

SIR,—I have read with interest Mr Lacy's letter on the extinction of the white rhinoceros in Zululand, and his scepticism in regard to Mr Varndell's statement of having shot one last year in that country.

Though Mr Lacy did not see any of them in the years he mentions up to 1875, they were existing in the part of Zululand that he speaks of in 1876, in which year I went on a shooting trip with Mr A. G. Moore, a well-known hunter and companion of John Dunn. I shot, in Usipebu's territory, an old bull white rhinoceros (whose skull I have), and I saw two others. Anyone who knows the South African animals will be aware that it is impossible to confound the white rhinoceros (*R. simus*) with the smaller black one (*R. bicornis*), the shape of the head and manner of feeding being quite different.

As regards the extermination of the former, Mr Selous says in his latest book of "Travel and Adventure in South-East Africa," that as "it was entirely confined to those parts of Southern, South-Eastern, and South-Western Africa where were to be found the open grassy tracts necessary to its existence, it is upon the verge of extinction." Therefore, if there are still any existing specimens, they would be most likely to be found in and about the dense bush near the coast, and where, from my own experience, it is almost impossible to penetrate. The rhinos had made tunnel-like passages, on either side of which and overhead was a *chevaux-de-frise* of the long sharp thorns of the mimosa.

I do not think Mr Baldwin can be pronounced an authority on South African game at the present time. I know that he has never revisited the country since he made his memorable hunting trip into Zululand so many years ago, when that country was a perfect sportsman's paradise, and the elephant roamed over the Berea at Durban, now the site of the villas of the colonists.

In conclusion, I think that Mr Lacy should not take exception to Mr Varndell describing the colour of the white rhinoceros as "a faint white." Though it is not really white, it is much lighter than its black congener, and in the sunlight has a decidedly pale colour, and could not by any means be described as black.

W. E. OATES.

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