

of me. After some time they moved off quietly, quite unconcerned. It was a grand sight, and one seldom seen, I fancy, nowadays."

This may be of interest in view of the allegations which have been made that the white rhinoceros no longer exists in Zululand. Mr Saunders has great experience of the South African fauna, having himself shot specimens of most of the different species. He is not likely to have been mistaken in this matter, especially as he got so close a view. I may mention that the white rhinoceros in Zululand are strictly preserved. Permission is never given to shoot them.

WALTER HELY-HUTCHINSON.

Government House, Natal, June 1.

SIR,—It may interest some of your readers to know that a few white rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*) are still to be found in this province of Natal. On the 24th inst. I happened in the course of my duties to be in the game preserve No. 4, which is situate in the unoccupied country immediately above and between the confluence of the Black and White Umfolozi rivers, when five of these animals were observed about half a mile distant. The magistrate of the district (Mr Wheelwright) and myself were together on horseback at the time, and decided to ride towards the interesting objects, which were walking slowly towards some open thorn bush, and see how close they would allow us to approach. We thus got to within fifty yards of where they were then standing in a bunch, in short grass on open ground, with only a few small trees dotted about. As they took no notice of our approach on horseback we dismounted, and, leaving our horses with some natives who had accompanied us, walked up to within twenty yards, and gazed for several minutes at one of the most interesting sights it has been my fortune to witness, and one which I venture to think is seldom to be seen at the present time, with these animals so nearly extinct as they appear to be.

At such close quarters we could naturally observe every movement of the huge pachyderms; that they were the large, square-lipped, grass eating variety, there is not the slightest question. For a minute or more they appeared quite unconscious of our proximity, although we had walked straight towards them without attempting to take advantage of what little cover there was. After a while they began to sniff about as if suddenly discovering an unwholesome taint in the air. What little wind there was was in our favour. Now and again one would take a few steps towards us, but, although it was a bright day and we were standing quite in the open, they did not appear to see us. After the lapse of two or three minutes at least, the five began moving about in an uneasy manner, still gazing in our direction. So near were we that the blinking of their small eyes was easily seen. They still appeared to be unable to decide whether they were in any danger, but eventually moved off, first in a walk, subsequently breaking into a slow trot. As they took an oblique course from where we were standing we rode to intercept them and got even nearer than before, and watched them trot out of sight, more like great pigs than anything else I can compare them to. A swarm of tick-birds, which we had observed scrambling over their huge carcasses, rose into the air, but soon lit again on an old bull, who was not too pleased with their attention, and attempted with several pig jumps to free himself from his tormentors. The birds, however, were most persistent, and, clustering on his haunches, remained there.

The group consisted of four full-grown animals (one of which was a very large bull) and one more than three-parts grown. The mature animals carried fair-sized horns, those of the large bull being particularly massive at the base. On the same day our natives saw three others of the same species, a cow with a young calf and a bull. In this particular locality there are, probably, ten of these animals, and, so far as I am able to say of my own knowledge, that is the only spot in this province where *R. simus* is still to be found. A few are supposed to exist near the southern slopes of the Ubombo range of mountains, but as several of the black or prehensile lipped species (*R. bicornis*), are still found in that locality, I am inclined to doubt whether those supposed to be *R. simus* are of that variety. At any rate I have never seen one there, neither have I seen the usual indications of their presence in that neighbourhood, always discernible in the shape of their excreta, which is easily distinguished from that of the prehensile lip variety. The reserve in which the five were seen is almost in the heart of this province. They are as strictly preserved as circumstances will permit—the Governor of the colony even not possessing power under our game law to grant permission to kill them. The penalty for killing or attempting to kill one is a fine of not less than £50 or more than £100, with an alternative of imprisonment. Added to this is a penalty for shooting in any of the reserves, of which there are four, without a licence, and no licences are granted to shoot in this particular reserve.

About three years ago two European poachers went into the reserve and shot two of these animals—a bull and a cow (the latter in calf). They were detected and heavily fined, but their accomplices, who were more to blame than themselves, unfortunately escaped. The remains of the animals, not having been properly preserved, were useless as specimens. The question of the effectual preservation of these few *R. simus* appears to be one well worthy the serious consideration of the International Big Game Conference. That noted authority on all South African game, Mr F. C. Selous, in his interesting contribution to the *Great and Small Game of South Africa*, I believe, estimates the number of these animals now living at about twenty. The few here, therefore, comprising as they do a large proportion of the last of their race now in existence, must naturally be objects of considerable interest, and are worthy of every effort for their preservation. Should these remarks be the means of attracting useful attention in that direction, my object in writing will be attained.

C. R. SAUNDERS.

Eshowe, Zululand, Natal, May 31.

### THE SEA LAMPREY.

SIR,—I have read with much interest Mr Tegetmeier's article in the *Field* of June 16 on the subject of the sea lamprey, and think the