

which border on Purnea, but the number there is so small that, in order to save the species from extinction in that part of Nepal, the Government of the country have strictly prohibited rhino-shooting. Even in other parts of Nepal, no *Shikari* is allowed a rhino which, owing to its dwindling number, is considered a royal game. Having very kindly given me permission to shoot a couple of rhinoceroses in the Thori jungles, H. H. ordered his own elephants to go out for my shoot. This was in the month of March 1920.

Accordingly, I went to Bhikhna Thori in March 1920, and from there to Baghahi, 12 miles north from the Railway Station where I had my first camp. We had peculiarly bad weather the very night we arrived there. There was a heavy storm and it came down in torrential rains. But the weather cleared up the next morning; and I was glad to be informed of a solitary rhino bull about two miles away from my camp. A Nepali officer who had been kindly sent by H. H. to be present with me in my shoot, sent a man ahead on a trained elephant to locate the rhino; and the man, after having located it, remained near the spot and sent words to me to come with a couple of elephants. Having received the news, I made for the place in all haste and saw the elephant, that had gone ahead, silently watching

the rhino from a distance. I was quickly taken to the spot where the rhino was sitting in a muddy pool of water. The Nepali officer went with me on a second elephant. As I was within about 150 yards of it, the rhino sighted us and stood up. I had a loaded .476 D. B. High Velocity Rifle in my hand and I fired a shot immediately at it. I cannot say where I hit it, but immediately it received the bullet, it knelt down and stood up again. I was about to fire a second decisive shot, but the Nepali officer put his elephant between mine and the rhino and I could not fire. The rhino then ran away as fast as it could into a thick *Sal* jungle. Later on, on enquiry, I was informed by the Nepali officer that he had intentionally put his elephant between mine and the rhino to stop it from charging my elephant and bringing it down ; for he had often seen a rhino charge an elephant with disastrous results to the *Shikari*. Here I may add for my readers' information that the usually accepted notion that the rhino invariably wounds its victim with its horn, may be only half true, for the Nepali officer told me that the axe-like side teeth of the rhino are very sharp and strong, and with them it usually tears up its victim. I agree with him, for I have seen the rhino distorting and convulsively turning its mouth in a fit of anger and displaying its dreaded canines.

To come back to my story, I may tell my readers that I was much discouraged because of my being prevented by the Nepali officer from firing my second shot and dropping the brute dead. Availing of the opportunity, the animal had run away; and I was compelled, in my disappointment, to go up to the place where we first saw it sitting. The animal was not there, but the small pool of water was full of blood-marks, thus showing that my first shot had done some work. Slightly encouraged, we followed the blood-marks for about a couple of miles, when, to our great surprise and joy, we saw it sitting in another big pool of water at a distance of about 200 yards from us. Not liking to fire at it at a long range, we wanted to go a little nearer; but the wounded rhino stood up again and ran away up a neighbouring hill. Its flight, this time, was in such a desperate haste that it did not leave distinct blood-marks behind and we lost the trail. It had become very late by that time and we were about five miles from our camp. So we returned, carrying with us a feeling of great disappointment.

Having no news of any other rhino being close to the place, we decided to shift our camp further up to Harahia, where some rhinoceroses had been seen. Disappointment urged us to make speedy arrangements for our departure and we found ourselves comfortably camped at Harahia on the following morning.

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As we had done yesterday, we sent ahead the *Shikari* and the trained elephant very early in the morning in search of a rhino. He managed to locate another big solitary rhino and remained there watching it and sent words to me. This time, I took half a dozen elephants with *Shikaris* on to follow me at a distance and come up to me as soon as I began firing. Reaching the place, I saw it from a distance, and the *Shikari* whispered to me to proceed as cautiously as I could so as not to scare away the rhino that was sitting in a pool of water by the side of a thick high-grass-jungle. Going up to the grass jungle alone, I got my .476 H. V. and .500 H. V. D. B. rifles both loaded and kept ready on my elephant and ordered the *Mahout* to go quietly into the grass jungle. As I went into it, the suspecting brute stood up in the water within 50 yards of me. But this time, I was determined not to lose my prey. I gave it a first shot immediately followed by a second and then emptied the contents of both the barrels of my .476 on it. But the animal's front was not towards me—I could only hit it on the hind quarters. The result was it could not run fast, but all the same it walked pretty fast limping, and I followed it with shots from both my rifles, now firing from the one and now from the other, when, to my great disappointment, it began to go up a small hilly

mound. Determined not to miss my second rhino, I kept on firing at it, but never within 150 yards range. When I had gone about a hundred yards from the place where I first started it, my *Shikaris* with their elephants joined me, and they also took to firing with their small-bore rifles and 12-bore guns. Then, when we had gone about a mile ahead, the rhino dropped down, but not before I had fired 33 rifle shots, hitting the animal as I found later on in 15 places and all on the hind quarters. As it dropped down, it lay on the ground with its four legs pointing to the sky.

The readers will realise how difficult it is to bag a rhino, firing from behind. Its hind quarters make, perhaps, the toughest portion of its body, and the four hard shield-like folds at its sides, we have already spoken of, admirably protect it from the formidable attacks of its enemies. Its front only, and particularly the portion near about its horn, is least capable of resistance and presents the most vulnerable spot in its body. Then, when a rhino has received a telling shot and has knelt down, a novice *Shikari* should not be deceived into thinking that he has dropped it down; for the brute may suddenly be on its legs again and run away with unimaginable speed; and the poor novice may lose the game for all his trouble. The safest course is to stop firing

only when one finds that the animal is down and has put its feet all up, pointing to the sky, which is a sure sign that it is dying.

I was very eager to get down to survey the animal as it lay dead, but when I tried to get off my *Howdah*, I found that I could not lift up my right hand and the palm of my left hand had blisters on it in many places. So I was practically helpless in the place where I sat. In the heat of excitement, while I was incessantly changing my rifles to allow time to the barrel that got hot to cool down, I had not noticed it. But now both my hands were exhausted and aching. The kicks I had received while firing quick shots in succession had hurt the joints of my right arm very badly, and the parts looked perfectly black after I took off my clothing on reaching camp. The natural conclusion I came to after all this, was that the use of high-velocity heavy-bore rifles gives *Shikaris* a good deal of trouble in big-game-shooting; for the rifles get excessively hot after one has fired half a dozen consecutive shots with them.

After the rhino had been bagged, we were glad to perform *Tarpan* (offering of water to a departed soul) with its blood according to our *Shastric* injunctions, and returned to camp with the trophy in the afternoon. Overjoyed at having got a rhino at last, for which

I had longed ever since I fired my first shot as a *Shikari*, I had immense mental satisfaction and many hours of restful repose after the day's hard work in the jungle. We, next, got rice soaked in the blood of the rhino and also got prepared a quantity of rhino meat, and having dried them up, brought them home for use in *Varshik Sharadhas*. Some of us, out of curiosity, wanted to eat its meat, but did not, finding it so tough and hard. Only our Nepali friends had a hearty meal of it.

The next two days were days of rest in camp, as I could not hold and fire my rifle owing to the injury my right hand and palms had received. On the fourth day, having got no news of a rhino in the neighbourhood, we went out to see if we could start and bag a tiger. We left camp at about noon and were hardly out for an hour, when the *Mahout* of the elephant whom we had sent ahead, sent us words that a rhino was sitting in a grass jungle close to the camp. Glad at the unexpected news, I gave up going after the tiger and went for the rhino.

The rhino was located in a narrow patch of grass jungle overgrowing a *Nalla* of water. But it was not alone—it had a female rhino with it. I did not like to shoot the female one and asked my *Mahout* to point out to me the male. The man forthwith raised his



finger in the direction of the bull and we quietly went into the *Nalla*. As before, I had this time again left behind all my *Shikaris* and my elephants; and now I began to move towards the place where the rhino was. The moment it saw me, it started making a chattering noise with its teeth; and my *Mahout* stopped and prepared me saying that the rhino would charge. I forthwith loaded my .476 and asked him to advance slowly. As I went a few paces forward, I saw the rhino coming straight against me at a distance of 50 yards. The elephant stood steady and I fired. My first shot told, hitting the rhino just below the right eye, and the animal suddenly rolled over, putting all its four legs straight up towards the sky. The *Mahout* immediately assured me that it was all over with my prey and that I need not fire again.

Glad at having got my rhino to-day in one shot, I returned to camp immensely satisfied. As I had now bagged my two longed-for animals, I left the place on the next day; but before leaving, I had the satisfaction to hear that the rhino I had wounded on the first day, had gone into a shallow lake and died near Sukhibhar, the place where our Imperial Majesty King George V had His Shooting Camp. Having got the news, I



MY FIRST RHINO.



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