

AFTER BIG GAME IN AFRICA AND INDIA.



AN being an omnivorous animal, an instinct for the chase is inherent in his nature, as in the Bengal tiger when he kills seven or eight bullocks out of a herd, though barely able to eat one. But it is not alone on this ground of natural instinct that I would endeavor to excuse myself for killing a comparatively scarce animal like the two-horned rhinoceros. With regard to the African lion, he is never seen, or certainly never at close quarters, except by the hunter; and in Somaliland at least I considered I was performing a virtuous act in killing, at different times, five, on foot and generally alone, and at an appreciable risk to my own skin in endeavoring to secure that of the lion; for these particular lions certainly subsisted chiefly on the flocks and herds of the wandering tribes, and were a continual source of loss of property and danger to human life. The justification of elephant-hunting is ivory, and the determination that the hunter possesses coolness of nerve and swiftness of hand and eye. One cannot test these qualities fully unless there is a clear possibility of the struggle ending in the death of the man.

The late Sir Samuel Baker said to me, shortly before his death, "You have seen the finest sight in Africa—the charge of the wounded African lion." Putting personal considerations aside, however, I prefer the sight of the half-naked brown Zulu warrior rushing by my side through the forest, with his shield and spear gleaming in the sun, in pursuit of some wounded antelope, to that of a wounded lion charging with a low, swift rush differing entirely from his ordinary gallop.

MY FIRST ELEPHANTS.¹

HEARING that elephants were frequenting a valley called Bedimbit, a short march westward of our camp at Darazo, in Somaliland, on the western shore of the Red Sea, I marched there with Dr. W. L. Smith of Worcester, Massachusetts. We took a few ponies, and some camels for the baggage; and after traveling for several hours, saw spread out

below us a wide basin with converging valleys, always of the same character in conformation and vegetation, giving an impression of hopeless aridity. Yet below, in more places than one could be seen the circular fences surrounding the camps of some of the pastoral nomads of the neighborhood.

By descending a rocky pathway we reached a camping-place near some running water. The rivulet which flowed through the gorge near us was a branch of the river which we had crossed and followed upward, at intervals, for two weeks; but instead of presenting a dry, sandy bed like most Somali watercourses when not flooded by a heavy rain-storm, there was running water here and there, popping up unexpectedly from the sand where some rock-ridge across the bed intercepted its subterranean flow, and disappearing a few yards farther on in the same mysterious way. Here elephants had come to drink, and had been feeding on the roots of rushes, breaking down trees and pulling up aloes, not more than twenty-four hours before, as we could plainly deduce from the fresh appearance of the footmarks.

We had heard elephants trumpeting near camp some days previously, just before day-break; and as the moon was at the full, we decided to watch for them at about that time. But the elephants forestalled us, and arrived about eleven o'clock, when all except the armed sentries were sleeping. When the windless calm of an African night is suddenly broken by the bugle-call of a wild elephant less than a hundred yards away, accompanied by the tearing up of aloes and the crashing of trees, the pulse no longer soberly keeps time and "beats healthful music." One thinks the animals are coming down upon the thorn-built zareba to crush it and all that it contains.

After breakfast we went down to the rivulet, and took up the trail. Each took a horse, but not to ride; the path was so rough that it seemed wonderful that elephants could climb up it, loving as they do smooth-going or soft, marshy ground. When we reached higher ground we found that the herd had kept, as usual, to the native cattle-paths, which they had beaten quite smooth, and strewn with spiked leaves of aloe partly chewed.

¹ In THE CENTURY MAGAZINE for November, 1893, I described my first encounters with African lions in the spring of that year.

Passing a Somali encampment about two miles farther on, we entered a narrow valley, and came upon two more zarebas, which seemed completely to block the way. We could distinguish no more tracks of elephants, and were considering whether we should not return. Fortunately for the chase, at this juncture a native informed our men that the elephants had swerved off at this point, and had climbed straight up the side of the mountain on the right, and that he would

below, serene and placid, gently fanning themselves with their enormous ears, quietly standing in the shade of some large thorn-trees, out of the burning glare of noon, sometimes slightly swinging their trunks, sometimes raising them to scent the telltale breeze. Strangest of all, within four hundred yards of where they stood, though out of sight, was a small Somali encampment, and some flocks of goats and fat-tailed sheep were grazing upon the hillside. How gray they looked, not



THE FIRST ELEPHANT TO FALL.

show them to us. It looked so steep that we left our ponies below in charge of the nomads; and having always been taught in India that elephants had the greatest aversion to rough and rocky ground, I thought we must indeed be in pursuit of elephantine monkeys instead of ponderous pachyderms weighing six and seven tons apiece. We both thought our guide was deceiving us, but decided to go on. This hill was a shoulder of the mountain above, and the gully beyond it joined the main valley. Posting ourselves at the exit of this gully, we sent men to beat it down toward us; but there were no elephants. The whole country was extremely rocky, and thinly covered with small thorn-bushes, so that concealment was hardly possible on our part or on that of the elephants.

Presently some of our Somalis caught sight of the herd. There they were in the valley

black at all! It was our first opportunity to admire their proportions without fear of interruption. The chocolate-colored, naked rank and file would not, or could not, understand that we had not come to fight elephants and lions like gladiators in the arena, but to overcome them by superior tactics, without more risk than was necessary, and by the judicious handling of arms of precision.

The Somali loves fighting, of which we had had occasional illustrations in the caravan. It amuses him to see the wounded African lion charge down upon the white sahib, as I had experienced in the previous year. The typical Somali is an active person. He danced like a brown monkey close to our wounded elephants, which trumpeted impotently and charged the empty air, while we, carrying our heavy rifles, would have been instantly caught and crushed if they had seen us.



ONE OF THE ELEPHANTS, WHICH FELL DEAD IN A CURIOUS ATTITUDE.

Meantime we deliberated how to deliver the assault. The Somalis wished us to march straight up in the open, and attack them without more ado. This we eventually did; but first we posted ourselves in the ravine, and the men tried to make the elephants move toward us. When we were ready I gave the signal to our beaters; but the elephants refused to move, not knowing where the danger lay, hearing the shouts, but unable to smell or see their enemy.

Let me candidly confess that in this comparatively open and very rough country I did feel some trepidation in attacking them on foot. There was only one tree convenient, and from behind the stem of it, which was not over twelve inches thick, we opened fire at a distance of about thirty-five yards, my companion using a double eight-bore and a magnum express, and I a double four-bore and a double eight-bore rifle.

This instantly set the herd in motion, and without charging us, they moved rapidly up the valley, leaving an old male elephant dead, one of his tusks broken by the fall upon the rocks, and a large female wounded, with a calf by her side, which the bushes had pre-

vented our seeing. Sweating under our heavy rifles, we followed quickly. Not far ahead the elephants were confronted by two of our yelling men mounted on ponies. This caused the elephants to turn straight up the mountain-side. About half a mile up they halted, and we overtook them; they were blowing water over themselves from the mysterious reservoir that every elephant carries concealed about its person, and were very suspicious and in charging mood.

In a short time four elephants were lying dead, shot through the head or heart, never having caught sight of us at all. The remainder of the herd decamped. I think we were glad to be rid of them, for we decided that we had got all the elephants we wanted. But if we thought we were going to get off without being charged by an elephant, we were mistaken; for up the hill came twenty or twenty-five Somalis, driving a half-grown mammoth before them, which was screaming and making mimic charges at its pursuers. They urged the angry little brute straight upon us, as though they expected us to be as nimble as themselves. He selected my horse as his enemy, and came on with a shriek like a

locomotive. Behind the elephant followed a long line of natives with spears and shields. I put a bullet just at the root of the trunk, which brought him down, though he rose immediately, and gave more trouble before he was quieted.

The afternoon was too far advanced to begin cutting out the ivory or detaching portions of the skin. My friend remained to contemplate the «bag» seated upon one of the dead elephants, while I went down to the large male which had been the first to fall. On reaching the narrow pathway, with rocks on each side, which led toward where we had first found the herd, as I turned a corner I met advancing from the opposite direction a very large and angry female with a young one trotting by her side; and swayed as much by prudential as by humane motives, I resolved to let her pass me without firing. My helmet was covered by a green material designed for just such an occasion as this. As I sank down beside a little thorn-bush, the great gray mass glided by within two yards of me, almost without a sound. That green helmet saved me. If I had fired without reaching the brain, I think she would have turned and killed me. My gun-bearer had vanished into the blue distance. When she had passed I noticed a spear sticking in her flank.

We sent for our four camels and the camp from Bedimbit, and camped near the water-hole at this place, named Ambassa. The whole of the following day was spent in taking out the tusks and skinning various portions of the elephants that we intended to take away as trophies, such as the ears, trunks, feet, and tails of the largest of the six, employing as many of our own men as possible, while leaving some to guard the camp, and enlisting a few of the nomads from the native encampment. We were rather short of knives, and besides using some of the enormous daggers these men wear at the waist, which were very unwieldy for the purpose, we had even to take the knives from the canteens.

The camp to which all our trophies were brought was surrounded, as usual, by a fence of thorny branches cut from neighboring thickets in order to keep away hyenas, which had now become very noisy and troublesome, as well as to prevent a sudden rush of Somali robbers if they should decide to make a night attack. About midnight I was aroused by one of the sentries, who whispered, «Shebell!» («Leopard!») The night was starlight, but dark, with no moon; and a few yards off in the sandy ravine I could distinctly hear a rustling

noise, and now and then the crack of a twig broken by some animal. It happened that I had set a trap for panthers, and supposing from the sound that one of these animals was dragging away the bait, we opened the zareba and stole softly toward the sound, carrying a lantern and a shot-gun. The sounds now rapidly retreated before us up the narrow gorge. Suddenly through the night there broke a low, rumbling trumpet-sound. We stopped, and looked at each other. There was the crash of a falling tree. It was those elephants again.

MY FIRST RHINOCEROS.

WHEN I left a point immediately opposite the British fortress of Aden, on my fourth trip into the African interior, we had a body-guard of about thirty camel-men, whom I had armed with Snider rifles. My companion was Sir Henry Tichborne, to whose ancestral property the claim of an impostor, one Arthur Orton, several years ago caused one of the costliest and most celebrated litigations of modern times. For four weeks we traveled at a speed of about twenty miles a day, being as great a distance as a caravan of loaded camels, each camel carrying about two hundred pounds, can manage. We crossed a tract of absolutely waterless, high-level plateau about six thousand feet above the Red Sea, measuring one hundred miles in width and three thousand in length, carrying a supply of water in barrels on the necessary camels, which themselves drink only about once every eight or ten days.

After crossing this great extent of arid country, our first serious halt for the purpose of hunting the wild rhinoceros was at the edge of a natural basin, or rock reservoir, which half the year is partly filled with mud and water, there being several other pools of the same nature in the neighborhood. The name of this place is Awarè. Every day we rode out in different directions in search of tracks of the giant pachyderm. I never employed professional trackers, gun-bearers, or so-called «shikarees» (a Hindustani word imported from India into Somaliland), but my companion had several on his staff. I usually restricted myself to the services of the ordinary camel-men. For some days we scoured the country in vain, until one evening, about three hours before sundown, I came across the apparently fresh tracks of two two-horned rhinoceroses. It was apparently in a part of the mimosa forest which we had omitted to search, or else the animals had recently wandered in. The forest was

full of deep, dark, shady glades and dense thickets, and the grass was growing in rank luxuriance, refreshed by the heavy nightly dews.

The wind was favorable, blowing toward us from the direction in which the animals were moving; and it was apparent, from the three-toed impressions on the fine white, sandy earth, that the great beasts which had made them were close at hand. On such perfectly flat, soft soil an almost noiseless advance was possible; and had it not

I instantly sat down, and «drew a bead» upon her chest. The distance was about seventy yards, and although the wind was adverse to her, and we had made no noise, she must have seen us like moving shadows among the trees, and was evidently full of suspicion and distrust. If I ever took careful aim, it was at that moment, and under cover of the smoke I shifted my position as the rhinoceros came charging down upon us, giving three or four sharp whiffs like jets of steam, evidently with the intention of clearing the enemy away from



PHOTOGRAPHED BY CAPTAIN BRYCE, ROYAL ENGINEERS.

HEAD OF BLACK RHINOCEROS, AND THE AUTHOR'S HUNTER, HASSAN MIDGAN.

been that there were dead twigs and branches lying here and there, or that now and then a hooked thorn of some acacia-tree would insert its curved point into one's clothing, even the delicate ear of the wild ass might have failed to detect our approach; for my own shoes had rubber soles, and the three men who followed like chocolate-colored shadows were carrying their sandals in their hands.

As I came round a bush I saw at the bottom of a kind of natural alley in the forest, framed in like a picture by the trees, a massive old female rhinoceros. She was facing me, and standing half in sunshine, half in shadow. From a bush protruded the hind quarters of another. Signifying to the Somalis to keep back,

the rear before making her escape toward the front against the wind. Having, as she supposed, effected this manoeuvre,—a very usual one on the part of the rhinoceros,—she swerved off, and the two broke away across the forest, crash after crash, dying away in the distance, marking their course as they receded. On perceiving the rhinoceros go off apparently uninjured, my Somalis gave full vent to their disappointment, making extravagant gestures, and using what sounded like bad language, yet still in half-whispers, as they knew instinctively that the animals might not have gone far, after all, especially if the one I had fired at had really received a mortal wound.

The tracks we now followed were deep holes and furrows imprinted by the animals at full speed. We had not gone far before I again saw the larger of the two rhinoceroses standing broadside on, and quite motionless, under a bush which concealed the head. Giving my three Somalis to understand that they must remain quiet, I aimed once more at the animal's shoulder, taking care that no twig or branch was in the line of fire, knowing how easily a bullet may become deflected. My shot was followed by a couple of short, angry snorts, the stamp of heavy feet, and an appalling crashing, which advanced and then swept round toward the left. Another cautious advance on our part, and not far off I saw, near the center of an open space, the smaller of the two rhinoceroses, but not the larger one. A shot delivered standing, from the shoulder, was followed by two shrill squeaks, as the animal tottered a few paces and fell over on its side—a sound most disproportionate to the size and bulk of so large a creature, but which I instantly recognized, from Sir Samuel Baker's description, as the death-cry of the rhinoceros; and the hearing of it filled me with a hunter's joy. While I was reloading the Somalis had crept forward with their spears, relying upon their own agility in evading any charge delivered by the larger one, which I knew must surely be somewhere near at hand. After peering over a low bush they executed a war-dance upon the ground beyond, for there were the two rhinoceroses lying stone dead almost side by side. My Somalis gave way to shouts and exuberant mirth; they were transformed from scowling fiends, soured by the white man's folly, into radiant brown angels, and I allowed them to stroke my face and pat me on the back without a reprimand.

The man with my gray Somali pony, who had been keeping well behind so that the sound of the horse's steps might not disturb the game, now appeared upon the scene; and as the sun was on the point of setting, the Somalis, singing the usual song of victory, struck off in a bee-line for camp, with that instinctive knowledge of direction which is possessed in its fullness only by natives born and bred in flat and almost pathless forests.

As we approached the camp, all the Somalis came running out to meet us, together with my friend and his English servant. As the Somalis agree that "no man can serve two masters," we had separate camps, our retainers were separately engaged, and the members of each camp felt their master's

failures or successes as their own. However, not long after my friend killed a rhinoceros with even finer horns than mine.

Most of the next day I passed superintending as many of my men as could be spared from camp in taking and preparing the skins, feet, and skulls of the two rhinoceroses for transport. The man who has not seen a group of Africans divested of their clothing, dabbled with blood, and swarming over a gigantic pachyderm has missed one of the sights of Africa. About ten days later we both returned to some wells at Milmil, whence a rush across the waterless plateau is generally made, taking it at its narrowest part. On the way we killed a male lion. Having secured my rhinoceroses, I was anxious to get as quickly as possible to the coast, which I reached at the end of December, 1894. On the way I made an interesting discovery, for which I was not altogether unprepared, consisting of many thousands of paleolithic flint spear- and javelin-heads, knives, and scrapers, which were perhaps fashioned when primeval man with long, flint-headed spears chased the great woolly rhinoceros ages ago in the valley of the Somme in France. But their chief interest lies in the fact that they are the first prehistoric flint implements ever brought from tropical Africa.

HUNTING WITH AN INDIAN PRINCE.

I SAILED from Aden in the beginning of January, 1895, and arrived soon after at Calcutta. I had been so fortunate as to obtain, through Lord William Beresford, and in his place, an invitation to join the annual shooting-party of his highness the Maharaja of Kuch Behar. At this period of the year the temperature at Calcutta is almost perfect, and the social season is in full swing.

The Maharani is a daughter of the late Keshab Chandra Sen, the celebrated reformer and founder of a new religious sect. Both the Maharaja and the Maharani have a knowledge and command of the English language quite as great as, and possibly greater than, most Englishmen, and at Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and on other occasions when they visited England, were much lionized. Soon after my arrival at Calcutta I had to visit the Maharaja at his country-seat near Calcutta, to receive from him a formal invitation. The camp was being prepared at a spot about forty miles from the Brahmaputra River in Assam, on the great plains which lie at the foot of the Himalayas.

Toward the end of February I joined the

Maharaja's party on a river-steamer at a place called Goalpara, and we disembarked at a small landing-place named Kholabanda, where some elephants were in waiting to convey us, with one relay half-way, more than thirty miles to a village named Simlagori, where the first camp had been prepared on the bank of a branch of the Manass River. This was a good long march for elephants, although as much as thirty-nine miles has been done by an elephant at a moderate pace, without halting. Four miles an hour is considered a fast pace for them; but as it was past noon before we started from Kholabanda, the mahouts urged the elephants along at a rate nearer five than four, and we reached camp about nine in the evening, having halted two hours on the way. At different points the neighboring villagers came forward with music, flags, and flowers to welcome the Maharaja, although it was not within his own territory.

This was the season when the grass is burned down in patches all over the grazing-districts, and fires very near the path caused some of the elephants to swerve and become unmanageable, especially the young female elephant I happened to be riding.

I had already made the acquaintance of the Maharaja's other guests, some five or six in all, who were his personal friends, titled people, and well-known sportsmen. One was the deputy commissioner of the district, Mr. McCabe, who a few weeks before had had an extremely narrow escape from a wild tusker elephant, which charged, and threw him down

a ravine, thereby losing sight of him, or he would certainly have been killed. Those of us who had not been the Maharaja's guests in previous years were astonished at the extent and completeness of the camp in such an out-of-the-way place as the Assamese terai. As we approached it between the patches of cultivation round the cluster of grass huts which constituted the village of Simlagori, the fires, tents, and lights in all directions, and the dark figures of crowds of servants, made it appear like a military encampment. A native sentry kept guard over the Maharaja's tent, which was placed somewhat at one side. In the middle of the camp rose a large dining-tent, and the tents which were intended for the guests were placed in a row on each side of the camp. Each of these tents was a large, double-roofed structure of about twenty feet by eighteen, internal measurement, supported on two massive bamboo uprights and a cross-bar; a space behind, between the inner and the outer wall, formed a bath-room, which was supplied with a large tin bath and an elaborate wash-stand. The floor of my tent was covered with a thick carpet; the bedstead was of wood, with clean white pillows and sheets, colored blankets, and mosquito-net. There were convenient pockets in the gay lining of the tent, and two arm-chairs, a table, and a large lamp completed the furniture. The tents of the other guests were equally comfortable, and the name of each of us was neatly printed on a placard hung outside in order to assist us in recognizing



PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE HON. SIDNEY PARKER.

MOVING CAMP FROM SIMLAGORI.



DRAWN BY W. H. DRAKE.

WASHING THE ELEPHANTS.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY THE HON. SIR W. PARKER.

our respective tents, the external appearance being exactly the same. On a carpet where a portion of the roof of the dining-tent projected so as to form a kind of open shelter, were a table with tea-service and some arm-chairs. During the three weeks that the camp continued, dinner was usually at eight, as we generally returned on the elephants from the jungle at five or six, in time for afternoon tea and a comfortable warm bath. Dinner was neatly served by a crowd of the Maharaja's barefooted, white-robed attendants. In India it is considered a mark of respect for a servant, on entering an apartment, to leave his sandals at the door.

As the «shoot» on this occasion was in Assam (being, I think, the first time that the Maharaja's annual shooting has taken place outside his own territory), no ladies were of the party. On a previous year, when the viceroy and his wife were among the invited guests, the Maharani herself came also.

Close to camp, and quite invisible until one came suddenly upon it, a small stream of clear water pursued a wonderfully circuitous course between steep banks. A stream near at hand becomes a necessity when such a large number of elephants are in camp as there were in this case—about sixty, besides others employed in keeping up communication with the mail-steamers on the Brahmaputra, and bringing supplies of ice, fresh

meat, and soda-water from Calcutta. Elephants have to be bathed and washed once or twice a day: When we happened to return to camp in good time before dark, watching large numbers of the huge beasts being scrubbed with cocoanut-shells and bricks, and marking their evident enjoyment of the operation, was a source of great amusement to us all. Elephants are sometimes rather noisy during the night, trumpeting to one another; consequently they were picketed in long lines at a considerable distance from the main portion of the camp.

One of the first things the Maharaja did after our arrival was to hand to each guest a slip of paper on which was written the name of the elephant allotted to him for shooting purposes, which bore on its back the structure known as a «howdah», to carry the shooter and his guns. As these elephants were necessarily large, and the howdah is high, the oscillation was much greater than if one were seated on a plain pad upon the elephant's back, or on one of the smaller elephants, which have a smoother gait. We usually, therefore, went to the cover, or jungle, upon one of the «beating», or «pad», elephants, which afterward during the operations of the day were employed in a long line to force the rhinoceroses and other animals out of the dense thickets in which they live.

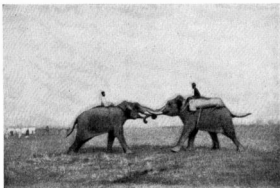
The howdah-elephant which the Maharaja

allotted to me was named «Secunder.» Three years previously it was an uncaptured wild elephant ranging at liberty the jungles of Bengal. It was a fine female, between nine and ten feet in height at the shoulder, with short but perfect «tushes» projecting a few inches beyond the upper lip. There are other elephants in the Maharaja's stud which have been tamed more recently still. It was very gentle and obedient, and perfectly fearless, and therefore very valuable as a shooting-elephant: as, for example, on several occasions during the following three weeks it stood without flinching the charge of wounded buffalo, tiger, and rhinoceros, thus enabling me to take a steady shot. Almost all elephants show great fear of the Indian rhinoceros; there are few that will not turn tail when they scent their enemy, and fewer still that will stand the crash and short snorts that precede the charge.

About breakfast-time each morning the elephant told off for each guest was brought to the neighborhood of his tent, and the howdah placed upon it, resting upon a saddle composed of two cushions of strong sacking about six feet by two, which rested in turn upon a large cloth covering the whole of the elephant's back. The howdahs for shooting are lightly built of wood and cane-work, and contain two seats, and racks to hold six guns or rifles, three on each side. All this is lashed on by ropes passing under the elephant's neck, belly, and tail. The weight which an elephant is able to carry upon its back exceeds a ton; for short distances they have been known to carry as much as three thousand pounds, but for long marches half a ton is considered the limit. Many of the Maharaja's elephants had fine tusks, but most tusks are cut at regular intervals to prevent them from injuring one another. One or two of the fighting-elephants, however, had pointed tusks.

The country surrounding the camp, which was to be the scene of operations, being part of the great valley of the Brahmaputra, was uniformly level, and seamed by a network

of small watercourses, which the elephants crossed easily enough by slowly sliding down one bank and climbing up the other, but tilting the howdahs at an alarming angle. However narrow a ditch may be, elephants almost always prefer going to the bottom and up again to stepping boldly across, for fear the banks may break under their enormous weight of about five or six or even seven tons. When one happens to be on the back of a runaway elephant, a deep ditch, or nullah, is an alarming obstacle, as also are the branches of trees. To jump off behind on these occasions is to incur the risk of a



PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE HON. SIDNEY PARKER.

ELEPHANTS FIGHTING.

kick, and the best plan perhaps is to hang on by the ropes which pass under the elephant's tail. The Maharaja's mahouts, however, had the well-trained howdah-elephants under good control; and notwithstanding rhinoceroses and tigers, and rapidly advancing grass-fires, which were sometimes started in order to drive the game from cover, nothing untoward occurred.

As we left the great river behind us and approached nearer to the Himalayas, the villages became less and less frequent, and now between camp and this great wall of mountains twenty miles distant the country was almost uninhabited. These mountains were only the foot-hills of the great snow-covered peaks; but range behind range, wooded to the summits, stretched in a blue line from east to west. Here and there were great reed-covered morasses, the favorite haunt of the rhinoceros and the buffalo, through which the elephants churned and plowed their way, raising bubbles of noxious

gases at every step. Here and there were open expanses of short grass which had been purposely burned early in the winter, or small clumps of trees, gradually extending as one approached the mountains, and blending with the unbroken forest which stretched along their base and sides, and which was putting on a faint tinge of green at the advent of spring. Here and there were large patches, black and freshly burned, and producing a cloud of dark, irritating dust whenever the elephants passed over them; or areas which had been burned about a month before, and where the green blades, about a foot high, showed in delightful contrast to the old blackened stems above. Morass, forest, open patches, and grass jungle in various stages, like a vast mosaic—this was the nature of the country.

When large numbers of trained elephants can be massed together, the slow plan of tracking the rhinoceros step by step is discarded, and by mere force of numbers the elephants in the beating-line, like a well-drilled regiment, closing up and keeping shoulder to shoulder, drive the big game out. According to the width of the part which is being beaten, the denseness of the jungle, and the proximity of the game to any particular point in the line, so the elephants close in or open out to keep the animals from breaking back, and send them out toward the "guns."

The Maharaja having brought his elephants into Assam, his men were strangers to the district; but some had been sent on long before to study the nature of the jungles, and to isolate the different patches by burning, reducing them to such a size that we might be able completely to surround some, if not all.

Trackers were sent out daily into the surrounding country to locate buffalo, bison, or "rhino." The whereabouts of a tiger was usually known by its having killed one or more head of cattle belonging to a neighboring village or hamlet. Consequently we secured more tigers at the first camps, nearer the central part of the plain, where villages were more numerous, and more of the other kinds of game as we moved nearer the mountains, where inhabitants were scarce.

At first the natives were very chary of bringing in news to the Maharaja about tigers, even though a reward was offered and they might have lost one or more of their best yoke-oxen; but after a few days they gained confidence, and news came in more

rapidly. It seemed that they were afraid, if the tiger should have changed his abode meanwhile, or escaped during the beat, that the deputy commissioner or the Maharaja would punish them. This, of course, was absurd, but it shows the natural timidity and caution of the Indian native. In other parts of India, Hindu religious notions about the taking of life sometimes offer impediments to the would-be tiger-slayer; but this was not so here.

Each evening, therefore, the Maharaja was generally in possession of news of the presence of game in certain patches of jungle, and was able accordingly to make arrangements for the disposition of his forces for the next day's sport. The whole army of us would sally forth from camp after breakfast, about nine o'clock—the howdah-elephants, the beating-elephants, the elephants with the guides and trackers, and the two elephants with the lunch bringing up the rear—about sixty in all. A rendezvous would be held in the neighborhood of the patch into which the animal or animals had retreated, and the Maharaja would discuss the situation and make his plans for the disposition of the guns and beaters. The line-elephants in a body would then proceed to take up their positions preparatory to an advance when all was ready, and the shooters in their howdahs, preceded by the Maharaja, would circle round to the opposite side of the jungle as silently as possible. An elephant makes wonderfully little noise, considering his proportions. Having previously drawn lots for places, and following in single file according to the order of arrangement, each of us, at a signal from the guide, would cause our elephants to halt by leaning over and touching the mahout upon the turban, we being at a distance from each other of one or two hundred yards or less, according to circumstances, facing the jungle, and able to command any open spaces across which the game might pass. The Maharaja himself generally took a position at one end, and one or two guns were always with the line of beaters. Firing downward from such a considerable height at close range, there was little fear of a ricochet bullet; but one had to be careful, especially as the beating-line approached, in firing at longer range, and consequently more horizontally, and in knowing the exact position of the "guns" on one's right and left.

The Maharaja of Kuch Behar ever since his youth has always had a large stud of elephants, and hunted in this way; and since



PHOTOGRAPHED BY H. W. SETON-KARR.

OUR LARGEST TIGER.

big game is now comparatively scarce even in Assam, we should not have made any bag worth speaking of if we had not had the benefit of his experience. Not more than three or four beats could be accomplished in one day. Considerable distances had often to be traversed from one jungle to another, and the intervals were often long and tedious under an Indian sun; but most of us carried books and papers to read while the elephants were getting into position. When the beat had once begun, however, all one's senses were on the alert. By the men's turbans, or the white sunshade of one of the aides-de-camp bobbing up and down, one could generally distinguish over the tops of the reeds the position of the beating-line in the far distance, and hear an occasional shout and the shrill trumpet of an elephant.

In the midday stillness, broken only by the constant flapping and fanning of the elephants' huge ears, one can distinguish the approach and mark the path of most of the wild animals by the rustling in the grass and reeds. But the approach of the panther and the tiger is heralded by no such sign. By experience one's eye becomes trained to discriminate between the swaying of the reeds caused by the wind and that due to the cautious advance of an unseen beast, whether deer, boar, bear, or something bigger still. When tiger or rhino are known to be at home, such small fry as these are allowed to pass unharmed, for fear of turning the object of pursuit; but when the larger game are advancing at full speed, it needs no expert to distinguish their appalling crashes from the whispering of a breeze. Will he break cover in front, or will the next gun get the shot? Standing in expectation, with guns loaded and heart beating, this is the most exciting moment of the day. The howdah-elephants being thus placed at intervals, and usually out of sight of one another, one was not always able to judge by the shots fired as to what was going on; but I was unusually fortunate in the number of animals breaking cover at a point immediately opposite to me, and consequently in the chances I obtained.

I took leave of the Maharaja shortly before the breaking up of the second shooting-camp, which took place about a month later, in his own country; but the total bag included seventeen tigers, seven rhinoceroses, and nearly forty buffaloes, besides bison, bear, and panther.

The method of hunting invariably adopted was that which I have endeavored to describe, and the trophies were often secured without

much danger or excitement, but the contrary was sometimes the case. In returning to camp in the evening, all the elephants usually formed one long line, and such small game as partridges even were shot; and it was very amusing to observe the extraordinary fuss some of the elephants made when told to pick up the dead birds with the end of the trunk and pass them up to the mahouts.

Our first rhinoceros was the one that gave us the greatest trouble. In the center of the long morass where he lived the mud was deep and tenacious, and the elephants sank to their bellies. Once or twice he had broken back through the line while we were posted elsewhere; but when it was evident that he had determined not to be driven from his home, the Maharaja called almost all the guns into the beating-line. After retreating before the advancing line of elephants for some time, during which we could mark his course by the waving and crashing of the reeds, and by an occasional snort, he obstinately determined to break through once more, and, with two or three short whiffs like a locomotive, came charging down blindly, straight upon my elephant Secunder, which, unlike others, treated the enraged pachyderm with silent contempt, and neither stirred nor trumpeted. This enabled me to plant two bullets into the advancing mass, and, snatching up another loaded rifle, to fire twice more as it retreated through the reeds, without having my aim disturbed by the swaying of the howdah. Then, bursting out from the jungle into full view across an open plain, it fell amid a cloud of dust. The rhinoceros was still able to bite or gore an opponent as we closed in, and was given a finishing shot, while some of the elephants, to test their courage or to train them to approach their natural foe, were coaxed into close proximity and made to push against it with the base of the trunk. After this the body was photographed, and when we moved away the Maharaja's trained skimmers had already begun to remove the shields of hide from the flanks and shoulders and the head and feet.

With regard to tigers, the expectation of the animal's appearance, the waiting and watching during the brief period of the beat, formed the most interesting and stirring part of the performance. The transverse rush of a tiger, scolding the elephants and throwing the whole line into confusion, is one of the finest sights in India. Some fell at the first volley, fired at from two or more of the howdahs simultaneously. One only fell to a single shot, stone dead. Some escaped,



PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE HON. SIDNEY PARSONS.

PREPARING TO TRANSPORT THE GAME TO CAMP.

wounded, into a neighboring patch of jungle, and most of these charged and "got home" upon some elephant, springing in every case upon the animal's forehead, and being tossed off and shot while on the ground. Although tigers have been known to climb into the howdah, the danger to human life in this method of tiger-shooting is very small. There were elephants of various ages and sizes in the beating-line, and during the uproar that ensued when a tiger came close, some of the younger ones exhibited their fear by the oddest sounds—shrill squeaks and shrieks that seemed quite disproportionate issuing from so large an animal. When a tiger succeeded in breaking through, the line had to retire, reform, and begin again.

The bears that we got also showed a disinclination to being driven from cover. News of them was brought to camp in each case from some village near, where they had been committing depredations. The only other items in the bag which require notice are the wild buffaloes. These furnished fine trophies, many of the horns measuring about ten feet round the curve, those of the males being much more massive than those of the females. Most of them, when disturbed, blundered about through the jungle, and were tough customers, requiring many well-placed shots. Some showed great ferocity, charging and slightly goring some of the elephants, but doing no serious damage. Of the Indian bison we obtained only one.

H. W. Seton-Karr.

HUNTING THE JAGUAR IN VENEZUELA.

«SEÑOR! Señor!»

«What do you want?»

«It is half-past three.»

I rolled out of my blanket, and getting to my feet, stood shivering in the chill air of the tropical morning.

Terife Valdez, tiger-hunter, had shaken me gently by the shoulder, and my drowsy ques-

tion being asked and answered, with the instinct of an old camper I tumbled up without a moment's hesitation.

«Water, Terife,» said I, stepping through the doorway of the rude hut; «cold water.»

Terife caught up a gourd of cold spring-water, and overturned it above my head.

«Caramba!» said he. «Much cold, is it not?»