

squeaker, and I had the boar to myself, and killed him in an awkward lane off the "Lord Harry," who went splendidly.

Christmas Hunting with Westcott and two very exciting kills. I got the first spear off the Lord Harry in very close country. We also lost two other boars, and killed two sows before we parted. Ah! how grieved we were to part before we had killed another score or so together.

Bill and I rode a boar from "Hankhi" to "Wade," I getting the spear. The boar came to bay in a corner and until old Loocha came up (my pet hill-dog) and worried him, he would not move. We then dismounted and killed him off on foot, which was very exciting. Bill had Snooks' old horse "Cornopean," which, of course, could not fence a hang, and kept him back sadly.

I worked at Nardhun in the morning, and afterwards beat the fields towards Sarod. The first boar I speared in the Sarod road and he instantly charged an unlucky wight, (black I should say) who was coming along it, smashing a *matka* of ghee he was carrying, but doing him no mortal injury. He next turned on me and *ripped my boot open*, his tusk actually cutting through the sole and the sock without cutting me. I thought it was my turn then, and polished him off with a rasper. The second pig took over easy country. I crippled him and left my spear in him and he was finished by the beaters.

A WEEK'S SHOOTING IN ASSAM.

THE days of "Great Bags" on the Brahmaputra churs, the times when Yule shot over the Goalpara and Rungpore Districts, are now numbered with the past, but still an account of a week's shooting over the old hunting-grounds, may not prove uninteresting to you. In these days when every body is a *shikari*, and nearly every native carries a gun, the game has, even of the best beats, considerably diminished, and such is the case in Assam. However, a man who knows the ground can yet hope to make a decent and a varied bag, as I hope the sequel will shew you.

Our party was made up of my friend, who had come up on purpose to see a Rhinoceros, and the Assam shooting, and myself. We started from Goalpara on the 17th April, and the first day crossed over to the Sookchur, about 10 miles from Goalpara, on the western bank of the Brahmaputra. Nearly the whole day was taken up with crossing our Elephants and baggage, but as we had boats with us we sent on everything except our houdahs from Jogigopa, and beat down the Sookchur to where our encampment for the night was to be pitched. We only expected to pick up a few Deer, and even in this we were disappointed. We came across several of the large "Bellinghy" or Swamp Deer, and a few shots were fired both by myself and my friend, who I shall style, C; but the animals were so wild and the

jungle so dense, that we did not succeed in having any to bag, although C. wounded one or two badly.

Camp was reached at 6 p. m., and precious glad we were to get in, as we had had hard work in the hot sun, and no spirits worth speaking of. Unluckily there was no good news of any large game on the chur, so we made up our minds to shift camp the following day the 18th, which we accordingly did and came to a halt at Pooteemari, a place where I thought we should find the game if there was any left in the country. On the way I bagged a fine hen, floriken, and just as we reached camp and few brace of quail. Our camp was pitched on the banks of the *Chumpamuttee* river, a fine stream which comes down from the Bhootan Hills. We were both busily employed in pitching the tents, &c., and I had ordered the houdahs off the Elephants, when in ran a "Cowberd" shouting that that there was a Tiger in a patch of jungle close-by. The sun had just set, and as the houdahs were off the Elephants, we were reluctantly obliged to give up the idea of following the Tiger that evening ; but we started after him the next morning, and beat and re-beat the small patch of cover in which he had been marked, but without finding him. The brute must have decamped during the night, not liking our close proximity. He was heard roaring close by camp during the night. After looking up the Tiger, we beat the chur East of Pooteemari, and came upon some herds of Buffaloes, but they were as wild as Hawks, and made off as soon as they sighted our Elephants. I had but five Elephants, so I could not make much of an attempt at a drive, but I did what I could ; and after a tedious chase over the open chur, I succeeded in getting a long running shot at 200 yards or so, and wounded the Bull of the herd, but I must have hit him too far behind, as he succeeded in making off though rather lame-ly. The herds escaped us by getting into very heavy cover. The ground we were shooting over was a large open plain, (a splendid place for a gallop after a Boar or a Deer), bounded on all sides by heavy jungles. This jungle in parts was almost impenetrable, even to Elephants. It consisted of thick "*Null*" or reed jungle, much higher than the houdahs, and in many places it was so dense, that the Elephants were unable to force their way through. Underneath the jungle were paths used by the Rhinoceri and Buffaloes, and these animals, unimpeded by either houdah or guddee, could make their way through the jungle without difficulty. One of the herds of Buffaloes took refuge in the thickest part of this cover, and it is needless to say we did not succeed in dislodging them. I lost C. for nearly an hour, but by chance we met again and continued the beat. Just as we were emerging from the heavy jungle, a Rhinoceros got up within five yards of me, putting my Elephant (a small female) into a deadly funk, and she shewed signs of bolting with me, but was luckily stopped in time. The jungle was so heavy I could not see the Rhino ; and even if I had done so, my Elephant was so unsteady, that I could not have raised my

rifle with a hope of success. We continued the track of the Rhino, but did not pick him up again ; and in the course of a couple of hours' beating, we only succeeded in putting up a small Hog, Deer or two, and one Buffalo ; at the latter of which C. fired but did not bag. Our mahouts declared they saw another Rhino break, but I think they mistook the Bull Buffalo for a Rhino. We were now rather disgusted ; and as it was nearly noon, we thought of tiffin, and made our way to the banks of the river, and on the way I bagged a Hog Deer. After tiffin we continued the beat, and put up one Buffalo which broke away into heavy jungle undamaged.

Just at this moment an accident occurred which put an end to my shooting for the day. My man behind me in the houdah was cutting a reed for a pipe, and as he made a cut at the reed he had selected, I put up my hand (left) to prevent some brushwood getting into my face, and I received the full force of the blow of the hunting-knife across the fore-fingers of my hand. Luckily, the sinews were not severed, but it interfered with my shooting for the rest of the trip. We got news of a couple of wild Elephants, but the cover was far too heavy to think of following them up. The following day, April 19th, we beat the churs near Chapur, and we found game but were again unlucky. We had great difficulty in crossing the Chumpamutte owing to the quicksands, but at last about mid-day we managed to get to the ground. I was beating for, and we formed line at once. We soon found fresh tracks of Rhinoceros, but did not find the brutes at home, so we left this cover and made for some likely-looking jungle on ahead. We were passing through some heavy reed jungle when I saw C. raise his rifle and fire ; at what I could not see, but I soon discovered it to be at a Tiger. He had put it up from under his Elephant and had a capital open shot and wounded the beast. He wanted to push on at once and get on to the brute, but the mahout did not seem to see the matter in the same light, and made his Elephant funk ; the Tiger then made off, and we had an exciting chase, but eventually we lost the brute in heavy jungle.

We continued our beat much discouraged at our ill luck, and we now made for some heavy-looking cover near the Bhoirab Hill. We followed a herd of Buffalo into this cover, and soon came on them ; C. and self singled out a fine cow as the herd dashed, past ; and fired. She staggered into some heavy stuff and we lost all track of her. This was owing to the heavy wind that had sprung up since we started. The wind blowing causes the jungle to sway and move, and thus precludes the possibility of the sportsman following a wounded animal by the indication afforded by the shaking of the grass caused by the movements of the animal. It is a common thing in Assam to kill a Deer without ever having seen it. The sportsman fires at the movement of the grass, and if he has had any experience, he knows what beast is before him and its height, and very frequently is fortunate enough to hit it. It is however disappointing unless

the high wind had considerably lessened our chances of sport, but we continued the beat. We were now in most likely-looking ground for Rhinos, heavy thick "Nul" cover, with plenty of mud and water. We had beaten nearly to the end of the cover when there was a sudden rush of an animal past me, which I knew to be a Rhinoceros. I could not see the beast but I at once pushed in after it, and shortly afterwards was rewarded by a plucky charge. I wounded the beast badly, but was prevented getting my second gun by the cowardly behaviour of my Elephant, who turned tail, and nearly shook me out of the houdah. Nearly all Elephants fear the Rhinos and not one in a hundred can hear the snort of the brute without bolting or becoming so unsteady as to make good chance of a sure shot but poor. We tried to hack up the wounded brute, and after a long search we came on him again, but he made away as hard as his legs would carry him. I had a shot at him and so had C., but one might as well fire at the moon as at a Rhino running away. The bullet rarely takes effect. The only safe shots are behind the shoulder and through the head just above the eye. The Rhinoceros, however, as he galloped away from us, shewed himself off to advantage, and C. said he had never seen such a grand sight in the course of his shooting, as the skedaddle of our friend. His pace was considerably freshened by the parting shots about the posterior from C. and myself. We tried to get on his tracks again, but the heavy jungle and the high wind defeated all our efforts, and we were compelled to make our way to Chapur, where tiffin awaited us. I had had to part with my houdah-elephant which a friend had lent me, so here was another bit of ill-luck. However, C. and myself agreed ill-luck could go no further and we must have sport soon, and he turned out a true prophet. In the afternoon we tried for Antelope. I dare say you will be surprised to hear of Antelope in such close proximity to Rhinoceros' ground, but they are found about Chapur and along the Bhootan Dooars, when there is in places fine high table-land country very suitable to the nature of the Black Buck. They are however very scarce near Chapur, and the few there are, are very wild. Our ill-luck pursued us again, and we found none, so returned to camp rather disgusted. The morning was however to bring better things. I gave C. the best houdah-elephant, and I mounted an untried young "Dantal," and we made for the Chandodingah Hill. Just as we got near the Rhinoceros ground, we saw a fine Bull-buffalo at the edge of the heavy jungle; the place was a good one for a stalk, so C. and self dismounted from the Elephants, and crept towards him; but before we could get within shot, he became alarmed and retreated into heavy jungle and we lost him. Some villagers (Meches or Bodos) now came up and told us, they had marked down one or two Rhinoceroses in a cover close by, so taking a man with us to point out the spot, off we started. The cover was a jungle with a coarse high reed, twenty feet high, and so dense that I could not force my houdah-elephant through it, so I made my way along its edges, keeping the Beating

Elephants within the heavy stuff. We beat about for an hour or two without putting up the Rhinos, though there was no doubt from the tracks that they were there, and then we tried a lighter patch at the banks of the river. We had hardly got into this patch when up got two Rhinoceroses on C.'s side, and we turned on him, doubtful whether to charge, when C. settled the question for him by a cleverly-placed bullet in the head from his twelve-bore muzzle-loading rifle. The brute dropped dead with one ball. It proved a young female Rhino nearly full grown, with an indifferent horn. No sooner was the brute down than a hundred or so villagers appeared like vultures in the scenes, and before our return from tiffin, to which we now adjourned, they had cut up and distributed the carcass. After tiffin we continued the beat up some very likely-looking jungle. I got one shot at a Deer or large "Kalkroah" ghouls Deer," which I wounded and lost. About an hour after the commencement of the second beat, we put up a couple of Rhinos which went away right before us, and we gave chase as quickly as the Elephants could follow. We now pushed them into a small but thick patch of jungle ; I posted myself at one end and C. at the other, and put the beating-elephants in, when out came a fine Rhino towards me, which I at once fired at, but unfortunately my brute of an Elephant sighted the beast as soon as I did, and instantly turned tail and battled for his life in spite of the efforts of the mahouts to stop him ; guns and everything were in the utmost confusion, and indeed it was as much as I could do to keep my seat in the houdah. The Elephant did not stop until we had run nearly half a mile. The second Rhinos broke near C. and his Elephant remaining staunch. He had a capital shot which he turned to good account. The animal badly wounded, took to some thick jungle close by, and C. gave chase and got alongside and finished her off. His first shot had so sickened her, that she was too ready for a charge. She proved a fine female, with a really good horn.

It was very annoying for me losing the Rhino I had wounded and being run away with, but it is the fortune of shooting. We beat about for a long time in the hopes of finding the wounded Rhino but without success, and as the sun was now setting, we shaped our course homeward ; on the way we got into a herd of Buffaloes, about 18. Unfortunately it was rather too dark, or we should have made great havoc, among them. As it was, we only bagged one animal and lost one or two badly wounded ; darkness had now set in and made it impossible for us to track up the lame ones. The following morning we had to move camp, but as our next camp was on the banks of the Brahmaputra, I procured boats and sent all my traps by water, and marched with the Elephants shooting on the way. Our route lay over good shooting-ground, and we formed line at once. I knocked over a fine Hog-Deer Stag, which bolted out from under the Elephants. After beating for about two-hundred yards more, I heard a rush in the jungle before C. who was mounted on a "Dantal" (I had taken the best

Howdah éléphant to-day) which, on hearing the rush, immediately dashed away with his rider into a pool of water close by ; C. who was not accustomed to elephants I believe, imagined he was about to have a swim for it, an idea he did not relish, as the water was of nice rich color and none of the sweetest. The Elephant, however, thought better of it, having probably become aware, that the cause of his funk was only a Bear. The Bear, which was a fine black one (long haired) broke from the cover at a gallop about thirty yards from my elephant, and I turned him over with a ball from my W. R.'s breech-loading rifle. Another bullet or two settled him and we paddled him at once. He proved a very fine specimen. Bears, although common enough in Assam, are yet very rarely met with. In my experience I have only seen some nine or ten, and have only shot two or three. Heavy reed jungle swampy ground was not a likely place for a Bear certainly, but he might have been on his travels. Luckily we were close by the river and the boats just now happening to pass, I transferred the Bear and Deer from the Elephants to the boats ; we continued the beat. Some villagers came and told us that there were some Buffalo in a patch of jungle close by, so we formed line, C. and myself remained outside the cover while the Beating Elephants drove the game towards us. Soon after the Elephants had gone in, there was a great commotion, and I knew Buffaloes were on foot, but they were reluctant to leave their hiding place, and the small line three Elephants failed to dislodge them. A large Kalkroah Deer broke about one hundred and twenty yards from where C. and self were standing, she had right and left, but unfortunately from the unsteadiness of his Elephant, missed both barrels. I was more lucky and rolled the animal over, as he was making a clear bolt of it. I pushed into the cover now and helped the Beating Elephant, and our united efforts succeeded in driving out the Buffaloes who passed C., who however did not bring any of them to bay. We beat over yesterday's ground but did not find any more Rhinos, and all we bagged was one more large Kalkroah Deer which I knocked over.

The Kalkroah Deer is generally found in the hills and in heavy forests, and is rarely met with in the plains. It is the largest species of Deer found in Assam ; the horns are straight and have generally but two tires. The skin in the old male is nearly black. They are splendid Deer, and are very rare, or rather are seldom shot, as they inhabit "beats" that the sportsman hardly ever frequents. Crowds of villagers followed us and the Deer were no sooner killed than they were cut up and distributed. The villagers all knew me, as I had shot over these parts some years before and had then kept them in food for some months. They had also cause to remember me from the fact that I had successfully treated one of them who had been severely bitten in the thigh, by a Rhinos. The poor fellow was dreadfully wounded. The Rhinos had gashed him with his sharp tushes and had laid bare his leg from the groin to the knee. A few simple remedies effected his cure, and the villagers seemed grateful for the assistance I had render-

ed them. The man himself had died of fever between the times of my visits. After the shooting for the day was over, we had a twelve-mile march to Chapur which we reached about 6 p. m., and were met by the Zemindar who gave us the cheering news that Tigers, Rhinos, and Buffaloes were as common as barn-door fowls. I knew the ground well, so did not take all his stories as gospels, but I thought there was a good chance of picking up a Tiger, as I knew there were several about. Well off we started in the morning, and beat away until 12 o'clock, and saw nothing except one or two Hog Deer and the tracks of one or two Rhinos, who had certainly never been near the place since last rains. Very much disgusted, I made my way back to camp, and on the way made enquiries about the Shikar of the place and could elicit nothing satisfactory. On the way home saw a Doe Antelope which made off on seeing the Elephants approach. To the N. W. of Chapur there is a magnificent plain which must hold a good number of Antelopes, but I had no time to look them up. In the afternoon I left C. who did not care for small game shooting, and taking my Dog, beat for Quail of which I bagged some five or six couples.* While I was away from camp, a villager ran in and told C. that a Tiger had just pulled down a Cow on the borders of some jungle about one mile away. Off C. started, taking with him my breech-loading rifle and a dozen cartridges. He found the news correct and he followed up the track left by the Cow having been dragged off by the Tiger into some heavy grass, (a very foolish thing to do) and came on the cow yet alive.

The nature of the jungle heavy grass, with Jow, convinced him that, shooting on foot in Assam, is very different work from that sport in Central India, and he came back to camp. It was however too late in the evening to get the Elephants ready and push after the Tiger that day, and as I knew the Tiger would return and gorge himself as soon as he found all quiet, I did not mind waiting until the morning. At day-break we were after him, and just we got on the ground, the rain came down in torrents and drenched us to the skin, besides what was of much more importance, wetting our ammunition. I tried to shelter myself under a Mackintosh and an umbrella, and sulkily smoked away for an hour or so, until my patience became exhausted, and rain or no rain I determined to push after the Tiger at once. We got on the track, and soon followed up the Tiger into a heavy patch of Nul jungle where we came on the kill. The Elephants now became uneasy and showed signs of the proximity to the Tiger, who did not hesitate to shew himself but dashed out in front of my Elephant, and I had right and left with my breech-loader and wounded him. C.

* This year Quail have been unusually plentiful, and I have shot them and heard of their being shot in places where they were never heard of before. Can you explain the reason of their being so abundant?

NOTE.—So they were all round Calcutta last year unusually plentiful.—EDS., O. S. M.

now fired from the other side up the nullah and wounded him also, but the brute was a skulker and did not answer our shots by a plucky charge, but chose the wiser course for him and made for some dense jungle which unfortunately was close by, and there, in spite of a long and steady beat, we lost him. If my Elephant had been steadier as the Tiger broke, I must have killed the beast the first shot, but she funks on Tiger, and as this one got up from under her belly, her nerves were too severely tired and she shook badly. The rain was against us and my muzzle-loading rifle which I picked up to fire, as the Tiger was making off, missed fire both barrels. C.'s rifle also missed fire, so it is not surprising the brute got off. I was much disgusted at losing this Tiger as it was a very fine one (as all animals are that escape one's rifle) and I had not bagged a single Tiger since April last year. The heavy rain proved to me the superiority of breech over muzzle-loaders. Nearly all my muzzle-loaders missed fire when they were discharged on my return home, and although I purposely exposed my breech-loaders (gun and rifle,) to the heavy rain as much as possible, they fired with the usual quickness. I use Westley Richard's snap action breech-loaders, 12-bore, and I have found them most handy weapons and I would strongly recommend them to the notice of any person wanting to purchase a really good breech-loading gun. The action is the simplest I know, and is sufficiently strong for all purposes. Our shooting ended here, for, with the exception of some Deer shooting in the south bank of the Bramahputra, we did not do much. Could we have prolonged our trip and visited the Dooars, I should have been able to have recorded a large list of game killed and bagged, but I was compelled to return to my Head Quarters, and C.'s leave was nearly up, so I had to abandon the idea of shooting over what I think may be termed the happy hunting grounds of Bengal. However the shooting in the Dooars will not last much longer. I was creditably informed that the Palwans or Shikaries had killed no less than 200 Rhinos in the Goma Dooar this year. Say 50 were killed only, and I think it will be understood that game will soon be exterminated, as the Rhino throws but one-half which takes many years to come to maturity.

W.

CHILMART,

June 14th, 1867.

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"On board" Lahore.