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A BIG GAME ANTHOLOGY

SELECTED BY

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"Yet if once we efface the joys of the chase
From the land, and outroot the Stud,
GOOD-BYE TO THE ANGLO-SAXON RACE!
FAREWELL TO THE NORMAN BLOOD!"

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.



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to water. The herd showed itself to be about fifty strong, and was accompanied by several large bulls. Selecting two of the largest of these we fired almost together, and both animals dropped. The herd then dashed away, and we walked forward to examine our 'bag'."

"Suddenly the bull I had shot jumped to his feet and headed back into the bush from which they, and we, had come, entering it about fifty yards away from us. We decided to first examine and give instructions for skinning the one lying in the open, and then to follow up the wounded one. But we had barely walked ten yards into the open when the apparently dead animal jumped up and charged us determinedly.

"He had lain about forty yards from us, and when he had decreased the distance to twenty paces my friend said, 'Now!' and we both fired together. The bull pitched forward on his head, but was up again almost instantly, and coming for us as fast as a broken shoulder would allow. Again we fired together, and both bullets entered the brain, bringing him down with a crash only about ten paces from our feet.

"We found the first shot had cut through liver and stomach and had smashed two ribs in its exit. Of the two shots we fired as he charged, one had perforated the lung and the other had driven clean through the shoulder from the front, and had broken it; so that he had continued his charge virtually on three legs. Looking at the now quiet bulk my friend said, 'I raise my hat to a brave beast. It takes more than a wound or two to beat pluck like that. We can thank our stars he didn't reach us alive!' A dictum with which I fully concurred.

"We then proceeded after the wounded animal, my friend arranging that I should follow the actual blood spoor and act as a sort of 'centre guide', while a native took a parallel course through the bush about ten yards to my right, and he himself travelled on a similar line the same distance to my left. He hoped by this precaution to take the bull in flank as he lay in ambush, or, at least, to locate him before he had time to charge.

"We had gone perhaps two miles in this formation when the native on my right yelled, 'Look out, master! He's coming!'

"Out of the tail of my eye I saw his black figure race rear-

wards, and, at the same instant, a shaggy presentment of fury hurtled through the bush towards me from a clump of ever-green trees twenty yards to the right of the path. My friend yelled, 'Run to your left and leave him to me! I have him covered!'

"The advice seemed good to me, and as I started to act on it I heard his rifle speak. Running for all I was worth across my friend's line of march, and stimulated to greater exertion by pounding hoofs and sobbing grunts behind me, I heard his rifle crack again. There was then a stumble, and a deep, gurgling breath behind me, but still the hoof-beats followed, albeit more slowly and uncertainly.

"Passing under the limb of a tree about eight feet from the ground, I discarded my rifle and sprang upwards, seized it, and drew myself up just as a black form rushed staggeringly beneath me, to pitch headlong a few yards beyond. Another shot made his end certain, but I am assured that at the distance from which he broke cover I could never have stopped him by shooting in time to prevent him doing me mortal injury. Neither could I have distanced him by running but for the effects of my friend's two shots as I ran. It was a very near thing, and I have not been at all keen, since then, on following wounded buffalo into long grass or timber, unless I have dogs, or plenty of natives, to give warning, or distract his attention."

From Man-Killers and Marauders, by W. S. CHADWICK

RHINOCEROS

RHINO SHOOTING AT NIGHT

"It is one of the most strangely exciting positions that a sportsman can find himself in, to lie behind one of these screens or holes by the side of a path leading to a watering-place so thronged with game as Tounobis. Herds of gnus glide along the neighbouring paths in almost endless files: here standing out in bold relief against the sky, there a

moving line just visible in the deep shades; and all as noiseless as a dream. Now and then a slight pattering over the stones makes you start; it jars painfully on the strained ear, and a troop of zebras pass frolicking by. All at once you observe twenty or thirty yards off two huge ears pricked up high above the brushwood; another few seconds, and a sharp solid horn indicates the cautious and noiseless approach of the great rhinoceros. Then the rifle or gun is poked slowly over the wall, which has before been covered with a plaid, or something soft, to muffle all grating sounds; and you keep a sharp and anxious look-out through some cranny in your screen. The beast moves nearer and nearer; you crouch close up under the wall, lest he should see over it and perceive you. Nearer, nearer still; yet somehow his shape is indistinct, and perhaps his position unfavourable to warrant a shot. Another moment, and he is within ten yards, and walking steadily on. There lies a stone, on which you had laid your caross and other things, when making ready to enter your shooting-screen; the beast has come to it, he sniffs the taint of them, tosses his head up wind, and turns his huge bulk full broadside on to you. Not a second is to be lost. Bang! and the bullet lies well home under his shoulder. Then follows a plunge and a rush, and the animal charges madly about, making wide sweeps to the right and left with his huge horn, as you crouch down still and almost breathless, and with every nerve on the stretch.

"He is off; you hear his deep blowing in the calm night; now his gallop ceases. The occasional rattling of a stone alone indicates that he is yet a-foot; for a moment all is still, and then a scarcely audible 'sough' informs you that the great beast has sunk to the ground, and that his pains of death are over."

From Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa,
by FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.

"WE ARE THE GAME"

"We arrive very near our goal without having been charged, in spite of the almost continual shifting of the wind; but it does not follow that we shall finish our day thus, for, in the

very middle of a dense thicket, we hear, a few yards off, a snorting and then a sniffing which we know well. In the midst of broken branches, overturned shrubs, and trampled grass, appears a huge mass which charges in our direction with the speed of a locomotive. We have only time to jump on one side. The animal passes, but so quickly that I cannot take aim, being hindered from doing so by a tree. It disappears in the grass. But in a few seconds we hear it returning on its steps, again seeking for that vitiated air, that smell of the enemy which has provoked its anger. It snorts and searches, turns and turns again like a gigantic pointer, with this difference that the rôles are reversed—we are the game which it is looking for. . . . This cursed vegetation is so thick that there is nothing to do but to wait; it is impossible to fire. I see the top of the grass wave and the shrubs lean over; I can guess, therefore, the position of the animal, but it remains invisible. However, its anger increases, and it continues to snort, making a noise somewhat similar to the grunting of a pig, only louder and deeper. It draws near. . . . From which way is the wind blowing? It is impossible to say, for the earth is wet and there is no dust.¹ . . . Time is pressing. . . . Ah! it charges us a second time! . . . This time I see my animal a moment before it is upon us; although going at a gallop, it is not travelling over the ground so quickly as it was. We have jumped aside and everyone is hidden. . . . Stationed behind a tree I see it advance splendidly, and I decide to stop its passage. Doubtless smelling our fresh tracks, it slackens its pace when in front of us, and I take advantage of this to fire two shots, which make it swing round in a direction opposite to ours: Before disappearing through the smoke it receives still another express bullet in its cruppers.

"But the battle is not over. At the same moment warning of another charge is given quite near to us; it is rhinoceros No. 2, which we have forgotten. Doubtless this is the female. He or she passes at a gallop five or six yards away, but not in our direction, blowing furiously. Look out for a fresh attack! It

¹ When there is dust, a handful is taken up and thrown in the air; by which means one can tell the direction in which the wind is blowing.

is terrible to be in the midst of vegetation so thick that it prevents you being warned of danger except through hearing. I send Rodzani up a tree to inspect the surroundings. He sees the last-named rhinoceros already at a great distance, and states that it is the male which is making off, and that it must be the female we have shot. But we are not long in finding he is wrong, because blood—that precious indication for the hunter—makes the pursuit of the first rhinoceros, which I believe I have wounded seriously, easy for us. After going one hundred yards he must have lain down, but got on his feet again after a final effort, to fall once more a little farther away. He has fallen on his stomach, his four legs giving way under him. Rhinoceros often fall in this way, probably because they do not die on the spot, but continue to walk until their legs refuse to carry them.

"It is really the male which we have killed. Here are his measurements: withers, 5 feet 2 inches; length from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail, 11 feet 1 inch; diameter of the forefoot, 8 inches; horns: front, 2 feet 3 inches; back, 1 foot 5½ inches. The measurements of the female, which was not long in dying, are as follows: withers, 5 feet 4 inches; total length, 11 feet 2 inches; diameter of foot, 8½ inches; horns: front, 1 foot 8½ inches; back, 1 foot 3 inches. It will be noticed that the female is larger than the male, a peculiarity which often happens.

"Let us return to the male rhinoceros. After measuring and photographing the body I leave two men with it, and make ready to return to camp so as to send others. As I am going that way I cross the plain on to which the female rhinoceros charged after the firing of my two first shots. Fresh marks on the ground show us that it is the female which passed that way, and suddenly a snorting tells us that she has been waiting for an hour for the return of her companion. As at one side of us there is an open space seven or eight yards in extent, where the rocky ground has not allowed grass to grow, I run to take up a position there, so as to have, if possible, more room in front of me than during the preceding encounter. I take my 8-bore to please my men, who have just

been reproaching me for not having used it, and place myself in the midst of the grass, motionless, on the side opposite to that on which I have heard the characteristic snorting of the unfortunate female. Here there are no trees in which one can shelter.

"The animal is disquieted, but she has not smelt us. I hear her walking, and then, immediately afterwards, I see her coming towards us, but like an animal which goes about its own business. She is coming out to the right, will cross the open space, and in all probability will enter the grass again on our left. On she comes at a walk, and, when seven or eight yards in front of me I fire. My men were persuaded that she would fall down dead on the spot. Msiambiri had even bet Rodzani a pot of moa (the beer of the country) that with the big rifle the rhinoceros would so fall. He loses, for upon receiving my bullet the animal throws herself upon us at full speed, making us scatter at once in the grass; but she quickly falls down and dies almost at our feet."

From *After Big Game in Central Africa*,
by EDOUARD FOA, F.R.G.S.

A GAY NIGHT

"This camp has proved a gay one! Before it was dark last night a rhino came to the water-hole about 100 yards away, and within two hours there were eleven of the devils at the water. Twice the camp was turned out, as they tried the road on which we were camped (an extremely foolish thing to do anywhere in rhino country). At one time two appeared to go mad and marched up and down as if they were holding the river against all comers; they made a great noise, so much so that at last I got sick of it, and fired a shot to shut them up. I had a grand view of them, as it was bright moonlight and, the camp being in a high bank of the river, it was even better than one would expect, as the sand is of the whitest and the animals showed up well. After I fired things were quiet for a bit, till an old cow and a calf passed the camp within 10 yards and caused a stampede. One half of

the camp went up thorn trees, while the other half went into the blue. Called by the guard, I dashed out and turned the wrong way—perhaps as well, for I should most likely have shot her. As it was, she was just off when I saw her. This little trot gave me something to think about, as my bare feet collected several thorns. After this the porters gave up all ideas of sleep—they had a few thorns to pick out as well.

“At daylight there were still two rhino at the water.”

From A Game Ranger's Note Book, by A. BLAYNEY PERCIVAL

THE “ANT-HILL” CHARGES

“As we came out of a patch of bush into an open glade some birds flew off an ant-hill in front. I was not taking any particular notice and did not observe the species. Next moment the ‘ant-hill’ was on its feet, charging straight for us. I shouted to the boy behind to run for a tree, and crammed in the spurs, seeking to reach the open before the rhino got home, and there was precious little room for the manoeuvre. Fortunately, I was able to cut across his bows. Then, seeing that he was intent on the boy, I put a revolver bullet into his ribs and won his attentions for myself. He came for me promptly, and I sat down to ride, reflecting that if the glade did not extend far or if the ground in front was bad there was trouble in store. There was nothing for it but to go, and the horse evidently thought so, too, for he showed a clean pair of heels, and, as good luck had it, the glade led us out upon a grassy flat. Arriving on the open ground I turned off sharp and the rhino went past, disturbing the caravan, though he did not go near it. He had been wallowing in red mud, and, as he lay on his side, had all the appearance of an ant-hill.”

From A Game Ranger's Note Book, by A. BLAYNEY PERCIVAL

“SOMETHING SENSATIONAL”

“There was the rhino standing at gaze about 200 yards away; we were down-wind of him, so there was little risk of a charge, but while considering the intentions of the beast

who was now trotting forward to get a better look at us, I saw just beyond him something much more interesting; to wit, five buffalo bulls under a tree; four lying down, the fifth standing on guard (buffalo always post a sentry thus when resting). I rode to within one hundred yards of them, but could approach no nearer, that wretched rhino being half-way between them and myself, so rode back to convoy the safari past. Then things began to grow exciting; the buffalo, roused either by the movement of the rhino who continued to advance, or by the sight of the safari, rose to their feet and came on, just as if they were backing up the rhino. Through the flying clouds of dust I could only catch glimpses of them now and again, but it was evident that we were in for something sensational, not to put it too strongly; to be charged by a rhino is commonplace; to be charged by a rhino and five buffalo at once would be something new, and it was impossible to gauge results. The dust clouds flew more thickly and hid the enemy from sight, but from time to time through the fog I saw the whole six; still coming on. The men saw them too; loads were down and all were ready for flight—small blame to them. Once more the dust hid the foe. I waited; then again the air cleared a little, and—behold! the buffalo were far away in full retreat, the rhino making the best haste he could after them. The animals had ascertained what the safari was, and wanted no closer acquaintance with it. My feelings towards them were the same.”

From A Game Ranger on Safari, by A. BLAYNEY PERCIVAL

GETTING EXPERIENCE

“The spoor went straight on across the clearing to a similar patch of bush on the opposite side, and the youngster stepped eagerly ahead of his guide to follow it up. There was no time to give him ‘chapter and text’—to warn him that the animals might be ambushed near—so my friend caught his arm and said, ‘Wait! He may be watching from cover and get our wind. We must be prepared for a charge.’

“‘Oh, Hell!’ the youth answered impatiently. ‘I am not

nervous, man! I have my rifle. I want to see if he has gone on. He may be running away and increasing his lead.'

"Seeing that the youth was determined to buy his experience my friend wasted no further argument, but brought his rifle to the ready and watched keenly for any sign of life, especially on the left-hand side of the clearing, which was down-wind; and he had not long to wait. The young fellow had barely covered half the distance to the opposite side—about fifty yards—when there came a vicious snort, a mighty crash of bushes on his left, and a black mass, with lowered head carrying two evil-looking horns, hurled itself on him at racing speed.

"The startled youth whirled in his tracks, jerked his express to his shoulder, and fired hurriedly. The spurt of the dust to the right of the charging bull showed the futility of the shot, and, on the echo of the report, came the crack of my friend's Mauser. The bullet went straight to the heart, and the great beast swerved slightly as he plunged onwards, but his massive shoulder caught the young man full in the chest, sending his rifle into the air and his body crashing earthwards several yards away.

"There he lay inert, but, for the moment, there was no time to go to his assistance. A second rhino had followed ten yards behind the first, and now came to slithering halt beside her fallen mate who had somersaulted to earth twenty yards from where the bullet struck him. My friend had expected this, and his sights had covered her shoulder as she crossed the clearing. As soon as she halted his rifle spoke again, and she fell in a heap beside her mate. A few convulsive efforts to rise, a fall back sideways, and a stiffening shudder of the short, thick legs guaranteed that she would rise no more.

"Then my friend hastened to his fallen client, to find him slowly regaining the breath which the tremendous impact had knocked from his body. Examinations revealed a badly bruised shoulder and a broken rib; for he had unfortunately struck a fallen log as he fell."

From *Man-Killers and Marauders*, by W. S. CHADWICK

HIPPOPOTAMUS

"A VERY NARROW ESCAPE"

"21st.—Had a very narrow escape of an upset. Monies wounded a calf, and it bellowed out lustily close to the boat; the cow immediately rushed at the boat, caught it about the stern, and raised it clean up on end, half filling the boat with water. Monies fired at it, and the shot went into its back and through its lungs, and it shortly died.

From *African Hunting from Natal to the Zambesi*,
by W. C. BALDWIN

"HE CHARGED RIGHT AT ME"

"Farther on, I saw a large sea-bull lying asleep close inland behind some reeds, and proceeded to crawl in on him; and just as I showed myself, half-way to my waist in water, to my surprise, instead of endeavouring to make his escape, he charged right at me, at great speed. He stopped for a second about twenty yards off, and I gave him a pill under the ear, which made him spin round and round like a top. I fired two more bullets into his body without effect, missed him with a third (meant for his head), and began to fear we were to lose him altogether, as he seemed recovering, and was gradually getting farther and farther away into deep water, and giving very poor chances of a shot. The sun was shining so directly on him, that I could not see to shoot a bit; the footing was slippery, and I was half-way up to my middle in mud and water, when I got a last chance, and put the ball exactly between the ear and the eye, and killed him."

From *African Hunting from Natal to the Zambesi*,
by W. C. BALDWIN

ONLY TWO HIPPOS

"All right. There were the prick ears, the staring eyes, and the grinning teeth of the quarry, and they were less than a hundred yards away. I raised my rifle. The villagers, in an ecstasy of anticipation, sucked the breath between their teeth.

"HIS FULL BEAUTY"

"The ground dropped gently to the stream, and I had approached to within twenty yards of the bank when away on the opposite side I suddenly perceived the bison. My breath came short and sharp, and then I seemed to cease to breathe altogether, whilst my heart pounded like a sledge-hammer. It was the first solitary bull I had had a full, clear view of in its native jungles. Its bulk staggered me, for the animal stood almost broadside on beneath a great tree, wholly in view save for the hooves and part of the white stockings. Ye gods! What a sight the great fellow was!

"Have you ever seen one under such conditions? If not I fear I cannot help you to realise his full beauty; for words fail to adequately portray it. They can but feebly convey the colossal total of his massive 'points'. Eighteen hands—and this specimen stood well over that—of coal-black beauty shining like satin on the back and sides, where the light filtering through the branches struck him, with four clean white stockings from the knee downwards. On to this enormous bulk the great head and thick, short neck were set, the frontal bone high, covered with whitish yellowish hair, the curved horns thick, much corrugated at their bases and blunted at their tips. Such was the sight upon which I gazed with a palpitating heart."

From *The Diary of a Sportsman Naturalist in India*,
by E. P. STEBBING

RHINOCEROS

A RHINOCEROS CHARGE

"At last in front of me, looming through a patch of high grass, and on the borders of a small bheel, I distinguished the body of a rhino, intently listening to the noise we were making. Neither the mahout nor the elephant saw it, so I touched the mahout on the head, and he at once stopped the hathee. I could see nothing distinctly, but fired into the mass

in front of me; on the smoke clearing away I saw a very large rhinoceros bolt into the bheel, and gave him a shot in the shoulder. He pulled up and faced me, looking vicious; I dropped the Lyell and took the Lang, and as he charged, gave him a couple of shots in the chest. On receiving them, he swerved and bolted, squealing awfully. Not till then had my elephant moved, but this noise was too much for it, and it broke away from the mahout and went in an opposite direction to that taken by the rhinoceros, and could not be stopped for some time; and I saw what I believed to be the rhinoceros go away to the left, and as soon as the elephant was under control again I followed up, but could find no trace anywhere, so went back to the bheel and took up the trail, and came upon the rhinoceros stone-dead. This was my first rhinoceros in Assam. It was a very large animal; one of the largest I ever killed. Its horn was massive, but not long, only eight inches, but $1\frac{3}{4}$ seers in weight."

From *Sport in British Burmah, Assam, and the Cassyah and Jyntiah Hills* (vol. ii.), by LIEUT.-COLONEL POLLOK

CHASED BY A RHINOCEROS

"We took across country, and got into heavy grass and tree-jungle; and, after going a long way, came across a rhinoceros. My rifle missed fire, but Barry hit hard. We followed, and put the brute up four times, and hit hard each time, but it seemed to bear a charmed life. At last it got into very heavy jungle, and I followed, whilst Barry stood on one side in the open. I came upon it; my right barrel missed fire, and my left hit as the rhinoceros charged savagely. My hathee bolted, with the rhinoceros at his heels, gnashing his teeth, and not above six inches off. The way my hathee hooked it 'was a caution to snakes, I guess'. I got hold of my muzzle-loading Lang and made a lucky shot between the ears, dropping master rhinoceros as dead as dead could be. Another second and the elephant would have been badly cut."

From *Sport in British Burmah, Assam, and the Cassyah and Jyntiah Hills* (vol. ii.), by LIEUT.-COLONEL POLLOK

"OLD KRAMAT"

"The attendant spirit of *kramat* animals has power to deceive the hunter by altering the appearance of the hunted animal or by giving its shape to one of the hunters or their attendants, and on one occasion a gallant officer in the N— Regiment fell its victim. Leaving his pad elephant in the forest with a Malay in charge, he proceeded one day to set off on foot to look for fresh tracks. He walked for hours, until suddenly his tracker stopped him and silently pointed out the outline of a huge animal in front of them. M. took a steady aim and fired: a scream from a sorely-stricken elephant and a yell from a terrified Malay were his answer. He had walked in a circle and had fired at his own elephant. As the smoke cleared he caught a glimpse of the elephant rushing madly through the forest and had a full view of the Malay bellowing on the ground. The wretched man had been quietly smoking his cigarette on the elephant's neck, and now, lying where he fell, was only in doubt whether a bullet-wound or a broken neck was the cause of his death. Both elephant and man recovered, the Malay the quicker of the two, for the elephant, though the wound healed, was never fit for work again; but both had a lucky escape, for the bullet, which hit the elephant high on the shoulder, had gone perilously near the man's leg. It will be some time before M. hears the last of the shot; but the chaff of the clubs does not carry the bite of the smiles of the Malays, who give the credit of the whole occurrence to 'old *kramat*' and his guardian spirit."

From *In Malay Forests*,
by SIR GEORGE MAXWELL, K.B.E., C.M.G.

"—SO—"

"After dinner, while I lay upon my mattress in the houseboat, I heard old Ahman telling Sleman and the other boatmen stories that deserve to be recorded. This is one way to kill a rhinoceros.

"Take a piece of hard wood (*lengapus* for choice), eight

inches long and two inches thick, and sharpen the two ends to as fine a point as possible. Armed with this, follow the rhinoceros. When you come upon it, shout and boldly advance. The rhinoceros will thereupon rush at you. As is the custom of the animal, it will charge at you with its eyes shut and its mouth open. When it approaches, step aside, and taking the stick between your thumb and first finger—so—hold it out perpendicularly, and put it in the animal's open mouth. The rhinoceros will snap upon it, and the pointed ends entering the upper and lower jaws will close the mouth for ever. As it cannot eat it will starve, and all that you have to do is to follow it until it drops down dead."

From *In Malay Forests*,
by SIR GEORGE MAXWELL, K.B.E., C.M.G.

SAMBUR

"PLUCK TO THE LAST"

"In the centre of one of the rapid streams, the buck stood at bay, belly-deep, with the torrent rushing in foam between his legs. His mane was bristled up, his nostrils were distended, and his antlers were lowered to receive the dog who should first attack him. I happened to have a spear on that occasion, so that I felt he could not escape, and I gave the baying dogs a loud cheer on. Poor Cato! it was his first elk, and he little knew the danger of a buck at bay in such a strong position. Answering with youthful ardour to my halloa, the young dog sprang boldly at the elk's face, but, caught upon the ready antlers, he was instantly dashed senseless upon the rocks. Now for old Smut, the hero of countless battles, who, though pluck to the back-bone, always tempers his valour with discretion.

"Yoick to him, Smut! and I jumped into the water. The buck made a rush forward, but at that moment a mass of yellow hair dangled before his eyes as the true old dog hung upon his cheek. Now came the tug of war—only one seizer! The spring had been so great, and the position of the buck was