

A RHINOCEROS STORY.

Once on a time my father took his sons out to hunt; he only had a gun, and we had assegais and knives. At first we were very unsuccessful, we found nothing till the second day, and were very hungry, when we came on a rhinoceros. The old man soon wounded it in the leg, and then told us to throw stones at it, to make the wound worse. You know how Namaquas can throw stones; so we crept upon the rhinoceros, followed it, and threw stones with such effect, that at last it lay down from pain. I being armed with a knife, then approached it from behind, and commenced to hamstring it, while my elder brother, who is now dead, Cobus, remarkable for two strange rings round his eyes, tried to climb over the back of the animal to thrust his lance into its shoulder—(it would have been very dangerous to have gone up to its shoulder on foot.) He had just begun to climb, when the rhinoceros rose suddenly with a terrible blast or snort; we all ran off as fast as we could to a tree, and there held a consultation about our further proceedings.

We had not been long at the tree when the rhinoceros, observing where we were, rushed towards us, with his horn at first in the air, and then as he came near, he tore up the ground with it. We scattered ourselves before him, when Cobus, getting in a passion, stopped short in his flight, called the rhinoceros an ugly name, and turned and faced it. The rhinoceros, astonished at this unexpected manoeuvre, also stopped and stared at Cobus, who then commenced calling out loudly and abusing the monster; it now seemed to be seized with fear, for it sidled off—Cobus, who had a heart like a lion's, and was as active as an ape, immediately pursued the huge animal, seized the tail, sprung with its assistance on its back, rode it well, and plunging his assegai deep into its shoulder—it fell, and was despatched by the rest of us.

The rhinoceros is often accompanied by a sentinel to give him warning, a beautiful green-backed and blue-winged bird, about the size of a jay. When the animal is standing at its ease among the bushes, or rubbing itself against a dwarf tree, the bird attends it to feed on the insects which either fly about it, or are found in the wrinkles of its neck and head. The creeping hunter, stealthily approaching the leeward side, carefully notes the motions of the bird. If the monster moves its head slightly, the bird flies from its horn (where it is generally seated) to its shoulder, remains there a short time, and then returns to its former strange perch. If, from its elevated position, the bird notes the approach of danger, and flies up in the air suddenly, then let the hunter beware, for the rhinoceros instantly rushes desperately and fearlessly to wherever he hears the branches crack.

[Col. Alexander's Expedition.]