow can travel faster than we, and that bird will keep him warned all the while. so we won't get within gun-shot of him."

"Then we might as well turn back and give up," said Bob; and I should like to know what warrant we had, in the first place, to expect any success in hunting rhinoceroses?"

"Others have brought them down; therefore we may succeed. It isn't every rhinoceros that is furnished with such a bird to give warning when danger threatens. Let us hear what Diedrick has to propose."

The Hottentot made known that he and the parties whom he conducted through the grass and jungles had often been baffled in the same manner by the vigilance of the little bird, but, where the hunters numbered three or four, he had succeeded in outwitting the feathered sentinel by a simple device.

In the present instance the party had come almost upon one of the animals without suspecting it. Indeed, the advance was so cautious that the vigilant bird did not discover them until it was almost too late; but it made up for its remissness. It did not rise more than fifty

Jack did not intend to withdraw from the jungle until he had secured a gorilla, and, understanding the nature of the animal as well as he did, he resolved that the hands of the party should be unhampered when the golden opportunity came, if come it should.

A short distance down the river, which was a tributary of the Gaboon, lay the small boat that had brought the party almost to the camp. By entering this at once, and making good use of their time, the natives ought to deliver the young chimpanzee into the hands of the missionary before night, and return to their camp by noon of the following day.

Warning them against undue haste or carelessness, Jack and Bob bade the natives good-by, and they quickly disappeared in the jungle, bearing their precious burden between them.

Although Jack and Bob felt the need of the presence of the natives, they did not mean to loiter until their return. They were competent to the task of hunting any game, and they set out to do so before Gyp and Hargo had been gone ten minutes.

Their prime purpose, however, being the capture of a gorilla, they gave little thought to anything else; but, before they had gone far upon their renewed hunt, they came upon a scene which, for the time, drove everything else from their minds.

It seemed that a party of elephants were returning from a bath in the muddy river, when they encountered three rhinoceroses on their way after the same luxury. The meeting took place in a sort of rough path in the jungle, not far from the camp of our friends.

Two of the rhinoceroses turned out for the elephants, but the third, a huge, ugly fellow, refused to give an inch. Thereupon the dozen or more elephants sensibly yielded the path to him.

All excepting one, a huge bull, who was in just as ugly a mood as the rhinoceros. Within less than two minutes of their meeting these monarchs of the jungle came together like a couple of animated mountains.

The rhinoceros ran across the front of the elephant, and flung up his two horns with the purpose of tearing him asunder, but the elephant threw his left foreleg over the huge, flabby neck of the mailed rhinoceros, and, partly holding him motionless, bore down upon him with such awful power that one of his tusks was driven clean through the victim's body, just back of his shoulders. As the fearful ivory sword was withdrawn it was crimsoned with blood, which streamed down its length and dripped to the ground, while the rhinoceros collapsed like so much mud, killed as utterly as if a thousand tons of rock had crushed him.

"The only law of the road in Africa is might," said Bob, after the elephant, having contemplated his work for a moment, swung off to join the herd, which viewed the battle from a point some distance away.

"That rhinoceros was a fool," remarked Jack; "he was too stubborn to turn out, but preferred to fight, and as a consequence he was knocked out in the first round."

"A rhinoceros doesn't always make such a failure. Mr. Godkin told me they

Jack did not intend to withdraw from the jungle until he had secured a gorilla, and, understanding the nature of the animal as well as he did, he resolved that the hands of the party should be unhampered when the golden opportunity came, if come it should.

A short distance down the river, which was a tributary of the Gaboon, lay the small boat that had brought the party almost to the camp. By entering this at once, and making good use of their time, the natives ought to deliver the young chimpanzee into the hands of the missionary before night, and return to their camp by noon of the following day.

Warning them against undue haste or carelessness, Jack and Bob bade the natives good-by, and they quickly disappeared in the jungle, bearing their precious burden between them.

Although Jack and Bob felt the need of the presence of the natives, they did not mean to loiter until their return. They were competent to the task of hunting any game, and they set out to do so before Gyp and Hargo had been gone ten minutes.

Their prime purpose, however, being the capture of a gorilla, they gave little thought to anything else; but, before they had gone far upon their renewed hunt, they came upon a scene which, for the time, drove everything else from their minds.

It seemed that a party of elephants were returning from a bath in the muddy river, when they encountered three rhinoceroses on their way after the same luxury. The meeting took place in a sort of rough path in the jungle, not far from the camp of our friends.

Two of the rhinoceroses turned out for the elephants, but the third, a huge, ugly fellow, refused to give an inch. Thereupon the dozen or more elephants sensibly yielded the path to him.

All excepting one, a huge bull, who was in just as ugly a mood as the rhinoceros. Within less than two minutes of their meeting these monarchs of the jungle came together like a couple of animated mountains.

The rhinoceros ran across the front of the elephant, and flung up his two horns with the purpose of tearing him asunder, but the elephant threw his left foreleg over the huge, flabby neck of the mailed rhinoceros, and, partly holding him motionless, bore down upon him with such awful power that one of his tusks was driven clean through the victim's body, just back of his shoulders. As the fearful ivory sword was withdrawn it was crimsoned with blood, which streamed down its length and dripped to the ground, while the rhinoceros collapsed like so much mud, killed as utterly as if a thousand tons of rock had crushed him.

"The only law of the road in Africa is might," said Bob, after the elephant, having contemplated his work for a moment, swung off to join the herd, which viewed the battle from a point some distance away.

"That rhinoceros was a fool," remarked Jack; "he was too stubborn to turn out, but preferred to fight, and as a consequence he was knocked out in the first round."

"A rhinoceros doesn't always make such a failure. Mr. Godkin told me they



ELEPHANT AND RHINOCEROS.