

ORIENTAL SPORTING MAGAZINE.

NEW SERIES.

AUGUST 1877.

Victrix fortunæ sapientia.—*Juvenal.*

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1877.

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW SPECIES OF RHINOCEROS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ORIENTAL SPORTING MAGAZINE.

DEAR SIR,—With reference to *Rhino's* enquiry on the above subject in your last number, I have the pleasure to subjoin a copy of a letter addressed by me to *The Field*, and which appeared in the issue of that journal of March 6, 1875, p. 242, as it deals more specifically with the question than either of the two articles of mine in the *Maga.* quoted by you. There was a short editorial foot-note to the letter in *The Field*, but I have not a copy of it as far as I can recollect. the question was not in any wise explicitly or decidedly answered. Since then I have had no opportunity of following up the enquiry, and certain essential and important information which I solicited from the Secretary of the *Batavian Society* regarding the so-called Javanese Rhinoceros (*Rh. sondaicus*) has not been forwarded to me.

Your correspondent will find in the impression of this *Maga.* for January 1875 a most interesting article "on a new species of Indian Rhinoceros" by the Great London Dealer in Zoological specimens, Mr. William Jamrach, from whom I have personally heard much on the subject, and of his bewilderment at the confused manner in which European savans dealt with his question.* I may add that the Osteologist of the *Imperial*—so I believe it is now called—*Museum*, Mr. Oscar Fraser, has bestowed a good deal of attention on the subject of new species of Rhinoceros, but has not, I think, yet been able to come to any definite conclusion in the matter.

Yours truly,

YOUNG NIMROD.

KHULNA, Jessór.

Post Scriptum, July 26, 1877.—I have just been asked to assist in procuring "a bit of the epidermis of a young specimen of the Rhinoceros from the *Gangetic valley*," and not from the *Brahmaputra*,—i.e., Assam. As this is required to assist in determining, if possible, on a new species of Indian Rhinoceros, I hope brother sportsmen will endeavour to supply the piece of skin required from the body of such a Rhinoceros—and that over the ribs would be best suited for the purpose. Perhaps Purneah sportsmen would be the most able to give the necessary aid, and the well-known *shikari* G. S.

* Perhaps, if poor Dr. Gray, of the *British Museum*, had been alive then, he would have conclusively decided the point one way or the other. The fact is that naturalists of standing and authority are reluctant to give any decided opinion about any new species, lest they should be mistaken, and their reputation suffer therefrom. Frank Buckland, however, would probably not allow such paltry misgivings to influence him, but I am not aware if he has been consulted.

in particular. I hope this appeal for help will not be vain, and any one able and willing to supply "the missing link," as it were, will oblige by forwarding it to Mr. Oscar L. Fraser, Osteologist of the *Indian Museum*, 7, Kyd Street, Calcutta, who is engaged in the enquiry alluded to above. I would greatly wish for your co-operation in the matter, too, Mr. Editor.

[We hope any sportsman able to assist in the matter will do so.—Ed.]

NEW SPECIES OF THE ONE-HORNED INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FIELD.

SIR,—As naturalists as yet recognise only two species of the one-horned Rhinoceros as being actually found alive in India, *i. e.*, the so-called common Indian Rhinoceros (*Rh. Indicus*, Cuvier), and the Sundarban Rhinoceros (*Rh. sondaicus*, Muller), a mere sportsman, with a limited knowledge of Zoology, naturally feels extreme diffidence in forming a contrary opinion, and much more so in announcing it publicly, but one cannot well resist ocular demonstration for facts are stubborn things. So I shall record, as concisely as possible, my observations on the subject, leaving it for competent authorities to decide thereon. And in so doing, I think I can choose no better medium than the columns of *The Field*; for it is there that English sportsmen all over the world seek for assistance when in difficulty, and rarely in vain.

Some time last year I saw two young one-horned Rhinoceros, completely differing from one another, and yet belonging to neither of the two acknowledged species referred to above; and as they were then shortly to be forwarded to England—to Mr. William Jamrach, I believe—I had hoped that our English naturalists would have been able to have examined them, and given us sportsmen out here the benefit of their views thereon. But, unfortunately, the one that had far more prominent tubercles than even *Rh. sondaicus*, died *en route*, and was cast overboard, I hear; and the other one, with its skin completely smooth, head elongated and narrower than *Rh. Indicus*, and provided with a double fold forward, almost similar to *Rh. sondaicus*, after remaining a short time in England, was sold to some one in Berlin, I learn, as *Rh. sondaicus* with the tubercles undeveloped. This it most decidedly is not, for a very young one of that species, about three months old, as well as even the *jetus* of one preserved in spirits, taken from the uterus of a large female Rhinoceros shot during the past year in the Sundarban, are in the *Indian Museum* here, with the tubercles in both of them very fully developed. Besides, during my experience as a *shikari* for nearly a score of years in the Sundarban—my estates border thereon, and I reside there—I have seen many Rhinoceros of this species in

all stages of growth, but never otherwise than with their tubercles thoroughly formed.

I have only just seen another young one-horned Rhinoceros less than an year old, which is also, I understand, the property of Mr. William Jamrach, and is now about to be shipped to England. It is specially with reference to this animal that I am writing, for I find it differ from any one of those above enumerated. In this one I find the skin to be far rougher than in *Rh. Indicus*, and of a blackish color, tail long, ears broad, and devoid of the fold on the neck, which is characteristic of *Rh. sondaicus*. *Habitat*,—Bhoptan Terai.

This brief notice of it will, I hope, induce you, Mr. Editor, and other English naturalists, to carefully examine this interesting animal when it reaches its destination, and I need hardly say that, by so doing, a boon will be conferred on all Indian sportsmen, who are at present sorely puzzled to account for such marked and striking differences in the various specimens of what, I submit, is erroneously considered the only two species of the one-horned Rhinoceros actually found alive in India, which is, I believe, all that naturalists will allow at present.

Nota Bene.—I am not quite sure, but I am inclined to think, that the Rhinoceros referred to in the penultimate paragraph of the above letter died on its way to England; and if so, it could not therefore have been examined by English naturalists, at least in its *live state*. My memory, however, is not at all clear on this point, I regret to say.

Yours truly,

YOUNG NIMROD.

CALCUTTA, GREAT EASTERN HOTEL,

20th January 1875.

BICYCLE RIDING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ORIENTAL SPORTING MAGAZINE.

DEAR SIR,—Can you tell me in your next number the greatest distance ever ridden in one hour on a Bicycle, both by professional and amateur riders?

Yours faithfully,

DRIVING WHEEL.

We think the greatest distance run in an hour was 18 miles, 587 yards by the professional J. Keen, in December last year. We do not know of any amateur trying how much he could do in an hour, but the Hon'ble I. Keith Falconer did 15 miles in 56 minutes 49 seconds.

Ed.