

## REMARKABLE ACCIDENTS TO DEER.

THE ADVANTAGE of keeping a "common-place book" is sometimes impressed upon us when a correspondent writes to report what he regards as a unique incident of sport or an unrecorded fact in natural history. From this source of information we often learn of things which repeat itself, and, for a truly it has been said, in the words of the Old Testament that "there is no new thing under the sun."

Deer, like other animals, are at times liable to accidents, but from the nature of the life they lead and owing to their remarkable intelligence, they less frequently fall victims to a catastrophe than do human beings. Moreover, such accidents as overtake them occur at such long intervals that one has time to forget the details of one before another is reported. Perhaps the common form of accident which sometimes ends fatally is the interlocking of antlers when two deer—red stags or fallow bucks as the case may be—fight together in the rutting time. Only last autumn, as reported in the *Field* of Nov. 25 (p. 735) two fallow bucks were found in the New Forest with interlocked antlers, and both dead. In such a case the cause of death might arise from broken necks, or utter prostration after a prolonged struggle, or starvation, if discovered only too late. Some years ago, when partridge shooting in high fern, we stumbled unexpectedly upon two bucks lying in this precarious position, but by promptly sending for the deer keeper and a carpenter's saw and cutting off one of the tines at a critical point of entanglement, we were able to release the animals and save their lives.

Another source of danger to deer is the risk of getting their antlers entangled in a wire fence and being held there as in a trap until they succumb. In some cases an accident of this kind has occurred, but in other instances the immense strength and weight of a stag has enabled it to break away. We have before us at the moment of writing a photograph of a stag's head with wire coiled round and about the brow and about the jaw and tines on both sides, as well as round the beam between the bay and that of the right horn. This stag, after making its escape, was slain, thus decorated, by Mr Ralph Sneyd in the forest of Glenochil.

Some years ago a good deal of comment was evoked by a strange accident that occurred to a red deer in Windsor Park. The animal was found lying on his back with one of the forelegs tightly fixed in the forked branch of a white thorn about 4ft. from the ground, the shank bone being fractured and splintered diagonally. He had doubtless stood upon his hind legs to reach some ivy above him, and when stretching himself upwards and towards the hoofs of the hind legs must have slipped from under the ivy, and when the animal tried to get up his front feet must have slipped suddenly between the forked branch of the tree, in which it was gripped so tightly by his weight below that escape was impossible. In his struggles to get free the leg was again broken lower down, and this miserable condition of affairs was discovered. A precisely similar accident happened to a fallow buck in Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire, and from the same cause, the animal tried to get up, some ivy on a thorn tree. The announcement of the first-mentioned accident in Windsor Park elicited a letter from Mr Fenwick Bisset, who was then Master of the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds, to the effect that a red deer hind had been found in Leighcombe, in the Hornor country near Porlock, hanging by her head in the fork of two branches of a pollard oak, having slipped upon sloping ground in the endeavour to reach some browsing above her. In another case which happened at Meggernie Castle, and near Loch Gierrie, a young stag got hung up by his horns in the fork of a birch tree, and when discovered was quite dead. A steep and rocky part of the Mashill Water, near Loch Laggan, in Badenoch, some years ago, a stag apparently while trying to reach some branches above him slipped forward and fell into a crevice of the rock, where his weight caused him to become so tightly jammed that he was unable to extricate himself, and so perished.

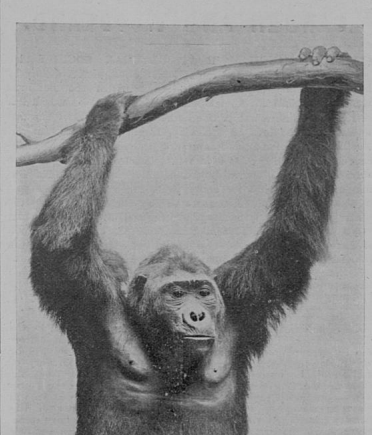
There are a few incidents which have come to mind after perusing a letter recently received from Capt. Hart Davis of the author of *Stalking Skeetles*, in which he describes an accident to a red deer quite as singular and much more uncommon than any of the preceding. The story follows:

The accompanying photograph (here reproduced) was taken on the spot to show the dead body of a stag, a victim of an unusual accident. He had been shot by himself, and he had killed himself quite effectively into his own antlers. His neck was broken, so the poor beast did not die a lingering death. He was found by the head stalker, Mr. R. Denton, near Argyleshire, on Jan. 10, 1864, and when recovered had been dead some days.

This is perhaps a singular an accident as could well be

## PORTRAIT OF A GORILLA.

This portrait here reproduced from a photograph is taken from a specimen preserved and mounted by Mr Rowland Ward, in a very life-like attitude, for Mr Rothschild's museum at Tring. As to the circumstances under which the animal was obtained, nothing definite is known beyond the fact that it was killed inland of Sette Cama, in the French Congo, and presumably by natives.



GORILLA FROM THE FRENCH CONGO.

since it very rarely happens that any European traveller has an opportunity of shooting one.

Found in western Equatorial Africa, chiefly, or perhaps entirely, in the district known as the Cameroons and the Congo rivers, it is the largest of all the apes, its bulk considerably exceeding that of man, although from the shortness of the legs it

## ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS FROM INDIA.

In the old days of the royal menagerie at Windsor, gifts from India were made to the Sovereign. When that collection was presented to the Zoological Society by William IV., it contained a number of birds and deer animals, but the latter were of the same time there were in the Tower menagerie a Bengal lion and a lioness which Gen. Watson had presented to His Majesty. In 1833 Brian Hodgson, then Resident of Nepal, and a corresponding member of the Zoological Society made "an extensive collection of the splendid and interesting pheasants of that country, as well as of other birds. His expectations were certainly not met, for his acclimatisation. Nearly a hundred were despatched from Khatmandu, but many perished in the sultry plains of India, and nearly the whole of the remainder died in captivity. Of the few that were shipped for England not one survived. In the following year he sent home upwards of three hundred skins of birds collected in Nepal, together with the skulls and skins of many mammals. More than twenty years later when Prince Albert was president, a large collection of Himalayan pheasants was formed by Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India, with the co-operation of Lord William Hay, Capt. James Ramsay, Mr Brian Hodgson, Mr Keene, and Capt James, the Acting Resident at Darjeeling. Mr John Thomson, the head keeper, was sent out to take charge of them. There were a good many unavoidable losses on the passage home, but five species—the cheer pheasant, purple, white-crested, and black-backed kalagee, and the hill partridge—arrived in sufficient numbers "to afford a reasonable prospect of permanently acclimating them in this country." In July, 1864, Mr Thomson returned from India, whether he had gone in the previous November to take charge of a collection brought together by the Government and Society by their corresponding members, the Bahu Rajendra Mullick, Mr A. Grote, Dr John Squire, and Mr William Damm, there were very few losses; the only one was a female, which cost little over £1500, which was well within the mark, and the expenses amounted to £308. The most important animals were two young Indian rhinoceroses, which were sent to the Jardin des Plantes in exchange for Jumbo, the other died in the Gardens in December, 1904, having been more than forty years in captivity. The late Mr Clarence Bartlett, who was sent out to receive and bring back a collection formed by corresponding members and friends. Unfortunately there were some severe losses on the homeward passage, but he safely landed two black wives, a female goral, an entellus monkey, a Panola deer, two slow loris, an Indian badger, and a number of birds—in all thirty animals, valued at about £760, just £30 less than the cost of the expedition.

The most famous Indian collection to reach the Gardens was that deposited in 1876 by his present Majesty, then Prince of Wales. Among the sixty-nine animals were five tigers—of which one, Sutta Cullis, is still in the Gardens—five tigers, seven leopards, a cheetal, two bears, eight black buck, and seven deer; there were eighty-six birds, of which thirty were pheasants. These arrived in May in charge of Mr Clarence Bartlett, who acted as zoological collector during the Prince's visit to India. The collection was exhibited in a special reception tent erected on the waste ground near the present reptile house, and was visited by Queen Victoria, the present King and Queen, and other members of the royal family. Needless to say that the exhibition was a great success, and a great attraction to the general public. The admissions in 1876 were 639,183; in the following year they rose to 915,764, and the income mounted from £28,728 to £24,455. In the following year the Prince's hunting trophies, among which were sixteen tiger skins, were put out for exhibition in the lecture room. A review of the Indian collections that have come to the Gardens would be incomplete without mention of the valuable donations of birds made to the Zoological Society by Mr W. H. Harper, between Aug. 14, 1891, and Aug. 14, 1901. He presented to the Society representing twenty species, none of which had been exhibited till then in Regent's Park. The valuable services rendered by the King to the Society were gratefully acknowledged by the award of the gold medal, and it may be assumed that in the course the Prince of Wales will be asked to accept the same distinction. To Lord Canning and others who presented or assisted in forming Indian collections that have come to the Gardens, and the services of Mr John Thomson were acknowledged by a money grant and the thanks of the council. The present year has begun well; the admissions are already more than those in 1905 by more than 3000. With such an attraction for the summer months as the Prince's Indian collection the society may reasonably hope to equal, perhaps to surpass, the record of 1876.

On Friday evening Mr Arthur Thomson, the assistant superintendent, started overland for Calcutta, to which city the animals formed the Prince of Wales' collection were sent to be housed in Nepal. He hopes to return by the end of May. Shelley, the keeper appointed to assist him, will go out in the Workman, the vessel in which the animals will be brought back.