

ROUND-ABOUT RAMBLES

In Lands of

FACT AND FANCY

BY

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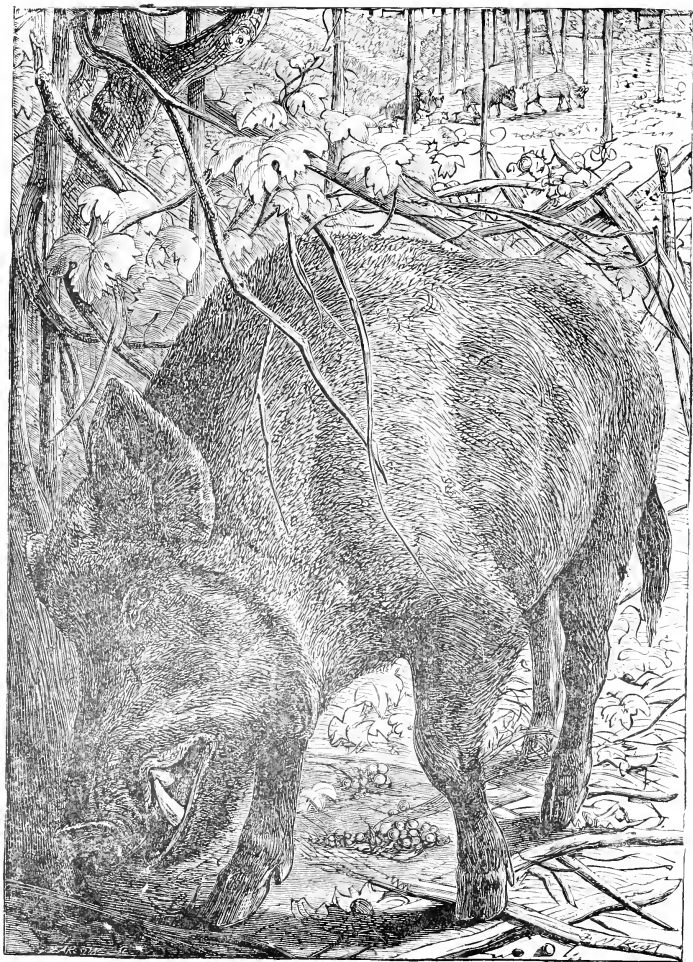
BIG GAME.

WHEN a man or a boy goes hunting—in a book—he might just as well go after good big game as after these little things that you see about home. So let us leave chipmunks, rabbits, and tit-birds to those poor fellows who have to shoot with real guns, and are obliged to be home in time for supper, and let us go out into the wide world, to hunt the very largest and most savage beasts we can find. It is perfectly safe,—in a book.

As we can go wherever we please, suppose we try our skill in hunting the Wild Boar. He will be a good beast to begin with, because he is tolerably convenient, being found in Southern Europe, Palestine, and neighboring countries, and also because he is such a destructive rascal, when he comes into the neighborhood of civilization, that every one will be much obliged to us for killing him. If he chances to get into a vineyard, in company with a set of his reckless fellows, there is small chance for a vintage that year. He tears down the vines, devours the grapes, green and ripe, and breaks and ruins trellises and everything within his reach.

If we are so fortunate as to get sight of him, we will find that he is no easy game to bag. Very different is he from his tame brethren with which we are acquainted—old grunTERS, who wallow about the mud-puddles and sleep serenely for hours, with their fat sides baking in the sun. The wild boar is as fast as a horse, and as savage as the crossdest bull. He can run so that you can scarcely catch up to him with your nag at the top of his speed, and when you do reach him he will be very apt, if you are not watchful, to rip up your horse with his tusks and cut some terrible gashes in your own legs, besides.

We must shoot this fellow as soon as we can get a good chance, for



WILD BOAR.

those sharp tusks will be ready for us, if we come too close, and if he increases the distance between us, he may get among the rocks and hills, where he will surely escape, for our horses cannot go over those rough ascents at the rate the boar would gallop.

When at last he is shot, the boar is capital eating. His flesh is far superior to common pork, possessing the peculiar delicate flavor which belongs to most wild meat. If we could shoot a wild boar every few days, we would be sure to fare very well during our hunting expedition.

But we must press on after other game, and we will now try and get a shot at a musk-ox. We shall have to go somewhat out of our way to find this animal, for he lives in the upper portions of North America, but an ocean and a continent or two are not at all difficult to cross—in a book.

The musk-ox is about as large as a small cow; he has very short legs, and horns which are very large and heavy. They extend over his forehead and seem as if they were parted in the middle, like a dandy's front hair. It is probable, if we get near enough to one of them, that we shall have no trouble in shooting him; but there is sometimes danger in this sport. A sailor once went out to hunt musk-oxen, and, to his great surprise, soon found that they intended to hunt him. A herd got after him, and one big fellow was on the point of crushing him with his great horns, when he dodged behind a rock, against which the furious animal came like a battering-ram.

In the fall and winter the flesh of the musk-ox is very good indeed, but in the spring it is not so nice. It then smells like your sister's glove-box (if she uses musk), only about one hundred times as strong. If we were to cut up one of these animals when his flesh is in this condition, we would find it almost impossible to get the smell off of our knives. The winter is certainly the time to shoot this game, for

then not only is his flesh very good, but his skin is covered with very long and warm hair, and we would find it even better, to keep us warm, than a buffalo robe.



THE MUSK-OX AND THE SAILOR.

While we are thinking of skins, we might as well get a variety of them, and we will find the fur of the brown bear very valuable.

So now for a brown bear. He, too, is found in the regions of ice and snow, and in the North of Europe he is hunted by the peasants in a way which we will not imitate. When they find a den or cave in the rocks in which they think a bear is concealed, these sturdy hunters make all sorts of noises to worry him out, and when at last the bear comes forth to see what is the matter, he finds a man standing in front

of his den, armed with a short lance with a long sharp head, and a bar of iron placed crosswise on the handle just below the head. Now, a full-grown brown bear is not afraid of a man who is armed with a little weapon like this, and so he approaches the hunter, and rearing on his hind legs, reaches forth his arms to give the man a good hug, if he comes any nearer.



HUNTING THE BROWN BEAR.

The man does come nearer, and, to the bear's great surprise, he thrusts forth his lance, which is longer than it looked, and drives the head of it into the animal's breast. The iron bar prevents the lance from entering too far into the body of the bear—a very necessary precaution, for if it was not there, the bear would push himself up

along the handle of the lance and have his great paws on the man in a minute or two. But the bar keeps the bear back, and the loss of blood soon renders him so weak that the hunter can throw him down and despatch him. It is strange that the bear never tries to pull the lance out of his body. He keeps pressing it in, trying all the time to get over it at his enemy.

This may be a good way to kill a bear, but I don't like it. It is cruel to the animal, and decidedly dangerous to the hunter. If I could not get a bear-skin in any other way than by killing the animal with a spear, I would let the bear keep his fur. If we see any brown bears we will shoot them with our rifles, a much safer and more humane method than the pike fashion.

After the bears, what shall we hunt? What do you say to a hippopotamus? That will be something that we are not accustomed to, at any rate. So away we go to the waters of Africa. If we travel along the shores of the Nile and other African rivers, we shall, no doubt, see some of these great creatures. But we must not expect to get a good sight of any of them, unless we are very careful to hide ourselves somewhere near where they are in the habit of coming out of the water to take a walk on land. Ordinarily all that can be seen of a hippopotamus is his head or his back, sticking up out of the water. They can stay under water for a long time, occasionally sticking up their noses to get a breath of air.

At night they often come on shore to see what they can find to eat. They live on grass and grains, which they find in the water and on land. These animals are generally shot or harpooned at night, when they come out of the water, but occasionally a hunter sees one on shore in the daytime, and he seldom finds any difficulty in shooting it, if he can hit it in the ear, which is its most vulnerable spot.

The hippopotamus is naturally a timid animal, and seldom turns on

its hunters, but sometimes it shows a courageous disposition. Some hunters, having shot a young but apparently a tolerably well-grown hippopotamus, were running up to their prize, when they were astounded by the old mother beast coming up out of the water and charging towards them with tremendous roars.



A BRAVE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

The hunters fired at her and then took to their heels, but having found her offspring, she stayed with it and did not pursue the men. If she had overtaken them, she would have been a terrible enemy to encounter.

If, during our night-watches on the river-banks, we are so fortunate as to shoot a hippopotamus, we shall find that we have a good supply

of very fine meat. And what we cannot eat the natives will be delighted to get. They consider a hippopotamus a most valuable prize, and as the meat is good and there is so very much of it, their joy when they kill one is not at all surprising. The only thing that troubles them after a successful hunt is that there are so few hippopotami killed, and so many negroes to eat them.

And now let us try a rhinoceros hunt. This animal is found in the same regions that the hippopotamus inhabits, but he also lives in Asia. He is rather a dangerous animal to hunt. He is a savage fellow when



A RHINOCEROS TURNING THE TABLES.

provoked ; he has a great horn on his nose, and a skin so thick that it is almost bullet-proof, and, besides that, he is the largest and strongest

animal on the earth, excepting the elephant. So no wonder he is a little unsafe to hunt.

The rhinoceros lives on grass and herbs, and makes his home entirely on the land. His flesh, like that of the hippopotamus, is very good to eat, but rhinoceros-beef ought to be dear, if the trouble and danger in getting it is taken into consideration when the price is fixed. He very often turns and charges on the hunters, and if he gets his horn under a man or a horse, he is likely to cause trouble.

It is said that a rhinoceros can kill an elephant, by ripping him up with his horn, and that the lion and all wild beasts are afraid of him. I am not at all surprised that this is the case, for I have examined the skin of a rhinoceros which I saw in a menagerie, and it was so thick and heavy that scarcely any animal could tear it, with teeth or claws, so as to get at the enemy within it. The rhinoceros which I saw in a cage was not quite full-grown. His horn was not more than an inch or two above his nose, but he was an enormous fellow, and his great hide, which was as hard as the sole of your shoe, hung on him in great folds, as if it had been made large so as to give him room to grow. He was gentle enough, and let me put my hand through the bars of his cage and take hold of his horn without making the slightest objection. But we will not find that kind of rhinoceros on the plains of Africa, and if we hunt one we must kill him very soon, or be prepared to get out of his way.

After a rhinoceros hunt we will not be apt to be easily frightened, no matter what beast we pursue, so we might as well go to India and hunt the Bengal tiger.

There is no animal more graceful in its movements, handsomer in shape and color, or more bloody and ferocious in its nature, than the Royal Bengal tiger. Even in a cage he is a magnificent creature. When I go to a menagerie, I always look first for the Bengal tigers.

If we go to hunt these animals, we had better ride upon elephants, for we must go into the jungles, where the tall reeds, through which the tigers roam, are higher than our heads.

When we are well in the jungle, we must be careful. It is sometimes very difficult to see a tiger, even if you are quite near to him, for the stripes on his skin are very much like the reeds and leaves of the jungle, and we must keep a very sharp lookout, and as soon as we see one we must be ready with our rifles, for a tiger is very apt to begin the fight, and he will think nothing of springing on the back of an elephant and dragging one of us to the ground. Sometimes the elephants are not used to hunting tigers, and when they see the savage beasts they turn and run. In that case there is often great



"A TIGER HUNT."

danger, for no one can fire coolly and with certain aim from the back of a bounding elephant.

If we find a tiger, and we get a good shot—or perhaps many good shots—at him, and he falls wounded or apparently dead, we must still be very careful about approaching him, for he is very hard to kill. Often, when pierced with many balls, a tiger is considered to have breathed his last, he springs up all of a sudden, seizes one of his hunters in his great jaws, tears him with his claws, and then falls back dead.

Hunters accustomed to the pursuit of tigers, always make sure that a tiger is dead before they come near his fallen body, and they often put many balls into him after he is stretched upon the ground.

We must by this time be so inured to danger in the pursuit of our big game, that we will go and hunt an animal which is, I think, the most dangerous creature with which man can contend. I mean the Gorilla.

This tremendous ape, as tall as a man, and as strong as a dozen men, has been called the king of the African forests. For many years travellers in Africa had heard from the natives wonderful stories of this gigantic and savage beast. The negroes believed that the gorilla, or *pongo*, as he was called by some tribes, was not only as ferocious and dangerous as a tiger, but almost as intelligent as a man. Some of them thought that he could talk, and that the only reason that he did not do so was because he did not wish to give himself the trouble.

Notwithstanding the stories of some travellers, it is probable that no white man ever saw a gorilla until Paul du Chaillu found them in Africa, where he went, in 1853, for the purpose of exploring the country which they inhabit.

As Mr. Chaillu has written several books for young folks, in which

he tells his experience with gorillas, I shall not relate any of his wonderful adventures with these animals, in which he killed some



"FIGHT WITH A GORILLA."

enormous fellows and at different times captured young ones, all of which, however, soon died. But the researches of this indefatigable and intrepid explorer have proved that the gorilla is, as the negroes reported him to be, a most terrible animal to encounter. When found, he often comes forward to meet the hunter, roaring like a great lion, and beating his breast in defiance. If a rifle-ball does not quickly put an end to him, he will rush upon his assailants, and one blow from his powerful arm will be enough to stretch a man senseless or dead upon the ground.

In a hand-to-hand combat with a gorilla,

a man, even though armed with a knife, has not the slightest chance for his life.

If we should be fortunate enough to shoot a gorilla, we may call ourselves great hunters, even without counting in the bears, the rhinoceroses, the tigers, and the other animals.

And when we return, proud and satisfied with our endeavors, we will prove to the poor fellows who were obliged to stay at home and shoot tit-birds and rabbits, with real guns, what an easy thing it is to hunt the biggest kind of game—in a book.