

least fifteen minutes to get a tie adjusted round his collar. I showed him how to pull the brim of his hat to just the right angle, and when he got on his heavy blue overcoat he was the proudest native I have ever seen. Looking him over, I had to confess that clothes make the man. He could have passed anywhere in New York as a visiting dignitary instead of a Malayan half-savage.

The end of Ali's Beau Brummell days—or perhaps only the beginning of them—came when we returned to Singapore. Our ship came into the harbour and I looked about the deck for Ali. He was not in sight. The temperature was a hundred degrees in the shade and there was no shade. It was a typically hot Singapore day.

Suddenly I saw Ali by the gangplank. He was wearing his winter overcoat and his felt hat, and I felt sure that underneath he had on his long woollen underwear. He was dripping in the heat like a fountain, but he was determined to show his friends what he had learned of the white man's ways in the great world outside Malaya.

Ali was as proud as any Argus pheasant on its strutting-ground as he walked down that plank, muffled and bundled in wool, from underwear to scarf and overcoat; his heavy felt hat cocked rakishly over one eye, he waved wiltingly to his friends who had come to meet him.

41

AS FAR BACK AS 1920 DR. WILLIAM T. HORNADAY, DIRECTOR OF the famous Bronx Zoo in New York, had wanted an Indian armour-plated rhinoceros, just as had the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago a few years later, when I had had to return them my expense cheque.

"Why can't you get me one, Frank?" Hornaday asked several times.

I explained to him that obtaining a genuine Indian rhino would be as much a diplomatic mission as an animal hunt. In the first place, while this biggest of all the world's rhinos—far larger than its African cousins—bore the name of Indian, it was practically extinct now in all the provinces of India. As the most awesome of game it had been hunted so extensively through the United Provinces and as far south as southern Bengal as to become almost non-existent. It was only in the tiny native state of Nepal, up near Mount Everest and the snowy Himalayas, that the armour-plated rhino had survived at all, because it had been regarded there as sacred and royal game which only the Maharajah and his friends could hunt.

"In the second place," I went on, "it is practically as impos-

sible to go to Nepal without official sanction as it is to go to heaven. Even the colonizing British have only the faintest look-in there, and a lone English attaché hangs his hat meekly in Katmandu, the capital, and does nothing but look at the hat and think of running away. The only other Westerner beside the attaché allowed in the country is the engineer who operates the Maharajah's electric light plant. And the engineer is as carefully watched as if he were constantly planning to elope with the Maharajah's favourite wife—and having seen a few Nepalese women, I know he isn't. I'm afraid I can't get you your rhino, Doctor. I tried once before and it's no good."

Dr. Hornaday smiled at me as if I had not even spoken of difficulties. "I don't want *one*, Frank—I want two."

"Two!"

"Charlie Penrose, President of the Philadelphia Zoological Society, has promised to go in on this with me. He plans to take one, I the other. Neither of us could afford two. We know it will be prohibitively expensive, Frank, but if you ever have a chance to get two genuine Indian rhinos, or even to get to Nepal, try for them at our price of \$7000 each. Even if you fail we'll pay your expenses for the attempt."

It was a full year later in Calcutta that I recalled Dr. Hornaday's almost forgotten—so hopeless had it seemed—conversation about rhinos. I was in India getting together a collection of Indian waders—storks, cranes, and flamingoes—for the St. Louis Zoo, as well as five hundred assorted specimens of Asiatic animals, reptiles, and birds for the newly established Dallas Zoo, for which I had an order to supply the entire lot. I was busy, but not so furiously busy that I overlooked the well-advertised fact that a dignitary of Nepal was in town who might lend influence towards the obtaining of Dr. Hornaday's two rhinos.

The dignitary was General Kaiser Shumshere. He was a nephew of the Maharajah, with a job comparable to our Secretary of State. He had come to Calcutta on official business, and had established a sort of unofficial embassy in an elaborate house in Middleton Row, the European section of the city.

Through an English lady whom I knew I was able to meet the General unofficially at her house for cocktails. He was a dapper little man of about thirty-five with an immaculately trimmed beard. On this occasion he was dressed in white flannel trousers and a Scotch tweed coat. He looked as businesslike and efficient as any European diplomat on his day off, and I thought I was lucky to have met such an enlightened and straightforward representative of Nepal. When I broached the business I had in mind, he waved one of his finely manicured hands and said :

"Visit me tomorrow, my friend, in Middleton Row."

I did, with every confidence. I met at his European gate six fierce-looking Gurkha soldiers who threatened me with drawn swords and knives which each carried in his goatskin belt. As I could not speak Nepalese, and they could not speak English, they indicated the far end of the street with the points of six Gurkha knives. I began to think my suave friend of the day before was not quite so European in his methods as he had seemed.

Lal Bahuda, one of my boys, came to my rescue. Lal had been born near the border of Nepal, and he spoke the language as well and as fluently as he did Hindustani. He shouldered our way past the fierce Gurkhas like a blocking back going through a football line, screaming at them all the time—as he told me later—that I was expected by the General and that their ugly Gurkha heads would surely be boiled in pig fat if they attempted to stop me.

And so I met General Kaiser Shumshere for the second time. What a contrast! For I met him in a sumptuous, incense-laden apartment hung with tapestries and silks and decorated with priceless gold, jade, and rose-quartz idols and other jewelled symbols of the great god Buddha, for now the General was on official—to himself—business. Instead of his European clothes he wore trousers of pink silk which bagged about his bony knees, and a green sleeveless jacket, studded with jewels, which showed his snakelike brown arms as lithe as a woman's in their every move.

He might have looked silly had he been the usual bombastic type of native. Instead, he looked subtle and grand in his pink and green silks, his accustomed working clothes, and managed to achieve rather the same effect as a Tammany Hall chieftain back in Manhattan when the chief is about to swallow a golden egg along with the goose that laid it.

"My friend," he said, and gave me a limp hand.

He was cordial without being effusive, though effusiveness is the usual fault of the East. He was the perfect exception to the rule. The ordinary Asiatic host either won't let you past his door, or he so overwhelms you with courtesies that he makes you utterly uncomfortable. Shumshere merely ordered cigarettes and whisky, and we settled down to a chat. He was absolutely unique, except in his methods of barter.

"Are there still Indian rhinos in Nepal?" I asked him, when we had finished discussing the weather and the whisky.

"Of course," he said quite frankly. "Everyone knows that there are."

"Well then, is there any chance of my getting into the country to capture just two of them—I ask for no more—alive?"

He favoured me with a politely withering glance.

"Certainly not. In the first place, as you must know, foreigners are not allowed in Nepal. In the second place, these rhinos are royal game. And besides, the Maharajah holds them as part of the natural resources of his throne. Under no circumstances is there a chance whatever."

"Not even a hope?" I asked.

"A hope is a different thing from a chance," said Shumshere. "While there is life there is always hope. A poet of one of our religions said those extremely wise words."

We looked at each other a moment and we both smiled.

"What about this hope?" I asked.

The General rubbed one smooth brown hand over the other.

"We are a practical people in my country," he said. "The Maharajah is an extremely practical person."

"I can believe that," I told him.

"It might be possible the Maharajah would consent to part with two of his country's 'assets'. I cannot say as to that. I could, however, telegraph to Katmandu and discover whether two young rhinos can be spared and, if so, whether his Highness would allow me to take or send a force of men into the rhino country to capture them and bring them down to the frontier for you and how much they would cost."

"Thank you, General."

Four days later I heard from the General again. I could have two live Indian rhino calves for 35,000 rupees, provided I would go up into Nepal—a permit to enter the country would be waiting for me at Rexaul on the border—to take delivery and pay for them.

I figured quickly. This was approximately \$12,600 in American money. Could I take the chance of two rhino calves travelling 16,000 miles back to the United States in safety and health? If one chanced to die *en route* I would be out more money by far than I could afford. I told Shumshere this was a lot of money for two animals—he knew it as well as I—and could the price be shaded a little?

Two days later I heard from the General. He was sorry; the price was the same. I could take it or leave it. He explained that there were fine hunters in Nepal who knew how to shoot rhinos, but to capture them alive was an entirely different and very expensive matter. It would be a long process and costly. A price was a price. I finally agreed—partly against my better judgment—and the deal was made, with the provision that Shumshere would personally head the expedition to capture the rhinos.

Weeks later I received a telegram saying that the rhinos had been caught—two fine calves, one weighing a ton, the other a ton and a quarter—and would I come and get them?

I went, of course, immediately. It had been agreed that I would receive delivery of the animals between Katmandu and Bilgange. I was allowed into Nepal only because an edict had gone out from the Maharajah's palace that I was helping the nation to market its "natural resources".

During the "hunt" for my two calves, General Shumshere—as he admitted to me—brought down over a dozen of Nepal's "resources" with his rifle, including the two cows that were with the captured calves. He told me later he had never realized how easy shooting game was in comparison with capturing it alive.

Dr. Hornaday was later horrified when I told him of the General's "feat". His scientific mind could not believe that anyone could shoot in such quantities animals so rare that they had almost ceased to exist, even when I told him the General's excuse was that he had shot them as "marauders" on native plantations.

I received the two calves just north of Bilgange. Then came the problem of getting them back to Calcutta. It was no easy task, for I had to carry food for my two and a quarter tons of rhino with me. After two days by bullock-cart with a company of Gurkha soldiers to help balance the loads over the rough places, and elephants to lend a pushing forehead on uphill grades, I managed to get them on a flatcar at Rexaul, the northern end of the railway line, and we proceeded southward.

All through the East, powdered rhino horn is looked upon as a prized aphrodisiac, and natives will risk their lives to obtain a bit of genuine horn. Lal Bahuda and I guarded the young rhino calves to the best of our ability. Yet on the morning of the second day out of Rexaul I found a hole an inch square and two inches deep gouged from one of the soft horns. I finally got the rhinos, however, to Athmal Gola on the north bank of the Ganges, from there by boat to Mokamaghat across the river, and finally to another flatcar and into Calcutta. From there they went on an American ship, the *S.S. Lake Gitana*, to Hong Kong. From China my two rhinos sailed east for San Francisco on the *President Wilson*, and I finally landed them in America, the rarest and most valuable animals ever seen in that country!

Drs. Hornaday and Penrose were delighted with their new acquisitions. (They are both alive and healthy today in the Philadelphia and Bronx Zoos.) Each generously paid me a bonus of \$1000 over the \$7000 price agreed upon, which made my total on the deal £16,000. When I had deducted General Kaiser Shumshere's \$12,600 under the heading of "services" from my accounts, I found that with railway, feed, and shipping costs I had just about

broken even on the entire business, with work and worry added to a profit of nothing.

However, work and worry meant little in comparison with the fact that I had imported into the United States the first armoured Indian rhinos ever seen in a zoo in this country. There was pride and prestige in the accomplishment, and although there was no profit, I was very happy about it all.

At my "Jungleland" exhibit at the World's Fair in New York in 1940 I was one evening touched gently on the elbow by a timid hand. I turned and saw a slim, rather elderly little man standing beside me where I was mingling with the crowd looking at my "monkey mountain". He was dressed in a tight-fitting blue serge suit. He had a pointed, greying beard, and I could tell from his brown skin and eyes that he was from the East.

"Mr. Buck," he said in excellent English, "you remember me?"

"I don't believe I do," I said honestly.

"I am Shumshere."

Dimly through the years I recognized the voice. It was really that of General Kaiser Shumshere of Nepal. I shook his hand in a firm American grasp.

"It is good to see you, Mr. Buck," he said. "I am visiting America and the Fair, so naturally I came here immediately."

"Naturally, General."

I took him to my office and gave him a drink—he chose a glass of wine rather than whisky-and-soda—without the formality that had attended mine at his Middleton Row house in Calcutta some twenty years earlier. We got on famously and I was grateful that he had needed only to part with a silver quarter to pass the ticket takers at my gates, instead of having fear of death from Gurkha troops, as I had once passed his. Without his Oriental dignity of splendid pink silk trousers and green-jewelled jacket, he looked, in his blue serge, very like anyone else. He was the nephew of a fabulously rich Asiatic maharajah, and an apostle of the "one and only" god Buddha, but here in America he still had to ride in an ordinary railway coach to get to the Fair, and he still had to talk with me amid a whirl of midway lights, chattering monkeys, and the constant crunch of peanuts in free American jaws. Throughout his visit he seemed rather bewildered but happy, but his dignity did not leave him.

"Which way from here, Mr. Buck, to what you call the subway?" he asked as he said good-bye.

"That way," I said.

And General Kaiser Shumshere of forbidden Nepal, with its sacred Buddhist temples, who had shot down over a dozen "assets" to get me two calves, went home to his New York hotel in the crowded subway, jostled by all sorts and conditions of men. In the free land of America there was no difference between his status in getting to or from the World's Fair and that of the lowliest citizen.



No Asiatic ruler ever got off to a worse start in life than the Sultan of Johore. Yet here he is, hale and hearty, and just short of seventy.



My boys and I take a few moments off to pose. These are all typical Malay types, except the second from the right in the rear, who is a Hindu. Ali II (without his woollen underwear) wears the Mohammedan cap.



In the depths of the jungle. We have just snared a rare bird, and having no cage, we built one of rattan there on the spot in which to carry our prize back to camp.



A typical overnight camp, twenty miles from my main camp in Johore. Notice the mosquito netting over the cot, without which sleep would be impossible.

helpless mouth. Apparently nothing pleased him so much as those crude molasses sandwiches of Snowboy's which he no longer had strength to eat.

After four months of as fine treatment as any man could obtain in the best of our hospitals, my orang died from his stroke. At the last he could raise one arm to eat thick molasses sandwiches! He was a fine fellow—but there was nothing more I could have done for him. He was a true orang-utan—a “man of the forest”

67

KEEPING THEM ALIVE IS DIFFICULT IN BOTH ASIA AND AMERICA. During the making of *Fang and Claw* I had a chance at the rarest of all animals that stalk the jungle. Its capture was no more difficult than its keeping; both were extremely difficult. This animal was an Indian armour-plated rhino.

My friend, George Vierheller, director of the St. Louis Zoo, already had a male rhino which I had brought to him several years after those I had obtained for Drs. Penrose and Hornaday in 1923. Ever since this male which I had brought back as a two-ton youngster had reached maturity it had been Vierheller's ambition—and mine—to add to the St. Louis collection a young female, so that for the first time in history these rarest of animals might have a chance to breed in captivity.

Now, the rhino is a strangely inconsistent creature. He is near-sighted almost to the point of blindness, yet he has a sense of hearing comparable only with that of the most delicate of jungle birds, and a sense of smell equally as keen. Usually he minds his own business, but once aroused, a rhino can be fully as deadly and savage in a direct charge as a rogue elephant, and his tons of powerful weight have trampled out the life of more than one hunter holding a high-powered rifle in his hands.

While making my third jungle picture, I had the good luck to run across one. Northern Assam, in the north-eastern section of India near the border of Bhutan, is not far, as jungle distances go, from the eastern boundary of Nepal, from which country I obtained the first Indian rhinos ever seen in any zoo in America.

I was in Assam hunting both for animal pictures and for rare pheasants, gibbon apes, and any other game that might be available for trapping, when I chanced across the rhino tracks. They were close together in the mud of the jungle near a “wallow”. They were evidently those of a mother and calf together, for one track was enormous and the other was about the size of a tea-saucer. I called off all trapping and picture activities and set myself and my boys hot on the trail of the rhinos.

I had no hopes of capturing the mother. I could see by the tracks that she was a gigantic specimen, and nothing short of an elephant kraal would hold her. But the tracks of the youngster showed that it was no more than a baby and probably weighed not more than half a ton—just a baby.

For three hot, blistering days, I followed those rhino tracks through the jungle, accompanied by Ali and two jungle trackers. Hell can be no hotter than that Assam jungle. I felt pounds and pounds dripping away from me, but each dawn I picked up the tracks, after a mosquito-ridden night spent in a hastily-built lean-to camp. Mud and heat and sweat and sun went with me on each forward step I took. I think I was ready to give up, when on the morning of the fourth day I saw a strange thing. The calf's tracks went on alone—the mother's branched off into the deep forest. Intermixed in the mud with the tracks of the young one were the unmistakable "pug marks" of a tiger!

I have no idea why the mother left her baby. Perhaps she went off in a different direction to feed, thinking her offspring was safely hidden in the heavy brush and that she would return in a few hours. Perhaps she was alarmed by the scent of the tiger and went off to meet the feline enemy head-on. At any rate, the big rhino's tracks led off into the jungle, while those of the youngster proceeded down the trail with the "pugs" of the tiger overlapping them.

I hastened my own pace and that of my boys through the overpowering heat. I knew that a baby rhino was not only food and game for a *hungry* tiger, but that even a well-fed tiger, out of pure savagery and feline cussedness, would very likely give a helpless baby rhino a severe mauling, if he did not actually kill it outright.

I burst upon the calf lying in a clearing. For a moment I thought it was dead, but a second later I discovered that it was merely insensible, evidently from the shock of the tiger's charge and the clawing it had received.

Still living, the young rhino was nevertheless in a bad way. It was considerably clawed, and one ear had been almost entirely torn off by the tiger's teeth. I saw at once that she was a female and a rare prize—exactly the rhino George Vierheller had been wanting—if I could only keep her alive and get her back to America.

I set to work at once. Before the rhino regained consciousness I hastily lashed her two front legs together with rattan strips. Then I amputated the part of the ear the tiger had torn. From my flask I doused the wound with Scotch whisky, the only thing I had available which might act as an antiseptic. Presently she began to struggle to get on her feet. Hastily I had my boys construct a sort of framework, or corral, of logs close round her, so that she wouldn't

be able to break free by her sheer weight. After a few hours she seemed to be content.

I got her half-ton bulk into a solid log cage—built on the spot—then by bullock-cart, railway, and steamship I transported my caged rhino from northern Assam the two thousand miles to my compound in Singapore at Katong. With her went fresh grass and vegetables, and the leaves of certain water trees and shrubs she liked. The same food followed her across the ten thousand miles of the Pacific to San Francisco. From there I took her three thousand miles overland in a special express car to New York. She went the final thirty miles by heated truck to my Jungle Camp at Amityville—and at last she was *home*.

By this time her tiger-torn hide was patched, her stump of an ear was healed, she was as healthy a young rhino as I have ever laid eyes on, and I was mighty proud of my surgery and my doctor's care for weeks and months. I kept her at Amityville for five months more to make certain she was in prime condition. She became a pet of mine, and when out of her pen waddled about after me like a dog. She took ripe bananas from my hand as docilely as my smallest monkey.

I now got in touch with George Vierheller at the St. Louis Zoo, for I wanted to get back some of the investment I had put into the rhino. The best offer he would make was \$8000. This was because she had only one ear, and zoological gardens are extremely particular about buying only perfect specimens. Prices had gone up since I had brought my first two armour-plated rhinos to America in 1922, and if it had not been for her tiger-torn ear my "baby" easily would have brought \$15,000.

For a few weeks longer I debated whether or not I would part with her. Except for that unfortunate ear—which would make no difference in her ability as a parent—she was as fine a rhino specimen as could be desired. I had grown genuinely fond of her through all the nursing and attention I had given and, besides, she was an added attraction for my Jungle Camp show. I finally decided, however, that she was too expensive a pet to keep and I made arrangements to ship her to St. Louis, where she would live happily for the rest of her many years on earth.

And then it happened—an entirely unforeseen event.

At this time I had in my Jungle Camp at Amityville seven big elephants, twenty-five or thirty antelope of various species, and several water-buffalo, along with my prize rhino. Between them they ate tons and tons of hay weekly, and I bought part of it from the farmers of Long Island while some of it, baled, came in from northern New York State by railroad.

Which bales of the hay did the mean trick I will never know

But some of it was old, wet, and mouldy. A careless keeper, late one evening, pitchforked some of it in the dusk into the pen of my rhino.

Next morning I was called. During the night the poison hay she had eaten had swollen her stomach—big as it was—to twice its natural size. Had I been called before dawn I might have saved her, by heroic treatment. Even the stomach of a beast that weighs close to a ton—as she did by this time—will respond to heat, emetics, and laxatives, exactly as will that of a human being.

But it was too late. My rhino was dead. When I reached her pen she was lying flat, as pathetic a sight as I have ever seen, for I had grown to love this baby during the many months I had travelled with her and attended her.

A stranger in a foreign land, she had perished through no fault of hers or mine. Aside from the \$8000 I lost on the deal, I shall always remember this gentle rhino whose life I saved in Assam jungle, only to lose in the civilization of Long Island.

Keeping them alive is a difficult business.

68

IN THE FALL OF 1937 I WENT TO HOLLYWOOD TO MAKE A SERIAL MOVIE for Columbia Pictures. While there, I fell in love with the climate and scenery of southern California all over again. I found many changes in Hollywood since my last visit there, and I liked them. I decided that I had been foot-loose long enough. At last I would establish a permanent home of my own, and where better than in this most pleasing of locations among palms and flowers and mountains and blue ocean?

In the heart of Encino in the sunny San Fernando valley I found exactly what I wanted—three and a half acres of oranges, lemons, limes, Japanese persimmons, avocados, pomegranates, pears, peaches, walnuts, and almonds. The low, rambling, ranch-type house of Monterey style was surrounded by six gigantic, ancient live oaks. It was a real home—not pretentious, but comfortable—and I bought it at once with the feeling that I was settled.

Into the house, along with new and modern pieces in certain rooms, I moved furniture I had bought in Asia and had had in storage for the past ten years—rare furniture from China, Siam, and India—fine, hand-carved pieces of teak, ebony, and lacquered hardwoods made by masters of the Oriental art of carving.

In the rear yard, under the shade of the great trees, I had built the aviaries I had dreamed of in the old Chicago days at Norwood