

most obedient Servant,  
GUNGA.

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A FEW DAYS' SPORT IN THE RAJMAHAL HILLS, OR MY  
FIRST INTERVIEW WITH A RHINOCEROS.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE BENGAL SPORTING MAGAZINE.

MY DEAR S,—Should there be a spare place in the July drag,  
kindly book me for it; but if you are able to meet with a more interest-  
ing passenger, pray pick him up, and secure me a berth in the next  
coach; but pray be careful not to place me alongside of a disagreeable  
sort of a chap, neither alongside of an old woman.

As I cannot tell if you be already aware of it, let me now  
inform you, that for a long time past I had been extremely anxious to  
fall in with rhinoceros, and as an opportunity offered itself during my  
progress to the upper provinces, I need not acquaint you, how eagerly

I seized it, and the particulars of the excursion, I trust, may prove of sufficient interest for the pages of Maga.

On the 9th of March, I left my boat, and proceeded towards the Oodooah Nullah to join a party of gentlemen there assembled, and prepared to destroy every living creature that might come in their way. As I see no utility in giving the names at full length, (particularly as some of them are thundering long ones,) I will briefly state, that there were two Bs, two Ls, two Rs, and your humble servant, the only W, making our number, in all, seven.

The morning of the 10th saw us in the field with a line of seventeen elephants, and each howdah stocked with a pretty decent supply of guns, from a one pounder downwards, which made mine appear like dwarfs,—they being only, (and I have never used a larger calibre,) twenty-ones to the pound; but yet they had done their work in right good style. Just I say that it was decided, that the first rhinoceros we fell in with, was to be shot bang in the eye?—the result, however, proved how difficult that task is.

From what I had always been given to understand, I looked upon this brute in the light of a perfect devil. I was told that he made desperate charges; that he stuck that ugly horn of his into the elephant; that he knocked him clean over; and that if he got hold of you, you were made into jelly in a brace of shakes. These were not, you will admit, the most agreeable thoughts to get into a howdah with, but as it was 'six' to 'one,' against my being the victim of course I could not object to take my chance but alas! how idle all these fears! We were conducted to some very light tree jungle,—in fact, I may say saplings, to take a peep into the habitations of these 'uncouth, and 'ungainly' animals; to our annoyance we found them from home, most probably, they were taking their morning walk, or what we would call a 'constitutional,' and it was, therefore, necessary to examine their 'promenades:' we did so, and soon came upon a female with her young; we saw them certainly, but that was all; they fled before us like deer, and I observed took particular good care to keep, what a sailor would call their 'after part' before during their flight, from which I infer, the sagacious animal had discovered our object to touch her up about the 'eye-lids.' Not wishing, therefore, to disappoint us altogether, she kept one eye in our direction, and that her 'bull's eye,' which, I regret to say, none of us could put a ball into,—in fact, no one made the attempt. The mother with her young, ran soon out of sight,—never to be seen again. After this untoward event those fine creatures the spotted deer, of which there is a very fair sprinkling in this neighbourhood, became objects of the chase, and a sad slaughter was made among them, I regret to say.

I must confess that I did not admire this work of destruction, and I am sure to be excused for calling it 'unsportsman-like.' Let me ask you what fair chance has a deer, when half a dozen men, each with two or five double barrels, are blating away at him in every direction? 'Putting' a poor beast after this fashion, is, in my opinion, tantamount to 'poaching.'

I fear I shall incur the wrath of many for making this assertion; nevertheless, I will maintain, that it would be much more 'sportsman-like' and much more 'satisfactory,' when the howdahs exceeded the number, for parties of two each to detach themselves in different directions, by which means, the deer would have a fair chance, that is, it would not be exposed to such a 'murderous' fire. Of course, I am alluding to men who have some pretensions to shooting, but those who set up a number of guns *dokkoo-ko-waste* and make only a parade of going out, to them I say, go in any manner, or in what numbers you please, very little mischief is to be anticipated from you. I observe above that I have made use of the word 'satisfactory:' I suppose I must explain myself; let me, therefore, ask of the sportsman, or the man who prides himself in his shot, if he does not feel satisfied with himself, when he has knocked over the object he has fixed on? I will answer for myself, that I invariably do. Now, how can he possibly claim the shot, though he were ever so certain, when an indiscriminate fire is kept up from six or seven howdahs? For my part, I declare that I would rather fire one shot well-aimed, than fire ten in a medley. This brings to mind a circumstance which once occurred to me, and it will not be out of place by mentioning it here, as disputes of a similar nature are likely to occur, when sportsmen are keen, and when they are out shooting together in numbers.

Some twelve or thirteen years ago, my friend Wroughton and Lt. Duffin, (now, poor fellow, dead and gone,) decided on going out for a few days to Uchpoutra, about ten miles from the station of Goruckpore,—a spot, at that time, famous for tigers. I have known ten killed there a few mornings. My companions were provided with howdahs, but I had another was there to be had all over the station. Rather than not go out, I made a six dozen beer chest, answer the purpose. It had certainly a ludicrous appearance, particularly to see guns occupying the floor of barrels. In this I trusted myself, and took the field as comfortable as the man in the very best of howdahs. The 2d day we were out, and while beating along the edge of a small nullah, a large male tiger was put up, who instantly received W's shot in the fleshy part of his thigh; the consequence was, a beautiful charge, and a splendid kill near the nullah. This proved too much for the elephants my com-

panions were on, and away they went to the right about, and fled, while poor I was left alone in the beer chest to bear the brunt of the charge. Well, as luck would have it, I knocked the tiger over stone dead, when he was within a dozen yards of my elephant's trunk. You will readily give me credit for feeling rather elated at my success; but imagine my surprise, nay, my mortification, when I heard D. claim the shot! He certainly fired as his elephant was going round on his heels; but how he could assert under such circumstances that he had killed the tiger, I was much at a loss to guess. I maintained, of course, the shot to be mine, and as the joke of having killed a tiger from a beer chest was worthy of a fight, I was resolved on not yielding the point. D. appeared equally determined; the consequence was, that we were ready to tear one another into pieces, and but for W. who always has his wits about him, I know not how the matter would have ended. He requested that both D. and myself, would give him a ball belonging to the gun we had fired with. I confess I was at first puzzled to discover his motives, but when the *chumar* made his appearance, the question was solved: the operation of dissection soon commenced, and a minute search was made in the skull of the beast, and at last the ball with which he had been killed, was found in the very back of the brain; this was brought into the tent, the medicine chest opened, a pair of scales taken out, and the balls weighed, when, reader believe me, I beheld, with no small degree of delight, the proof too positive in my favor to be any longer disputed; and I dare say D. most heartily cursed W. for his ingenuity, which threw him clean out of the scales. My friend Wroughton, who, I am happy to say, is still alive, and kicking, and who, I may here add, is a beautiful shot, will, no doubt, remember this circumstance too well. In resuming my former subject, it strikes me that I may be questioned, 'why did you join such a party?' Know then, reader, my object was for once in my life to see a Rhinoceros in his wild state, and see what sport he afforded. If I had not availed myself of this opportunity, I might have waited, as I had already done, many a long year. I hesitate not, therefore, to say, that had the party been four times six, I should have still joined them; the object has now been accomplished, and I have merely to add, 'catch me out Rhinoceros shooting again: I would as soon go out after 'butterflies.' I judge from the specimen I had in these five days, when those we fell in with, (save one exception, on whom we accidentally stumbled,) told us in very plain language, 'catch me who can.'

On the second day we fell in with another Rhinoceros, who did us the trick, and was out of our sight in an instant: we searched every corner for him, but all to no purpose. The poor Deer came in for it again this morning,—seventeen of them being on the 'guddies' before breakfast.

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The third day blank; that is, fell in with no Rhinoceros; Deer, of course.  
 The fourth day we proceeded in another direction in the hope of falling in with Tigers, and after going over a large tract of country, besides getting well grilled in the Sun, we returned home with a 'bag full of emptiness.'

The fifth and last day after Rhinoceros again. A fellow certainly went in for it this morning; he must have been napping without a doubt, in which he got smartly peppered; but notwithstanding he managed to walk away for the time being, though he dropped after having travelled one or four coss,—another of the pleasures of this sport: you discharge all your artillery into the beast, he walks away with the cargo of lead, then a day or two after you hear of his being dead some eight or nine miles distant. This is not at all to my mind; I have, therefore, done with it.

I have been repeatedly told, that a single shot in the eye will bring down one of these ugly brutes: I can now say to my informant get him within your reach first, then shoot him in the eye, though I will add, this is by far easier said, than done; I judge, of course, from what came under my personal observation.

To compare this sport to Tiger shooting, in my view of the case, is a perfect farce. Give me one good 'fighting Tiger,' and all the Rhinoceros you can promise me will not tempt me. With the former, you have sport, excitement, and a variety of other feelings I cannot now take the trouble to describe; with the other, you have disgust and disappointment in every sense of the word; wishing you, therefore, my dear friend, that glorious sport I have had among the feline race, and to which I now fear I must say 'good bye' for some time,

I remain, Yours very sincerely,  
 ROYAL TIGER.

On the River, ah that abominable River, 10th April, 1836.

RECOLLECTIONS OF TIGER SHOOTING.

No. 1.

I have seen tigers take to the water, but I should think they do not willingly encounter that element. In the south of India...

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