

# THE WORLD'S SPORT.

A SHORT, ANECDOTAL ACCOUNT OF THE FAMOUS SPORTS  
OF MANY COUNTRIES.

## RHINOCEROS AND LION HUNTING IN AFRICA.

By H. A. BRYDEN.

BEFORE the advent of Europeans in the African continent rhinoceros must have roamed for long ages of the past in an extraordinary abundance over an immense amount of country ; and especially must this have been the case in Southern, Eastern, and North-East Africa. The war

fairly abundant. In East Africa, until fourteen or fifteen years ago, these animals seem to have been never disturbed by white hunters and firearms, and Mr. James Thomson, in his first expedition through the Masai country, encountered them in extraordinary numbers. Sir John Willoughby,



A TOUGH CUSTOMER.

of extermination, which for the last hundred years has been waged unceasingly against the wonderful fauna of South Africa, has greatly diminished the numbers of these gigantic creatures in the regions south of the Zambesi ; but in parts of Central, East, and North-East Africa the common black rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros bicornis*) is still

Sir Robert Harvey, Mr. C. V. Hunter, and other sportsmen who entered the country in the wake of Thomson, made wonderful bags of all kinds of game in that magnificent natural game-preserve, and forty or fifty rhinos were shot by a single party during the season's hunting. Far more could have been killed if desired.

In Somaliland rhinoceros have been a great deal shot at by English hunters during the last few years; but there are still, undoubtedly, fair numbers of these enormous mammals in the far interior; and, especially, in the almost unknown and entirely unexplored region between Lakes Rudolf and Stephanie and the Nile, there is a vast, virgin, great-game country, where the foot of the ubiquitous white man has never yet fallen or the sound of a sporting rifle yet been heard. Here, undoubtedly, rhinoceros, as well as elephants and other kinds of game, exist in large numbers.

But, plentiful as is the rhinoceros still in certain parts of the Dark Continent, it was probably never so numerous as in the good old days in the great hunting-grounds south of the Zambesi. Fifty years ago these huge creatures were scattered thickly over the whole of the vast regions lying between the Orange and the Zambesi. The numbers of rhinoceros, black and white,\* shot were perfectly astounding, if it be remembered that this animal is a slow breeder, and that the cow brings forth only one calf at birth. Before the advent of modern arms of precision, the rhinoceros wandered over the whole country but little molested by the black man, from whom, indeed, thanks to its immense size and strength and the great thickness of its hide, it had little or nothing to fear. But since the introduction of firearms, and especially of percussion and breechloading weapons, the slaughter of these animals has been immense. A pair of Boer hunters forty or fifty years ago would slay fifty or sixty easily in a single season. The late C. J. Andersson, single-handed, killed sixty during one season in the 'fifties, chiefly by night-shooting at the scant desert waters to which these animals repaired. Messrs. Osowell and Vardon slew eighty-nine in much less than a year. Gordon Cumming was equally

successful in his many campaigns against these and other big game.

It is not to be supposed, however, that, easily as the rhinoceros is at times to be shot, its downfall is a mere matter of nerve and straight shooting. It is distinctly to be classed among the dangerous game of Africa, and, with the elephant, the lion, and the buffalo, wreaks at times a bloody vengeance upon its pursuers. Sometimes the rhinoceros can be shot with the greatest ease with a single bullet. It has been shot dead on not a few occasions while fast asleep in the veldt, enjoying its siesta during the heat of the day. But, at other times, it is by no means easy to bring to bag, and will carry away an extraordinary amount of bullets. Scores of dangerous accidents have happened in its pursuit. That great hunter the late W. C. Osowell, the friend and companion of Livingstone in his earlier discoveries, had at least two narrow escapes from these creatures. In one instance he had wounded a huge white rhinoceros (*R. simus*), the biggest of all terrestrial mammals save the elephant. His horse took fright, and stood spellbound at the animal's approach. The white rhinoceros drove its long fore horn right through the horse's middle—wounding Osowell's leg on the far side—and threw steed and rider bodily over its head. The horse was, of course, killed, while Osowell suffered a severe wound and shaking. In another instance, while stalking on foot, Osowell was chased by a black rhinoceros, caught, and again tossed yards into the air. This time his escape from death was a most narrow one. Both horns had penetrated his thigh—the fore horn clean to the bone, by which it was turned, making a frightful wound—and for weeks he lay confined to his wagon.

Charles John Andersson, the intrepid Swedish explorer, hunter, and naturalist, who first penetrated Damaraland and Ovampoland with Mr. Francis Galton, in the early 'fifties, was all but killed by a black rhinoceros while night-shooting at a desert fountain. The wounded and enraged beast twice charged him and knocked him down, but, probably owing to the dim

\* The so-called "white" rhinoceros is, in reality, as dark-coloured as its cousin the black rhinoceros, and must have been, in some curious way, misnamed by the early Dutch hunters in South Africa.

light, missed him with her horn on the first occasion. Andersson scrambled out from under her hind legs after the first onset, and was instantly charged again. This time the aim of the mighty beast was surer, and with her long horn she ripped him from the knee to the hip, trampled over him, so that his upper ribs bent with the pressure, and, snorting heavily, plunged into the darkness.

Mr. Selous, Mr. F. V. Kirby, and other hunters have in recent years shot rhinoceros in South Africa with no heavier weapon than a .461 Gibbs-Metford sporting rifle. One or two other sportsmen have even destroyed these great creatures with the .303 Lee-Metford. But, unless the hunter is a steady, cool shot, sure of his nerves and his shooting, he may be advised to follow up rhinoceros with a weapon of heavier calibre, capable of dealing the smashing blow which these beasts often require. A .577 double-rifle, shooting solid, hardened bullets, or a .8 or 10-bore Paradox, using the solid, steel-cored bullet, may be

recommended as weapons and missiles powerful enough to stop even the rhinoceros. In South Africa of late years, although white rhinoceros have been rediscovered in the dense reed-beds and jungles of Central Zululand, these animals have become very scarce. The white rhinoceros, never found north of the Zambesi, is nearing extinction, and its black congener, south of that river, is to be sought successfully only in Northern and Eastern Mashonaland, and Portuguese South-East Africa.

Lion-hunting, of old the sport of kings and Pharaohs in Asia and Africa, is still vigorously pursued by the white man, and

especially by the sport-loving Briton, wherever that noblest of the carnivora is to be found. Asiatic lions are nowadays so scarce that they but seldom fall to the hunter's rifle. But in Africa, from Somaliland to Khama's country, and occasionally even farther south, they are almost everywhere to be encountered. The lion is, however, not an everyday sort of beast, and, from his nocturnal habits, his presence is far more often made apparent after sun has set than in broad daylight. Occasionally, however, the hunter chances



THE ROAR OF A LION.

upon these animals in daytime, and, their spoor being once found, they can be tracked to those sequestered places, among thorn-bush or reeds, in which they love to lie after their night of prowling.

The attack upon a lion in such quarters is, however, a very ticklish operation, and results not seldom in the severe mauling—sometimes even in the death—of the hunter or one of his natives. It was the fashion at one time to decry the lion as a beast easily shot, and possessing no very exceptional courage. It is true that the lion, being a thin-skinned animal, can be easily laid low if the sportsman's nerves are good, a fair shot is obtained, and the

bullet strikes in the right place. But there are many chances against so happy an ending. The lion does not always afford an easy broadside shot so that the heart and lungs can be raked; and when charging end on, the chances are about as much in favour of the hunted as of the hunter. It is difficult to get a fair shot in a vital part at a lion coming straight for the rifle, and if the bullet strikes in the thick, bony formation of the head, it is as likely as not to glance off or do little harm to the animal. All great British hunters, from Gordon Cumming to Selous, agree in looking upon the lion as at no time an animal to be taken liberties with, and when wounded, as one of the most dangerous and daring of wild creatures. There is no bolder or more ferocious animal on a dark African night than a hungry lion, which will, in the coolest possible manner, take an ox from the span or kraal, or even a man from the camp-fire or hut. One of the most lion-haunted countries in South Africa—or, indeed, any other part of the continent—is Mashonaland and the Portuguese territory lying between that

country and the port of Beira. Here lions were, and still are, exceptionally daring; probably from the fact that before the entry of Mr. Rhodes's pioneers, in 1890, they had had but little experience of white men and their weapons. The adventures, deaths, and severe accidents

which have happened from lions in Mashonaland and the adjacent region since the entry of the Chartered Company would fill quite a fair-sized volume. The lion, in fact, is still a power in all parts of the immense regions of savage Africa, and his reign is not likely to be ended for many a long year to come. There is no better weapon with which to attack this animal than



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a .450 or .500 double Express rifle. But the .303, the .256, or the Martini-Henry .450-577 are all suitable weapons. In no case, however, should hardened bullets be used. Hollow-pointed Express bullets, or soft-lead missiles which will "mushroom" sufficiently—preferably the hollow-pointed Express—are far more suitable for this kind of game, where not so much penetration as great impact and shocking-force is the effect desired.