

# BURMA

BY

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*Ornari res ipsa negat: contenta doceri*

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in the forest<sup>1</sup> he is exceedingly useful. When work is finished, dragging elephants are hobbled, their forelegs being tied together, and are then let loose in the forest to fend for themselves. Each has a wooden clapper round his neck to guide the riders when searching for them. Elephants thus hobbled often go quite a long way in a single night and are not at all impeded in their foraging. Though mechanical appliances have almost displaced them for this work, elephants are still used for piling teak logs in the timber yards of Rangoon and Moulmein and seem to display remarkable acuteness and intelligence. From time immemorial, the kings of Burma set much store on the possession of white elephants, regarding them as among the most honourable insignia of their royal state. Wars were waged for the possession of these precious beasts<sup>2</sup>. So far as Burma is concerned, the cult of the white elephant is dead.

Rhinoceros are found in several districts in Lower Burma but are not very common. The one-horned Javan (*R. sondaicus*) is rare; the two-horned Sumatran (*R. sumatrensis*) is more frequently encountered. The gaur, by some called the Indian bison (*Bos gaurus*), a handsome beast, standing as high as nineteen hands, is the largest of the wild oxen. Gaur are generally seen in herds. Forest lovers, they prefer hilly country. The banting or saing (*B. sondaicus*), the characteristic wild ox of Malay countries, is not uncommon in many parts of Burma. He is a very handsome beast, finer than the Javan variety, and may even be a distinct species. In habits he resembles the gaur but chooses lighter and more open forest and the outlying spurs of hills. Gaur have been found at heights above 5000 feet, saing not over 4000 feet. Of gaur and saing solitary bulls carrying fine heads are most eagerly sought by sportsmen. Both are often dangerous when wounded. The much discussed mithan (*B. frontalis*) is domesticated

<sup>1</sup> See p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 101.