

BIG GAME SHOOTING

BY

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CHAPTER XI

INDIAN SHOOTING

BY LIEUT.-COL. REGINALD HEBER PERCY

I. INTRODUCTORY.

IN dealing with such a vast tract of country as India it is out of the question to describe any one class of outfit which will suit the traveller equally well among the snowy peaks and bitter winds of the Himalayas and Ladak and in the furnace-like heat of the plains. Snow is the great obstacle to travel in the former, whilst heat, rain, and malaria are the evils to be contended with in the latter. Nor is one class of weapon equally suitable everywhere. For all soft-skinned animals, such as tigers, and all varieties of sheep, goats, and deer (except sambur) there is no rifle, in the writer's opinion, that is so satisfactory as a .500 Express with a charge of at least $5\frac{3}{4}$ drachms of powder. This weapon is sufficiently powerful for any beast to be met with in the Himalayas. Of course, yak may be found, but the chance is so remote that it is barely worth while taking a special rifle for their benefit, and a few cartridges with solid bullets for the .500 will probably meet all requirements. On the other hand, for thick-skinned animals, such as elephants, rhinoceros, gaur, buffalo, and sambur, the smallest bore of any practical use is a 12-bore, and the powder charge for this should be at least 6 drachms. The light bullet of an Express is so easily turned by a small twig that it is absolutely untrustworthy among heavy timber, and it is for this reason that the writer includes sambur with the larger animals. For the big

10 ft. 1 in., and the writer has seen a foot in Mr. Rowland Ward's shop that measured 5 ft. in circumference, which should make the animal 10 ft. at the shoulder.

Sterndale gives 10 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. as the largest authentic measurement on record, and oddly enough quotes Sanderson as authority for the measurement of this elephant, which belonged to the Sirmoor Rajah.

As regards tusks, Sanderson's biggest pair measured 4 ft. 11 ins. and 5 ft. respectively, with a girth of $16\frac{1}{2}$ ins. at the gum, the pair weighing $74\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

Sir Victor Brooke's big tusker measured : Right tusk, 8 ft. ; 5 ft. 9 ins. outside socket ; girth 1 ft. $4\frac{9}{10}$ ins. ; weight, 90 lbs. Left tusk, 3 ft. 3 ins. ; 1 ft. 2 ins. outside socket ; girth, 1 ft. 8 ins. ; weight, 49 lbs.

The skeleton of the well-known Arcot rogue elephant, now in the Madras Museum, measures 10 ft. 6 ins. at the shoulder. Mr. Rowland Ward considers that when alive it must have stood 10 ft. 10 ins.

'Jumbo,' the African elephant in the Zoological Gardens, stood 11 ft., and Sir S. Baker says that African elephants measure 12 ft. or more.

The three largest African tusks recorded in 'Horn Measurements,' by Rowland Ward, are :

| Length | Greatest circumference | Weight |
|----------|------------------------|--------|
| ft. ins. | ins. | lbs. |
| 9 5 | $22\frac{1}{2}$ | 184 |
| 9 4 | $20\frac{1}{2}$ | 160 |
| 9 4 | 18 | 110 |

XIII. RHINOCEROS

There are no fewer than four different kinds of rhinoceros to be found in India and Burmah ; viz. *Indicus*, *Sondaicus*, *Lasiotis* and *Sumatrensis*. The first, which is the most generally known, extends from the Nepal Terai to Assam. The second

is found in the Sunderbuns, and from Manipur through Burmah to the Malay Peninsula ; the third is found in Arakan and Tenasserim ; the fourth, from Tenasserim through Burmah to Siam and the Malay Peninsula ; the two first varieties being one-horned, the two last two-horned. The Asiatic rhinoceros differs from the African in three particulars : the skin is divided into shields by well-marked folds ; he has long upper cutting teeth (the African having none), and the nasal bones of the skull are produced and conical instead of broad and round (Sterndale).

The chief difference between *R. indicus* and *R. sondaicus* is that the latter has a well-marked fold in front of the shoulders, the line running over the back of the neck, whilst in *Indicus* it dies away on the shoulder-blade ; the head of *Sondaicus* is also somewhat slenderer, and the female has no horn. In *Indicus* both sexes have this horn, and the curious tessellated appearance of the hide in one is very different from the tuberculated armour of the other.

Though *Sondaicus* has been described as the lesser Indian rhinoceros, there is little difference in the size between this and other Indian varieties.

R. lasiotis and *R. sumatrensis* have more or less hairy hides instead of tubercles. *Lasiotis* is larger, lighter in colour, with wide-set ears, a short tufted tail, and a long fringe of hair on the back edge of the ear ; *Sumatrensis* is smaller, darker, with close-set ears (which are filled with black hair but have no fringe), and tail long, tapering, and semi-nude.

The native names of all four varieties seem much the same : 'Gaindá,' 'Gairá,' 'Gonda,' generally ; 'Gor' Assam, 'Khyenhsen' Burmah, 'Bodok' Malay.

The rhinoceros does not extend to Central and Southern India, being only found in the heavy grass swamps of the Terai, Assam, &c. ; consequently the only way of hunting this beast is with elephants. The rhinoceros may be either tracked up to his lair on a single elephant, or the jungle may be beaten as for tigers.

In no branch of sport is it more necessary to have trust-

Measurements

| Authority | Height at shoulder | Length head and body | Tail | Girth chest | Girth forearm | Length of horn | Girth at base | Remarks |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---|
| Col. Kinloch, 'Large Game Shooting', British Museum | ft. ins. 5 9 | ft. ins. 10 6 | ft. ins. 2 5 | R. INDICUS ft. ins. 9 8 | ft. ins. 3 2 | ins. 12 | ins. .. | Single horns—doubtful specimens |
| " | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 19 | 20½ | |
| " | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 38 | 26½ | |
| " | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 33½ | 27 | |
| Sterndale | 5 6 | 12 3 | 2 4½ | R. SONDAICUS .. | .. | .. | .. | { The length 12 ft. 3 ins. appears to include tail |
| No measurements procurable | | | | | | | | |
| R. LASIOTIS | | | | | | | | |
| R. SUMATRENSIS | | | | | | | | |
| Sterndale | 3 8 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | Rear horn merely a knob |
| British Museum | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 27 | 17½ | |
| " | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 32½ | 17½ | |
| Mr. A. Manson, 'Oriental Sporting Magazine,' 1876 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 8½ | .. | |

worthy men in charge of the mahouts of the pad elephants. A rhinoceros when roused makes such a noise crashing through the reeds and snorting, that, though he rarely charges home, and even then only bites instead of using his horn, he fairly terrifies both mahouts and their animals, and consequently, unless the line is under good control, the beating is carried out in a very half-hearted manner. The usual pace of a rhinoceros is a trot, but he will sometimes break into a gallop and gets over the ground with surprising speed. When shot they usually sink down on their knees and rarely roll over on to their sides. The flesh is said to be as good as, or better than, most Indian beef. The track is easily distinguished, as the foot has only three toes.

There is a story of a fight having been witnessed between a rhinoceros and a wild male elephant, in which the latter was worsted. A rhinoceros is said to have wantonly attacked the camp of two officers from Dinapore, near Derriapore, in 1788. The brute killed their horses, which were picketed, treed the officers and their servants, and 'after keeping them in dreadful suspense for some time, and using some efforts to dislodge them, seeing the sun rise, retreated to his haunt.'

Their habit of depositing their dropping on the same spot, which is shared by many deer and antelopes, has been noted by all writers on the subject. Native shikaris watch these large heaps and take poor rhino at a disadvantage.

XIV. THE MALAY TAPIR (*Tapirus malayanus*)

Native names : 'Ta-ra-shu,' Burmese ; 'Kuda-ayer,' Malayan

Sterndale says of it :

Habitat : Tenasserim provinces, as high as 15° N. Lat., Lower Siam, the Malayan Peninsula, Sumatra, and Borneo. *Description* : General colour glossy black, but with the back, rump, and sides of the belly white ; the young are beautifully variegated, being striped and spotted with yellow fawn on the upper parts of the body and with white below. Mr. Mason writes : 'Though seen so rarely,