ONE OF THE RAREST OF BEASTS TRACKED DOWN:

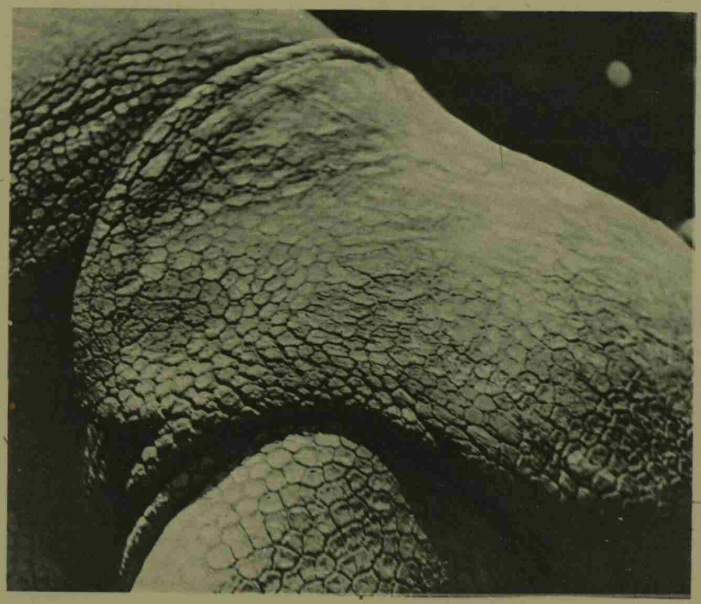
THE ONE-HORNED JAVAN RHINOCEROS SECURED BY A SPECIAL EXPEDITION.

THE DENSE JUNGLE IN WHICH *RHINOCEROS SONDAICUS* WAS FEEDING WHEN FOUND BY THE VERNAY EXPEDITION DISPATCHED TO SECURE THE SPECIMEN: IN THE KROH FOREST, PERAK, MALAY STATES.

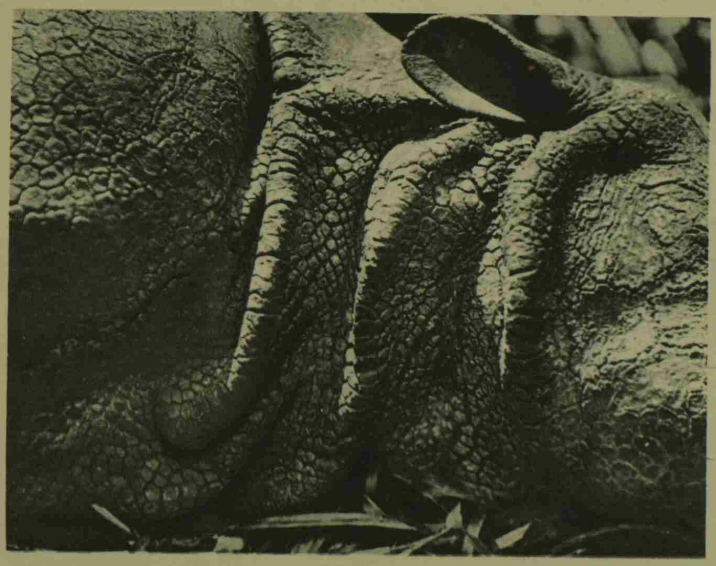
TAKING AIM WITH HIS BLOW-PIPE: ONE OF THE EIGHT SAKAIS—ABORIGINES OF MALAYA—WHO ACCOMPANIED THE PARTY AS GUIDES, AND WERE UNABLE TO LIFT THE HEAVY SKIN OF THE DEAD BEAST.

AT WORK ON THE SKELETON, WHICH WAS PRESERVED AND BROUGHT TO ENGLAND FOR THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM; SINCE THE SPECIES MAY WELL BE EXTINCT BEFORE LONG.

THE GIGANTIC BEAST PHOTOGRAPHED A FEW MINUTES AFTER DEATH: A TROPHY WHICH TO THE SURPRISE OF ALL, WAS FOUND TO BE A FEMALE—IN SPITE OF THE INCIPIENT HORN, A FEATURE BELIEVED PECULIAR TO THE MALE.



PROTECTIVE ARMOUR IN THE SEPTUAGENARIAN FEMALE: A CLOSE-UP OF THE FOLD OVER THE RIGHT FORELEG, SHOWING THE TESSELLATED MARKINGS ON THE SKIN.



SHOWING THE HAIRLESS EAR, AND THE CRACKS IN THE TESSELLATIONS, WHICH ARE EVIDENCE OF EXTREME AGE: A CLOSE-UP PHOTOGRAPH OF THE NECK.

In an article of great interest on the opposite page Mrs. MacNaught, of Taiping, Perak, describes the successful search for a specimen of the Javan rhinoceros (*rhinoceros sondaicus*) in the Malayan jungle, and the reasons which led to the formation of the expedition. Since the beast sought belongs to an exceedingly rare species—one of the rarest animals in the world to-day—it is worth emphasising here, to avoid possibility of misunderstanding, that permission for its shooting was only obtained because this particular rhinoceros was known to be aged and isolated, and inhabiting a region where its race would not in any case be perpetuated. Great interest attaches to the creature's incipient horn, since that feature had not been previously observed in females of the species. The Javan rhinoceros is now only known by a few survivors in Java, Burma, and the Malay Peninsula. The present specimen was shot by Mr. Arthur S. Vernay in January of this year, and, mounted by Messrs. Rowland Ward, was added on October 4 to the exhibition of game animals of the Empire on view in the Whale Room of the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.

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THE HUNT FOR THE ONE-HORNED JAVAN RHINOCEROS:

HOW A MAGNIFICENT SPECIMEN OF ONE OF THE RAREST OF BEASTS WAS SHOT IN THE MALAYAN FORESTS.

By FLORENCE MacNAUGHT.

IT is more than three years since Mr. Theodore Hubback, the Nimrod of Malaya, suggested to his friend and fellow-enthusiast, Mr. Arthur Stannard Vernay, of 51, Berkeley Square, London, and of New York, through whose generosity the wonderful Vernay-Faunthorpe collection of the mammals of Southern Asia has been collected and presented to the Natural History Museum of New York, that he should lead an expedition in search of the one-horned *Rhinoceros sondaicus*, or Javan rhino, one of the rarest animals in existence. A specimen was known to have lived for many years in the district of Teluk Anson, Perak, Federated Malay States, which had been proved by the Game Warden of that State to be aged and solitary, cut off from all contact with its kind through ever-encroaching cultivation, and doomed to die and decay in the depths of the jungle without any hope of ever reproducing its species.

Far better, said the experts on the fauna of the Empire, that this solitary beast should be collected in the interests of science and housed in the British Museum for the edification of future generations. The authorities in Perak were therefore approached in the matter; but wild life in Malaya is decreasing rapidly, because man takes precedence in the animal world, and the Game Department is conserving rigorously the specimens that remain, so that big-game licences are difficult to obtain. It was not until the interest of the British authorities was aroused that the Chief Secretary of the Federated Malay States gave his consent and blessing to the enterprise—a consent which means that a rapidly disappearing animal has been preserved to science.

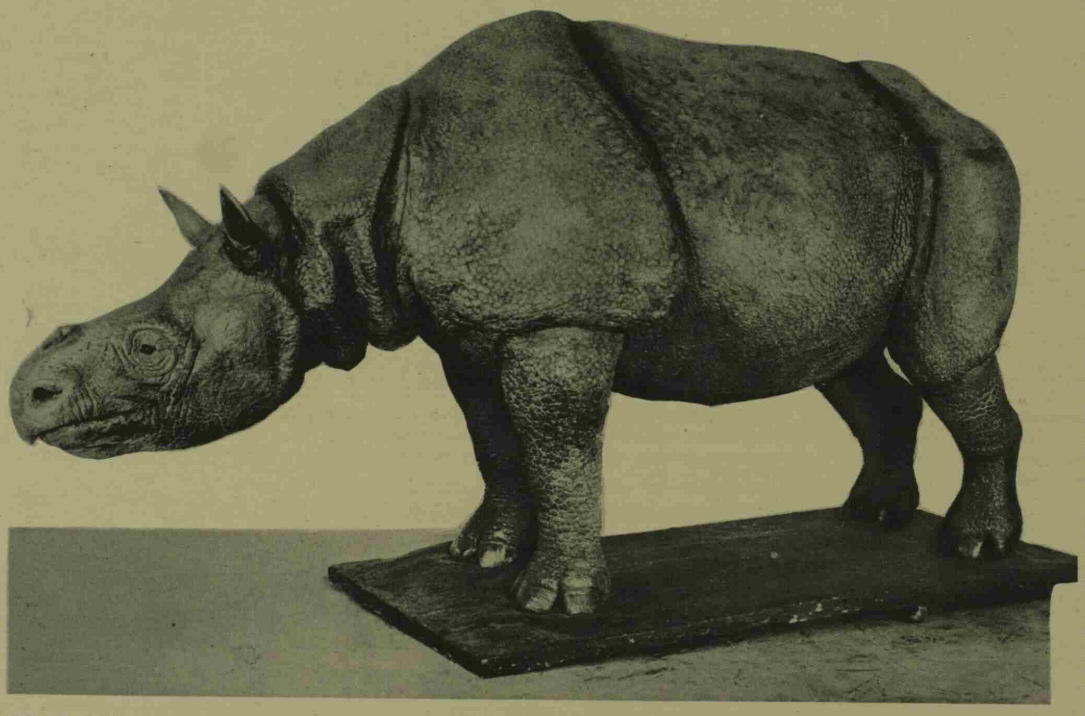
And so the expedition was formed and made possible, owing entirely to the generosity of Mr. Vernay, who not only financed his side of it, consisting of the pursuit of the rhino, but also enabled the British Museum authorities to send out a collector, Captain Beresford Holloway, in search of other mammals — a search, we may add, that has been productive of many interesting specimens, and much knowledge as to the lesser fauna of Malaya.

Mr. W. E. MacNaught, Game Warden of Perak, undertook the organisation in Malaya, and with the help of his staff brought everything to such a pitch of perfection that Mr. Vernay, who left London on Christmas Day, 1931, actually shot the rhinoceros on Jan. 24, 1932, three days after he went into camp—a record for speed and staff work that can seldom have been equalled. The rhinoceros, contrary to all expectations, was an enormous cow, very old, probably a septuagenarian, which would, in the ordinary course of nature, have died within a few years, and have decayed in the jungle unhonoured and unsung; and, although the expedition would naturally have preferred a bull, Mr. Vernay is most satisfied with the truly magnificent specimen he has obtained, and with the knowledge that a cow is quite as interesting, from a scientific point of view, as a bull.

On arriving at the camp at Sungei Samak, it was only thought necessary to establish beyond any doubt the species; and from the tracks and from the report of a ranger of the Game Department who had actually seen the animal, which carried one horn, heretofore considered a male characteristic, it was definitely concluded that it was *Sondaicus* and a bull. By the tracks the animal was obviously of immense size, and undoubtedly solitary, because, although the tracks were very numerous, they were the only rhino tracks seen throughout that particular area. Fresh tracks were found on the morning of Jan. 24, and were immediately followed up. The party left camp at 7 a.m. and marched through thick jungle that was in places exceedingly dense and difficult, progress very often being only possible by creeping along doubled up.

At 10.30 a.m. the rhino was discovered in very dense jungle of thick bush, cane brake, and a tall plant upon which this animal feeds; the distance approximately 8 yards, the beast head on, and the wind fortunately in the right direction. The great form was seen with difficulty, only the head showing amidst the dense, rank vegetation, and the low, broken horn dispelled any doubt as to the sex. So Mr. Vernay aimed, and with a soft-nosed bullet of 480 grains from a ·465 Holland rifle cracked the skull and pierced the brain, a second shot behind the shoulder being taken for safety. The animal travelled from 25 to 40 yards, and then dropped dead, when, to their amazement, they discovered that it was an immense cow, measuring 5 ft. 3 in. at the shoulder and 10 ft. 8 in. over all, and possessing a very fine tessellated skin and other characteristics that make it exceedingly valuable and interesting, both from a sporting and from a scientific point of view.

The complete skeleton has been preserved and sent home to Rowland Ward, as it is of the utmost scientific importance to secure the skeleton, because it is for all time definite evidence of the existence of the creature; and there are now, either in London or New York, complete skins and skeletons of the three species of the rhinoceroses of Asia, all collected by Mr. Vernay. The ribs of the Malayan *Sondaicus* are very large, as indeed are all the bones, and the teeth are worn down almost to the gum, showing the age of the animal, and also proving that she could not have lived much longer in the ordinary course of nature. Very interesting are the tiny teeth between the incisors, which are used to bite off leaves and tender shoots, and which are carefully preserved, as they will be put back with the other teeth into the gums of the mounted animal.*



THE SPECIMEN AS MOUNTED AND PRESENTED TO THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM: THE FEMALE *RHINOCEROS SONDAICUS*; SHOWING THE INCIPIENT HORN PROTRUDING FROM THE SNOUT—A FEATURE NOT PREVIOUSLY OBSERVED IN FEMALES OF THIS SPECIES.

Modelled in the Rowland Ward Studios. (*Copyright.*)

The general idea is to kill the larger species of rhino with a solid bullet, for fear of the soft-nose variety not penetrating the thick hide; but some years ago Colonel Faunthorpe and Mr. Vernay, having studied the matter very carefully, decided on the soft nose from a ·465 rifle, using the 480-grain bullet. It has certainly been effective, because Mr. Vernay has, during his career, killed three big rhinos with four cartridges, using the folds of the neck as the point of aim, thus breaking the vertebræ and causing instant death. This, however, is only possible in grass country, where the *unicornis* is usually found.

The expedition, from start to finish, had fortune with them, the greatest bit of luck being that the wind was right; that is to say, coming from the rhino to the hunters. Had it been the other way, it might have been a nasty and dangerous bit of work, because a rhino charges on scent, no jungle, however thick, hindering his fearsome and deadly rush. There had been a great deal of rain in the locality, and the skinning of the animal had to be undertaken with great care. The expedition numbered amongst its personnel an expert taxidermist, a native of India, lent by the Bombay Natural History Museum, who has been with Mr. Vernay on former expeditions; but all the members of the party took their share in the work, which was most arduous, food and drink being scarce, and the weather distinctly unpleasant. The leeches and ticks were very troublesome, and as there was no time to deal with them, they enjoyed a veritable banquet at the expense of the party.

The Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., is so interested in the parasites from the interior of the beast, and in the ticks and lice that live on the exterior, that Major Rowley (8th Hussars, retired), who was a member of the expedition, was given charge of cases of jars to contain specimens, and was so keen on collecting them that he obtained permission from Captain D. P. White, of the Malayan Veterinary Service, Perak, to go with him to the abattoir where dead buffaloes are dissected, in order to study the subject at first hand. This he did with great success, the Institute of Medical Research, Kuala Lumpur, which very kindly prepared the specimens for export, being greatly interested in them because of the numerous diseases peculiar to the Tropics, the origin of which can be traced to animal sources.

The skin of the rhinoceros was finally prepared for export by the taxidermy department of the Kuala Lumpur Museum, where it aroused great interest from its vast size. It was consigned to Messrs. Rowland Ward, of Piccadilly, where it can no doubt be viewed by those interested, before it reaches its appointed place in the Natural History section of the British Museum, which will not be for about a year, as the mounting of such a large animal is a difficult and slow business. The skin was so heavy that the eight Sakais (the aborigines of Malaya) who accompanied the party as guides could not lift it, much less carry it away through the dense jungle. Mr. Vernay and his followers therefore remained all night in the jungle, guarding the skin and carcase, and working on them by the light of storm-king lanterns until further assistance was obtained in the morning. From this it can be imagined how immense was the rhino, and how noble it will look when set up in the British Museum.

On the subject of the shooting of the *Rhinoceros sondaicus* there has been some criticism from those who do not understand the facts, and who do not realise that this species, which lives almost at sea-level in swampy country, ideal for the cultivation of *padi*, is bound to become extinct as its haunts are cleared for agricultural purposes; whereas the *Rhinoceros sumatrensis*, which is a hill-climber, and prefers an altitude up to 5000 ft., can live and breed quite happily and undisturbed. The latter's great enemy, however, is the Chinese, who esteem all species of rhinoceroses very highly for medicinal purposes. The horn, composed as it is of agglutinated hairs, they convert into a very potent medicine, and the flesh, blood, and portions of the entrails are also much prized, so that rhinoceros-poaching has, in the past, been very common, and still goes on in spite of the Game Laws. For this species also, ultimate, if slow, extinction must be expected, and in time this extraordinary animal will be as unbelievable as the pterodactyl or brontosaurus, except for the concrete fact of the existence of specimens preserved in museums.

Mr. Vernay has created a world record by having shot all three species of rhinoceros: namely, the *R. unicornis*, or Indian rhino, the great one-horned beast characterised by its thickened skin that has the appearance of rivetted armour-plating; the *R. sumatrensis*, bearing two horns, and being the smallest living species; and now this magnificent specimen from Malaya, the *R. sondaicus*. To complete his unique collection in New York, Mr. Vernay requires a *Rhinoceros sondaicus* and a group of Schombergk deer, and is prepared to form and to finance expeditions in search of them, the former probably in Java, and the latter in Siam; and in those who know his immense energy and single-mindedness of purpose, there is little doubt that he will achieve his ambition.

* Since this was written, the specimen has been set up in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.