

\* *The Mammalia of India*—(continued from page 107).

We dropped Mr. Blanford at the tail of the Elephant; after whom in his arrangement come the *Equidae*. Now the Indian *Equidae* have been lately discussed in these pages by our lamented member, Mr. Steel, who knew much more about them than either our author or his reviewer. It is only necessary to remark in this place that Mr. Blanford's printers have caused him to represent *Equus caballus* with four toes! (*vide* pno 468, engraving), which liberality is balanced by allowing only one to the tapir! It is only fair to say that in very few instances has the correction of his proofs been so ludicrously overlooked. He puts all the Asiatic wild asses into one species, *Equus hemionus*, and passes on to the *Rhinoceroses*, of which he allows us three. The chief is *R. unicornis*, which, Mr. Blanford says, "was common in the Panjab as far west as Peshawar in the time of the Emperor Baber." This story is everlastingly turning up: sometimes in very curious forms. It is not long since the President of our chum Society was reported as having informed it that the Emperor Baber "killed Hippopotamuses in Bannu," and really the one story is not much more unlikely than the other. The author of the Book of Job expressly mentions Behemoth as indifferent to the floods of Jordan, and, if we are to open our mouths for this sort of scientific diet, a Hippopotamus† might nearly as well have got from the Jordan to the Kuram as a Rhinoceros to Peshawar.

The whole evidence in both cases is contained in the following extract from the Memoirs of His late Majesty the Emperor Zahir-ud-din Muhammad (commonly called Babar Khán, very much as our first Richard was called Cœur de Lion; and upon as good cause). The Emperor (to be) was in possession of Kabul and raiding in Afghanistan; and wishing to extend that operation to Hindustan, *i.e.*, across the Indus, he sent an officer to examine the banks of the river; and says he:—

"I myself set off for Sawate, which they likewise call Karak-Karreb, to hunt the Rhinoceros. We started many Rhinoceroses,

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† The Hippopotamus existed in India in the Pleistocene period.

but, as the country bounded in brushwood, we could not get at them. A she-Rhinoceros that had whelps came out and fled along the plain; many arrows were shot at her, but, as the wooded ground was near at hand, she gained cover. We set fire to the brushwood, but the Rhinoceros was not to be found. We got sight of another, that, having been scorched in the fire, was lamed, and unable to run. We killed it, and every one cut off a bit of it as a trophy of the chase."

This extract is from Leyden and Erskine's Translation of the Emperor's Turki Memoirs, and has been verified by the kindness of Miss Hughes of the Royal Asiatic Society.

It is worth examining as a piece of thoroughly bad evidence. In the first place the whole phrase, especially the word "whelps," shows that the passage is not from the hand of either Leyden or Erskine, but from that of one of their Munshis.

Further, the Emperor, the most vivacious memoir writer of his day, and perhaps the very best of any who ever wrote in any Asiatic language, dismisses the whole affair in the few words quoted. Had he really been relating his first encounter with a giant pachyderm, is it to be supposed that he would have dismissed it without any notice of its monstrous size, tough armour, and single horn of magic virtue? Until a Turki manuscript of the memoirs is examined by a competent scholar, with his eyes open and his mouth shut, we cannot tell what the Emperor really did write. Steps are being taken in that direction, and it is hoped that some reader of this notice (particularly any one at the British Museum, who could get it done in a fortnight) may take them on his own account.

Meanwhile, the most probable conjecture is that the game were "Gonde" or swamp deer (*Cervus duvauceli*) existing in the marshy jungles of the Indus within the present writer's time, under that name. The error of a Scribe (even of Erskine's Munshi) would easily turn "Gonda" into "Genda" (= a Rhinoceros), and that would (if the Turki word is really at all like either) explain the whole yarn. Baber evidently looked upon the whole affair as an almost blank day; and the present writer has seen a division of an insufficient spoil, such as he describes, carried out as a *joke* in the same region. The scene was apparently in the jungles near the

river, and there is not a scintilla of evidence to bring it near either Peshawar or Bannu. Up to the present, at any rate, all that is before us about the Trans-Indus Rhinoceros is a lot of careless quotations, probably at second hand, from an obviously bad translation of a probably corrupt manuscript.

After the Rhinoceroses, in Mr. Blanford's classification, come the Tapirs, which are not in our province. Only this writer would like to know where and when a Tapir was called a "Danta"? There is some reason for thinking it an American word, but it occurs in the Commentaries (so called) of the great Alfonso D'Albuquerque, as the name of some Malayan animal apparently resembling a Tapir, and any light on the subject would be welcome.

After the Tapirs, our author puts the genus *Bos*. We have only one species wild—the bison, lately and sufficiently discussed in these pages by Mr. Inverarity.

The Sheep and Goats come next in order, and we have only one of each, both confined to the Sind hills. Our goat or Ibex, *Capra aegagrus*, is interesting as the widest ranger of all wild goats, found from Crete to Sind, and probably the ancestor of most tame goats. The "Field" newspaper has lately published a perfect little monograph on the wild goats of the world, which has probably come within ken of most of our readers.

Our sheep, the "Gad" of the Sindis, was until now *Ovis cycloceros*, but Mr. Blanford identifies it with *Ovis vignei* of more northern lands.

On the whole, it too has very good claims to the honour of having begotten at least part of the tame sheep of the world. Otherwise it is not a "first sort buckrie," except in the item of mutton.

After all, a sheep which produces good mutton justifies its existence.

We regret to say that at this point Mr. Blanford's second volume begins to fall off. The next two names are "*Cemas goral*" and "*Boselaphus tragocamelus*," of which the first is a misspelling, and the second a mere barbarism. The man who rejected "*tibetanus*" and "*philippensis*" because they were not true, might fairly have been expected to reject such outrages on philology, as neither Greek nor Latin.

*Boselaphus tragocamelus*—save the mark, is nothing but our old friend *Portax pictus*: the Nilgai. The Maratha name "Rūhi" or "Rohi" is wrongly given as "Rū-i," and a name given as that used by the Gonds, "Guraya," cannot be universal, as Forsyth, an excellent authority, gives "Rohi" as the Gond name in the "Song of Lingo." The description is good, except that the animal is described as "rarely met with in thick forest." It was very common in the heaviest Khandesh forests twenty years ago, but does not inhabit actual thickets. Forsyth justly notices it as the biggest brute in Central India, except the bison. A very small (but mature and *blue*) bull, weighed piecemeal by the present writer, came to three hundredweight. His live-weight was probably little under four.

The sanctity attributed to this animal by the Hindus enables it to survive the other wild ruminants in some districts. The writer can remember its being held "not shikar" in Khandesh, and once actually stoned a herd out of his way there, so careless were they of the presence of man.

The practice of making enamelled shields of the neck skin, and the general decay of piety, have made the Nilgaies a trifle shyer since those days, when Lord Mayo was Viceroy.

Mr. Blanford calls his next beast "*Tetracerus quadricornis*—the four-horned antelope," which is a foul barbarism, unless indeed we are to write Rhinocerus, or to give up even the Latin grammar bodily. The rest of the article upon this creature that never did him any harm, is equally inaccurate. It begins with "Fur thin, harsh, and short." Now, although this description does apply to some skins, especially if compared with those of fine deer, the fur in Bombay specimens is often thicker and longer than that of any other Peninsular antelope, and scarcely more harsh than that of any but the gazelle.

In a chance specimen, brought to the writer a fortnight ago, the hair on the sides and back was nearly an inch long. In another, now picketed by the tent, it exceeds an inch. The little beast is almost shaggy, and this is its character amongst the strictly Indian antelopes of the Peninsula. The writer has shot many; and kept many alive; and the specimen now referred to will probably live to

contradict our author in the "Zoo." It haunts, says Mr. Blanford, "thin forest and bush and keeps chiefly to undulating and hilly ground," and elsewhere he speaks of it as found "throughout the Bombay Presidency."

As a matter of fact it is unknown in the plain regions forming the most part of this Presidency, but is pretty common in the forests of the Konkan and Khandesh, most of all in the heavy forests of Western Khandesh, where the writer has seen many in a morning's walk. In that region, too, it strays far from water (which Mr. Blanford thinks it never does).

On one occasion the water-bearers of a Bombay forest party, in the "Dry Junglo" of Khandesh, missed their way; and left the European leader, and a Bhil gun-bearer, to a very fair chance of death or lunacy—or both. The creepers and "bel" fruit failed to allay their burning thirst, and things looked very ugly indeed, when a four-horned antelope came before the rifle. The Bhil rushed in and sucked the blood as it spouted from the shot-hole. The white man lit a fire, grilled and sucked the fresh meat. But both of them were of the mind that the "bekri" was the saving of their lives, as they did not feel strong enough to struggle to the well some six miles away. For the "bekri" the nearest water was 9 miles distant.

Mr. Blanford, however, is doubtless right in allowing only one species of *Tetraceros* to India, and in utterly rejecting the name "Chinkara" as applied to it, stolen from the gazelle. Also in speaking a good word for its venison.

A large female of *Tetraceros quadricornis* merely "gralloched," that is with only the viscera removed, weighed exactly two stone. The live-weight of a full-grown buck would probably not exceed half a hundredweight.

It is commonly confounded with the barking deer (*Cervulus muntjac*) under the name of "bekri" or "bekad." But in Khandesh, at the period referred to, many native shikaris distinguished it as "ran mendi" (wild sheep). Mr. Blanford thinks that it has been sometimes mistaken for the hog-deer. But in the Bombay Presidency all errors to this effect have been due to confusion between the latter (*Cervus porcinus*) and the barking deer, or

more often, the t. *use* deer (*Tragulus memimna*). In several cases the present writer was able to ascertain this by actual conversation with the reporters of "hog deer" where no hog deer was—cross-examination of the witnesses; in fact, the error was not of observation but of nomenclature.

#### LIST OF BIRDS' EGGS OF NORTH CACHAR.

Presented to the Society by MR. E. C. S. BAKER, of  
NORTH CACHAR, April, 1892.

Hume's Nos.	Scientific Name.	Popular Name.	No. of Eggs.
41	<i>Poliomeletus ichthyaetus</i> .....	White-tailed Sea Eagle .....	3
70	<i>Bubo coromandus</i> .....	Dusky Horned Owl .....	1
102	<i>Cypselurus batasiensis</i> .....	Palm Swift .....	2
148	<i>Palaeornis torquatus</i> .....	Rose-ringed Parrakeet .....	2
195	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i> .....	Blue-throated Barbet .....	3
215	<i>Rhabdodryas tristis</i> .....	Largo Green-billed Malkoha ..	2
217	<i>Centrococcyx rufipennis</i> .....	Common Coucal .....	1
218	" <i>bengalensis</i> .....	Lesser Indian Coucal .....	2
259	<i>Lanius nigriceps</i> .....	Black-headed Shrike .....	4
265	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i> ..	Common Wood Shrike .....	6
278	<i>Dicrurus ater</i> .....	The Black Drongo .....	2
280	" <i>longicaudata</i> .....	Indian Ashy Drongo .....	1
282	<i>Chaptria aenca</i> .....	Bronzed Drongo .....	1
283	<i>Bhringa remifer</i> .....	Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo ..	5
291	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i> .....	White-throated Fantail Fly- Catcher .....	1
344	<i>Pitta nepalensis</i> .....	Blue-naped Pitta .....	3
385	<i>Pyctornis sinensis</i> .....	Yellow-eyed Babbler .....	5
388	<i>Alcippe nepalensis</i> .....	Nepal Babbler .....	14
393	<i>Stachyryhynchus ruficeps</i> .....	Red-headed Babbler .....	1
412	<i>Garrulax pectoralis</i> .....	Black-gorgetted Laughing Thrush .....	3
413	" <i>moniliger</i> .....	Neck-laced Laughing Thrush ..	8
421	<i>Ianthocincla rufigularis</i> .....	Rufous-chinned Laughing Thrush .....	1
428	<i>Argya caudata</i> .....	Thrush .....	5
461	<i>Molpastes burmanicus</i> .....	Burmese Red-vented Bulbul ..	3
536	<i>Franklinia gracilis</i> .....	Franklin's Wren-Warbler ..	14
551	" <i>buchanani</i> .....	Rufous-fronted Wren-Warbler ..	1
615	<i>Mesia argentauris</i> .....	Silvov-eared Mesia .....	5
674	<i>Dendrocitta rufa</i> .....	Indian Treo-pie .....	5
676	" <i>himalayensis</i> .....	Himalayan Treo-pie .....	13
686	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i> .....	Southern Dusky Myna .....	4
694	<i>Ploceus baya</i> .....	The Baya .....	1
695	" <i>manyar</i> .....	Striated Weaver-bird .....	4
696	" <i>bengalensis</i> .....	Black-throated Weaver-bird ..	2
699	<i>Uroloncha punctulata</i> .....	Spotted Munia .....	4
702	" <i>acuticauda</i> .....	The Himalayan Munia .....	1
703	" <i>malabarica</i> .....	White-throated Munia .....	4
825 quat	<i>Bambusicola fitchii</i> .....	Western Bamboo Partridge ..	4
913	<i>Hypotaenidia striata</i> .....	White-breasted Water Hen ..	7
926	<i>Herodias intermedia</i> .....	Smaller Egret .....	1
1004	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i> .....	Grey Pelican .....	1
937	<i>Nycticorax griseus</i> .....	Night Heron .....	3
76	<i>Carine brama</i> .....	The Spotted Owlet .....	2
Total number of Eggs .....			155