

THE
SPEAR AND THE RIFLE;

OR

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

SPORT IN INDIA.

BY AN OLD SHEKARREE.

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of buffalos, when a ball was fired at a large bull, which hit him on the hind quarters, and irritated him immoderately. One of the pad elephants—a rather small one—being nearest to the wounded buffalo, the latter lowered his head, and charged her with a quickness and impetuosity that must be seen to be at all understood. The bull's full force took effect on the elephant's side, and she was rolled over to the great amazement of the driver. The buffalo was satisfied with this feat, and taking no advantage of his fallen foe, made off to join the rest of the herd, but before he could effect this, he received balls enough to disable him, and he was eventually a victim to his own rashness. The elephant was quickly on her legs again, as also the driver, and neither were much the worse for the accident, except that the former received a skin-deep wound from the buffalo's horn, which soon healed over.



RHINOCEROS HUNTING IN BENGAL.

Returning to the station from a short hog hunting trip, three or four friends and myself had reached an indigo planter's house, and well known hospitable resting place, about half way, or say five and twenty miles. In the middle of the day, to our utter astonishment, information was brought us that two rhinoceros had just been discovered in a sugar-cane field close at hand. Everybody was instantly astir, and guns and ammunition in general demand. There were only two elephants at the factory, and one of these was the tallest I ever beheld, but very old, and the other was a small beast; but such as they were, we were thankful for them. Two

of the party went in a very unusual conveyance—a buggy! while I proceeded to the scene of action on horseback. There were only two guns for the whole party, and these belonging to our host, our own not having yet come up from the last ground, and we hardly expected to do any good with these; nevertheless we were determined to try. When we got to the field—a rather large piece of sugar-cane—we plainly saw the two huge beasts, for they took no pains to conceal themselves, but walked leisurely about, sometimes in the field, sometimes outside, standing looking about them for a minute at a time at the novelty of the scene, and their position. While this was going on, a native servant of our host's had loaded an old rusty musket, and walking deliberately to within ten yards, fired at the biggest of the two animals, and strange to say, killed him dead as a stone at the first shot! This astonished us all not a little. The female retreated into the sugar-cane, but almost immediately returned to her fallen mate, walked round him repeatedly, and made a low grunting kind of sound, as we supposed to make him get up. She also nudged him with her nose, and gave him a slight kick or two, but, as may be supposed, without effect, for the beast was quite dead. Firing was now commenced on the female, but with no other result than to cause her to retreat into the sugar-cane, from which, however, she very shortly came forth to repeat her useless attempts to rouse her mate. This continued for some time; at every wound she went into the sugar-cane, and after a little restless unhappy wandering, she came out and was again fired at. The man with the rusty musket, after repeated trials, could make no proper impressions on her, and when she had received in all

about twenty balls, and again failing to rouse her dead mate, she crossed the field and galloped away. I was after her as fast as I could, but her pace was double what I could get out of the horse I was riding. I say "double" as a figure of speech, for there was no telling what her pace was; all I know is, that she was very soon out of sight, although the line she took was an open one, and her track could be distinctly traced by the blood; nor do I believe that the fastest horse that ever was foaled would have had any chance with her. We put men on her track, but from that day to this, we never could discover what became of her, neither could we ever learn whence she had come. It is true, plenty of rhinoceros were known to be at a distance of from eighty to one hundred miles, but none had never been heard of nearer. We conjectured that they must have wandered from their usual haunts, and getting entirely out of their reckoning, had gone from one little piece of cover to another, with which even the best cultivated parts of the district abounded in those days.

The novelty of this visit having been duly discussed, rhinoceros in general became the subject of conversation, and on its being suggested that an expedition should be undertaken after them, it was readily agreed to by some, of whom I was one. None of us had ever been after rhinoceros, and all we had to boast of were some excellent shots amongst us, and plenty of pluck to carry us through any adventure we might enter upon. The party having been finally arranged, and the convenience of all duly consulted, we agreed to start in three weeks. This gave us time to collect the best information as to the country we should take, as also the best elephants we could procure.

The big male—the property of our friend the indigo planter—was offered but refused, for so arrant a coward never was seen, and such a character is the worst that can be amongst a line of his fellows. The last time I saw him at his master's, he was dragging a gigantic cart laden with indigo plant from the river to the vats, and well pleased was I to see the ignominious service to which he was reduced. But strange alterations of fortune attend elephants, as well as human beings. This enormous beast was purchased by a native of wealth and rank, at a very high price, solely on account of his great height. He was required to grace a procession, his thin ugly figure being concealed under a profusion of gaudy trappings, and his new master was willing to pay heavily for the luxury of being mounted on the tallest elephant of the party; in which object, however, he was cleverly frustrated, as there was a taller beast than this one in a distant district, and another great man got the loan of him, and he arrived only a few hours before he was required. I mention the circumstance to show to what lengths the natives of India will sometimes go for the merest trifles; that in the present instance, being nothing more than the paltry ambition of being carried through a crowd for an hour, or perhaps less, a few inches higher from the ground than others. His disappointment and chagrin were in proportion to his anxiety in this petty affair, and that was, I believe, extensive.

Our line was increased to seventeen in number, and some of these were of the very first character as sporting elephants; and as we were to be out some time, every part of our arrangement was on a proportionate scale. In fact there was nothing wanting to ensure good

sport, save and except the animals we were in search of.

As we had to travel over remarkably good hog hunting country, we enjoyed some excellent fun, before we came to ground too bad to ride over. One incident amused me immensely, and is, I think, worth relating. A friend and myself were riding after a very fine boar, close on forty inches high, and we came upon a nullah that we knew we could not cross. The hog would have no difficulty in doing so, and if he took it, we were pretty certain to lose him. We were going at a certain pace, when we saw the nullah not far ahead, and in disappointment I began pulling up, but observing my companion rather increasing his speed, and knowing him to be a very odd yet ready witted character, I held on after him, he keeping up his running till he had barely time and space to avoid the water. He then rounded a bend in the nullah, and got down to its ridge beyond, when to my astonishment, I found we were between the nullah and the hog. My companion, wider awake than I was, saw that the bend was very sudden, and justly concluded that by pressing the hog to the utmost, the latter would take the nullah at his best pace, and in all probability cross again beyond, and thus we should all once more be on the same side of the water; and so it turned out. This would hardly have occurred to one man in a hundred, and the result was that we had a most splendid chase, and killed as fine a boar as any that fell to our spears that season. *Experientia docet* is a proverb I always acknowledged the full force of, and here again I got a wrinkle, never to throw away a chance, as matters may—and often do—mend when least expected.

As we had plenty of time, and most delightful country

for hogs, we spent three or four days in the enjoyment of the most splendid and exciting of all sport that the world affords. It was our plan—no new one—for two men to take after each hog that was judged large enough to defend himself properly, and thus be worthy of our attentions. We had no difficulty whatever in finding hogs of this description for the whole party. One morning we turned out of a grass cover, on the slope of an old tank, seven or eight fine boars, and every man of the party took after one of these, and strange to say, every man killed his hog. This included an elderly gentleman who was a very keen sportsman, but who, by reason of age, was supposed to be rather a timid rider. I mention the foregoing as an almost unprecedented case, more especially as the accidents to horses were very trifling, and the hogs fought well.

We had now arrived at that point when the nature of the cover, and the ground, made it quite as likely we should meet with rhinoceros as hogs. We therefore abandoned the horse and the spear, and took to the elephant and the rifle.

The information we got from our scouts, who were kept constantly moving for this purpose, was not very satisfactory. They reported that we could not be certain of getting rhinoceros until after the third march into the heavier grass swamps, but that as their movements were most uncertain, they might be in force not as many miles from our camp. Our next encamping ground was on a slightly elevated space, just large enough for our purpose, upon which grew some remarkably fine trees; and from this spot we had a most commanding view of the flats and swamps in the distance. Such an uninterrupted wilderness of high grass,

with a few trees scattered amongst it, I never before saw. It was a wide plain, with occasional depressions in the surface, but no elevations; and it was in these soft, hot, wet hollows that rhinoceros delighted. The grass was generally quite high enough to hide any animal from view, and if we fell in with one, the main difficulty would be to keep him in sight. But my reliance was in our excellent line of elephants, which, if the mahouts kept only a reasonably good look out, must drive everything before it. There were occasional clumps of magnificent trees that any English park would have been improved by.

Early in the morning our search commenced, and for that morning we purposed to do no more than drill our mahouts into keeping a good line at one uniform steady pace. Having taught them to dress by an elephant stationed in the centre, we got on admirably; especially as the chief mahout was an active intelligent fellow, and directed his attentions with judgment, to those any way out of the line. Satisfied now in this respect, we went on, when up jumped a tiger, and though all shooting, except at rhinoceros, was, by general agreement, interdicted, the man before whom he got up could not command himself, and fired, hitting him very hard in the shoulder. This brought upon the elephant a famous charge, which unfortunately I could not enjoy, as I was too far off, and all I remember was seeing the brute clinging to the elephant's forehead. Here he did not long remain, as the elephant shook him off, and he was very soon put *hors de combat*. This was a slight interruption, and the dead tiger being mounted on a pad elephant, on we went. We had by this time wandered a good way from camp, and after the late adventure

with the tiger, had just re-formed our line, when word was passed that something unusual was on foot. How eagerly then did each man clutch his rifle, and pass his eye from place to place, to catch the first glimpse of the game. As we proceeded, it became clear that we were driving some large animal before us, and it was most tantalizing to know this, yet not to be able to get a sight of it, for just out of shot ahead, we could hear the animal going along, and see the high grass bend before it. Long or random shots at a rhinoceros were useless, and we pressed on with the whole line, and in the course of about a quarter of an hour, on coming to an open space, we were delighted at seeing a good sized rhinoceros, but making good use of his power to escape. This it was of course our object to prevent, and to push on was the order of the day, but unfortunately we did so without preserving a good line, and we lost our game; no one could say what had become of it. Line was again formed, and coming to some heavy ground, on searching carefully, we discovered his track; and judging from this the direction he had taken, again we pressed on, but with great care not to injure our line. The delay had given the rhinoceros a good start, and though we came upon his track every now and then, it was a long chase before we again sighted him. The sun was intensely hot, and but for the ardour of the sport, none of us would have remained exposed to it; as it was, we cared not for it, but only for the rhinoceros. Following steadily on, the beast unexpectedly jumped up before me, upon which I fired and hit him in the neck, and the ball passed on and lodged under the right jaw. This did not, of course, disable him, though it slightly astonished him, and he went off through the

thick tall grass at a great pace. Keeping him in view as well as we could, we went on as fast as was practicable; and again, when we least expected it, up he got before another part of the line, and as the cover was not so thick just beyond, he got a whole volley; one of the balls seriously injuring his off fore leg, so that his escape was now more than doubtful. Up to this point we had seen only the rhinoceros running away, but now we hoped to see him at bay. He went off limping perceptibly, and disappeared in a small extent of heavy grass, beyond which was some low swampy ground, that indicated deep mud and a difficult passage. Over this we had not observed him go, and forming a compact body, we advanced upon the cover. As soon as we got a few yards into it, he came at the line, through which he attempted to force a passage, but was met by two well directed shots on the head, that turned him. He again stopped, as if he did not relish the notion of facing the swamp, and on our getting near him, he charged the line again, and the elephants—who have a great dread of rhinoceros—began to be very fidgetty; but he received several shots, some one of which must have seriously hurt him, as he retreated evidently distressed. We could see the grass move as we went on; and as we followed him up, we plainly perceived that two animals were on foot; and this rather puzzled us to determine which was our wounded friend. As we advanced, one of the two went ahead, and guessing that the hindmost was the one we wanted, we were disappointed to find ourselves mistaken. It was not long before we discovered him to be a fresh animal, and he received the fire of the whole, but not seeming to be at all disabled, we at once left him, and went in pursuit

of the wounded one. We had not long to hunt for him, and coming up to him just as he was leaving the thick grass to cross the swamp, he received the contents of every rifle in the line; and whether he had miscalculated his strength, or the last volley had again injured him, he turned back, and charged us with all the vigour he could muster, and coming in contact with a male pad elephant, the latter received him on his teeth, and sent him rolling over in a helpless state. We then closed in on him, and finally destroyed him. He was of average height and size, and had a prettily shaped horn on his nose, but decidedly blunt, and in no way apparently capable of breaking the skin of any animal. The first ball from my rifle had done him great injury, and must eventually have destroyed him, but the one in the fore leg had hit him in the lower joint, so that he could not escape. Many other bullets had gone through the hide, and only some few had failed to penetrate it, and these for the most part on the folds of the skin. One ball we found flattened on his skull under the skin. It was an exciting chase, and as the first I had been at the death of, I was well enough satisfied; but there was no great fight, and I thought to myself that it was all very well for once in a way, but if all rhinoceros died as tamely, the sport was hardly worth taking much trouble for. The native chiefs consider it a most lucky occurrence to kill a rhinoceros, and so far we were to be envied.

Having with great difficulty taken the head, we decided on returning to camp, but thought we might as well form line through the cover into which the second rhinoceros had retreated, and about a mile higher up we came upon him. He made off as fast as he could, and as we neared the edge of the swamp, we saw him

crossing it ; but either it was more difficult to effect, or he was severely wounded, for he progressed through the mud with very great exertion. The mahouts stoutly objected to put the elephants in, and all we could do was to send a few balls after him ; but as they evidently did him no harm, we desisted, and when we turned our heads towards camp, he had increased his distance considerably, and no doubt got safely across.

Our people brought away all the harder and thicker parts of the hide, for shields and such like ; and no end of whips were selected.

When we got to camp, my care was to have the head properly prepared, so as to preserve it ; and this, after much labor of a very unpleasant nature, I managed to do ; but had I known the disgusting trouble this job would entail on me, I should have been contented with the horn only.

Early next day we started after more rhinoceros ; and whether yesterday's sport had alarmed them, or there were few in the covers near us, I cannot say, but for some hours our search was in vain. We tried all the most likely places up to the swamp, but found nothing, and though the day was not far gone, we were, nevertheless, disappointed.

The question was now put as to the propriety of crossing the swamp ; and after some discussion, in which the most intelligent mahouts were decidedly against the attempt, one man suggested the original idea of examining the margin of the low ground, to see if anything had gone over lately. The search began, and after a while, we found the track of more than one rhinoceros, from which we came to these conclusions, viz., that the instinctive habits of the wild animal, would, in all

probability, lead it to the best and safest crossing; and also that there was plenty of game, if we could only find it, as we had seen other casual footmarks elsewhere. The elephants were accordingly put into the swamp, and though it was very deep and heavy, yet did we get on better than we expected. The labors of these ponderous short-legged beasts, on such an occasion, are very severe, and the motion to the riders by no means pleasant, but there was no help for it.

Some of the line had crossed, and the rest were getting along steadily, when sounds of alarm and distress were heard, and on looking back, we perceived that a good-sized elephant had stuck fast, and that assistance was necessary; she had deviated too far from the proper line of passage. Well was it for all concerned that this was promptly afforded, or we should have lost the animal. As soon as she found herself in danger, she roared an alarm, and in a few minutes, some dwarf babools that grew on the edge of the swamp, were taken to her, as also bundles of long grass as fast as they could be cut; and on removing her pad, she was free to act and exert herself. She seized the branches, and bushes, and bundles of grass, as also her own pad which was handed to her, and anything else she could get, and she worked them underneath herself in a very curious manner, until after about an hour's exertion, she had prepared sufficiently safe standing ground. During all this time, as much more grass, and branches of trees, and such like, had been brought to the spot as was possible, and laid along in a kind of pathway, and the elephant proceeded to finally extricate himself. This was not easily done, and her labors were at times very unpleasant to behold. It was not the first time I had

seen an elephant in a difficulty ; and on one occasion, where the poor beast got into the quicksand of a river, all our exertions, and all the branches of trees, and even the pads of three other elephants, were of no avail, and he sank down and gradually disappeared for ever. It was one of the most painful sights I ever beheld, and like an execution, few men ever desire to see a second.

I will here add the only other instance of loss in a quicksand which I remember. A friend and myself were travelling by dawk, i.e. in palanquins, with relays of bearers ; and borrowed two ponies of a native chief, to ride a few miles to see a curious cavern. On our return, we somehow unintentionally irritated some hill people, who pursued us with their drawn knives, about two feet long. Being on foot, and we on horseback, they could not overtake us, but the distance to the river side—where we had a boat—was short, and we had barely time to get our steeds on board, and shove off, before they arrived. The ponies were Rungpoor tanguns, a breed from the Bootan mountains, well known for their vice and fighting propensities. The boat was small, and we were nearly certain to have a fight, but preferred this to leaving one of the beasts behind. Their heads and eyes were well tied up, and every precaution taken, but when not half way across, in spite of all our care, they discovered each other's proximity, and forthwith began a fight that nothing could stop. All the thrashing we could give them with big sticks over the head, only seemed to infuriate them the more, and we were not only in personal danger of their teeth and heels, but were tired with our endeavours to stay their feud. Everything was useless, and we were compelled to let them fight it out ; and fight it out they did, with

a fury I could not have believed horses capable of. One was bigger than the other, and strange to say, the little one had the best of it; for getting his antagonist to the side of the boat, he plied his heels with such vigor, that he kicked the big one overboard. When this had been effected, it was with the utmost difficulty that we prevented the little one from following the other, and continuing the fight in the water. The big one soon got to his legs, and began floundering about, working for the dry part of the shoal on which we had drifted. This, however, he was never doomed to effect, for the more he got into shallower water, the deeper he sank into the sand, till finally his exertions were of no avail, and the sand got a firm hold of him; and the more he tried to get out, the softer the sand became, and by the time we got a rope over his neck, he was beyond all the power we could exert in the boat, to save him. I would not have believed that an animal could disappear so rapidly as he did, unless I had seen it. He went down—down, till at last we lost sight of him altogether, bridle and saddle and all, and we never saw him again.

But to return to our party, all of whom at last got safely across the swamp; and when we had effected this, it occurred to us that we must re-cross it to get back to camp. We therefore left an elephant to examine and discover some more favorable passage by the time we should return, and then we formed line in search of game. The cover was thicker in places than we had hitherto found it, and the general face of the country decidedly lower, so that there were more moist and watery hollows, and good feeding grounds.

Proceeding quietly along, signal was made that game was on foot, and every man was in a moment on the

qui vive. We had not to wait long, for, as we were wheeling round at the termination of the piece of grass cover, beyond which there was no shelter for any animal larger than a hog, the rhinoceros broke cover and received the fire of all the line, and it was clear she had been severely hurt. No sooner was she in the open, than seeing the line of enemies, and feeling the fire from our rifles, she turned on the nearest elephant, and went at her with a rush that promised terrible things. She was met by some well directed shots, one of which hit her just in front of the horn, and another on the hip bone, both of which must have proved very uncomfortable to say the least, though neither mortal. What effect any of the other shots may have had it is impossible to say at the moment, but the immediate result was to disturb the charge. The rhinoceros getting into the cover, stopped suddenly, and it was clear that whatever she might next attack, would feel the consequence of her anger.

All being ready, we moved up to the spot where we knew the beast was standing ; one of the party saw her and aimed at her forehead, and to his—and our—astonishment, no movement resulted. I could not make this out at all, and expected every instant that some one in the line would suffer. We moved up step by step very cautiously, and the elephants began a low grumbling, that with them indicates fear and apprehension. When within about twenty yards, we halted, expecting every moment to have the furious charge which all felt confident was coming. Another of the party now saw her, and fired, when the beast moved so as to be visible to me, and I fired, aiming at her neck. No sooner had she received the ball, than out she sallied, and accident-

ly came in contact with a fine large heavy female elephant, on which one of the gentlemen of the party was mounted. The rhinoceros reeled from the concussion without injury to the elephant, but almost instantly charged a pad elephant, who received her on the hind quarter, where the rhinoceros left the mark of her horn in the shape of an extensive contusion, that broke the skin in a far uglier manner than if it had been cut by a hog, or torn by the claws of a tiger. This was another novelty, for I had never seen the effects of a rhinoceros charge, and viewed from a howdah it had a serious aspect.

I do not wonder at elephants disliking rhinoceros more than any other animal. A female, not having teeth—like the male—to defend herself with, and a rhinoceros being so much more active than an elephant, it is not at all surprising that the latter avoids the rhinoceros. A male elephant, with good teeth, should have nothing to fear from any rhinoceros, but even in this case they avoid them. The habits of the two animals in their wild state do not tend to bring them into collision ; for the elephant frequents the more open forests, where, however, good water is indispensable ; while the rhinoceros retires to thick and heavy morasses, where the quality of the water, and its produce, is of less consideration than plenty of both.

When the charge was over, and the injury to the pad elephant had been inflicted, the rhinoceros edged away evidently disconcerted by the large force opposed to her, for several of the nearest elephants rushed up to the assistance of the wounded beast. This they will occasionally do, and so almost invariably do both wild and tame buffalos when danger is near, and also other tame

cattle, that in the dry months of the year, are sent up to the turrae to graze. It is no uncommon occurrence for tame buffalos to rush down on a tiger, and beat him off the carcass of the one he has just struck down with his paw, and effectually disabled by a bite through the neck. In such a case a tiger has no chance, and sneaks off, to return to his disabled though not dead prey, when the herd have disappeared.

The rhinoceros, not liking so formidable an opposition, retreated, and in doing this, received the contents of every barrel that could be brought to bear on her. The worst of rhinoceros hunting is, that a man can rarely tell what effect his shots may have on them, for as in this and other cases, I have known a whole volley of ten or a dozen balls to hit a rhinoceros, and to make apparently no impression on the brute. Under these circumstances, therefore, all we could do was to continue firing whenever we got an opportunity, trusting to the almost certainty of seriously injuring her eventually. Remembering the first effect of a random shot, which lamed our first rhinoceros, I determined, in my own mind, to fire at the legs on all occasions for the future, whenever I should get the chance. In all hunting or shooting, there is always one place better to hit than another; as for instance, always fire at the head of a hare, and spear a boar in the small of the back, and if I may make a rule for rhinoceros, I should say always fire at the lower limbs at first, with the object of disabling them from doing much mischief, and also to prevent their leading you too long a chase. We have seen that a single ball may kill one, but the chances against it are excessive, and if you cannot kill with the first shot, it is better to disable and prevent escape.

Following up the wounded rhinoceros, therefore, as fast as we were able, we again started her, and firing low, the beast retreated to a dense piece of high grass, but of very small dimensions. Here she seemed determined to make a stand, and without going up to within a few yards of her nose, there was no symptom of a movement. We therefore stationed ourselves nearly in a circle round her, and directed the male elephants to close in on her, and to defend themselves as the chance required. In this manner we approached her, and when the male elephants got so close as also to touch her, she charged out at the one nearest in front; but the charge was perceptibly deficient in that activity and vigor that characterized her first attack. The elephant being prepared, repelled her with his teeth, but without doing her any great harm. She then passed the first, and came into view of our second circle, when she, of course, received the fire of all immediately near, and as the others came round, we all went in chase, and fired as opportunity offered. The rhinoceros was now weak, and to all appearance subdued, and we came up with her fast, and when within a few yards she turned round with an angry activity we were not prepared for. Had she been allowed to wreak her vengeance unmolested, there is no knowing the amount of damage she would have done. As it was, the several balls hit her hard, for the distance was short, but the elephants were so unsteady, and the one she attacked fairly turned round and bolted, but not before the rhinoceros had given her a severe poke with her horn. She was followed as fast as the elephants could be got under proper control, and as we came up to her, she turned on us, but her weak charge was entirely checked by continued and severe

firing. From this point she never got much further, and several shots being simultaneously fired at her behind the shoulder, she was killed.

It was now late in the afternoon, and we had had a severe day's work, first with extricating the elephant from the swamp, and then with this rhinoceros, that had fought well; and though she had led us a long chase, it was luckily not in a direct line, in truth not very far from where we first found her. We were astonished at the vast number of balls that had penetrated her, and that she should not have been disabled at an earlier period.

I consider that we had to thank our good fortune more than our good management, in destroying this brute with so little damage to ourselves and elephants. It was clear to me that firing from a howdah is not the most favorable position for making effective shots; it would be far better, were it possible, to fire from *below* instead of from *above* the animal. In the present case, she became exhausted from loss of blood, from the many wounds inflicted, and in this way owing to our strong battery, we might make nearly certain of killing any rhinoceros we might fall in with. The labor of decapitation having been performed, we moved off towards camp. Our continued firing had been heard by the elephant people left behind, and when we came in the vicinity of the so much dreaded swamp, we were met by the welcome information, that not half a mile farther up was a passage not worse than an ordinary nullah, and that the track of rhinoceros there, and at other places, were as if they had travelled in herds, instead of singly or in pairs. This was indeed good news, and we got to camp in high spirits.

We had now killed two rhinoceros, and had so far gained experience, that we felt nearly certain of killing any we might find, if we persevered. There was a difference of opinion as to how this was to be done in the most expeditious manner, and one man would insist on it that firing at the place nearest the heart was the best plan, but would not take into consideration that only shots at very close quarters could have any fair chance of success, and that when so near, a ball from a howdah must necessarily be fired *down* on a rhinoceros, and thus have to perforate some of the hardest and toughest skin, and where the bones are larger and closer together; whereas could the same shot be fired by a man on foot, or from a lower angle, it would unquestionably be more likely to have the desired effect. But seeing that this cannot be done, I still maintain that which experience has since confirmed, viz., that the best plan is to disable—if you cannot kill—the game, which prevents escape, as also injury to the elephants; and having once done this, proceed to destroy the animal. The man is not yet born who can use a gun of sufficient size to kill a rhinoceros at the first shot—ordinarily—though, as we have seen it has been done, accidentally. With our respective theories we were again in the field, to try their practical value. Avoiding the scene of our yesterday's disorder, we crossed the swamp where it was very much narrower, and so far from the game having taken alarm, as we got into a piece of very fine cover, no fewer than three rhinoceros were started at once. It was now necessary to select one, and be particularly careful to keep that one in sight, and not change it for a fresh animal; and having started three at once, we might—and probably should—meet with more. We

singled out the one we pursued, because, judging from the commotion in the grass, it promised to be the biggest, and therefore likely to afford the best sport, though as far as my experience goes, this is not always the case, for I have seen a small hog, and a small elephant, give as much fun as bigger ones. As the rhinoceros progressed to the right or left, word was passed, and the line wheeled accordingly. In this way we went on for some distance, occasionally getting a sight of the brute, but too far off to fire, and the cover continuing so thick, there seemed little hope of coming to close quarters.

At last the nature of the ground changed, and every here and there the plain was intersected by low muddy depressions, like dammed up nullahs, but holding little water. Here we now often saw the rhinoceros, and latterly gained upon him, and just as we had crossed an unusually thick piece of cover, we came to within twenty yards of him, as he was leisurely walking over a narrow swamp. This was the first time he had seen us, and instead of making off, he seemed curious to discover who and what was following him. The opportunity was not to be thrown away, and instantly every man had his rifle to his shoulder. Remembering my plan, I took a deliberate shot at his fore leg, but not with much effect, as the balls from the other guns made him unsteady, just as mine reached him; so large an animal could not well be missed at so short a distance, but where each ball struck, or with what effect, no one could say. He jumped sharply out of the wet, and into the dry cover, evidently very much astonished at the salute his new acquaintance gave him. A good look out was now necessary so as not to lose him, and we did not delay to get on good terms with him again. For a

short distance he went away at a sharp pace, when suddenly the waving of the grass ceased, and he evidently stopped, in all probability, as we thought, either to examine his wounds, or to listen to the proceedings of his pursuers. This gave us time to get closer to him, when again off he started, but very shortly slackened his pace, and at every step the distance between us lessened. *Prenez garde* was now quietly passed along the line, as a fierce charge was something more than likely. Much would depend on the opportunity I might have, but if possible, I resolved again to fire low. The line moved quietly but steadily on, and before us was the rhinoceros, walking even more leisurely than we could have believed, and with him several others, and as we neared him, so far from this making any difference to our friend, he seemed as unconcerned as if we were one hundred miles away, while the others, three or four in number, made off to the right.

There was no difficulty in distinguishing the one we were after, as he was so much larger than the rest, and unless we should start one as big as he was, the chances of losing him were distant. The grass was very thick, but low, and left his broad back quite open to view; we continued moving up to him, expecting every instant that he would come down upon some one. By this time the line had closed in, and our battery would thus be very severe when we should use it. At last, as he was in no hurry to change his tactics, one man fired and hit him on the back of the head; the ball was excellently well aimed, and it made him reel, and he turned half round, when every rifle but my own was fired at his broadside. The entire volley had not nearly the effect on him that the ball at the back of the head

had, and he went on at rather a brisker pace. We followed him, and it was clear to me he was seriously wounded somewhere, and coming up to him again as he was passing obliquely before me, where the grass was neither high nor thick, I aimed at his hind legs, and the ball hit him on the hock, injuring it severely, for he instantly dropped behind, but recovered himself. He was now quite incapable of escaping, and I hugged myself at the success of my plan. No sooner did the line approach him, than, though only on three legs, he rushed at us, and in spite of our firing, he made good his charge, and so furious was it, that he very nearly upset one of the elephants; but as the wound he made was not serious, I suspect she must have blundered, and in the confusion the others contributed as much to her discomfiture as the rhinoceros. Most of the elephants bolted outright, or showed other symptoms of fear, and only one in the whole line stood her ground, and that a small female, of whom it was not to have been expected. One of the runaways was not to be stopped for upwards of a mile, and to see her occasionally disappear into low ground, as suddenly as if shot through the head, was alarming to us lookers, and what must it have been to the man in the howdah. To be run away with on a level plain by an elephant, if not pleasant, is not particularly dangerous, but when this happens amongst trees the case is altered. Here, luckily, the danger was chiefly from the inequality of the ground, and if a fall should occur, it would in all probability be a soft one; but the elephant was brought back without any accident.

In the meantime, with some little trouble, we had got the line re-formed, and walked steadily but slowly

up to the rhinoceros, and as soon as we were within his reach he again charged, but the fire was so severe as to check his career. We continued firing as fast as we could, and during a lull while loading, he again attempted an attack, but he had not strength to give it effect, and in a few minutes he sank to rise no more. Thus died our third rhinoceros, after affording very fair sport, and a remarkably fine specimen he was. His hide was wonderfully thick, especially that casing the shoulders, and the vast folds and ridges at different places, as well as the size of his horn, indicated age.

Observing places on the skin where the balls had flattened, and many where they had scarcely gone through the hide, it occurred to us that we should have mixed tin to harden them. When we got to camp, this was done with good effect. I may mention that the ball from my rifle had broken the hock, so as to render the limb perfectly useless; and on examining the fore-leg, I satisfied myself that a ball hitting the lower joint, could not fail to disable any rhinoceros.

We now turned our heads towards camp, taking a sweep into some likely covers, and soon found, but as the game was evidently of no size, we feared it might not be a rhinoceros. The line continued to advance, and coming to some shorter grass, we plainly perceived that it was really the game we were in search of, but rather a small one. As soon as we got within reach of him, three or four balls hit him, and he suddenly turned round and came at the line as if to charge. When within a few yards, he was fired at by nearly every man, and fell, and on going up to him he made an effort to rise, but a ball in the side soon decided the point against him, and he was dead. He was only half grown,

and our bullets found no difficulty in penetrating his hide at any point, but he afforded no sport, and might well have been left to live. We now made in a straight line for our tents, firing, however, at any game that was started within range of our rifles. Many beautiful shots were thus made at deer chiefly, one of which I particularly remember. The cover was in tufts of thick high grass, and it was impossible to catch more than a casual glimpse of the deer, as they passed amongst these tufts. After many ineffectual shots, all of us gave it up as a bad job except one man, who was resolved to bag one. Watching them, therefore, till they came to a certain point, and before we could well see anything, he fired, and the leading buck received a shot behind the shoulder, that killed him dead. All small game was in great abundance, and our table was sumptuously supplied.

I am free to confess that I began to weary of rhinoceros shooting, and longed for the hog on the wide plain. Firing at game in a commodious howdah, from the perfect security of an elephant's back, was never a favorite pastime to me, and where I could not pursue my sport on horseback, I preferred any kind of shooting on foot. Tigers cannot be pursued in the *turrae* except on elephants, and accidents are met with here even. An officer in the Bengal army, is, I believe, still living, who was taken out of his howdah by a tiger. The beast sprang from the ground, and clearing the howdah—which was on a moderate sized elephant—without touching anything, he caught the officer to whom I allude with his fore paws, while passing over the howdah, and took him with him to the ground. The tiger was instantly shot by his companion, and the man so unceremoniously made a field officer of, escaped with

severe bruises and contusions, which broke up the party.

The dispositions of rhinoceros are, I believe, extremely vicious if molested, but where they are pursued by so heavy a battery as we had, they get cowed I have no doubt. Had only two people been out, my belief is they would have scarcely killed one animal in a week. I was once riding alone, mounted on a small black pony, and met a rhinoceros at a point where it was impossible to go either to the right or the left. It was about ten in the morning, and I scarcely knew what to do. We were both going quietly along, and I considered it best to put a bold face on, and pass him if he would let me. As we neared each other I saw no cause for apprehension, but on the contrary, thought the rhinoceros had a very benevolent cast of countenance, and we each went on our way unmolested.

At Lucknow may be seen many rhinoceros, some confined by a frail wooden railing, and others tethered to posts by ropes round a fore leg. Accidents from rhinoceros are very rare; they frequent the more distant and inaccessible wildernesses, deadly to human beings, and are therefore seldom molested; and also by reason of their being of little or no use when they are overcome. I have before noted that native chiefs consider it a very fortunate event if they kill a rhinoceros, and they will go to any extreme rather than return without one. I remember a Bengal Nuwab who killed two, and so proud was he of this, that he caused one to be lugged along from the jungle to his capital, in a decomposed state, and it was then very indifferently cleaned and stuffed with straw, and in a short time became so very offensive as to be a public nuisance. As the Nuwab

would not remove it, some young men in the neighbourhood very quietly poked it into the river when unusually dark.

On this trip we started with seventeen elephants, and this morning we numbered eighteen. The increase is to be accounted for by the fact that one was born during the night, and thus, though we had an additional number in camp, the line in the field was diminished. I saw the animal immediately after it was born, and it really was a very pretty little thing, as, indeed, all young animals are. This plump, round, playful little creature was a source of great amusement to us all, and to myself in particular. It was very clean, and very fat, with a dash of mischief that was often exceedingly laughable. I consider it very remarkable that on another occasion, a similar accident happened when I was in camp, so that I have been present when two young elephants came into the world.

Four rhinoceros had now fallen to our guns in three days, and it is not my intention to detail the deaths of those subsequently destroyed. We crossed no end of swamps, and beat no end of grass covers, and, I may add, found no end of rhinoceros, but the accounts I have given of the deaths of four, are fair specimens of the rest. Several fought well, and we lost one elephant, who died in spite of all our people could do. It is quite true he had received the charge of a rhinoceros, but it is equally true that no bodily injury resulted, and his death was then—and is to this day—a mystery, with strong suspicions of foul play.

On our way back to the station, we had some more excellent hog hunting, and small game shooting, and to my notions far better sport than if we had killed half a

hundred rhinoceros, after which animal I never wished to go a second time.

When within a few stages of the station, a friend and myself started for home in a buggy, and to ensure getting there in time for breakfast, we left camp very early, in fact sometime before daylight. Both being drowsy, my friend gave the reins to the syce, and desired him to drive quickly. How far we proceeded I do not remember, but very suddenly and unexpectedly, we found the buggy upset, and the contents confused and contused, making strenuous efforts to recover their legs. When this was effected, my friend began to vent his anger upon the driver, for endangering our lives and limbs, but was speedily appeased by the man's very ready but quaint remark, that he did not merit punishment, as his master had told him to drive quickly—not to drive well. The buggy was righted, and the horse again yoked with the aid of a little rope, and we closed our season about ten o'clock, a.m., on that day, much the better in health for all our splendid sport, and none the worse for the upset.



T I G E R .

After leaving Bengal, and its buffalos, rhinoceros, elephants, and above all, its hogs, I commenced the pursuit of new game in different regions of India. It was my chance to be travelling through the hills southwest of Rewah, in Bundelkund, in the upper provinces of India; and on arriving at my halting ground about ten, a.m., I was visited by the usual crowd of curious