

INDIA

AND

TIGER-HUNTING.

BY

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SERIES I.



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As soon as the attendants had realized the nature of the catastrophe, they ran for a rope, affixed it to the hind leg of the oppressor, and would quickly have hauled him off, only that the rope, which was an absurdly thin one, snapped, and another and stouter one had to be procured. With this the excited beast was dragged away, and the wounded one, having had its leg liberated, was able to walk from the arena, but with one wound, at least, which I should think must have rendered its recovery doubtful. Thus terminated the part played by the buffaloes in this entertainment, and which were productive of the only *contretemps* that occurred throughout the proceedings.

The pageant was brought to a close by a contest between two large male rhinoceroses. At first these creatures seemed so apathetic that it looked as if nothing was to come of their interview; but by dint of a little persuasion they were induced to attack one another. There was nothing brilliant in their movements, but plenty of determination was manifested.

With his pointed upper lip ever on the ground, each drove his long upright horn before him as though he were engaged in ploughing; at least this is what he would have done had not his opponent carefully kept his nose touching that of his adversary, whose advance thus became impossible. They were well matched, and if one was made to recede a little he speedily recovered his ground. Each evidently felt that it would be fatal to let the other get under his guard. This, no doubt, sooner or later, would have occurred; but I suppose it was not intended that either of these valuable animals should be sacrificed, so, after they had been allowed to display

their curious method of attack and defence for about a quarter of an hour, they were separated, and removed to their private quarters. This operation was not so simple as it had been in the case of the buffaloes. It was easy to see that the rhinoceroses would have had no objection to slaughter any number of the human race without respect to persons ; but they had doubtless often performed ere this, and were aware that it would be useless to try and catch any of their nimble keepers. They therefore retired without very much ado.

Thus terminated the only spectacle of this kind that I had ever witnessed. The programme on such occasions is never twice the same ; sometimes elephants are made to contend, and I have even heard of a tiger being turned out to fight with a buffalo. In this case, I believe, the tiger was killed, which is not surprising, as it had doubtless been brought up from infancy a captive in a small cage, and could have no experience in the art of self-defence.

As I shall probably not again refer to native sports and pastimes, I will conclude the subject by giving an account of a really wonderful performance that I once saw executed with a sharp sword.

At the station of Mhow, about the time of which I am writing, weekly games were held by the native regiments there, and in connection with these I had heard, before my arrival at that place, of a havildar, *i.e.* sergeant, of one of the corps doing duty there, who regularly every week performed the most extraordinary feats in the presence of a large assembly of spectators.

Availing myself of the first opportunity that occurred after my arrival, I attended the meeting, which was held one