

BY DR. J. H. PORTER.

THE term rogue, as ordinarily applied to elephants, is somewhat misleading. The title conveys a suggestion of petty vice, and nothing could be more inapplicable to the character of those dreadful beasts than this. As a rogue elephant is necessarily a wild one, the beginning of his career has been concealed from observation. There are no records of rogues except at their acme, and next to nothing is known concerning the evolution of these destroyers.

The rogue elephant, however, is what Darwin calls "a variation from an average"; but as the creature's development cannot be studied in jungles, information on this subject must be sought for elsewhere, and government stables, where large numbers live together, are the best schools. And what is the outcome? First, a conviction that the conventional elephant has no existence in nature. Next, a most positive assurance that those vices believed to be exceptional among males are really extremely common traits, perfectly natural to these animals. Finally, the investigator will discover that captive elephants are not kept in order by their virtues, but much more generally restrained through fear and self-interest.

Nothing exceeds a Hindu's disdain for the tusker's intelligence, except his deep-seated conviction of its unlimited capacity for mischief. So undeniable an authority as Colonel Barras has put it on record that all the old males he knew of had killed at least one man. In India no experienced person, either native or foreigner, ever deals with ele-

phants upon the basis of their alleged good qualities. Every one of them has been caught in these times either within the Western Gháts, on those heights between the Bramahputra and Bárak valleys, or among primeval forests of Mysore, Orissa, Travancore, Coorg, and the Tarái. Is it to be supposed that driving them into keddahs, tying the frantic creatures to trees until they have been reduced to a state of exhaustion by starvation, and subsequently teaching these captives a few simple manœuvres, has radically changed the original wild beast and effected what Professor Romanes calls "a transformation of emotional psychology"? The most complete instruction he ever gets contains nothing which can by any possibility provide him with the cardinal virtues. No metamorphosis takes place. Nobody who has learned what such establishments as Baroda and Teperah teach, believes that these brutes "are actuated by the most magnanimous of feelings."

Nothing else ought to be expected from an unadulterated wild beast, cut off from the improvements effected by domestication in other species through a barrenness during captivity which compels every set of elephants under training to begin anew.

Notwithstanding that an elephant's face-skeleton is imperfectly developed, and much of the countenance being concealed by its trunk, their physiognomies present marked contrasts, particularly in those expressions which belong to the eye. Going about among the masonry platforms where these fet-

tered giants stand, one can scarcely fail to see that an evil look is more common to old than young animals. If facial character goes for anything, the kindliness, generosity, and forbearance supposed to be congenital in this race, depart with age. However benevolent or admirable elephants may be originally, development spoils them, and curious information confirmatory of such an inference can easily be got from their attendants, when they are entirely convinced of the uselessness of lying. Moreover, so far as mere facts go, these men know a great deal. All have passed their lives with elephants; many were laid at some tusker's feet to be watched while babies, and this is one of those themes most enlarged upon by writers from whom a little more rationality might be expected. A creature who can pick up a needle, or lift the carriage of a stalled field gun, could not have much difficulty in keeping an infant from crawling away, and that is all this big nurse does. He has been taught it by dint of cutting off his coveted ration of sugar or rum, hammering him on the toes with a stone, and driving an ankoos into his body.

Intellect in an elephant shows itself almost exclusively in the power to acquire. There is no difficulty in mastering the lesson set, and it is perfectly learned by an animal quite intelligent enough to foresee the consequences of neglect, but utterly unable to perceive how it might revenge itself upon the father, whom as like as not it hates and will finally kill, by trampling his child.

Few more impressive confidences can be imparted than one in which a Hindu describes how he knows his elephant intends to destroy him. It is all so seemingly trivial, and yet in reality of such deadly significance. His story is so full of details that prove the man's profound understanding of what he is talking about, that one remains equally amazed at the brute's power to dissimulate and its intended victim's insight into this would-be murderer's character. And yet, from the psychological standpoint, an elephant never gives any other such indication of mental power as is exhibited in its revenge. That patient, watchful, implacable hatred, often provoked simply because a man is in attendance upon another animal (for it is the rule with tuskers to detest their next

neighbors) speaks more conclusively of a high intellectual grade than all the stories, true or false, that have been told of their ability. Such Concentration and fixedness of purpose, such careful, unrelaxed vigilance, such perfect and consistent pretence, and, when the time comes, such desperate, unhesitating energy as homicidal animals exhibit, are impossible without a very considerable, although in this instance very irregular, development.

No one can deny that if this creature is great at all its greatness shows itself in its crimes; these have caused it to be worshipped in the East, where men venerate nothing but merciless, irresponsible force, and where an exhibition of those qualities and traits described, fully accounts for the formula, "My Lord the Elephant."

Transfer such a beast as this to the wilderness, where nothing restrains it except natural conditions or the superior force of other elephants, and compare what is known concerning its character and habits in freedom with those results already given. The facts to take cognizance of in this connection are that wild elephants live together—assemble in larger or smaller aggregates, as circumstances dictate; that they are vegetable feeders, not organized for bloodshed, and not, as a matter of necessity, either cruel, treacherous or aggressive. Further, both Asiatic and African species have taken a step in advance of that mere "collective instinct" which makes many feral groups gregarious; they form families, in which several generations are represented. These are the constant units in every association, irrespective of numbers, and when great herds break up they are resolved into families again.

Something underlies any kind of social cohesion, and, without instituting any comparisons between brutes and men, even the lowest human beings, it is enough to say that affection, sympathy, some sense of obligation for mutual aid in escaping from, avoiding, or repelling danger, together with a general and habitual co-operation, though mostly unorganized, much more strikingly characterizes numbers of creatures considered to be greatly inferior to elephants.

Apart from analysis or minute detail, this is the picture in outline of an elephant family. It is presided over by

some old bull, able to conquer any other male present, and whose relation to his companions consists in taking whatever he wants and leaving the rest to shift for themselves, which they do, each accordingly with the measure of its own capacity and after the same fashion. Their patriarch sometimes puts down quarrelsome young tuskers, but if he does anything else it is not known. When a herd changes its location this animal does not lead. If it encounters difficulties he is the one least likely to give aid. Should his family be attacked the bull abandons them. "I have never known an instance," says Sanderson [Thirteen years among the wild beasts of India], "of a tusker undertaking to cover the retreat of a herd." Nobody else has seen it, for when male elephants fight it is for themselves alone.

In case of a contemplated foray into cultivated lands where danger may await them, and it is necessary to reconnoitre, this important duty very frequently devolves upon "some experienced old cow." She leads the herd, and it is eminently creditable to their intellect that they should recognize her fitness. Cows, also, will occasionally charge in defense of those bulls to whom they are attached; but the case is not reversed. Females, likewise, help wounded companions, perhaps oftener than males, though this is doubtful, for almost always each elephant thinks only of its own safety. There are a few instances on record of momentary combinations against enemies, and small isolated herds have become, to a certain extent, customarily aggressive. All accounts, however, represent their conduct, as compared with those of many other species, to have been in the highest degree inconsistent and ineffectual.

It remains to say that animals in pitfalls are sometimes assisted, but more commonly abandoned without an attempt to extricate them. That a mother whose calf has fallen into one of these traps, tries to help it, goes into hysterics and flies, saunters around without throwing it down any food, or wanders off and forgets all about it, just as it happens, and without so much constancy in any particular behavior as would enable anybody to make the slightest forecast concerning her conduct on such an occasion. Green knew

a wonderful tusker in Central Africa to receive succor from an elephant, accidentally met with, who brought water in its trunk; but this incident stands alone. These illustrations touch upon those social qualifications previously referred to, and there can be no doubt either with regard to their truth or conclusiveness.

The patriarch, who is the important figure in this inquiry, becomes more morose, more violent and unsocial as time goes on. From voluntarily separating himself at certain seasons from the herd, and joining other males, he sometimes comes to staying away altogether, and permanently living a solitary life. Or, as constantly happens with patriarchal bulls, a brother, nephew, son, even grandson, falls upon him, and their conflict ends in his defeat. Then existence with kinsmen like his is made intolerable, so that instead of an act prompted by this creature's own will, exile may be regarded as often forced upon it.

From these two classes—anchorites by choice or hermits by necessity—rogue elephants are almost exclusively derived. As for the fell brute itself, that will be best understood by a recital of its deeds. Before any narratives, however, it may be briefly remarked that, given the average character described, it undergoes a distinct degeneration with solitude. "A tusker in seclusion," observes Leveson, "is always morose, vicious, and desperately cunning;" while the rogue has all these traits in their most extreme degree, and something besides. He makes an approach to that state of "perpetual rage," which Buffon incorrectly attributed to tigers. The nervousness, confusion of mind under excitement, vacillation, and paroxysmal cowardice, preëminently characteristic of elephants as a class, give place to concentrated purpose and command of faculty. Moreover, this animal is not usually mad. It may be, of course, since any creature similarly organized is liable to diseases which involve insanity. Nevertheless, facts in those cases reported do not support the hypothesis of mental alienation as explanatory of the traits displayed.

Fortunately, undoubted rogues are solitary. There is, so far as the writer knows, but one exceptional instance. Colonel Pollok extracted this from

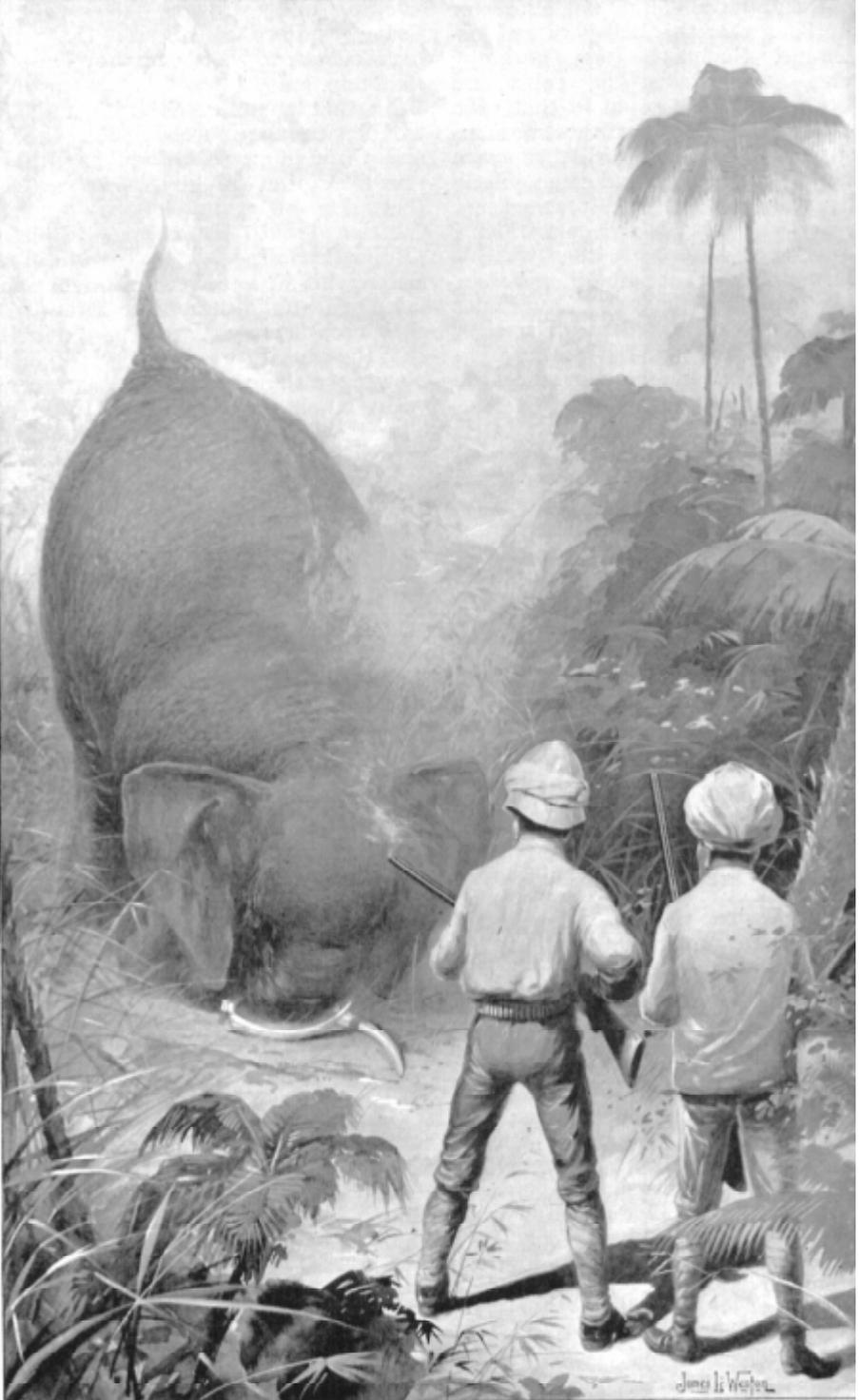
official records in the Adjutant-General's office, of British India, and such portions of the officer's report as bear upon the points discussed here are given:

"SIR—I have the honor to state that on the 24th instant, at midnight, I received information that two elephants of very uncommon size had made their appearance within a few hundred yards of the cantonment and close to the village, the inhabitants of which were in the greatest alarm. I lost no time in despatching to this place all the public and private elephants we had . . . and at daybreak on the 25th was informed that their very superior size and fierceness had rendered all attempts at their seizure unavailing, and that the most experienced mahout I had was dangerously hurt, the elephant he rode having been struck to the ground by one of the wild ones, which, with its companion, then adjourned to a large sugar-cane field adjoining the village. I immediately ordered the guns (a section of a light battery) to this place, but wishing . . . to try every means for catching these animals, I assembled the inhabitants . . . and, with the assistance of the resident Rajah, caused two deep pits to be prepared . . . and they (the elephants) were cleverly driven into them. But, unfortunately, one of the pits did not prove to be sufficiently deep, and the one who escaped from it, in the presence of many witnesses, assisted his companion out of the other pit with his trunk. Both were, however, with much exertion, brought back into the cane. . . . About four o'clock yesterday they burst through all my guards, and, making for a village about three miles distant, reached it with such rapidity that the horsemen who galloped before them had not time to apprise the inhabitants of their danger, and I regret to say that one poor man was torn limb from limb, a child trodden to death, and two women hurt. Their destruction now became absolutely necessary, and as they showed no disposition to quit the village had time to bring up the four-pound pieces of artillery, from which they received several rounds. . . . The larger of the two was soon brought to the ground by a round shot in the head, but after remaining there about a quarter of an hour . . . he got up again as

vigorous as ever, and the desperation of both at this period exceeds all description. They made repeated charges on the guns, and if it had not been for the uncommon bravery and steadiness of the artillerymen . . . many dreadful casualties must have occurred. We were obliged to desist for want of ammunition, and before a fresh supply could be obtained the animals quitted the village, and, though streaming with blood . . . proceeded with a rapidity I had no idea of toward Hazarabagh. They were at length brought up by the horsemen and our elephants, within a short distance of a crowded bazaar, and ultimately, after many renewals of most formidable and ferocious attacks on the guns, gave up the contest with their lives."

This is the account of an English officer. Hear now the experience of an old shikari, far down in remote Travancore, who spoke in this wise:

Sahib, said Joora Naik, that devil-beast came upon us like the pestilence, which no man can foresee. Goordut and Doorjun were excellent men—may Bhugwan receive their spirits—and the elephant killed these first. This your servant saw. There was a panther that had taken many cows, and their owners accused me unjustly, saying: "Behold this hog, who wallows in idleness while we are ruined." Likewise they gave me a multitude of curses, which were returned. For I sought that infidel diligently; but who can find a panther, unless by the favor of God. Doorjun and Goordut warmed some kicheree while resting from cutting wood in the forest. It was then I met them, and their smoke must have come where the elephant stood among shadows meditating murder. He came silently, like a storm cloud; yet I saw him, and gave warning, climbing a tree myself with haste, for elephants do not steal upon men in this manner unless they are possessed by devils. Sahib, the fate of Goordut and Doorjun was not propitious, and when I cried aloud and the beast we rushed down upon us, seeing that he was discovered, truly they became confused, like men who have smoked bhang and are stupefied. Goordut had his legs crushed and lay yelling, while Doorjun was caught and rent into tatters with the tusks. Then the elephant went back to Goordut and knelt upon him,



Painted for *OUTING* by Jas. L. Weston.

"THEN HE FIRED." (p. 163.)

afterwards kicking his body back and forth between his feet until it was no more than a pulp. Think not, Protector of the Poor, that this hell-born had forgotten me. Such as he forget nothing; they are as wise as a king cobra, and their knowledge is equal to that of a man-eating tiger. When this infamous one had made an end with these men he stopped screaming and came quietly under where I sat and reached up. There was that in his red eyes which I had not seen before; neither was his demeanor like that of other beasts. Quick, moving shades of wrinkles crossed his forehead. The presence of Bowanee, Goddess of Destruction, encompassed him, and he moved in the shadow of death.

After a time he went away. It is known unto my Lord that the evil spirit who possesses these creatures gives them no rest, and they go on unceasingly, having no pleasure except to kill. There was lamentation and great fear when I returned and told of these things; but what could we do? Mohunlall, the priest, made many charms, which he sold; nevertheless, of those who bought them several were afterwards destroyed, and it must have been that the special devil which abode with this elephant was unknown to him.

Crops promised well this year, and all our platforms were occupied, so that watcher's cries and the beating of tom-toms continued during darkness; for nilghai, with sounders of hog and deer, came out of the forest, doing much damage. Bodhee was one whose land brought forth abundantly; but he abhorred to lose anything. Therefore Bodhee erected yet another platform in his fields, building it close to a clump of tree jungle, and hiring many men to sit thereon. *Bap ki kusin* (I swear by my father) that this was foolish; the act befitted a man bereft of reason; for, truly, the elephant approached behind that cover, screening himself effectually, and he overthrew this stand. Several were injured, and Bearee Mul, who escaped, said that the beast—may my curses cleave to him forever—hunted them in the grass as he had seen Feringhee dogs belonging to *Ufsur-log* (English officers) in Mysore scent out wounded birds. Bodhee himself was killed, with Gopal Chund, Tiluk Singh, and Feruk Pandey; but some crawled

away, and, as the elephant screamed continually, other watchers took warning and escaped. After this, our fields remained unguarded, the zemindars losing much of what they expected to obtain.

In that manner, Khodawund, our troubles began; moreover, they had no end throughout this district, until we sent a petition to the *Pultan ka Ghora* (battalion of white troops) on the frontier, and Kummeens Behádur (Major Cummings) came to give us aid. Before this I beg to represent that none lay down at night, neither attended to their occasions by day, without a feeling as if the sansar, the icy wind of death, blew upon them. Travelers were met with on highways and slaughtered. Those who went by jungle paths perished there; pilgrims—Gosaeens carrying Ganges water—saw him and died. It is your servant's business to watch by night, being a shikari, and twice I beheld this beast, passing silently with a wild and awful mien. He visited lonely shrines and no priest was left to perform their rites; he came upon poor-was (outlying hamlets) and the cries of women wailing for the dead followed after him. In distant cattle camps, wretched men awoke at the bellowings and hollow trampling of their buffaloes to find the elephant among them.

Walled villages were safe; but such terror spread abroad that those within them trembled, and gate-watches struck nagáras and fired ginjalls whenever a wild elephant's trumpet sounded near. And open towns were not safe, for he descended on many, bringing destruction.

Your servant was at Koilee when this devil arrived. It was evening; the cattle had come home, and women were drawing water, while the men stood about speaking with one another. Without warning he burst forth from high canes growing close to the village well, and his form loomed black against a red sky. Azeema and her son were trampled; likewise he caught Shurfun, tearing off her head. I sat in a neem tree and saw him rage this way and that. Also I observed that he did not leave wounded persons, as had been done with Goordut when his legs were broken, but rent and crushed them until they were dead. In this way time was occupied, so that many escaped who

would have been killed if a delight in murder had not misled him.

Truly, it is not good, being powerless, to behold such things, for, besides those who were destroyed, others received injuries from falling houses and were burned when their roofs fell in. I made supplications and vowed offerings if I might be permitted to witness his death; but it was not time, and we suffered much under this curse. At last Kummeens Sahib arrived, coming suddenly, without ostentation, and, having made my salaams, he appointed me his chief shikari, as knowing this country. He was a slayer of beasts, very big and red, and of a stern countenance.

"What has been done?" he roared, when the people had assembled to do him honor. "Have you dug pitfalls; have you watched; has one village helped another?" At this they remained silent, and he looked upon these men with disdain, as having expected nothing, afterward commanding them, in the Ungréz (English) manner, to go to the devil, and ordering that none should come near his camp except they bore intelligence, or their punishment would be sure. Moreover, the Sahib gave instructions while regarding me with green and fiery eyes. He said that an elephant such as this one was like a man-eating tiger, and must be pursued continually; neither thereafter did he give us any rest, nor sought repose himself, traveling always, wherever there was news. *Ai Bhugwan! Ai Narayun! Ai Seeta-ram!* Between Kummeens Behádur and the elephant our souls were disquieted, and the livers of all turned to water, for that we were spent with toil. His demon apprised this Son of Satan concerning the pursuit, and he did not permit himself to be seen. Yet recompense was not always withheld, for in the hour of destiny we came to a camp of Brinjarries (gypsies) that had been just attacked, but no harm done, since these strayers from the paths of righteousness are very wary. Whereupon-Kummeens the valiant rejoiced, knowing that, being enraged, this accursed would do something more at once; and, truly, his spoor struck off towards the next village.

There was rough ground betwixt us and that place, so the elephant went round it, having become accustomed to success; but the Sahib mounted a taltoo

(pony), ordering me to do so likewise, and he took his big rifle, giving its twin brother into my hands. Then he departed, riding on the short line and stopping for nothing.

The people saw us coming down, and because we were alone and came with haste they perceived that peril was at hand. Therefore, men ran in from their fields, and the inhabitants gathered themselves together to offer salutations. But Kummeens Sahib listened not, nor took notice of offerings. With a voice like a great wind he ordered them to fly, which they did with alacrity, many taking refuge in a stone tower.

At this time I observed that the Lord Kummeens had become very calm, and when people prayed for him on the tower, and called down blessings upon his head, he commanded them to be silent without vehemence, for this was a man indeed, one who knew not fear, neither permitted interference. We stood in an open space between the village shrine and their gram deota, nor did it seem long before the elephant came. His pace was swift after coming out from behind the hills, because he expected to surprise this village; but, on ascending the slope, and seeing nothing of what he had been accustomed to behold—no terror-stricken, helpless crowd uttering shrieks and lamentations—I think that this astonished him, for he pulled up and advanced slowly. The light of battle shone on my Lord's face, yet he moved not, standing with his gun poised, and I beside him holding the second one, useless if the first had failed.

Elephants do not see well, and this, being confused, cast his eyes about quickly, without at once perceiving us. Soon, however, he looked more attentively, and then a change came over him. His ears cocked, his trunk stretched itself out, his body swelled with rage. By your soul, Sahib, it was frightful to see how he from whom all had fled resented being met. But Kummeens Behádur stirred no more than the peaks of Kylas. He waited while the elephant charged screaming down, until his upraised trunk dropped in anticipation of seizing us. Then, when the forehead lay uncovered, he fired; and as this beast fell dead both tusks were broken off, which is something I have not seen again, though it is common to break one.