

A ONE - HORNED JAVANESE RHINOCEROS SHOT IN SUMATRA, WHERE IT WAS NOT THOUGHT TO EXIST.

A PERILOUS SHIKAR THAT ENTAILED HOURS OF WRIGGLING
THROUGH ALMOST IMPENETRABLE JUNGLE.

By J. C. HAZEWINKEL.

*This narrative of a rhinoceros hunt is not only of great interest by reason of the graphic quality of its descriptions, but also because the hunter, Mynheer Hazewinkel, has been able to demonstrate that the one-horned Javan Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros Sondaicus*) is also native to Sumatra, and not only Java and the mainland of Asia—a fact of which hitherto zoologists have not apparently been aware.*

WE were camping on one of those remote native clearings in the jungle, very primitively tilled, and only occupied at intervals, called ladangs. As usual, I slept under the porch of one of those flimsy little huts, built on high poles, preferring rather the chill night air or an inquisitive tiger to the stuffy and smelly interior, generally over-crowded with children in various sizes, ages, and tempers.

The sun was still hiding behind the trees of the forest, that bordered all four sides of our little clearing. Rays, filtering through the foliage, were painting the morning mist a deep red gold, and the dew drops on the coffee leaves were sparkling with all the colours of the rainbow. Now and then, the distant call of the Argus Pheasant marked the beginning of a new day, and was, at the same time, the signal for all nocturnal prowlers to regain their shelters. It was cold, accentuated by a gentle breeze; therefore nobody, though already awake, liked the idea of leaving their blankets very much. Yet the camp ought to have been bustling with activity, to get ready for the start, in spite of the cold and the early hour. Ought to have been! But then, why not?

Already on two previous trips in these regions, news received from the natives concerning the whereabouts and movements of a big rhinoceros had proved to be worthless. Being an incorrigible optimist, I firmly believed in the luck of the third time. The reward of this faith was tracks indeed, but all more than two weeks old, leading us a merry-go-round for five consecutive days! Small wonder that everybody was feeling dejected and apathetic, and lacked the usual eagerness to be early on the trail. It was then that I saw one of the guides—a venerable Hadji (whose portrait appears on this page)—emerging from the bush, shouting, gesticulating, and actually on the run! At the sight of this uncommon behaviour, I groaned with misgiving, for surely what could it mean otherwise than that somebody had been bitten by a poisonous snake, or perhaps some other calamity, that would cause delay, or even break off our trip. But the moment I realised the meaning of his words, I became suddenly wide awake. Forgotten was all stiffness, gone all grumblings and grudges against Diana, goddess of hunting!

It appeared that the Hadji, when he went to bring water for the cook, had stumbled upon the fresh track

try to propitiate the Pojang with offerings, ranging from flowers to a buffalo, in proportion to the importance of their undertakings. In this particular instance a couple of chickens, black and white, that we had specially

good spirits. So, every big forest has its Keeper, the Pojang, the Spirit of some ancient king or warrior, frequently the ancestor from whom they claim descent. Whenever they go into the bush: to hunt, fish, or to cut trees, to collect forest-produce or to select the site for a new ladang, they will always

much clearer, so we advanced with the utmost care, now and then stopping motionless to listen. Suddenly we heard terrific snorting, and the sound of a heavy body crashing through the underwood; but after some moments silence reigned supreme again: such is the uncanny way these animals, representing so many tons of flesh, muscle, and bone, move through the forest without making unnecessary noises.

With nerves taut through excitement, we crept on with the utmost wariness; for anything might happen now. Arriving at a cluster of big trees, we found that, had we but come some minutes earlier, we could have surprised him taking his bath in a mud-pool. In these pools, called koebangs, the rhino likes to wallow, just like the buffalo, to cover its hide with a thick layer of mud,

to protect it against heat, leeches, and ticks. These koebangs are found at fixed intervals in the haunts of the rhino, that it may indulge in its particular hobby as frequently as it likes. Now trailing became decidedly unpleasant, for in no time we were covered with the same protective layer, due to the mud which had stuck to the underwood. This went on for about three-quarters of an hour, and by that time we were totally unrecognisable, for mud, sweat, leeches, and rotan-creepers had played havoc with our features and clothing, not to mention the strain, which was telling severely on our nerves. Then, as suddenly as before, that well-remembered snorting, immediately followed by an angry roar and stamping of the brute's massive feet. That indicated business without a doubt!

On he came, though nothing was to be seen. The direction of the tremendous noise he was making showed us that my native hunter was his objective. I saw the man taking aim, then, without shooting, making a dash sideways. Almost the same moment a big black mass crashed at breakneck speed through the underwood, near the spot where the man had been standing. The brute was gone so quickly that I did not get the chance to shoot. Swerving back on a wide curve, he now made a dash at two natives who were lagging behind. A yell followed, and somebody's incoherent prayers! We went back as quickly as possible, fearing the worst. But what we saw was too much for our already overtaxed nerves. We had simply to laugh and laugh! Our holy man, the Hadji, clung like a huge, flapping bat, head down, to the branch of a very providential

tree, still invoking Allah most urgently not to forget the Pojang!

When at last we had got him down and soothed his terror-stricken mind, he told us that the rhino nearly got him, and that the brute was a very big one, with a long horn. That was just the stimulant we needed. After my hunter had explained to me the reason why he had not been able to shoot—he had clean forgotten to push back the safety-catch—we took up the trail again. Yet I was afraid that we should not get the chance of a second meeting with our thick-skinned friend. But, thanks to the chickens—bless them!—our luck held true. In less than ten minutes he was again announcing his friendly intentions; followed it up with a rush at us. [Continued on opposite page.]



AN ANIMAL WHOSE TRACKS ARE SOMETIMES CONFUSED WITH THOSE OF THE RHINOCEROS: THE SHY MALAYAN TAPIR, PHOTOGRAPHED STANDING IN A MUD-POOL; WITH ITS CHARACTERISTIC PARTI-COLOURED SKIN.

The *Tapirus Indicus*, or "saddled" Tapir, is a timid, good-natured, and quite harmless herbivorous animal. Its only weapons are its teeth and bulk (length, some 8 ft.; height, about 4 ft. 6 in.), for the latter may be used in knocking down and trampling an aggressor. It has on the fore- and hind-feet respectively three and four sharp pointed toes; whereas the rhino possesses only three, which are more or less circular. For an expert tracker it is, therefore, easy enough to distinguish them from each other.

brought with us, were slaughtered on the spot, where the Hadji had found the track. Incense was burned, and a vow made that, should the hunt materialise and without accidents, a full-grown goat would be provided as a thanksgiving. Naturally, I had to provide the goat; and they would feast on it!

Trailing rhino in the Sumatran jungle necessitates the utmost dexterity, for the rhino's senses of smell and hearing are extraordinarily acute. Furthermore, the paths are so irregular, twisting back and forth, that when one expects the quarry to be still in front, it may turn up, quite suddenly, behind or beside you, to the disadvantage of the hunter! Though rhinos like to follow and use the forest trails, they generally leave them when feeding, and then tracking becomes a most uncongenial task! One has to wriggle through the virgin masses of tangled brushwood and creepers, taking exceptional care not to make too much noise. And this may go on for hours and hours! Now, when tracking elephants, even a solitary bull will kindly oblige you by making an easy path to follow—for they act more or less like a steam-roller. In Sumatra, where

the rhino does not live in open plains or sparsely covered places, it is necessary to keep on the look-out for fresh tracks, and then to follow them up, until you overtake it. This, in a jungle which is one intertwined mass of undergrowth and creepers, in which the ill-famed rotan plays an unending game of "wait a little"—or, perhaps, in dense secondary bush, thickly interspersed with shoulder-high along-along grass. It is no job for a big party; three or four men at the most are needed, while the rest with the camp outfits have to follow later along the same trail. This trail is specially marked, lest they should lose their way. The larger the pursuing party, the more dangerous it becomes, in cases of sudden attacks, due to the difficulty of scattering, as one would in more open country. Even accidents may occur, for in the excitement somebody may be hurt, even shot.

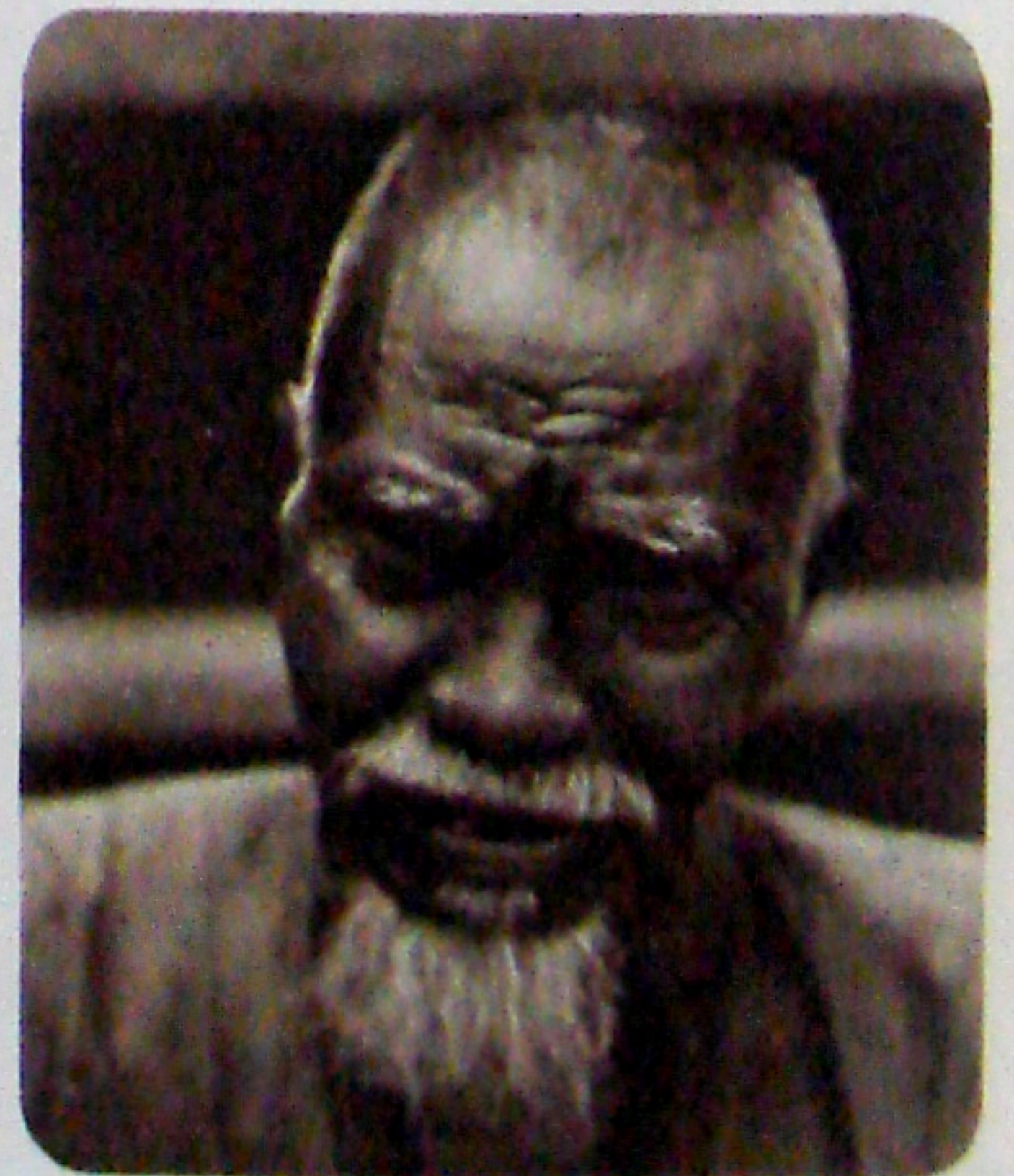
On this occasion, though it had not rained for over a month, the track was easy to follow, for luckily our friend did not use the beaten paths, preferring to make a new one. At about eleven o'clock the track became



THE HEAD OF THE RHINOCEROS (*RHINOCEROS SONDAICUS*) KILLED BY MYNHEER HAZEWINKEL IN THE SHIKAR DESCRIBED ON THIS PAGE: EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE JAVANESE ONE-HORNED SPECIES IN SUMATRA.

of a big rhino, where the path crossed the little brook. Yet I was still sceptical, for it might prove to be those of a big tapir (such as is seen in the accompanying illustration). It would not have been the first time that such a mistake had been made, even by natives. But Allah be praised, that day our luck was really incredible! We had been scouring the bush for five days, without reward. Then, when least expected, our friend passed at less than a hundred yards from the very ladang we had chosen for our camp! This sounds unbelievable, for the rhino is known to be particularly shy, giving inhabited places always a wide berth. But this one, as I had occasion enough to learn on my previous trips, even dared to cross the larger inhabited ladangs, nearer the villages. According to all concerned, the brute could not have gone far. So we had a fair chance.

The camp, some moments previously quiet and sleepy-looking, became now the scene of busy activity. Before leaving we had first to attend a little ceremony. The natives, though Mohammedans, still believe in evil and



A "HADJI," OR HOLY MAN, ONE OF MYNHEER HAZEWINKEL'S SHIKARIS, WHO DISCOVERED THE FRESH TRACKS OF THE BULL RHINOCEROS, AND WAS NEARLY KILLED BY THE QUARRY: A VENERABLE SUMATRAN, WHO, THOUGH A MOHAMMEDAN, SACRIFICED TO THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT OF THE FOREST, TO ENSURE THE GOOD FORTUNE OF THE HUNT.

THE ONE-HORNED JAVANESE RHINOCEROS FOUND ALSO IN SUMATRA.



THE ONE-HORNED JAVANESE RHINOCEROS SHOT IN SUMATRA: A BULL THAT REACHED 3 YDS. 1 FT. 4 IN. IN LENGTH, STOOD ABOUT 1 YD. 1 FT. 6 IN. HIGH, AND HAD A HORN MEASURING 14½ IN. ALONG ITS CURVED FORE-SIDE; PHOTOGRAPHED AFTER THE SHOULDER-HIGH "ALANG-ALANG" GRASS HAD BEEN CUT DOWN ALL ROUND THE CARCASE.

(Continued.)
 This time we were prepared. Two shots! The colossus was stopped, as if by a giant hand. Swaying to and fro, he alighted down on his fore-knees, after some uncertain steps, and finally fell down on his side, spitting and groaning. Vainly he tried to get up again. Some last contortions and grunts, then stillness, the more impressive after the previous hubbub. We approached as cautiously as possible, for he might not have been quite dead. But he was! Great rejoicings! For me, all expenses, troubles, and vexations were at last crowned by getting this really very big male specimen of the one-horned *Rhinoceros Sondaicus* (or *Javanensis Cuv*), one of the biggest of its species. Heretofore, zoologists had apparently not been aware that the *Rhinoceros Sondaicus* was also native to Sumatra, and not only to Java and the mainland of Asia. This one, the first of a series of seven shot by me, proved it beyond doubt. Rejoicings among the natives, because they had been rid of a dangerous neighbour, who was more feared than the elephant, and had been terrorising them for years and years while on their way to their isolated ladangs, with their wives and children, along lonely bush-trails, only armed with smooth-bored rifles, not even breech-loaders. Great rejoicings for my men, because they anticipated a big feast, in which a goat—a very big one, too—would play an important part. And what about our



THE ONE-HORNED JAVAN RHINOCEROS SHOT IN SUMATRA—TO THE SURPRISE OF ZOOLOGISTS: THE KILL PHOTOGRAPHED WITH A 5½-YARD PYTHON, SHOT ON THE SAME DAY WHILE COILED UP LETHARGICALLY IN SHALLOW WATER, DIGESTING AFTER A RECENT MEAL OF WOODCOCK, PORCUPINE, AND DWARF MUSK-DEER.

friend the rhino? Well, he went the way of all rhinos; namely, to the chemists of the Celestial Empire, with hide and hair, to give—with more or less results—youth and vitality to old sinners and patriarchs who still refused to renounce the pleasures of life. The Chinese gladly pay quite a lot of money for the hide of the one-horned rhino (up to fl. 1500), and, in particular, the chula, or horn, will fetch fancy prices, even up to 4000 guilders (nearly £500). The two-horned *Rhinoceros Sumatrensis* is, on the contrary, far less valuable: will fetch, in fact, only about one-tenth of the above-mentioned prices. Hide, horn, blood, and other parts of the body, pulverised or as an extract, provide the most essential ingredients for very potent and renowned medicines. According to the Chinese and the natives, those medicines should be able to give back lost strength, youth, and vitality, and cure various diseases. The horns are sometimes modelled into goblets. Water or some other liquid, when left in such a vessel for some days, should then become a veritable panacea against all ailments and diseases, even tuberculosis and the plague! The belief attached to the magical curative and invigorating powers of these drugs is a survival of animism. The rhino is to those simple-minded people the symbol of exuberant male vigour, and accordingly that much coveted strength must adhere to every part of his body.