



HENRY S. KING AND CO., LONDON.

• HOWDAH SHOOTING IN THE TERAI.

THE LARGE AND SMALL GAME OF BENGAL
AND THE NORTH-WESTERN
PROVINCES OF INDIA

BY

CAPTAIN J. H. BALDWIN, F.G.S.

LATE OF H. P. BENGAL STAFF CORPS

'Hæc olim meminisse juvabit'

'To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold'

Childe Harold, canto ii. stanza 25

HENRY S. KING & CO., LONDON

1876

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PREFACE.

DURING a lengthened furlough in England on medical certificate, I have agreeably occupied myself and whiled away many a long winter's evening by transcribing and condensing extracts from old journals, game registers, and note books, which I have kept religiously for a series of years, in fact almost from the day I entered the service seventeen years ago until the present time.

Throughout my Indian career I have had the good fortune, for one so enthusiastically fond of field sports, to be quartered in some of the best game districts in the Bengal Presidency, such as the Central Provinces, Oude, Assam, and Central India, where both large and small game were plentiful and varied, and where I had every opportunity of studying their habits. Moreover, on five different occasions I have made extensive sporting expeditions into the interior of the Himalayas, and twice visited parts of the most unfrequented and least known quarters of that glorious range, including one excursion in 1863 over the snow passes into Thibet.

Throughout these wanderings I have always made it a practice every evening on returning from the hill-side or the jungle, while impressions were still fresh on my memory, to note down anything that had occurred during the day that might possess an interest for the sportsman or the naturalist.

From constantly following my favourite pursuit at all times and

in all seasons, whenever my duties would permit, in the hills and in the plains, while continually in search of the denizens of the forest and the jungle, I have been fortunate enough to procure with my own gun and rifle specimens of almost every description of large and small game to be found in Bengal and the North Western Provinces of India, and I can consequently testify from personal experience as to their ways and habits, and the best manner of hunting them.

I have no pretensions to be a scientific naturalist, but may claim to be a close observer, and certainly a lover of nature.

My remarks on 'the Tiger' and 'Tiger Hunting' have been extended to greater length, and related with more detail, than observations on animals of less note. It must, however, be distinctly understood that my reason for dwelling longer than ordinary on this particular subject is not that my experience in tiger-shooting has been greater than in the pursuit of other large game—for I am well aware that in comparison with the achievements of many of our renowned Anglo-Indian hunters my own exploits have been inconsiderable—but because I believe that the general public take an especial interest in reading anything new in connection with the habits and chase of the royal tiger.

In writing this book—more especially in giving to the different animals their correct and scientific terms—I have derived much assistance from the valuable works of the late Dr. Jerdon, viz., 'The Mammals' and the 'Birds of India.' I have generally adopted that able writer's appellations for the different beasts and birds, have frequently quoted from his works, and on the rare occasions when I have ventured to express a contrary opinion on any point, it has always been with much diffidence.

All the animals depicted in the illustrations (with the exception of the Rhinoceros, Argali, and the three skulls of Buffalo and Ovis

Ammon) fell to my own rifle, and in the first instance were preserved in a rough state by my own hands.

The sketches of Himalayan scenery, and also that of the old Bundeela fort, have been engraved from my own drawings taken on the spot.¹

I gladly take this opportunity of tendering my grateful acknowledgments to numerous friends who have kindly assisted me with their advice and encouraged me to persevere in bringing this work to its present complete form.

In conclusion, I beg from my readers and critics the indulgence usually accorded to a first attempt. I venture to hope that the young hunter about to start for the East may glean some useful hints from these experiences, and that even the old Shikary, who has long since cast anchor in his native land and bid farewell for ever to the dense jungles and sunny plains of India, may feel a sympathetic interest in some of my adventures, and find his sporting recollections awakened by the perusal of the following pages.

J. H. B.

¹ The sketch of 'Howdah Shooting' has been kindly supplied by a friend.

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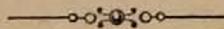
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THE
LARGE AND SMALL GAME OF BENGAL.



CHAPTER I.

THE TIGER (*Felis Tigris*).

Far off in desert dank and rude,
The tiger holds its solitude.—HEBER.

THE Tiger, in spite of numerous enemies and constant persecution, is still to be found in nearly all the large forests of India. In former years tigers were doubtless a scourge, now they are becoming rare even in the wooded parts of the country, where in days of yore they abounded, and where once a dozen could be shot by a party in the hot weather with but little difficulty. Two or three now will only be bagged over the same ground, and these not without great exertion and perseverance.

Skirting the base of the Himalayan range from end to end, and running in a direction nearly east and west for many hundreds of miles, stretches a vast irregular tract of high, and in many parts impenetrable jungle, termed the Terai.

The greater portion of this immense and almost unbounded cover consists of forest, dense thicket, and tangled vegetation; but in many parts, especially near the banks of rivers and margins of lakes, a very high description of tall feathery-tipped grass, appropriately termed 'elephant grass,' grows abundantly and spreads for miles over the face of the country. Where this grass has been burnt by the villagers to obtain fresh pastures for their cattle, park-like glades, clothed

in bright green, prevail, and to complete this splendid game preserve (perhaps, taken altogether, the finest in the world), numerous jheels and swamps here and there occur. Many of these patches of water or morass are of large extent, although from a distance, half-hidden from view by thick belts of tall reeds and sedge which encircle their margins, they may appear to be of no great size.

Sundry of these swamps, such as the well-known 'Māla' in the Philibheet district, never, however great the heat or scanty the rainfall, become dried up, but remain from one year's end to the other fathomless quagmires, of such a highly dangerous nature that only the foolhardy or ignorant sportsman would attempt forcing a howdah elephant over their treacherous surface.

Ere now, elephants urged on by their impetuous masters have been swallowed up in these abominable quagmires. So long as a wild beast is cunning enough (and there are many such) to make his den in one of these swamps, lying hidden throughout the day, only issuing forth from his lair in search of prey after nightfall, and returning again to his sanctuary before the dawn, he may reach a good old age, and eventually die a natural death, for nothing in the world can harm him.

This Terai, throughout its full extent is intersected and abundantly watered by divers noble rivers and purling streams, having their sources for the most part in far distant glaciers, or high up amidst the eternal snows. After cutting a passage through the higher steeps, and by many a tortuous route at length reaching the deep wall-bound glens dividing the middle ranges, the main streams gradually increase in volume, as each small rivulet and mountain torrent join in, and by degrees widen out their channels, and gliding rapidly over their rocky beds, as they progress through the broad open valleys of the lower hills, at length debouch into the plains.

Many of these glorious rivers, on reaching the comparatively speaking level country at the foot of the mountains, divide into numerous and more or less rapid watercourses, which form between their winding channels islands of all shapes and sizes. Some of these 'churs' (as they are termed by the natives), formed of shingle and sand, are partially or entirely bare, others are clothed in high thick grass and jhow (a description of shrub common on the banks of many Indian streams), while others again are covered with clumps of splendid forest timber, often including in their ranks gigantic specimens of sâl and seesum. These islands, when overspread with jungle, more

especially when there is an undergrowth of matted creepers, brake, and thick grass combined, harbour all kinds of wild animals, and are the special habitat of the royal tiger. With the towering Himalayas hard by, affording in their deep gorges and rocky clefts, many a safe retreat and unapproachable sanctuary; with numberless herds of deer and sounders of hog within easy reach, and thousands of village cattle feeding unprotected in the grassy glades of the Terai; and, finally, with an abundance of water (a *sine qua non* with the Feline genus), the mighty cat yet holds his own; and in out-of-the-way nooks and corners, impracticable for the use of howdah elephants, or perhaps beyond the reach of the well-equipped hunting parties which each year sally forth from our Indian cantonments bent on his destruction, 'Felis Tigris' may yet be said to flourish in almost undiminished numbers.

The Terai I believe to be by far the largest stronghold for tigers in the Indian Peninsula, but there are numberless other favourite haunts which, though of less extent, are many of them of such a nature as to present insurmountable difficulties to sportsmen. Such, for instance, are the well-known Sunderbuns, a group of low forest-covered islands situated at the mouth of the Ganges, and celebrated for holding a very large-framed breed of tiger.

There are various other jungles throughout Lower Bengal where tigers occur more or less abundantly; but it would be tedious to the reader, and, indeed, an almost impossible task, to name them all, so I will pass on, and briefly refer to quite another, and perhaps equally famed tract of country for holding tigers. I allude to Central India, or that vast region north of the Nerbudda, which includes Bhopal, Gwalior, Bundelkund, and numerous other states and provinces:

A country full of hills and rugged rocks,
Replenished with fierce, untamed beasts.—SHAKSPEARE.

Here again we have an immense stretch of wild, arid, and in many parts almost uninhabited country, which, though altogether differing in character from the Terai and the Bengal Sunderbuns, is yet perhaps equally good for holding tigers, and, moreover, presents fewer difficulties and obstacles for hunting them, so much so that I venture to say there are few Central-Indian jungles which, by the aid of elephants or beaters, cannot be thoroughly searched through or driven.

To this last fact I should attribute the yearly increasing scarcity of tigers in Central India. In some parts the animals are now altogether extinct, though doubtless there are still many good beats which year after year yield a limited number of the animals, and I have no doubt there are many other retreats in certain localities (such as the southern part of Rewah for instance) which have hardly ever been visited, much less thoroughly explored, by English sportsmen.

The Government reward¹ for slaying a tiger in Northern India is ridiculously small, only five rupees or ten shillings. This is very absurd, for nearly always there is more or less risk in ridding the country of such a formidable beast. Recently I believe the rewards have been increased in consequence of the consternation created by the reports sent home, and published in the newspapers of the loss of life, and injury to the villagers, by their cattle being carried off by tigers. It is undoubtedly true that great numbers of buffaloes and bullocks are annually destroyed in certain districts by tigers, panthers, and leopards. But even the destruction to cattle is much exaggerated. Almost in every village of Northern India, there is a low caste tribe called Chumars, who deal principally in hides, and are much given to killing cattle by means of poison, and various other ways, and putting the deaths down to tigers, and as it is contrary to the religion of high caste Hindoos (who are generally the proprietors of cattle) to have anything whatever to do with a deceased bullock, the hide naturally goes to the Chumars, who have a prescriptive right to the hide of every bullock dying in the village. But, the reports of deaths of human beings have been, I believe, greatly exaggerated. Many of the published reports of deaths by wild animals included those occasioned by snake bites.

Now, from personal experience, I venture to assert that for every one native, killed by all wild animals put together, at least ten lose their lives from the bites of cobras and other poisonous snakes. I am speaking of our North-Western provinces in general. During the rainy season and following months, from the beginning of July till the end of September, it is something terrible to calculate even approximately the number of poor creatures who die from snake bites. It is such a common thing for natives to lose their lives from the bite of a cobra,

¹ In some parts of Southern India the reward is, I am told, 20 to 25 rupees, and for a 'man-eater,' sometimes 50 or 100 rupees, according to the special nature of the case.

that little notice is taken of such an occurrence. Whereas if a man is killed by a tiger or panther, the fact is noised abroad through the whole district. There can be little doubt that the proper way to keep tigers down is to increase the reward; native shikaries (or hunters) will then take the trouble to make tiger-shooting a profession. Usually speaking, their fire-arms are of the rudest description, but they never throw a charge away, and generally when they get a fair shot, lodge the bullet—often a piece of hammered iron—or slugs, in the tiger's body, causing his death eventually, if he does not fall dead on the spot.

In certain parts of the country where tigers, panthers, and leopards have been exterminated, wild hog and deer of various kinds have so increased that the crops of the villages are very much injured by swarms of game feeding on the corn under cover of night. These creatures are the natural food of the tiger, and nature intended that he should prey on them, and a single pair of the royal beasts keep down other game over a vast extent of jungle, and thus do immense good instead of harm.

Some assert that there are two or three species of tiger in India alone, and that the animal found in the Sunderbuns is larger than, and of a different species from, his Central-Indian brother, but I do not think this is the case. Undoubtedly there is much diversity in colour, shade, size, and general appearance among tigers. I have seen skins of every shade: some, light yellow with numerous and narrow stripes, others, very dark yellow or rufous, with broad transverse bars of black. Some have a kind of double row of stripes as it were, some have small yellow spots in addition to the stripes. I have seen the skin of a white tiger (this however is a great rarity), and lastly, I have often seen skins of old animals very much faded, and the stripes almost imperceptible. No two tiger skins are ever I believe exactly alike. Yet, as I said before, in spite of skins differing in size, colour, and number of stripes, they all belong to one and the same species of tiger.

Another point of frequent discussion among sportsmen and naturalists, is the size of tigers. I have actually read of a tiger 15 feet in length, and need hardly say, that no such animal ever existed. Jerdon in his 'Mammalia' says: 'The average size of a full-grown tiger is from 9 to 9½ feet in length, but I fancy there is little doubt that occasionally tigers are killed 10 feet in length and perhaps a few inches over; but the stories of tigers 11 feet and 12 feet in length, so

often heard and repeated, certainly require confirmation, and I have not myself seen an authentic account of a tiger that measured more than 10 feet 2 inches or 10 feet 3 inches.'

I have consulted several of our most experienced Bengal sportsmen on this point, and with the exception of two, who extend the extreme length of a tiger to 10 feet 6 inches, they all bear out Dr. Jerdon's statement, and pronounce it to be correct. I myself have seen many large tigers fairly measured with a tape from the tip of the nose down the centre of the head and back to the tip of the tail, but only on one occasion have I seen one exceed 10 feet. This was a particularly fine male tiger, and he measured 10 feet 2 inches exactly. Tiger skins often measure 11 feet and upwards but these afford no criteria of the size of the animals they adorned, and a skin recently taken off an animal, will often stretch a foot and more, if pegged out very tight.

The tigress is smaller than the tiger, she is not so thickly built, nor has she such enormous muscular fore arms. In both sexes, the chief strength is in the fore part of the body, the neck, chest, shoulders and arms, which are immensely thick and powerful, enabling the animals to pull down and destroy their prey with hardly an effort, but the loins and hind quarters, though symmetrical and admirably proportioned, are not nearly so strongly built, and I believe that it is from this cause that tigers are unable to climb trees like other cats. They can make prodigious springs, but cannot clamber up a tree like a leopard or bear. The tigress generally produces two or three cubs at a litter, sometimes four, and only a few years ago five cubs were found in the body of a tigress killed in Central India. This, however, was an extraordinary occurrence.

On the birth of the young ones, or soon after, I believe, the male tiger separates from the female, though he is generally to be found in the neighbourhood. We often hear of the tiger striking down his prey with his paw, and doubtless occasionally he does so, but I am of opinion that this is not his usual mode of proceeding; he more generally, I believe, springs from an ambush, or by grovelling along the ground, approaches to within springing distance, then with a mighty bound, or succession of springs, he launches himself on his victim, and seizing it with his fangs by the back of the neck (not the throat), brings it to the ground, and then gives that fatal wrench or twist, which dislocates the neck and at once puts an end to the struggle. I have examined the carcasses of many scores of bullocks killed by tigers, and have in

the great majority of cases found the neck broken and the deep holes at the back of the neck caused by the tiger's fangs. Sometimes, though certainly less often, I have discovered undoubted evidence that the dead bullock had in the first instance been felled by a blow from the terrible fore-arm of the tiger.

Again, we hear of the tiger, having despatched his victim, proceeding to drink the blood from the neck, but this is never the case; frequently there is very little blood to be seen on the dead bullock or deer. I have never noticed the veins in the throat of a carcase laid open, or torn, as if for the purpose of getting at the blood, and if the tiger were in the habit of lapping the blood of a creature just killed, there certainly would be marks to show this on the throat.

Natives of India invariably drive their cattle home about sunset: in some villages in Bundelkund I have seen the cattle coming home of their own accord as it becomes dusk; instinct tells them of the danger of being abroad after sundown. The animals are then generally shut up in large pens, or sheds, or driven into some open spot in the centre of the village, and tethered to pegs or small posts driven into the ground.

Even then they are not always safe. I remember in Assam, a tiger in the dead of night leaping over a fence nearly five feet high into an enclosure such as I have described, seizing one of the largest oxen therein, and again leaping back, dragging the bullock after him across several fields, and over two hedges, a distance of over two hundred yards, till he reached some grass jungle, where he partly devoured his prey. In company with a brother officer, I sat up over that bullock for several hours, but no tiger came, so home we went. Our disgust was great, to hear next morning, that when we were under our blankets, he had come later and made a hearty meal off the remainder of the carcase, for only the head and hide remained. As I have said, this was a large, full-grown ox, and if I had not seen the spot with my own eyes, and carefully examined the pen in which the cattle had been shut, and from which this beast had been so easily extracted; and if I had not heard the account from the people of the village, how they had been awakened by the noise of the marauder and his struggling victim, and seen the traces across the fields made by the tiger dragging the carcase, I could hardly have believed it possible that the brute was possessed of such prodigious strength.

I remember hearing of another remarkable instance of the enormous muscular power possessed by these animals from a friend, which I will

relate as told to me. In the beginning of the rainy season *i.e.* about July, whilst he was encamped at a place called Dangra, Central India, intelligence was brought in to him, about mid-day, that a tiger had just before carried off a fine full-grown bullock from a herd grazing within a mile of his encampment. My friend proceeded to the place and inquired into the particulars. The cowherds showed him the spot where the bullock had been killed in the middle of an open field. The carcass had then been dragged by the tiger to the edge of a nullah, and thence carried across into a dense jungle. This *per se* was nothing very extraordinary, but on examining the tracks, it appeared that the tiger had dragged the bullock to the edge of the nullah, and then had evidently jumped with it held in his mouth across the ravine; of this there could be no doubt, for there were the tiger's footmarks up to the edge on the one side, but not a mark in the nullah below, the bed of which consisted of soft mud. On the far side he again found the prints of the brute's paws, and the deep indentation in the soft bank where the body of the bullock had struck the ground as the tiger landed with his prey.

Cattle are very often pulled down in broad daylight, the natives in charge not daring to interfere. The tiger almost always seizes one of the best conditioned beasts in the herd; he does not trouble himself about the old or the lean, a skeleton of this kind might wander about all night with impunity. Having dragged his victim under some bushes, into a clump of grass, or a neighbouring nullah, he usually devours a portion of the carcass, commencing always at the tail, leaving the remainder for a future meal; sometimes, though not often, he conceals the portion left for a second visit, probably the following night, and a cunning tiger who has been hunted, and is suspicious, will make one meal only off a carcass, never returning for fear of falling into a snare by so doing. Jerdon in his 'Mammals of India' writes as follows (from information obtained from the late Major Sherwill) on the tiger: 'Tigers are very partial to certain localities, and avoid others to all appearance quite as favourable covers. Year after year they will be found in one locality and killed, and never be seen in another close at hand apparently quite as suitable.' The above are admirable remarks, and well describe the peculiar liking tigers have for certain spots.

A pair will take up their residence in a certain hiding place, probably on the banks of some river where there is plenty of thick cover to conceal them, and numerous herds of cattle in the neighbourhood to prey

upon. At length their repeated depredations are reported to the district officers, and a party organised to put a stop to their evil doings. They are probably driven out and shot, but the strange thing is, that within a few months, a second pair, or perhaps one old male tiger, will have pitched upon the same stronghold; though it is difficult to say where they can have come from or what there is so particularly attractive in the spot. A tiger makes a long round in search of food at night, usually a circle of many miles, and woe betide the stray ox or horse that has not been driven home at eventide. A tiger on returning to a kill is most careful and suspicious in his approach, generally making a circle round before attempting to take his supper. If the carcass of the bullock has been disturbed from the position he left it in, handled in any way by a human being, or removed to more open ground, an old tiger will at once suspect danger and make off.

Usually speaking, a tiger, when shot through the body, if he escapes at the time, dies shortly after; he is a hot-blooded animal, and a wound soon mortifies. Bears, on the contrary, recover from desperate wounds. I need hardly say that, like the rest of the felidæ, tigers' claws are retractile; there are five on each fore paw, four on the hind; the claws are carried in a case as it were, and the tips never touch the ground except when he is running. In the centre of the foot there is a round pad, enabling the creature to walk without making the slightest noise and approach to within springing distance of such timid, restless creatures as many of the deer tribe are, without being discovered. I have often noticed when passing through the forest, deep indentations on trunks of trees, where a tiger has been stretching his claws (as we see our domestic cats continually doing). Some say it is to sharpen them, others to clean them, I think that it is just a lazy way of stretching themselves.

Jerdon in his 'Mammals of India,' when speaking of the leopard; tells us that, 'Like the tiger, the leopard will, if hungry, eat any dead carcass he can find.' Now, though I readily admit that occasionally the tiger will feed off a carcass which he has had no hand in killing, yet I am convinced that such an occurrence is most exceptional, and I venture to assert that one of the chief characteristics of the tiger is, that in its wild state it will only feed on prey of its own killing.

African hunters tell us of lions, when prowling round an encampment at night, carrying off meat hanging from trees; now tigers occasionally will walk round the tents and carry off a stray bullock or horse. Even camels are sometimes pulled down and devoured. This

has twice occurred to my own knowledge in the Lullutpore district; but never I believe will they touch venison or flesh of any kind, and the gentleman who a few years ago, when we heard so much about Indian tigers, proposed in a letter to one of the newspapers to exterminate 'Felis Tigris' by scattering hunks of meat saturated with poison in jungles inhabited by the royal beast, was not well acquainted with the habits of the animal, or he would never have made so absurd a proposition. I have often heard the question asked, 'Which is the more powerful animal, the African lion or the Asiatic tiger?' and in a fair combat which of the two would prevail? It certainly would be a grand sight to witness such a battle royal, and it is difficult to say which of two such powerful animals would come off the victor. An Anglo-Indian would, I imagine, argue in favour of him with the striped coat, and an African hunter probably back the gentleman with the shaggy mane. Such a battle did actually occur many years ago, at a menagerie, if I remember rightly. A tiger burst through the partition separating him from an African lion, and killed the latter in a few minutes, but the duel was not a fair one, for the tiger was a fine lusty male in the prime of life, whereas the lion was a patriarch whose best days had passed and whose teeth were in anything but fighting order.

Tigers can be found with tolerable certainty during the hot weather months, from about April 1 till June 15; the jungles during this period become dried up by the intense heat and scorching wind, so that for miles not a blade of green grass is to be seen, and nearly all the forest trees have dropped their leaves; moreover, the natives set fire to the grass in all directions to obtain a fresh crop, so that what was once a thick dense cover concealing all kinds of wild animals becomes a desolate black wilderness in a single day. The consequence is that only on the banks of rivers or swamps where there is yet moisture is there a particle of jungle left, and here, huddled together into this small compass, are the whole of the animals, both carnivora and ruminantia, of a large extent of country. When so situated tigers do not wander far; they can procure food close at hand with little trouble; starting after dusk for their nightly rounds, they return before daylight to the same lair.

After the first fall of rain, however, the grass and vegetation grow up with surprising quickness, and once more the animals spread over the country; one day a pair of tigers may be in one spot and the next ten or twelve miles away; in fact, there is no certainty where they may

be found, and consequently during the rains and cold season but few tigers are brought to bag.

In the hot weather the big cats have a beautiful smooth glossy coat, the hair being very short; as the temperature becomes colder the fur grows, and by November or December the winter coat is about an inch in length, and at the neck (especially just behind the jaws, where often there is a regular tuft of hair) still longer; this long coat again drops off about March or April. A tiger if in good health keeps his coat in perfect order: those we see at home, shut up in cages, never show the splendid condition, the muscular power, or the glossy coats and brilliancy of fur displayed by the wild ones of the jungle.

Not only is the tiger found all along the foot of the Himalayas, but it is not uncommon for the animal to ascend the valleys of that splendid range to a considerable height. I have seen their foot-marks and traces at a height of 8,000 feet. I remember a tigress inhabiting a forest above the Pindur river in Gurhwal for several years, and a deal of mischief she caused. A poor herdboy was killed within a mile of my tent by this tigress. The unfortunate fellow was driving home his buffaloes at eventide, later than was prudent, knowing, as he must have done, that this dangerous beast frequented this part, and as he was crossing a deep valley, by a narrow footpath with a dense jungle on either side, the tigress suddenly sprung on a cow-buffalo lagging behind the others and pulled it down. The brave lad most foolishly went to the rescue and attempted to drive the brute off her prey, and in doing so received so terrible a blow from the paw of the tigress that he never spoke again. At the time this happened my leave was up, and I had not even a day to spare, or I should certainly have devoted a week or two in an endeavour to destroy this pest.

Not far, however, from the spot where the tragedy now related occurred, a gentleman, a tea-planter, residing in that part of the country, killed a fine tiger with a single ball.

It is commonly supposed, I believe, by those who have never visited India, that it is a dangerous practice in the daytime to pass through jungles inhabited by tigers, but it is astonishing how very seldom one of the animals is seen unless search is made for him in his very lair. Moreover, when the sun is up, all wild beasts retire to their dens or caves, where they lie asleep till night sets in, so that there is little probability of meeting with a tiger in broad daylight. And should such an extraordinary, not to say unpleasant, meeting take place,

forty-nine out of fifty tigers would be only too glad, with a surly growl, to get out of the way of a man on foot passing through the forest—I will not guarantee anything after dark—provided that the latter only stood steady on viewing the enemy, or passed on as if he had not observed him with the striped coat.

Only once during my many wanderings have I met a tiger unexpectedly, and when unprepared for such a *vis-à-vis*. It happened as follows: Many years ago, when I was a 'Griffin' (or a novice in Indian ways and customs), I was quartered with a wing of my regiment in Assam. It was a very out-of-the-way part of the country and by no means a favourite station, but as the shooting in the neighbourhood was good, I was perfectly happy. Like most young fellows who are sportsmen, I made use of some of my servants for shooting purposes. Now bheesties, or water-carriers, are frequently useful men to take out on a shooting excursion, especially when after wild-fowl; and often enough the man who has charge of your dogs, called 'mehtur' or sweeper, is pressed into the service, but I made use of my 'dhobie' or washerman, for shikar expeditions, which was a most unusual practice, for as a rule they are a mild race of beings, quite unsuited for sport.

Nor was this man an exception, for though clever enough at his own vocation, he was a useless wretch at shikar, and was continually telling me, when I reprovèd him for anything, that it was not his business, which was true enough. He was very particular about his feet, and complained about the thorns lacerating them, so I gave him a pair of native shoes to wear when out with me. The consequence was that he made such a noise clumping along that when on the look-out for deer I always made him follow at a distance. It happened that we had a dinner-party at the mess: the guests consisted of two or three civilians and a few planters, who composed the whole of the station. We were short of supplies, having to live almost entirely on ducks and fowls, and my commandant requested me to sally forth and reinforce the cuisine with some game. I did not require much persuasion to go out; so about three o'clock I made a start, and as usual pressed my dhobie into the service to carry my rifle.

Within a mile or two of our barracks there was a dense jungle inhabited by buffalo and other animals, and I had been warned by the planters and others acquainted with the country that I ought never to be without a rifle, as at any time one might come across tiger, buffalo,

or even rhinoceros within a few miles of the station, and towards sunset there was a good chance of a shot at a hog-deer or a wild boar, so I always carried a weapon loaded with ball. We made our way through the grass in the direction of a village situated in the middle of the jungle, where a large extent of ground had been cleared for cultivation, and where I knew from previous visits there was very fair bird shooting. There were some fields of mustard skirting the grass jungle, and of an evening two descriptions of partridges, viz., the black and the kyah or marsh partridge, issued forth from the high cover to feed in the mustard. The sport was better than usual; in less than a couple of hours I had several brace of birds, including five quail, strung on the stick, and just before giving over, a hare jumped up, which I knocked over. This was a treasure, for hares were rare in that part of Assam. It was then time to leave off, for the sun was already low, we had a long two miles to tramp, and night sets in rapidly in the East.

We bent our steps homewards, I leading the way, with my shot-gun on my shoulder, my companion close behind carrying rifle and birds. The path was a winding one and led through tall feathery grass; every now and then we came to broad glades in the jungle, where, a few weeks before, the cover had been fired by the natives; these glades or openings were now covered with short fresh grass, and were favourite feeding-places for deer, especially early in the morning or towards sunset, so when we came to one of them, I slackened my pace, advanced more cautiously, and looked carefully round in hopes of viewing one of the animals I have mentioned. We had got through about half the journey, and the sun had altogether disappeared, though there was still sufficient light to see objects clearly, when we came to one of these above-noted glades, a narrow strip, perhaps a hundred yards long, and nowhere more than twenty yards broad, covered with grass about a foot in height, with small clumps of bushes here and there.

As I paused on coming out of the tall cover I noticed something moving about forty or fifty yards off to my left front, the tall feathery grass swaying about slightly, but quite sufficiently to attract attention; only a few minutes before, I had observed several head of cattle, and imagined that it was a stray bullock causing the movement on the edge of the cover; but the next moment a very different sort of creature appeared, for out walked a full-grown

tigress, and close behind her a cub of about ten or twelve months, I should say. She was crossing the glade broadside to me, from left to right, and quite unaware of my close proximity. Now as usual my follower was lagging behind, but the halt that I had made allowed him to catch me up: and on he came 'clump, clump, clump,' with his thick shoes. It was in vain that I motioned to him with my open hand to walk lightly, he only opened his eyes and inquired 'Kya hai, Sahib?' (What is it, Sir). I kept looking at the brute and then at the approaching man, till at length, as I expected, the tigress looked round, saw us at once, and slowly sank down in the grass, her eyes still fixed on us until nothing but her round head was to be seen.

I kept motioning to my stupid servant to give me the rifle and take the gun; he could not comprehend what was the matter till he was close to me, and just as I snatched the rifle from him and flung the gun on the ground he saw the head above the grass; he trembled all over and turned a kind of 'pea-green' colour. I put my hand on his shoulders and pushed him down behind a small thorn bush, and was just kneeling on one knee, not knowing very well in my own mind what was to be done next, when the tigress turned round, and by a rapid movement covered the remaining distance to the opposite side of the glade from that she had come from, and as she disappeared, in the very act of entering the high jungle, I took a snap shot at her. She gave a deep growl in return, but did not turn round on us. It was a foolish thing to do, but I could not for the life of me resist the temptation. I fancied I heard the thud of the bullet on her side, and asked my dhobie if such was his opinion, but he was in a state of collapse and only muttered 'let us be off out of this,' and indeed it was time to be off, for it was rapidly getting dark, and for what we knew to the contrary, there might be more tigers about, possibly paterfamilias himself, so having retired a short distance and reloaded, we left the path that we had hitherto been following, and by a detour in a few minutes reached a more open country, my servant leading the way and continually looking behind him, and I must confess that I caught myself more than once doing the same; but we were not followed, as might have happened after the provocation I had given to a tigress with young.

We reached the barracks soon after, and, full of excitement, I related the adventure to my brother officers. We ordered out four elephants with three howdahs up, to be ready soon after daylight, and the following

morning went straight to the spot, where I had seen the tigress, but after a careful examination could not discover a drop of blood or a sign that the animal had been wounded. We carefully searched the jungle in the neighbourhood, and within a quarter of a mile of the place discovered a regular den, where evidently the animals had resided for a long time: the heavy grass and reeds were beaten down flat, for a space of several yards, there was an unwholesome odour in the vicinity, and the ground was strewn with the bones of bullocks, deer and pigs, but the tigers had wisely taken their departure. I regretted when too late my hastiness on the previous evening; it was a rash act under the circumstances to have fired a shot, and had I left the mother and cub alone and unmolested, the probabilities are that they both would have fallen to our rifles the following morning. As for my dhobie, he prayed for his discharge, declaring that he wished to have no more of such adventures, and that 'shikar' was not what he had enlisted for in my service. There was some truth in this, so I promised to drag him out with me no more, and we made peace.

I believe that the greater number of tigers prey principally on cattle. It is so much easier for them to procure a fat bullock than to roam the whole jungle through after deer and hog, creatures always on the *qui vive*, and who frequently discover and escape from their enemy ere he can make good his spring. In Bundelkund a pair of tigers often in the hot weather take up their abode within a mile of a village, probably on the bank of some river or stream where there is sufficient cover to conceal them. Every three or four days these tyrants sally out from their lair and pull down a bullock or young buffalo; this state of things goes on often for months together, and the damage occasioned is enormous; but the natives appear to look on their losses in the light of a tax, or as their fate, that must be endured; day after day they drive out their flocks and herds to the very jungles where they well know that quite recently a bullock was taken.

The villagers, moreover, do not appear to be anxious, generally speaking, to get rid of their enemy. Many castes have a superstitious dread of assisting in killing a tiger, and if a party of European gentlemen do come into the neighbourhood purposely equipped for shooting tigers, such is the apathy of the people of the country, that unless they are acquainted with 'the sahibs,' or know them to be officers over their own district, with whom, for obvious reasons, they desire to be on good

terms, likely enough they will not open their mouths, or give the slightest information, although every one of them could, if he chose, point out the very spot where a tiger, which has quite recently devoured dozens of their cattle, lies at the very time concealed. This appears to be very extraordinary and unaccountable, but such is the case in many districts that I have visited, such as Jhansie, Lullutpore, and Gwalior.

A sportman to be successful in such wild districts as I have just named must be a tolerable linguist, accustomed to the ways and habits of the natives, and, above all, not too proud to associate and converse with the poor jungle tribes. He should invariably show kindness to the villagers, and keep his servants in a strict state of discipline, not allowing them to annoy or bully the natives, as they are constantly in the habit of doing, *e.g.* of obtaining food without paying for it, or of beating down the legitimate prices of the village bunniah or grain-seller.

On arriving at a village, he should in the evening send for the head men of the place, speak kindly to them, inquire after their crops, find out if the bunniah has sufficient corn, flour, &c., to supply him and his camp followers, and if not (which is very often the case, and such a sudden invasion is sometimes most inconvenient, not to say a severe tax on the villagers) he should enter into such arrangements that the people may have no cause to complain, and finally, he should make it an invariable practice, when striking his camp, and about to march elsewhere, to inquire if everything supplied to himself, servants, camp followers, and beaters, has been fully paid for. The probabilities are, that should he visit that same village on a future occasion, he will be welcomed by its inhabitants, and if there be a tiger prowling in the neighbourhood, the people will not only give information where to find him, but assist in driving him out.

Though several of my predecessors, well experienced in the ways and habits of the tiger, have pointed out that the animal seldom if ever roars, and altogether differs from the lion in this respect, yet we constantly see allusion made in print to the 'roar of the tiger;' in fact it is almost a proverbial expression. The only occasion on which I ever heard the animal give utterance to what might perhaps be called a roar, was once when I was encamped near a jungle, which had till quite recently been inhabited by a pair of tigers. The male tiger had however, just before our arrival, fallen to the matchlock of a Thakoor, and the disconsolate widow, the tigress, for hours together on the night

of our arrival, continued calling for her mate, often in a loud mournful cry which, as I said before, might perhaps be called a roar.

Mr. Dunlop, in his interesting work 'Hunting in the Himalayas,' well describes the truly unpleasant sound which a tiger utters when, full of fury, he comes out, and charges his foes. He says :

'Its charge is accompanied with a succession of rapid, startling, coughing growls.' But this again cannot be called a roar.

I have frequently at night heard tigers when going their rounds, (and hungry, I believe), make a low yawning whine. This is generally done by a tiger holding his head close to the ground : the yawn ends off with a kind of subdued grunt, not unlike distant thunder. More than once, when encamped high up in the Himalayas, on a still night, I have heard this same yawning whine, far down in the valleys below. Once when halting at a place called Ramgurh, between Nynee Tal and Almorah, in company with two friends, we heard a tiger, apparently about half a mile off, in a deep valley behind the Dawk Bungalow, and soon after, the repeated barking of two kakur (*Cervulus aureus*, the little barking deer) on the face of an opposite hill, showed the direction which the tiger was taking.

Again, when in camp with my brother-in-law in the Philibheet district near the banks of the Sardah, I was awakened one night by a police sentry, who was in a bit of a funk, I suspect, at having heard a tiger passing down the opposite bank of the river, only a few hundred yards off, and uttering, at intervals of perhaps a minute, the same moaning yawn that I have already described. The following morning I came across the tiger's punjahs, or foot-prints, and from the size of them he must have been a grand beast. Most cats dislike water, but a tiger disturbed by beaters and suspecting danger in front, will not shrink from taking to water, and swimming across a river, to avoid the snare laid for him. I have twice seen this happen.

A very extraordinary occurrence took place a few years ago near a place called Morari in the Lullutpore district. I tell the tale as it was told to me. Three sportsmen were out in the month of May beating for tigers, and one day put up a pair of them on the bank of a river. H——s (the narrator of the story) was posted on one side of the river, where the bank was very steep, rocky, and bare of trees ; his companions G——n, of the 93rd Highlanders (then stationed at Jhansie, and later of Ashantee fame), and C——e, were on the other bank, seated on a ledge of rock overhanging a thin strip of sparse jungle

between them and the river. All round them the foliage and thicket was very dense. As I have said, a pair of tigers were found, and driven forward by the shouts of the beaters. These showed themselves within gun-shot of the position where the two hunters on the rock awaited them. One beast came forward, and was hit through the body by G——n. It scrambled down the bank of the river, took to the water, and commenced swimming across a large, deep pool directly towards H——s, who called out to his comrades to cease firing, and that he would put an end to the wounded brute as soon as ever it reached his side of the river; which would have been an easy matter, I imagine, for he showed me where his post was, above the water and well out of harm's way. The pair of sportsmen however, did not take this good advice, but fired several more shots at the beast in the act of swimming across, and when it had reached about the very centre and deepest part of the pool, a shot from C——e took effect, and killed at once. H——s informed me that he believed the bullet struck the tiger on the back of the head, and then, extraordinary as it may read, the beast slowly sank and was never found again.

H——s assured me that from his position, whence he had a commanding and clear view, he could for nearly half a minute see the carcass of the tiger sinking farther and farther down in the deep blue water, until it altogether disappeared, and for ever; in spite of a large reward being offered, and every effort made to recover the dead animal. It was certainly a hard piece of luck. I have passed the spot several times, and once noticed within a mile of the place a pair of crocodiles lying side by side asleep on a slab of rock. It is possible that they or some of their brethren benefited by this extraordinary occurrence, for I suspect a crocodile would at once take advantage of such an opportunity and gladly make a meal off the carcass. I have read of instances in which the scaly reptile has not shrunk from a single combat with a tiger, when the latter has approached the water's edge to drink. One thing sportsmen should remember from the above tale—don't fire at a tiger when swimming in deep water.

The tiger has few enemies able or willing to attack him besides man. I have frequently been told by the jungle tribes of the Central provinces and Bundelkund, that the tiger, great and powerful as he is, fears the wild dog; that he would leave a jungle as soon as ever a pack of these ravenous brutes enter it, not only from dread of *Cuon rutilans* but also because he well knows that game of all kinds desert a jungle

soon after the arrival of a wild pack: and that occasionally they had known of tigers having been killed and devoured by wild dogs. I could never bring myself to believe this, though so repeatedly assured by old shikaries that to their certain knowledge instances had occurred during their time. It seems so unlikely that wild dogs should attack such a formidable foe as a tiger, in a combat with whom they would be certain of getting plenty of hard knocks even if they did prevail in the end, especially when the jungles hard by were probably full of all kinds of deer, which they could hunt down with ease. I say that until the last few years I was of opinion that such an occurrence was too improbable to be believed; my belief, however, was very much shaken by an inquiry held by my friend H——s and myself into the facts of the reported killing of a tiger by wild dogs in 1872, and I am not nearly so incredulous now.

Before joining H——s for our usual hot weather campaign against the feræ of the Lullutpore jungles, he had written to me, saying that a report had recently come in from the southern part of the district, of a tiger having been killed and devoured by wild dogs, and that he proposed we should make a point of visiting the spot and instituting a strict inquiry into the whole circumstances of the case. We did so about a month after, and from the testimony of the people of the place, it appeared that the natives inhabiting a small village in a very wild and out-of-the-way part of the country, had been aware for several months that a pair of tigers were in possession of the surrounding jungles. One night early in the hot weather, several of them when sitting out in the moonlight, heard a most extraordinary noise in the forest hard by; they imagined it to be occasioned by two male tigers fighting; not an unusual occurrence at certain times of the year. On the following morning when going out to cut wood, a party of them by chance came across the bones of a tiger recently killed, lying in every direction, with a large piece of flesh and skin adhering to one hind leg; moreover they found three wild dogs lying dead in one spot. We examined five or six most respectable natives separately, and cross-examined each one severely, to elicit the truth, and they certainly did not contradict one another in any material point, in fact so strong and complete was the chain of evidence, that we both felt inclined to change the opinion we had hitherto held on this interesting topic. Since then I have heard of another combat between similar champions, not terminating, however, with the same result. A sportsman was out in camp

in Central India in 1873, and a tiger killed a bullock not far from the encampment, and apparently while occupied at his gory repast was attacked by wild dogs, probably endeavouring to obtain possession of the prey. A tremendous battle had taken place, and no less than five wild dogs were left dead on the field, while the tiger appears to have made good his escape.

I am indebted to a friend for the following interesting anecdote giving an account of a mortal combat between a tiger and wild boar. He says:—

‘In the cold weather of 1865, when shooting in the Saugor district near a place called Preprasser, I found a large patch of grass trodden down and covered with blood and bristles. On searching about we found an old grey boar of the largest size lying dead, and on beating another cover close by for spotted deer, came across a dead tiger covered with wounds, and his bowels protruding. On tracking back we found marks of blood leading from where the boar was lying. The inference was clear. The tiger and old solitary wild boar had evidently had a fight, the former most probably the aggressor in the first instance. The result was the death of both the champions.’

The natives of Assam at certain seasons of the year kill numbers of deer, hog, and such like animals, by driving them into nets skilfully placed on the outskirts of thick patches of grass and thicket. Not unfrequently a tiger in endeavouring to steal off becomes entangled in the meshes of one of these nets, when there is usually a ‘cut and run’ made by the hunters. When stationed at Tezpoore, in May 1866, an unfortunate native was struck down by a netted tiger, and fearfully injured. The case was not altogether hopeless, if the sufferer had, without a moment’s delay, received proper treatment from a skilful surgeon, but the wounded man happened to be a ‘Holy Brahmin,’ so his friends would not consent to his being attended by an Englishman, and the consequence was he died shortly after.

In the Cossyah Hills, where tigers are very destructive in certain localities, I often noticed traps set for them, but have never known one captured, though leopards were constantly caught.

The tigers on the Eastern Frontier have an especial predilection for horse flesh, and when I was stationed at Cherra Poonjee in 1865, tigers at night constantly ascended the bare table land on which the station is built, from the heavy jungles at the foot of the Cossyah range, and carried off horses and ponies. Two of my brother officers sat up one

evening over the carcase of a 'tattoo' or pony, which had been killed the previous night, but only a small portion devoured, so that there was every probability of the marauder returning for a second meal. They took up a position in the ruins of an old building, on the edge of a plateau. Before the sun had set the tiger appeared, and two or three shots were fired at him, but he made off, though the sportsmen believed that he had been struck.

An extraordinary event happened while I was stationed at Jhansie. Our brigadier, Colonel B——n (since dead, I regret to say), and one of his subalterns, C——è, were out together in the Seepree district tiger shooting. One morning they put up a large tiger and shot him. The beaters reported to them that they had come across the carcase of a bear, recently killed and half eaten, near the spot where they had first put up the tiger just accounted for. The two sportsmen examined the remains of the bear, and became convinced that the tiger had not only killed, but devoured the missing portion of poor 'Bhaloo.' To clear up all doubt they had the tiger opened, and portions of the bear's flesh were found in his stomach. This is the only instance of the kind that I have ever heard of. It is not unusual when beating for large game to put up tigers and bears, sometimes also panthers, in the same cover.

There are three ways of carrying on tiger shooting practised by English sportsmen in the East. The first and most general plan is howdah shooting. A well-organised party of perhaps four guns, with fifteen or twenty elephants, more or less, even in these times may bag perhaps twenty tigers in a month or six weeks, besides other game. Howdah shooting in my opinion is decidedly the best mode for carrying on the sport.

Next we have the 'hankwa,' or driving certain patches or tracts of jungle with an army of beaters, the guns posted in advance, either in machāns (seats made with poles in lofty trees) or on the top of rocks or other commanding positions. Under such circumstances there is little if any more danger than in howdah shooting so far as the sportsmen are concerned, though there is always a risk of some of the beaters getting mauled. Occasionally, especially when driving the broad bed of a river, the guns are simply posted in an irregular line to cover the ground, and the sportsmen stand behind bushes or patches of grass, there being no trees or rocks at hand to take advantage of. I need hardly say that the sport is then dangerous, and is really what we so often hear about—Shooting on foot.

This plan of carrying on tiger shooting is adopted in Bundelkund, Gwalior, and other parts of Central India; also in Bombay; wherever, in fact, the ground is impracticable for using elephants.

In certain localities—only in forest country, I imagine—a system of driving the jungle with beaters in the direction of a line of machāns has been successfully carried on for a series of years, but only, so far as I am aware, in one particular part of the country specially adapted for the sport, viz. the Mirzapore jungles in the neighbourhood of the Soane river. The manner of conducting and carrying out successfully this excellent and safe method of tiger shooting has been fully described quite recently by ‘A late Customs’ Officer’ in his interesting work, ‘Past Days in India.’

There is yet another way of killing tigers, generally despised by Europeans, and that is, sitting up in a machān or tree over a kill or pool of water, and waiting till the tiger comes to make his supper or quench his thirst, as the case may be, and then giving his royal highness a warm reception. I must confess that I myself have a partiality for the sport, though I cannot boast of having met with any great success.

I have never had the good fortune to be included in one of the well-equipped and thoroughly organised parties that each year sweep through portions of our own and the Nepaul Terai, sometimes numbering thirty or more elephants. Good sport under such circumstances is almost certain, and a number of tigers are yearly killed in this manner with little difficulty, and with hardly any danger to the sportsmen. Such opportunities of sport are, however, usually speaking, open to only a few. I may say, however, that I have seen a fair amount of howdah shooting in Assam and Rohilkund, and for the benefit of those unacquainted with the manner of carrying on this sport, I will describe the general plan of procedure, and add a few hints which I have learnt by experience, and which may possibly be of use to a tyro.

The first and great point, after procuring leave of absence, making up a party, and agreeing to start on a certain date, is to obtain a sufficient number of elephants to beat with, and a few extra steady ones accustomed to the sport, to put the howdahs on. Often this is no easy matter. In certain parts of the country, such as the Philibheet district, for instance, elephants fit for tiger shooting are numerous and easily procured. Almost every Mussulman Zemindar, or native of any

rank, possesses one at least, sometimes two or three elephants, and in such a quarter there is little difficulty (especially if a district officer forms one of the party) in collecting the desired number. On the other hand, in Bundelkund, Gwalior, and in the Central Provinces, elephants for the most part are exceedingly scarce. Often there is the greatest trouble in engaging six or eight, and to obtain these the sportsmen have generally to depend on the assistance of the commissariat officer of the nearest large station. Some of the best howdah elephants that I have ever come across have been the property of Government. Having bespoken and engaged a sufficient number of both howdah and pad (beating) elephants, the next thing is to send out a gang of experienced shikaries as an advance guard a full month before a start is made, with instructions to proceed through the tract of country determined on as the most likely to produce sport, and to make full inquiries *en route* from the villagers and country people, and especially from local shikaries, if tigers are about, and where. They should ascertain where cattle have recently been killed, and proceed to the spot themselves to discover the lair of the tiger or tigers. I have already mentioned that in the hot weather these animals do not wander much, but keep in one particular spot; they will then inform the country people that 'the sahibs' are coming, and that if they will furnish reliable 'khubber' to the sportsmen on their arrival a few weeks later, and keep an eye meanwhile on the cattle slayers they will receive a handsome reward for their trouble.

Probably before the hunters get under way the leader of the gang sent in advance will have returned from his rounds, and if he is an intelligent, trustworthy man, a very good idea may be formed from his report of the prospect of a good bag being made, or the contrary.

By ascertaining all this before starting, and altering the course accordingly, so as to pick up one tiger reported here and another there, an immense amount of labour and time is saved.

On the arrival of the party, near some spot where a tiger has been reported to be in the neighbourhood, and an encampment having been formed—probably in a tope (clump) of trees near a village for the convenience of getting supplies—a consultation is held, in which the village shikary, should there be one, and the aheers or cattle-keepers of the village, are included. If the tiger, by recent depredations, has shown his exact whereabouts, or has been tracked to his lair, then no time should be lost in looking him up. But if, as is often the case

though he is known to be prowling about, there is a doubt, on account of the extent and denseness of the cover, as to his exact lair, other steps may be necessary to lead to ultimate success before ordering the elephants out.

An excellent plan, under the circumstances I have described, though it may appear cruel to some, is, to have four or five bullocks, or still better, young fat buffaloes, tied up that same evening in certain parts of the jungle frequented by the tiger, and left out during the night. The buffaloes should be hobbled, not tied up by ropes round the neck. The latter proceeding often awakens the suspicions of a cunning tiger, who straightway declines meddling with the bait, and makes off. The probabilities are that the jungle tyrant will within a day or two, likely enough the very first night, take one of these baits, and make a hearty meal off the unfortunate victim, and then there is every chance of his coming to grief, for usually speaking, having procured his dinner and filled his stomach, he becomes lazy, and meditating a second repast ere long off the same carcase, proceeds to some hiding-place not far off, lies down, and, gorged with flesh, speedily falls into a heavy sleep. He is awakened by a crashing in the cover, caused by a mob of huge animals forcing their way through the thicket, with his enemies the white faces on their backs. At once he comprehends the danger of his position, and stealthily attempts to flee, but in vain; his striped coat is seen, and presently a volley from the howdahs rolls him over; with an angry growl he recovers his legs, and turns round on his pursuers, but only to be speedily shot down.

After a 'kill'—the term used in India for the carcase of a bullock or buffalo killed by a tiger—has been reported, the usual plan adopted is for the sportsmen to turn out, get their howdahs up, and with as little delay as possible beat up carefully all the most likely places in the vicinity of the carcase. But before starting, an experienced leader should be elected from among the party, one well acquainted with the country and the manner of conducting howdah shooting, and his orders must be implicitly obeyed by all.

It is a fine sight to witness a line of elephants beating for big game, more especially to one mounted on a steady staunch elephant, with double-barrels arranged in readiness on each side. Sometimes on great occasions, as many as forty or fifty elephants are employed by one party, but I have never been out with more than twelve, which is a good number for three guns, one on either flank, slightly in advance

of the general line, the third in the centre. The elephants should not be hurried or pressed, but allowed to push their way leisurely through the cover.

If the jungle is very thick, and festoons of creepers and dense matted thicket bar the way, as is often the case, especially in forest country, the elephants should be kept tolerably close together. On reaching a more open country, with shorter or less tangled cover, they may be again extended, according as the leader may direct. He also gives orders for wheeling, changing direction, or any other manoeuvre that he may deem necessary.

When beating thick grass jungle extending for miles over a level country, as is often the case in Assam, the whole body of elephants will be kept in line; but when driving valleys or nullahs at the foot of ranges of hills, it is often necessary to send one or more guns on ahead to guard passes or gorges, through which a cunning tiger may make his escape, and then reach some rocky mountain where elephants cannot follow. These 'stops' having reached their positions in advance by a detour, and with as little noise as possible, the remainder of the elephants beat up towards them, and should the tiger be at home, he is placed between two fires, and probably one or other of the sportsmen gets a shot.

When sent on in front to guard a passage such as I have attempted to describe, the sportsman on reaching his post should if possible place his elephant behind a bush or clump of grass sufficiently high to partially conceal him, and yet with a good view all round; perfect silence and a good look-out should be kept. It is wonderful how silently the big cats approach.

I was once posted in such a position, far in advance of the beaters (it was in Bundelkund, where men are used to drive the jungle), and soon after the first shouts from the distant host had given notice that the 'hank,' *i.e.* drive, had commenced, a large tiger came stealing along. When I fired at him he certainly was not ten yards off, creeping along below my position, and without any idea that his days were numbered. By good luck my first shot struck him fair between the shoulders, breaking his back and completely flooring him there and then. I had taken the precaution, knowing the elephant to be an unsteady one, of turning his tail towards the beat, and thus obtained one steady shot before the elephant was aware of the proximity of the tiger. Immediately the former learnt by the dying growls of the

tiger what was up, he attempted to bolt, but fortunately the mahout managed to stop him after some little trouble. Tigers can see but little in the full glare of an Indian sun, and if an elephant will stand tolerably steady, even with little cover in the vicinity, and especially in the bed of a river, with rocks and boulders around him resembling much in colour his own hide, nine chances to one an advancing tiger does not become aware of his awkward position till quite close up, and well within range of the occupant of the howdah. Then with a pause and a look up he comprehends the snare laid for him, but probably all too late to escape the danger.

Half the battle in howdah shooting, in fact the chief and most important point of all, is to be mounted on a staunch elephant, with a good mahout on his neck, not afraid when the time comes to take his charge into action. A very moderate shot, under such favourable circumstances, may even in these times kill his half-dozen tigers in a single month, and without incurring the slightest risk or danger in accomplishing such a feat.

If on joining a party you are permitted to choose an elephant for your own howdah, do not be in a hurry or trust too much to appearances in making your selection. Fine, handsome tuskers are often the greatest cowards, and small, insignificant-looking females the very best and pluckiest; in fact I think female elephants are generally to be preferred.

Having selected your elephant find out if possible all about his or her antecedents and various peculiarities, and also inform yourself by inquiries what sort of character the mahout bears. Promise the latter a small reward for every head of large game you kill, and take an early opportunity of showing the man that you use straight powder. This will give him confidence, and he will not be afraid when the time comes to take you up to a crouching tiger. A mahout does not care to go in for a scrimmage knowing that he has a muff behind him, and that likely enough his elephant, perhaps himself, may get mauled in the first encounter. The mahout can with ease, should he be so inclined, and without his master being a bit the wiser, not only make his elephant unsteady, but prevent the animal, however willing, from going up to the tiger at all, although apparently, with voice, arms, and legs, using every endeavour to urge the huge beast on in the desired direction.

However, I have learnt by experience that it is as well if possible to

keep on good terms with your mahout and not lose your temper should he through nervousness or other cause misbehave. Sometimes he certainly is most aggravating, but it does not make things a bit better to abuse him continually, as I have known many do. At the same time watch the man carefully at first, especially if he is unknown to you. If you are certain that he is trifling with you, or not exerting himself to the utmost to obtain you shots, and keeping the elephant in his proper place at all times, then speak firmly to the man on returning home, and until his conduct improves stop all 'buksheesh' or reward. Generally speaking this will speedily bring him to his senses. After a good day's sport, if your elephant has done well, see him properly fed yourself, and give him a basket of native sweetmeats or 'mithāis' as these balls of sugar are called. There is nothing the noble brute likes better, and he knows perfectly well that he only gets such delicacies when he has been a good boy.

Before starting for a day's shooting you should see your own howdah put up. If you are not present your servants will be almost certain not to fasten it properly, and before you have been up half an hour, you will find the howdah all on one side. Then comes an untying of ropes and uncoupling of chains, and an attempt made once more to put the heavy box upright in its place again, at the same time keeping everyone waiting. Moreover, when once a howdah has slipped, it will be almost certain to slip again, but if put on square and properly secured at first starting it will remain so all day.

Perfect elephants for tiger shooting are extremely rare; some, the great majority by far, will not even approach a tiger; others, perhaps, will permit the occupant of the howdah to take a shot, but should the tiger charge, will wheel round and make off with a scream of terror. Others, again, become so excited as to go in for a little sport of their own, and when a tiger is rolled over by a bullet, rush forward with trunk in the air, and try to kneel on, kick, or stab him with their tusks. Few indeed are those that will stand perfectly steady when a tiger charges, trusting to their master in the howdah to save them from the teeth and claws of the enemy. It is impossible for the best shot in the world to do any execution mounted on the back of a bolting elephant; generally speaking it is as much as the unfortunate sportsman can do to hold on and keep his position, and should there be trees in the vicinity he runs a risk of coming to fearful grief against a low bough, which may dash the howdah to pieces and perhaps injure him severely. *On the other hand, if

the elephant stands firm there can hardly be an easier shot than a tiger making off or charging, and there is no excuse for missing such a mark.

A sportsman on the back of a steady elephant is perfectly safe, and I have never heard of a tiger succeeding in taking a man out of a howdah, though I have from off a pad elephant. I remember seeing the barrels of a rifle belonging to General V——h at Gowpatty deeply indented by a tiger's teeth. This tiger, in spite of being wounded, made good his charge on to the General's elephant. The old gentleman having fired 'every shot in the locker,' had to hold his rifle barrels across the assailant's jaws to prevent the brute from seizing him and dragging him from his howdah until a brother sportsman (if I remember rightly) came up alongside and knocked the tiger off with a ball through the body.

Occasionally, in spite of repeated wounds and a shower of balls, a tiger will succeed in making good his assault, and spring right on to the elephant's head or body (I have seen this happen twice), and then great care is necessary to get rid of the foe, for a ball carelessly aimed may severely injure or even kill the elephant. A most extraordinary accident of this kind happened some years ago in the Philibheet country. A zemindar of that district, by name Ram Lal, a good shot and sportsman, accidentally killed a tiger and his own elephant both with one bullet. Ram Lal himself related the story to me, and to this day I believe the bones of the elephant may be seen lying where this unfortunate affair took place. If I remember rightly Ram Lal had wounded the tiger near a swamp called the Mala; he was mounted on a female elephant, well known to be one of the best and staunchest for tiger shooting in Rohilkund. One or two friends were with him at the time, but their elephants could not be induced to face the wounded tiger, so he went in at the brute alone. The tiger charged and succeeded in fixing himself high up on the elephant's head. The mahout called out to his master to save him, and Ram Lal leaning over the howdah-rails attempted to shoot the tiger through the head and succeeded in doing so, but at the very second he drew the trigger the poor elephant, doubtless in great pain, threw up her head, and as ill luck would have it the bullet dropped both tiger and elephant stone dead, the latter uttering a loud cry as she fell.

The sportsman should always be in readiness for a shot. As I have said before, it is often when least expected and likely enough in the most unlooked-for quarter that you come across a tiger. I

well remember once in Assam losing my chance through not being in readiness when the time came. In company with two brother officers, I had been out beating with elephants through a long, hot day, and towards evening we turned in the direction of home, agreeing to fire at anything that might get up. Presently an old boar jumped up in the grass, almost between the feet of my elephant, and old 'Jung Bahadoor' tired and half asleep with the day's toil, gave such a start, that for the moment I was thrown off my balance. Steadying myself again, I fired right and left: one bullet told loud on his hide but took effect too far back to stop him, and when I had snatched up my second gun he had passed me. The second howdah poured in a broadside of three barrels, but the thick grass made the shooting difficult and on went piggy with a grunt of defiance; he had still, however, to pass a third enemy, Captain G——e of my regiment, a steady good ball shot. Bang! the boar staggered, but plucky to the last, on he went, at lessened speed; a second shot however closed his career and he subsided in the grass. We got down and in a few minutes had the beast 'padded,' (*i.e.* placed on a pad elephant) much to the apparent satisfaction of several of our Seikhs behind us in the howdahs, who prefer the flesh of the wild hog to any venison. We were then within two miles of our barracks, and imagined the day's sport to be over; about 200 yards from where we had 'padded' the boar, something stirred in a patch of grass, in front of my elephant, moving from left to right. The elephant stopped, curled up his trunk and trumpeted. Instead of being ready and prepared for a shot, I was sitting down in the howdah smoking, and now when all too late I caught up a loaded rifle (I had not even taken the trouble to re-charge the empty guns), but the animal, whatever it was, had passed on: my friend on the right fired at the moving grass but without effect; the jungle was too thick to let us catch a glimpse even of the game in front of us, till presently, to the astonishment of everyone, a fine tiger broke cover and made right across the open for the edge of some very high reeds. Captain G——e fired twice but the distance was too great. Having reloaded, we went in pursuit, but the opportunity was lost; the tiger reached some very thick jungle, and, do what we could, he was not to be found again; the sun got low, and we were compelled to give up the chase and make for home.

Usually speaking eight or nine o'clock is quite early enough to start on a tiger-shooting expedition in the hot weather months. Wild

animals, after wandering about in search of food all night, generally reach their lairs and dens about daylight; still it is just as well not to begin too early, or before the sun is well up, and perhaps by that time the gangs of shikaries and trackers, who will have been out very early, and gone their rounds to ascertain by the tracks what wild animals have been on the move since the previous evening, may have returned with the latest intelligence of their movements.

The howdah sportsman, beating for large game in forest jungles, will do well to keep a vigilant look-out for, and avoid brushing against, or even passing anywhere near, the nests of wild bees, which may often be seen hanging from the boughs of trees in the Terai, and in most of our Indian jungles.

The vicious inhabitants of these nests, are not to be trifled with. Not unfrequently, they will, without the slightest provocation, furiously attack the hunter, his attendants, and worst of all, the elephants. What follows can be easily imagined. Maddened with pain, and shrieking with terror, the elephants, in spite of the best endeavours of their mahouts to restrain them, rush headlong here, there, and everywhere. The unfortunate occupant of the howdah, driven frantic by a swarm of the abominable insects stinging him on the face and neck, his guns flying about in every direction, while he continually has to duck his head to avoid a scrape in the face from a branch, or the risk of being half strangled by the pendent loop of some tough creeper, considers himself lucky, if at length his mahout regains control over his affrighted charge before the howdah is dashed to pieces by coming in contact with the bough of a tree.

Bees' nests are fortunately not quite so common in Central India, though I can recall to mind a regular stampede in the Saugor country caused by one of our party carelessly shaking the very branch from which three bees' nests were hanging.

I will now pass on to the second mode I have mentioned of shooting tigers during the hot season, as carried on in Bundelkund, Gwalior, and other parts of Central India, viz. : by driving (or hanking as it is called) certain portions of jungle, generally the banks or beds of rivers, deep ravines, or low ranges of hills, with an army of beaters.

I need hardly say that this system of tiger shooting is only adopted in parts of the country where, on account of the rocky and broken state of the ground, it is impossible to use elephants, or where elephants cannot be procured to assist the sportsmen. I have already mentioned

how difficult it is in many districts, especially in Central India to obtain even a few elephants for sporting purposes.

Sometimes in a 'hankwa' (or drive with beaters) the guns are posted on the tops of rocks or other commanding heights, or the sportsmen clamber up into trees, high enough to be out of harm's way, and sit astride of boughs; occasionally in forest country, machāns or platforms made of stout poles and boughs, or charpoys (native bedsteads) lashed firmly to trees at a height of twelve or fifteen feet from the ground, are prepared for the guns. Sometimes, though not often, there are no trees, high rocks, or commanding positions to take advantage of, when the guns have simply to stand behind bushes, or patches of grass, to cover the ground on a level with the tiger should he show himself. This of course is dangerous, and under such circumstances not less than two well-armed sportsmen should be together at each post; but the great objection to this system of tiger shooting is, that there is always a danger, even when the best and most careful arrangements have been made, of some of the poor beaters getting mauled. It is the bounden duty of sportsmen to protect these poor fellows, who, for two annas (three pence)—often less—with nothing but a stick in their hands, enter a jungle so dense that often they can only see a few paces in front of them, to drive out a ferocious brute.

The great proportion of the wild beings who yearly offer their services as beaters, to Central Indian sportsmen, are poor, miserably clothed, and often half-starved mortals. And yet, savages as they are, I have seen them on trying occasions, and when exposed to real danger, exhibit wonderful pluck and coolness. They are in general honest and cheerful people, and among their leaders, are some of the most renowned trackers that the world can show.

The Red Indian of North America has long been renowned for his address as a tracker, whether it be on the hunting path or war trail; and the Caffre of Southern Africa has won golden opinions from English hunters for his ability and dogged perseverance in the art of 'spooring.' But Anglo-Indians, who like myself have repeatedly witnessed (and doubtless as often been lost in wonder at) the consummate skill and marvellous sagacity habitually displayed in following up the tracks of some wild animal by the lynx-eyed Bheels, Gonds, and Sahariahs of Bundelkund, more especially when the work is beset with every sort of difficulty—I say that those who have been spectators on such occasions will bear me out when I assert that these poor jungle people

are second to none as trackers, and that they cannot be surpassed by any nation under the sun in this, the most important qualification of all in the mysteries of woodcraft,—an accomplishment only to be acquired by years of patient study and practice.

It is wonderful how, in a large jungle extending for miles, these people will post the guns with extraordinary and unfailing skill and sagacity in the exact spot where the game, if there, will surely pass.

I have twice been present when unfortunate accidents have happened to beaters. Both instances occurred within the space of ten days, and it may have been the same tiger that struck down both the poor fellows. In the first instance no one was to blame but the unfortunate man, who lost his life through his own rash conduct in acting contrary to the express orders we had given that same morning—that there was to be no straggling, but that all the beaters were to keep together in one compact body. We were after a well-known savage tiger, that had killed several people at different times, and had no fear of human beings. For years he had been the pest of a whole district, and we had journeyed far in search of him. Knowing the character of the brute we had to deal with, we took special precautions to avoid accidents. A dozen policemen with loaded muskets were distributed among the beaters to protect them, and several more were furnished with blank ammunition to squib off as the beat advanced, and thus to drive the beast before them, till he reached a certain open spot, where the guns would be posted and where it was hoped that he would meet with his deserts.

The beat extended along the bank of a small river, covered with dense thorn bushes, and the edge of the water fringed with thick patches of bright green willow and reeds.

The tiger retired into one of these clumps and would not move further, in spite of stones being hurled in from above, and numerous shots fired. We had a single howdah elephant with us, but it was impossible, so steep and rocky were the banks of the river, to get him down to the required spot. My companion H——s ordered some of his men to set a light to the jungle, and after several futile attempts, they at length succeeded in establishing a regular blaze, which soon burnt up the thorn bushes, grass and everything dry, but the patch of green willows and reeds remained; and ensconced in the midst crouched the tiger. We were yet consulting what was to be done to oust the brute, when a savage growl, followed by a rush of the beaters up the bank,

attracted our attention, and then several of the men called out that one of their number had been struck down by the tiger. It was too true: a fine young 'aheer' or cattle-keeper, without saying a word to his companions, who were quite unaware of his intentions, had foolishly crept forward, to try and discover the actual spot where the tiger was hiding. He must have approached within a few feet of the animal, for it struck but one blow, without moving or exposing its body, and dashed the unfortunate man with great violence to the bottom of a stony ravine, from whence his comrades dragged him before we reached the spot. The poor fellow had a fearful injury on the head, caused either by the tiger's paw or the rocks against which he had been dashed, but we had hopes that it was not a mortal wound. We made the best bandage we could, tearing up a shirt, and having cut down some boughs and made a litter, speedily conveyed him to the higher ground, where the elephant was standing, and at once had him carried to our tents, while arrangements were being made to have him sent to the nearest hospital, where he would be properly attended to. But all was of no avail; the unfortunate man died that same evening; his skull was fractured, either by the blow of the tiger's paw, or by the fall into the nullah, probably the former.

Now, as I said before, no one was to blame in this unfortunate business but the poor lad himself; still it was a very sad occurrence, and we felt it the more when, after having made every effort to avenge his death, we were a few days later compelled to give up the chase of this cunning beast.

About nine or ten days later, near a place called Bhōnta, where I had shot a very large male tiger the previous year, we met with another catastrophe, possibly occasioned by the same brute. The jungle we were beating was on the same river and only eight or ten miles distant from the scene of the first unfortunate affair, and this was an instance of what may occur at any time when beaters are used.

We were driving a long patch of thick scrub jungle overhanging numerous narrow ravines and deep water-courses bordering the banks of the river Jamin, where a tiger was known to reside. Every possible precaution had been taken beforehand to prevent accidents, and only those who were willing to assist us in the hunt were employed as beaters. I was mounted on an elephant which on this occasion we were able to bring into use, and posted nearly half a mile ahead of the rest of the guns, where there was a break in the cover, and from my howdah I

could obtain a tolerably clear shot at an animal passing up the bank of the river. We distributed several armed men among the beaters and cautioned them to keep well together. Whether the tiger had heard or seen us as we made a detour to take up our posts, I am unable to say, but evidently he suspected danger ahead, and after being moved once or twice and driven forward by the shouts and noise behind him, he deliberately crouched down in a narrow crevice in the ground well concealed by the grass and bushes around, and there waited till the line of beaters approached; then he charged through them with a savage growl; a poor fellow crossed his path and was immediately struck down. He received a very severe flesh wound on the shoulder from which, however, he eventually recovered. But doubtless had the blow been delivered on the throat or head, the consequences would have been the same as in the first sad affair.

Now here was an instance of a beater getting severely mauled through no fault of his own or of anyone else, and it is the liability to such accidents that is the great objection to using men to drive the jungles for tigers. We certainly were most unfortunate in that year, and the two accidents which I have related are the only ones which have happened when I have been present, but I have known of many narrow escapes.

A pair of elephants, or even a single steady beast, are of the very greatest assistance in beating for tigers in the manner I have just described. Perhaps a tiger is fired at and wounded, and retires into some thick clump of bushes: to follow him into the covert on foot, under such circumstances, is the height of folly; and many an English gentleman has lost his life through rashly infringing this golden rule. These large cats, even on open ground, crouch so low and lie so flat that it is often difficult to distinguish their yellow coats from the sandy soil, and in tangled thicket or grass jungle it is impossible, even at a distance of a few paces, to make out distinctly the treacherous brute crouching to the earth and in readiness to make his spring. Then is the time when, if the ground will permit of his being brought into play, a single elephant comes in so usefully. With one or two sportsmen on his back, in readiness for a shot, guided by his mahout he advances into the thicket and compels the tiger either to show himself, or move his position, and in doing so the probabilities are that he exposes himself and offers a chance to one or other of the sportsmen; but the great point of all is, that this is accomplished without risking the lives

of either hunters or beaters : it is therefore a matter of the greatest importance before starting on a tiger-shooting expedition with beaters, to secure the services of one or two steady elephants. Moreover, the animals are most useful for various purposes on the line of march, such as carrying tents and baggage, and also for bringing home the game after a successful hunt.

Howdah shooting is a most luxurious way of carrying on sport, with your guns ranged on either side of you, and a big umbrella held over head by a native in the back seat of the howdah. Things under these circumstances are mightily different and considerably less harassing than plodding along all day on foot in the hot sun.

Of all sports tiger shooting on foot during the hot weather months is the most trying and arduous. It requires a man to be in robust and sound health and with the real spirit of the chase in him to go out day after day in a broiling sun, with a blast of scorching hot wind blowing as if from the mouth of a furnace, a blinding glare, clouds of dust, continual thirst, bathed in perspiration, much toil, and often after all with but poor success as a reward. He must indeed have the bumps of patience and perseverance strongly developed to carry him through such harassing work with equanimity. I have had my hands covered with blisters from the heat of the rifle barrels, my face and neck scorched and burnt to the colour of mahogany by the terrible sun, water constantly having to be poured on the back of my head to prevent a sun stroke and over my shoes to make the heat of the leather bearable. These are some of the trials a hunter must put up with ; but when at last he is successful and brings in one, perhaps a pair of royal tigers as the fruit of his exertions, he feels repaid for all that he has gone through, and his success encourages him to try again.

In Gwalior, Bundelkund, and other parts of Central India, the sportsman in search of tigers during the hot weather months in the vicinity of such rivers as the Scinde, Betwah, Dessaun, and many others, has frequently to cross miles of high, arid table lands covered with slabs of rock, low stunted trees, and bushes, a dreary desert without a vestige of a green leaf or sprouting twig, the ground baked as hard as iron by the glaring sun and scorching hot wind, and not a sign of a living creature except, perhaps, a stray ravine-deer, or may be a pair of sand-grouse. Suddenly and unexpectedly the scene changes, and the hunter comes upon a deep yawning ravine, called by the natives a 'koh,' the bed of which in the rainy season is a roaring rapid, but now is clothed in rich

green verdure and foliage, most refreshing to the eye after crossing miles of yellow dried-up plain. The rocky sides of these ravines are often perpendicular, some only a few score yards across from side to side, others of great breadth; generally there is a stream of water trickling down the centre, or here and there springs of water slowly ooze out and drip from the rocks, forming small pools below, and here, attracted by the water and cover, the wild animals from the adjacent country are collected; not only tigers, panthers, and bears (the latter especially) resort to these deep nullahs, but samber, cheetul, and other cervidæ.

Each of these deep chasms has a name, and during the months of April, May, and June they are the most likely spots of all to hold big game. Moreover, they can, generally speaking, be beaten with ease and success. So steep and wall-bound are the sides that no living creature can ascend them, except in certain spots well known to the natives, and here the guns are placed. Perhaps the sportsman is posted high up in the boughs of an old mangoe or burgot tree, well out of harm's way, or stands on a slab of rock overlooking the pass he is directed to guard; sometimes though not often in the very path where he with the striped coat, if at home and disturbed by the shouts of the beaters, will presently show himself. Generally speaking, two guns are sufficient, one on either side, to command one of these nullahs; occasionally when it is over 100 yards in width, and the foliage at the bottom is very dense, a third gun is necessary in the centre to prevent a tiger creeping by unseen.

A herd of samber or cheetul speedily show themselves after the beat has commenced, and the black coat of old Bruin, as he comes shuffling along in his usual ungainly fashion, is sure to catch the eye of the sportsman; but a crafty old tiger, perhaps accustomed to this kind of thing, advances slowly and cautiously without a sound to betray his footfall, now crouching along the sandy bed of the nullah, with overhanging bushes to screen him from view, now stealthily taking advantage of each patch of scrub, creeper, or low tangled thicket, and seldom crossing the open or exposing his yellow striped coat to his enemies. He, I say, unless a most vigilant watch is kept, will pass on, successfully run the gauntlet, and make good his escape without having been perceived by one of his numerous enemies.

• There are certain rules for tiger-shooting on foot, which, if carefully attended to, generally lead to success, and to the avoidance of

accidents. I am alluding to exceptional occasions, when, on account of there being no trees or high rocks to take advantage of, the guns are posted on foot, behind bushes, grass, or cover of any kind capable of affording concealment.

Never under the above circumstances fire at a tiger coming towards you, but allow him to pass, and then take your shot. There are several reasons for adhering carefully to this rule. In the first place unless the beast is shot dead, he probably observes his enemies in front of him, and if wounded, will be almost certain to charge. If he does, the position of the sportsman, unless well supported, is highly dangerous, for, like all cats, a tiger occasionally appears to be endued with nine lives, and in spite of receiving numerous mortal wounds, he may at length succeed in reaching his foes, and before dropping dead, inflict some fearful injury on the hunter or his followers. On the other hand, by remaining perfectly quiet till the tiger passes by and then taking a steady shot at him, much danger is avoided, for if not shot down, he nearly always springs forward, with a growl, and passes on without turning back on his enemies. Again, when a tiger is fired at coming directly towards the guns, if he does not charge he will almost to a certainty turn back, and should the beaters be close up will probably maul one or more of them.

Lastly, it is a very bad practice to fire in the direction of a number of beaters. I have often seen it done by thoughtless men, but it is most unfair to these poor fellows, who have quite enough danger to face, without being exposed to this additional risk. If the ground is at all level, a spinning bullet may make its way through several hundred yards of brushwood and grass, and with a large body of men advancing it is highly dangerous. I remember seeing a leathern bag which, suspended from the neck of a shikary assisting in a line of beaters, had been perforated by a bullet discharged from the rifle of a reckless and inconsiderate sportsman; in this case the ball must have passed within a few inches of the man's body.

To illustrate the danger of firing at a tiger coming towards you, I will relate what actually occurred to my friend H—s, when out tiger-shooting, near Danwur, on the banks of the Saur river, Lullutpore District, in the hot season of 1868. The account also shows the difficulty of getting a fair shot at the head of a tiger. H—s, who was by himself, and driving the jungle with beaters, commenced the morning of a splendid day's sport by a double shot at an enormous

tiger, which went away wounded, and was found dead the day after. Shortly after, in the same beat, a tigress and two nearly full-grown cubs came out close below his post. The tigress received a shot which tumbled her over dead into a crevice in the rocks, whence she was afterwards extricated. One cub disappeared, but the other came on and was quickly served the same way as its mother. The beat ended, and it was proposed to leave the dead tigers where they were lying, and beat higher up the river. My friend was next posted in a particularly awkward, not to say dangerous position. He stood between the steep bank of the river, which just about this spot was very deep, and a lot of rocks and brushwood on his right hand. The jungle in front was very dense, with only a small path running through it, evidently made by animals going to and fro to drink.

Shortly after the beat began H——s saw a tigress swim across from the right to the left hand side of the river and ensconce herself in a cave, but the beat coming on, she left this and came back to the right-hand bank, and then made her way straight down for where my friend was standing. She descended by the path I have mentioned, and presently came directly opposite to H——s and within a few paces of him. It was a truly awkward position; my friend aiming straight between the eyes of the brute, fired, and wounded it most severely, the animal was flung backwards as it were, but recovered herself again in an instant and, half-stunned, commenced battering a thorn bush to pieces close by, using both teeth and claws. H——s could not get a clear shot at her while thus occupied, and dared not fire again for fear of attracting her attention until he could make certain of killing her on the spot. At length he obtained a chance, and planting a shell fairly in the centre of the neck dropped her dead.

On examination it was found that the first shell had struck her the least thing too high, and glancing over the skull had only partially stunned her.

Take up the position pointed out to you as your post without making the slightest noise or talking; there should be no chopping of branches or snapping of dry sticks to assist in screening the guns; no tiger will show himself anywhere near a post after such a warning of danger. Never object to your post; if the man who places you is a competent authority on such matters, be assured that if, as is generally the case, he is a resident of the nearest village and knows every inch of the surrounding country, he understands far better than you

do where a tiger is likely to be found and which direction he will most probably take when aroused. Never neglect to take up as safe a position as possible; whether you believe a tiger will show himself or not, take advantage of a commanding spot, such as a high rock or a natural knoll. Do not remain at the foot of a tree, when you have been directed to climb up it, because you do not expect to see a tiger walk out, or are too lazy to make the exertion. Always face 'half right,' not directly towards the beat; it is generally easy enough, however cramped your position may be, to shoot to the left, but often very difficult, especially when sitting astride a bough, to turn round sufficiently to your right hand to bring the sights to bear on a beast passing quickly.

Tell your men sitting with you, should they happen to see something advancing before you, not to speak, but to draw your attention by pulling your coat, or touching you, and pointing. Keep your eyes well about: a tiger when driven forward by beaters approaches at a leisurely pace, and without making the slightest noise: he does not come bounding past, but deliberately, as if scorning to hurry himself. Unless passing through the thicket or at a distance, there can be no excuse for missing such a fair mark, but there is something about the grand brute as he comes striding along that is liable to make the heart beat quickly and unsteady even those accustomed to meeting with a royal tiger. But if possible get the better of such feelings before our friend draws near; let him come on, even in an exposed position: if your clothes are of some dull tint, as they should be, and you remain perfectly motionless, the brute will not observe you—a movement, however, or a rustle of leaves will draw immediate attention—allow him to pass, and then, take a steady, deliberate aim, just behind the shoulder, and draw trigger. Whatever happens, hit or miss, remain quiet, not a move, keep your eye on the beast if possible, and put in a fresh cartridge. If you have dropped him in his tracks, although to all appearance he is stone dead, be most careful in approaching the animal. Many a sad accident has happened at the moment of victory through too great eagerness and want of caution in going up to a beast lying apparently dead, but yet with just enough life left in it to strike a last blow. Before walking close up to the prize, make one of your men throw two or three stones at him, and should there be a sign of his again recovering his legs, put in another shot at the back of the head, which probably will be a settler. Never leave your post or show yourself till the

beaters actually reach you. I have known a tiger suddenly appear at the very end of a beat, and only a few yards in front of the line of coolies.

It is a good plan always to pay the beaters yourself after a day's shooting, or at any rate to see them paid in your presence, and before starting in the morning give to each man a wad, to be produced in the evening at pay time. This is necessary to prevent lazy rascals, who have done nothing, putting in their claim with those really deserving, and in a large assembly of men, perhaps eighty or a hundred, it is impossible to decide who has rendered assistance or the contrary, and the production of a wad as a ticket does away with this difficulty.

I will now relate the most successful day's tiger-shooting that I ever was engaged in. As is very often the case, we met with a great piece of luck when we little expected it.

In April 1871, I left Jhansie to join my old sporting friend H——s at Lullutpore. The weather, as is usually the case at that time of year, was exceedingly hot; however, the greater the heat and drier the weather, the better chance there was of sport, which was some consolation to us. I found my friend encamped on the banks of the river Betwah. There was a large 'mela,' or fair going on, and an immense concourse of people assembled, and he, as police officer, was there to keep order. The mahseer fishing in the Betwah was fairly good, though the fish averaged a small size, and there was also a little shooting in the neighbourhood, so time passed pleasantly enough, and at length, when the fair came to an end and the multitude had dispersed, we were able to pack up and be off. We steered south in the direction of the Saugor country, making for a village in the vicinity of which a pair of tigers had made themselves notorious by their depredations.

Our disappointment was great on reaching the place to hear that a Thakoor had been there beforehand, and a week previously had shot the male tiger from a machān; however, the tigress was still said to be in the neighbourhood. We encamped under a splendid old tamarind tree, and that evening, when sitting out in the moonlight enjoying our smoke, we heard the tigress roaring, doubtless for the loss of her mate.¹ Sometimes the sound appeared to come from one direction, sometimes from another. I could not sleep soundly, and when I did sleep at all

¹ I have already alluded to this exceptional instance of a tigress roaring, at page 17.

it was to dream of tigers. We made sure of finding her the following day, but after four fruitless beats on the morrow we gave it up and returned to camp. That night the jungles were silent for the first time (so the villagers informed us) since the death of the tiger.

The following morning we tried the jungles in another direction, working hard all day; but though plenty of game was seen, there was no sign of the tigress, so we struck our camp and again journeyed further south, till after several marches we came on the Jamin river, and encamped near a small village called Midurwaho. The country in the vicinity was very wild, covered with scrub jungle, very little cultivation, and few villages. H——s had a police guard here, and on our arrival the men composing the guard assured us that there were undoubtedly tigers in the neighbourhood, and that numerous cattle had been killed quite recently, a buffalo only one day before, and within half a mile of our tents. The following day was spent in collecting beaters and making every preparation for a 'hank'; towards evening a thunderstorm came on, and heavy rain fell. Now although this made the air cool and pleasant after three weeks of exceeding great heat, yet nothing could have been more unfortunate for our chance of sport. In very hot, dry weather tigers remain near water, and lie panting under some overhanging willow close down to a pool or stream, but when rain falls they often leave their haunts, and wander about all over the country.

However, after the rain the ground was soft and in fine condition for tracking, and we fully expected to hear when our men came in, that, although the tigers had left their lair and gone either up or down the river, yet that our trackers, by following the punjahs, or footmarks, had been able to trace and mark down the noble game. The gang of shikaries returned about eight o'clock, but with no encouraging news to cheer us with. They had discovered no recent traces of the tigers, since the previous night's rain, and it seemed doubtful if they really were in the neighbourhood. The morning was cloudy; thunder still rumbled overhead. About nine o'clock we turned out, and proceeded to beat both banks of the river in the most likely spots. Large herds of spotted deer came trooping out, among them several fine stags, but not a trigger was drawn at such small game for fear of disturbing the animals of which we were in search.

The first three beats proved blank, and there was only one short one left. It began to rain again; our men wished us to return home as they believed that there was little use in persevering under such

luckless circumstances, but most fortunately we agreed after a brief consultation, in spite of the rain which now descended in torrents, to finish up by driving the remaining small strip. We did not even take the trouble to draw lots for posts as usual.

The Jamin river in the locality we were about to beat was very narrow. There was thick thorny jungle only on one bank (the side we intended to drive). The river curved considerably at this spot, and just at the chief bend there was a ford across, where the stream ran very shallow, and this was the position selected to post the guns and bar the way.

Our shikaries informed us that if a tiger were put up and came forward, the chances were that he would either take along the crest of the steep bank, where the cover was densest, or descend and attempt a passage across by the ford I have mentioned to the opposite bank, with the intention of reaching and making his escape among a labyrinth of deep nullahs and watercourses lower down on that side. My post was a very commanding and safe one on the summit of the high river bank, which was almost perpendicular where it faced the water. In front of me, and entrenching, as it were, my position, wound a deep and broad ravine, running from the open country, and gradually deepening till at length it cut through the steep river bank, and joined the main channel of the Jamin. This gully was now dry, though doubtless in the rainy season it became a roaring torrent. Not only was my station a secure one, but it was impossible for a tiger to pass down the river without my obtaining a full view of him, and offering a splendid chance and a clear shot to my rifle as he crossed the dry nullah I have attempted to describe directly below me, and extending far away to my right.

H——s' post was a very different and far less satisfactory position, dangerous, in fact: of that there could be no doubt—about midway across in the bed of the river, and just above the ford, there was a sandy island, and at one end of it a group of low, shelving rocks. My friend stood on a flat slab, the highest of these boulders, but even then he was only a few feet above the level of the ground, and by no means at a safe elevation. I looked right down on my companion, perhaps sixty or seventy yards from me, and we each had a couple of stout fellows well armed, seated behind us.

H——s evidently did not expect much, for when the rain had stopped, I saw him sit down and pull a book out of his pocket to occupy

himself, while our shikaries went round to arrange the beaters. We neither of us had an idea what an exciting scene was about to take place.

Presently the 'hankwa' began. First, a single shot as a signal, immediately followed by the usual shout raised from one end of the line to the other, a crashing caused by stones hurled down from above, a braying of horns and the rub-a-dub-dub of numerous tom-toms—altogether a din and combination of discordant sounds enough to scare every living creature within miles of the spot. Out poured the inhabitants of the jungle. An old solitary boar, several cheetah, including one fine stag, and scores of pea-fowl. I was just admiring a beautiful spotted deer, standing in front of us within twenty yards, and offering a most tempting shot, when one of my companions pulled my coat and pointed, at the same time whispering 'Dekho, Sahib; "Sher"' (or, look sir, a tiger), and sure enough about a hundred yards off there he stood on a rising piece of ground fronting towards us, partially concealed by the bushes, and looking back over his shoulder towards the beaters, with his tail moving slowly from one side to the other; in another moment he disappeared, coming right towards us. I gave a low whistle to my companion, who looked up, and the signal I made with my hand soon brought him to 'attention.' The next minute the grass moved about thirty yards to my right front, and out stepped a tiger. Before descending the ravine between us he paused, looked up, and saw us; drew back, and crouched down so low that I could only see his head and white throat. I aimed rather low and fired. A savage growl followed, I could not see for the smoke what actually happened, but both my men said that the beast was severely hit, for that he half reared up and fell over. At my shot the shouts of the beaters, the noise of drums, horns, and all kinds of music redoubled, and just when I had reloaded I saw a second and a larger tiger, or rather tigress, show herself near the same spot where we had originally viewed the first one. She came on, but the last glimpse that I caught of her showed that she was making for the river, and probably with the intention of crossing, so I called out to my friend to look out below, and the words were hardly out of my mouth when bang went his rifle. The shot was followed by a succession of savage growls, and the next thing we who were above beheld, was the tiger charging straight at H — s. A general volley from the guns staggered her resolution, and she partially turned, and as she did so received a ball

behind the ear which rolled her over dead. I remember feeling that I could breathe again as I saw her throw up her head and pitch over, for although at the last she appeared to change her original intention of taking revenge, yet she was a deal too near H——s to be pleasant.

The tigress was an old one, very beautifully marked, and of larger size than ordinary, measuring $9\frac{1}{4}$ feet. The first thing to be done was to stop the beat, for there was the first tiger yet unaccounted for, and it was not improbable that he might yet have strength to do mischief, although both my men were of opinion that, if not dead, he could hardly move from the spot where he had dropped. A careful reconnaissance was made round the patch of grass and bushes where the beast had fallen over wounded, and at length one of the scouts—a Pathan policeman, who would persist in thrusting his head wherever there was most danger—spied him out, lying extended on the ground, but with life still in him. He asked if he should put an end to him with his musket. We assented, and the next moment our second tiger was accounted for. Not one of us had an idea that there was yet a third which had hitherto escaped the notice of everyone, and which lay crouching to the earth only a short distance from where we were standing.

The beat was over, and the main body of beaters descended by a path to the river to quench their thirst and refresh themselves after their exertions. H——s went back with some of his men to try and get one of the elephants down to carry home the game. After some trouble he succeeded, and presently returned, mounted in a howdah, and fortunately with his loaded rifle beside him. The ground, covered with deep cracks and holes, was very trying and embarrassing to the elephant's advance, but in about a quarter of an hour or so he succeeded in surmounting the various obstacles in his path, and at length approached to within sixty yards or so of the spot where, in company with three or four men, I was standing close to the carcase of the tiger first fired at, which proved to be a young male about four years old, and measuring close on nine feet. At length, after turning backwards and forwards two or three times, the elephant gained the edge of the high bank overlooking the river. There happened to be a thick patch of tall dry grass and thicket directly in the way of his further progress, and the huge beast came crashing and forcing a passage through the centre of it, in order to reach the spot where we were standing, and pick up the dead tiger.

When about forty yards from us the elephant, while still in the middle of the thicket, stopped, and trumpeted. The mahout, imagining that his charge smelt for the first time one of the dead tigers, gave the poor beast a thump on the head with his iron hook to urge him forward. The elephant, with trunk curled and ears pricked up, slowly advanced, and then, to the astonishment of everyone present, without other warning than a loud 'wouf,' a tiger sprang right from under the animal's very feet on to the upper part of his trunk. The elephant shrieked out, but stood tolerably steady; and H——s, catching up his rifle, in an instant stood up in the howdah, and gave the foe a good shot in the body, which fairly doubled him up, and dropped him like a sack among the bushes below, not dead, however, for before another shot could be put in, he scrambled down over the edge of the bank, and took refuge among a mass of roots, creepers, and thick foliage. When we had recovered a little from the surprise of thus meeting with a third tiger, we held a consultation what was to be done next. We first attended to the poor elephant whose trunk, badly clawed, though fortunately not bitten, was streaming with blood. He retired out of action, and we directed the mahout to send down a second elephant we had in reserve by the same route that the first had taken, that the injured beast might return home at once, to be cared for and have his wounds dressed.

Our day's sport, and truly it was an extraordinary and exciting one, was not over yet. The third tiger had, as I have already mentioned, taken refuge on the almost perpendicular bank of the river, where he was safe from his enemies for the present, for it was impossible to see him from above, hidden as he was under a mass of overhanging creepers and bushes. That he was severely wounded there could be no doubt, but on rolling stones down we could hear him 'swear,' so probably there was some fighting left in him yet. What was to be done? The river flowed broad and deep directly below where the beast lay concealed, and the only possible way of getting a shot at him seemed to be from the other side of the water, so it was agreed that I should cross over by the ford, and come round till directly opposite the spot, while my companion kept guard above.

In about ten minutes I reached the desired position, and found the water shallower than we had imagined. Wading in, knee deep, I approached to within twenty yards of where the tiger was concealed, and in perfect safety, for the river ran rapidly between myself and

the enemy. For five minutes or more we (that is, I and two natives) stood straining our eyes, and then gradually approached nearer, till the water reached our hips. Still we could make out nothing, when suddenly the man on my right clutched me by the arm, and eagerly pointed to my right front, where the roots, creepers, and hanging bushes overshadowed a hollow in the bank. Then at last I made the brute out, lying perfectly flat, only his head and neck, the ridge of his back, and here and there a glimpse of his tawny hide were visible. He seemed to be aware that he was now discovered, for as I raised my rifle he put back his ears, opened his mouth, made that face that cats only can make, and spat at me. The next moment a heavy bullet struck him just where the neck joins the shoulder, and passing through the body lengthways, made its exit on the opposite side: it was a finisher. His head dropped, he hung for a moment, then slowly rolled over, and down he came crash through the bushes and splash into the river below. He was evidently quite dead, for his head remained under water; we watched him for a few moments to make sure that life was extinct, and then when there could be no further doubt, approached closer. The water at the deepest part was up to our armpits, but as we neared the high bank it became shallower again.

Presently one of my companions got a grip of the hind leg of the dead tiger, and I clutched him by the tail, the third man also giving a helping hand, but we could only just hold him and prevent the carcase from sinking, and perhaps from being swept away by the current. Assistance was, however, at hand; in another minute half a score of beaters reached the spot, and out we lugged him on to the shingle.

It was only then, when the excitement was over, that I discovered that I had a splitting headache, and felt faint and done. It took us fully another half-hour to get the tigers carried up on to the higher ground, and strapped, one in front of the howdah, and two behind, making with ourselves a very tolerable load for the elephant to carry. It was late in the afternoon when we reached our tents, and as we passed the village, the inhabitants came out to meet us, one and all rejoicing at their enemies being thus disposed of. The beaters received a suitable reward; to our policemen, who had worked hard, and rendered great assistance, we gave a fat sheep for their dinners, and half-a-dozen of rum to make merry with; and that evening we ourselves killed our tigers again over a couple of bottles of champagne.

When making a start for a day's tiger-shooting, whether with or without elephants, it is always as well to bring a basket of fireworks with you. In a country intersected with ravines and nullahs they often prove most useful. For instance, a savage tiger may take refuge under a mass of creepers and bushes in some deep rocky gorge where, on account of the nature of the ground, an elephant is of no use whatever. Then is the time when a well-aimed rocket will often move the beast, without the necessity of men being employed to drive him out, and in doing so endangering their lives.

There is a very simple kind of firework, called by the natives 'anar,' procurable at any small town, a kind of hand-grenade, made of clay and baked hard, and filled with combustibles (the natives constantly use these things at marriage festivals). On being lighted by a small fuse, and thrown into a patch of thick jungle, this diminutive bomb explodes with a loud report. I have seen bears driven out of caves several times by these explosive balls, and when rockets are not procurable, they make very tolerable substitutes. Sometimes these inventions are dangerous things to handle. A poor Sikh policeman, who was assisting us one day in driving out a tiger, had his hand badly cut and shattered by one of these balls exploding before he could throw it into a bush, as was his intention. Fireworks seem to ruffle the temper of the tiger, and often a well-aimed rocket, or half-a-dozen explosive balls fizzing, banging, and jumping about near his royal person, exasperates him to such a degree that out he comes and immediately charges his foes.

Tigers have been known to charge elephants immediately on being found, and without a shot having been fired to irritate or provoke them: a tigress with cubs is especially given to this practice. Generally speaking, I think they will charge when wounded, followed up, and driven into a corner, but I have seen a tiger even under these circumstances turn tail, and make every endeavour to escape, without attempting to molest his pursuers. The very last one I shot—a fine heavy brute with a splendid skin—behaved in this manner, and showed no sport; but he was very severely wounded, and perhaps not in a condition to fight.

Three of us were out in the Bala Behut country, Lullutpore, and one morning proceeded to drive the bed of a small river, where a tiger was known to be lying concealed. Two machāns had been prepared the previous evening commanding the principal passes; in fact, two

guns were quite sufficient for all purposes, and there was hardly room for a third anywhere. On drawing lots, my two friends got the posts, and I imagined that I was out of it altogether, and had not the remotest chance of getting a shot. H——s, who had killed many tigers in his time, good-naturedly offered me his machān, the most likely position of all for a shot, but luckily, as it turned out, I said that I would abide by the lot I had drawn. In company with two natives carrying rifles, and a shikary, who offered to put me where there was just one chance, I followed by his directions the high bank of the river, till we came to a spot where several small ravines branched off in different directions from the main channel of the river close at hand. This river, I must explain, like many others in that part of India, dwindled down in the hottest time of the year to a mere stream, and often disappeared altogether under ground for a certain distance, leaving nothing but boulders, rocks, and dry shingle to mark its course when flooded, again to reappear further on above the surface of its deep-cut channel, and slowly glide past in full view. At the spot where I had taken up my position the bed of the river below me was perfectly dry for a space of perhaps a hundred yards, though thickly covered over with low stunted willows and bushes. There was a high rock with an old tree overshadowing it, and my guide directed me to take my seat on the top of a slab, which I accordingly did, but without even a distant hope of viewing the tiger, much less getting a shot at him. After waiting upwards of half an hour the line of beaters at length approached our post. As yet only a bear had been seen, and he had broken back and made his escape. I was about to resign my rifle to an attendant, when, could it be possible? I caught a glimpse of a tawny hide gliding through the thicket. Again I saw the striped yellow coat, but only for an instant; the beast was fully eighty yards off, and making off in the direction of the opposite bank. For the third time I saw the tiger, and instantly fired, and on ducking my head under the smoke, great was my delight to see him lying sprawling. In another instant, however, he had recovered himself, glared round (I should not have cared to have been standing anywhere near him just at that moment), and then bounded across the open shingle to a rather large and almost isolated clump of green willows—my second shot striking the stones under his belly—and disappeared under the foliage. I immediately despatched one of my men to inform my companions of what had happened, and to desire them to join me, and ordered a second man

to ascend a high tree close at hand, and to keep a sharp look-out if the wounded beast again moved from where we had last seen him. Presently H——s and F——n came up, and we consulted together what was to be done.

I have already mentioned that the clump of jungle into which the tiger had retired was almost detached from the mainland, being joined to it by a long narrow sandbank covered with bushes and grass, and with the exception of this one narrow strip in rear, the patch was surrounded by a perfectly open shingle of dry rocks and white pebbles. We had not an elephant with us, or there would have been no difficulty whatever in finishing off the wounded beast. At length it was agreed that I should advance in company with three good men in a compact body, and examine the spot where the tiger had last been seen.

H——s was to cross the river some distance back, and come round the farther bank, till he reached a spot directly opposite to where we supposed our friend to be hidden, so as to give him a warm reception if I drove him across. This was a dangerous task, none of us were positive that the tiger had not proceeded beyond the clump of jungle I have named, and reached the mainland, and if so, he might be crouching anywhere in the dense thicket, or among the numerous narrow ravines and clefts which covered and intersected the river bank, and I need hardly say, that to come suddenly on the wounded and exasperated brute under such circumstances, would have been highly perilous. However H——s insisted on undertaking the duty, and in company with two well-armed followers, made a start. F——n remained behind, and occupied a position directly overlooking and covering our advancing party.

When all was in readiness, I descended with my three allies (all stout fellows, and to be depended on) into the rocky channel of the river, and formed up my men in the following manner. On my right I placed a man named Bhopal, a first-class shot, and a determined fellow, who had slain many tigers at different times; he was armed with a heavy double 8-bore breechloader. On my left stood my Sikh orderly, a fine strapping fellow, named Lena Sing (who, I am positive, was all the time longing for a regular scrimmage); he carried in his hand my double gun heavily charged with bullets and slugs; and still further to the left a man named Bahadoor, with his loaded musket and fixed bayonet guarded our flank, while I myself in the

centre with my double 12-bore Reilly charged with shells, completed a formidable party. I had no fears of an accident, even if the tiger had the temerity to come out in the open and charge. We advanced slowly, keeping close together, with our weapons at full cock and at the ready, and shoulder to shoulder, moved up, till at length we reached the spot where the beast had received his wound and rolled over. A large patch of blood clearly marked the place, and quickly as the animal had covered the distance from thence across the open to reach his present hiding place, there was no difficulty in tracking his course, for the white stones were thickly besprinkled with drops of blood, and on advancing a few steps further, we came upon still more evident signs. The tiger was very severely, probably mortally wounded, for in addition to the spots of blood dropping from the wound, we came upon long spirts and splashes of bright-coloured frothy gore, manifestly ejected from the animal's mouth, a sure sign that he was hit through the lungs. At length we reached a position, perhaps fifteen yards from the willow clump, and this was quite close enough. The tips of the long green boughs hung down so close to the pebbles that nothing was to be gained by stooping down and attempting to peer underneath. So I directed Lena Sing (the man on my left) in a whisper to throw in a stone; he stooped down, picked up a large pebble, and threw it into the centre of the patch, but with no result; not a sound or movement followed. 'He is dead, sir,' said the man on my right; but hardly were the words out of his mouth, when a deep 'wouf' and a swaying of the foliage proved that this was not the case. The cover was so thick that it was impossible for any one of us, even for H——s, all in readiness for a chance as he was, to catch a glimpse of him; but it was evident that he was slowly beating a retreat by the neck of land already mentioned, connecting the clump of willows with the mainland.

Our chance of success now appeared to be less hopeful. There was nothing to prevent the wounded beast reaching the foot of the high river bank, along which to the right and left as far as we could see there ran a dense fringe of willows, grass, and matted thicket, and there was no saying how far, or in which direction he might wander. H——s, carefully feeling his way, advanced still further along the high bank of the river, but so dense was the cover below that he could make nothing of it. The animal was not to be seen, and a good half-hour was spent in a fruitless search. All of a sudden, when

our hopes were on the wane, I noticed an old Sikh policeman about one hundred and fifty yards to my right, waving his arms like the sails of a windmill, and energetically beckoning me to join him. H——s (who had just returned from his ineffectual search on the opposite side) and I ran towards him, and when we came up to where he was standing on the margin of a broad pool of water, to our astonishment, directly opposite to us on the far side, close in to the bank (which there was nearly perpendicular), and almost up to his neck in water, was the wounded tiger. While yet looking at him, and preparing to fire, he made an effort to scramble up the steep slope, but slipped down again, and fell back into the same position as before. There was only his head, neck, and upper part of his shoulders for a mark, and I suppose the distance was sixty yards or thereabouts. I fired, and missed, the old Sikh did the same, but H——s planted a shell fairly in the centre of the animal's forehead, literally blowing the head to atoms, for when the skin was afterwards removed and the flesh scraped off, the skull fell to pieces, and had to be held together by wires. On examining the body, we discovered that my first bullet, fired from above at a distance of about eighty yards, had struck the tiger on the tip of the left shoulder, had passed through his lungs, and taken its departure lower down on the right side, almost directly behind the shoulder, and we were of opinion that if the bullet had taken effect one and a half or two inches lower, the brute would probably have remained where he first rolled over.

But I must explain how he reached his extraordinary position up to his neck in water. On examining the river bank (which, as I have already said, was fringed with overhanging willows), it was evident enough that the wounded tiger had attempted with much difficulty—for he had slipped and fallen every few yards—to pass down the river and make his escape under cover of the willows. At first even in his crippled state he had met with few obstacles, but presently coming to where the river curved close in to the almost perpendicular bank, he had not the power to ascend such a steep incline, so attempted to pass on by a very narrow ledge, but failed; probably his broken limb gave way, and he fell down headlong into the water. The splash thus made attracted the attention of the old Sikh, who perceiving the beast's grim countenance above the surface of the water, summoned us immediately, and pointed him out, and the animal then received a finishing shot from H——s, as already described. He was a fine thickly

built male tiger, measuring nine feet eight inches in length, height at shoulder three feet seven inches, size round head two feet ten inches, with a superb rufous-coloured skin in perfect order. One of the canine teeth in the upper jaw was broken off close to the gums, and the stump decayed far back to the very root of the fang. On the outside of the face there was an inflamed swelling, corresponding with the position of the injured tooth, and doubtless the animal had for a long time suffered much pain from toothache. This successful day's sport took place on May 24, 1872, and I made the remark when we started in the morning that the day was a propitious one, being her Majesty the Queen's birthday.

I will now briefly speak of machān shooting, or shooting tigers from a platform constructed in a tree, and overlooking a pool of water, or carcase of a buffalo or bullock recently slain by one of the *Felidæ*. As I have already remarked, this is a method of destroying wild beasts usually adopted by natives.

Machān shooting is not a popular mode of killing tigers among European sportsmen as a rule, and is generally pronounced to be slow work; perhaps it is so, but in my opinion, watching a solitary pool of water for an hour or two before nightfall has its attractions, and I can recall to mind many a pleasant evening spent in this manner. It is most interesting and instructive to the young naturalist, to watch from his place of concealment the ways and habits of the denizens of the forest as they come stealing forth to take their drink about sundown. The first, usually speaking, to make their appearance, as shadows lengthen, and the fiery sun descends behind the tree tops, are musters of peafowl with their bills open, so parched are the birds' throats with thirst. An old hen, after craning her neck, and peering around to satisfy herself that all is safe, at length emerges and leads the way to the precious water. Hardly have the birds retired when they are succeeded by a troop of Lungoor monkeys (*Presbytis entellus*), leaping from tree to tree with unfailing precision, and swinging themselves down from bough to bough with wonderful dexterity. There is a pause before they descend and trust themselves on the ground. These gentry know well that treacherous leopards and other enemies lie in wait near these drinking places, so are particularly careful that the coast is clear before they alight on the rocks that surround the pool; at length a hoary old patriarch, after a cautious look around, jumps down from the tree, and informing his numerous relations by a croak that

all is right, strides to the margin of the pool, and buries his face in the water. The remainder of the troop, taking courage from his example, speedily join him; a short delay, a few gambols and practical jokes by the juniors of the party, and once more they ascend the sloping rocks, reach the tree trunks, and amid a swaying of foliage, quickly disappear in the forest.

A pair of spur fowl, and a brace or two of sand grouse, next arrive: the latter having their nests on the bare tableland hard by. Whole bevvies of bush quail come hurrying down over the hot rocks for their evening drink. Still later a sounder of hog allay their thirst and cool their carcasses in the water, and just before darkness sets in, suddenly and quietly, and passing below the very tree in which the hunter lies concealed, a noble stag samber emerges from the forest. Perhaps the temptation of possessing his wide-spreading antlers is too strong and not to be resisted, or the patience of the sportsman waiting for still nobler game is exhausted, and he takes his shot.

A machān is usually constructed of poles eight or ten feet in length, placed across, and resting on the higher boughs of some tree; these are lashed firmly in their position with cords; smaller poles and sticks are placed transversely and fastened securely like the larger ones; then boughs and binders are interwoven between, till at length a tolerably firm platform is set up, capable of sustaining the weight of the sportsman and an attendant. Thick green leaves and small boughs are arranged around the edge of the machān so as to screen the occupants from the view of an animal below, and the hiding-place is then complete.

Another method frequently adopted by sportmen, is to procure a large-sized 'charpoy,' or native string bedstead, from the nearest village, and secure it in the desired position with ropes. A few branches and twigs are entwined or tied round the wooden framework of the 'charpoy,' and an efficient place of concealment is thus easily provided.

The machān, to be perfectly safe from the reach of a springing tiger, (I have already said the animal has not the power of climbing) should be erected at a height of fifteen feet, not from the foot of the tree, which may be situated in a hollow or gorge, but above the level of the surrounding country.

An officer was pulled out of a tree and killed by a tiger not many years ago in Central India. He was seated on a bough at a con-

siderable height from the foot of the tree and bed of the nullah that he was guarding, but unluckily he forgot that the summit of the high banks of the ravine on either side were almost on a level with him: the consequence was, that a tiger he fired at and wounded when passing below, had the cunning to ascend the bank to the higher ground, and from thence made good its spring on to the unfortunate sportsman, dragged him down, and mauled him so dreadfully that he did not long survive the fearful injuries he received.

It is, however, exceptional for a tiger, or any other animal, even when wounded, to attempt an assault on a man well hidden and posted at a reasonable height from the ground, provided that he remains steady after firing a shot, and does not draw attention to his position by moving or speaking.

The tree selected for the machān should be situated some little distance from, and yet within easy gunshot range of, the 'kill' or pool of water, whichever it may be. If the platform is erected in a tree close above the dead bullock, or too near the margin of the water, the probabilities are that a cunning brute will at once discover the ambush, and make off. I have known this happen once with a tiger who was distinctly visible in the moonlight some distance off, but would come no closer, and I have several times been discovered by samber and cheetul, animals especially careful when approaching water.

Usually speaking, it is of little use ascending into a machān to watch water, or lay up over a dead bullock, till the sun gets low. The time of all others to be especially on the alert is the last half-hour before night sets in. After a hot sweltering day, when the cattle have been driven home, the villagers are in their dwellings, the birds are gone to roost, and the forest has become perfectly quiet, then the jungle tyrant, stretching himself after having lain asleep all day, issues forth, and makes straight for the spot where he well knows he will find the lifeless body of his victim of yesterday. Naturally of a suspicious nature, however, hungry as he is, he takes a careful look round before going close up to the carcass. If the jungle has been disturbed since his former visit, bushes or boughs cut away, the machān (in which his enemies are lying ensconced) not sufficiently concealed, or the position of the bullock altered from that in which he left it, he at once suspects that all is not right, and makes off.

But if, on the other hand, care has been taken to make as little

noise as possible in arranging the machān, the tree has been well selected, and the guns properly posted and concealed, the chances are that, after a cautious reconnoissance, the brute at length silently emerges from the jungle, and striding up to the carcase, commences his gory repast.

Usually speaking, unless there is a full and very bright moon, and the carcase lies on open ground away from the gloom of trees or bushes, I have found it to be of little use waiting after night has regularly set in, and except under the above-mentioned favourable circumstances, when it may be worth while to remain yet another hour or two, I recommend the sportsman to light his lantern and descend from his perch, for there is little likelihood of his gaining anything by remaining.

I have shot deer, hog, and other animals, by sitting up all night over pools of water in a machān, and generally the sportsman obtains a shot or two about daybreak; but my experience is that it is unsatisfactory work, and does not repay one for the loss of rest, and, moreover, there are other objections; for instance, after nightfall, except during the hot dry months when no dew falls, jungles in the neighbourhood of water often become unhealthy; and the consequence of sitting up for a single night in the open air is often an attack of fever and ague, or some other ailment equally bad.

Mosquitoes and other noxious insects generally swarm in myriads in the neighbourhood of these pools of water in the jungle, and the worry and irritation they inflict is sometimes exasperating, and hardly to be borne with equanimity. And lastly, though I may say that I am a tolerable rifle shot by daylight, yet in spite of white cotton or phosphorus on the sights, white tape down the rib between the barrels and various other contrivances to enable the sportsman to aim correctly (most of which I have tried), I never could make even moderately good practice with a rifle in the dark, and have often missed animals within a dozen yards of me. Perhaps repeated failures may have something to do with my disbelief in night shooting.

Tiger skins, when the animals they once adorned have been shot by the sportman's own rifle, are always objects of value and interest, especially to adorn the hall or drawing room. It is very seldom one ever sees a perfect tiger skin; the fur is nearly always rubbed off more or less, the whiskers are missing, or there is some other defect, and generally speaking these blemishes (and however slight they may

be, they in a measure detract from the exquisite beauty and finish of a skin) have been occasioned from want of care, and a little circumspection on the day when the slain beast was brought into camp. Tigers are generally shot at the very hottest time of the year, and I have known the fur come off the hide on the eve of the very day that the animal had been killed. So no time should be lost in removing, cleaning, and stretching the skin directly the carcass is brought in. I know well how little inclined the sportsman feels when he returns to his tent exhausted and toil-worn, after having been exposed all day to the terrible heat and glare of the sun, to superintend himself the operation of removing the striped coats of his prizes. But if he wishes to preserve them complete, and without a defect of any kind, he must make it his duty personally to see this work properly done, for let him rest assured, if he confides in natives, of whatever class, ten chances to one they will do something or other wrong.

Having retired under the shade of a tree, begin by placing the noble beast on its back, and with a sharp knife (a common butcher's knife, I think is the best), make one long, straight, but not deep cut, from the centre of the lower lip to the end of the tail, then take the legs, make clean cuts commencing just above the pads of the feet and carry the knife along the under side of the giant arms till the main incision is reached.

Then separate the hide from the body. First, extract the claws and put them carefully away, as they are a great temptation even to honest natives. If the hide is blood-stained or dirty, send a man with it to the nearest river or pool of water, and direct him to wash it thoroughly, and in the meantime have a clean, smooth place swept clear under the shade of a tree. To stretch a skin to dry in the sun is a common but fatal error. Next have a number of sharp pegs prepared of some tough description of wood, such as the babul (Indian Acacia) and when your man returns from the river with the skin properly cleansed, stretch it out fur downwards, on the spot prepared for it, making a small hole with the point of a sharp knife through the tip of the nose, and a second one about an inch from the extremity of the tail. Drive a long, stout peg through the hole in the nose deep into the ground, draw the skin out moderately tight lengthways, and drive a second peg through the hole near the tip of the tail, then extend the fore arms and hind legs. You yourself should stand at the head

of the skin, to see that it is stretched evenly, while your assistants, two on either side of the hide endeavour, under your directions, so to peg it down that, when firmly fastened to the ground, the arms and legs may lie squarely extended, and exactly at the same angle on either side to the body, for as it is stretched and dried in the first instance so will it remain for ever afterwards.

The sides of the skin are then drawn out taut, and pegged down along the edge.

The next process (and it is a very important one) is to have the hide most thoroughly cleared of every particle of flesh, fat, and sinew; not an atom of oily matter or grease of any kind should be left to melt into the skin. A low caste race of natives called 'Chumars,' who reside in almost every village, are usually employed for this work, but they should be carefully watched, or, with their sharp oval-shaped knives, they are likely enough to pare the skin itself, instead of removing extraneous matter adhering to it, and unless immediately checked may do much mischief.

Finally, when the above measures have been completely and effectually performed, apply freely to the nose, edge of mouth, root of ears, tail, feet, or any dark patch where congealed blood has collected, caused by bullets or shells tearing the carcase, an ample dressing of strong, arsenical paste, and over every inch of the remainder of the skin, spread a thick coating of finely powdered alum (I always carried about with me a giant pepper box filled with alum for besprinkling skins) and last of all leave a native to rub the alum well into the skin with the palm of his hand. In the hot weather months the skin will probably become perfectly dry in twenty-four hours or less; it should then be taken up and hung over a tent rope, and be put out daily in the open air, but not in the sun; at night it should be carefully folded up, and put away. This is only a necessary precaution, for if a fresh skin be carelessly left out all night, likely enough some hungry village cur or prowling hyæna will tear it to pieces. A friend of mine had a fine tiger skin utterly spoilt one night by a pariah dog or jackal dragging it away from his tent and gnawing the tail off. A skin, that has been treated in the manner just described, will keep in perfectly sound condition for a long while, though at the same time the sooner it is put through the permanent process of preservation by a professional furrier the better.

To preserve the skulls of tigers, I recommend in the first place,

that as much of the flesh as possible should be scraped off, the brains taken out, and the head thoroughly cleaned, and then hung up every day in a tree, where Indian crows, as well as wasps, ants, and other insects will soon find it out, and speedily remove the particles of flesh still sticking to the bones.

I much prefer this plan to burying the head in the ground or boiling it. My two first tiger skulls were completely spoilt, and rendered worthless, by being allowed to remain too long buried in an ant hill. When dug up they fell to pieces.

The fat of a tiger, if boiled down and refined, is very useful for oiling guns and other purposes. Natives say that it is a certain remedy for rheumatism, but I cannot certify to the truth of this.

It is an invariable rule in all big game shooting, that the skin of an animal brought to bag belongs to the fortunate sportsman whose bullet first struck the mark, however slight the wound may be. I remember an instance of a leopard being claimed by a sportsman whose bullet broke the animal's tail within ten inches of the tip.

There is often a difficulty in deciding this point, especially in howdah shooting, and when several shots are fired almost simultaneously. The best plan when this occurs is to draw lots for the trophies, or, at the end of an expedition to divide the skins and heads of doubtful ownership.

There is much difference of opinion among sportsmen what description of sporting rifle is the best for tiger shooting; some like an express rifle, others a large bore. I believe both weapons are equally efficient, though I myself prefer a rather heavy ten or twelve bore, on Forsyth's system of rifling, capable of burning four or five drams of powder, and carrying a spherical ball with accuracy up to 120 or 150 yards, and also when required, shells at shorter ranges.

CHAPTER II.

THE PANTHER (*Felis pardus*, Hodgson).

Yet though lonely seem the wood,
Therein may lurk the beast of blood.—*From the Gulistan.*

THE late Dr. Jerdon in his valuable work 'The Mammals of India,' following, as he tells us, the leadership of Mr. Blyth, apparently after some hesitation, classifies the Indian panther and leopard as 'simple varieties of the same species of cat' under the single specific title of *Felis pardus*.

I fear that it will be considered presumption on the part of a common observer and sportsman like myself to commit to paper an opinion at variance with the views of such renowned naturalists as the two above-named gentlemen. Nevertheless, holding the convictions I do on this point, after having carefully studied the subject, I find no other course left open to me, and have therefore ventured to follow the arrangement of Hodgson, and place the two cats distinctly apart, under the specific names of *Felis pardus* for the panther, and *Felis leopardus* for the leopard.

I have no desire whatever to reopen an old controversy, which has been so often discussed by far abler pens than mine, but feel bound briefly to give my reasons for having in this single instance ventured to differ from my usual and unerring guide Dr. Jerdon.

1st. As has been frequently pointed out (among others, by that distinguished authority, Sir Walter Elliot), the shape of the head of the two cats differs most materially, the panther's skull being long and pointed, the leopard's shorter and more rounded. This distinction between the two creatures I look upon as of itself conclusive evidence in this disputed question.

2nd. It cannot be denied that the coats of our large Indian cats

vary much in shade and marking in different individuals; nevertheless the true panther of Central India (which part of the country I believe to be the great stronghold of this comparatively rare animal) has certain characteristic dark markings on the coat which, though difficult to describe in words, yet to an experienced eye, at once proclaim it to be of another species from the leopard. The general tint of the panther's skin is pale tawny yellow, that of the leopard more of a rufous and darker tinge. The irregular dark markings decorating the coat of the former are larger, and not so distinct as the clear black blotches and spots adorning the hide of the latter.

3rd. Last, though by no means least, the two animals altogether differ from one another in size and character. The one is a large, powerful, and thoroughly vicious wild beast, highly dangerous to cope with when provoked, and in the opinion of many old and experienced sportsmen even more to be feared than the royal tiger, which preys principally on such large game as samber, nilgai, wild hog, and more especially village cattle; the other is an altogether smaller, less courageous, and, in comparison with the panther, insignificant cat, that preys chiefly on smaller descriptions of deer, calves, sheep, goats, and especially dogs.

I may add that I never yet have met with an experienced Central-India sportsman who did not fully recognise the panther as altogether a distinct species of cat from the leopard, or, in fact, who had a single doubt in the matter.

The panther is to be found in the nullahs and ravines of Central India, on the sides of rocky hills, where from under the shelter of an overhanging rock he can survey the country below, and descend on some stray bullock or other victim. In the hot weather he is often put up when parties are out beating for tigers on the banks of rivers, or in small islands where the cover is sufficient to afford concealment. Like the larger cat the panther chiefly depends on village cattle for food, though he will pull down full-grown samber or other large deer if he comes across them. Occasionally he takes to man-eating, though not so frequently as tigers do. I remember hearing of one in Gwalior, that had devoured over fifty human beings, and was the terror of a whole district.

Some years ago, in the neighbourhood of Kamptee, an officer in the Artillery and a native shikary were both pulled out of a tree by a wounded panther, and so severely hurt that neither of them survived

it. The unfortunate officer, if I remember right, had fired at the brute when passing below the bough of a tree upon which he was sitting, and wounded it. The panther, however, climbed up the tree and, pulling him down, mauled him dreadfully, then actually climbed up again and killed the native shikary. The latter must have lost all presence of mind, for he did nothing to assist his unfortunate master, or even to save his own life.

The cry of the panther is a series of measured grunts, or coughs, repeated four or five times, and often heard about the pairing season. I shall never forget once hearing this same grunting noise a deal nearer than was pleasant. When out in camp during the hot weather, the nights were often so oppressively close that it was impossible to get any rest inside a tent, so we slept outside in the open air; no dew falls at night during the hot months, and I believe it is much healthier to sleep in the open. We generally retired to rest about ten o'clock, our beds being placed out on the plain, often at some little distance from the tents. A couple of men fanned us with punkahs till we appeared to be asleep; and then our dusky attendants quietly slipped away. Now this was all very well when encamped in a tope of trees with no jungle in the vicinity, but we were then in the very thickest part of the Lullutpore jungles, near a place called Bala Behut. We frequently heard the sharp bark of the spotted deer and the bell of the samber close to the encampment at night; and more than once, I had said to my companion H——s that I did not much like this sleeping in the open, with all kinds of brutes close at hand. He only laughed, replying that there was no danger and that he had made a practice of doing so for years in preference to sleeping in a stifling tent. However, I was not convinced, though I said no more, but I took the precaution of invariably placing my loaded rifle close to the bedside.

One night we had retired as usual, and after a chat about our plans for the morrow, had dropped off to sleep. All of a sudden I awoke with a strange feeling of danger. I sat up and listened, and immediately the measured 'hough, hough, hough, hough,' of a panther close at hand, broke the stillness of the night. The brute could not have been fifty yards off, and from the cry appeared to be in a ravine below. I hastily awoke my companion, and informed him of the close proximity of our ugly visitor. He, however, treated the matter lightly, and turning over, was speedily asleep again. There was no more rest for me, with this beast close at hand; so I lighted a cheroot and paced

up and down. Presently day began to break and the camp to bestir itself; but the panther still continued making his abominable cry, and in spite of men moving about, seemed loath to retire to his den, wherever it was.

It was soon broad daylight. My companion presently arousing himself, sprang up, and remarking to me, 'We will teach this brute a lesson for breaking our night's rest,' gave hasty orders for the assemblage of as many of his policemen and camp-followers as could be collected, and ordered them to proceed as quickly as possible about a quarter of a mile in a certain direction, and then to beat up the nullah in which the panther was, to a place which he pointed out, where we were to be posted. We hurried away, rifle in hand, to take up positions in front of the beat on either side of the nullah. A sporting Thakoor belonging to the neighbourhood, who had joined our camp a few days before to assist in beating, accompanied us. He was a fine big man, but a notorious cattle-lifter, H—— informed me; he was lame from a terrible wound in the right foot caused by the bite of a wounded tiger. He had his matchlock with him, and as the nullah was wide and required three guns to command it, we put him in a position between us, in the bed of the nullah, where there was a chance of a shot, should the beat be successful.

The natives with us imagined that the brute would come creeping along one side or the other of the ravine where the cover was thickest. These large cats when driven forward by beaters, almost invariably take advantage of any grass and buskes in the way, that is sufficient to afford concealment, in preference to crossing open ground, for their instinct tells them the danger of exposing themselves. However, on this occasion, strange to say, the panther took right up the centre of the nullah. We only just reached our places in time; the beat had already commenced. I caught a glimpse of the brute, a very large one, coming quietly along, every moment I expected the 'fizz,' 'bang' of the matchlock; but no—he passed and was presently seen further on. We ran for several hundred yards higher up the ravine, in hopes of heading him, but no such luck. He took up a narrow deep gorge in the direction of the river, and none of us saw him again.

My friend was indignant at the escape of the night disturber, and asked the Thakoor how it was he didn't get a shot. Our native ally denied that he had seen the beast. But I am almost certain that it passed close to him, but probably the man, having already been fear-

fully mauled once by one of the large cats, dared not risk a shot with his rusty old matchlock, and considered on this occasion, that discretion was the better part of valour. We said no more, but returned to camp baffled and disappointed.

Three nights after, near this same spot, the whole camp was aroused about midnight by shouts of 'A tiger!' 'A tiger!' Servants tumbled over tent ropes, bullocks tore past, tails on end, dogs barked, and horses struggled to get loose.

The confusion and uproar were so great that it was some little time before we could discover what had really happened. H——'s office writer, a portly Bengali Baboo had stupidly picketed his pony some little distance from the other horses, and out of the general camp circle. An animal which the natives declared was a tiger, though I am almost certain it was this same panther that had disturbed us on the previous occasion, suddenly sprang on the pony and pulled it down. The latter, however, a sturdy beast, used his hoofs with good effect, and with the assistance of a number of bullock-drivers and camp-followers shouting and throwing stones, managed to shake off his antagonist, and take refuge among the other horses. On examination we found that the pony was bleeding a good deal at the throat, though the wounds were not serious. Now a tiger, as I have before stated, almost invariably seizes his prey by the back of the neck; leopards and panthers not unfrequently by the throat; so, in spite of the assurances of numerous natives that the marauder was a tiger, I am convinced that it was only a panther or leopard.

The panther, I have already stated, can climb trees with facility, but I have never heard, in spite of frequent questions to native hunters, of his dropping on deer and other creatures from trees; though the jaguar of America, an animal somewhat similar in appearance and habits to the panther, is said constantly to lie in ambush in some thick tree over a pathway frequented by deer and hog.

I once heard of a panther concealing himself along the bough of a tree up to which he had clambered, to avoid danger. He was, however, observed by some beaters as they passed underneath, and was pointed out and shot dead.

I had the good fortune to shoot a panther, or rather to finish him, within a year of my arrival in India, and was not a little proud of such an achievement. In those days I was stationed at Benares, and was living with a Captain P——y, who was in the Public Works Depart-

ment, and had charge of the Government road between Mirzapore and Saugor. Early in March 1859, my friend informed me that he was about to inspect some new works, that he would be out about a month, and would be glad of my company, if I was not afraid of the heat. I was delighted to meet with such a chance. I had a new gun and rifle and had long wished for an opportunity to bring them into play against the inhabitants of Indian jungles. The drill season was over, so there was no difficulty in getting a month's leave.

We reached Mirzapore the day after leaving Benares, and without delay commenced our march in the direction of Saugor. Within a week I had slain my first black buck, and soon after a splendid old cock bustard, besides a large bag of small game. Captain P——y, a keen sportsman and splendid shot with both gun and rifle, sometimes accompanied me in my expeditions, but often was detained by his work.

In about ten days we reached a rocky gorge through a range of hills, called the Kuttra Pass; and here, to the surprise of my companion, and much to my delight, news was brought in of a tiger within a few miles of the pass, at the foot of which we were encamped. Captain P——y informed me, that panthers, leopards, and bears were not uncommon in the neighbourhood, but that tigers were seldom met with. However, the cattle-keepers declared that for weeks past a tiger had been preying on their herds, and that a bullock had been killed on the evening previous to our arrival. We decided to have a look at the 'kill' ourselves, in order to be able to form an opinion whether it really was a tiger or only a panther or leopard. On reaching the spot where the cow had been killed, we found only a small portion eaten. The carcase had been dragged into a ravine; it was a large heavy beast, and had the appearance of having been killed by a tiger; but on account of the hard rocky state of the ground, we could not find a single clear foot-print to decide the point. There was a large 'burgot' tree within thirty yards of the kill, and we agreed on sitting up that very evening, as the natives seemed to think it probable the beast would return for his supper.

Having dismissed our followers, retaining only one old man armed with an axe, we ascended to our posts, I sitting astride of a large bough, about fifteen feet from the ground, facing in one direction, Captain P——y with his back to mine, guarding the opposite quarter. I forgot to mention that the cow had been killed on the side of a hill where it had strayed, and that the tree in which we had taken up our

position was on the verge of a steep decline. Neither of us had an idea from which side or direction the beast, whatever it was, would be likely to approach. The jungle was thick around the spot. A large number of vultures, scared from their repast on the carcase by our approach, had flown into some neighbouring trees, and as the jungle had become once more quiet they now returned. Although in a very unfrequented part of the country, with only one small village within many miles, the vultures had discovered the carcase, half-hidden as it was. Every minute fresh birds with half-closed wings descended with a tremendous whish-h-h-h, while others, gorged to repletion, flew with apparent difficulty on to trees or rocks close by, and, as customary after filling their stomachs inordinately, spread out their wings and remained motionless. As each new comer arrived and settled somewhere close by, he waddled up with hasty strides and lowered head, and wedged himself in by force between his comrades.

At times the carcase was altogether screened from view by the mass of birds, all pulling, struggling, and fighting over the prey. It was an interesting sight to watch, though we were rather too near the dead animal for it to be pleasant to the nasal organs. Presently the shadow of a large bird made us look up, and after soaring round once or twice, with his legs straight out behind him, *Leptoptilos Argala*, or as we call the huge crane 'The Adjutant,' settled hard by; tucking his wings under him, with measured strides he approached the ravenous crew; some of the vultures respectfully made way for so distinguished a personage. One who blocked the path received immediately a tremendous dab on the back, by way of a reminder to quicken his movements. Having received the latest arrival in proper form, the ring closed once more round the horrible feast. The sun had now got low; there was not a breath of wind, and with the exception of the flapping of wings caused by the birds of prey as they kept coming to and going from the carcase, not a sound of any kind was to be heard.

Suddenly a great commotion arose among the ravenous group around the dead bullock. The vultures took wing into trees as if they had heard or were aware of something approaching. Captain P——y whispered to me over his shoulder, 'Look out.' Two or three minutes passed and it began to get quite dark, still nothing appeared. Presently my companion touched me with his elbow, and on my looking round towards the carcase, to my astonishment I beheld what I thought was

a veritable tiger, never having seen one; but in reality it was a very large panther tearing the flesh. The next moment a ball from my friend's rifle crashed through the brute's body, rolling him over; in an instant he had recovered himself, and not knowing probably from what quarter the danger came, made direct for our tree. A second shot from the same rifle struck the ground between his fore legs when quite close; the animal paused for a moment and glared up at us (I shall never forget the devilish expression of that terrible countenance), as if half-meditating an assault. At this moment I had brought my rifle to bear; instead of shooting him through the head, however—I was too excited, and in too cramped a position for such accuracy—my bullet struck him in the back over the loins, crippling him in the spine; he sprang forward and went rolling down the side of the hill, getting another shot from my left barrel as he disappeared. It was evident that the beast could not go far, for he with difficulty dragged himself along; but in spite of all my persuasions Captain P——y would not hear of following him up or anything of the kind, knowing full well from experience the danger of such an act, especially as night was fast coming on, and it was already dark.

I was rather disappointed, although he assured me that we should certainly find the panther dead on the morrow. I slept very little that night, and soon after daylight, leaving Captain P——y asleep, took my rifle, and started for the scene of the previous night's adventure. In the first half mile, however, I met a mob of natives, four of them staggering along with the dead panther slung on a pole across their shoulders. His tongue was hanging out of his mouth and his teeth close shut were driven through it. The natives had found him lying dead, within twenty yards of the place where he had disappeared. Both shots were mortal wounds, but it was astonishing that the brute had been able to move a step after being struck with the first ball, for it was planted fair in the centre of the shoulder, and had passed out on the other side. The animal measured within an inch of eight feet in length, and was very thick and muscular.

Panthers when provoked will charge elephants as readily and daringly as tigers. I have seen this happen two or three times; and once, when mounted on the back of an elephant totally unfit for this kind of sport, I was regularly pursued by a snarling, vicious panther. We, that is, H——s and myself, having heard of a pair of these animals that had been for weeks together doing a deal of mischief, borrowed two elephants

from the Rajah of Teeree, and went to look for them. After a deal of hard work, towards the close of the day, and just as we were about to give up the chase, or rather search, we came upon them in a patch of thick bushes. Now, I knew nothing of the elephant I was mounted on; he was a huge tusker, and the mahout had been only a few minutes before expatiating on his merits and steadiness when facing tigers and other big cats, little thinking how very soon he would have a chance of showing his real worth.

Instead of a howdah, I was mounted on this occasion on an abominable kind of flat seat, with iron rails round it, and from this native invention it was difficult—so cramped was the position—to use a rifle at all, much less shoot accurately. However, we had but one howdah, so made the best of it. I have already said that after a diligent search, we came upon the pair of panthers we had so long been looking for. In spite of sundry thumps on the head, my elephant did not seem at all inclined to advance to the attack; and presently when one of the panthers gave an angry growl, to my disgust, the brute of an elephant, with a shriek of fear, swung round, and made off at full speed with his trunk in the air. The panther in front of us immediately perceived the advantage he had gained, and the terror-stricken 'hāthi' making off, he came out with a bound, growling and snarling, and attempted to spring on to the elephant's hind quarters; in this he failed, but followed us up for a good thirty or forty yards. As for attempting to take a shot at our pursuer, that was out of the question; for it was as much as I could do to hold on, much less put a rifle to my shoulder. I lost my hat, as well as my temper, got a fine scraping across the face and neck from the bough of a prickly tree, and twice, the elephant, blundering over rocks and stones, nearly came down altogether. At length the mahout managed to stop the frightened brute, which was trembling from head to foot; but nothing would induce it again to approach the cover into which the panthers had retired. In the meantime my companion, mounted on a female elephant, had fared little better; she with the howdah on, perceiving the flight of my tusker, retired out of action in an opposite direction, though not at such a headlong pace; it was a ridiculous sight, but trying to the temper. The end of it was, we had to give up the hunt, and return home. We sent the elephants back that same evening to the Rajah, vowing that in all our lives we had never come across such useless brutes.

CHAPTER III.

THE LEOPARD (*Felis Leopardus*, Hodgson).

On every side the ambushed leopard strains,
 No passage for the bounding deer remains.—ANVÁR-I-SUHAILÍ.

IN general appearance (as already mentioned when speaking of the panther) the Indian leopard so much resembles the panther that they are often confounded, and to the present day classed by some as one and the same animal. In the Himalayas the leopard is very common, and a perfect pest, continually carrying off dogs close to the outskirts of our hill stations. A dog that is in the habit of leaving his master and wandering from the foot path, when travelling in the hills, is almost certain, sooner or later, to be carried off. I have known of many fine sporting dogs taken when shooting pheasants and chikor.

Leopards are in the habit of watching foot-paths, from some hiding place above, whence they can view everything that passes. As soon as they perceive a dog or goat loitering behind or astray, they steal rapidly and silently down, and before poor 'doggy' can join his master, or an unfortunate goat his comrades, he is seized by the throat and swept off the path without having time to utter a cry or offer the slightest resistance. A good stout dog is almost a match for a leopard, if brought face to face with him on open ground, but the cunning cruel cat creeps up and buries his fangs into the neck of his prey when he least expects him, and once in the fatal grip, a dog or any other creature hardly ever escapes. I remember, however, a plucky little terrier belonging to Colonel D——s of the 37th, making his escape from the clutches of a leopard, and returning to his master with a wound in his throat.

• Two moderate-sized setters, the property of a gentleman at

Mussoorie, turned on a leopard which attacked one of them, and speedily got the better of their assailant. They so worried the beast that it was unable to make its escape, and was easily despatched.

It is not uncommon for the Thibet sheep dogs—large powerful animals (something like the Newfoundland breed with heavy ‘jowls’) and specially retained to guard flocks and herds—to be carried off by leopards; sometimes these dogs escape through wearing broad spiked iron collars. I remember seeing a collar deeply indented by the teeth of a leopard; the wearer had escaped with his life after being dragged some distance, but was grievously wounded.

Leopards are seldom seen in the daytime. I have only on three occasions seen them in the Himalayas, although I have travelled and wandered a great deal in our hill ranges; yet they are common enough.

The first thing that takes your eye in the early morning as you leave your tent, is the scratch on the turf from the foot of a leopard; if you examine the outskirts of your tent, you will likely enough find his ‘pug,’ where he has been sniffing under the canvas for ‘Dash’ or ‘Juno;’ and the sap yet running from a neighbouring tree shows that he has only an hour or two before been stretching his claws on the bark. I had a setter whose mother had been taken by a leopard, and who himself had had more than one narrow escape. This dog always slept on my bed, and more than once has awakened me on a dark night by his growling and trembling all over, and nestling closer to me, evidently from fear of some brute close at hand, probably a leopard. The first expedition I ever made to the hills I lost a pet dog named ‘Snip,’ carried off by a leopard; he was by no means a well-bred dog, rather the contrary; a thick-built brown terrier, rather bandy-legged, curly-tailed, with a pair of prick-up ears, and brown intelligent eyes. I bought him from a soldier in the barracks at Allahabad when a pup, for one rupee, and though not a valuable dog, he was a prime favourite of mine. For several months this poor dog was my only companion; we always shared our meals together, and sometimes both Snip and I had to put up with very ‘short commons,’ and retire to rest after only a scanty meal. One windy wet night, having collected sundry scraps, and filled a plate principally with rice for my dog, I placed the dish at the entrance of the tent, and soon Snip was in the full enjoyment of his meal. Having tied a lantern on to the tent pole and lit a cigar, I took up a book and lay down on my bed. In another minute I was startled by the sharp

cry of my poor dog, and jumping up, I rushed out of the tent. I could see a dark object making off: catching up a lighted piece of wood from a fire burning outside, I hurled it at the animal; but although the sparks from the burning wood striking the ground almost between the creature's feet showed it to be, as I expected, a leopard, the animal would not drop his prey. I ran after it shouting, but the brute disappeared in the darkness down the face of a steep decline. I went back, got my gun, a lantern, and two men with torches. We searched everywhere, called the dog by his name and whistled, but in vain, and in half an hour we returned wet through from a fruitless quest.

On another occasion, within six miles of the spot where my dog was carried off, a leopard one evening suddenly sprang upon a small white milch goat, which was browsing on some bushes about fifty yards below my tent.

The little creature would have undoubtedly shared the same fate as my terrier, had it not fortunately been coupled by a stout rope to another and larger goat. The leopard dragged both the animals for several yards down the face of a steep decline, but so impeded was the beast by their united struggles, that assistance arrived ere the marauder could reach his den, which we afterwards discovered within a hundred yards of our bivouac.

The leopard is one of the chief enemies to the monkey tribe; he stalks them when the animals are on the ground in search of nuts and roots, lies in wait for them near pools and springs of water, and occasionally will ascend trees in pursuit of them. Monkeys always show the greatest consternation on viewing their enemy. As I have before stated, I have been made aware of a tiger or leopard being on the move through the jungles by the demeanour of wild monkeys. They will follow the big cat from tree to tree, and rock to rock, as he passes below, their hair bristling, tails on end, shaking the branches with their paws, and stooping down, making hideous grimaces at their foe, keeping up an incessant chattering and swearing the while, and showing in every possible way their hatred and fear of him. I have frequently been told by native hunters that monkeys are sometimes so fascinated by a glaring leopard, that they become powerless to make their escape, and will even drop from the bough of a tree into the very jaws of their dreaded enemy. No doubt this is true, especially with young creatures. I have noticed that, in a beat, pea-

fowl invariably show alarm on the proximity of any of the cat tribe. My friend H——s assured me that he has frequently been made aware of the approach of one of the large cats by a peculiar sharp kük, kük, kük, cry of alarm made by pea-fowl. Leopards also prey on porcupines. I remember in the hills finding a porcupine near the mouth of a leopard's den, evidently just killed, for it was yet bleeding at the throat.

Leopards often take up their quarters in the hills under some pile of rocks and bushes close to a station, and every night prowl about the houses, carrying off stray dogs and goats. A friend of mine at Nynee Tal was one evening returning home with his rifle on his shoulder, and when close to the station, his attention was attracted by his dog, a setter, suddenly returning to him with his tail down and looking back, as if pursued by some creature. On carefully looking round, he observed the head of a leopard projecting from an overhanging rock above the footpath, his eyes glaring, and his whole attention still fixed on the dog. S——d took a steady aim at the brute's head, fired, and killed the beast on the spot.

During the summer months, when the snow passes between the Himalayan range and Thibet are open, the Bhootias who inhabit the villages on the confines of our territory, bring down large herds of goats laden with salt, which they dispose of at Almorah, Sirinugger, and other towns, and return later in the season supplied with flour for their own use, and to barter with the Thibetans. Many of these useful creatures fall a prey to prowling leopards, and it is nothing unusual for a party of traders to lose eight and ten of their goats in a single journey between the Neti Pass and Sirinugger.

Leopards, like all the cat tribe, are dangerous when wounded or brought to bay. Two officers, to my knowledge, have been severely bitten and clawed at different times within a few miles of Almorah by wounded leopards. Hill leopards are in the habit of ascending the high open ground above the forest in quest of burrel and thar (wild sheep and goats). They often stalk these animals by getting above them, and then gradually descending behind a ridge or some other cover till within springing distance. That the animals are often successful in their endeavours to surprise such prey as I have just named, is proved beyond dispute by the amount of hair always observable in the leopard's ordure.

I have only once shot the hill leopard, and then, though mortally wounded, the beast managed to creep under some rocks, and the

body was only recovered some weeks after when the skin was spoilt. I was encamped at a place called Tappobun in Gurhwal, on the look-out for bears. One morning some of the villagers reported having seen a leopard in broad daylight, lying on a rock sunning himself near the bank of the river close by, and only a short distance from my tent. This was most unusual, but on proceeding to the spot I found his fresh tracks, and discovered a cave with a narrow entrance near where the animal had been seen, and which I was certain was his hiding-place. That evening I had a goat tied up within short gun-shot range of the leopard's lair, and took up my position on a flat rock above. After waiting upwards of an hour, the bleating of the goat brought him out, but he was grovelling so close to the ground that, in the long grass and nettles, I could with difficulty get a clear shot. Just as the brute was about to spring on his intended prey, I fired, and had the satisfaction of seeing him roll over apparently dead. I descended from my post, but on reaching the spot where I had expected to find the carcass, discovered to my disgust that he had succeeded in reaching his den by means of another entrance lower down which I had not previously observed. There could be no doubt of this, for there were drops and patches of blood up to the very mouth of the hole. It was hard lines, but there was nothing to be done, for the entrance was small, and the animal's den evidently extended some distance under a mass of huge boulders. I therefore gave it up as a bad job.

Two years after I again visited ~~that~~ same village, and a man of the place, with whom I had made friends, came in the evening to make his salaam, and the very first thing he told me was, that about two months after my former visit, one of the men of the village, passing near the leopard's cave, had observed the remains of a dead animal lying near the mouth, which proved to be a leopard, and doubtless the same creature that I had fired at and wounded. He had either come out to die (as some animals always do) or, as the narrator thought, had been washed out by a very heavy flood of rain.

A description of black leopard is occasionally found in India, but very rarely. I have heard of it once in Gwalior, but never in Bengal Proper. The term in Hindustani for the leopard is 'tendooah,' but in Kumāon, Gurhwal, and other hill provinces, the natives call the animal (erroneously I believe) 'lukhar bugar;' properly speaking, this title belongs to the hyæna, and is the term by which that animal is known all over the North-Western Provinces.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SNOW LEOPARD (*Felis Uncia*).

How waked the spotted beasts of prey,
Deep sleeping from the face of day.—JOAQUIN MILLER.

THE Snow Leopard, called also the Ounce, is a very rare animal, only to be found in our territory among the high peaks and passes of the Himalayas, and always in the vicinity of the snows. I once had a snow leopard cub tied up in my tent for upwards of a fortnight, and great indeed was my disappointment when the young creature sickened and died, for I had fully determined that, be the cost what it might, it should be sent home to the Zoological Gardens. I believe that it would have been considered a valuable acquisition, for I have never heard of such an animal having yet reached this country.¹

I will now relate the remarkable manner in which I became possessed of this cub. In 1863 I had been upwards of a month in Thibet on a shooting expedition, and had been tolerably successful. I was quite by myself; a friend who had accompanied me over the Neti Pass had left me. The only human beings within many miles were a gang of some eight or ten Thibetans, living in one of their usual tattered tents, with their flocks and herds around them. I may mention *en passant* that recently, when travelling in Norway, I visited a party of Laplanders in the vicinity of Tromso, and was much struck with the strong resemblance these people bore in features, dress, and general appearance to the inhabitants of Thibet. The Laps, however, do not wear 'pig-tails.' One evening I sent my Bhootia shikary over to try and get some yak butter from these people; he returned in about an hour's time with what I required, and casually mentioned

¹ I observe that the 'Report' of the Zoological Society of London, dated April 29, 1876, page 22, fully bears me out in this statement.

that the Hooniahs (as the Thibetans are sometimes called) had for sale the skin of a very handsome snow leopard, which they had recently killed. I was surprised to hear this, knowing that these people seldom use fire-arms, but how else could they have killed it? I wished to see the skin, though without the remotest idea of purchasing it, for I only value heads and skins that have come to me by my own rifle.

The following morning we happened, when starting in search of burrel, to pass the camp of the 'pig-tailed' gentlemen, and I sent in a message that I wished to see the skin they had for sale. Presently two men came out with the snow leopard's skin. It was a large one, and had been very handsome. It was of a light grey colour, with black, irregular spots; there was a black line running lengthways over the hind quarters; the hair was long on the neck, and the tail was remarkably long, ringed with black, and black at the tip. I should say that the animal when alive had been probably about the size of a panther, but on account of the careless manner of dressing the hide it was quite spoilt, the fur having come off in large patches. I could see no bullet holes, and desired one of my men to ask them how it had been shot. They replied that the animal had been killed by one of their party rolling a stone down on it. I laughed and told them that I did not believe it. On this the elder of the two men told the whole story to my Bhootia, and he interpreted it to me in Hindustani.

It appeared by the man's tale that the leopardess lived in a cave on an opposite range of hills with a pair of cubs, and for months past had given great annoyance to the Thibetans by continually carrying off their sheep and goats. One day one of their party coming along by chance over this range of hills, saw her lying out on a rock, basking in the sun at the mouth of the den, and fast asleep. The man rolled a large stone down with such accuracy that it struck the sleeping animal in the middle of the back, breaking its spine; he then descended and finished it with a short but heavy dhow knife that he had in his girdle. Such was the Hooniah's account, and improbable as it at first appeared to be, I believed it, for in the centre of the skin, about the middle of the back, there was a dark, congealed patch of blood, where the animal had evidently been much injured when alive, and the Hooniahs, without my asking them, pointed this out as the spot where the stone had struck the leopard. I did not think at the time of asking any questions about the cubs.

Two days after, I was returning in the afternoon from an unsuc-

cessful day's sport. We (my two Bhootias and myself) had been out since daylight, and fagged hard up hill and down dale, and were tired after our exertions; fatigue is always more felt when the 'bag is empty,' so we sat down to have a rest and a smoke. It happened to be on the summit of the very hill where the Hooniah had killed the leopard in the remarkable manner I have related. While sitting down I noticed a pair of what appeared to be ravens swooping at something in the valley below; they kept wheeling round and round, and striking at some animal, I thought, in the grass. I imagined it to be a hare or marmot, and desired the younger of my two companions to go down and ascertain what it was. On reaching the spot I saw him stand amazed, and then eagerly make signals for us to come down. We accordingly descended, but before the spot was reached, a grey animal jumped up in the grass, and took refuge among some boulders. On reaching the place my man told me that it was a large cat, and pointed it out to us crouching under a rock. Directly the elder of the Bhootias saw the beast, he pronounced it to be the cub of a snow leopard, and then I remembered the Hooniah telling us about the pair of cubs. One of the men took off a blanket he was wearing over his shoulders, and after some trouble, in which all three of us got clawed, we managed to tie up our young friend in the folds of the blanket and carry him home. It was about the size of a lynx, with large feet and broad head, of a dusky white colour, with irregular black spots. The animal was miserably thin, and had evidently been starving for days. He ate burrel flesh ravenously when placed in front of him, and clawed my dog across the face handsomely for attempting to get a share of the meat. I chained him up to the pole of the tent with my dog's chain and collar, and made him a bed of straw; but he gave much trouble, especially on the march. However, in ten days he grew to be quite strong, slept day and night on my bed, and in time would doubtless have become quite tame.

One day, however, on returning from shooting, the cub lay dead, from what cause no one could or would explain, but I had a strong suspicion that he had been poisoned with some of my arsenical paste by one of the servants, to avoid the bother and trouble he gave to them all. However, this was only a suspicion, though there were grounds for supposing that the animal had not died a natural death, as his body was much swollen and distended. As can easily be imagined, the death of my pet was a great disappointment to me.

Two gentlemen of my acquaintance once actually came upon a snow leopard feeding on the carcase of a burrel which he had just pulled down, but unfortunately they missed their shots; they consoled themselves however, by carrying off the slain burrel. I was one march behind them, and remember on arriving at the camping ground which they had vacated the previous day, seeing the feet of the burrel lying by the remains of their camp fire.

CHAPTER V.

THE RED LYNX (*Felis caracal*).

Piercing like lynx's eyes.—SHAKSPEARE.

THE Lynx, like the tiger, leopard, and others of the cat tribe, is nocturnal in its habits, and is seldom shot, or even met with, in northern India. Though found in certain localities, it is decidedly a rare animal. Once only during my many wanderings and excursions have I seen one. It was in the Central Provinces: one of my companions got a long shot, but unfortunately missed.

The lynx when caught young can be reared without much trouble, and with care and kind treatment becomes exceedingly tame, and makes a good pet. My friend H——s had one for several years at Lullutpore.

I once came across the Thibet lynx (*Felis isabellina*)—quite another variety from *F. caracal*, and equally rare—in 1863 when hunting burrel, beyond British territory, and might have shot this uncommon animal, but for the stupidity of my followers. I will transcribe the occurrence from my journal.

In July 1863, in company with two Bhootia shikaries, I was out one day on the look-out for burrel. Soon after we started we had the good fortune to discover a fine herd of the wild sheep feeding on ground exceedingly favourable for a stalk, so that it required but little deliberation to decide on the plan of operations. We could perceive by the aid of our glasses that the greater part of the herd were old females and young, which I seldom meddled with; but there were, as is often the case, several young males, full-grown, and well worth the trouble of bringing to bag. We were favoured by the ground, and the wind was in the right direction, so that I had fully made up

my mind that at least one of the sheep, if not two or three, should furnish us with a supper.

We made a wide circuit, and approached the herd with all possible care; but what was my surprise and disgust, on peeping over a certain bush which I had marked as the spot from which to take my shots, to find the animals beating a retreat in a long line over an opposite hill. They were making off at a fast trot, and evidently had taken alarm at something or other. I tried to persuade myself that we had not been the cause of our ill-success, but what else could have done the mischief in such an out-of-the-way part? There must have been a watchful sentry that we had overlooked, who had given his comrades a hint to be off, and that was the only conclusion we could come to. When the burrel were out of sight, we walked slowly forward to the spot where they had been feeding only a few minutes before, and quite by chance I almost put my foot on to a lamb about a month or six weeks old, lying dead in the grass. The blood was yet flowing from a wound in its throat, evidently quite recently inflicted. I placed my hand on the body and it was warm. There had evidently been an opposition stalker at work, who had been beforehand and cut us out; but where was the gentleman? We looked round; the ground in the vicinity was covered with loose boulders and stones. I fancied that between two rocks about sixty yards off, I could make out the head of some animal looking attentively at us.

Now, I have nowhere met with men gifted with keener eye-sight (accustomed as they are to this description of hunting) than the Bhootia shikaries who are in the habit of accompanying Englishmen on hunting trips into the wilds of Thibet. Generally speaking, they are to be trusted in scanning the face of an opposite hill or valley below, and if burrel, or other animals are in sight, however motionless and well concealed they may be by the colour and shade of the ground, nine times out of ten one of these men will almost instantly detect them. I pointed out to my comrades this object like a head between the rocks, that had caught my eye, and appealed to them to decide if it was a living creature or the contrary. After a careless glance, they both shook their heads, remarking that it was nothing; so I gave one of them my rifle, and throwing myself down, prepared for that usual soother to the feelings under adverse circumstances, a smoke, but hard luck was in store for me. Suddenly the younger of the two men thrust my rifle into my hand and clutched me by the shoulder. I

looked round, and from behind the very two rocks, where a minute previously I had rightly imagined that I could make out the head of some animal intently gazing at us, a lynx was rapidly stealing off. Before I could recover myself, stand up, cock the rifle, and take a rapid aim, he had gained the brow of the hill, and was in the act of disappearing as I drew the trigger. Under the circumstances the shot was a good one, for the bullet struck the ground close to the animal, but a miss is as good as a mile, and though I ran forward in hopes of giving him a second barrel, I never saw the lynx again. I remember that I was very wrathful at this unlucky affair, and roundly upbraided my two companions on their carelessness, and certainly they richly deserved the reprimand they received. As I have already mentioned, this is the only instance that I ever came across the Thibet lynx, and few Indians of my acquaintance have had the luck to bag one.

The general colour of the skin of the Thibet lynx much resembles in tint the coat of the animal it so frequently preys upon—the burrel.

The tail is rather short and tipped with black.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HUNTING LEOPARD OR CHEETAH (*Felis Jubata*).

Couched low he lies, and meditates the prey.—POPE.

DESCRIPTION.

Extreme Length—From 7 to 8 feet.

Height—From 2½ to 3 feet.

Head—Round in shape. Ears short.

Body—Slender in form.

Limbs—Longer than either panther or leopard; claws only slightly retractile, and not so sharp and curved as those of true cat.

General Colour—Light red on back and sides, white below, thickly spotted with black, spots very distinct (more so than markings of leopard) and small.

Tail—Long, generally carried curled at the tip.

Hair—On neck rather long and bristly, but can hardly be called a mane. The fur is rather rough, and wanting the sleekness of true cat.

THE Cheetah, though classed among the cats, differs from the rest of the feline race in one or two material points. It has been described by some writers as the connecting link between the cat and dog. I have never seen the animal in its wild state, though it is by no means uncommon in many parts of India. A friend of mine who was stationed for many years in Rajpootana, informs me that when out pigsticking in the plains near Nuseerabad, cheetahs have frequently been put up and speared from horseback.

He states that they give a short but very quick run, and when brought to close quarters have seldom been known to show fight; but it was always considered prudent not to let a wounded cheetah get behind your horse, as cases have been known of their springing on to a

horse's back after it has passed by; in which case a cheetah not only becomes an ugly customer to dispose of, but may inflict serious wounds on a valuable hunter, and utterly spoil his nerves.

My friend H——s has constantly shot the cheetah in the Lullutpore district, when beating for big game. The animal, I have been informed, is generally to be found in rocky ravines where there is sufficient scrub and bush to afford concealment, seldom in very open country.

As is well known, the cheetah is kept by rajahs and other rich natives for hunting antelope. It is a mistake, however, to imagine that the cheetah in its wild state chiefly preys on the common Indian antelope. He will certainly pull a black buck down, when the latter enters bush or grass jungle,—the natural haunt of the cheetah,—but he does not follow the antelope on to open flats or plains. The bush-loving chikarah, the four-horned deer, stray goats and sheep, form the cheetah's principal prey.

The method of hunting antelope with the cheetah, as practised in India, has so often been described that I will only briefly allude to it. A party of us, mounted on horseback, went out at the invitation of a native rajah near Benares to witness a hunt. A pair of cheetahs, in a flat cart drawn by bullocks, were chained up, with collars on, and hooded. We soon found a herd of antelope, among them four or five bucks, at which to loose the cheetahs. The antelopes were tame enough, and allowed us to approach within 300 yards or so, when we came to a halt. The keepers then let loose one of the hunting leopards, a male, and the creature seemed to know perfectly well what his duties were, for immediately his hood was taken off, and the collar chain unfastened, his eyes were riveted on the antelopes, now risen to their feet, and staring at us. He at once commenced approaching them, almost in a direct line, not taking advantage of some sand hills to conceal his stalk, as he might have done, but grovelling and crouching close to the ground. That the antelope saw their enemy was evident, but instead of making off, they appeared to be either paralysed from fear or wrapped in curiosity, till they allowed him to approach within springing distance. Then, as the foolish creatures turned to flee, the cheetah made two or three bounds forward, and with extraordinary speed pulled down, not a buck as we had hoped and had been told he would do, but a poor old doe with a young one at her heels. We galloped up, but it was too late to save the poor creature. The cheetah had already buried his teeth in her throat. He glared and growled at his keeper in a savage

manner when pulled off the carcase by his collar, and I imagine it would have been dangerous for a stranger to have meddled with him. We had no further sport, and one and all agreed that, though the spectacle was worth seeing just for once in a way, there was nothing much in it from a sporting point of view.

Cheetah-hunting is probably to be seen to the greatest advantage at Baroda, where it is carried on in a far more scientific style than I have above described. What I have related is merely from personal experience.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDIAN BLACK BEAR (*Ursus labiatus*).

In the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear.—SHAKSPEARE.

DESCRIPTION.

Extreme Length—From $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{3}{4}$ feet, both sexes much about the same size.

Height— $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Head—Bald about the face, the lower part of which is a dingy white colour; lips large and coarse; ears rather short and round at the tips; eyes small.

Neck—Short. Shoulders high. Hair of a black colour, *coarse* and *shaggy*. *Very long* above neck, and over fore part of body, a dingy white mark on chest, as also on tips of paws.

Limbs—Rather short, thick, and muscular, fore legs rather bow-shaped.

Feet large, soles bare, armed with *very large, curved*, non-retractile claws.

Tail short.

In general appearance the most unwieldy of all the Ursidæ family.¹ Nearly always more or less mangy about stomach and lower parts.

THIS bear I have only met with in the Central Provinces, Bundelkund, and Gwalior; but I believe it is also to be found in the hills of the Madras Presidency, as well as in many parts of Bombay, where low ranges of mountains occur, covered with rocks and scrub jungle, and where the animal can conceal itself during the day in deep caves.

Bears are, generally speaking, inhabitants of very cold countries, such as Russia, Norway and Sweden, and the Arctic Regions, but *Ursus labiatus* is an exception to this rule, for he is constantly to be found in the very hottest parts of India. I need hardly mention that the different species of the *Ursidæ* family inhabiting cold climates hyber-

¹ As Shakspeare says of bears, 'They are ill-favoured rough things.'

nate, or lie dormant in their dens during the rigours of winter. I am unable to state for certain whether *Ursus labiātus* is given to this practice or not, but I imagine that he is an exception to the rule, and *does not* hibernate.

I believe that this black bear has never been accused of killing goats, sheep &c., for food. Undoubtedly the Himalayan species frequently does so. In my numerous expeditions and sporting trips, involving constant association with native shikaries, I never once heard such a thing stated, and *Ursus labiātus* can hardly therefore be included among the carnivora. In fact, though continually hunted and bullied by sportsmen, he is, generally speaking, a very harmless creature. His principal food is wild fruit, such as the mango and mowah (especially the latter), various berries, sugar cane, if growing near his haunts; also various kinds of insects, such as centipedes, spiders, beetles, ants, especially the white ant, and honey when he can get at a bees' nest. I have more than once seen an old bear, just after daylight, hard at work with his huge curved claws, scooping out the nests of the white ant, and although the ground is often as hard as iron, he makes prodigious holes. Another favourite amusement, or rather occupation, when he is in quest of food, is turning over loose stones in search of insects.

I once shot one thus occupied, after watching him for fully a quarter of an hour at his work. He turned the stones over with ease and by a single effort of his huge paw—some of them large flat slabs, deeply sunk into the ground—and immediately licked up whatever 'delicacy' there might be underneath. It was just about sunrise in the middle of the hot season; I had been quite unable to sleep from the terrible heat of a fearfully close, muggy night, and so about four o'clock took my rifle and, in company with an orderly, clambered up a rocky hill near my tent, where a pair of bears were said to be. We took up a position above some caves, in hopes that when daylight came we might catch 'Mr. Bear and his wife' as they returned from their nightly rounds. There was not a breath of air, and the rocks on which we were sitting were still warm from the hot blasts of the previous day. Having waited a full half-hour, my companion got impatient, and asked leave to be allowed to go higher up the hill and have a look around. I consented. He returned in a few minutes full of excitement; he had seen a bear in a valley below, but on the opposite side of the hill; and this was the gentleman I have already described as turning the stones over. We managed to descend without 'being seen', so busy was the animal at his work, and

crept up within easy rifle shot. After we had waited some minutes, poor 'Bhāloo' seemed to think it was time to be away home, and commenced making off, when I bowled him over with a bullet through the neck, which killed him instantly.

Sitting up before sunrise over caverns and dens is a common way of shooting bears; but although I have very often tried it, this was the only time I was repaid for turning out so early, and then the bear was not killed returning to his lair, but was discovered quite by chance, as just related. This reminds me of a most absurd occurrence that happened many years ago.

I had been persuaded by a village shikary to get up very early and sit up over some caves on the brow of a hill, where he assured me an old Reech (as the jungle tribes of the Central Provinces sometimes call the black bear) had resided for years. My companion informed me that he was a 'būrha,' or old gentleman, who lived quite by himself,—probably an old bachelor—I had twice previously gone through the performance of sitting over this very spot, in hopes of intercepting this bear, but with no luck, and this was the third and last time. There were so many caves and holes in the hill—a regular honeycomb, in fact—that my companion was puzzled where to post me to the best advantage, and finally, after some deliberation, decided on the very highest point of the hill, from whence I could see in every direction. There we sat hour after hour, and I suppose from previous disappointments I was not sufficiently vigilant. As day began to break we heard the loud cry of a hyæna as he retired to his lair, and the calls of numerous peafowl in the valley below. Suddenly my excitable companion clutched me by the arm, quite startling me, and throwing me off my balance, and whispered 'Reech, Sahib, Reech' (A bear, sir, a bear!), pointing at the same time down the hill behind us. By the time, however, that I had turned round ready for a shot, it was too late; for all that I beheld was a glimpse of the huge 'posterior' of the bear, as he was in the act of disappearing into one of the numerous entrances of his cave: so we were regularly done, and went home disconsolate.

One word more on the subject of sitting up for bears. The sportsman should bear in mind when choosing a position that his post is not accessible from above.

Some few years back a gentleman in the Civil Service was severely hurt by neglecting this precaution.

I will relate the story as told to me. R——l of the survey, and S——g of the Civil Service, one evening late in the month of April, agreed to sit up for bears, which were known to inhabit some hills near a village named Sitapur, in the Kirwee district.

Their positions were about 500 yards apart, R——l in a machān built in a tree near the head of a pass, commanding a good view of a path, along which 'Bhāloo' would probably come, and also overlooking both banks of the ravine.

S——g posted himself nearer the caves where the bears were said to be, on a kind of spur projecting from a hill, and overlooking a pool of water.

The latter had not been long in his place when he saw two or three bears making straight towards him from the hill side above. One came on along the crest of the spur, and continued to advance towards S——g, till quite close up. S——g gave the brute both barrels, and in stooping for his second rifle either slipped or was pushed by the bear over the edge of the rock on which he was standing, and fell down among the boulders below.

R——l who had heard the shots and a native shouting for help, on reaching the spot, found S——g lying severely hurt, at the foot of the rock: his collar-bone was broken, and he was very severely bruised, having fallen over twenty feet.

The wounded bear fell over the other side of the spur, and was never seen again.

Bears, I believe, nearly always have two cubs at a time, sometimes only one. I had often been told by natives that an old she-bear with young ones, when in danger and beating a retreat, will put her cubs on her neck and shoulders and carry them there; and this I can assert to be perfectly true; for in my last shooting trip with the late Captain B——s of my regiment, and H——s, in the Lullutpore jungles, the latter shot a she-bear, driven towards us by beaters, and endeavouring to escape, with a very small cub buried in the matted hair of her neck. The beaters reported having seen a second cub; only one, however, was secured.

The black bear if left unmolested is, usually speaking, a harmless creature enough; but I have known many exceptional cases when, without being provoked or molested in any way, a bear has attacked and severely injured natives. A very remarkable instance occurred in the hot weather of 1872 in the jungle I have so often mentioned, viz. :

Lullutpore, when in company with my friend H——s of the police. We were returning early in June, from the Bijawur country, having met with very fair sport. I transcribe the bag from my old game register :

‘Four tigers, two bears, seven samber, two cheetul, one four-horned antelope, one hyæna, four black buck, four chikarah, and two wild boars—total twenty-seven head.’

As it was evident by the masses of clouds collecting in every quarter that the rains were close at hand, we had agreed to finish off by looking up a pair of bears concerning whom we several times had received ‘khubber’ (or intelligence). Accordingly we made a couple of marches, and pitched our tents near a river (the name of which I cannot remember), and within a mile of the place where the bears were said to be. Our camp was in dangerous proximity to several huge bees’ nests, hanging down from some steep cliffs bordering the river, and only fifty or sixty yards from our tents. Strict orders were given to our camp followers that no one was to approach or to irritate in any way these dangerous insects, as we well knew what terrible creatures these wild bees are to meddle with, and the disastrous results of human beings molesting or even approaching their nests.

But I am digressing. We could get no certain information where the bears’ caves were, so agreed to assemble thirty or forty men, and drive the neighbouring hills and valleys. Now in that part of the country villages were few and far between, and we could not collect more than eight or ten men from each miserable group of huts, called a village, so we had some trouble in getting sufficient coolies together for our purpose.

The evening previous to the intended hunt H——s sent out four of his policemen with orders that they were each to go to such and such a village and come back early the following morning with as many men as they could get. As these policemen would have to pass through portions of forest and jungle after dark, H——s very properly ordered (as usual on these occasions) that each man should take his loaded musket, to protect himself if necessary from any wild animal he might meet with. We retired to rest as usual, and, as it was fearfully hot, agreed to sleep out in the open. I awoke very early, had drunk my usual cup of tea, drawn on my pantaloons and boots, and was busily occupied in my ablutions. H——s was still seemingly fast asleep, although his old bearer had been going on, ‘Sāhib, Sāhib,

pānch bajā hai,' (meaning that it was five o'clock) for the last quarter of an hour. All of a sudden I ceased rubbing myself with a towel, perfectly astounded at a most hideous outcry from I do not know how many voices, and seemingly only a short distance off. I could hear among others, cries of 'A bear, a bear!' and then a loud 'Ow, Ow, Ow.' I recognised the latter at once; there could be no mistaking it; it was very certain there was mischief going on, and Bruin concerned in it. Hastily drawing on a shirt, I seized the rifle lying loaded under my bed, and in company with half a dozen servants and others, ran as fast as possible in the direction of the uproar, which had now nearly ceased, my companion promising to follow. The first person we came to was one of H——s' policemen, a great fellow, but a man we had often suspected of being anything but a 'brave'; he was rolling on the ground, howling with pain, his clothes much torn, and his arm bleeding from some rather deep scratches, but otherwise not much hurt; so leaving a man to take charge of him to camp, we went on in the direction whence we had heard numerous voices. About fifty yards further, we came to a solitary tree with eight or ten natives sitting in the branches. It was a kind of sycamore with very light bark, and on approaching I was horrified at seeing a stream of blood running down the stem of the tree. A poor fellow with his leg terribly torn about the calf, was being supported by three others. I immediately ordered them to lower him gently down, and as he reached our arms he fainted. There was water close by, to the edge of which I carried him, and ordered some of those around to pour water over his temples, while I made a hasty bandage with my bearer's puggree to stop the bleeding. The wounded man soon revived, and having sent for a bed from our camp, we carried him there, dressed the wound—a very severe one—properly, and two hours afterwards started the patient, carried by six men, for the Lullutpore hospital, where he soon recovered.

The next thing was to hold a 'court of inquiry' on the whole business. The policeman made out 'that two bears attacked them as they were returning from their expedition in the dark, and that he was knocked over, and knew nothing more.' But among the poor villagers there were three or four very intelligent men, who were afraid to speak out in the presence of the policeman; but on giving them a second hearing we soon extracted from them what had really happened, which was as follows. The whole party, numbering ten or a dozen men, left their village about three o'clock, when it was quite dark, the

policeman with his loaded musket leading the way. They had arrived within a quarter of a mile of the camp, and were walking in single file through a rather dark clump of bushes, following a well-beaten path, when they all of a sudden found themselves confronted by two bears coming from the opposite direction. The policeman, instead of showing a good example, threw away his musket and bolted down the side of the hill, and as he did so, one of the brutes made a blow at him with its paw, grazing his arm and tearing his clothes as I have described. The unfortunate coolies, deserted by their cowardly protector, and with nothing in their hands to defend themselves, naturally took to their heels; this same bear, evidently a vicious one, after them. There was only one tree near; they all attempted to climb up it at the same time, and all but one succeeded before the bear reached the foot. As this unfortunate was being dragged up by his companions—some of whom attempted to keep the brute off by shouting—the bear caught him with its paws, bit him through the calf of the leg, and passed rapidly on. Now all this was occasioned by the cowardly conduct of the policeman.¹ Had the fellow stood his ground like a man, shouted, or even fired his musket, the chances are ten to one that the bears would have taken to their heels; but it is the same with all brutes: though by instinct they fear human beings, still when they see a man run away from them they fully comprehend the advantage gained, and gathering courage, proceed to further measures. There is not a surer way of bringing a wild animal, be it a tiger, panther, or in fact any savage beast, on to the top of you, than by running away. The policeman was found guilty, and sent home in disgrace. However, he deserved his punishment, and as H——s remarked, it was a very good test what the man was worth.

Two days after we had our revenge. I was unwell, but H——s sat up over the cave into which these two bears had been marked down: just before dark they came out and squatted at the mouth of their den, offering a fine chance. He killed one, and wounded the other most severely; but unfortunately the second one was not brought to bag.

I have been told by native hunters that they have seen a bear

¹ Shakspeare says with truth, and his lines apply not only to the boar, but to all wild beasts—

To fly the boar, before the boar pursue,
Were to incense the boar to follow us,
And make pursuit when he did mean no chase.

struck by a bullet stuff grass into the wound to stop the bleeding when making off: this sounds improbable. The most deadly place to shoot a bear (except through the head, which, of course, drops any animal) is in the white patch on the chest. Often the brute, hearing your approach, and not having made out whether you are friend or foe, stands up on his hind legs to have a better look, and then the white crescent offers a fine mark to aim at. If struck within that white mark, the animal nearly always drops dead on the spot. Through, or behind the shoulder, are also good places to plant a bullet, but an old bear will take any amount of lead in the stern, and make off. The eyesight of these animals is by no means good, but their hearing is tolerably keen, and sense of smell very powerful; so in stalking one, be careful about the wind, or you will assuredly be discovered.

Remember always, if possible, in approaching a bear, to get above him to take your shot, and then you are comparatively safe; for if the creature attempts to come up hill, he affords a chance which can hardly be missed, whereas firing at a bear from below is dangerous, for it is astonishing how quickly they can come down hill. I have never been charged by the Indian black bear, though I have been by the Himalayan species—an anecdote hereafter to be related—but it is very certain they will occasionally charge in a very savage manner. I know of two Englishmen and a great number of natives who have been mauled by the Indian bear. Bears, if they make good their charge, almost invariably strike a man in the face; and it can easily be imagined what fearful punishment they can inflict, furnished as they are by nature with such powerful muscular arms, and terrible curved claws. I have seen poor fellows fearfully disfigured and mutilated by a single blow from the paw of a bear. A shikary named Dhun Singh, a native of Lullutpore, who was a most enthusiastic follower of the chase, and always joined our shooting party in the hot weather months, had by a single blow from the fore paw of a bear been disfigured for life in an instant, and left senseless on the field. He was afterwards such an awful object, that I never could look at him without shuddering.

It is a very common thing to read in books, and to hear people speak of a bear's hug; in fact, the expression is proverbial. The animal, I believe, is supposed to be in the habit of squeezing a man to death. 'Raising itself on to its hind feet, it squeezes its enemy between the fore legs,' says one writer. American bears may act thus,

though I imagine it is not the case. Our bears in India certainly, to the best of my knowledge, never attempt such a thing. They strike with their fore paws, or draw a man towards them, to bite him through the face or arm, but there is no squeezing or hugging. I have put this question over and over again to natives who have lived among bears all their lives, and have invariably received a reply in the negative. When in Norway, I also made enquiries on this point, and my opinion was confirmed there by several old bear hunters whom I consulted. The Norwegians affirm, that *U. arctos* when provoked, is a dangerous animal to cope with, but that he never attempts to hug, or squeeze a man, but strikes him in the face with his paw.

Although the bear is an awkward brute both in appearance and manner of shuffling along, it is extraordinary at what a pace he gets over rough ground, as will soon be discovered by anyone on foot attempting to follow him up when he is alarmed and making off. After sleeping all day, he emerges from his den in quest of food just as darkness is coming on, issuing forth without making the slightest noise, and generally squats at the mouth of it for a few minutes before sallying forth on his rounds: he then almost invariably makes straight for water.

Though, generally speaking, these animals are nocturnal in their habits, and are back in their caves before the sun is high, yet in out-of-the-way places, where they are not hunted or disturbed, I have seen them out much later, especially in dull cloudy weather, or after a thunder storm. Perhaps the rumbling in the skies awakens and disturbs them. In the rainy season they constantly remain out in the forests during the day, but though the hunter comes across their unmistakable tracks, the grass and jungle is then so high and thick that they are not often seen. Moreover, at that time of the year, the forests begin to get unhealthy, and few sportsmen care to be out.

Generally speaking, the Indian bear is not so fat or in such good condition as his hill brother, which is not to be wondered at, considering that the former inhabits the very hottest parts of India while the latter's habitat is among hills, often of great elevation, and in a climate and temperature exactly the contrary to that which *U. labiatus* is compelled to endure. Consequently through the intense 'grilling' the Indian bear yearly undergoes, not so much fat is to be got from his carcass as from that of *U. Tibetanus*. There is a certain amount of bear's fat usually found between the animal's hide and the flesh, but

by far the most and best bear's grease is obtained from about the creature's bowels in certain places that natives know where to look for it. I have procured as many as eleven bottles of grease from a single Himalayan bear, but never remember getting more than four from the bear of the plains. This grease is well worth keeping and preserving, as it is useful for many purposes, and sells for one or two rupees a bottle. The skin of *Ursus labiatus* is very coarse, and does not make nearly such a good rug as that of the hill species; moreover it is one of the most difficult to dry and preserve that I know of.

Bears are cunning enough to shake the boughs of mangoe trees not strong enough to bear their weight, to make the fruit fall; they then descend to devour what has dropped.

Natives affirm that bears are immensely fond of honey, and will persist in storming a bees' nest, in spite of thousands of bees settling on their faces and stinging them. If the nest is in a position possible to be got at, they say that 'Bhāloo' nearly always makes good his assault, and retires gluttoned and smeared with honey. This is all hearsay, but I believe it to be true.

The Indian bear is easily tamed, but makes a clumsy and troublesome pet. British soldiers often have one chained up near the barracks. I remember hearing of an amusing occurrence at one of our Bengal stations many years ago. A gallant European regiment, with rather a peppery colonel, was formed up one morning in readiness for the usual drill. Just as the commandant galloped up at one end of the parade ground, the pet bear of the regiment came shuffling across from the opposite direction. The colonel's horse took fright at the brute, and in a loud voice the rider called out to the sergeant-major to drive the animal away; but the bear was full of play, bounded about through the ranks, first here, then there, till the men were in fits of laughter, and their commander in a towering passion; at last four buglers had to assist the sergeant-major to capture the animal, and lead him back to the barracks.

Natives constantly bring bears round to exhibit sundry tricks and performances, such as dancing, wrestling with a man, and so on. These dancing bears nearly always have their teeth and claws drawn, a great piece of cruelty which should be stopped.

I have known elephants steady enough with tigers, that could hardly be brought to face a bear; and horses often exhibit great fear on viewing the animal, though bears not unfrequently have been

speared from on horseback by Englishmen. I shall never forget the fright a horse of mine, named 'Fiddle,' got one dark night in the hot weather, from what we supposed was a bear.

The affair happened thus. I had received news from a native friend residing in Scindiah's country, near Aumōla on the banks of the Scinde river, that a pair of panthers, and several stag samber, driven by the intense heat from the neighbouring hills, had taken up their quarters among the patches of willow, grass, and jungle skirting the river, and that if I would come out, he would provide beaters for a 'hank.' A friend stationed at Jhansie at once accepted my invitation to accompany me. We had little difficulty in obtaining ten days' leave, and having sent on our traps three days before, and then laid out two horses on the Seepree road, we ourselves started to drive out the forty miles' journey in my dog-cart.

It was a bright moonlight night when, after dining at mess, we lit our cheeroots, and made a start. Our first horse was a borrowed one, and he got through his share of the journey, some twelve miles, in good style. We found the change horse ready waiting under a thick burgot tree. This animal was hired for the occasion from a Parsee merchant, and though his action, from a screwed leg, was awkward in appearance, he was a good one to go, and speedily rattled us over the second stage of sixteen miles. So far things had gone well, and we had only some ten more miles to get through to reach Aumōla, where our journey ended. Unfortunately, however, this last stage was by far the worst of the three, though the distance was shorter than usual, for we had driven the hired horse three miles beyond the ordinary changing place. Yet the wretched state of the unbridged, sandy road, made the work heavy and laborious for the horse, and knowing, from previous expeditions, that this was the case, I had reserved my gallant stud-bred—he with the fiddle-head—to pull us through this difficulty.

By the time we had got him into the trap, the moon had got so low that my companion remarked, it would be as well to light up. I struck a match and opened one of the lamps, when to my disgust I found a mere stump of a candle, not more than an inch or two in height, and the corresponding lamp proved to be in a similar state. Turning wrathfully to the syce and demanding an explanation of his carelessness in not placing fresh candles, I found him, like the generality of native servants, ready with an excuse. 'He had been sent on in front

the previous evening; how could he see whether on starting the candles had been renewed?' and so on! It was no use grumbling, so having lit the stumps of candles, we got under way again. At first the road was good enough; but as we approached the flat-topped range of hills skirting the Scinde river, through which the track wound, things did not improve, and the springs of the 'tum tum' were more than once severely tried as we jolted and bumped across nullahs and fords. Still we made progress, till at length the roar of the Scinde could be heard in the distance.'

Within a short mile of the river the road descended through a deep gorge, with high banks, covered with bushes and jungle on either side, and so narrow that the branches of trees hanging over, often scraped our hats. As we approached the very worst bit of road, as a matter of course, the lamps went out with a flare and a sputter and we were left almost in total darkness. There was nothing to be done but to allow the horse to pick his own way slowly and surely. All of a sudden our nag came to a halt at the bottom of a ravine, snorted, and commenced pushing the cart back. Imagining that there was something lying in the road barring the way, I gave the reins to my companion, jumped down, and went up to the horse's head. There appeared to be nothing so far as I could see, to prevent our advance, and I began patting him, and then for the first time noticed that he was trembling all over,—and still backing. I was about to remark 'he must be ill,' when my companion suddenly exclaimed, 'Take care; there is something moving in the bushes above you.'

This was pleasant, certainly, and I did not like it. We had no arms with us of any kind, and if we had had gun, rifle, or pistol, they could have been but of little service in such a state of almost pitch darkness. I stood close in with my back to the cart; there was not a breath of wind, and all was again silent, though a moment before something had unmistakably moved in the jungle above within a few yards of us, and as I could not help thinking just at an inviting distance for a spring. 'See if you can find a stone,' presently remarked my friend in a whisper. I put down my hand and got hold of a lump of 'kunkur,' and threw it in the direction of the suspected danger: immediately there was a rush of some heavy animal retreating, which made the horse rear up in the shafts. Again I threw clods of earth, and we shouted as loud as we could; nothing further was heard, and

after a deal of patting and persuading, the good horse resumed his course, and we reached Aumōla in safety.

The natives told us the following morning that a pair of bears from a neighbouring hill not unfrequently crossed this road at night, on their way to and from the river; but panthers and leopards, occasionally a tiger, were also in the neighbourhood, and it was possible enough that one of the big cats had been lying in wait by the roadside, on the look-out for a stray bullock or horse coming along: or it may have only been a mangy hyæna after all, that had so disconcerted us.

In America the flesh of the bear is considered fit for human food; in fact, we constantly read about bear hams, but the only people I have ever known eat bear's flesh in India are the Saharias of Bundelkund, and they, I believe, will eat anything, for I have actually known them devour a hyæna. I have never met or heard of a European who would make the experiment of having a piece of bear's flesh cooked for his dinner, though I imagine it cannot be so very unpalatable. Once when in company with a brother officer on a shooting trip near Mussoorie I happened to shoot a bear, and reminded my friend, just as a group of *paharies* (hillmen) were taking the skin off, that I had heard him say he would not mind trying a piece of bear's flesh, and that now was his time to pick out a 'tit-bit.' G——s, however, on viewing the sinewy carcase of the poor bear—not unlike in shape a short, thick-built man—shook his head, and declined to try the experiment.

I have said that the extreme length of the Indian bear is from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{3}{4}$ feet, but I once shot one larger than this, for he measured 6 feet 2 inches, an unusual size for *Ursus labiatus*. He was, moreover, very thick in proportion. I will conclude this chapter with an account of how this bear was bagged.

It was in the hot season of 1870, that I sallied out in company with a friend in the Royal Scots at Jhansie, for ten days' shooting.

I must mention that, a few months before, I had made friends with a sporting Thakoor, living near Aumōla on the Scinde river, and he had promised to let me know, when the hot weather had set in, if any tigers, panthers, or bears came into the neighbourhood of his village. He kept his word, for one morning I received a letter informing me that a pair of tigers had been killing bullocks on the banks of the Scinde, and that if I came out sharp with two or three other Sahibs, he thought we might beat the royal pair out, and have some sport. I could only, however, persuade one friend to accompany me. The

weather at the time, the first week in June, was certainly uncomfortably hot, and this deterred others from joining us.

We reached Aumōla in safety, and put up in a small bungalow close to the bank of the river. The Thakoor came to make his salaam early next morning, and after a lengthened consultation we agreed to have a big hankwa the following day. However, luck was against us, and though fresh traces of the tigers were numerous, we never caught a glimpse of them. My friend killed a panther by a most extraordinary good shot, and I bagged a mangy hyæna, and that was all after three days' hard work.

The hyæna I killed from a machān. After sitting up for many hours, with I——n over a dead bullock (which had evidently been killed by a very large panther or a tiger) we had given up all hope and were preparing to descend the tree and return home, when a rolling stone on the opposite hill followed by a rustling in the bushes, raised our expectations from the lowest ebb to the opposite extreme; another movement lower down, when, to our disgust, instead of a splendid royal tiger, a sneaking, dirty hyæna slowly emerged. He was allowed five minutes to enjoy his last meal, and then a two-ounce ball rolled him over.

The next day, with the aid of a basket full of fireworks we drove an old bear out of his den, and most certainly he should have been bagged; but the powder was not straight, and though very severely wounded, he escaped. In the evening of the same day we were returning home towards sunset, tired and disconsolate, both on horseback, with the coolies straggling along behind us. A few hundred yards to our left was a hill, quite by itself, with a burnt-up level plain all round. I should say this hill was about half a mile long at the base. The side facing us was flat, sloping gradually to the base from a rocky ridge which ran along the summit, and about half-way up there was a step or terrace, on which grew four large mango trees covered with fruit. My syce, a very sharp-eyed man, whose keen vision had been the cause of many a poor black buck coming to grief, presently came running up, and pointing towards the hill said, 'Sahib, what animal is that?' We came to a sudden halt, and, after gazing half a minute in the direction in which the man pointed out a certain black mass under the mango trees, we both exclaimed almost simultaneously, 'By Jove, a bear!' There was little time to make arrangements (the sun was already low down), so we held a hurried consultation. We happened to have two



MY CAMP NEAR WĀN, IN THE HIMALAYAS. AUGUST 1868.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HIMALAYAN BLACK BEAR (*Ursus Tibetānus*).

Churlish as a bear.—SHAKSPEARE.

DESCRIPTION.

Small in size in comparison with bears of Northern Asia, Europe, and America.

Extreme Length.— $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 feet.

Height.—3 to $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet.

Head.—Rather long. Face square and flat. Nose pointed. Eyes small. Ears erect, rounded, and of moderate length. Neck short.

Fur.—Short, crisp, and of a glossy jet black colour; a fringe of longish hair behind each ear.

Chin.—White. A very distinct, pure white crescent-shaped mark on chest, extending across tips of shoulders.

Limbs.—Thick and muscular.

Feet.—Large, with five toes, soles bare, armed with stout black claws, not so large or curved as those of *U. Labiātus*.

Tail.—Short.

THIS is the common bear of the Himalayas, and much resembles the black bear of the plains in its general habits, so that my remarks on *U. labiātus* apply also to this species, except in one or two points. I have already said that the hill bear will undoubtedly, not unfrequently, prey on the flesh of animals, such as that of goats, sheep, calves, or even ponies; worse still, he will readily devour putrid carcasses. On my first visit to the hills, I very soon learnt that this bear was a flesh-eater, so far as regards sheep, goats, &c., but I could hardly believe that he would make a repast off such abominations, though the paharies repeatedly informed me that such was the case.

One day, however, I saw a bear busy making a meal off a bullock that had died of disease and had been thrown into the bed of a stream. In the autumn of 1868 I was encamped in the Neti valley in a locality famed for bears, and one morning was busy outside my tent stuffing a moonal pheasant. The road from Thibet passed close by, and numerous flocks of goats and sheep laden with packs of salt kept passing, *en route* to Serinugger or Almorah. Presently a Bhootia, with a heavy load on his shoulders, came up and asked for a light from the cooking-tent, and I heard him say that only a quarter of an hour or so before, he and his companions had seen a bear below the road eating something. I asked him two or three questions, but could hardly believe that such a thing was possible, as it was near mid-day with a warm sun. Not half an hour afterwards, three more Bhootias came by; one of them walked straight up to me and said, ‘Sahib, if you want a shot at a bear, there is one only half a mile back, for we saw him a few minutes ago at the bottom of the valley.’ He also pointed out a curve in the path, below which they had seen the animal.

I at once took my rifle and, accompanied by a chuprassie, walked up the road as fast as I could in the direction pointed out. Long before

reaching the spot I saw several vultures soaring round the head of the valley and descending somewhere about the spot I was making for. On reaching the curve in the road and looking down, we saw right below us on the farther bank of the river among the rocks and stones, a large bear busily engaged feeding on a carcass. He was surrounded by a circle of vultures waiting for their turn at the feast. The rocks around were also covered with these birds. While watching the scene below and considering what was to be done, I was amused to see how on two occasions the selfish old bear, by making a kind of half-jump forward and a growl at the same time, kept the vultures at a distance.

There could not be a more awkward place. On our side of the stream—now much flooded and impassable, through the snow melting above—there was a landslip for a height of fully 500 feet, with patches here and there of bush and grass, but the cover was nowhere thick enough to afford concealment. Not only would it have been dangerous to attempt the descent of this rolling mass of stones and earth, but we should have been immediately discovered, for it was impossible to take a single step without sending pebbles and earth clattering down, which would betray our approach in an instant. The ground above the bear on the opposite bank was rocky, and several trees and bushes hung over the bank close above him; capital cover to creep up behind, but unfortunately there was only one bridge by which to cross the torrent, merely a few planks resting on rocks on either side of the stream, with stones at each end to keep them steady; and this bridge was a few hundred yards below the place where the bear was. If I could only manage to steal across without being noticed it would be all right; in fact this was the only chance, unless I took a long shot across from above the landslip.

I chose the former plan; so putting four or five ball cartridges into my pocket, I descended alone by a narrow footpath leading to the bridge: but I was discovered before I even put foot on the plank. I have already mentioned how keen is the bear's sense of smell; I had quite forgotten that there was a strong wind blowing up the valley from where I was right in the direction of the brute. On taking a look towards him I saw that he had left off feeding and that his snout was elevated in the air, evidently suspecting that something was wrong (one would have imagined that the 'delicacy' in front of him would have drowned all other olfactory sensations), and the next moment he

began retiring slowly, looking over his shoulder and halting every few paces. It was too far for a shot, so I watched him till out of sight. The next minute my chuprassie came running down from above, where he had obtained a better view than myself, with intelligence that he had seen the bear enter a cave under some rocks. This was glorious news, and I made sure now of getting a shot.

Taking the chuprassie with me to show the exact spot where *Bhāloo* had retired, we crossed the bridge and carefully making a *détour*, descended as nearly as possible above the cave, when having chosen a favourable position on the top of a rock guarding every direction, I ordered my man to roll some stones down and shout. He toppled over a loose rock, which thundered down and broke to fragments on the shingle beneath. A sullen growl of defiance from the depths of the earth was the only result. The man, who was a plucky little *Ghoorkha*, went still lower down and threw stones right into the mouth of the den, but with no better success. A number of men, among them several of my servants, had now assembled on the road opposite. I called out to them to come down and bring with them as much dry grass and straw as they could collect. In a quarter of an hour or so, some twenty or thirty men, with four large sheep dogs, came across with straw enough to fill a barn. They crammed this into the mouth of the den, pushing it down from above with poles; still all was silent within.

A piece of rope was then lighted, and the chuprassie descended and soon made a huge bonfire. The smoke poured out in every direction from twenty different fissures, showing to what a distance the cavern extended: but still all in vain. Old Bruin would not bolt. One of the men, by my order, squibbed off some powder, holding the barrels of my shot gun as far down into the cave as he could reach; at the report we all heard the bear growl again, and much to the amusement of the lookers-on, the man with the gun clambered up the bank a deal quicker than he went down. At length, after fruitlessly expending several hours, we had to give it up; and next morning I found fresh footmarks at the mouth of the den, where in the middle of the night *Bhāloo* had issued forth in safety.

This animal usually feeds at night, but on cloudy, wet days, especially when it is foggy, he may be found wandering about in the daytime; in November it is nothing unusual to find bears in the oak forests looking for acorns at all hours of the day. Just at dawn of day is

the most likely time of all to come across a bear; they may then be met even on public roads, returning to their lairs.

The hill bear is especially partial to all kinds of fruit. I have known them invade gardens in the night close to the back of large villages, and not only despoil the trees of their crops, but break and twist the branches into all manner of shapes.

It is nothing uncommon to meet with apricot trees utterly ruined by the repeated visits of bears.

The wild cherry appears to be exactly suited to Bruin's taste, and the animal has also an especial liking for a yellow raspberry which grows abundantly in many parts of the Himalayas.

I recollect a native directing my attention to the roof of his house; there were the stalks and remains of a kind of melon or pumpkin hanging about the thatch, but the fruit was all gone. On the previous night a bear had actually clambered up on to the roof and made a hearty supper, while the owner was sound asleep inside the hut. I could not resist laughing at the poor fellow as he related the story of his wrongs, for whenever he came to the word 'bear' he coupled with it terms of abuse to the animal's father, mother, and almost every other relation for generations back, as is the usual practice among natives. In some years the Himalayan bear is very plentiful, in others hardly one is to be met with; hillmen say every third year.

I have noticed that when the crops are good, bears appear to be numerous, and *vice versa*. The brutes having discovered some fields where the 'mundooah' is ripe, take up their quarters in the neighbourhood for the season or so long as the crop remains unharvested, probably in some deep ravine, or among piles of rocks and boulders on the bank of a river not far distant. As soon as it is dark they sally out and commit fearful depredations, although the poor people of the country sit up on platforms, shout, hurl stones, and do everything in their power to frighten them away. I have sat up many times on moonlight nights on some commanding spot and got one shot, sometimes more, at the marauders, but have never once been successful in killing one. It is so difficult to shoot with accuracy at night, even when a black object suddenly looms out from the darkness close at hand; and, as I have before mentioned, bears, unless shot through the head, neck, shoulder, or some such vital spot, can carry away many bullets in their carcasses, and even recover from desperate wounds.

Jerdon remarks—speaking of this animal in his 'Mammals of India'

—‘Its specific name is unfortunate, since it is rare in Thibet,’ and undoubtedly this is a just criticism. So far back as 1863, and many years before I perused Jerdon’s works, I made an observation in my journal to the same effect. Though common enough throughout the Himalayas, it is hardly ever seen in Thibet, nor have I ever met with a sportsman, European or native, who had shot the Himalayan bear in that country. Moreover, judging from that portion of Thibet north of Gurhwal which I visited in 1863, it is a country to all appearance totally unsuited to the animal’s requirements. There are no trees there, and but little bush or scrub jungle to afford concealment, and there is almost a total want of its natural food, such as standing crops of corn, wild fruit, or berries.

The animal, generally speaking, on meeting a human being, turns away with a surly growl, but occasionally, like *U. labiatus*, it has unprovoked fits of fury.

Many sportsmen think bear-shooting poor fun, but I must confess that in my opinion it is a fine sport, with just enough danger about it to make it exciting.

It is amusing to witness the ludicrous confusion of Bruin when suddenly surprised, or perhaps fired at, more especially when he is for the moment unaware from which direction the danger threatens.

One morning just after daylight, in the month of August 1869, as I issued forth from my tent, pitched on some high ground overlooking a deep valley, the sides of which were cut into a series of broad terraces, one above the other, and at the time were covered with a ripe crop of ‘mundooah,’ my servants pointed out to me far down below two bears busy devouring the corn.

I managed to creep down unperceived to within easy range, and then, before a whole village of spectators, disgraced myself by making a clean miss. It was a very raw morning, and my fingers were so cold that I could hardly feel the triggers, at any rate I made that my excuse.

The bears startled out of all propriety by the loud report, commenced dancing about, growling, and snarling at one another, and altogether conducting themselves in such an absurd manner that it was with difficulty I restrained myself from bursting into a fit of laughter.

The result was that presently when the awkward creatures had recovered somewhat from their first alarm, and began to shuffle off, my aim was so erratic that the bullet from the second barrel only made them quicken their pace.

I have only once been regularly charged by a hill bear, who managed to come much closer than was pleasant, but it was all through my breaking a well-known rule, which I have already given—always, if possible, approach a bear from above, and unless you have a comrade to support you, never fire at him from below. /

The adventure occurred near a place called Jhoseymut in Upper Gurhwal. I had been resting at a small bungalow there, after a trip over the snows, and met with a celebrated shikary belonging to the neighbourhood. We fraternised, and had a long talk on hunting in general, and agreed to have two or three days' shooting together on some very high crags not far off, where my new acquaintance promised to show me some thar (Himalayan wild goat). We could not take a tent up to the place where we intended going, but the paharie informed me that there was a goat-shed near the spot, where two men of his village were grazing the sheep and goats on the upland pastures, and that we should be able to put up there for three or four days without any difficulty. All that was necessary for us to take with us was bedding, a few pots and kettles, some cold meat, a tin or two of soup, and the like. As we had a very severe uphill march the first day, to reach our hunting ground, we agreed to make a start very early to avoid the heat; so having arranged our traps and loads the previous evening, and placed them in readiness, we retired to rest sooner than usual. Next morning after a cup of coffee and a biscuit, taken by candlelight, and a delay of half an hour or so, while we waited for sufficient daylight to permit of a start being made, we got under way about five o'clock.

The party consisted of myself,—leading the way, rifle in hand,—the shikary I have mentioned, close behind, bearing my shot gun, and two other men in rear, carrying my bedding, and our provisions, &c. It was a dull rainy morning, with heavy clouds hanging about the hill tops in a threatening manner. However, we cared little about the weather, and soon were toiling step by step up the steep side of the mountain. At length we came to an oak forest, through which the path led. Happening to look up, I saw a pair of large animals under the shade of an oak tree, about sixty yards or so above us. They were busy turning over the leaves in search of acorns. It was so dark that at first I thought they were pigs; but the man behind assured me they were bears. One of them was standing in a most tempting position broadside on: and luckily before firing I

marked an old oak tree close at hand, to step behind if necessary. I took a steady aim and fired. The bear, hard hit, rolled over, making a hideous noise; the other one immediately made off. Suddenly the wounded animal recovered his legs, his head being in our direction; he evidently saw us, for instantly, and with savage growls, he advanced to take revenge. The quickness with which he covered the distance between us was truly astonishing. By the time that I and the paharie, who was carrying my shot gun, and who stood firmly at the charge, had got behind the old oak, and I had dropped in a fresh cartridge, he was only ten yards or so from us, coming down hill like an express train. I fired at the white of his chest as he came on, but the ball only grazed his throat; and when I drew the trigger of the left barrel he was close up on the other side of the trunk. I think he must have seen the white 'kamarbānd' or waist-band of the paharie, for he attempted to get round at us from his side of the tree, and as he did so he received from my rifle a heavy shell fair on the top of the shoulder, which exploded in his chest, and killed him on the spot. My companion during this trying moment, still held his gun at the charge, facing the enemy, and as he informed me was in the act of drawing both triggers together right in the brute's face, when I gave the bear the *coup de grace*. I believe that at such close quarters two barrels of No. 5 shot would have finished or blinded the animal; but, as it was, things had ended well. I still have the skin of that bear, and have only once slain a larger or more formidable brute. My first shot had given a mortal wound, and the bullet was so well placed behind the shoulder, that the wonder was it did not prove instantaneously fatal; but it is only one instance among many that I have known, showing the extraordinary tenacity of life of this animal.

Bears nearly always travel in single file, and like all carnivora, when on the move after nightfall, prefer keeping to roads and footpaths rather than forcing their way through thick scrub or wet grass.

I have never seen more than three bears together, but it is not unusual to meet with four, or even five at the same time.

Bears' dens are generally in some deep gorge, choked up with grass, nettles, and matted thicket, and ending in a cave; or often simply a hollow under an overhanging rock. I have frequently noticed in the vicinity of these lairs, generally in trees close at hand, flat nests or platforms, made of broken boughs and sticks, where I suppose the

brutes sit out and sun themselves. I have never seen *Bhāloo* occupying one of these platforms or nests, but have constantly noticed them, and always not far from his den or lair. I have generally come across a bear when I least expected it; several times when bird shooting, or taking a stroll, once when mahseer fishing, and again in a very remarkable manner at Mussoorie, close to the mall, in broad daylight.

This was such a notable occurrence that I will relate the account. In May 1868—a terribly hot season by the bye—I was obliged to take leave to the hills on account of my health. In company with G——s of my regiment, we journeyed to Mussoorie, and put up at a friend's house on the outskirts of the station.

We were both so weak and seedy at first, that we were fit for very little work; but the bracing air of the hills gradually pulled us round, and we were soon able to take long walks. Instead, however, of bending our steps in the direction of the mall, and joining the gay throng there, as is the usual custom of an evening in our hill stations, we avoided the town and made for the country, which was more to our taste, wandering about the slopes of the hills that looked down over the glorious Dhoon. There were gooral to be found, but that was all that could be said, for the said gooral were few and far between, and to say that they were wild, does not at all express the difficulty of approaching those Mussoorie chamois. We always, however, took a light rifle belonging to our host, with us, as it was possible we might get a chance shot now and then.

One evening we had been for our usual stroll, and had reached the outskirts of the station just before sunset. We sat down on a rock to smoke, within a quarter of a mile of General C——'s house.

While talking I had been looking down the khud (or side of the hill), and presently saw a black object among some wild raspberry bushes, but imagined it to be a stray bullock, till, to my astonishment, I beheld a bear standing, erect on his hind legs, clutching with his big paws at some tempting bunches of the wild fruit. The brute was only some three or four hundred yards below. We drew back, descended by a very awkward, steep ravine—in doing which G——s lost his hat, which went bounding down the slope till lost to view, and for ever,—till we had reached a certain old stump I had marked as the place to take a shot from. I then advanced on all fours, and on peeping over a piece of rising ground, came right on to Bruin, still busy at the rasp-

berries. He did not see me, however; I drew back and returned to G——s, who, never having shot a bear, was eager for the fray. We examined the priming of the muzzle-loader, and then once more advanced, G——s leading the way. On reaching the spot I pointed out, he looked over, and fired a hasty shot. The bear with a 'growl' went down the side of the hill seemingly not much the worse, and when we went up the mark of lead on a rock showed that the shot had missed. We returned home. The rifle shot had been heard by several people on the Mussoorie mall; and when we spoke of having seen and fired at a large bear, many smiled incredulously, and well they might, for with so many natives about, and cattle feeding, with men to look after them, it was indeed rashness on the bear's part to show himself in broad daylight in such a place.

I have been informed more than once by sportsmen, that dogs, even the commonest curs, are most useful at certain times when shooting bears. The latter instead of attacking the man, invariably make for the dog, thus giving a fine opportunity for his master to put in a deadly shot. I knew a Chinaman, belonging to a tea garden north of Almorah, who owned four or five large dogs: these animals would not actually attack a bear, but would surround him, and by barking attract the brute's attention. The gentleman with the pig-tail was a plucky fellow, and at the same time a good, steady shot, and he had accounted for a very considerable number of bears in the neighbourhood of the tea plantation where he resided.

A gentleman I formerly met in the hills, a famed sportsman, related to me a most interesting anecdote of an encounter between a pack of wild dogs and a bear, which he had witnessed. He was crossing a range of hills in the early morning, and by chance came across a ravenous pack baiting a poor bear, who, though making a stout resistance, was nearly done. His coat, and portions of his flesh, were torn to strips; and although he had killed more than one of his opponents, he could not have held out much longer. If I remember rightly, B——t put an end to him with a bullet, and the wild pack made off.

I have several times found bears in trees. I once caught one up among the highest branches of a group of oaks. I was not in search of or thinking of bears at the time, but had been for hours on the lookout for surrow (forest goat) in company with a native, and had, quite by chance, come under the oak trees. The old bear must have seen

us, and remained quiet: and we, quite unconscious of any brute being near, sat down to rest ourselves. Presently I heard something move, and jumped up; my companion looked round, but soon returned, remarking that it must be some pheasants close below that we had heard. I was about to sit down once more, when again I heard leaves move, and this time the sound seemed to come from above, so I looked up, and there high up in the lofty oaks, half hidden by the foliage, sat an old bear. As soon as he saw me coming round to get a better look and a shot at him, he seemed to understand that he was discovered, and with sundry growls began to rapidly descend, stern first as bears always do. I fired at him, the bullet struck him just above the root of the tail, and passed up through the whole length of his body: we afterwards found it in the skin of the chest. His arms ceased to clasp the old oak trunk, and he fell with a most tremendous thump on the turf, without a spark of life in him.

The hill bear is a clever and powerful swimmer, as the following extract from my hill journal of 1864 will illustrate:—

Late one evening, after an unsuccessful ramble after gooral (Himalayan chamois), I was descending the face of a very precipitous mountain in all haste so as to reach my tent, which was still far below, before being overtaken by nightfall.

My whole attention was given to maintaining my footing, as step by step, assisted by my iron pointed staff, I carefully made my way down the dangerous grassy decline. All at once, a shaggy-headed paharie, who was carrying my rifle close behind me, gave my coat a pull and pointed out a certain black object crossing a broad reach of the river Pindur, far below us.

Though fully half a mile off, we had no difficulty in making out the swimmer to be a bear, and halted a few moments to watch his movements.

The river was much flooded by heavy rain, which had fallen some days previously, and though broad at the part selected by Bruin for his passage across, yet about the centre was running like a sluice.

No human being, however strong a swimmer, could have stemmed such a roaring rapid, but would have been instantly swept away. But the old bear, as I watched him through my telescope, gallantly breasted the torrent, and buffeting the current with his brawny limbs, though carried down perhaps a score yards in his transit from one bank to the other, yet was evidently quite able to hold his own; and speedily reached the far side in safety.

We saw him pause a few moments on the shingle, after slowly wading out of the water, give his dripping coat a shake like a Newfoundland dog, and then shuffle off into the thicket hard by, where he was soon lost to view.

Most animals, the thar and burrel, for instance, or the little gooral, are furnished by nature with coats much resembling in colour and shade the ground they frequent. An old thar lying motionless, is exactly like a clump of dead ferns or grass, often like a stone covered with dark moss and weeds. A burrel, with his ashy blue coat, resembles one of the loose grey stones constantly to be met with on the bare hill side; and the brown hair of the little gooral also affords him excellent protection from the observation of enemies, be they biped or quadruped. But the black bear is an exception to this general rule, for his coal black hide renders him clearly visible to his enemies at a great distance, especially when the herbage is short; it then requires no telescope to pronounce what the black object is, even when miles away. I have many a time, however, been taken in by the black stump of a charred pine, imagining it to be an old bear.

The paharies (hillmen) not unfrequently bring bear cubs into our hill stations for sale. I recollect meeting a man a few miles north of Almorah carrying a basket containing two very small cubs. They were so very diminutive that I imagined they could have only been born a few days, but the owner (an intelligent though wild-looking native from northern Gurhwal) assured me that they were at least two months old.

A bear when struck with a bullet, even when only slightly wounded, nearly always makes an uproar that may be heard a considerable distance, but occasionally he disappears without even a growl, as the following extract from my hill journal exemplifies.

In the month of August 1869, I was encamped at a place called Wān, two or three marches north of the river Pindur; my tent was pitched under three most magnificent deodars (if I remember right the largest of the three measures considerably over twenty feet in circumference; and is supposed to be one of the finest in the Himalayas). The sport was pretty good: I shot an enormous boar, and one day had very good sport with Koklas and Kallige pheasants, which were exceedingly numerous.

On the fourth day after my arrival, in company with a shikary belonging to the yillage, I made a lengthened expedition in a new

direction, but fortune did not smile on our efforts. We suddenly came on a *gerow* stag, which disappeared almost immediately, before I could raise my rifle, and I missed two shots at *gooral*. About five o'clock in the afternoon it became very dark and cloudy, so we turned homewards, but still in hopes of better luck. We were descending the side of a rather steep mountain by a rocky spur, or ridge, and had made a halt at a spot where my companion informed me that he had constantly seen *gooral* grazing towards the evening.

We were lying down, and I was carefully examining the valley below with my telescope, when, as I was about to return the glasses to their case, I beheld, to my astonishment, on the edge of the jungle, not fifty yards off to my left, a black bear standing broadside to us. He had evidently not as yet seen us, but he had his nose elevated, and appeared to be snuffing the air. I simply turned half round, and resting both elbows on the ground, took a deliberate shot at him. As is often the case with breech-loaders, the smoke hung so thick around me, that for the moment, I could not see what had happened, but when at length the cloud made by the discharge had partially cleared off, the bear had vanished.

I turned to my companion, and asked him if it was a hit or miss; but he gave a cluck with his mouth, and scornfully shook his head. And I also had my misgivings, that in spite of such a very easy shot, I had made a mess of it; for I had not heard the bullet tell on the animal's body, nor had the bear uttered a growl, or sound of any kind, and this was strong presumptive evidence that I had missed the mark. However, having reloaded, according to my invariable custom, I walked forward to look. There was the hole in the turf made by the rifle ball, and my companion commenced digging the piece of lead out with a stick. I had turned with a sigh to leave the spot, when a single drop of blood on a white stone quite by chance caught my eye. Hastily ordering my attendant to join me, we took up the spoor, and had not gone a dozen paces, when we came upon the bear lying stone dead; the bullet had struck him just behind one shoulder, and passing through his body, taken its departure almost exactly in the same spot on the other side, and had then ploughed the hole in the turf. He was not a particularly fine bear, but his coat which is shown, pegged out, in the sketch of my encampment, was a fine glossy one, in first-rate order.

The mention of this village, Wān, always recalls to my mind a

painful incident which happened during my stay there. An old and faithful Mussulman servant was suddenly taken very ill and died on the third day, although I did everything in my power for the poor fellow. I had not at the time the remotest suspicion of foul play, and on reporting the circumstances to the civil authorities, I informed the magistrate of the district that I believed his death had been occasioned by an aggravated case of dysentery. There were some Mahomedans in the neighbourhood, and I got them to inter the body decently in the bed of the river below. Not long afterwards a bheestie (water-carrier), whom I had foolishly taken into my service at Nynsee Tal without inquiring into his character, robbed my tent while I was away shooting, and deserted. And then my chuprassie and other servants informed me for the first time, that this scoundrel had quarrelled with my deceased khitmughar a few days before he died, and had been heard to mutter threats against him, and that they believed the villain had given the old man poison in his food. It is certain that although the runaway was searched for everywhere, and every effort made to arrest him, he succeeded in making his escape, and was never heard of afterwards.

The Government reward for killing a hill bear is four rupees, and in some years great numbers of bear skins are brought into our hill stations by shikaries claiming this fee.

On returning southwards, in 1868, from an expedition into the interior of Gurhwal, I sent in four bear skins to the Almorah collectorate, and claimed sixteen rupees. I was informed, however, by the authorities that if I received the money it would be necessary to cut the paws off the skins to mark them.

I need hardly say that such a mutilation of my trophies would have utterly spoilt them, and as three of the skins were fine glossy coats, well adapted for making door-mats or carriage-rugs, I demurred and received back my bear skins intact.

It is, however, quite necessary to mark skins of leopards, bears, &c., brought in by natives in some indelible manner, to prevent good-for-nothing rascals producing the same skins a second time—a practice to which, I have been informed, the hill-men were much given before the precaution of cutting off the paws was adopted.



THE STRIPED HYÆNA (*Hyæna Striata*).

CHAPTER IX.

THE HYÆNA (*Hyæna Striata*).

Outeries he raised amid the beasts that prowl
Along the waste; caused village dogs to howl.—ANVÁR-I-SUHAÍLI.

DESCRIPTION.

Extreme Length.— $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 feet.

Height.— $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 feet.

Head.—Forehead round, jaws extremely powerful, teeth large and formidable, ears prick up, bare of hair, and pointed.

Body.—The back is rounded, drooping towards the hind quarters; neck, short; shoulders, thick and powerful.

Limbs.—Moderately thick.

Feet.—Much like those of a large dog; claws, stout, blunt, of a black colour, and non-retractile.

Tail.—Moderately long, and ‘swishy.’

General Colour.—Dingy gray, with numerous irregular, dark, transverse bars or streaks; throat and upper part of breast, black; a coarse mane, or fringe of long hair, runs down the neck and back. The hide is generally ill-conditioned and mangy.

THERE are, I believe, three species of hyæna in Africa, but the Striped Hyæna is the only one found in India or in Asia. This animal is not gregarious, but is generally met with singly or in pairs. It is more or less common over our Northern Provinces of India, but especially so in Central India, where, from constantly meeting with it, I had many opportunities of studying its habits. Though usually nocturnal, I have on several occasions met the beast prowling about, long after the sun was up, or late in the evening. During the rainy season especially, it is not unusual to meet him in broad daylight. At night the hyæna wanders round the outskirts of villages on the look-out for stray goats, sheep, or dogs. He visits the neighbourhood of slaughter-yards in search of bones and offal, and in the early morning an observer may notice his fresh foot-prints on the banks of rivers, especially in the neighbourhood of burning ghats (or places where Hindoos are in the habit of burning their dead). For what purpose he prowls round such spots can easily be imagined. Sometimes he will enter a hut and carry off a sleeping child, but I think this is exceptional, and though occasionally mischievous, he is exceedingly useful as a scavenger. He is also said to visit graveyards in his rounds, which I take to be not unlikely. It is the spotted hyæna of Africa, that from its unearthly cry is called the ‘laughing hyæna;’ but the cry of the striped species is also hideous and indescribable, and may be heard at a great distance off on a still night. Dogs become greatly excited, and cannot be restrained from barking on hearing him.

The hyæna often breeds in regular burrows, like those of a rabbit, only on a larger scale. I have known, but only on one occasion, as many as four together, and though we hear of African hyænas collecting and hunting in packs, this is not the case with the Indian species.

The hyæna is a most cowardly brute, though sometimes dangerous when wounded or driven into a corner. I have never known or heard of one attempting to attack or face a man. He is in the habit of devouring the remains of bullocks, deer, &c., left by tigers; and his extremely acute sense of smell enables him invariably to discover ‘the kill.’ It is amusing to witness the stealthy approach of the hyæna to

the carcass, and to see how carefully he looks round before beginning his meal, as if fully aware that he was trespassing on the preserves of others. It is astonishing what powerful jaws he is provided with. I remember once when watching over a kill, seeing a hyæna only some twelve feet below the tree in which I was concealed, snap through the rib of a buffalo with a single effort.

It is a bad plan to slip greyhounds or dogs of value after him, for if they succeed in overtaking him-- in an open country fast dogs very soon will—and attempt to pull him down, he will almost to a certainty turn on his pursuers, defend himself desperately, and maul one or more severely with his fearful teeth. The hyæna, unlike the cat tribe, does not always seize his prey by the neck, but often by the flank or hind quarters. At night he will visit an encampment, and devour deer skins pegged out to dry. I do not think he hunts by scent, like a dog, but creeps up and springs on his victims.

The animal inhabits our Himalayas, but only in the very lowest ranges, never ascending to any considerable height; nor have I ever heard of him in the interior of the hills. I once heard the cry of this animal close below a small bungalow called Mungowlie, on the road up from the plains to Nynsee Tal, and that was an unusual elevation for it.

The hyæna has been described as 'very cunning and suspicious,' but that is not my experience of him; on the contrary, our Indian species, at any rate, is a heavy, stupid brute, and a traveller, whose name I cannot recall to mind, mentions that to this day certain of the Arab tribes call a stupid person 'dubbah,' which is their term for hyæna.

The creature is naturally of an untameable disposition, but if taken when young, may be brought up without much difficulty, and will readily follow its owner about like a dog. An artilleryman, belonging to a battery at Jhansie, had a pet hyæna. I saw the beast several times following his master about, and it appeared to be perfectly quiet and tractable. During the day he reclined on the man's bed in the barracks, and though constantly bullied by numerous dogs belonging to the gunners, was well able to hold his own and take care of himself. I heard afterwards that this animal deserted from the battery when on the march to Cawnpore, and reappeared at Jhansie again.

My bungalow at Jhansie was on the outskirts of the cantonment, and a pair of hyænas constantly passed through the garden at night on

their way from a rocky hill, only half a mile from the house, in which they had their den, to the slaughter-yard, where they doubtless picked up bones, &c. I had often searched for their lair, and attempted on moonlight nights to get a shot at them, as they passed backwards and forwards, but never succeeded. One morning, just after gun-fire, when there was only light enough to distinguish objects with difficulty, I was aroused by the furious barking of several dogs close to the house. It was in the hot weather, and the doors were wide open, so I jumped up to see what was the matter, and putting on a pair of slippers, walked out into the verandah; and to my astonishment the first thing I saw was a large hyæna crossing the garden at a slow gallop, with five or six pariah dogs close at his heels. I ran back, snatched up a rifle and a couple of cartridges, which happened to be lying ready at hand, and returned in time to take a snap shot at the animal as he was in the act of scrambling over the compound wall. He fell back evidently wounded, but again attempted to scale the wall. My second shot missed, so I went back and put on my clothes, and by the time I had reloaded my rifle, and reached the spot where I had last seen him, I found that he had not only succeeded in getting over the wall, but was half-way across the cavalry parade-ground, evidently making for the rocky hill I have already alluded to. The pack of curs were still yelping at his heels and pressing him hard. After running some distance I could see that he was done and could go no farther, and when he reached the foot of the hill he was unable to ascend it, but sat down with the pariah dogs snapping at him on every side. By taking advantage of a deep ravine, I crawled up to within fifty yards and dropped him dead. The first bullet had passed through his hind quarters, and it was surprising that, with such a wound, the poor brute had struggled so far. It was a large male, and as usual the skin was not worth keeping; but the head, with a ruff round the neck, was in good order; so I cut it off, and have it stuffed at home. A portrait of this very animal's pleasing countenance heads the chapter.

The hyæna—generally called 'Lukhar-Bughar' by the natives of Northern India—has frequently been speared by a well-mounted sportsman. The pace of the animal while it lasts is, I have been told, quicker than that of the wild hog, but generally speaking, after a short burst a plucky Arab, on tolerably open and rideable ground, will, within half a mile of the start, take his rider alongside of the chase, and then the hunt is speedily terminated, for the hyæna, unlike the 'lord of

the sounder,' never shows fight, but ignominiously bites the dust. As already mentioned, the neck of the animal is short, but Pliny exaggerates when, speaking of the hyæna, he says,

Cui cum spina riget, collum continua unitate flecti nequit, nisi toto corpore circumactō;

for, although the neck is not very flexible, I have frequently seen the animal look back over its shoulder when alarmed at something and making off.

Some horses, though courageous enough to close with boars of great size and ferocity, show fear on viewing a hyæna for the first time, and appear to dread approaching within spearing distance, and this is hardly to be wondered at, for the hyæna is an awkward uncouth-looking brute at the best of times.

CHAPTER X.

THE INDIAN WOLF (*Canis pallipes*).

With their long gallop which can tire
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire.—MAZEPPA.

DESCRIPTION.

Much resembles European species, but *smaller*.

Extreme Length.—About $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Height.— $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet.

Head.—Long and pointed; teeth, large and formidable; ears, prick up and rather pointed.

Feet.—Like those of a dog; claws, stout and blunt.

Tail.—Moderately long, scantily brushed; the tip black.

General Colour.—Grizzled rufous gray, lighter below; the fur rough and coarse. The male rather thicker built and darker in colour than female; but no considerable difference in appearance between the sexes.

THE Indian wolf, or 'Bhériá,' as he is called by the natives, is pretty common throughout the North-Western Provinces, still more so in Central India. I often came across him within a few miles of Jhansie, and in Lullutpore also it was by no means a rare occurrence.

In general colour and appearance the wolf is very like a large jackal, and from a distance I have very often mistaken the one for the other. We read of wolves in Russia, Siberia, and other countries, collecting and hunting in large packs, but not so the Indian species. Sometimes two or three are together, but oftener only one. I once saw a pack of seven, all seemingly full-grown, but this was most exceptional. The wolf in many countries is regarded as a ferocious and dangerous wild beast, but the Indian species is a cowardly brute that would never think of attacking a man; though in carrying off stray goats,

sheep, &c., he is fully as mischievous, if not more so, than the hyæna. The animal is not altogether nocturnal in its habits, and may be seen often in broad daylight, watching a herd of antelope or goats, for an opportunity to pounce on a victim.

It is notorious that in many parts of the country, great numbers of children are carried off by wolves. Returns sent in to magistrates of districts show a fearful loss of life caused by these brutes, though perhaps—as all classes of natives are given to infanticide—the wolf is credited with a greater amount of child-slaying than he is really guilty of. Every sportsman, however, should do his utmost to destroy such pests whenever an opportunity occurs.

I have generally come across these animals when hunting chikarah, near the banks of large rivers such as the Jumna and Ganges, more especially where the banks were intersected by deep ravines and gullies choked with grass and bushes; or still oftener, on the low rocky hills of Bundelkund. Between Allyghur and Somna, where there are numerous sandy ravines and patches of grass jungle, wolves were pretty common, and natives frequently brought in cubs to the former station when I was there, for the government reward.

A native one day made his appearance at a small station near Meerut with several wolves' heads, for which he claimed and received from the magistrate the usual reward. The heads were then taken from him and buried, but the cunning rascal having ascertained where they were interred, scratched them up again in the night, without being discovered, and produced them again before the magistrate of an adjoining province and succeeded in defrauding the Government, for he again received the same amount as before.

I have always found these animals wary and difficult to approach, but, by continually hunting them, have killed a good many at different times. The first one I ever shot jumped up in a dhal field, and two barrels of quail-shot within six or eight yards most effectually gave him his quietus. I have mentioned, when writing on the hyæna, that the animal, when seizing its prey, such as a sheep, goat, or other unfortunate, does not invariably fasten on to the neck or throat, as the leopard does, but often on the flank or hind quarters. The same remark applies to the wolf, and I may add that both these animals, having pulled down a victim, almost invariably, I believe, commence their repast by tearing a hole in the stomach or flank, and not at the tail, like the large cats.

I will relate an anecdote showing this to be the case. One afternoon during a break in the rains, I was fishing in a stream, only two miles or so from Jhansie. I had ridden out to my fishing ground, and as usual my syce carried a double-rifle, as it was more than probable we might come across a black buck or chikarah during the day. I had been busily occupied with my sport for upwards of an hour when my attention was taken by two villagers talking in an excited tone to my syce some fifty yards off. Presently all three of them came up to where I was standing, and my groom then informed me that the two men, or rather boys, were in charge of a herd of goats, and that only a few minutes before, a pair of wolves had pulled down an old goat belonging to them, and seeing me close at hand, they had come for assistance.

Hastily putting down my rod, I bade them show the way. The ground in the neighbourhood was covered with low bushes and scrub, intersected here and there by deep sandy ravines. We had only gone some two or three hundred yards when one of the herdsmen desired me to halt a minute, while he went forward to reconnoitre. Presently he beckoned me forward, and the next minute I came right upon a pair of wolves at the bottom of a ravine, tearing a poor old black goat. One of the assassins heard me approaching and looked up. I could hardly have missed such a chance, and knocked her over with a bullet through the shoulders. At the report of the rifle, the other one bolted down the nullah, and as he was concealed by the bank, I did not see him again till he ascended the opposite side, about 140 yards off, or thereabouts, and halted a moment to look back. It was rather a long shot, though I ought to have killed him; the bullet, however, fell short, and he made off.

On examining the dead goat, I noticed that large portions of flesh were torn off the side and hind quarters, but not a mark on the throat or back of the neck; she had evidently been seized by the flank, and pulled down. The wolf I had shot was an old female with a mangy coat, not worth preserving. She was dead before we reached the spot where she had fallen: to all appearance she had cubs, doubtless hidden not far off. My attendant cut the head off to obtain the government reward of three rupees.

The wolf has not the powerful jaw of the hyæna, but his teeth, in proportion to his size, are very formidable, and with a single bite—his jaws closing like the snap of a trap—he can inflict a severe wound.

When stationed at Benares many years ago, I had a young wolf chained up to a tree in my compound, but finding him a troublesome pet, I only kept him a few weeks. One night he broke loose, scrambled over the compound wall, and made good his entrance into an enclosure where some ducks, belonging to a lady in the next house, were shut up, and killed several of them. The brute was caught in the very act, and got his master into a scrape. I often watched this animal playing with a puppy belonging to a brother officer, and in time, I think he would have become in a certain measure tame, but, as I have already mentioned, I did not keep him long. He was a perfect nuisance at night, continually keeping us awake and banishing all sleep with the noise he made. There is an old saying: 'The wolf changes his coat, not his disposition;' and to a certain extent I believe this to be actually true. I have seen many wolves chained up, or shut in cages, but not one of them was thoroughly tame; they always are of a most suspicious nature, and, however kindly treated, never seem entirely to get over their fear of man.

We know that the wolf of Europe and America is constantly in the habit of howling, especially at night; but my experience leads me to the conclusion that the Indian species only utters a peculiar baying call, totally different from a howl.

There is another species of wolf found beyond our Himalayas, but seldom if ever, I believe, on our side of the passes. This animal, called 'chanko' by the natives, is tolerably common in Thibet, though seldom shot by sportsmen. I twice saw one when over the snow passes, but on both occasions failed in getting a shot. Judging from their appearance at a distance, and from skins which I have seen, the Thibet wolf must be considerably larger than the Indian, and with a much thicker and warmer coat, only natural in such a climate. Moreover, the fur of the former animal is of a lighter colour altogether than the latter.

I was very anxious to shoot one of these 'chankos' to complete my collection. When looking for burrel we constantly came across his spoor, probably where he had been doing a little hunting like ourselves, and more than once a dismal howling in the night was attributed by my Bhootia followers to the Thibet wolf; still I was unsuccessful in getting a shot.

One day I shot a 'kyang' or wild horse, as the animals are usually called. They abounded in the neighbourhood, and there was

no sport in shooting them; but I had killed this particular specimen to examine the creature closely, and make notes, as to its size, shape, &c. *En passant*, I may mention that I found these kyang a great nuisance when out after ovisammon, or burrel. They appeared to be of a most inquisitive disposition, and with their large, donkey-like ears erect, persisted in dogging our steps and following us wherever we went, till I was often compelled to send a man back to drive them away.

But to return to my tale. My followers had taken the skin of the kyang off and I believe had eaten a portion of the flesh, though they denied it, and left the carcase, about 300 yards from my tent, lying on the brow of a hill. There appeared to be no vultures thereabouts, but four enormous ravens that followed my camp from place to place, soon found out the carcase, and were busy enough. Two days after, happening to pass near the spot, I could not help noticing that a large piece of flesh off the hind quarters was missing, and there was every appearance that some wild beast had been making a meal off the carcase during the previous night. My companions, two Bhootia shikaries, having examined the ground in the vicinity, found the spoor of some large animal, which they pronounced to be 'chanko' again. I enquired if the animal would be likely to return after dusk, and receiving a reply in the affirmative, I determined to lie in ambush and wait his arrival.

Within thirty yards or so of the spot, there was a mass of large boulders, well suited for a hiding place, and it was agreed that the three of us should sit up concealed among the stones that very evening, and give Mr. Chanko a warm reception, should he put in an appearance. It was a bitterly cold night when we took up our posts; the wind made my teeth chatter, in spite of being well wrapped in a warm blanket; there was a bright moon, which favoured our plans. Many hours passed without a sign of a living creature, except occasionally the sound of hoofs, as herds of kyang capered about on the plains around, a troop now and then coming to drink below us in the river; at last, tired after a hard day's fag, I fell asleep. I was awakened by a pull at my blanket, and a hoarse whisper, '*Sahib, Chanko.*' In a moment I remembered where I was, and on looking towards the carcase of the kyang, beheld a large animal of some sort on the body, and could hear him gnawing at and tearing the flesh. I could see the brute against the sky line very distinctly, and taking as good an aim as I could, fired. There was no need for my attendants

informing me that the beast was 'hit,' that was evident enough, for it gave a loud yell, and in beating a retreat made an outcry, which at the time struck me as being most unlike that of a wolf. However, my Bhootias still declared that such the creature was, though I had my suspicions, for they showed little readiness to follow up the wounded animal, and I noticed were conversing in whispers as we returned to camp. 

The following morning, in company with my two men, I attempted to follow up the spoor of the wounded beast, but the ground was too hard and stony for tracking. At first we found a few drops of blood, but could trace the animal only for a short distance, so soon gave it up. That same evening four Hooniahs came to our tents, from an encampment a few miles off, and commenced an angry altercation with my followers. I was engaged at the time, completing a sketch, and at first took little notice of what was going on. At length I deemed it necessary to interfere and inquire what was the cause of the quarrel, and after some little difficulty ascertained that the Thibetans accused some of us of having shot one of their sheep dogs. Here was a pretty business. As a matter of course, native like, my men stoutly denied all knowledge of the matter; but as soon as I discovered the cause of the quarrel, I at once ordered my interpreter to tell the Hooniahs the whole circumstances of the case, and how the mistake had occurred. It appeared that the Thibetans had loosed three of their sheep dogs the previous evening at dusk, as is their usual custom, to guard the goats and sheep from wild animals; and at daylight they discovered that one of the dogs, which had strayed away, for what purpose we already know, and which they described as the best and largest of the three, had returned wounded in the hind quarters, and apparently had been shot.

Knowing that I was in the neighbourhood, and, at the time, the only human being within many scores of miles possessing fire-arms, they very properly came to the conclusion, that I, or one of my followers, had been the cause of the bullet wound in the sheep dog. Naturally they were angry and excited, for these Thibet sheep dogs are large and valuable animals, and I saw at once that it was a matter of great importance to me, alone as I was, and far away from our territory, that the matter should be settled amicably and without loss of time; so I offered to accompany them back to their encampment, do what I could for the wounded dog, and, moreover, pay them whatever compensation they thought proper for damage done.

On reaching their tents, I was glad to find that the dog, though severely was not mortally injured. The bullet had entered the side, passed along under the skin, and just missing the hip bone, had taken its departure over the hind quarters, and as far as I could make out no bones were broken. The poor dog seemed to know that I had been the cause of his anguish, and growled at me furiously; two of the Hooniahs, however, held him down, while I cut the hair away and washed the wounds, completing the business with a bandage fastened on with string. I paid the Thibetans five rupees in money, and gave them a cup full of gunpowder with a few bullets as an additional present; and after sundry glasses of rum had been imbibed by them, we parted good friends. About five weeks after I saw this dog again, in a fair way of recovery, though there was still an unhealed wound where my bullet had struck him. Finally, I gave my two Bhootias a severe reprimand for having been the cause of this untoward affair, and declared that I would deduct the five rupees paid to the Hooniahs from their wages, a threat not carried out. After all, I never succeeded in shooting a chanko.

Indian wolves are often hunted by English sportsmen on horseback, with dogs, but seldom successfully even on good riding ground. The well-known untiring pace of these animals is generally too much even for greyhounds.

The rapidity with which a pair of these ravenous brutes will devour a carcase is something extraordinary and almost past belief.

I remember early one morning in the hot weather of 1870, when out after big game in Scindiah's territory, in company with a young friend in the Artillery, we were making for a nullah we intended to drive for a pair of panthers known to be in the neighbourhood, our attention was taken, on coming over the brow of a hill, by a herd of cattle suddenly, with tails on end, dashing wildly out of a clump of bushes, where they had been peaceably grazing just before. From the terror displayed by the drove, we rightly concluded that some brute had scared or assaulted them. We descended the hill, and on reaching the bottom, a single cow left the herd, and came towards us. She was making a low moaning noise, was evidently distressed, and at the same time affrighted at something in this clump of jungle; and as we advanced towards the spot she approached us, as if for protection, with ears pricked forward and eyes dilated. My companion and I cautiously stole forward, keeping close together, and in readiness

for a shot. It was only just after daylight, when in the hot weather months, tigers, panthers, and such like have not always reached their dens after their nightly rounds.

I fully expected, knowing as I did that a pair of panthers were in the neighbourhood, that we should presently come across one or both of them devouring a bullock, but we were disappointed; a few steps further brought us to a glade, and out in the open, near the centre of it, was a pair of animals which I at first took for large jackals, busy tugging at what proved to be a fine calf. They were, however, wolves, and hearing us approach, looked round, and so suddenly dived into a deep crevice in the ground leading into a nullah close at hand, that we were taken by surprise, and neither of us succeeded in getting a shot, though we followed the blood-stained pair some distance. On returning to the carcase, which was that of a fine young heifer, about one-third grown, I was astonished to find that nearly one-half the body had been already devoured, though not more than six or seven minutes at the utmost had elapsed since the time when the herd had taken to flight, and the calf had been pulled down by the murderers.

My companion, not up to the ways and religion of the Hindoos, innocently suggested to a group of natives who had now joined us, and who were nearly all Rajpoots, that they should take the remainder of the carcase, and cook it for their dinners, as it was very good meat. His Hindustanee was not very explicit, but the looks of disgust exchanged between the gentlemen of high caste, showed that they well understood the unlucky suggestion my companion had offered anent the sacred cow, and I felt bound to tell them that he had done so quite unintentionally.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WILD DOG (*Cuon rutilans*).

And the wild dog
Shall flesh his tooth in every innocent.—SHAKSPEARE.

DESCRIPTION.

In size rather larger than a full-grown jackal, measuring perhaps 20 inches at shoulder.

Head.—Foxish in appearance, nose pointed, eyes rather small.

Ears.—Black, moderately long, erect, but rounded, very hairy inside.

Body.—Straight and long.

Limbs.—Rather short.

Tail.—Rather short, thin at root, and expanding suddenly into a thick brush of a dark brown colour, tip black, the animal carries the tail almost horizontally, never erect.

Colour.—Bright rufous, darker down the face and centre of back, lighter below; hair on back of neck grows rather long.

I HAVE only twice met with this animal, once within twenty miles of Mussoorie, and again in the Lullutpore jungles. On the former occasion, I was returning at dusk to my tent after having been out after gooral. I met a dog on the footpath, and in the gloom took the brute at first for a large jackal, till my companion, a paharie, called out to me to fire, and then it only struck me that jackals seldom ascended the hills to that height. I only had time for a snap shot as the animal disappeared, but imagine that I struck him, for the creature certainly uttered a cry. However, we could find no blood, and never saw it again, although I returned and searched carefully for it on the following day.

The paharie with me and the villagers were perfectly certain that this was one of a pack that had infested some very dense jungles in the neighbourhood for some months before my arrival at the place, and, they informed me, had driven away almost every head of game in the

vicinity. I very frequently came across the tracks of wild dogs in the hills, and once found the remains of a female gerow that had recently been devoured; the bones were scattered about in every direction, and I noticed that many of them had been cracked by the powerful teeth of these ravenous brutes.

I have already related well-authenticated anecdotes of a tiger and a bear having been attacked by wild dogs, and both coming off second best in the battle; the result being that the former was torn to pieces, and the latter so cruelly mauled that he could only have held out a short time longer, had the fight continued to the end. The animals are in the habit of travelling about from place to place, sometimes crossing over a vast extent of ground in a single night. Wherever they go the inhabitants of the forests flee before them and make for other resorts.

Once in Lullutpore, when out beating for samber, a pack of nine wild dogs had the impudence and temerity to hunt and follow a herd of pig that our beaters had put up. They came by me with their noses to the ground: unfortunately the scrub jungle and grass was so thick that I could not obtain a clear shot. The animals were not exactly giving tongue, but I distinctly heard them utter a low kind of whimper as they passed within twenty yards of my post. Soon after they had gone by they were fired at by a native, who wounded one of the pack, but, much to my disappointment, the animal escaped. I believe that when once wild dogs are on the track of a gerow, or any animal, in fact, the fate of the creature is well-nigh sealed; for it hardly ever escapes from the jaws of the bloodthirsty, untiring crew. Natives have informed me that they will tear in pieces and devour a large bullock or full-grown samber in a very short space of time.

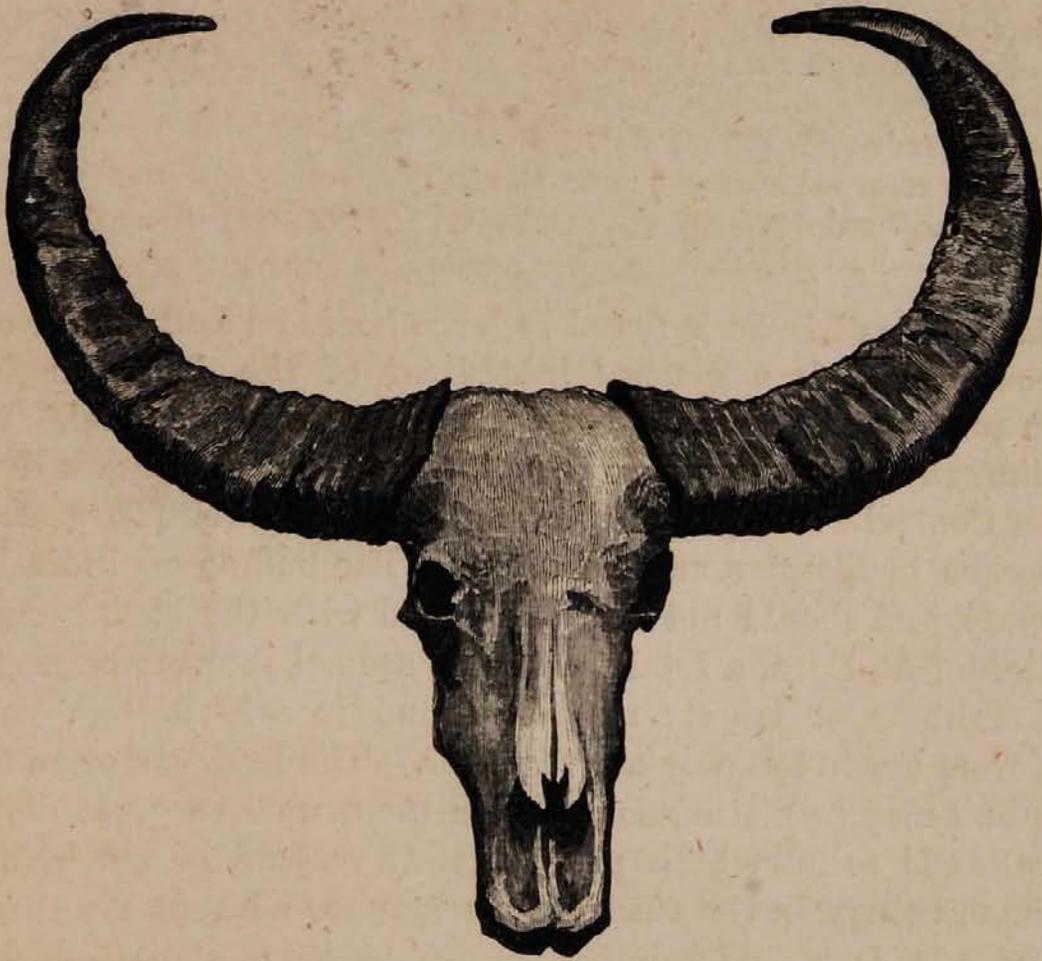
A Bombay sportsman has kindly furnished me with the following interesting anecdote about the wild dog. He writes:

‘In the hot season of 1861 I was out tiger-shooting with a party in the Khandeish jungles, at the foot of the Satpoora Mountains. One day we had shot a couple of tigers, at some distance from our camp, and as usual had sent them on an elephant to the tents, where in the course of the evening, we superintended the process of removing and pegging out the skins. The carcasses were then dragged a few hundred yards off, to the rear of our tents, and left as food for the jackals and vultures.

‘Next morning soon after daybreak, as I and another of the party

were going into the jungle, we happened to pass within sight of the carcasses, which had been pretty well demolished during the night. We noticed three or four thin-looking animals, which we at first took to be mangy jackals, gnawing at a carcase; on perceiving us they simply ran a short distance into the jungle and there seemed to wait until we had passed by. Looking at these animals a little more carefully, they appeared to be lighter in colour and taller than the ordinary jackal, and not knowing exactly what they were, we ran back to our tents, fetched a couple of rifles, and killed two, which stood for an easy shot at a distance of only forty or fifty yards. On going up to and examining the dead brutes we were still puzzled—so extraordinary-looking in appearance were they—to imagine what animals we had killed, so had them brought into camp. The Bheel shikaries, on seeing them, at once pronounced them to be ‘Junglee Kútás,’ or wild dogs; adding, that they inhabited the jungles in the neighbourhood, though scarcely ever seen.

‘These dogs, in appearance, were something between a pariah dog and a jackal, light red in colour, with erect pointed ears, and a long thin tail, not bushy. They were very thin and long in the leg, and appeared from their make and condition to be capable of great speed and endurance.’



THE WILD BUFFALO. SKULL OF MALE.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WILD BUFFALO (*Bubalus Arni*).

And their nostrils rais'd to meet the air,
Amid the sheltering element they rest.—SOUTHEY.

DESCRIPTION.

Extreme Length.—From $12\frac{1}{2}$ to $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Height.—From 5 feet 8 inches to 6 feet, occasionally a few inches more.

Horns.—Vary much in size, length, and curve in both sexes; but especially those of the cow, which are *not nearly so thick*—considerably longer, and much straighter than those of the bull. The horns of the cow often project almost, horizontally from the

skull; the tips pointing upwards—in other specimens, the horns slope back over the neck and shoulders.

Head.—Forehead much rounded, especially that of the cow, not protected by base of horn.

Body.—Immensely thick and rounded.

Limbs.—Very stout and muscular, rather short.

Feet.—Very large and flat.

General Colour.—Dusky black.

THE Wild Buffalo of India is found in large herds on both banks of the Berhampooter, and is a general inhabitant of the dense jungles of Assam, in some parts of which province they are very plentiful. Occasionally, though rarely, they are to be met with in the Terai, below Nepaul, also in the Central Provinces in the jungles of Raepore. They are also very numerous in Bhootan and elsewhere. The buffalo of India is the water buffalo, and should not be confounded with the shaggy-headed prairie bison of America, a totally different animal in every respect. As many as eighteen or twenty may be found in a herd, but, usually speaking, from five to ten only are together. The bulls are often found alone. A bull may be distinguished from the cows at a great distance by his size. Old solitary bulls are generally very dangerous, and will attack human beings in the most vicious manner without the slightest provocation. It is a common occurrence to hear of natives losing their lives when passing through the jungles or when cultivating their crops. Though to all appearance a clumsy, unwieldy animal, it is capable of wonderful activity. Its pace, when making off, is a heavy, awkward gallop. When passing through high jungle, it carries its horns well back over the shoulders, and it manages to cross very rough, uneven ground, at surprising speed.

During the heat of the day these animals retire into swamps and dense marshy jungles, but early in the morning or late in the evening they may often be seen in the open, especially on the sandy banks and islands of the Berhampooter. We frequently shot them at Tezpore within a few miles of our barracks, and at night they often came close to the outskirts of the station, and did immense damage to the crops. The usual way of hunting them, in fact the only practical method in such a country as Assam, is by beating with a line of elephants. They are also occasionally stalked and shot on foot. This is a highly dangerous sport, as I know to my cost, for when shooting on the edge of the Lowqua jheel, near Tezpore, Assam, though not in search of buffalo at the time, in March 1866, I was most severely mauled by a vicious

old 'buff,' and my sporting career very nearly came to a sudden and inglorious end.

It happened as follows: On March 2, 1866, Captain G——s of my regiment and I obtained three days leave to 'visit the district,' or, in other words, to 'go shooting.' On the previous evening we had dispatched our servants, guns, and traps to the opposite bank of the Berhampooter from Tezpore, where we were then stationed, and the following morning crossed over in a boat. The passage of the river, which is very broad thereabouts, took several hours, and the current was so strong that we were swept far down and grounded several times, and had to take our turn at the oars and toil like galley slaves. The day was very hot, without a breath of air, and the glare from the water and white sand extremely trying; and when we reached the Lowqua bungalow, a resting-house for travellers, built on piles, but always made use of by sportsmen, my companion complained of a bad headache, which was not to be wondered at. So in the evening I went out for a stroll alone, or rather accompanied by a single native, a 'klassie,' or tent-pitcher, belonging to my regiment, who often attended me on my expeditions.

We started about three o'clock in the afternoon, and as we intended looking for big game, took rifles only. I had a pair of rifles, one a heavy double, burning 4 drs. of powder and carrying 3-oz. bullets intended for buffalo, rhinoceros, and such like; the other an old favourite two-grooved rifle, lighter than the first, and which I generally used for deer. I gave the big weapon to my companion, and taking the smaller rifle myself, we made a start, I leading the way with my attendant at my heels. Having often been over to Lowqua on former expeditions I knew the jungle paths well, and the most likely spots for game. We made our way in the direction of a jheel, a large patch of water surrounded by high jungle and reeds, the haunt of the wild elephant, the rhinoceros, the wild buffalo, as will fully be exemplified, the tiger, and other feræ, and where, on account of the denseness of the jungle, no sane mortal should have entered, as it was almost impossible for a man on foot to see two yards in front of him. But I was at the time inexperienced, and although my commanding officer, Captain G——e, was constantly telling me 'that some fine day he was sure that I should come to grief,' I only laughed at his advice, never for a moment imagining how soon his warning would prove true. I knew that deer and other animals would probably come out towards

sunset to drink at the edge of the lake, and after such a hot, close day there was every prospect of sport.

We reached the lake about five o'clock, and after proceeding about half a mile along the margin came to where a small point of land jutted out into the water. There were several clumps of bushes on the point, and behind one of these we decided on hiding. Within a hundred yards of us were three or four lanes and 'tunnels' in the grass, made by rhinoceros, buffalo, and other brutes going to and returning from the water. The soft mud was covered with tracks of the inhabitants of the neighbouring forests. Presently a splashing in the water about sixty or seventy yards off, attracted my attention. The animal, whatever it was, instead of appearing at the mouth of one of the tunnels I have spoken of, had unfortunately come to drink where a patch of bushes screened it from our view. On stooping down I could make out the legs of apparently some large deer, perhaps after all only a common Parah or Hog deer, but as it was getting late and only half an hour or so of daylight remained, I determined on attempting a stalk to see what it was at any rate, so motioning my companion to follow, we slowly crept up towards the game. On reaching the patch of bushes which had prevented my getting a shot, and looking over, the animal had disappeared: perhaps it had heard us approaching, or having drunk its fill had retired into the grass again.

We advanced cautiously a few paces, till we reached the spot where the deer had been standing a few moments previously. I was just pointing out to my companion the water yet trickling into the slots made by its feet, when something moved in the grass close to us. I turned round sharply, but all was again silent. There was a tunnel under the reeds and jungle, up which the deer we were following had gone. I made sure that what we had heard in the grass was the sound of this deer retreating, little thinking that a treacherous monster in the shape of an old bull buffalo was ready waiting for me: so stooping, I followed the tracks. It was a reckless thing to do in such a spot. We were up to our ankles in mud, and the overhanging reeds, nearly meeting overhead, made it very dark. I had only taken four or five paces, and was in a cramped position, listening as I took each step, and straining my eyes to catch a glimpse of the deer's hide, when there was a crash in the jungle close to me, and before I could turn round to my right and bring the muzzle of my rifle to bear, in a second of time, I was hurled to the ground, with

astonishing quickness, by a tremendous butt on the right shoulder, followed up* by a pair of huge knees on my chest crushing me down. My rifle had been sent flying out of my hand at the first shock, but had I retained possession of it, it could not have assisted me in the least. My companion was close behind me at the time, and I called out twice to him in Hindustani to fire, but he rendered me no assistance in the hour of need. The buffalo commenced butting me with his huge head; I was covered with foam from his vile mouth. Most luckily the ground was very soft, or I must have been killed. I had fallen on my back, but managed by clutching the root of a small tree to draw myself from under him, but as I did so and turned over, he struck me a terrible blow on the back, with his foot, breaking two ribs, and then I was powerless and imagined all hope of escape to be over.

He gave me a bad wound on the left arm, another dangerous one under the arm-pit, a third on the hip, all with his horns, and then I found myself lifted off the ground and thrown a tremendous somersault in the air. I must here mention that on this disastrous day I happened to be wearing a pair of strong English cord pantaloons, in which the animal when thrusting at me had caught the tip of one of his horns, and in trying to get clear, or in attempting some other vicious manœuvre, during which he succeeded in giving me another terrible gash, as I have already said, sent me flying. I believe I descended on my head, but still having a portion of my senses about me, I remained perfectly still where I had fallen. Most luckily I was half hidden by a low thorn bush, and was almost on the edge of the lake again. About four yards off, from under the bush, I could see the head and shoulders of the enemy, and, as may be supposed, I watched him with anxiety. He was snuffing the ground where he had been pounding me. He seemed to listen for a few moments, and then to my inexpressible relief, went to look for me in exactly an opposite direction, and presently entirely disappeared. Now or never was the time to escape. I managed to struggle to my feet, the trees and grass seemed to be whirling round me, I took twenty or thirty hurried, tottering paces along the edge of the lake, and then, bleeding fearfully, fell over insensible. The next thing I remember, on coming to my senses, was my wretched companion kneeling by my side, crying, and attempting to stop the bleeding of my arm. In a moment I remembered all that had happened, and whispered him to be silent, and support me to my feet, which he did.

We managed to stagger along for perhaps fifty yards and I could go no farther; I had a fearful thirst on me; he had my hat in his hand, I told him to bring water in it; he brought some from the lake, poured a little down my throat, and the remainder over my head. I made him cut his linen coat into strips, dip them in the water, and bind up my arm as well as he could, and then run for assistance, first having put his rifle at full cock by my side,

Night came on and I fell into a kind of doze. It seemed very long before I heard voices, and then saw the glare of torches, and friends standing round me. G——s, after a long search in the dark, had found out where I was lying. He poured some brandy down my throat, and put me on a bed carried by four men. We reached the bungalow in an hour. My friend rapidly cut my clothes off, washed and bound up my wounds so cleverly that when, soon after, a doctor, accompanied by two others, made his appearance, he would not unbind the bandages that G——s had so skilfully put on. It was many weeks before I could move hand or foot, and for a full month after I did get on my legs again, I was only able to hobble about with difficulty with the assistance of a stick. But I was in good health at the time, and my wounds healed rapidly. However, 'Quæ nocent docent,' I had been taught a severe lesson, and since that have been more careful when shooting on foot, especially in jungles where there was a chance of meeting an old bull buffalo. This old bull received his deserts shortly afterwards. My brother officers, bent on revenge, crossed the Berhampooter with a number of elephants. They beat up the edge of the swamp near the scene of my late disaster, and speedily found the old Urnah at home. He charged them once and died game, with his carcass riddled with bullets.

Natives have often told me, and I believe with truth, that a tiger will never molest buffaloes when in a herd, though he will take advantage of a poor cow with her calf.

A buffalo is not often dropped with a single bullet, though I have seen this happen occasionally. The very first one I ever fired at, near Gowhatty, fell stone dead, with a shell behind the ear. The neck, and just behind the shoulder, are deadly spots. I have often heard of bullets being flattened on the skulls of bull buffaloes, and the animals escaping, but this is not my experience; even a common double-barrelled gun will generally, I believe, with a good charge of powder, at a moderate distance, drive a ball through the skull of the most

thick-headed 'buff.' At Tezapore we brought in one day the head of a very fine buffalo, and placed it by way of experiment against the wall of a building, and at a distance of several paces, a double-barrelled gun, belonging to our doctor, who backed the gun, loaded with three drams of coarse powder and spherical bullet, drove the ball not only through the skull and neck of the buffalo, but with great force against the wall beyond. The skin of the wild buffalo, especially about the neck, is of immense thickness, and is valuable for leather: when properly cured it is worth from twelve to sixteen rupees.

I have several times seen buffaloes charge a line of elephants in spite of a shower of bullets from the howdah. Very few elephants will stand steady when charged, but almost invariably turn their *sterns* to the enemy. Two or three of our elephants in Assam were gored by the horns of buffaloes; but I can only remember one that was at all severely hurt. It was an old female; she had a large swelling in the stomach for several weeks, caused by the horn of a wounded cow buffalo.

In jungles where wild elephants abound, and the game is not often fired at and disturbed, buffaloes will often take little notice of howdah elephants approaching, especially if there are only two or three of the latter, if no noise is made, and silence is kept by the occupants of the howdahs. They apparently mistake them for the forest elephants which they often meet with, and do not fear. The tame village buffaloes not unfrequently mix with the wild ones. An experienced sportsman will recognise at a glance a tame buffalo: he is never so plump or in such fine condition as his wild brethren. But care should be taken; I have seen absurd mistakes made, and a heavy bill to pay to the villagers through the impetuosity of gentlemen too eager for the fray. There is a Government reward of three rupees for a wild buffalo: this is quite necessary, for in parts of Assam, out of the reach of sportsmen, the animals increase rapidly, and do great mischief to the crops of the poor villagers. I have seen a field of rice utterly spoiled in a single night by an invasion of 'buffs': not only do they devour immense quantities of the rice when getting ripe, but trample down and destroy with their huge feet even more than they eat. Unless there is a shikary with his matchlock in the village, the unfortunate inhabitants are afraid to meddle with the enemy, and it is not to be wondered at, for the wild buffalo is a sulky dangerous brute at any time.

Sometimes they are taken in pitfalls, but I do not think traps or this description meet with much success.

The natives of Assam, in districts where I have been quartered, seldom keep tame bull buffaloes for breeding purposes, but at certain times in the year, when the cattle are driven out to feed on the jungle side, 'a distinguished visitor' in the person of a huge Urnah, or wild bull, makes his appearance from the neighbouring swamp, speedily curries favour with the tame cows, and finally takes entire possession of the herd, making threatening demonstrations with his horns, and pursuing the herdsmen, on their attempting an approach for the purpose of driving home their erratic kine. The latter, in spite of being called from a distance by their owners, appear to be perfectly content with their new lot, and nothing loath to acknowledge the huge inter-loper as their lord and master for the time being.

Several times when stationed at Tezapore, the natives came to our barracks, imploring us to rid them of these troublesome Urnahs.

In April 1865, an old herdsman came one morning with the usual story, and begged us to render him assistance. A wild bull had carried off five of his cows, and for the space of a whole week, the suppliant had been unable to reclaim his property. This bull had been seen that very morning enjoying a bath in company with the tame beasts, and as the spot was only some few miles distant, my brother officers determined on looking him up.

At the time, I was *hors de combat*, and only slowly recovering from the severe mauling I had undergone early in the previous month, so—much to my disappointment—was unable to accompany my companions.

They ordered out four elephants with three howdahs up, and having taken the old cattle-keeper with them to show the way, soon made a start. I remember that it was a particularly still day, without a breath of wind. Presently, perhaps an hour after their departure, I became excited on hearing a distant pop, bang, bang, in the direction of the Berhampooter. My friends returned soon after, with the head of an enormous bull buffalo slung to the back of one of the howdahs: by their account, however, he had not shown much sport.

The marrow-bones and tongue of a buffalo are worth keeping for the pot, and, as I have already mentioned, the hide is valuable for leather.

One more anecdote of a successful encounter with a buffalo (or

rather in which a friend was successful), and I will pass on. The Lowqua lake during the cold weather swarmed with thousands of wild fowl. Pintail ducks and gadwall were especially numerous, and we made many a good bag there. Captain G——s of my regiment and I had the shooting of this large jheel almost entirely to ourselves. It was in an out-of-the-way part, and few English sportsmen visited the place. On January 22nd, 1864, having crossed the Berhampooter the previous evening, we found ourselves at an early hour, guns, dogs, and attendants, on the edge of the lake, bent on a day's duck-shooting. Boats had been prepared on the previous evening, and as had been agreed on, four fishermen, the owners of the same, met us at the water's edge. As is often the case early in the morning in the cold weather months, especially in Assam, a very dense fog hung over the surface of the water.

The first thing to be done was to decide how we were to shoot the lake with the best chance of success. One of our boatmen, remarked, that, before commencing our attack on the 'moorghabies' or ducks, it would on such a morning be well worth while to paddle quietly round the edge of the jheel, and probably we might get a shot at a rhinoceros, or still more likely a 'junglí bhyns' or wild buffalo. This advice seemed good, and we determined on adopting it, so made a start in the larger of the two boats, G——s sitting at the bow, and I at the stern. Instead of using paddles, which would be sure to make some noise, our men produced a pair of long poles, and with these they were able to punt us along with no further sound as we made rapid progress through the water than that caused by the ripple against the bow of the canoe. We glided along silently, only able to see twenty or thirty yards in advance. Vast flocks of ducks kept rising in front, scared by our approach, and a large description of purple coot abounded in the thick reeds bordering the lake.

We had gone I suppose about half a mile in this manner, when the man standing next to G——s suddenly ceased urging the boat forward, and held up his hand, as much as to say 'listen.' There was a dead silence. We heard a 'splosh,' 'splosh,' 'splosh,' in the mud close at hand. The boat had still way on, and continued gliding forward. The next moment several huge creatures loomed out of the fog close to us. G——s was the nearest, and before I was ready, bang went his rifle, a short Enfield, at a buffalo standing within thirty yards of us with his nose elevated in the air, and stupidly

eyeing our approach. The bullet told with a loud 'whop' on the black hide. There was a desperate flounder and splash, and a crash in the reeds, and the herd vanished. What was to be done next? (This was previous to my disastrous affair with the old bull, already related, or the probabilities are we should have acted less rashly.) One of the animals was struck without doubt: G——s thought somewhere in the chest.

While yet debating what was to be done, we were all startled by a loud, deep, and terrible moan. The boatmen became intensely excited, exclaiming, 'Sahib, bhyns murgya,' meaning 'the buffalo is dead.' We listened for a few moments, but all was still, and the noise we had heard was not repeated. We landed, and agreed to follow up the track, if we could find blood to distinguish the wounded buffalo from his brethren. There was no difficulty in this; on the edge of the jungle we found blood, and in plenty: it was a bright colour and frothy, a sure sign of a deadly wound. The track led up a dark tunnel under the reeds. I did not much admire the look of things, but as G——s gallantly led the way without a remark, I did not like to show or say what I felt. Closing up one behind the other with rifles at full cock, eyes opened to the widest, and 'arrectis auribus' to catch the slightest sound, we entered the jungle. The mud was something fearful, and we were soon ankle deep in the mire, and the exertion of first drawing one leg out and then the other was severe in the extreme. One thing was certain: if we were attacked, we must then and there fight it out. There could be no running away.

We laboured along slowly, when G——s suddenly halted, and was about to raise his rifle to his shoulder. I stayed his arm, and inquired by raising my eyebrows, 'What do you see?' Moving a little on one side, he pointed straight in front, and then I saw for the first time a black object on the ground, and could just make out 'a tail.' It was little use firing into the animal's stern, even when so close: if alive, and the shot did not kill it on the spot, likely enough it would bring the brute on to the top of us. There was a long pause, still not a move; 'He must be dead,' whispered my companion, making a step forward: another pace, and at length we arrived close up, and sure enough there lay a very fine 'buff' quite dead. The body was distended to an extraordinary size; we found out afterwards caused by internal bleeding. An artery had been divided by the bullet in its passage, and the animal had probably died from suffocation. The ball had passed

nearly through the body lengthways, and we found it buried just under the skin behind the ribs. Leaving a man with a hatchet to hew off the head of the prize, cut out the marrow-bones, and take off the skin, we made for the boat, delighted with our success, and later returned heavily laden with near twenty couple of duck and teal.



THE WILD BUFFALO. SKULL OF FEMALE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ELEPHANT (*Elephas Indicus*).

The beast who hath between his eyes
The serpent for a hand.—MACAULAY.

IN former years wild elephants, now much reduced in numbers, abounded in the dense forests at the foot of the Himalayas, especially in the Dhoon and Sewālik range. They are to this day plentiful in Assam and Burmah. Many are yearly caught and tamed by Government officers for the use of the State; some for dragging big guns, others for the commissariat. We often saw wild elephants in Assam when on shooting expeditions, but did not molest them.

In my opinion, though I am no elephant-hunter, following up a 'rogue' elephant on foot, especially in swampy ground, is the most dangerous of all sports, not excepting tiger-shooting under similar circumstances. It is a common error to suppose that the giant elephant is unwieldy and easily to be avoided in thick jungle; but only those who have been pursued by an enraged elephant, or who have witnessed the extraordinary speed sometimes displayed by a wounded one when bent on revenge, can understand the extreme peril in which the sportsman is placed as he endeavours to escape, with the huge monster crashing through the thicket, close behind him. When howdah-shooting, our mahouts were always anxious to keep clear of wild elephants, as their own beasts got very excited and troublesome on viewing their confrères of the jungle.

I remember one day when snipe-shooting with a brother officer, on the margin of the Lqwqua jheel, in the Tezapore district, we came across a very large 'tusker.' This jheel or lake was surrounded by heavy jungle, and nearer the water by dense masses of reeds and tall grass;

but there was a narrow strip of swampy ground on the very margin of the lake, covered with short rushes; and here in the cold season snipe were to be found, though not in great abundance. There was just room for a couple of guns to walk abreast, with two men between us. The gun next the water got nearly all the shooting, but every now and then we changed places. We had just landed from a 'dugout,' or a log of timber, generally from the mango tree, hollowed out into a canoe, had advanced only about fifty yards, and hardly commenced operations, when a crackling in the jungle close at hand brought us to a halt, and soon to a retrograde movement in the direction of our boat.

There were only wild animals, such as rhinoceri, elephants, and buffalo in that neighbourhood, and not a village within many miles. It was evident that some big brute was approaching the water: we had only our shot guns, so that the best thing to do was to retreat and get out of his way. We therefore scrambled into the canoe again, and in a few minutes a huge elephant came out of the grass, probably either to drink or bathe; but on seeing us he pricked up his ears and came to a halt. We asked the boatmen if he was a wild elephant, or one that had escaped from Nowgong, a station six or seven miles off. They replied that the beast was undoubtedly a wild one, and that they had often seen him before near this very spot. He stood swinging his trunk and eyeing us, as we imagined, in any but a friendly way, but presently turned round and walked slowly back again into the reeds. He might have been, and probably was, a harmless beast enough, but we did not begin our snipe-shooting again till we had paddled a good quarter of a mile from the place where we had viewed our friend. He was one of the largest elephants that I have ever seen. Not far from this same jheel, I fired at and wounded most severely a 'rogue' elephant.

This brute had been for some time the terror of the district, and there was a reward offered by Government to the person who should kill him. He was in the habit of walking into villages, the inhabitants of course taking to their heels; and out of pure mischief would unroof the huts, and take whatever he fancied from the bunniah's (grain-sellers') shops.

On January 3, 1864, in company with G——s of my regiment, we crossed over to the Lowqua lake from Tezapore for a couple of days' duck-shooting, and soon after reaching the spot, intelligence was brought to us that this notorious elephant had been seen that very morning on the edge

of a small lake, only a short distance from the larger piece of water. We had brought our rifles with us, and agreed that before firing at wild fowl we would look round this lake. By the time we had reached the spot it was near midday, and an extremely hot sun overhead. On peering through the tall grass bordering the water, there (almost directly opposite, and certainly not fifty yards off), stood a huge elephant, exactly tallying with the description we so often had heard of the well-known 'rogue,' and the object of our search.



VIEW OF THE BHOOTAN HILLS FROM THE BALA STOCKADE. APRIL 1865.

To all appearance the animal was asleep, for with the exception of slowly moving his ears when the flies teased him, he was motionless. After a hurried consultation, we knelt down and took deliberate aim at this huge target; he was broadside to us, so we aimed at the root of his ear, and fired almost at the same instant. The bullets told loudly on the beast's skull. The elephant gave a shrill scream, and came down on his knees, and then almost on his side, but shaking his head,

recovered himself, receiving as he did so another bullet from my rifle, and a second barrel from my companion. In another moment he had disappeared. What was to be done next? 'Better leave him alone,' I said; 'if he dies we shall be sure to find him;' but my companion was a rash man, and insisted on going round to see the result of our shots.

He led the way; we kept clear of the grass, and walked round in the water, making as little noise as possible, till we reached the place where the animal had been standing. There we found a patch of blood on the grass and reeds where he had entered the jungle, and my friend, in a louder voice than was necessary, was calling my attention to it, when close at hand there was a crash in the reeds. I ducked under a thick thorn bush, G——s taking to his heels along the edge of the lake. Every moment I expected the beast to come out in search of his persecutors, but we saw him no more, and thought it advisable to beat a retreat home. The animal was very severely wounded, but he made straight away for some distant hills, and was never seen or heard of again, but there can be little doubt that he died of his wounds.

Elephants are numerous in the Bhootan jungles. When on service there in 1865, we were encamped for several months near Bala. We not unfrequently heard elephants at night breaking the trees; and early one morning, when in search of jungle fowl, and passing through a very dense timber forest, I caught a glimpse of three huge elephants rapidly and silently disappearing among the tree trunks. Two of our baggage elephants, lent by the Kooch-Bihar rajah, made their escape, and we supposed joined the herds of wild ones. They had been recently caught, and were not thoroughly tamed.

Elephant-hunting in these times can hardly be included among our Indian sports, for in parts of Bengal where I have been stationed at any rate, the practice of shooting such useful creatures is forbidden, so that, excepting now and then when a reward is offered for the destruction of a 'rogue' who has rendered himself conspicuous by his depredations, the sportsman seldom gets an opportunity of slaying such noble game. I am informed that the Government of Ceylon also now prohibits elephant hunting, and certain it is that if some restrictions had not been put in force to prevent the wholesale destruction of elephants in that island, sooner or later, and probably at no distant period, they would have become extinct.



THE GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS (*Rhinoceros Indicus*).

Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great?—JOB.

DESCRIPTION.

Extreme Length.—From 12 to 13 feet.

Height.—From $5\frac{1}{4}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Horns.—Both sexes have a single horn, situated near the end of the snout, slightly curved, and pointing backwards, from 15 to 20 inches in length.

Ears—Rather long and rounded. When erect they point forwards.

Eyes—Small and twinkling.

Neck—*Very short* and thick, and overlapped by two or three heavy folds of thick skin.

Body—Very broad, and much rounded. Back slightly hollow.

General Colour—Dirty black.

Limbs—Short and thick.

Feet—Divided into three toes.

Tail—Short.

THE Indian Rhinoceros is found in Assam, where it is still plentiful, and also in the Bhootan jungles. During the campaign of 1865, an advance guard, when marching very early one morning between Bala and Buxa, suddenly came upon a huge 'Gainda' standing in the middle of, and completely blocking, the narrow path. The animal, however, quickly wheeled round, and disappeared in the jungle. Later, a very fine rhinoceros was shot by my commandant, Colonel S——d, in the neighbourhood of Buxa. In former years it was to be met with in the forests bordering on the Sardah in Nepaul and the Philibeet district, and also in Gorruckpore; but it is now extinct there or very nearly so.

The Indian Rhinoceros, male and female, has a single horn, seldom growing to more than eighteen inches in length.

Rhinoceri are usually found in swamps where the reeds and grass are very dense, remaining hidden, often asleep, during the day: at night they come out to feed on the edge of the forest. They sometimes will travel long distances to reach rice and corn fields, and do immense mischief, so much so that there is a Government reward of twenty rupees to anyone shooting a rhinoceros. If left unmolested they are, usually speaking, harmless, but when wounded, dangerous, especially to a sportsman on foot. They will occasionally, in this condition, like the buffalo, charge an elephant with their eyes closed, and inflict severe wounds. I have never seen this happen, but I remember an instance of a howdah elephant being very dangerously hurt by the horn of a rhinoceros. A young tea-planter near Tezpore had charge of a fine elephant for the use of his garden, but occasionally took him out for shooting purposes. On returning one evening from the jungle, he came across two rhinoceri. He fired at and struck one, and followed it up into a swamp; suddenly he came upon the animal in the thicket, and it immediately charged: the elephant swung round and was about to make off, when the rhinoceros caught him a tremendous butt in the side, nearly knocking him over, and inflicting a severe wound

several inches in length, very deep, and, I need hardly add, extremely dangerous. For many months the poor beast was unfit for work, and became very thin and emaciated, and all thought he would die, but he eventually recovered.

The hide of the rhinoceros is so very thick, being covered with huge plates, that unless struck on the head (behind the ear is also a very deadly place) bullets from a common gun do him little harm, and even rifle balls with large charges of powder, unless well placed, are ineffectual.

We often hunted this huge animal in the neighbourhood of Tezpore, where it was by no means rare; an exceedingly fine specimen was shot by my brother officers, near the margin of  Lowqua Lake in the month of April 1865.

We usually came across them on the edge of some inland jheel or lake, where the water was surrounded by dense reeds, grass, and jungle. The animals like to roll and wallow in the soft mud, and generally speaking their hides are thickly coated with a layer of clay. On being disturbed by the approach of the elephants, they generally with pricked-up ears, more like huge pigs than anything else, stand staring and offer a fair mark to the nearest sportsman. Often, however, the jungle where 'Gainda,' as he is called by the natives, is to be found, is so high and thick that it is almost impossible to catch a glimpse of him as he makes off.

The foot of the rhinoceros is divided into three, that of the elephant into five toes, so that their footmarks are at once distinguishable the one from the other. Moreover, the prints differ in size, the elephant's being much larger. The horn of the rhinoceros can be removed with ease, whereas the tusks of the elephant are extracted with great difficulty. Rhinoceri are in the habit of depositing their ordure in one particular spot. I have several times come across these places: apparently, from the heap of soil and the rankness of the grass around, they had been used for very many years, and on examination I invariably found fresh traces of the brutes. Natives have told me that often savage encounters take place at these spots between the males, who, I suppose, have casually met. The Assamese build machāns in trees near, and on moonlight nights wait for the rhinoceri and sometimes shoot them.

Jerdon in his 'Mammals of India' describes a second species, 'The Lesser Indian Rhinoceros' (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), which he tells us is found in the Bengal Sunderbuns. I regret that I am unable to supply any information regarding this animal.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WILD BOAR (*Sus Indicus*).

So fares a boar whom all the troop surrounds,
Of shouting huntsmen, and of clamorous hounds;
He grinds his iv'ry tusks; he foams with ire;
His sanguine eyeballs glare with living fire.—The ILLIAD.

I AM touching here on delicate ground. The spear and not the rifle is the usual and more legitimate weapon for hunting hog, and shooting a boar in many parts of India is considered a worse crime, if possible, than shooting a fox is in England. I can fancy many an old Indian turning from this part of my sketches in disgust; but this rule I venture to say only applies to certain districts, where hog can be speared from horseback, and no sportsman worthy of the name would ever think of shooting them, under such circumstances, or anywhere within reach of a tent club. But in the Himalayas, or among the rocky hills and nullahs of Bundelkund, and in many other parts of the country where spearing hog is impossible and out of the question, it is a perfectly legitimate sport to shoot boars at any rate.

Wild hog differ so much in size and appearance in different parts of India, that it is difficult to give a general measurement for all. The largest that I have ever seen have been in the Himalayas; but those of Assam and Lower Bengal often reach a great size and weight. One killed by a brother officer near Gowhatty, in 1866, measured close on forty inches at the shoulder. On the other hand, the hog inhabiting the scrub and bush jungle of Bundelkund and Gwalior are of small size, fully one-third less I should say than the first mentioned. The largest boar that I ever measured, shot in the Himalayas, reached five feet ten inches in length, and over three feet at the shoulder; he was

an enormous brute ; but they not unfrequently exceed even this. This boar I shot in the middle of the night, and under rather remarkable circumstances, so I will relate the story.

In one of my numerous rambles in the Himalayas I happened to be encamped in the upper ranges on the look-out for bears. My tent was pitched about 200 yards above a small village, where I procured supplies, and on the borders of an oak forest ; directly below the tent were some fields of corn, one beneath the other, on the side of the hill, like huge steps, and I could not help noticing on the evening of my arrival at the place that the crops had suffered much from the ravages of wild animals, more especially hog : the upper fields close below my encampment were rooted up in all directions, and half the crop destroyed.

That same night I was awakened several times by my dog, who slept by my side, continually moving and growling, but imagined that the animal's restlessness was caused by some of the village curs prowling about in search of scraps, as they are in the habit of doing. At length, when only half asleep, I became aware of a munching noise, caused by some animal feeding not far off, so I sat up and listened, and presently determined to look out in the direction the sound appeared to come from. At the back of my tent was a window, or rather a square hole, with a piece of canvas hanging over it to keep out the night air, and fastened by buttons ; this window happened to be just over my head, so kneeling on the bed, I unfastened the flap, and looked out. It was a still bright night, and a full moon shining on the side of the hill made objects at a moderate distance, and away from the shadow of the trees, easily discernible. And there within fifty yards or so of the tent was a large dark animal in the middle of the crop, hard at work devouring a red kind of corn. I had no difficulty in making this out to be a wild hog of large size, and took measures accordingly.

My rifles were close at hand, tied to the pole of the tent, and my pouch of cartridges under the bed : it did not take me two minutes to unfasten, slip the cover off, and load one of the weapons, but my dog got so excited at these unusual midnight preparations that I had the greatest difficulty in restraining him from whining and spoiling the sport. On looking out again, however, the muncher was still there, broadside to me, so I took a shot at him, and almost simultaneous with the loud echoing report, I heard the unmistakeable

thud of the bullet on the animal's hide; but away he went, as if nothing had happened.

My servants and the villagers were awakened by the rifle shot and presently came running up to inquire what was the matter, but I sent them home again, as nothing could be done till daybreak. I was up earlier than usual the next morning, and in company with a Ghoorkha chuprassie followed the track of the animal I had fired at. There was ample evidence by the stream of gore that the pig was hard hit, and we had not gone twenty yards into the forest, when we came on a huge wild boar lying dead, with a bullet wound through his carcase.

The hide of this animal is, I think, very much the same colour all over the country, viz., dull black, covered more or less with black hair and bristles.

The young are first striped; then brown; later still, when they have reached their full strength, dingy black; and on reaching old age, the animal often becomes a grizzled, grey colour. Old males are armed with large semi-circular tusks; those in the lower jaw much the longest, curving outwards and upwards, and meeting when the mouth is closed, a shorter and thicker pair in the upper jaw; it is by rubbing these teeth together that the wild boar keeps the curved edges perpetually sharp. The tusks of a very fine Indian boar sometimes reach eight and a half and nine inches in length; but anything above this is exceptional, and the very largest pairs of canine teeth that I have seen, were much smaller than the tremendous weapons which garnish the jaws of the African Valke Vark or Emgallo. None but those who have witnessed it can conceive the rapidity and terrible power with which when enraged the wild boar uses these formidable tusks. I have seen a dog nearly cut in two by a single stroke. Occasionally in hog-hunting horses are terribly injured, and poor beaters are not unfrequently cut over with ghastly wounds. Sportsmen have frequently been mauled, and a European in the Customs Department near Jhansie, many years ago, lost his life, so fearfully was he gored by a hog that he had wounded. The strength of the animal is proverbial, and his speed such that the fleetest Arab horse often has to be ridden to the utmost to bring his rider alongside the chase.

There is hardly a more dangerous brute to cope with on foot than a wounded boar. He will fight to the last and then die game, and natives in the hills have told me more than once that they would rather face a bear. He lies hidden during the day, generally under a thick patch of

bushes, surrounded with dense grass, in the bed of a nullah. A patch of sugar cane, or high grass jungle, especially if near the edge of a swamp, is also very likely to hold a sounder.

Often when bird-shooting in the neighbourhood of Jhansie, I have almost fallen over a wild hog lying asleep and completely hidden in the long grass and thicket. At dusk he sallies out in quest of food, and often travels many miles to plunder fields of grain or sugar cane, or to dig up certain kinds of roots and ground nuts to which he is partial. He generally returns before daylight, and when the sun is fairly up, has once more reached his retreat.

In the hills the animal is especially fond of acorns and walnuts; there also he is a terrible spoiler of the harvest. The mischief and havoc created by a sounder of hog in a single night is incredible. Not only do they root up young corn with their noses, cut the sugar cane as if with a knife, but they trample on and spoil even more than they devour. The unfortunate natives in many parts of the country, especially the inhabitants of villages bordering on the forest, lose quite half of their crops by these nightly visitations. Often on wet, stormy nights, I have heard poor fellows in the hills shouting to drive the pigs and bears off their corn; night after night, till the crop is cut, they sit up on m \ddot{a} chans, or platforms raised on poles, and by beating tom-toms and shouting, whenever they hear wild animals approaching or devouring the corn, to a certain extent scare them away.

I need hardly mention that the hog is regarded by all true followers of the prophet as an unclean animal; but Ghoorkhas, Rajpoots, Seikhs, and Paharies in general prefer the flesh of the wild pig to any venison.

One of the most extraordinary scenes that I ever witnessed during my sporting career, was in an encounter with a herd of wild hog high up in the Himalayas. In the autumn of 1864, I obtained a couple of months' leave to the hills, and as usual, having completed my arrangements, made all haste to reach some happy hunting grounds north of the Pindur river. In a former expedition, as I was returning south, I had quite by chance discovered a range of hills where thar and moonal pheasants were abundant. I had then no time to make a halt, but noted the spot for a future visit. Within ten days from leaving the plains, I had crossed

O'er bleak Almorah's hill,

and my camp was pitched in this out-of-the-way spot; but for a whole week I met with little success, only bagging one thar, a young male. The weather was most annoying and tantalising; day after day, soon after dawn, a thick damp fog rolled up the valleys and enveloped us in a cloud, through which it was impossible to see an object distinctly, even when quite close. Still we persevered in hopes of a change of luck.

On several occasions when ascending from my tent to the crags above I had noticed the fresh marks of wild hog, where they had quite recently rooted up the soil with their snouts; but my companions (two men from the only village within many miles) were unable to tell me where the animals retired during the day. There was a large patch of oak trees, and in the vicinity the pigs had ploughed up the dead leaves and mould in all directions, evidently in search of acorns. One morning I had turned out as usual very early, and after a short breakfast made a start, in company with my two men, for the higher ground in search of thar. On the way up we happened to pass through the clump of oaks I have mentioned, and to my surprise we suddenly came upon a herd of hog busily engaged turning up the leaves. I motioned my companions to remain behind a tree while I crept forward; it was an easy stalk. The animals were close together, and by getting a pair of huge oak trunks in a line with them, I advanced to within fifty yards without being discovered. On peeping round a tree, I counted seven, all apparently boars of the very largest size, hard at work turning over the leaves and quite unconscious of danger. Taking a deliberate aim, I fired at one, the nearest to me; he rolled over and over, and the poor beast appeared to suffer intense agony in his death struggles, for his squeals might have been heard a mile off. This was remarkable, for the wild boar generally dies without uttering a groan. I began to reload my rifle, an old two-grooved muzzle-loader, and while feeling for a cap in my pocket, was about to advance towards the still struggling boar, and put it out of its misery, when I heard an angry grunting from the direction in which the other six hogs had made off, and to my utter astonishment beheld them returning in a body. *Obstupui, steteruntque comæ.* The first thing that struck me was that they were advancing to attack me, and avenge their fallen comrade; but no, grunting furiously, they tore down to where their friend still shrieked murder, and I saw several of them viciously prod him with their tusks.

I had now completed my loading, and taking another shot, heard

the bullet tell loudly on the brute aimed at; however, he did not drop. Away went the sounder; the ball from the left barrel striking the ground too low. I now left my place of concealment, and advanced to examine the boar dropped by the first discharge; he was quite dead, and I noticed several scrapes on his body, the marks evidently of his friends' tusks. Leaving the slain, we then took up the spoor of the wounded brute; it was easy enough to follow him, for there was blood at every step. Though we followed the tracks a long distance, we were unsuccessful in overtaking him; the red drops and patches became fewer and farther between, till at length we lost all trace and returned to camp. I afterwards heard that the carcass of a large boar, doubtless this wounded one, was found by two wood-cutters, fully four miles from the spot where I had fired at him, but this discovery was made after I had left the neighbourhood.

To return to the extraordinary conduct of these wild boars after I had dropped the first one of their number. What could have been the meaning of such conduct on their part? It has been a never-ending puzzle to me, and I am unable to give a satisfactory explanation. I can only suppose that these animals had never heard a rifle shot before, and after recovering from their first alarm caused by the report, not seeing anything further to terrify them (for I was hidden from their view), returned to discover what was the matter with their shrieking friend; but that they should have treated him in the manner they did is to me most unaccountable. I lately saw a farmer lifting a hog from a sty into a cart, and the animal on being seized commenced squealing in the manner pigs only can. There were a number of other pigs in the yard, and immediately they heard the one in the farmer's clutches raising his voice, they all stopped feeding, and collecting together and grunting, apparently in an angry manner, advanced in a body towards the man who was carrying their comrade. These tame pigs reminded me forcibly by their demeanour of my adventure with the wild ones years ago in the Himalayas.

I have seen the marks of wild hog at a great elevation in our hills. Once very high up, over 15,000 feet, I remarked the fresh traces of this animal on bare ground far above the forest, where the soil had been turned up by his snout in search of roots. They, however, only visit such spots during the night, ascending by the valleys, and returning to their lairs before sunrise. In Bundelkund, especially in the Jhansie, Lullutpore, and Saugor districts, they are very common, often in

large herds of over forty. I have already remarked on the mischief done to crops by these creatures, especially in parts of the country where tigers, panthers, and other carnivora have been exterminated.

At Jhansie I very frequently put up hog when bird-shooting, often within two miles of cantonments; and on several occasions when out very early have met troops of pigs returning to the bush scrub after being out all night. As with solitary male elephants, and single bull buffaloes, very old boars are generally met with alone: these patriarchs are often sulky, and dangerous to meddle with, and few among the felidæ dare to measure their strength with such grim and powerful adversaries. Old boars when wounded will often turn round and charge with the greatest impetuosity and fury, and unless stopped by a well-aimed bullet, will speedily inflict the most fearful injuries with their terrible curved tusks. I have noticed that a boar when standing in thick bushes and about to charge, draws back a little, just before rushing forward; probably to get a little more room for 'full speed ahead.'

The villagers about Jhansie often begged us to turn out, and, as riding in such a rocky country was out of the question, shoot the devourers of their crops; and not unfrequently I have seen as many as five and six hog shot in a day. The usual way of hunting them was to collect twenty or thirty beaters, and drive the sides of low hills covered with thick bushes. The guns were posted well in advance where the scrub was least dense, and it was possible to see around.

I remember that four pigs and a blue bull were rolled over at a regular warm corner in the Lullutpore district in one beat, and then the shooting was not particularly good, for some forty hog were driven out within easy range, and over twenty shots fired. Three of us were out on this occasion, and two Bundeela Thakoors also brought their matchlocks, and took post in line with the other guns.

Presently the beaters approached; game of all kinds came streaming out in every direction, and a rapid independent firing commenced. I had made a good beginning by rolling over an old grey boar passing within a few yards of me, when one of the Thakoors seated behind a bush on my left, in endeavouring to stop an old sow trotting by, let fly a long iron bolt from his rude weapon. The missile struck the trunk of a tree, glanced off, and then came hurtling past close over my head. The result was that immediately after I missed three easy shots in succession.

A wild boar galloping past offers a fair mark, much easier in my opinion to hit than a bounding antelope; but unless struck on the head, neck, shoulder, or other vital part, he will probably make his escape for the time, though if shot through the body, his carcase will generally be recovered, if good search be made the following day. Old boars are very cunning, and I have often watched one approaching my post, when beating; he will halt, listen, snuff the air, as if suspecting danger in front, and after all charge back through the beaters, rather than face the ambush laid for him. When a sounder is coming towards him, the sportsman hidden behind a bush or rock is generally made aware of the approach of the hog, before they actually come in sight, by the sound of their feet among the leaves or clattering over the rocks, and the conversation kept up by the grunters. So long as the cover is tolerably thick, they advance, driven forward by the shouts of the beaters, at a deliberate trot, pausing every now and then to listen; but on breaking cover, and fairly taking to the open, the pace is quickened, and away they go at a slashing gallop.

Wild hog are in the habit of visiting pools of water during the night, especially during hot weather, and they enjoy wallowing in the mud. In the hills I have frequently seen deep clay holes with the fresh traces where the animals have been rolling. They often rub the mud off against trees hard by. I believe this coating of mud is intended to resist the stings of winged insects.

One day I was bird-shooting in company with a young friend; we were beating some bush and grass jungle for quail. Presently the beaters between us roused a huge wild-boar from his lair under a thorn bush. He was trotting off sulkily at a moderate pace, when, most foolishly, my companion saluted him with a charge of quail shot in the posterior. The brute stopped immediately, grunted angrily, and with gleaming eye, half faced round, with a look as much as to say, 'Just you do that again.' He looked so ugly, that I fully expected we were in a scrape and that he would charge. However, after a momentary halt, he again made off and disappeared. I devoted a few minutes to giving my companion a blowing up for his thoughtlessness.

Sir Samuel Baker, when writing on the wild hog of Ceylon, tells us more than once that he has known the animal feast on the carcases of putrid elephants and other animals. Possibly the Singhalese wild hog is of a different species from the animal inhabiting our Indian peninsula. But my own experience has led me to infer that the wild

boar of Northern India never eats flesh of any kind; on the contrary, I believe wild hog as a rule to be remarkably clean feeders. A sportsman passing through the jungle, rifle in hand, in search of game, will invariably have a look at the carcass of a buffalo or bullock that he may come across, in the hope that one of the carnivora may have been the cause of the animal's end, and that he may profit thereby; and a group of gorged vultures on the top of a tree, in an out-of-the-way part, will at once attract the attention of a hunter who knows what he is about, and very probably on wending his steps in the direction of the birds, he may come across the carcass of a bullock, sambar, or nilgai, with the deep tusk holes in the back of the neck, showing that murder has recently been committed. I have examined many scores, I might say hundreds, of such carcasses, and have frequently found traces of various animals, but never once have I discovered the print of a wild hog's cloven hoof in close proximity, much less recognised the mark of his teeth; and I believe that *our* Bengal wild boar would scorn to feast on such-like carrion. However, *errare humanum est*, and I am open to correction if mistaken on this point; and I must confess that one or two experienced sportsmen whom I have consulted, have expressed a different opinion from my own in this respect. Jerdon tells us that 'wild pigs have been detected feeding on the carcass of a dead elephant, in Southern India.'

American writers affirm that the peccary, a small and exceedingly fierce description of wild hog, readily devours snakes and other reptiles when he happens to come across them. On two different occasions I have been assured by the inhabitants of Bundelkund that the wild hog inhabiting their jungles will devour snakes, but I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement. I may mention here that Indian goats when out grazing are said to kill snakes with their feet, but this also requires confirmation.



THE GEROW OR SAMBER.

CHAPTER XVI.

GEROW OR SAMBER (*Rusa Aristotelis*)

Then stopp'd and stamp'd impatiently,
Then shook his head and antlers high,
And then his keen horns backward threw
Upon his shoulders broad and brown,
And thrust his muzzle in the air,
Snuffed proudly.—JOAQUIN MILLER.

DESCRIPTION.

Height.—From four and a half to five feet.

Extreme Length.—About six and three quarter feet. The largest of seven stags that I have shot measured seven and a third feet in length.

Horns.—Large and heavy, differing much in shape and divergence. Those of the

animal figuring at the head of the chapter measure three feet one inch in length round the curve; there is one upper and one lower tine to each horn, and the former measures eleven inches, the latter thirteen inches in length. The horns in this particular head are very dark in colour, rough and knotted, very thick at base. It is not uncommon to see gerow horns with extra knobs or points, generally very short. In the head from which the measurements I have given were taken, there is a short point, projecting from the left horn behind the junction of the upper tine and the main horn.

Colour.—Very dark brown.

Hair.—Long and coarse, especially on the back of head and neck, where there is a regular thick bristly mane. The hair on the forehead of old males is very dark, almost curly, giving the animal quite a 'bull' appearance.

Abdomen.—Much lighter; the tail is rather long and tipped with black.

Ears.—Very large and open, long white hair inside; the powers of hearing are very acute.

Eyes.—Large and full.

Chest.—Very dark.

The hind differs much, both in form and colour, from the stag; her limbs are less massive and of lighter build. I should say she weighs fully one third less than the stag. Her coat is of a lighter colour, more a yellow than a brown tint, especially when young. I need hardly add that the hind samber (like all the *Cervidæ*, with the exception of the reindeer) is without horns. Shikaries say she has one young one only at a birth.

The footprint, or 'slot,' of the stag differs much from the hind: the former is broader and rounder at the tip; and, naturally from his greater weight, the print is deeper.

I observe an interesting distinction made in the *Cervidæ Family*, in Jerdon's 'Mammals of India.' The author of that work, when describing the 'Genus *Rusa*' (to which the Gerow or Samber belongs), says, 'Canines in the upper jaw in *both sexes*'; but, when speaking just before of the 'Genus *Rucervus*' (Hodgson), (which in aspect he says is intermediate between *Cervus* and *Rusa*, and includes the noble swamp deer) he remarks, 'Canines in the *males only*.'

I HAVE been puzzled whether to speak of the gerow and samber as one and the same animal, or as two distinct species of deer. I myself imagined till quite recently that the gerow of the hills and the samber of the plains were decidedly distinct species, but as such well-known naturalists as Blyth, Jerdon, and others far better able to give an opinion than myself have decided to the contrary, I will treat them as of one species, merely commenting on them separately.

I have often been perplexed to form an opinion as to the time of year that the stags drop their horns, for it seems to be very uncertain. I have known a stag samber without horns, having dropped them early in March, and I have seen a stag still retaining his antlers in June, and what was most remarkable, on the latter occasion, there was a second stag in company with him, about the same size and age apparently, whose horns, about a foot long, were *in velvet*: there could be no

mistake about this. I was in company with a friend at the time; we were beating a deep gorge in the Lullutpore district, called the Tupsooa Koh—which I may mention *en passant* was a favourite hiding-place during the Mutiny of 1857 for wandering bands of rebels, who, defeated and scattered over the country in every direction, took refuge amid the dense jungles and rocky ravines of Central India—we were in search of a tiger that had been seen that very morning; the samber were driven towards us by the beaters, and stood quite unconscious of their danger within a few paces of where we were concealed, their whole attention taken up with the shouts of the advancing beat.

Generally speaking the stags have all dropped their horns by the middle of May. Both horns do not invariably drop off at the same time. I have frequently seen stags with a single antler. By the first week in October the new horns are generally perfect, but here again there are exceptions, for I remember well, many years ago, during Christmas week, seeing a very fine stag samber shot, which, much to the disgust of the successful sportsman, had *his horns in velvet*; this however was a most exceptional case, but as I said before, there appears to be no certainty on this point.

The gerow, one of the largest and most noble in bearing among the deer tribe, though now-a-days from constant persecution much thinned in number in comparison with former years, is yet tolerably common throughout the middle and lower ranges of the Himalayas. It also occurs at considerable elevations. I have observed its foot-print at an altitude of 12,000 feet, and I have reason to believe that it occasionally wanders much higher, ascending the mountains by remote valleys to the very limits of forest bordering the snows.

It is a particularly shy and wary animal, hiding during the day on the sides of hills covered with dense shady forest; or lying concealed far down in the bed of some deep dry gloomy ravine, where patches of the ringall bamboo, thick ferns, and long grass grow abundantly.

The Himalayan sportsman when abroad in search of game will constantly come across the fresh sliding footmark of the gerow, but, unless a skilled hunter and acquainted with the crafty habits of his quest, in vain he searches for the animal's lair. I have found a stag in an out-of-the-way part reclining under the shade of an oak in broad daylight, and that on tolerably open ground, but such luck does not often happen.

It was not till my third expedition to the Himalayas that I,

succeeded in slaying a stag gerow, viz., in the autumn of 1868; but I then made amends for the ill-success of former years, for I shot four fine stags and a poor hind (the latter by mistake when standing in the thicket). One of these stags was a magnificent brute, and I came across him quite by chance.

Early in October 1868 I was returning south from Upper Gurhwal, where I had been hunting thar: and one morning made a very early start, as the march was a long one, for a place called Rāmnee. Instead of following the road taken by the coolies carrying my baggage, I was in the habit of making a *détour* through the jungle picking up any game I came across, and reaching my camping-ground about mid-day, when the tent would be pitched and a late breakfast ready. On this occasion, I had obtained a guide who promised to show me some moonal pheasants, a gooral or two, and perhaps a musk deer.

We made a start when it was yet dark, and commenced clambering up to the higher ground by a spur very steep and rocky on the one side, and covered with thick trees on a more gradual slope on the other. My two companions every now and then desired me to halt while they descended a short distance on the look-out for gooral (chamois), but nothing was seen. About an hour after starting, still following the same ridge upwards, I had made a momentary halt to recover breath, for it was hard work, when one of my men gave a low 'hist,' and held up his hand; a dead silence followed, then we distinctly heard, far down below, something moving about among the dead oak leaves. It was impossible to catch a glimpse of the animal whatever it was on account of the density of the foliage. '*Bhāloo*' (a bear) said the paharies, and I thought it very likely to be the case; but how to get down was the difficulty. The animal appeared to be directly below us; but if we descended, which was no easy matter, just at the spot, by the face of the open slope, we certainly should be discovered; so at length we determined to retrace our steps for a few hundred yards to where the descent was less steep.

We got down without much difficulty and commenced carefully advancing up the gorge; and presently, to my delight, on turning a corner, came right upon a fine old stag. He stood staring at us, offering a splendid chance. I was rather above him, and just as he turned round to make off, hit him behind the shoulder with a heavy bullet; he stumbled forward, fell over, and while he was attempting to regain his legs, my second shot dropped him dead. He was a noble

brute; I brought his stuffed head to England, and it figures at the opening of this chapter.

The gerow has other enemies besides man; tigers not unfrequently come up the hill valleys from the Terāi, and constantly pull down the big deer, especially the hinds. Leopards are numerous and often kill the young; but perhaps the worst foes of all are packs of wild dogs. If a ravenous troop of these animals once take up the track of a gerow, or any other deer in fact, his fate is nearly always sealed, for they hardly ever give up the chase till they have run the animal down and torn him to pieces. The hillmen have told me that the gerow, when hard pressed, generally makes for a pool or a river, and standing up to his knees in water, comes to bay, and attempts with his horns to keep his enemies at a distance; but all in vain, for in the end the dogs tire him out, pull him down, and speedily devour him.

Like all deer, gerow are very fond of salt; the hillmen, aware of this, put salt on flat stones in certain places frequented by the animals; if they find the salt licked off, they lie up close by on the following night, and generally get a shot, for the gerow will be almost certain to return after dark. The paharies also catch these deer in nooses set on the borders of their fields; and after a heavy fall of snow sally out in snow-shoes, and with packs of dogs slaughter the unfortunate animals as they flounder about helplessly in the snow.

The alarm note of the animal is a very deep, loud kind of bellow, which may be heard a long distance. I remember once my camp was pitched above a village called Elanee, near a deserted old cattle-shed. One very still morning, my bearer came into my tent before daylight to call me, and struck a match; immediately he did so, there was a tremendous bellow close to the back of the tent, which brought me out of bed in no time: hurrying on a pair of slippers and taking up my rifle, which lay ready loaded, I slipped out. There was a second still louder call, not twenty yards off, but I could see nothing, though I could hear the sound of the animals' feet. Unfortunately they (for there were two) were on the slope of a hill facing me; the moon was behind the hill, and consequently just the part of the cover where the gerow were standing was in the deep shade, and it was in vain I strained my eyes into the darkness. Shortly after I heard the clattering of their feet as they made off. I believe they had come in search of salt, which is always spilt about more or less near these places where goats and sheep are kept; and were unaware—for my tent had been only pitched

there the previous night—of human beings being in the neighbourhood till they heard the sound of the match being struck on the box.

I have said that one of the worst enemies to the gerow is the wild dog, and that he seldom escapes, when once a pack of these ravenous brutes is on his trail. I will conclude my remarks on this animal by relating an anecdote which may interest the reader, of a stag gerow, which I believe had been pursued and made his escape from wild dogs.

It was early in the month of October; I was hunting thar on a range of mountains just below the snows, in a very out-of-the-way part of Gurhwal. One day, in company with two paharies, I had ascended by a valley some likely hills for the wild goats we were in search of. On coming over the brow of a hill, overlooking a vast extent of country below, we sat down to rest ourselves, and also to scan narrowly the surrounding ranges and crags. I was occupied eating a stalk of crisp wild rhubarb, which one of my men had peeled for me—and mighty refreshing it is, after the fatigue of climbing a steep hill side—when suddenly one of my companions, a very sharp-eyed young fellow named Gopal, pointed out for my inspection, a certain brown object far down below us, quite a mile off. After a long look through the glasses, I distinctly made out an animal of some kind. Now came the puzzle, what could the creature be? It was not a thar, male or female; it was of too large a size; nor was it a burhel, for the same reason; moreover the coat was too dark for the latter. Could it be a surrow? (a large kind of goat antelope). No, that would not do. We decided to descend lower and have a closer inspection. There was an opportune spur running down from the mountain we were on, and by following it we could reach a spot overlooking the place where the animal was reclining under the shade of a thick bush.

We descended carefully for several hundred yards on the side of the ridge farthest from the game, and then once more cautiously peeped over, and, to our astonishment, at once made out the creature to be a gerow stag, for his sweeping horns were now discernible. But what had brought this inhabitant of the forest into such an unlikely spot, far out in the bare ground, above the jungle, puzzled us immensely. By descending still farther, about 300 yards, we reached a favourable position for a shot. He was across the valley on the opposite slope, about 120 yards off. I sat down, took a careful aim and fired. The stag reared up and fell over; my men rushed forward. Slowly, to my disgust, the huge beast began to roll and slide down the hill side. I

shouted to the men to be quick and seize hold of him ; but they had to perform a considerable circuit to arrive at the place. By the time they had reached the spot it was all too late ; the dead animal had revolved four or five times ; in vain they attempted to stay the lifeless body ; down it went, each second turning quicker and quicker and gaining fresh impetus, till I saw it bounding and rolling far below and, at last, with a loud crash it fell among the rocks and stones in the bed of the mountain torrent, fully 400 feet beneath us.

My men reached the spot with some difficulty, and shouted up to me that both horns were broken off, at which piece of bad news I was not the least surprised. Only three months before, within twenty miles of Mussoorie, a similar *contretemps* had happened, when, as on this occasion, a stag gerow on receiving its death wound, had rolled down a khud, and smashed both antlers off. On descending to have a look at the beast, we could not help noticing that the carcase, irrespective of the injuries it had recently sustained by such a disastrous fall, was splashed and stained with mud, the feet were cut, and the skin torn, with here and there dry blood marks, and the whole appearance of the poor brute evinced that he had been lately through some great exertion and fatigue : a hunted wanderer on the wild. My men declared that this stag had quite recently been pursued by a pack of wild dogs, which I believe to have been the case.

I will now offer a few remarks on the samber of the plains, an animal which, as I have already mentioned, so closely resembles the gerow of the hills, that Blyth, Jerdon, and other naturalists have pronounced them to be of one and the same species. I have hunted the samber in Rewah, Saugor, Jhansie, Gwalior, and Lullutpore ; also many years ago on the banks of the Soane, and have found little difference to speak of between specimens from these districts. But, on the other hand, many observers have pointed out a distinction in one or two points between these animals of Central India and the gerow found on the upper ranges of the Himalayas ; for instance, the latter animal is said at certain times of the year to have a darker coat and longer hair than the samber ever has, and I believe that this is quite true ; and again, the gerow is said to have antlers of a size and thickness never seen in the plains ; and I must say that this is also my experience. Perhaps, after all, the gentlemen I have named are right in coming to the conclusion that there is not sufficient distinction between the two to warrant their being classed separately.

The samber of the plains, from being constantly pursued, have of late years become quite as scarce and difficult to find as the gerow in the hills. Jerdon when alluding to the number of samber found in a herd, says, 'being often found in herds, varying from four or five to twenty and upwards.' I am afraid, however, that now-a-days, in the Bengal Presidency at any rate, such a glorious sight as a herd of twenty samber is a *very rare* occurrence. Speaking from my own experience I have never seen more than eight together, and more generally I believe the animals associate in parties of four or five. In parts of the Central Provinces and Bundelkund, the usual manner of hunting the animal is to take the field with some thirty or forty beaters (more or less, according to the extent of the country), and drive the forest. The guns are posted in advance, sometimes as far as half a mile, and at such distances apart that an animal driven forward by the beaters cannot pass through without running the gauntlet, or in other words, passing within sight and range of one sportsman at least. If the jungle is thick, the guns have to be posted close to cover the ground, if the contrary the line is more extended.

In Lullutpore, where I saw much of this 'hanking' as the sport is called, each beat had a name. The positions for the sportsmen were well known; and probably, the same beaters had been assembled year after year, whenever the Sahibs paid a visit to the districts; so that no 'arranging' (or making a 'bundo-bust' as the expression in Hindustani goes) was necessary; for each beater knew well the direction he should take, and no mistakes were made. I have stood at a position, behind some old tree, thick bush, or perhaps a rock, from whence, in years gone by, scores and scores of samber and other big game have been rolled over by sportsmen's bullets. As can easily be imagined, a jungle constantly driven in this manner soon becomes devoid of game, and twice in a year should be the limit; even then the animals often are too wary to fall into the snare, and knowing from former experience that, in spite of the noise behind, the danger really lies in front, break back through the beaters. An old stag, if in company with one or more hinds, as is not unfrequently the case, is particularly cunning; instead of showing the way, he often craftily remains in the rear, allowing his better half, an old hind, to precede him, even urging her to the front with his horns. With his antlers laid back on his shoulders, to prevent them striking against boughs and sticks, he pushes his way through the densest thicket or where he

imagines the danger to be least. I have known a stag come within a few yards of my post without being seen or heard; and then, just as the beaters are emerging from the jungle, and you are putting your rifle at half-cock, a crash close at hand followed by a shout from the coolies vainly attempting to turn the beast back towards you, announces that a samber has made his escape through the line.

I remember, in the month of March 1870, shooting a rather good stag on the banks of the Scinde river, near a place I have often mentioned, called Aumōla, the account of which is, perhaps, worth relating. Nearly opposite to a bungalow at the above-named spot, high up on the top of a cliff, overlooking the Scinde, are the remains of an old fort, which many years ago is said to have been held by a gang of Mahratta freebooters. At the back of this ancient stronghold there is a high wall, loop-holed all round, enclosing a large patch of ground, perhaps ten or twelve acres in extent; which was, at the time I am speaking of, covered with very thick high grass, bushes, and scrub. To my astonishment I was informed by a sporting Thakoor in the neighbourhood, whose acquaintance I had made the year previously, that this enclosed piece of jungle was a favourite resort of samber, and that if I was agreeable he would assemble twenty or thirty men, and beat the patch out. I readily assented; and early the following morning my native friend made his appearance armed with a long matchlock.

We clambered up to the deserted old fort by a flight of steps which led from an old gateway down to the river, and then held a whispered consultation as to our plans. There were two or three breaches or gaps in the wall, encircling the patch we were about to beat. The Thakoor placed me in an old tree overlooking one of these gaps, while he himself went round to marshal the beaters. The drive commenced, and within a minute after the usual shouts and yells began, a clattering of feet made me draw back the hammers of my rifle, in readiness for a shot; and presently out came a herd of noble samber. An old hind, with a half-grown young one close behind, led the way, with her ears pricked up, then a young stag with short horns, followed by two more hinds. They came trotting along at an easy pace, directly towards the very spot where I was hidden. I was sitting on a bough almost over the gap; and the animals, quite unconscious of danger, passed close below me. The old hind had already cleared at one bound the low breach, and I was just preparing to fire at the young stag,

when a native, perched by my side, pulled my sleeve, and on looking round I saw a much finer one with a good pair of horns, ungallantly bringing up the rear, and coming towards us. I let him advance till almost below me, and then a ball from my rifle struck him fairly behind the ear, killing him instantaneously. I must confess that I was much surprised to find so fine a herd of deer in such an unlikely spot.

Driving the jungle, or hanking, is an exciting sport; but I myself infinitely prefer a quiet stalk after samber at daybreak or eventide, with a single attendant, to turning out with an army of beaters.

Like wild hog and other inhabitants of the forest, the samber, in hot sultry weather, delights to roll in water, and I have seen trees plastered with mud by them. They are also in the habit of rubbing their horns against the trunks. I have frequently noticed young saplings with the bark stripped off from this cause.

The samber has been called 'Elk' by Ceylon sportsmen, but I need hardly say that this is a mistake, for the true elk of Sweden, Siberia, and other countries is the *cervus alces*, the moose of North America.

The latter animal has been described as 'displaying courage and even ferocity when attacked;' a samber, so far as I am aware, though he will, when pressed by dogs, use his antlers to defend himself, will never attack, or, even when wounded, face a human being.

I need hardly mention that it is unsportsmanlike—a crime in fact—to slay a stag without horns, or with antlers in velvet. The month of October is about the best time of year for the sport.

The hunter who wishes to succeed in obtaining the trophies from a noble stag must above all things be an early riser; and should make a point of starting for the forest or hillside at the first sign of daylight. It is then that the sportsman comes across the stag browsing on the edge of the wood, or meets an old bear returning to his den after his nightly rounds in search of food. A few hours later, however, the hunter will only find numerous traces of the object of his search, the fresh foot-print, and the young shoots cut off where *Rusa Aristotelis* had been feeding. Now he is lying down in perfect security, in the midst of the densest jungle, where nothing can approach him without being detected. The bear that at dawn was making for his lair, is now curled up and sound asleep. In fact, the lazy sportsman, who arrives late on his ground, will not view one-fourth the number of the inhabitants of the forest that he would have done had he been up before the sun.

Always carry your own rifle. This is another most important rule, which few adhere to, especially in the hill ranges, where the hunter, in following large game, has continually to face and scale very steep crags and slopes, and consequently is liable to become fatigued, and to feel the weight of a rifle on his shoulder. Speaking for myself, though by no means a strong man, I am not joking when I assert that I can walk better with a gun on my shoulder than without one; and the sportsman in the hills should accustom himself, whenever he leaves his tent for a range through the forest, invariably to carry his own weapon, and not to trust it to an attendant; for however expert the latter may be in placing a rifle in his master's hands, opportunities of taking a shot will frequently be lost; and just as the hunter obtains a grip of his weapon, the animal—often the very creature the sportsman has toiled unsuccessfully to find all day—bounds away before there is time to fire. I firmly believe I am not exaggerating when I say that the stalker who trusts his rifle to a native to carry for him, instead of shouldering it himself, loses fully one-third of his shots.

Again, how few of us Englishmen can walk as a hunter should; it seems natural for us to tread heavily, and many start for a ramble through the forest in search of game, wearing a pair of thick creaking iron-shod English boots, instead of soft samber leather shoes. How is it possible to walk with the former over rough stony ground without being heard by creatures like the gerow, for instance—an animal constantly in the habit of being stalked by his natural four-footed enemies, such as leopards with paws of velvet, who creep up to their prey without rustling a leaf or making the slightest noise of any kind, and even then often fail? Hill-men seldom wear shoes, and, with the exception of a 'dhotie' or waist-cloth, are little encumbered with clothing. This is a great advantage to them; but the careful though unhesitating way in which they tread, avoiding alike brittle stick, loose stone, and crackling leaf; the wonderful skill with which one of these wild men of the woods will, stooping, pass under a mass of overhanging thorns and brambles, hardly disturbing a twig, should be witnessed to be appreciated. The 'white face,' his companion, on attempting a similar manœuvre, is caught hopelessly in half-a-dozen places.

When out 'still hunting'—that most appropriate and expressive American term for the hunter in the thick forest—the pace should be always slow. However accustomed a man's eye may be to take in

everything within range, it is quite impossible that he can examine properly every patch of scrub and tangled thicket when walking quickly. Every Indian sportsman knows what an exceedingly difficult thing it is to see a spotted deer when standing perfectly still in the thicket probably watching his approach all the time. In the middle of a clump of overhanging bushes, the animal is almost undistinguishable to any but a practised eye; and it takes time and care to detect creatures in their native haunts, furnished as they are by Nature for concealment and protection with coats exactly similar in shade and colour to the objects around them.

When passing through thick cover, pause every now and then for a moment or two, and make the best use of your ears. A crackling branch in an oak forest in the hills has before now betrayed an old bear eating the acorns; and the finest gerow stag I ever shot first drew my attention by the sound of his foot-fall among the dead leaves in a ravine far below. Stoop down when passing heavy clumps of overhanging shrubs and bushes, and look well underneath; by so doing you will often be able to make out the legs of more than one deer standing motionless.

When on the look-out for big game, there should be no talking between yourself and attendants. If it becomes necessary to address one of your companions, always speak in a low tone. Much can be done by signs with the hands, which is preferable to using the voice. If by chance you get separated from your comrade in the covert, and wish to know where he is, a low whistle should act for 'where are you?' and a return whistle gives the desired information without having disturbed the ground in front. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with spooring, and never be above acquiring information on the subject from natives capable of instructing you. You should be acquainted with the foot-print of every animal in the jungle, and be able to form an opinion how long it is since the creature passed by, whether it was walking at the time, or going at speed. Be familiar with the various cries and calls of the inhabitants of the forest; and be able to distinguish and recognise their alarm notes, such as the bark of the kakur, the hiss of the gooral, or the shrill whistle of the thar, or burhel.

Even the cries of birds frequently afford useful information; wild animals know how to profit by such tokens, and so should human beings. On a summer's evening at home the 'twit-twit-twit' of an

old blackbird, the harsh alarm note of the jay, or the impatient monotonous call of the white-throat, has the effect of immediately dispersing a group of 'bunnies.' Just before they were peaceably engaged cropping the turf; now they scuttle off to their burrows, fully aware, by the warning notes of their feathered friends, that danger is near; perhaps from a biped armed with a gun, or a prowling fox or cat. It is the same with large animals. I have lost my shot more than once at deer through the irritating screech of a plover, named the 'Did-he-do-it' from its cry. Once when stalking burhel in Thibet, three snow pheasants rose in front of me and uttering their shrill alarm cries spoilt my chance of a shot. A querking marmot, on another occasion, put an old ovis amon on the *qui vive*, so that I was unable to approach within shot.

Peafowl make a peculiar clucking note when a tiger or leopard is on the move. By unremitting perseverance and attention the young sportsman will soon become familiar with the ways and habits of wild animals, and their various cries and modes of communicating with and warning one another.

Finally, always make a practice of reloading before moving a step, whether successful or not; and make it your wont invariably to walk up to the spot where the object you fired at was standing or passing, even when convinced that your bullet has missed the mark. I have often taken a shot at an animal, and imagined that I had missed clean; but on reaching the place, and examining the ground, a patch of fur or hair or a drop of blood has told a different tale.

I have dwelt longer than I intended, with the risk of wearying the reader, on the interesting subject of woodcraft. My observations, however, have been offered in the hope that they may be of some practical use to the young sportsman, and this must be my excuse.



THE SWAMP DEER.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SWAMP-DEER OR GHOND (BĀRA-SINGHA).

(*Rucervus Duvaucellii.*)

‘And when he standeth still he stretcheth forth his proud ambitious neck, as if he meant to wound the firmament with forked horns.’—SHAKSPEARE.

DESCRIPTION OF MALE.

Height.—Rather less than the samber: about 4 feet, a few inches more or less.

Length.—From 6 to 6½ feet.

Colour.—Light brown; in some almost yellow; abdomen lighter.

Hair.—Not so coarse and rough as that of the samber.

Ears.—Open and rounded.

Eyes.—Large and full.

Horns.—Not so dark, rough, and knotted as the samber's, nor is the span across the tips so great. There are numerous points in a cluster on the upper part of the horns, which curve much forward. The lower tines point straight to the front, and join the

main horn at the root, as in the samber. This lower or basal tine is from 10 to 13 inches long, and the horns are generally under 3 feet in length. In a full-grown stag there are often ten or twelve points, irregular as to length and size. I have one head with fourteen points.

The female is smaller, but does not differ so much in size and proportion as the stag samber does from the hind. I have seen hinds of a very light colour.

I FIRST met with this fine animal in Assam, where it is very plentiful in some parts. We used to beat them out of heavy swamps with the aid of a line of elephants, and shoot them from howdahs. The ghond is often put up in very wet marshy ground, several inches deep in water. I have seen them in the Bhootan jungles, always in grass or reeds bordering on patches of water; also in Philibeet, where, however, from continued persecution, the animal is now rare. It formerly was common in the grassy islands of the Sardah.

I once saw a most magnificent stag, early one morning, on the edge of a swamp bordering Nepaul. I have never met with this animal in Central India, though I have been shown heads of the swamp deer shot by sportsmen in that part of the country, differing little if at all from those I had myself procured in Assam. It is a remarkable fact that although the samber, an animal much resembling the swamp-deer in general appearance and habits (and often frequenting the same cover near the foot of the Himalayas), ascends the mountains to great elevations; yet the latter, so far as my experience goes, seldom if ever wanders upwards from its natural habitat amid the swamps and thick grass jungles of the Terai, or inhabits the forest-covered slopes of even the lowest ranges of hills.

I am not acquainted with a single instance of the *bāra-singha*—as the swamp-deer is generally termed by sportsmen and natives—having been shot in the interior of the Himalayas.

The swamp-deer associates in much larger herds than the samber ever does. It is nothing uncommon, in out-of-the-way parts of Assam, to come across large herds of these noble deer, numbering thirty and forty individuals in a troop. I have never personally witnessed so glorious a sight, but mention the fact of swamp-deer congregating in vast herds, on the authority of a well-known sportsman and resident of Assam, and I observe that Jerdon also mentions that they are very gregarious.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHEETUL, OR SPOTTED DEER (*Axis maculatus*).

‘ And a deer came down the pathway,
Flecked with leafy light and shadow.’—LONGFELLOW.

DESCRIPTION.

In size and general figure much resembles our own fallow deer (*Cervus dama*). The horns, however, of the cheetul terminate in sharp points; whereas those of the fallow deer are palmated and curve much forward.

Colour.—A rich glossy red, beautifully spotted over with white on the back and sides; many of these spots are of an elongated shape. A white line runs lengthways down each side of the body. The abdomen, the chin, and half-way down the throat, and beneath the tail, white. A dark brown streak down the middle of the back. No considerable difference in the size and appearance of the sexes, except that the female has no horns. But old stags are generally more stoutly framed and rather darker than the hinds, especially about the upper part of the neck and back of head, at which part they often become grizzled white with age. Ears, very dark brown externally, pinkish white inside; muzzle nearly black.

Horns.—Thin, long, and smooth in comparison with those of the samber, swamp deer, and other stags. They show great variety in shape, length, and curve.

THE cheetul is nearly always found in herds. I have met with a herd of over forty at one time, stags and hinds mixed; and Jerdon tells us of having seen over a hundred together at the foot of the Neilgherries. In certain localities it is very common, living on the banks of rivers, or islands covered with bushes and grass; also in glades in the forest, but never far from water. It often frequents, especially in the hot season, the very spots likely to hold tigers. On the banks of the Betwah, Chumbul, Jāmin, Scinde, Desān, and other rivers of Bundelkund and Gwalior, cheetul were once very numerous; but, like other big game, they are now not nearly so plentiful as in former years. The call of the cheetul is a short, sharp kind of bark,

easily distinguishable from that of any other inhabitant of the jungle. When encamped in the forest at night, the sportsman will hear this call on every side. It is also the alarm note of the animal.

I remember once, when howdah-shooting, just before sunset, in company with my brother-in-law in the Civil Service, our attention was attracted by hearing several spotted deer calling loudly close to us. On pressing the elephants forward, two cheetul came bounding towards us, but I did not fire, as I was certain that some beast was pursuing them, and sure enough the next moment an elephant on my right trumpeted and swung round. We turned in that direction, and presently saw a leopard stealing along. On hearing us approach, he crouched down till I could only see his head and the line of his back. I fired low for the shoulder, but through the smoke hanging around me could not see what the result was. The man behind me in the howdah and the mahout declared that the brute rolled over; but natives are rather too fond of shouting out 'Lugga!' or 'Hit!' at their master's shots; at any rate, there was no blood to be found, and although we hunted through every patch of grass in the vicinity, nothing was to be seen of the leopard. What I wish to show by this anecdote is, that the call of the cheetul is used by the creature when frightened, and probably to warn others to be on their guard.

I have already remarked on the great difficulty of discovering the spotted deer when standing perfectly motionless in a clump of overhanging bushes. I have often carefully scrutinised one of these clumps, and decided in my own mind that no living creature was therein concealed, till a crash close by, and a clatter of feet and bobbing away of white tails on the side farthest away, has disclosed the fact that not one animal, but several, had escaped my notice. The cunning creatures on these occasions stand perfectly still, until, with one sudden dash, they make off.

The early morning is the time to stalk cheetul. Curiously enough, I never once remember seeing spotted deer in the Assam or Bhootan jungles, nor in the neighbourhood of Dacca, Cachar, Sylhet, or the forests below the Cossyah hills. At any rate, they were extremely rare, if they existed in the provinces I have named, although the jungles were in many parts exactly similar to those of Rohilkund and Central India, which abound with cheetul.

The first cheetul I ever shot was at Chukkyah, near Chunar, many

years ago, when stationed at Benares. The Rajah had a 'rumnah' or preserve at the above-named place full of game, and occasionally the officers of the garrison were invited to shoot.

The cheetul is very easily tamed, and when full-grown there can hardly be a more beautiful creature than a stag. We had a very handsome one belonging to the band of a European regiment I was attached to, which always appeared on parade, and led the way on the line of march. If I remember rightly, this animal accompanied us down to Calcutta when we were ordered to China, and was stolen, much to the disgust of the men, just before we embarked.

The creatures are mischievous pets when allowed to roam about. I remember one devouring half a towel. The same animal would also eat paper.

The cheetul never, I believe, leaves cover for the open country, except at night to consume the crops of the villagers; so that greyhounds have no chance of coursing it. Even, however, in open country I much doubt if the fastest dogs could come up with a full-grown unwounded stag. They are often shot from howdahs, and it requires practice to roll one over handsomely when bounding through grass, catching a glimpse of him only now and then. In my opinion, however, it is a much easier shot than a hog-deer under similar circumstances. In the Philibeet district, on the banks of the Sardah, I have several times, in company with another sportsman, brought home four or five stags strapped on to a pad elephant in one morning's sport. Jerdon and also one or two other writers say that there are two distinct species of spotted deer, and give reasons for that opinion. I regret that I have not sufficiently observed specimens, shot in various parts, to be able to judge or decide on this interesting subject. Unlike the *antilopinæ*, the cheetul does not leave its droppings in one particular spot, but scattered about in the manner of goats.

The hide of this animal, when properly preserved, is the most beautiful of all deer skins, and makes, when mounted, a handsome door-mat.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PARAH OR HOG DEER (*Axis porcinus*).

‘Where the deer rustle through
The twining brake.’—THOMSON.

DESCRIPTION.

Extreme Length.—About $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Height.—From $2\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{3}$ feet.

Horns.—Somewhat similar in shape, and with the same number of points as those of the cheetul, but much shorter, hardly ever exceeding 18 inches, I believe.

Tail.—Rather long.

Colour.—Like many others of the family *Cervidæ*, the coat of the hog deer varies much in shade at different seasons of the year. In winter, when the hair grows long, those that I have examined have been of one uniform glossy tint of deep yellowish or olive brown, slightly darker down the back. In the hot-weather months, when the animal has dropped its long coat, it has altogether a lighter appearance: the face and front of legs are darker in tint; hoofs, black; under parts of body, inside the thighs, and under the tail, white. Like the swamp deer, the young of the parah are distinctly spotted with white; but as the animal reaches its full growth the spots appear to fade, if not altogether to disappear, and in old specimens I have searched in vain for the white markings.

The sexes much resemble one another in size and general appearance, so much so that when the male has dropped his horns they are undistinguishable even at a very short distance.

The parah altogether lacks the remarkable beauty and grace of the cheetul, carrying its head low, and diving through the grass like a pig; hence its title of ‘hog deer.’

THE Hog Deer is exceedingly common in many parts of our Northern Indian Provinces, and, I am also told, in Sind, generally frequenting long grass and reeds on the edges of swamps and rivers; it is often found also in thin forests, where there is grass under the trees. Sandy islands in large rivers, when covered with grass, are also favourite places for parah, or amongst ‘Jhow,’ a kind of bastard cypress.

It is generally found singly or in pairs, and is usually shot from howdahs. The animal often jumps up in the grass under the very

feet of the elephant, and rushes off. It carries its head low, and has a habit of stopping very abruptly, thus causing many a miss. There is no animal, probably, at which so many ball cartridges are fruitlessly expended as the hog deer. In my opinion, when the grass is so high as to screen it as it makes off, and the sportsman is compelled to fire where he supposes the animal to be, it is the most difficult of all rifle shooting. I have not the slightest doubt that many more parah might be killed if buck shot or slugs were used, instead of a single ball; but during my service I never yet met with nor heard of a single Indian sportsman who resorted to such a bad practice. Animals, when struck with spinning bullets, escape only too often to die a lingering death, but many more do so in countries where the missiles I have above named are used, and I suspect buck shot is only adopted by those who cannot depend on their shooting with ball.

When exposed to view in the open, the parah is easy enough to hit with ball, but in thick grass it is another matter. It requires very great practice; and I can only recall to mind two, among many scores of hunters with whom I have been out, real proficient at the sport. One was an Assam tea-planter, and the other a police-officer in our North-Western Provinces.

A common double-barrelled gun is a capital weapon for the sport. Remember always to aim low and well in advance of the moving grass, if you wish to stop '*Axis porcinus*' as he rushes past. I shall never forget, when a 'griffin,' my first introduction to this animal; it was also my first attempt at howdah shooting. In the month of December 1866, in company with G——s of my regiment, we went out in search of deer and buffalo, in a jungle near Gowhatty in Assam. We had hardly entered the first patch of cover when up jumped a parah, and, as usual, the grass moving showed his whereabouts as he made off. I fired twice; there was no further stir in the grass, and I was congratulating myself on such a good beginning, when on approaching the spot, the animal made off as before. This time I emptied another double gun, and G——s on my left also poured in a broadside from his howdah, and we were both perfectly satisfied that, at any rate, the creature was now dead enough. The mahout below me, who probably had been out often before, to my astonishment muttered, '*Nahin lugga, Sāhib,*' or '*Not hit, Sir.*' I was in the act of wrathfully rebuking him for hinting at such a thing, when once more the hog deer sprang up close to us. This time, however, he exposed himself to view, and was struck through

the back; but which of us made the lucky hit it was impossible to say, for the two shots were fired almost simultaneously. I distinguished myself later on the same day by shooting through the head, at the first shot, a huge buffalo—the very first wild one I ever saw.

So similar is the parah to the wild hog in general colour, and in its way of carrying the head low as it darts rapidly off, that often when the animal has been partially concealed by the grass I have been puzzled for the moment to decide which of the two creatures was before me. Jerdon tells us ‘that the hog deer is rarely found in Central India,’ speaking in comparison with other districts. I have shot over a great portion of Central India, but have never come across the animal.

I remember, when crossing a range of the Cossyah hills in our Eastern Frontier, viewing a parah on the road in front of me; he had come up one valley and was about to descend another. This was remarkable, because in that part of the country a traveller or sportsman may ride or walk—search far and near for days together—without catching a glimpse of a quadruped of any kind. Even birds are very scarce indeed on those flat-topped Cossyah ranges.

The best time of year to shoot parah is towards the end of February. In the Terai and other forests, the old dry grass having by that time been burnt, only patches of cover are left here and there, and in these clumps the hog deer take refuge. The sportsman with a single elephant can with little difficulty drive them out, and get capital shots as they run across the open. I shot a fine male parah one day in the Philibeet district, apparently in excellent health and condition. The animal’s skin, to all outward semblance, was in good order; but on removing it, to my astonishment, the body underneath was one mass of living maggots, and when the hide had been stretched and dried, it had the appearance of having been riddled with a charge of shot; what the cause could have been of the animal being in such a fearful state, I am at a loss to say.

CHAPTER XX.

THE KAKUR, MUNTJAC, RIB-FACED, OR BARKING DEER.

(Cervulus aureus.)

‘Thy graceful gait bore off at once my heart.’—BYRON.

DESCRIPTION.

Elegant in form.

Height.—A little over 2 feet.

Extreme Length.—4 feet, a few inches more or less.

Horns.—From the top of the head a pair of curious stalks, about 3 inches in length, covered with thick bristly red hair, project in a line with the frontal bone. From the top of these stalks the antler commences, and just above the point of junction there is a very short branchlet projecting diagonally forward an inch, sometimes less, in length. Above this the horns, rising from 3 to 4 inches more, and gradually diverging, make a graceful arch, or rather hook, inwards, turning towards each other; but at the same time the points curve backwards; the tips about 3 inches apart.

Colour.—A beautiful bright glossy red, or chestnut, inclining to golden yellow about the neck. Inside of the legs, and under parts of chin and tail, white.

Ears.—Moderate size, erect.

Eyes.—Small.

Tail.—Rather long in proportion to size of animal. I observe that certain writers mention among the characteristics of genus *Cervulus* ‘tail rather short;’ but I think this is an error.

The females are very similar to the males, but have no horns. There is a kind of knob, however, in that part of the head where the horns of the male are situated, and often the coat of the former is of a lighter tint than that of the latter.

It obtains its name of ‘rib face’ from two peculiar dark folds running down the middle of the face, giving it an ugly appearance. The nose is pointed, the tongue long, and limbs rather short and slender. The feet very small and pointed. The body rather thick and compact; no sign of dark stripe down the back.

THIS pretty little animal still abounds all over the lower ranges of the Himalayas eastward to Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhootan, Sylhet, and Cachar. It is also found in certain hill ranges of the Central

Provinces. I once saw three brought in by a shooting-party at Nagode. Jerdon says 'the rib-faced deer is found in all the thick jungles and forests of India;' but my experience does not coincide with his, for I have seldom met with the animal in the forests of Bengal or away from the foot of the Himalayas. I never met with it, nor do I believe it is ever found, in the Jhansie or Lullutpore districts, nor have I ever heard of it in any part of Gwalior. In my numerous expeditions to our glorious hills, stalking the little kakur has been one of my favourite amusements, and a goodly number have fallen to my rifle at different times.



CAMP SUNKOT. AUGUST 1863.

The kakur, I believe, pairs like the roe-deer, which animal it much resembles in many ways. Jerdon says, 'It is a solitary animal, very rarely even two being found together;' this certainly is not my personal experience; for frequently, when out for a stroll with my rifle, I have come upon a pair of kakur browsing together, and I have seen four within a short distance of one another in the same glen.

It delights to frequent the shady dark woods and oak forests of the interior of our hill ranges, where ferns are thick and vegetation abun-

dant. Early in the morning and late in the evening I have seen it close to the back of villages, occasionally grazing on the crops; and in our hill stations, especially Nynee Tal, it is not uncommon to hear a kakur barking after sunset above the houses on the hillside.

The call of the kakur, from which it derives its name of barking-deer, is an alarm note, and never uttered, I believe, except when the animal is frightened or startled by something unusual. They bark constantly, especially at night. I have heard three and four making this noise at one time, generally a sign that a leopard is on the move, and on a still night the call may be heard a long distance, quite two miles I should say. Both sexes bark, and I am of opinion that there is a perceptible difference in the call of the male and female.

The animal becomes very cunning from being constantly hunted, and is therefore difficult to get a shot at. In some of the lower ranges of Kumaon, where once this pretty little deer was very abundant, it is now seldom to be met with, and has almost entirely disappeared. How can it be otherwise where deer, chamois, pheasants—all sorts of game, in fact—are indiscriminately hunted and snared by gangs of poachers from one end of the year to the other; and in consequence of there being no game laws, no one has the power to forbid or hinder these rascals from exterminating the game.

With such a bright-coloured skin, one would imagine it an easy matter to distinguish the kakur when standing in the covert, but the contrary is really the case, as the sportsman will soon discover. Next to the cheetah, I do not know a more difficult animal to spot when it is perfectly motionless under the shade of a clump of bushes. Many a time I have walked right up to where the creature was hidden, unconscious that it was close to me, till startled by the crash in the bushes as it darted away.

When the kakur makes off, it often commences its retreat by a succession of bounds, bringing all four feet to the ground at the same time, and making several quick coughing barks till it has gone some little distance, when it moderates its pace, and at intervals of a quarter of a minute or so regularly utters its peculiar, deep, hoarse cry. After once having alarmed the animal without getting a shot, when it has entered the thick jungle covert, it is of little use, generally speaking, to attempt following it up at once, as the chances are you will not succeed in catching sight of it again, much less in getting within distance. Though I have obtained my shot and been sometimes successful under these circumstances, it is better to leave it alone, without further

disturbing the jungle, till another day, when probably, if you visit the spot about the same time, but with greater caution than on the previous occasion, you will find the animal, if not precisely in the same place, at any rate somewhere in the neighbourhood.

It does not follow when you hear a kakur bark near at hand, that you are the cause of the creature's alarm, though, usually speaking, doubtless it will be so. The best plan on hearing the first call is to halt and listen which direction the animal is taking. I remember killing a fine buck one evening as I was returning to my tent after a day's shooting. The animal suddenly called within fifty yards, just below me. I halted, and presently had the satisfaction of hearing footsteps in the leaves: I stood behind an oak tree and got a shot, within ten yards or so, which rolled him over dead. It turned out that two men with a dog were passing along a footpath below, and it was at them the kakur had taken fright. I have several times heard the animal, when bounding away, click its feet together.

It has been stated that only the male kakur is furnished with canine teeth, but I can assert the contrary to be the case, though the tusks of the female are smaller than those of her consort. I believe that the animal uses its tusks and also its feet to rake up leaves when searching for food. I have frequently noticed bare patches, where the leaves have been turned over, with marks where the creature's little foot had been used, and also what I believe to have been the marks of this projecting canine tooth.

A sportsman should be careful when approaching a wounded kakur. A Hill-man once showed me a scar on his hand of what had been a very severe wound, which he informed me, and I believe truthfully, was occasioned by a buck kakur striking him with his projecting canine tooth, when attempting to seize and dispatch the creature; and I know of an instance where a kakur with a broken hind leg inflicted a dangerous wound on a dog attempting to pull it down.

The kakur is another of those animals that, when running, holds its head low, and makes its way through the most impenetrable jungle of thorns with a quickness and ease quite wonderful. The skin of the animal is very tough, but at the same time very pliable, and is prized by the natives for making bags to hold flour, &c. The flesh is exceedingly good—the best venison I am acquainted with.

A party of sportsmen, in the autumn, when driving the hill-sides for pheasants, frequently bag one or two kakur in the course of the

day. A charge of shot, lodged well forward, will double up the little fellow, bounding past within twenty yards, as effectually as any bullet. I have known this animal ascend our hills to a height of 10,000 feet; but hills of far less altitude are its usual resort. It requires a neat ball-shot to drop him, especially when bounding off. I once made a right and left rifle-shot at two kakur; I came suddenly upon them, feeding in a ravine, within a dozen yards or so, and, as they ascended the opposite bank, fired, dropping both, one dead and the other unable to rise to its feet again.

The paharies catch these animals in nooses set on the edges of their fields, where they come out to feed at night. I have often seen kakur browsing on the borders of tea plantations, especially where the cleared patches of ground for growing the tea plant are away from buildings and the noise of men. I have never yet seen a kakur thoroughly tamed, though, doubtless, when caught young it may be reared. The time of gestation with the female is five and a-half months. The usual food of the creature is fresh grass, the young shoots of shrubs and bushes, and it will also descend at night from the hills and graze on young corn.

Jerdon, when speaking of the Indian marten, observes 'that that animal is said sometimes to make the young of the kakur deer its food.' I firmly believe that the above is a correct statement, from an occurrence that happened when I was encamped at a place called Sunkot, in the Himalayas, in the autumn of 1869. Unfortunately I did not myself witness the affair I am about to relate; but my servants, on my return one evening from shooting, informed me that, about mid-day three of them, according to custom, were cooking their food on the bank of a stream within 100 yards of the tent; that, while so occupied, they saw a young kakur on the opposite side of the water, closely pursued by four or five martens or 'tuturalas,' as natives call them. The fawn—for by their description the deer was little more than half-grown—appeared to be much distressed, as if it had been long hunted; and while the group of animals, pursuers and pursued, were in sight, they saw the martens spring up several times at the throat of the kakur. Two of the men, my bearer and a chuprassie, gave chase, but lost sight of the animals in the thick bushes. I am convinced that this account was correct, for the men could have had no possible object in concocting such a story, and were eager to relate the occurrence to me directly I returned from shooting.

The kakur is the smallest antlered deer that I have ever met with.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MUSK DEER (*Moschus moschiferus*).

‘Together graze two deer, from one proceeds
Pure fragrant musk.’—ANVĀR-Ī-SUHAILĪ.

DESCRIPTION.

The smallest of Himalayan four-footed game. The body is rather heavily formed, and the animal stands rather high on its legs.

Extreme Length.—From 3 to 3½ feet.

Height.—About 2 feet.

General Colour.—Like many other Himalayan quadrupeds, the colour of the musk deer's coat varies much in different localities, and is consistent with the season of the year. Those that I have examined in the autumn months, shot in Upper Gurhwal, have been of a rather dark grey tint on the upper part of the body tinged with brown, and grizzled here and there with dingy white. Darker over the hind quarters, beneath altogether paler, and whitish inside the limbs.

Ears.—Rather large and erect; dark externally, white inside.

Head.—Rather long, of an iron grey colour. Without horns. The canine tusks project downwards from the upper jaw; they are slender, slightly curved, and very sharp. Both sexes have tusks, but those of the female are smaller.

Limbs.—Slender and wiry; the feet delicate and very pointed.

Tail.—Very short.

The winter coat is a strong, bristly description of brittle, coarse hair, which has not a particle of gloss about it. Nor does it lie smooth, but appears to be in a rough semi-erect state at all seasons of the year.

THIS timid and much persecuted little animal, formerly so plentiful on the tops of our Himalayan range, is now scarce, and in many remote parts has been altogether exterminated. I have only met with it occasionally when shooting thar on very high ground, and have generally come across it in some out-of-the-way spot when least expected. It is a particularly hardy animal, and is little affected by cutting blasts, severe frosts, and drifting snows of winter, remaining on

the higher grounds after other creatures have been forced below by the weather. I never have seen more than two at a time, and generally only one. I have met with it as high up as 14,000 and as low as 7,000 feet, according to the season of the year. Once I came on one lying basking in the sun, apparently asleep, and missed him clean, within fifty yards, as he bounded off; but the animal is a small mark for a bullet even when standing, and when leaping down the hill-side is one of the most difficult rifle shots.

The musk-pod is found in the male only, and very often even he has none. It is contained in a small kind of gland situated under the abdomen. The musk, from which the well-known perfume is extracted, is of a brown colour, and the scent is very powerful. It is a common occurrence for natives at our hill-stations to offer musk-pods for sale, especially to strangers; but generally speaking only about one-quarter of the mixture in each pod shown as musk is really so, and the remainder is simply rubbish. However small an amount of musk, even a few grains, may be placed in the pod, it is quite sufficient to scent the whole, and the natives are so clever at copying the true article that it requires experience to detect the adulteration.

To obtain this pod, the poor creature is continually hunted and snared by professional poachers, who live the whole year through in out-of-the-way spots below the snows, trapping musk deer, pheasants, and other game. I have often come across a line of these snares, which are generally set in the following manner. Having selected a piece of ground frequented by the 'kustoorá,'—as he is called by the natives,—the hunters, or rather poachers, set to work making a hedge, generally down a spur of the mountains. This hedge often extends for a mile and more, and constructing one is a work of great time and labour. The men first mark the spots for a noose to be set where musk deer are in the habit of passing, for they very frequently, like many animals, use the same path: here a gap is left in the hedge which is made about three feet high, and very thick at the bottom, so that nothing can force its way through. The trap set at each opening is what most schoolboys are acquainted with, made by a stiff switch or binder bent down, with a strong twine noose attached to the end. The binder is kept in its place by a contrivance so devised that when touched by a musk deer's foot it is released and springs up, the animal being caught, generally round one of its legs, by the noose. The foolish little creature, when crossing from one hill to another, on being stopped by

a hedge, instead of leaping over, as it is fully capable of doing with ease, follows the line, looking for a gap to pass through, and presently attempts a passage where the fatal noose is ready awaiting it. Hundreds are killed annually in this way, and I know of numerous spots where, years ago, when I first visited the hills, musk deer were often to be seen hopping about; now, through poachers having been continually at work, there is not one.

The musk deer on being started bounds away, bringing all four feet to the ground at once, and after proceeding a certain distance generally halts to have a look back, offering a fair though small mark, and is very easily missed. The animal will bound down the side of a precipice with extraordinary ease. If I had not witnessed many times the truly wonderful manner in which the creature will descend the face of a cliff, I could hardly have believed it possible.

The musk deer gives a hiss when frightened, very similar in sound to the alarm note of the gooral. The dung of these animals, in spots frequented by them, may be seen collected seemingly for years and years, and smells strongly of musk.

The flesh is justly considered exceedingly good for the table, and there is no perceptible taste of musk, as might be imagined, in the flavour of the venison.

I have several times started the musk deer when beating the tops of the hills for moonal pheasants. One day I had placed myself behind a rock on the face of a slope covered with rhododendrons and other shrubs, and sent three boys—sons of a shepherd—round, to try and drive some old moonal cocks down to me, for they were too cunning to be stalked, and this was the only chance. The boys showed themselves several hundred yards above me, and came down in a line; presently I heard one of them shout out that a musk deer was coming towards me; and then I heard the measured thump, thump, thump of the creature as it brought its four legs each time to the ground. The kustoora crossed the path in which I was standing about twenty yards from me, with one of its flying bounds, and received a charge of No. 3 (I only had my shot gun), which rolled it over. My setter, usually speaking steady enough till told to move, was sitting at my feet, but this was too much for him; he sprang down the hill, and got so much in my way that I could not fire a second barrel, which probably would have been a settler. The deer recovered its feet, went down a decline which was too steep for me to follow, and eventually escaped. To complete

my misfortunes, while caught in a thick bush, and struggling to follow the animal, four old cock moonal whizzed down close overhead, without my getting a shot at one of them. When my dog came slinking back, well knowing that he had misbehaved, a tuft of hair in his mouth showed that he had been very close on to the chase.

Jerdon mentions that the 'young of the musk deer are spotted with white.' I was unaware of this.

CHAPTER XXII.

NIL-GAI, OR NYL-GHAU (*Portax Pictus*).

‘Antelopes in jungles shelter.’—FREILIGRATH.

DESCRIPTION OF MALE.

Extreme Length.—From $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 feet.

Height.—From 13 to 14 hands.

Head.—Rather long, and narrow at the muzzle.

Ears.—Broad and open.

Neck.—Thick and short.

Shoulders.—High.

Limbs.—Rather short and thick.

Feet.—Large; the print much resembling that of the sambar.

Tail.—Long for an antelope, perhaps averaging about 2 feet in length, with a tuft of coarse dark hair at the extremity.

Horns.—Black, smooth, apart at the base, and tapering to rather sharp points; the tips projecting slightly forward. The horns of a full-grown animal measure 7 or 8 inches in length: I have seen a pair which measured $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Colour.—General tint, deep iron grey; darker under the fore part of the body. The legs almost black, excepting two horizontal white marks, divided by a black bar, between the fetlocks and hoofs. There are two whitish spots on the cheeks below the eyes. A short dark-coloured mane runs along the neck and ridge of hump, and from the front of the neck, about half-way down, there is a pendant tuft of dark hair, some 6 or 8 inches in length. Above this tuft, directly under the throat, is a patch of white, narrow above, broad below. At the back part of the hind quarters there is a broad blaze of white, extending downwards, inside the thighs, to nearly the centre of the abdomen.

The female is altogether smaller than her consort, weighing, I should say, fully a third less. Her general colour is pale reddish brown; she has no horns.

THE Nil-gai is by far the largest of our Indian antelopes. I am not sure, but believe it to be peculiar to Hindustan. It certainly is not found in Africa.

The meaning of the Hindustani ‘nil-gai’ is ‘blue ox.’ Without

doubt the animal is a true antelope, but it is vain attempting to convince a Hindoo that such is the case. His religion forbids him to slay a cow; it is one of the greatest crimes he can commit; and he will persist to the last in asserting that the nil-gai belongs to the cow, and not to the antelope tribe.

Antelopes, generally speaking, are most elegant and graceful creatures in appearance, but the nil-gai is an exception; his limbs are thick, massive, and short in proportion to the body; and his gallop is awkward in the extreme. The animal does not—as has been asserted—frequent thick forest, but is generally to be found in bush jungle, or low rocky hills covered with scrub, thicket, and stunted babul bushes; also in high grass. It is occasionally found on the lower ranges of the Himalayas, but does not ascend to any great height. One was shot many years ago in the Mussoorie park; but it is exceptional to hear of the creature in such altitudes. In the Central Provinces, especially in the Saugor country, also in the Lullutpore and Jhansie districts, the nil-gai is exceedingly common, generally in small herds, but I have seen as many as seventeen together; these were all females. Few sportsmen care to hunt or search for the nil-gai, as there is little pleasure or sport in the pursuit. He (for only the male is worth firing at) is generally speaking easily stalked, and offers a fair mark, hardly to be missed. Unless struck in a vital part, however, he will make off, being most tenacious of life. I have known an old blue bull escape though wounded in four places.

When beating the jungles for samber in the Lullutpore district, we usually took our shot at a blue bull if he came by, but never went out specially in search of him. A friend of mine, a noted hog-hunter, has ridden and speared nil-gai repeatedly; but it takes a really good horse and a good rider to accomplish such a feat, especially if the ground is rocky and uneven.

The nil-gai, like many other antelopes, and also certain of the deer tribe, is in the habit of daily visiting certain bare spots, and dropping its dung there.

The creature is easily tamed and reared, if caught when young. I have seen a pair trot well in harness; and, frequently, two or three tame ones are allowed to wander about our Indian cantonments, where at night they commit fearful havoc in the vegetable gardens of the residents. The leather from the hide of a blue bull is of value, on account of its toughness, for gaiters and boots, and the skin is always

worth sending to the tan-yard. Tigers not unfrequently prey on the nil-gai; and it has numerous other enemies, such as leopards and wild dogs.

The nil-gai feeds chiefly on the young shoots of certain bushes and shrubs; among others the babul; is especially fond of the mowah berry, like nearly all the antelopes and deer tribe. At night it visits the corn-fields anywhere near the jungle; and if left uninterrupted, soon commits havoc with a crop. I once, when out with my rifle, saw a blue bull standing up on his hind legs, with the fore feet resting against the stem of a tree, a position goats often adopt, to reach an extra tempting sprout on a high branch, I suppose. The call of the nil-gai somewhat resembles that of the samber, but the note is shorter and sharper.

One evening, in the hot weather of 1872, I was returning with my friend H——s on foot through some bush jungle; we had been unlucky on that particular day, for we had driven the whole of the neighbouring hills unsuccessfully; not that game had not been found, but, as is often the case, things had gone wrong. Two stag samber had broken back through the beaters, and other creatures had escaped from one cause or another; perhaps, moreover, the powder had not been very straight. We were several miles from our camp, and the sun had set some little time, so that it was nearly dark. My companion was leading the way along a narrow footpath, with his rifle over his shoulder. We were skirting the bottom of a hill, when a clattering of hoofs and a crash through the bushes drew immediate attention to a dark moving object on the side of the hill. My friend, as quick as thought, took a hasty aim and fired. We both fancied that we heard the thud of the bullet against the hide of some animal, and the noise of retreating hoofs ceased altogether at the shot. In company with several natives we ran forward to have a look round. There was not a breath of air, and everything was still. We searched about, blundering and tripping over rocks and stones in the darkness, but could find nothing. I was about to remark that we had better give it up, when I was startled by a deep sigh, and there at my feet lay a large blue bull, that had just breathed its last. The bullet had passed through the lower part of the neck where it joins the shoulder, a very fatal spot.

This animal, in addition to the term 'Nyl-ghau' or 'Nil-gai,' is also called 'Roz' in some parts of the North-Western Provinces.



THE BLACK BUCK.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE INDIAN BLACK BUCK, OR SASIN ANTELOPE (*Antelope bezoartica*).

'Our sands are bare, but down their slope
The silvery-footed antelope
As gracefully and gaily springs
As o'er the marble courts of kings.'—*Lalla Rookh*.

THE Indian antelope, the male of which is the well-known 'black buck,' is in appearance a most noble, graceful creature. Among the numerous African antelopes there is not one, in my opinion, superior to an old Indian black buck in beauty and elegance. The male stands about two and a-half to two and three-quarter feet at the shoulder, and about four and a-half feet in length, including the tail. The body

is well-rounded and beautifully proportioned. The horns, in colour black, are spiral, making three or four turns, with rings at short intervals from the base to within two or three inches of the tips, which are smooth; the points often very sharp; the average length perhaps from seventeen to nineteen inches. The latter would be counted a good pair. It is not uncommon to kill a buck with horns of twenty-two inches, and occasionally a pair of twenty-three and twenty-four inches. The latter, however, is exceptional. At different times I have slain over 200 black bucks, and the horns of only one among them reached twenty-five inches fairly measured; but I must confess luck has not smiled on me in this respect.

Many a time, on walking up to a fine old buck just rolled over by a rifle bullet, I have said to myself, 'Well, here are horns over the twenty-five inches at any rate;' but the measuring-tape, on being fairly applied, has once more proved that I was mistaken. I once saw a buck brought in that had been shot by a brother officer, the horns of which very nearly reached twenty-six inches; and many years ago I saw at Agra a very old pair, exactly one inch longer than the above. They were just under twenty-seven inches.

Very old bucks are of a deep glossy black down the spine, and brown at the back of the head and neck. In old patriarchs the face is often quite grizzled with age; the haunch is also brown; a patch of white extends round the eyes and under the chin; the eyes are large and prominent; the belly, as also down the inside of the legs, pure white. Young bucks at first are of a light yellow, similar to the females, which tint gradually deepens to a rich brown, and about the third year they become really entitled to be called 'black bucks.'

In none of the ruminantia is the distinction of sex more marked, in external appearance, than in the Sasin antelope. The female is rather smaller than her lord, and her coat is of a sober tint in comparison with his. She is of a pale yellow above, with a light streak along each side of the body; the ears of both sexes are long. The female has rarely more than one young one at a time: she has no horns.

Some pairs of bucks' horns differ much from others. I remember a standing joke we had against a youngster who bagged a buck with what he thought an extraordinary pair; it turned out, however, that the tips had been sawn off, and that the animal, when shot, had only been wild a few days, having escaped from a native's house.

Some horns are very thick at the base, with rings very strongly

marked, and diverging at a broad angle. In my opinion these are the handsomest; and I noticed that in the Saugor country horns of that description were common. Others only diverge slightly, and at the tips are but a short distance apart. The length of horns is not always a criterion of age; I have seen them of unusual length in quite young bucks, and *vice versa*; nor can the age after the first few years be ascertained by the number of twists or curves. The animals not unfrequently break their horns when fighting.

In certain parts of India antelopes are very numerous, generally where there are large grassy plains. I was once quartered at Allyghur, a well-known part of the country for black bucks, and where I had many opportunities of watching them and studying their habits. I have occasionally seen herds there of two or three hundred, but nowhere else, though I have been informed by sportsmen from other provinces that they have seen upwards of a thousand in one herd. It is not the custom of these animals, even when much hunted and fired at, to leave certain tracts, or to wander far away to other haunts; the same herd will be found again and again within certain limits, perhaps a radius of a few miles. They never migrate like the spring bucks of Africa, nor do they ever congregate in such enormous numbers. I have frequently seen five or six herds on one plain, and if alarmed by a rifle shot, they would not join together, but make off in distinct parties. The does are much more numerous than the bucks, and an old buck immediately attacks and drives away another of his own sex who attempts to intrude himself on his select party.

During the heat of the day they retire into high grass, standing crops, or sugar-cane, and lie down, coming out to feed again in the evening, and grazing all night. If the sun is not very powerful, however, they will often be found reclining in the open plains. The early morning is the best time to look for them, when they will probably be found feeding on the crops. Unless much bullied and shot at, it is generally not a difficult matter to approach within rifle-range of a herd; but a sportsman, to be successful, must be an accurate judge of distance, and it should be his object not to hit the animal somewhere in the body, but in a vital part, so as to drop him dead. There are many who hardly ever do this, but break the limbs, and often through bad shooting allow the unfortunate beast to escape wounded, only to become the prey of wolves and jackals or die a lingering death.

With the exception of the chikarah, and one or two others, I am not

acquainted with an animal more tenacious of life than our Indian antelope. I have known a buck struck with three bullets, two of them having passed through the body, give a long chase before being run down. And a friend writes, 'I once hit a buck four times with round bullets from a 17-gauge rifle. These bullets formed a triangle about four inches on each side, close behind the centre of the shoulder, the fourth went through the kidneys, after which the buck ran nearly or quite a mile.' As for a buck with a broken fore-leg, unless you have a greyhound or some other description of fast dog ready to let slip, or a good horse close at hand, you are no nearer your object than if you had missed the mark altogether. I have more than once seen a buck with a broken fore-leg fairly beat a well-mounted rider, and make good his escape. I once had a horse that would allow me to rest my rifle on the saddle without moving, which was a great advantage, for not only did it enable me to take a steady aim, but I had only to throw my leg over the saddle if it was necessary to pursue the quarry. A dog trained for the purpose, even a common pariah, such as one that I had at Allyghur, is of great use for retrieving wounded bucks. This animal, rejoicing in the name of 'Tiger,' always accompanied me on my expeditions after antelopes. One of my servants followed about 200 yards in rear with the dog held by a slip; if, after firing my shot, it was apparent that my bullet had reached the mark, and I held up my hat, it was the signal to 'chor do,' or 'let go.' It was wonderful to see how quickly the sagacious brute would single out the stricken creature from a large herd. If I had missed, he would speedily return to heel, knowing well how useless it was for him to attempt the chase of an unwounded antelope. Though of no great speed, he had an untiring pace, and in the end was generally successful. This dog had only one fault, I am afraid rather a bad one; if my nag and I were not pretty close up when he pulled down the buck, he often tore a hole in the body where the bullet had made an entrance or exit.

A hog spear is a useful weapon for a horseman pursuing a wounded buck. Sometimes a sportsman, by taking advantage of a clump of bushes or patch of grass, can approach very close to a herd for his shot, but often enough the antelopes are on the level plain with no cover anywhere near. If so, he should dismount at some little distance, carry his rifle concealed as much as possible on the side away from the herd, and gradually circle round at a leisurely pace in the direction of the antelopes, never looking at nor appearing to notice them but from the

corner of his eye, marking the buck with the best pair of horns. Probably the creatures, if lying down, will, as the sportsman approaches, rise up one by one—the old buck is the last to rouse and stretch himself—and, suspecting danger, gaze intently with ears pricked up at the object of their distrust. Having decided on a victim, he should edge round till within range, 130 or 150 yards perhaps; then, gradually slackening his pace—not suddenly stopping, or the creatures may take to flight—let him pause, bring the sights to bear, and slowly draw the trigger. He will probably get a second barrel as the antelopes bound away across the plain, but it requires much practice to be successful at running shots of this description. He should never fire into the ruck should the antelopes make off in a cluster; it is very often done, but is most unsportsmanlike. If a buck has fallen to his shot, let the sportsman reload, and in advancing to despatch a living animal by cutting its throat, let him be careful never to approach within reach of the hind leg, even when the creature is to all appearance stone dead. (I remember a native many years ago being severely hurt by the dying kick of a black buck.) He should walk up quietly, and seize firmly with his left hand the root of one of the horns, turn the points down, and if the poor brute has still life in it, put an end to its sufferings as speedily as possible with his hunting-knife.

Mounted on a good Arab horse, a gallop across country after a wounded buck, with a dog to assist in the chase, is an exciting pursuit; but the sportsman, in such districts as Agra and Allyghur, should beware of yawning dry wells, found all over that part of the country, as they are most dangerous. These wells are dug by the villagers to cultivate their fields; and there is nothing above ground to warn a man riding fast of the danger in front till he suddenly finds himself on the brink of a dry well, often too late to pull up and save himself from being precipitated to the bottom. One of our native officers at Allyghur, a tough old Pathan, mounted on a sturdy nag, and riding after a buck my Commandant had wounded, fell headlong down one of these fearful traps, horse and all, and, wonderful to relate, was extricated without having broken a bone or injured himself materially, though he was naturally much bruised and cut about. He was, however, one of the most wiry, tough men I ever came across, but how he escaped so easily is a wonder.

A buck, if severely wounded, nearly always separates from the herd. Sometimes, if without horse and dog, it is better to watch him without

being seen yourself, instead of following him up. A rising piece of ground, for instance, should be taken advantage of, and your telescope brought into play. The poor brute will direct his steps probably to the nearest cover, such as a patch of sugar-cane or high grass; do not move till he has disappeared, for before entering he will be sure to take a final look round to see if enemies are following him; and should he catch sight of you, he will once more break into a trot, instead of lying down as he had intended, and likely enough make his escape if you cannot keep him in sight, or at any rate give you much additional trouble. If, however, you succeed in marking him down, do not be in a hurry to go near. If he has entered a patch of thick jungle or cane, do not go in yourself, or probably when in the densest part you will hear a crash as the animal jumps up and makes off, but will not be able to see him, and by the time you again reach the other side he may be out of shot. The better plan is to wait till your attendants join you; instruct them to give you time to reach the far side of the cover, and then to beat in a line towards you. Probably the buck will jump up and come out near you, giving a broadside shot. I have known wounded antelopes lie very close indeed before they would move and show themselves. It is not usually the buck that is on the look-out for danger, but, generally speaking, an old doe who gives the alarm on the approach of the sportsman: she, after gazing steadily at him for some time as he gradually approaches, and impatiently stamping her feet, comes to the conclusion that he is up to no good, and sets the example to the remainder of the herd by making off at a sharp trot; the others follow in a long string, then one after the other, with curved backs and heads lowered, they commence a series of prodigious springs and bounds, a beautiful sight to behold. The old black buck, having first taken care to complete his select party by driving them together and in doing so gallantly facing the danger, generally follows last of all, and if the stalker is then within even a long shot, he should not delay, but fire at once. Sometimes the herd, after proceeding a short distance, slacken their pace gradually and halt, to have another look at the intruder they suspect; but more often, after bounding in the manner I have described, they quicken their pace, settle down to a slashing gallop, and speedily disappear. Sometimes, instead of a noble old black buck and his twenty does or more, the sportsman comes across a small lot of young males: unless in want of flesh, however, he passes on.

I should be afraid to say the extent of ground I have heard on good authority that an antelope has been known to cover at a single bound, but it was something wonderful, and almost past belief, and the African term 'spring buck' might with justice be applied to our species. And this reminds me that I have seen it stated that the Sasin or Indian antelope is to be found in certain parts of Africa: it is a mistake, for the animal is found in Asia only, and I believe is restricted to Hindustan, though I am not positive about Persia.

When at full speed the pace of this creature surpasses that of any quadruped with which I am acquainted, and only under most exceptional circumstances is an unwounded, full-grown buck ever pulled down by greyhounds. I have seen the attempt made over and over again, hundreds of times I might say, but never once with success. On the plains of our North-Western Provinces, or in the Deccan, I do not believe it to be possible, but on heavy sand or boggy ground, occasionally (especially in the rains, when blown out with grass and out of condition), a buck may be run down. This antelope trusts almost entirely to sight for protection, though doubtless the sense of smell also in some measure warns it of danger, and the size of ears which nature has bestowed shows also that the sense of hearing must be keen.

Single bucks are usually, I think, easier to stalk successfully than several collected together. If the sportsman finds a herd on the alert, and likely to take to flight before he is able to get within rifle shot, it is a good plan for him to drop behind a bush or clump of grass, and let his syce advance leading his horse, not going too close, however, but simply drawing off the attention of the game, and thus enabling his master to make a successful stalk from another direction. I have practised this manœuvre successfully many a time.

The animal, if taken when young, is easily reared and becomes quite tame; but a buck, as he gets old, and his horns grow, is a troublesome and dangerous pet. I remember a grasscutter at Benares being badly hurt, and a syce at Mozuffernugger, lying asleep on a charpoy (or native bedstead), was killed by a tame buck goring him in the side, for no apparent reason, and it was supposed in play.

At certain times of the year, about January and February, when the rutting season begins, the bucks may constantly be seen in pairs fighting, with their heads down and horns locked, pushing one another backwards and forwards. When thus engaged there is a good opportunity to make a rapid stalk in. I once got within thirty paces of a pair fighting in the

manner just described, not on the open plain, but in the bed of what had been a jheel or patch of water. The lake was now dry, and the mud at the bottom caked hard, and covered all over with cracks; and here, quite by themselves, these two champions were occupied in a desperate duel. There was a fringe of grass and rushes skirting the edge of the hollow pool, which I took advantage of, and, creeping up within close range, I knocked one over dead with the right barrel, and so severely wounded the other with the left that he went but a short distance.

When a buck has triumphed over an adversary and put him to flight, he generally follows up his success, and chases him all over the country; and I have more than once got capital shots by hiding and waiting till the pair passed within range. I have on three occasions dropped black bucks, seemingly stone dead, but only stunned for a few seconds by the bullet striking one of the horns. On two occasions the animals recovered themselves and made off. But once, near Agra, I bagged a very fine buck only struck on one horn by the bullet. I was out with a brother officer shooting quail; we had marked down a number of birds in a narrow strip of sugar-cane, and as the canes were too high and thick to walk through, and at the same time see to shoot, we placed ourselves on either side of one end of the patch and directed our beaters to commence at the other, form line, and walk towards us. I had brought my rifle with me, and a lad was standing close behind with the weapon over his shoulder. Almost immediately after the beaters had begun to drive the patch, I heard some animal come rushing through the cane towards us, and immediately changed my gun for the rifle, fully expecting to see an old boar break cover; but presently out bounded a splendid buck, with his horns carried well back over his shoulders. He came past at a great pace. Aiming well in front of the shoulder, I fired, when he fell to the shot, apparently quite dead. I reloaded, and then, in company with my friend, who had left his post to have a look at the game, walked slowly up. By the time we had come within a few yards of the antelope, he began to show signs of life, twice managed to raise himself on his knees, and fell back again. Instead of firing another shot, as I should have done, I put my rifle down and drew my hunting-knife; by that time he had gained his feet and was staggering away. I ran after him; he still further recovered himself, and it was only by a great effort that I succeeded in seizing him by a hind leg; he dragged me several yards, but at length I dropped my knife and got hold of the other leg, and just

as I did so, one of the beaters, with a tremendously thick bamboo-lathi or long club, in his hand, came to my assistance, and struck the poor buck a blow on the back of the head, that dropped it on the spot. On examination we found the mark of the lead about two inches from where the horns join the skull.

I have seen a buck with one horn wanting, the missing one having been knocked off its head by a bullet from the rifle of a brother officer. This animal, a particularly fine one, escaped, and we repeatedly saw him afterwards; but he had learnt a good lesson, and was so cunning, keeping out in the centre of a vast plain, that there was no chance of getting a shot at him again. During the heat of the day, antelopes often retire into grass or bush jungle and lie down; at such times they will crouch very closely indeed. One day I had marked down a floriken in a clump of grass, and had walked the patch through twice without flushing the bird. The third time I beat it, a black buck jumped up from under my very feet. Such a shot could hardly be resisted, and a charge of No. 5, at the back of the head, turned him over like a rabbit. Often when bird-shooting I have been startled by these animals suddenly jumping up in close vicinity.¹

When at Allyghur I once shot five bucks in a day, which was just four too many, and any tolerably steady rifle shot, by continually hunting the creatures, might have made a very large bag in that district; but though now and then I like having a day at antelopes, it is not a sport I am partial to, simply because there is so little difficulty in being successful. It is a pity to kill too many of such noble creatures. My Commandant, Colonel S—d, a giant Nimrod, was a great slayer of bucks; and, if I remember rightly, once, in a single day, killed eleven. However, if we had not shot a good many, I don't know how the villagers could have existed; the crops were often fed quite close off by hundreds of antelopes during the night. Moreover, our men were only too glad to get the flesh of those we shot, so none was wasted. The flesh is, in my opinion, at the best of times only tolerable,

¹ I am not aware that the common Indian antelope has any call or alarm hiss, to warn its comrades of approaching danger. When travelling by night and passing through a black-buck country, I have heard the males grunting close to the high road, and when a buck is paying court to the ladies of his harem, with nose in the air and tail on end he sidles up to some one of his favourites and accosts her with a deep, hoarse grunt. When struck by a bullet the buck also sometimes utters a harsh bellow—if it can be so called—and generally this is the sign of a severe wound.

and not to be compared to mutton. At certain periods of the year, however, the saddle of an old buck is well worth keeping. Black buck hams are also excellent when properly cured, and in flavour much resemble the mutton hams of Scotland.

It is astonishing how soon after their birth the young of this antelope are able to follow their parents, and in a few weeks distance any but swift dogs. The old doe cunningly hides her fawn when very young, hovering about in the vicinity. Many, however, fall a prey to wolves, jackals, foxes, eagles, and pariah dogs; the latter especially are very destructive to young antelopes. These village curs turn out in gangs, and systematically hunt through patches of cover, snapping up the young of antelopes, hares, &c. Infested as the country is with vermin of all kinds, the wonder is that many more do not fall victims.

In some districts antelopes are driven into nets and numbers destroyed, but this is not a general practice among the natives. As was natural when the railway was first made through the North-Western Provinces, the herds of antelopes grazing in the plains through which the line passed, were frightened out of their lives by the snorting iron horse. They, however, soon got quite accustomed to the noise and rattle of a passing train; and recently, when travelling through the Meerut and Allyghur districts, I saw large herds reclining quietly on the grass, and although the train passed within a few hundred yards of them, they did not even take the trouble to rise to their feet. My Commandant, Colonel S——d, shot bucks several times from off an engine, between Toondla and Koel, when the line was being made.

It is a common practice for sportsmen, especially young shikaries, to blaze away at herds of antelopes, on flat, level plains with long-range rifles, quite regardless of villages in the distance, their bullets ricocheting among poor people cutting their crops or cultivating their fields, or tending herds of cattle that are in the line of fire. I need hardly remark on the danger of such recklessness. I have known natives on three different occasions struck with bullets fired by too eager sportsmen; two of these unfortunates died from their wounds; one, a poor woman, was killed on the spot. Natives, when cutting a crop, are in the habit of squatting down, so that often their heads are below the level of the standing corn; and many a time I have been horrified, after taking a shot I thought safe enough, to see numerous black heads bob up, startled by the whizz of the bullet. Latterly I used nothing but rifle shells on these level plains, which

mitigated the danger to a great extent; for on making a miss the shell exploded on the ground, and the lead being blown into several irregular pieces, flew but for a short distance. It is the long, thin, solid, conical bullets—which spin across the plains for great distances—that are so unsafe. This description of bullet, moreover, so often fired from small-bore rifles, is most unsuited for shooting black buck. I have already mentioned how very tenacious of life the animal is; and on being struck by one of these small bullets, unless hit in a vital part, even when it passes right through the body, although the wound may be eventually mortal, as is usually the case, the animal is often capable of galloping many miles and escaping, only to be torn to pieces by jackals. Now had this same animal been struck by an express bullet or rifle shell, exactly in the same spot, he would probably have dropped in his tracks or been bagged at any rate without much trouble.

In the hot season, antelopes generally visit pools of water or rivers twice a day to drink and a shot may be got at them by lying in wait, for they nearly always follow the same path backwards and forwards. Once, in the Lullutpore district, I caught a herd returning from water, and made a satisfactory right and left. We, that is, myself and H——s, of the police, had come in from a march about 12 o'clock in the hot weather of 1871, and had sat down to breakfast in our shirt sleeves, our tents being pitched under a clump of trees on the banks of the Dassāun; presently a chuprassie came running in with news that he had just seen a herd of 'Haran' or antelopes come down the opposite bank of the river, only a few hundred yards from our tents. We were short of provisions, so catching up our rifles, ran out just as we were; on peeping down from the high bank of the river we saw some twenty or thirty antelopes drinking about 100 yards farther up on the opposite side. We hastily formed a plan: I was to cross over by some stepping-stones below, concealed from view by a curve in the river, climb up the opposite bank, and by a detour come round to a patch of bushes just above the spot where the creatures were. H——s was to take a shot from his side when I had reached my post, and probably I should get a chance as the animals made off. The plan succeeded exactly as we expected. H——s fired across; the herd ascended the bank by a steep path, and came past me within a dozen yards. One I rolled over directly he appeared on the top of the bank, and a second, as he passed at full speed, fell to a shot from the left barrel.

During the rainy season of 1864 a white buck was reported to have been seen on some plains a few miles from Allyghur. The poor brute had been driven from the Etah district, where naturally the unusual and unlucky colour of his coat drew attention to him in particular; he was lame, probably from a rifle bullet; and exceedingly wary, as well he might be. I had a good look at him through a pair of glasses on one occasion. He evidently was rather an old buck, but his coat, though much lighter than usual, was not white; and it turned out when he was shot, some time after I had seen him, that his skin was mangy and ill-conditioned, which accounted for his unusual appearance at a distance. Natives, especially Holy Brahmins, often asked me for buck skins. They use them for saying their prayers on.

All antelopes have eye-pits, or the infraorbital sinus, more or less developed; but in the black buck this hollow gland below the eye is very large, and when angry or excited the animal opens it wide. I noticed this at Allahabad: we had a tame buck tied to a peg in the compound, and one day a greyhound attacked the creature, or, at any rate, stood barking opposite him. The antelope lowered his horns, and it was then that I noticed this eye-pit distended in the manner I have described. When stuffing heads and removing the skin from the face in which there is a hollow in the skull, where the gland, about the size of a small chestnut, rests, I have noticed a strong, unpleasant smell arising from the eye-pit, and also a thick fluid discharge from it. I have never been able to come to a satisfactory conclusion, not being a good enough naturalist, to say for certain what use this gland is to the creature.

The reader probably is aware that no true follower of the prophet (Mahomed) can ever eat the flesh of any living creature—except of a fish, which they say has been already ‘hallaed’ by the Creator—that has not been despatched by himself or one of his creed. ‘Hal lal karna’ the operation is termed by the Mahomedans; and while the knife is being used at the throat of the unfortunate animal, it is necessary, while the victim is yet alive, to pronounce the word ‘Bismillah,’ or ‘In the name of God,’ and the flesh is then rendered fit for food; but an animal that has once breathed its last before being despatched by the knife is ‘Harām’ or unlawful, and of no use whatever to a Mahomedan. This rule, however, is by no means strictly kept or acted upon.

Often when stationed at Allyghur, and starting for a day’s black-

buck shooting, I took one or two of my servants out with me to carry home an antelope for their own dinners, if fortune favoured us. I made a practice of giving the slain animals alternately to Hindoos and Mahomedans, to prevent jealousy or ill-feeling between the two sects. When it was the turn of the Mussulman to receive a buck, my 'bheestie' (water-carrier) generally accompanied me with his knife to perform the 'Hal lal;' his name was Khan Mahomed, and he was a very good servant, and was looked upon as a genuine follower of the prophet. Nevertheless, not once or twice, but I might say over a dozen times, I have been amused at the cunning displayed by this man, and the easy manner with which he broke through the laws of his religion as laid down in the Koran. If I fired at a buck, and the ball happened to strike it in the head or neck, so that it dropped dead on the spot, the flesh was *ipso facto* rendered unfit for a Mahomedan, as already explained; but my bheestie was not in the habit of being too particular on this point, so long as he imagined that I was ignorant as to the true state of affairs, and had not observed that the antelope dropped lifeless. He would often run up and, in spite of the buck being stone dead, cut the animal's throat, and pronounce the 'Bismillah,' as if everything was quite correct and in form. If, however, I walked forward, and there could be no doubt that I must have perceived the true state of affairs—with a sigh he would remark 'Kismat-kee-bât' ('It is fate'). So, to prevent any difficulty of this kind, when I had an idea that a buck had fallen dead, I loitered behind and pretended to be occupied in re-loading, all the time, however, watching the Khan's movements. With a glance over his shoulder, to make sure that I was not observing him too closely, he would commence hacking at the dead animal's throat, and muttering, at the same time, the authorised prayer.

When I was yet a 'Griffin,' and stationed at Agra many years ago, I incurred the displeasure of my Commandant, Colonel S——d, through quite unintentionally leading astray one of the Mahomedan native officers of the regiment, a sturdy little Soubahdar, whose name I cannot recall to mind, but with whom I was on good terms. In those times I was unacquainted with the religious customs and ways of the natives, having hitherto been attached to European corps. One day I had been out with my rifle and shot two ravine deer, and with my own hand put the animals out of their misery, in the usual manner with my hunting-knife. On returning to our encampment I sent one of the prizes with my compliments to my friend the Soubahdar,

who accepted the present without asking any questions—for very good reasons of his own, I suspect—how the animal had come to its end. That evening at mess I casually informed my Commandant how I had disposed of one of the ravine bucks. Colonel S——d inquired if they had been ‘Hal lalled.’ ‘Oh, yes,’ I innocently made answer, ‘for I performed the operation myself.’ I remember that I received a severe lecture for my pains, for my commanding officer was exceedingly particular in matters of this kind. He told me that I was not fit to command a ‘naick (corporal) and four.’



THE CHIKARAH, OR INDIAN GAZELLE. MALE AND FEMALE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CHIKARAH, OR INDIAN GAZELLE (*Gazella Bennettii*).

I never nurs'd a dear gazelle,
To glad me with its soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well
And love me, it was sure to die.—*Lalla Rookh*.

THIS beautiful and harmless creature is very common in certain localities of India, but not nearly so widespread over the country as the black buck. Its prominent, soft, dark eye proclaims it at once as belonging to the genus *Gazelle*. The average height of four fine bucks measured at Jhansie, was as nearly as possible two feet. Extreme length about four feet. The general colour of the coat is pale reddish-

brown but some are much lighter in tint than others, more of a sandy hue, and exactly resembling in shade the desert country so often the favourite haunt of the animal itself. The chest, belly, and part between hind quarters, are white. There is a dark brown mark on the face, extending from the corner of the eye to the corner of the mouth; also a dark mark on the bridge of the nose; remainder of face, light brown. Old animals are often quite grizzled from age on the upper part of the face. Tail, long and black. Ears, long in proportion to the size of the animal; open, and pointed. The limbs are slender in the extreme. Both sexes have horns; those of the male generally average about eleven or twelve inches in length. From over a hundred bucks that I have shot at different times, only one pair measured over fourteen inches: it was a splendid pair, and reached fourteen and a third inches.

Like the black buck, the horns of the Indian gazelle vary much in curve, divergence, and thickness.

The gazelle of Syria, Arabia, and other countries of Western Asia (*Antelope Dorcas*), though much resembling the Indian chikarah in general appearance, has yet one or two peculiarities in the shape and curve of the horns, sufficient to distinguish it from the latter. The horns of the male Dorcas Gazelle are considerably curved, slope back over the neck of the animal, and curve inwards at the tips; whereas those of the buck chikarah are straighter, and have little slant to the rear, but rise nearly erect from the summit of the forehead.

I have two fine pairs of ravine bucks' horns; the rings are twenty-one in number, and the horns are three-and-three-quarter inches apart at the tips; on the other are nineteen rings, and they are very nearly the same distance from tip to tip. The points of the first, however, curve forward more than those of the second.

The female resembles her mate very much in colour, but is smaller; and her horns are quite different in shape and size. I have a fine pair; they are six-and-a-quarter inches in length, which is unusually long. One horn often differs from the other in curve. They do not incline so much forward as those of the buck, and they are also much closer, within an inch apart at the points in this particular specimen.¹

The little ravine deer is a regular bush-loving antelope, and much resembles a wild goat in its appearance and habits; hence the name of

¹ See figures at the head of this chapter.

'goat antelope' in some parts of the country. It roams in small herds on broken ground, especially on the sides of large rivers, where the banks are high and much broken up into ravines and gullies. In Bundelkund, the chikarah is far more common than the black buck, especially in the Jhansie district, where I have seen more gazelles, and in larger herds, than anywhere else. They frequent low hills covered with bush and grass, especially in the neighbourhood of cultivation. The chikarah, as regards feeding on the crops of the natives, is not so mischievous as the common antelope. It prefers various kinds of weeds to young corn, and I have often observed it browsing on the young leaves of various bushes, such as the acacia; it feeds later than the common antelope, and is of a more restless disposition. In former years there were great numbers within a few miles of Agra, on the banks of the Jumna. I shot over forty in that neighbourhood in the cold weather of 1863. In the Saugor and Jubbulpore country this graceful little creature abounds, also in Rewah and Bandah; in Gwalior and Lullutpore the animal is often found, and generally in dry, burnt-up ravines, frequently far away from water. I have never met with it, nor do I believe the chikarah inhabits Bengal, Assam, Sylhet, Cachar, or any part of the Eastern frontier.

Stalking ravine deer is a favourite amusement among English sportsmen. I myself much prefer the sport to shooting black buck. The country inhabited by the former is generally undulating and broken, and there is not the sameness of the dead level plain on which herds of the common antelope roam. Moreover, where much hunted, the little chikarah becomes exceedingly difficult to approach, and the sportsman to be successful will have to work hard to obtain a shot. When he does get a chance, it is a small mark to aim at. I have already spoken of the extraordinary tenacity of life shown by the gazelle, more so than by any creature I have ever met with, not excepting even the common antelope. It is very swift, far too much so for any description of dog; and does not bound like the common antelope. The females are more numerous than the males, but not to the same extent as with the Sasin species. I once counted twenty-three in one herd near Jhansie; to see so many together, however, was exceptional, though it was not unusual in a day's sport to come across a herd of ten or twelve; nowhere but in the Jhansie district have I seen so many collected together.

Like other antelopes, the little ravine deer has many enemies besides

man. One day, when out with my rifle, I noticed an old female gazelle, with a fawn, stamping her feet, and every now and then making that peculiar 'hiss' which is the alarm-note of the animal. It was not I that was the cause of her terror, for I had passed close to her only a few minutes before, and she seemed to understand by my manner that I meant no harm. No, there was something else. I turned back, and on looking down a ravine close by, saw a crafty wolf attempting a stalk on the mother and young one. I tried to cut the rascal off; but he was very wide-awake and made off, a bullet sent after him only quickening his pace.

Another day, at Agra, a pair of jackals joined in the chase of a wounded buck, an account of which may perhaps interest the reader. Early one morning in February 1863, I had crossed the Jumna by the bridge of boats, and having ridden a couple of miles up the side of the railway, turned off to the right, making for the banks of the river, where I knew chikarah were to be found, although only three miles from, and in sight of, the Taj Mahal and the city of Agra. I had left the fort before dawn of day, and reached my ground just as the sun rose above the horizon. Within half an hour I got two shots, and bagged a young buck feeding in a field; then a long three hours with no luck, although several chikarah were seen. On the way back to where I had left my horse under a tree, a fine buck suddenly jumped up out of a nullah, and scrambled up the opposite bank: just as he reached the level plain above a ball from my rifle struck him. It was aimed for the shoulder, but took effect too far back; he fell, but recovered himself, and made off; my second shot, a very bad chance, missed. Having reloaded, I followed him up; for some time I kept him in sight, but at length came to a mass of ravines, and was just too late, on rounding a corner, to see which one he had taken. I had then to trust to the spoor, and followed the tiny footprints of the poor little creature for several hundred yards. Presently, on coming out into more open ground, I was surprised to see a pair of jackals in front, with their noses down, evidently following the same chase that I was engaged in. Instead of sticking to the spoor, I now kept the pair in view until I lost sight of them; but having again taken up the tracks of the wounded chikarah and advanced about two hundred yards or so, I suddenly, on rounding a corner, came upon the jackals worrying the unfortunate creature, which they had already much torn. On hearing my steps and looking up, they slunk

off sulkily, and having retired about fifty yards, sat down, as if not yet despairing of obtaining a share in the spoil. I was very nearly tempted to take a shot, but threw a stone at them instead, and they speedily disappeared. They evidently, from their lair among the nullahs, had seen the chikarah come past, and observed his tottering steps; or, still more likely, had smelt his blood and followed him up.

I have already alluded to the extraordinary speed of the black buck. The little chikarah, in proportion to his size, is hardly less swift of foot; and, moreover, the rocky broken ground which he frequents favours his escape from greyhounds, and makes it difficult, often impossible, for the horseman to follow him.

I have never been stationed in our Northern Punjab, but have been informed that the natives in that part of the country are in the habit of hunting the ravine deer with dogs (often Persian greyhounds), assisted by a large kind of falcon. The latter so hinders the progress of the gazelle by striking it in the face with its wings and talons, and persisting in stooping at it, that the animal becomes perplexed, and makes so many turns to avoid the one enemy, that at length he falls into the jaws of the other. Jerdon describes this mode of hunting as follows: 'The gazelle is occasionally hunted by dogs with the aid of the Saker falcon (*Falco Cherrug*), which strikes the antelope on the head and confuses it, so that the dogs come up and catch it. Without this aid dogs have very little chance, though now and then I have known one pulled down.'

Once only have I seen a ravine deer run down by a greyhound, and then the course was not a fair one. It happened thus. One evening during the rains at Jhansie, in company with two friends, I started for a walk across country; one of my companions had a fine English greyhound following him. We had proceeded only a short distance when our attention was drawn to a female chikarah coming towards us at a rapid pace. As she passed, I remarked to my friends that, by her distressed appearance, I was certain she had been recently hunted. Presently our greyhound caught sight of her and gave chase. We followed as fast as we could run, and after two or three doubles the hound pulled her down. While we were examining the game, a remarkably fine old doe, with an extra long pair of horns, three dogs came in sight, and, hunting by scent, approached us with their tongues hanging out of their mouths; they also had evidently had a long run. In another five minutes a man dressed in white, also running, came in

sight, followed by two others. We called out to them, and the men, three British soldiers, told us that when looking for hares on the sides of a range of hills fully three miles off, they had put up the chikarah, and that their dogs had gone after her. They were pleased enough when we made over to them the old doe, and, slinging her on to a pole, made their way in the direction of the barracks.

The chikarah is as easily tamed as the common antelope; they are favourite pets, and become strongly attached to those who rear and feed them. I have seen tame ones driven out with a herd of goats to graze, and never attempt to make their escape. It is not at all unusual to find the wild gazelles feeding close to, sometimes almost mingling with, herds of goats, when the latter have been driven out to pasture. Native shikaries use the horn of a buck chikarah to hold their precious supply of gunpowder, with a simple cork at the mouth of the horn, and slung round the neck.

I once shot a fine female ravine deer, with a splendid pair of horns, the unusual length of which has already been mentioned. Poor thing! her fine horns were the cause of her destruction. I had been out all day shooting near a place called Bubeena, in the Jhansie district, and was returning late in the evening; when, within half a mile of the end of my journey, and nearly dark, the alarm hiss of a chikarah drew my attention. On looking up to my right, I could see, clear against the sky, still lightened where the sun had set, what I thought was a buck chikarah, for it had a longish pair of horns. I fired, the animal dropped dead, with a rather lucky shot through the throat, and on going up I found that I had killed a very old doe, with the remarkable pair of horns which I yet retain.

The chikarah, as also the common antelope and nil-gai, all the tribe in fact, have the habit of leaving their dung in certain spots. I cannot explain the reason of this. The rutting season is towards the end of the cold weather, and the female drops her young about April, I think. Like all antelopes, the eyesight of the chikarah is very acute, and the animal is perpetually on the watch against danger. It, however, appears to be gifted with only a moderate sense of hearing, and still less so of smell.



THE FOUR-HORNED ANTELOPE. MALE.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FOUR-HORNED ANTELOPE (*Tetraceros Quadricornis*).

Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by.—BYRON.

THIS peculiar little animal, the most remarkable among our Indian antelopes, is by no means common. I have seen it occasionally, but in small numbers, in the Lullutpore jungles, where I managed to shoot four fine bucks; I have also observed it near Dinaro and in one or two other places in the Jhansie district, also on the banks of the Scinde river in Gwalior; I again met with it in Philibheet. It also inhabits the low hills and valleys of the Sewalik, but never ascends the Himalayas. I was very anxious to procure a specimen from the latter district, for—whether fancy or not, I am unable to say—it struck me that the colour of the animal in Rohilkund and the Dhoon differed from that of those I had met with in Gwalior; it was more of a yellowish tint. I was, however, unsuccessful in my attempts to procure one. Those I shot in

Bundelkund were of a light grey or brown, and as nearly the size of the chikarah as possible.

One day I brought in a buck of each species, and on comparing them we found the measurements were within a trifle of being the same. 'The chousingha,' as the natives call the four-horned deer—weighed slightly heavier than the gazelle. The body was rather thicker, and the legs shorter, both measured about the same from the nose to the root of horns, taking the front or smaller pair of the four-horned variety, viz. four-and-a-half inches. The second and longer pair of horns were two inches further back, almost on the crown of the head, smooth, black, and sharp-pointed. The foremost horns of the best specimen I procured were an inch and a half in length, and situated almost between the eyes; the hindermost three and a third inches; but these measurements, I believe, are above an average length. Only the male has horns.

The face of the four-horned antelope is uniform grey, without the dark markings on bridge of nose, or between the eye and corner of mouth, as in the chikarah, nor are the eyes of the former so prominent, beautiful, and soft as those of the latter. Moreover, the ears are somewhat shorter, and the tail considerably so; the latter is of a red colour. In length the animal measures about three feet, and rather less than two feet in height. The whole shape of the head of the four-horned antelope much resembles that of the gooral (Himalayan chamois), except that the forehead of the former projects in an oval form, somewhat resembling that of a sheep. The hair is much longer and coarser than that of the chikarah or black buck, there is less white on the under part of the body, and the animal is altogether less elegant in form than the generality of antelopes.

The four-horned antelope when hopping along the side of a hill, has often reminded me very forcibly of the gooral; when put up it makes a dash forward till concealed by the cover, halts a moment to listen, then again runs forward. We came across it generally in the hot weather, when beating for samber on the dried-up, rocky, high grounds of Lullutpore, where covered with low bushes and thicket, with here and there clumps of grass. I saw never more than four together, and, generally speaking, only a pair.

The animal has a habit when running of holding its head low, like the parah and kakur, and the pace at starting is like that of the musk deer, not a trot, but a bounding leap, and seldom very fast. When

lying in wait over pools of water, I seldom saw this animal come to drink; we often found it in the hot weather on the burnt-up arid flats, far distant from water. The four-horned deer has been called chikarah by several writers, but this is an undoubted mistake. The females, I have noticed, are more numerous than the males. It is called 'Bher' as well as 'Chousingha' in some parts by natives. The call of the animal is a quick, short snort, something like that of the chikarah, but at the same time easily distinguishable from the alarm hiss of the latter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SURROW, OR FOREST GOAT (*Nemorhædus bubalina*).

Far from the hunter's rage secure they lie,
Close in the rock, not fated yet to die.—*The Iliad*.

DESCRIPTION.

A powerful, though somewhat awkwardly built, animal.

Extreme Length.—About 5 feet; sometimes a few inches more.

Height.—3 to 3¼ feet.

Horns.—Black, ringed at the base, smooth above, taper to a sharp point, and curve backwards from near the crest of the head. The horns in character much resemble those of goral, but are stouter and altogether larger. Average length about 9 or 10 inches. The finest pair that I have seen reached 13½ inches. Both sexes have horns much alike in appearance.

Limbs.—Very stout and muscular.

Feet.—Large.

Tail.—Short, and rather bushy.

Colour.—Varies considerably: some reddish-brown, others more of a greyish tint. Head, rather coarse, dark on the top; chin white; ears rather large and open, white inside. A coarse bristly mane of dark hair runs down the neck, and a dark stripe down centre of back. Lower parts whitish.

The female is of a paler tint than the male, and not quite so stoutly formed; but the sexes are so very similar in general appearance, that it is almost impossible to distinguish them, even at a very moderate distance.

THIS extraordinary species of mountain antelope, though much sought after by English sportsmen, and still more so by native shikaries, is yet tolerably abundant in the middle and lower ranges of the Himalayas, from Cashmere to Nepaul, and probably still further to the eastward. I did not once come across or see traces of the animal in the Bhootan hills, though gerow and kakur were plentiful, nor so far as Jamaware does it inhabit the Cossyah or Jynteah ranges.

The surrow seldom ascends mountains of great elevation, but prefers those of a medium altitude. I have rarely met with it on ranges exceeding 10,000 feet in height. On the other hand it does not, as far as I have observed it, descend to the very lowest bluffs and spurs, and never inhabits the Terai, or forests at the base of the hills.

With the exception, perhaps, of the little musk deer, the surrow is the most solitary of all Himalayan large game. I have seldom even seen a pair at one time; and once only, during my many wanderings, three together. This happened near Mussoorie in 1869. I was returning late one evening, when a rolling stone on the opposite side of the valley I was descending arrested my attention, and, on looking across, I saw three surrows, two old animals and one young one, standing in a group and eyeing our movements from the edge of a patch of thicket, from which they, doubtless, had just before come out to graze; unfortunately they were out of shot, and though I searched everywhere for them the following morning, I could not discover their retreat.

Occasionally a surrow is shot by an English sportsman, but owing to the extreme vigilance and cunning of the animal, and its invariable habit of remaining hidden throughout the day in almost inaccessible spots, and amidst the densest cover, few, comparatively speaking, are brought to bag.

It is an animal exceedingly tenacious of life. I have known a surrow severely wounded in two places baffle its pursuers and make good its escape. It frequents very steep, rocky slopes, where the cover is thick, especially in the neighbourhood of landslips. It has been described by Adams as a 'stupid animal,' but such is not my experience: on the contrary, I have always found the creature wary in the extreme, difficult to approach, and seldom found on open ground, with the chance of a clear shot; but, generally speaking, standing in some deep ravine, on the side of the mountains, in the midst of a mass of Ringall bamboos, or some similar thicket, where it was impossible to approach him unheard; and just as you are in the very thickest part of the cover, a shrill, snorting kind of whistle, followed by a crash, and clattering of stones, tells you that he is off. This has happened to me I might say dozens of times.

Late one evening in October 1863, just as it was getting dark, and my tent yet several miles below, I was descending the side of a steep khud, in a pelting torrent of rain, sliding and slipping at every step, when I was suddenly startled by the shrill alarm note of a surrow,

apparently quite close to me. The whistle was repeated a second time, but the thicket was so dense I could see nothing. At last, after straining my eyes for some time, I made out the head and neck of the brute, glowering at me through the bushes. Aiming about a foot lower for his shoulder, I drew the trigger of my old two-groove, but the cap snapped, and to my disgust the same thing happened with the left barrel; still the animal never moved. Hastily pricking the nipples with a coarse needle, which one of my companions pulled out of his blanket and thrust into my hand, I had just got fresh caps on, when the patience of the surrow was exhausted, and away he bolted down the hill.

In some parts of Kumaon the natives erroneously call this animal 'Thar.' I only once attempted dining off a piece of surrow, and the experiment was never again repeated, for the meat was tough and strong-flavoured. Of late years another variety has been discovered near the sources of the Burhampooter. Jerdon names it 'The Takin,' and remarks, 'It has something of the aspect of the gnu of Africa.' I regret to say that I have never seen it, not even the skin or horns, and consequently am unable to furnish any information as to its ways and habits.



THE GOORAL, OR HIMALAYAN CHAMOIS. MALE.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE GOORAL, OR HIMALAYAN CHAMOIS (*Nemorhadus Goral*).

And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance.—BYRON.

DESCRIPTION.

The Himalayan chamois differs considerably, both in appearance and habit, from the animal inhabiting the mountains of Albania and Western Europe. It is rather larger, more goat-like in aspect, not so elegantly formed, and is not so gregarious as the European chamois. Moreover, the horns, instead of projecting forward almost at right angles to the frontal bone, and terminating in a hook (as is the case with *Antilope rupicapra*), slope back from the crest of the forehead in a gradual curve: the tips are almost straight.

Extreme Length.—From $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{3}{4}$ feet.

Height.—About $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet; occasionally a few inches more.

Horns.—From 6 to 9 inches in length. Black, round, ringed at the base, smooth and polished above, and gracefully curving backwards from the crest of the forehead; the points very sharp.

Eyes.—Hazel.

Ears.—Rather pointed and erect, brown externally, white inside.

Limbs.—Thick and muscular.

Feet.—Large.

Tail.—Short.

General Colour.—Above, deep rusty brown, dotted with black; darker down the back of neck and centre of back; lighter altogether below. Upper part of throat white. The coat in the winter months is long and rough; the hair longer at the back of the neck.

The female much resembles the male in colour and general appearance, so much so that the sexes are undistinguishable one from the other, even at a short distance. The coat of the female is, however, of a slightly paler shade, and her horns are not, generally speaking, so thick at the base as those of the male. I have often seen a female gooral with two kids.

EXCEPTING perhaps the kakur, the gooral is the commonest and best known of any of our Himalayan quadrupeds, frequenting the grassy slopes and stony ridges of the lower ranges from as low as 2,000 feet up to an elevation of 10,000 feet. I once saw one in the Neti valley, still higher.

The gooral may generally be found grazing in the morning and towards evening on steep hills, often under pine trees; there are generally one or two together, though I once counted seven in two groups on one hill side within a space of perhaps six or seven acres. The nature of the ground on which the animals are found often makes the pursuit of them a dangerous sport. When much hunted and bullied they resort to the sides of steep precipices, where they are unapproachable; and at times the hunter, if he means to get a shot at all, must walk gooral paths, to follow which, to anyone but a practised cragsman, is not only trying to the head and nerves, but hazardous in the extreme; and often a single slip of the foot would precipitate him down hundreds of feet on to the rocks below. Occasionally these grassy slopes are covered with the fine needle-shaped leaves dropped from the fir-tree, which makes the walking still more difficult and dangerous. To anyone with a tolerable head and sure foot, however, it is a charming sport, and I myself am never tired of a ramble after gooral. To be successful, the sportsman must be a steady rifle shot, and at first should not be discouraged at frequently missing fair chances; for it is difficult without practice to judge distances with accuracy, especially across valleys, with perhaps a fog rolling up between you and the object. It is a pity to fire at one of these animals unless it is in such a position that, if dropped by a bul-

let, the body will remain where it has fallen; for if once it begins to roll down hill, gaining velocity at each turn, it will probably not be recovered till quite spoilt and useless. I have known them lost altogether, in this manner, by rolling down into some cleft where no human being could follow.

During the day, if warm with a powerful sun, the animal lies down on some flat stone in the shade of overhanging rocks or bushes, perhaps under the stem of an old oak, from whence he can view the country around. When reclining motionless in the manner I have described, it is often most difficult to make out the creature. The sportsman should generally get above the ground he intends hunting, and every now and then descend and examine the slopes beneath: it is useless attempting to stalk from below, for the animal will be almost certain to discover him long before he gets within rifle shot, and with a 'hiss' of alarm make off. I have sometimes got a shot by copying this alarm note. Once I remember, after carefully examining the side of a hill, above which myself and two hill-men were seated, without being able to find a gooral, one of the men, as we were about to leave, made a sharp 'hiss,' very like that of the real animal, and immediately, from within fifty yards of us, a fine gooral sprang up. He had been hidden from our view by a large projecting crag. Before I could fire a shot, he was off, and we did not see him again till far below out of range.

I am not aware of an English sportsman ever having lost his life when following the chase of the gooral or thar—the latter a still more dangerous sport—though it is not uncommon to hear of native shikaries being killed by missing their footing when after these animals. I can call to mind three fatal accidents of the kind, and this seems remarkable, for as a rule the hill-men are wonderfully sure-footed and cautious.

The gooral not unfrequently falls a prey to the hill leopard, and young chamois are often pounced upon when feeding unsuspecting of danger, and carried off by the bearded vulture or lammergeyer.

A friend, when shooting over the Budraj-hill, near Musscorie, in company with a well-known shikary, named Seebhoo, had his attention attracted by the cries of some animal in distress, and, on looking in the direction from whence the sound came, he saw a lammergeyer in the act of rising in the air, with a young gooral firmly grasped in its talons. He watched the ruthless bird of prey, as it soared across a deep valley, until it finally disappeared among some trees on the opposite side, where, doubtless, it had young ones waiting for their food.



THE THAR, OR HIMALAYAN WILD GOAT. MALE.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE THAR, OR TEHR, OR HIMALAYAN WILD GOAT (*Hemitragus Jemlaicus*).

Peering down each precipice, the goat
Browseth.—BYRON.

DESCRIPTION.

Extreme Length.—About 5 feet, more or less.

Height.— $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Horns.—Triangular, and meeting at the base, where they measure 9 or 10 inches in circumference, rising erect from the summit of the forehead, and at the same time gradually diverging. They curve gracefully back, and terminate in a kind of hook about 7 inches apart. The tips of the horns are smooth, round, and sharp. Average length of horns, from 10 to 12 inches. I have measured a very fine pair, which reached $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The horns of old males are generally much wrinkled and rough at the base.

Limbs.—Thick and muscular.

Feet.—Large.

Tail.—Rather short.

Colour.—During the winter months the male has a long shaggy coat of coarse hair with a wavy flaxen mane, falling over the neck and upper part of the shoulders. General colour of body:—Very dark greyish brown; darker over hind quarters; legs still darker; belly lighter; face almost black; ears rather small, of a blackish tint; tip of tail black. Altogether wanting a beard, which is remarkable, as I believe the beard to be one of the characteristics of the goat tribe. The male thar has that strong unpleasant odour peculiar to goats.

The female is altogether a smaller and less striking animal in appearance; coat nowhere shaggy, and of a drab tint; belly, dingy white; horns of the same shape as those of the male, but altogether smaller.

THIS splendid wild goat is common throughout the Himalayas, inhabiting the central ranges, but not usually frequenting such high ground as the burhel. It is more numerous and widely spread than the wild sheep, and is generally found on the steep sides of precipices and inaccessible mountains, where to follow it is perilous in the extreme, and often altogether impossible. In fact, I look upon the pursuit of hunting the thar as the most dangerous of all hill sports. The herd is frequently unapproachable for a time, and the sportsman is compelled to wait for hours, in hopes that they may feed on to less difficult ground, where the attempt to descend and get within rifle-shot may be feasible.

The sport in many parts of our Himalayan range is quite as hazardous as following the chamois among the mountains of Switzerland and Albania. It requires a good head and a firm foot to follow unhesitatingly these wild goats in their native haunts; but to a sportsman endowed with a moderate share of the above qualities—and that is all that I could ever boast of possessing—it is a charming occupation; and in my opinion hunting thar, burhel, and other really wild creatures among the tops of our hills, is a sport second to none. Not only is the chase fascinating in the extreme, but nowhere in the world, except in these high regions, will the hunter or traveller meet with such magnificent views. They are far beyond my powers of description, especially in clear frosty weather, when the snowy range is surpassingly beautiful; the climate is then glorious, the air pure and exhilarating, the sky a deep blue without a cloud, and as a background shows off to perfection the dazzling white peaks of mighty Nunda Dēvi, and Dewalagiri,

Whose head in wintry grandeur towers
And whitens with eternal sleet,

nearly 9,000 feet higher than the loftiest summit in Europe. There was

something so incomparably grand and awe-inspiring about these superb snow mountains, that I never tired of gazing at them.

I first shot the thar in 1863, on my way back from Thibet, at a place called Neelāp, opposite to Tappobund, in the Neti valley. On this occasion I succeeded in bringing down two, one of these a splendid old male, figuring at the head of the chapter. Again, in 1864, I was successful in Upper Gurwhal, near a place called Beti. In 1868, I hunted on a range of mountains called Luggun, also in the above province, and again visited Neelāp. That year I shot eight altogether, which was good sport; and in 1869 I bagged six more over the same ground, among them three fine males. In the latter locality, which is within twelve or fifteen miles of a large village and camping ground called Ramnee, thar were very plentiful; mostly, females and young, though old males were also to be found on the highest crags. I have, in a single day, seen upwards of a hundred females, young males, and kids on these hills, and if I had chosen, could have shot many, as the ground was first-class for stalking, and less difficult for walking than I have met with anywhere in our hill ranges.

An old male thar, of noble mien, with flowing mane and shaggy coat, is a grand prize to any sportsman. These patriarchs, for the greater part of the year, remain separate from the females, and graze on much higher ground. Old males are generally found in small herds, but not unfrequently a very old fellow, as with many wild animals, is quite by himself. I once saw a large herd, all old males, numbering twenty-seven: this was at Neelāp, on my first expedition to our Himalayas. They were on the opposite side of a deep gorge from where I was, and unluckily too far off for a shot, and the whole herd ascended in single file in the most tantalising manner up a very steep precipice directly opposite to the spot from whence I was watching them. It was a fine and rare sight, for old males seldom congregate in such large numbers.

The tops of our middle ranges, from 7,000 to 13,000 feet, which thar usually frequent, are, generally speaking, bare of forest, but broken up into numerous rocky ravines, nullahs, and narrow glens, sloping down to the brink of stupendous heights and precipices. On the banks of these ravines many descriptions of coarse herbs, wild rhubarb, mixed up with long rank grass and vegetation, flourish; and here the early sportsman will find the thar feeding.

As with hunting the burhel, gerow, bears—all our hill animals, in

fact—the sportsman who hopes to be successful at shooting thar must be up and off before the sun. The animals in the early morning are occupied feeding on ground comparatively easy for walking, and can generally be stalked at that time of day with much less difficulty than a few hours later. When the sun gets warm they gradually descend by narrow paths the faces of precipitous cliffs and steeps, and lie down in caves under shelving rocks or trees in perfect safety. The mode generally practised by sportsmen when hunting the thar, and by far the surest method to lead to success is, first of all, to get above the ground where the animals are expected to be found grazing; then let him gradually descend cautiously, and examine each ravine and rocky corrie, every out-of-the-way nook and corner, till presently, if luck attends him, he comes across the object of his search. Before taking his shot the sportsman should be careful that the animal he aims at will not, if struck with a bullet, roll down a precipice and be spoilt or lost, for the thar frequent very much steeper rocks and cliffs than the Himalayan chamois. I have seen a thar fall and roll for upwards of 1,000 feet till brought up by a clump of trees, and naturally the body was then worthless, the horns broken and skin destroyed, the carcase having been literally dashed to pieces.

Generally speaking, the sportsman will be able to convey a small tent high enough up to reach his hunting-ground in the early morning: sometimes, however, this is impossible, and I have often on these expeditions had to take up my quarters in a goat-shed or in some cave, protected from the wind at the entrance by bushes and boughs. These are not pleasant quarters, especially when recently vacated by the sheep and goats. Occasionally the herdsmen themselves may be on the uplands in charge of the village flocks; and these poor fellows, generally speaking, are a civil, obliging class, only too glad to assist a sportsman and rig up quarters for him inside the walled inclosure where the herds are collected, and shut in at night for protection against wild beasts; and, moreover, for a few pence, they will provide him with a bowl of fresh milk morning and evening—no slight boon to a thirsty and wearied hunter on returning from the hills.

At night when sitting round the log fire, as is usually the custom before turning in—and I have spent many a pleasant evening in this manner—the hunter will probably, by questioning the shepherds, glean some valuable information regarding the wild animals in the neighbourhood, where and at what time in the day they feed, how they may be

got at, and so on. The shepherds themselves are often willing enough to accompany him next morning as guides and show the game. Thar and burhel get quite accustomed to tame goats and sheep, from constantly meeting with them, and unless hunted by dogs or fired at, may be seen feeding within a few hundred yards of the flocks and herds.

If the hunter means to be successful in shooting thar, he must not shrink from crossing over rather dangerous places now and then, though at the same time, if he cannot trust his head, it is foolish to risk his life to slay after all but a poor goat. One thing may be safely said, however, if his companions, probably a couple of men from the nearest village, or perhaps herdsmen, perceive that he trips and stumbles, or hesitates to cross dangerous places, they will never take him to ground which they think he is unable or unfit to walk over in safety, however many thar there may be, for fear of an accident, and getting themselves into a scrape. Some of our English sportsmen reach perfection in walking dangerous ground, and I have known one or two who would cross over such perilous ledges that their shikaries dared not follow them.

If unaccustomed to walking the side of a mountain in a dangerous part, the hunter should beware of running water below, for nothing is so liable as this to turn the head. Once, on the banks of the Pindur, I had imprudently followed a gooral along a path often less than a foot wide, and on the side of an exceedingly steep cliff almost overhanging the river. I was not very well at the time, and the foaming torrent below so affected my head, and made me feel so giddy, that I had to halt and turn my face to the rocky side of the precipice and collect my thoughts, before resuming my perilous journey. I once fell, by a piece of turf giving way, a distance of twenty feet, and luckily clutched hold of a bush, or might have gone down much farther; as it was I was badly bruised, and could hardly move for a fortnight.

An alpenstock about six feet long, slightly springy, and shod with a strong iron point at one end and rounded off at the other, is of great assistance for keeping the balance, and is also useful for either ascending or descending. It is coming down a very steep slope that is so dangerous. I have often climbed with tolerable ease up the side of a mountain in the morning, and yet when returning later in the day by the very same course have met with considerable difficulty. In walking take short steps, and try always to keep the balance on the hindmost foot, so that should a piece of turf or a loose stone give way

with the other foot, you can recover yourself immediately. Never get into the habit of jumping in your walk, and where you suspect the ground to be rotten, try it well with your foot before trusting your full weight on it. Grass shoes are excellent inventions for walking upon slippery rock, and your men will be able to procure or make you a pair. In crossing dangerous places, take your shoes and stockings off if you feel nervous: there is nothing like bare feet to give one confidence, and though the rocks will feel sharp at first, you will soon get accustomed to it. Be careful when you come to a landslip which it is necessary to cross; some of these are highly dangerous, just a mass of stones and earth so balanced that the weight of a man's foot will set the whole side of the hill in motion, and likely enough bring some huge stones whizzing down from above. I have several times had this occur, and most hazardous it is.

Thar frequent ranges of mountains exposed for months together to the full brunt of the monsoon, and consequently the very best ground from June to September is under a more or less heavy down-pour of rain; worse still, the hills and valleys alike are enveloped in thick dense fog. It is simply impossible to carry on the sport under such circumstances; and, speaking from experience, I would strongly recommend no one to attempt it. In the first place it is miserable work to be out in a small tent exposed to a perpetual torrent of rain; everything gets damp and uncomfortable; your guns, in spite of daily rubbing up, get coated with rust; you yourself are never dry. The walking on the sides of the hills is abominable, not to say dangerous. Perhaps the heavy clouds may lift for an hour or two in the forenoon, enabling you to get out for a while; a herd of thar is then sighted, and you are carefully approaching them, full of hope and excitement, when suddenly a vile black cloud rolls up the valley, enveloping you in an instant, and shutting out from your gaze the objects of your heart's desire; down comes the rain, and you return home disgusted.

The above is no exaggerated picture, but what I have experienced over and over again. I have sat for hours shivering under a dripping rock in the vain hope of the clouds breaking and once more permitting me to take the field, till the increasing darkness has warned me that night was coming on, and that it was time to return to my tent. But enough of this; I think I have said sufficient to dissuade the keenest of sportsmen from attempting the chase of the thar during the rains.

I prefer the autumn to other seasons of the year, though doubtless a larger bag may be made in the summer months; but the coats of the animals at this latter period are worthless, and the females are with young. In September the weather gradually changes for the better, and October is a glorious month, the best of all for this sport. The weather during that month and November is delightfully crisp and frosty, and as the snow falls the thar are driven lower down, and may be found on less inaccessible ground than earlier in the season.

Always give up shooting in sufficient time to reach your tent before the shades of night overtake you. I learnt a lesson in 1868 which I shall never forget, and took care afterwards to leave off the chase in plenty of time before the sun got too low. One day, in company with two paharies, I took the field at daylight; and as it was the last day we intended remaining in that particular place, one of my men carried my shot-gun, to procure some moonal pheasants, which I had observed feeding on previous expeditions, but did not fire at, for fear of alarming thar or other big game. Within half an hour of starting, I flushed five pheasants from a small ravine and dropped an old cock, which I stowed away carefully at the bottom of a bag; it was a good bird for stuffing, only slightly knocked about, and in capital plumage. After that we had very bad luck; there was plenty of game, but so wild that it was in vain we attempted to get within rifle-shot, and more than once the thar perceived us before we saw them. We wandered farther and farther, but all was of no use. I fired two shots later in the day, and certainly should have killed, but I only wounded a young male thar, and he escaped. In fact, do what we would, it was one of those days when dame Fortune would not favour us, and all our endeavours to meet with success were frustrated, so at last we gave it up with a sigh, and silently bent our steps homewards. And then for the first time I noticed that the sun had almost set, and darkness soon came on. My tent, still far below, appeared like a white spot in the distance. On we hurried, but it soon became difficult to continue our descent; and at last, on coming to a place really dangerous even in broad daylight, it was impossible to proceed farther, for night had set in. What was to be done? There was no moon, and a cutting cold wind blew along the face of the mountain. We had had nothing to eat for many hours except some stalks of wild rhubarb, which my companions had peeled for me, and we were tired out with the day's toil. However, there was nothing to be done but to make the best of it. With much difficulty

we retraced our steps for a short distance, and groped our way to where we had observed a hollow in the cliff with a slab of overhanging rock; on this bleak spot we were compelled to pass the night. I had three or four fuses in my pocket, and having collected some dry sticks, grass, &c., we managed with these to light a miserable attempt at a fire. One of the men good-naturedly took off his blanket and hung it on one side of the cave to keep the wind off me. Suddenly I remembered the moonal pheasant, and out we pulled him, an old cock bird, and doubtless as tough as leather, but that could not be helped; his beautiful coat, that had been intended for preserving and adorning a lady's hat, was ruthlessly torn off; with my hunting-knife I carved the bird, dividing him equally into three shares: we frizzled the flesh in the hot ashes, fixing small pieces on to the end of pointed sticks, and soon nothing was left but the bones. After that, we lay down side by side to keep one another warm; my companions, accustomed to rough quarters, soon slumbered, but there was little sleep for me. The rocks were as hard as iron, and the cold something fearful. During the night a herd of thar, on their way to drink, came clattering down the side of the mountain, sending stones and earth crashing below. At length morning dawned; we were stiff with the cold, and covered with frost. We reached camp in another hour, and a tin of hot soup somewhat revived me, but I felt the effects of that terrible night on the hill-side for weeks after.

Thar, on viewing an enemy, whether biped or quadruped, make a loud sharp whistle, which may be heard a long distance off. This alarm-note in sound is different, and easily to be distinguished from the whistle of the burhel, used on like occasions.

I remember once witnessing, in fear and trembling, a dangerous encounter of one of my followers with a wounded thar, on the very brink of a fearful precipice. It happened thus. I had severely wounded a fine animal, which, after rolling down a slope some distance, had again recovered its legs, and, following a narrow ledge on the face of some steep rocks, had entered a cave or hollow quite concealed from view. This was most annoying and tantalising, especially as for upwards of a week we had met with a course of bad luck. I first attempted to follow the path which the animal had taken, but at length reached a projecting corner overlooking such a dizzy height that I could proceed no farther; 'ghabra gya,' *i.e.* I became confused, as my men expressed it. It was almost as difficult to turn round and retrace my steps, but at length I succeeded

in doing so, and joined my companions, only to be laughed at. One of them, a shaggy-headed, wild-looking paharie, offered to venture on a closer reconnaissance if I would lend him my iron-shod stock. This I readily agreed to, but urged him to take my rifle instead; he, however, preferred the pole. In a few minutes the clever fellow, as active as a monkey and sure-footed as a goat, rounded with ease the spot where I had been discomfited, and presently approached the place where we had last seen the wounded thar.

In another moment out came the shaggy old patriarch, and to my horror, rushed, with his head down, straight towards his biped antagonist, and endeavoured to pass him. The path at the spot was luckily wide enough for the man to maintain his footing, and using his pole as a lever against the rock, he pushed the brute off him, and then, before the huge goat, badly hurt as it was, could again assault him, or rather attempt to push past him, he brought the stock down with his whole force on to its horns; this, coupled with its wounds, seemed to stupify the creature, and a second blow behind the ear sent him rolling down the precipice—a performance loudly applauded by the spectators, two in number. We afterwards recovered the carcase, with both horns broken off and otherwise much injured. The marks of the animal's horns deeply indented my stock, and showed with what force the blow had been given. This is the only instance I am acquainted with of a thar attempting to face a man. The hero of the adventure informed me that the pathway terminated altogether at the cave into which the wounded brute had retreated, and that to push by him was the only means of escape left, and that this was probably the cause of such an unlooked-for assault.

The flesh of the thar, though eagerly devoured and considered delicate by natives, is coarse and strong-flavoured, and even when a young male had been shot I hardly ever could touch it, unless hard pressed for meat. As with domestic goats, the male has a very powerful and offensive odour about him, which the hide retains long after being stretched and preserved. The leather made from the skin of old males is much valued by natives on account of its tough qualities.

It is nothing uncommon, as with the burhel, to see an old female thar with two kids—in fact, nearly as often as with a single young one. Opportunities will sometimes occur in shooting thar when the sportsman may get several shots at close range, and bag two or three animals.

I once caught a herd of nine, four young males and five females,

in such a position that they could only escape me by coming past within a few yards, or by ascending a very steep hill right opposite, offering the very easiest of shots. The mouth of the gully in which they were feeding opened on to a precipice, down which even a thar could not descend. I had come across some wild rhubarb with the sap yet running from where the young shoots had been recently nipped. We followed the traces, apparent enough, and, within a hundred yards, came suddenly right on the herd in the position I have described. I bagged two males, and, had not my old muzzle-loader hung fire in one barrel, must have shot a third, for he came past not ten yards from where I was standing. A friend of mine, and a great hill sportsman in the highlands of Gurhwal, bagged five thar (if I remember rightly) under almost precisely similar circumstances, out of one herd.



THE BURHEL. MALE.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BURHEL, OR BLUE WILD SHEEP (*Ovis Nalura*).

Path or no path, what care they.—WORDSWORTH.

DESCRIPTION OF A FINE MALE SHOT IN 1863, AND FIGURING ABOVE.

Height.—3 feet within half an inch.

Length.—Including tail, 5 feet 4 inches.

Horns.—2 feet 1 inch in length, measuring round the curve, and almost 13 inches in circumference at the base. The horns nearly meet in the centre of the head, curve upwards and outwards at a moderate angle, and describe each almost a complete half circle. The points, which are blunt, sometimes flat, finally curve inwards and to the rear (unlike the tips of *Ovis Ammon* horns which point to the front); the tips in this particular specimen are 2 feet 2 inches apart. The age of the animal, I believe, is marked by divisions (not wrinkles) on the horns, one division for each year's growth, and this head has twelve distinctly marked. The weight of the head is 16 lbs.

The winter fleece, or rather coat of coarse hair, with which the animal is furnished by nature, is of an ashy or bluish-grey colour, very much resembling the winter coat of the reindeer. About June the burhel drops this long coarse coat, which is then replaced by

a much darker, shorter, and more glossy covering. There is a black stripe or band running lengthways along each side of the body, black, down the front of the legs, also black on the chest. Abdomen white. Tail short, white, tipped with black.

Limbs.—Rather stoutly built; feet rather large.

No beard.¹ The female is smaller, colour much the same as that of the male, but with fewer black markings on the body; horns small, seldom more than 7 or 8 inches in length, flat, rising erect from the head: they curve outwards, and at the tips are about 8 inches apart. The horns of both male and female (as is the case with other wild species of sheep and deer) differ much in shape, thickness, and curve; hardly two pairs are ever found to be exactly similar.

In some of the males, especially young ones, the face is brownish grey; in old rams often nearly black.

Ears.—Moderately long and pointed.

THE burhel inhabits the highest ranges of our Himalayas, and will be generally found feeding on the rich, grassy slopes in close proximity to and watered by the melting snow. During the summer months the animals frequent the very highest peaks and crags; but as winter comes on and snow falls, they are forced to descend for food, and may then be approached with much less difficulty and exertion. The domestic sheep is well known to be one of the most stupid among animals, and it has been rightly described as the simplest and silliest of all creatures; but the hunter will soon discover that the burhel, ourial, ovis ammon, and other species of wild sheep, are, on the contrary, the most shy, cunning, and difficult to approach of all wild animals, excepting, perhaps, the markhor and ibex of Cashmere. Ever watchful and on the alert, they will take alarm even at the quirk of a marmot, the shrill scream of the snow-pheasant, a rolling pebble, or a passing shadow; the slightest sound draws the immediate attention of the sentinels posted to guard the herd. The hunter, in following the burhel, will find his powers of enduring fatigue and his capabilities as a stalker tested to the utmost, and will succeed only by unflagging perseverance and a determination not to be beaten.

I need hardly say that the first object of the stalker is to obtain sight of a herd without discovering himself. Having succeeded so far, the

¹ Jerdon, when speaking of the ourial of the Punjab, *Ovis cycloceros* (an animal that I have never hunted or seen), among other remarks in the description of the male, says: 'A profuse black beard from the throat to the breast, intermixed with some white hairs reaching to the level of the knees.' This appears to be rather a remarkable fact; for Linnæus, when giving the characteristics of the genus *Ovis*, remarks 'no beard,' so the beard of the male ourial would appear to be an unusual appendage.

next thing is to approach within rifle shot, and if possible above the herd, and within close range. And with such wideawake, restless animals as *ovis ammon* and *burhel*, the greatest care and caution is always necessary to be successful. Never be in a hurry on these occasions, or act without due consideration. Take note of the direction of the wind, and scrutinise carefully with your glasses the ground in the vicinity of the herd. Perhaps the animals are feeding slowly in a certain direction, and by making a rapid detour you may be able to head them, lie in wait, and obtain an easy chance at close range; or, may be, by waiting patiently till the herd has fed on to more uneven ground, you may, by taking advantage of a ridge, a low ravine, a mass of rocks, or clump of bushes, be able to follow close in rear unperceived, and at length get a shot under favourable circumstances. Sometimes an approach for the time being is altogether impracticable; but nearly always the hunter, by a little patience and perseverance, will at length be able to decide on some feasible plan for out-manœuvring the quarry. At any rate nothing is gained by acting hastily or rashly, and without due thought in the first instance; whereas, by patiently adhering to certain rules, always making the best of his chances, and last, though by no means least, using tolerably straight powder, the sportsman's efforts will sooner or later meet with the success they deserve.

One of the favourite resorts of the *burhel* during the summer months is on the grassy slopes of the Thibet valleys; far away from any habitation, and in such out-of-the-way regions, the sportsman has often to depend entirely on his own rifle and gun to fill the larder and to provide flesh sufficient for himself and followers. I never, when beyond the Snowy Range, was altogether starved out, though more than once obliged to put up with short commons. On one occasion I was reduced to live on snow-pigeons and the scrapings of an old ham-bone for four days in succession, when fortune once more smiled on our efforts, and the evening of the fifth saw us returning in triumph with two fine *burhel*. One thing is very certain: shooting in the Himalayas is at all times hard work, and good food is absolutely necessary to keep the hunter up to the mark, and to enable him to bear fatigue with impunity. But I am wandering from my subject.

The *burhel* is gregarious. I can hardly remember ever once coming across a solitary one, and they often congregate in large herds of forty

and fifty. I once counted in Thibet upwards of sixty together, mostly females and young, but including eight or ten young males. I sometimes met with flocks of both sexes mixed together; at others, small herds of old rams high up by themselves; but I am of opinion that the males and females remain together in one herd for a longer time than is the case with the thar. They feed early in the morning, and that is the time to be up and after them.

During the day, especially if there is a cold wind blowing—which, by the bye, is nothing unusual in Thibet—the animals retire behind some rocky cliff, where they can repose in the sun, but still with an eye all round to guard against surprise. Here they remain chewing the cud till the sun begins to get low, when they once more visit the pastures. Where much hunted and shot at, the wild sheep will, naturally, almost invariably be found watchful and on the look-out against danger, and only feeding or reclining on spots where their instinct tells them that they are safe from their enemies, and that nothing can approach without discovery. On the other hand, in out-of-the-way places, little frequented by sportsmen, the animals will occasionally be discovered feeding or lying down during the day-time on the banks of ravines or slopes of broad nullahs—sometimes directly under and within easy gunshot from the brow above—of a cliff, or ridge of rocks, or reclining in the vicinity of such broken ground that the stalker can make his approach with tolerable ease and get one or more shots. I say that occasionally this may occur, and when such a chance does happen, let the sportsman be deliberate and make the most of it. If he manages to get within close range without being discovered, do not let him be in a hurry to take his shot, but look well round for the best ram in the flock; he likely enough may be lying apart from the rest, and at first have escaped notice. Before you draw trigger at him even, have your spare cartridges ready for immediate loading; after your first pair of barrels, you may get several more shots. I have seen a herd, when surprised half asleep, in the manner I have described, start to their feet at the report of the rifle, but not knowing from which direction the danger threatened, stand irresolute for a few seconds, thus offering a splendid chance, if new cartridges have immediately replaced those discharged.

It is, usually speaking, of little use, after having fired at, or thoroughly alarmed a herd, again to attempt a stalk, or even to follow

them up; for burhel, under such circumstances, will often cross mountains and valleys for many miles before moderating their pace; and certainly, will be so well on the *qui vive*, as to admit of no more liberties being taken with them for that day at any rate.

On approaching the edge of a khud or precipice overlooking a large extent of ground below, the greatest care should be taken. Let the hunter and his comrades advance on all fours, and on reaching the edge, lie flat on their stomachs for a few moments, and most carefully examine and take stock of every inch of ground below with the telescope, every dark clump of ferns and grass—especially where overhanging rocks cast a shadow beneath—be most careful before showing yourself to examine the side of a mountain covered with boulders, loose rocks, and fragments of stone, exactly resembling in colour the blue coat of the burhel. Many a time I have looked and looked again till firmly convinced no living creature was in sight, when the twitch of an old burhel's head—tickled probably by a fly—has suddenly opened my eyes, not only to the animal that moved, but to numerous comrades lying around him.

I myself prefer the sitting position for taking a shot at an animal below or across a valley. I have often missed easy shots when resting the rifle-barrels on a rock or stone; whether it is the jar, or recoil occasions this, I am unable to say; but such is my experience, and I recommend something soft, such as a cap or handkerchief, being placed between the naked rock and the rifle-barrels; moreover, this prevents the latter getting scratched by the recoil.

One word more; if using a rifle with short barrels, be careful when sitting down and about to take a shot at a burhel or thar beneath, that the muzzle is clear of the point of your boot. I once very nearly blew the ball of my toe off, when firing at a gooral far below. I was descending a grass slope, when I suddenly saw the animal lying under the shade of a bush, and sat down to take a deliberate aim. The rifle—a breech-loader by Powell—had short barrels, and when I took my shot at the chamois I quite forgot that although there was nothing between my eye and the object I was endeavouring to cover with the sights, yet on account of the position I was in and the shortness of the barrels, the mouth of the weapon only just cleared my big toe, which I as nearly as possible blew off. This doubtless was clumsy on my part; but I think it worth mentioning.

As I have already said, the hunter will occasionally, under favour.

able circumstances, be able to make good his approach within very short range of a herd, and be repaid for days spent in fruitless toil. I once met with such a lucky chance, the account of which is perhaps worth relating. In June 1863 I was hunting burhel quite by myself, and many miles away from our snow passes and British territory, among the bare round-topped hills of Thibet. I had been tolerably successful, having shot two old males with good heads, and one female; but, in spite of working hard day after day, luck had been for a whole week against me; provisions were running short, and my camp followers, with no meat for their dinners, as usual were beginning to grumble and lose all faith in the sahib's customary good luck. We were encamped in a deep nullah on a beautiful patch of turf, with a sparkling stream flowing past within a few yards of the tent. I had been amusing myself collecting and pressing a number of wild flowers, growing in the vicinity, quite new to me.

While thus engaged my Bhootiah shikary came up, and pointed in the direction of some towering rocky crags directly opposite, where he said a herd of burhel were to be seen. Now that very morning I had been out from daylight to noon, up hill and down dale, without getting a single shot, although two herds of burhel had been sighted; and I was so disgusted with our want of success, caused by their extreme cunning, that I had determined on moving our camp the following day, and trying new ground. On taking a look through my glasses I easily made out a large herd of wild sheep; many of them were climbing and clambering about the summit of the mountain, and with the naked eye were discernible against the sky line. Every minute the number of the herd increased as they kept coming over the brow, and those that we first had noticed, after wandering about, came lower down, and one by one lay down. Evidently they had chosen this spot as a resting-place for the day, and in half-an-hour from the time we had first noticed them, the whole herd, upwards of thirty, had descended from the crags on the top of the mountain, and were reclining on a gentle slope of grass and flat stones. If we could only get round behind the hill and come over the top without being discovered, they would apparently be within close rifle-shot, and such an opportunity does not often occur. My men were most anxious that I should once more try a stalk. The distance the creatures were off was great, but at length I consented, and in another ten minutes we made a start.

My Bhootiah shikary—the guide, interpreter, and leader of the expedition—was a first-class stalker, and I generally trusted to his judgment how to approach a herd in preference to my own; but we were both of one opinion on this occasion how the attempt was to be made. By following the upward course of the stream for about a mile, gradually ascending, and at the same time keeping well out of sight, we hoped to gain a pass through the range of hills on which we had marked down the game, and by this means to surprise the burhel from the rear. If the whole herd had crossed over the brow on to the side of the mountain facing the tents, nothing could be easier than our stalk; but, on the other hand, if a single one had loitered behind, or intentionally been dropped as a rear-guard, our efforts would be fruitless. A strong wind blew at our backs on starting, but we knew that when we had gained the pass, and rounded the hill on the opposite side, it would blow in our faces, and be consequently in our favour.

In about half-an-hour's time we reached the gorge I have mentioned, and paused for a few minutes and carefully examined the side of the mountain we were now about to scale; but not a living thing was to be seen. We had marked the spot under which the wild sheep were reclining, and the ascent was steep and difficult. But at length, after another half-hour's toil, we reached the wished-for position, or rather halted about 100 yards below it. All three of us were quite breathless after such a clamber—and in a country like Thibet, where the air is so rarefied, anything beyond a walk is almost impossible. I sent the elder of my companions forward to reconnoitre; he took off his turban, long coat, and shoes, and advanced stooping at first, and then on all fours like a cat, we anxiously watching him the while. He selected a patch of tall herbage and grass on the very highest point of the crag to look through and over. As the man approached the spot, his pace became slower and slower; he took a glance of about a quarter of a minute over the edge of the ridge, slowly drew his head back, descended a few yards, and then turning in our direction made a signal for us to come up, motioning at the same time with his finger that the game was still there. Hastily catching up my rifle and gun, the latter loaded with ball, we joined him; and there was such a grin of delight on the man's face, that I knew at once there was something good in store. Carefully examining the nipples to see that the powder was up

—it was the days of muzzle-loaders—and putting fresh caps on, I advanced and peeped over. And what a glorious sight met my view. There, within perhaps fifty yards, grouped in every sort of position, some few grazing, but the great majority lying down and chewing the cud, was a splendid herd of animals; but already an old female suspected danger, and with ears erect gazed intently up at me: no time was to be lost. There was a fine old male lying on a rock close below, a fair easy mark; and just as I drew the trigger of my rifle, the old female, who had now discovered me, gave a loud shrill whistle of alarm. The herd sprang to their feet, but all too late. The old ram never rose, but rolled off the rock dead, with a ball through the heart; and a second bullet told loudly on the side of another. The whole flock now made off at full speed, but still within shot. I fired both barrels of my gun, and another was hit by the last shot. Hastily reloading we descended, and rapidly followed. On rounding the corner a young ram, with drooping head, was seen slowly walking in front of us. On hearing our approach he looked round, and received a shot which put him out of pain. Yet another was lagging behind, but he was not much hurt seemingly, and appeared to recover himself, for he was able again to rejoin his companions, so we left off the pursuit, and returned to examine our prizes. The ram killed by the first shot was a splendid animal—I have only once shot a larger—with a fine pair of curved horns; the second was a three-year old; both had fine glossy coats. There was a commotion in my camp far down below; I could make out with my glasses a group of camp followers anxiously awaiting the result of the echoing rifle-shots they had heard, and eager to learn if there was to be flesh for their dinners. I sent down the younger of my two companions with orders that everyone was to come up and help to carry home the meat, which was of great weight. I suppose the old ram alone weighed 250 lbs. or thereabouts. While the men were coming up to us, we set to work removing the skins, and it was nearly dusk before we all got back to camp again, laden with the spoil; and great was the rejoicing over our unexpected success.

It is a mistake to make a practice of firing shots at long ranges, which seldom is a successful plan; the hunter, though often outdone by the cunning of the creatures he is in pursuit of, will by careful manœuvring sooner or later meet with opportunities; but when such

chances do occur, he should be sure of his shot, taking cool and deliberate aim; for nothing can be more disheartening to himself and his followers if, through nervousness or anxiety to succeed, he should miss easy shots after much toil and fatigue.

My first campaign against the burhel was undertaken in 1863, when comparatively a 'Griffin,' yet I succeeded in shooting five fine males, one the magnificent old ram already alluded to, two smaller ones, besides several females. Not that I mean to boast, but I wish simply to show what a very moderate rifle-shot can accomplish, armed, as I then was, with an old two-groove rifle, an Enfield rifle, and a smooth-bore, all bad sporting weapons.

Burhel, like many other wild animals, are particularly fond of salt; they regularly visit the camping-grounds of the traders when vacant, descending often great distances to lick up small quantities of salt, spilt here and there out of the leather bags carried by goats. I have often seen two young ones with a single female; I believe that the former are able to follow the old ones in a few days after their birth. The attempt has been made to rear the lambs, but unsuccessfully, I think.

The burhel never descends so low down as the ourial of the Punjab, but on one range of hills, bordering the Neti valley, I found both burhel and thar on the same ground. It was exceedingly thick, foggy weather at the time, and more than once I hardly knew what description of animal I was stalking. The burhel are fully capable of descending steep inclines at full gallop, and of clambering up the face of rocky hills to all appearance presenting an insurmountable obstacle. Unless struck in the shoulder, neck, or some such vital point, they often manage to escape; and if recovered the following day, it is more than probable that vultures, wolves, foxes, or vermin of some kind, will have spoilt both skin and head, and the horns alone will remain as a trophy.

The following is an excellent plan for recovering lost game, and well worth remembering by the young sportsman. On being compelled to give up the chase of a wounded burhel or thar, by night setting in, a snowstorm, or other cause, let the hunter mark well the course and line of country finally taken by the stricken animal, and early the following morning proceed himself or send a sharp lad to ascend the highest peak overlooking the direction noted the previous evening, giving him instructions to watch the vultures. These lynx-eyed birds are gifted

in addition with a wondrous sense of smell, and will surely discover where the poor crippled creature has laid down and died, and will be seen descending one after the other, as if from the clouds, to where the carcass is lying.

First a speck and then a vulture,
Till the air is dark with pinions.

The watchman has only to bend his steps as fast as possible to the spot so pointed out, making all haste however, or the ravenous birds will have spoiled the prize with their huge bills and talons. I have at different times recovered one burhel and two thar in this manner.

The burhel has numerous enemies to contend with ; leopards are continually following them ; also the ounce and the lynx. In Thibet, the wolf of that country preys on them ; and the young are occasionally killed by eagles. The bearded vulture or lammergeyer (*Gypæetus barbatus*) is said to be especially destructive to them.

All things considered, the best time of year for hunting burhel is the autumn ; the animals are then to be found at lower elevations than in the summer months, and consequently the labour of ascending to great heights in order to reach the game is mitigated. The coats of the animals are at that season in splendid condition, and really worth preserving as trophies. In the month of June or thereabouts a larger bag can doubtless be made, for the weather on the high ranges is then delightful, though exceedingly hot in the valleys, and favourable for carrying on the sport, but the fleeces of the wild sheep are at that period in wretched condition. The long winter coat of coarse hair is then dropping off, leaving patches here and there ; in fact, the skins are hardly worth the stretching. The females also at that season are with young ; though, as the males are easily distinguishable from the females, the sportsman can avoid killing the latter. It is much more difficult to distinguish the sexes of the gooral and one or two other hill animals, and it is therefore particularly objectionable to hunt them in the breeding season. Nothing can be more painful to the true sportsman than to shoot a poor thing in young, or with kids unable to provide for themselves. The early summer is a season when, for the reasons just given, it seems only natural that the poor things should be left in peace for a time ; so I recommend the months of August, September, and October in the upper regions for hunting burhel,

in preference to the spring or early summer. At that period rain will be falling in torrents in the middle and lower ranges; but the hunter who keeps at considerable elevations will escape the dense clouds that envelope the hills and valleys below.



FEMALE BURHEL.



SKULL OF OVIS AMMON.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE OVIS AMMON (*Linnæus*).

And nought is seen
But the wild flocks that own no master's stall.—*Thomson*.

THIS splendid wild sheep does not belong, strictly speaking, to India, as it is found only across the border, beyond the snowy range. I will, however, include it in my list of big game, as Thibet can be reached with tolerable ease from our territory.

I am aware that many sportsmen and naturalists consider the argali of Northern Asia and the *Ovis ammon* of Thibet to be identical. Undoubtedly the two animals are nearly allied, and bear a strong resemblance to each other in figure and general appearance, but I venture to say that the difference in the character of their horns is abundant proof of their being two distinct varieties.

The horns of the Thibet ammon ram never, to my knowledge, have a final outward curl or twist at the tips, nor do they ever, so far as I am

aware, taper to a point in the manner of the argali and *Ovis Polii*, but are massive throughout, terminating abruptly with the tips *very blunt, or flat*.

A glance at the illustrations belonging to this chapter will best convey my meaning to the reader. The sketch at the commencement of the chapter represents a skull of an ordinary-sized Thibet *Ovis ammon*; the head at the end of the chapter is that of the argali of Siberia.

Description of a Ram Ovis Ammon.—In general appearance a noble stately animal, standing from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 feet in height at the shoulder, and $6\frac{1}{2}$ to $6\frac{3}{4}$ feet extreme length. Sometimes they even exceed the above measurements. The coat in winter is a thick fleece of coarse hair, with an under-covering of soft wool next the skin. The hide somewhat resembles the caribou of America in colour and appearance.

General colour, dingy brown on the back, grey on the sides, and dirty white below; white in the chest, and a fringe of white, crisp, and rather curly hair about the neck. In summer this rough hair falls off, and is replaced by a close, short, darker, and smoother coat.

Head, of great size; nose, curved; no beard; ears, rather short and erect; tail short; limbs, long and well proportioned; feet, large, and the print very like the shape of a heart. The horns grow to an enormous size; they are light in colour, almost meeting at the base, triangular, with the corners rounded and very much transversely wrinkled. They curve backwards, gradually extending outwards, and finally curl in a circle forward with the blunt tips direct to the front. In a full-grown male the points are about 14 or 16 inches apart. The finest pair of horns that I ever saw measured 22 inches in circumference and 43 inches in length, but specimens have been shot with horns measuring 25 inches in circumference, and considerably longer than the above. A pair of horns in my possession, represented at the head of this chapter, measure $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches round at the base, and 38 inches in length round the curve, and this is about, or perhaps above, the average size of horns among full-grown rams. The skull with the horns above mentioned weighs 26 lbs. without the lower jaw, which is missing.

The female is smaller and lighter built than her consort, and altogether a less striking animal. Her coat is in general much the same tint as that of the ram, but darker about the neck. As with the burhel, her horns differ much from those of the male; they diverge at a moderate angle from the head, are flat, and curve gradually backwards; are never of any great thickness, and seldom more than 20 or 22 inches in length.

I have mentioned, when speaking of the burhel, that I believe the age of the animal may be ascertained by counting the number of certain divisions (not wrinkles), clearly marked and defined on the horns, and I am of opinion, though open to correction, that the same rule applies to the *Ovis ammon*. The head in my possession is very much wrinkled, yet there are nine distinct divisions in addition, showing, I believe, the age of the animal to have reached that number of years.

I have already spoken of the exceeding cunning and wariness of wild sheep in general, and assuredly the *Ovis ammon* is by nature by far the most difficult to approach of all the genus *Ovis*. Moreover, unlike the burhel, which is often found feeding on rocky hills—favourable ground for the stalker—the giant sheep keeps more on the plain or low undulating ground, such as the bare, round-topped hills of Thibet, and consequently is much more difficult to stalk. Under the most favourable circumstances the hunter will seldom be able to approach within 150 or 200 yards, and must sometimes take his chance at even longer ranges. I always in the summer months found the males apart from the females. Generally two or three old rams would be feeding together, and the females and young separate by themselves.

I remember on one occasion counting 14 of the latter in one herd. Although the *Ovis ammon* is wild and restless at all times, I never, when following it, found the walking difficult, nor did I ever see the creatures clambering about on steep and precipitous ground, such as thar and burhel delight to frequent, though they are said to be able to ascend with ease the sides of crags and cliffs. The sense of smell appears to be very acute with *Ovis ammon*, more so than with burhel or thar; their pace, when alarmed, is a fast and strong gallop, and they will often travel many miles at a stretch before pulling up.

I generally found them feeding in the early morning, on the side of some hill, valley, or ravine, where there was an abundance of fresh grass and herbs, facing and enjoying the warmth of the rising sun. The animals go to drink once or twice a day, and occasionally may be waylaid on their journey to and from the water. Unlike thar and burhel, who not unfrequently, on discovering the sportsman attempting to approach them, betake themselves to high rocky ground, or descend steep precipitous cliffs, the giant sheep, when they suspect danger, almost invariably make for open ground, where they can see all round them. They are very powerful creatures, and a bullet or rifle-shell

must be well placed to bring to bag an old ram. The flesh is exceedingly good, though not perhaps equal to that of the burhel. In the summer months the animals resort to certain spots, where they are to be found year after year, though of late, from constantly being hunted, their numbers have much diminished. When the snow falls, generally in September, the *Ovis ammon*, kyang, and other animals inhabiting the plains of Thibet, retire to the high grounds of the interior, returning south to their old resorts in the spring. I constantly came across the bleached bones and skeletons of the big sheep, nearly always lying in the bed of some deep gorge or nullah. I was informed by my Bhootiah guides that the animals are frequently cut off and smothered by the first fall of snow, before they can escape and make good their retreat northwards. I once succeeded in capturing a lamb of this species in 1863, which was only a few hours old, at a place called Chissum, in Thibet. On returning one afternoon from shooting, we suddenly came across the dam and her young. My followers, blood-thirsty as natives invariably are, were lost in astonishment at my refusing to fire at the old one, standing looking at us within 80 yards or so, while we carried off her young. The camp was close at hand, so we conveyed our prisoner there, and put him—it was a young male—to one of my milch goats, but, as I fully expected, the foster-mother refused to nourish the young stranger, and persisted in butting it; so, as it was evident our attempt was a failure, and that without a nurse the lamb would speedily die, we determined to restore it to its mother. We found her still hovering about the spot where we had robbed her, and having written on a card the date and particulars of the capture, we attached it by a blue ribbon to the youngster's neck, and let him go. Within half-an-hour I had the pleasure of seeing the old female trot up to her restored lamb, and soon after walk away with it.

I will end my remarks on the *Ovis ammon* with an account of a successful day's sport, when a tolerably fine ram fell to my rifle. In the summer of 1863 I had been upwards of three weeks in Thibet in company with B——n of the cavalry. We had shot several burhel and other animals, but not a single *Ovis ammon*, and there appeared to be little chance of our ever succeeding in what was the chief object of the expedition, for the cunning animals invariably baffled all our endeavours to get within range. At length we reached a place called Tazang, and pitched our tents by a stream of water in a deep valley. The hills

about us were bare, round-topped, and of a reddish colour. No one had shot over the ground that year, and our men assured us that we should find several 'Nyun' as they called them, as it was a well-known spot always frequented by the giant sheep.

The first morning we went out, several *Oves ammon* were viewed, but all attempts at stalking them were of no avail. The next three days passed with no better results, and we began to despair of ever succeeding. Moreover, it was most tantalising: each day we sallied forth we met with herds of burhel, and more than once within easy rifle-shot; but to avoid doing mischief by the reports of our rifles, we had resolved to fire at nothing but the 'big sheep,' and in spite of our servants—camp followers, and all—grumbling for flesh, we still lived in hopes of fortune favouring us.

On the morning of the fifth day, we made a start at daylight, and on this occasion agreed to keep together. We first ascended a high mountain by a narrow ridge, from which we had a fine view on either side; troops of kyang (or wild horses as they are called) were grazing and capering about on the plain below, and about ten o'clock we saw a number of burhel gazing at us from an opposite height, but none of the animals we were in search of were to be seen. After making a long and fruitless round we agreed to return in the direction of our camp, then about five miles off. We were walking in single file, first B——n, then a Bhootiah, then myself, and a Bhootiah lad bringing up the rear; no one had said a word for some time, and we were regularly down on our luck, when a low whistle from the native behind me drew general attention, and the next moment we were flat on our stomachs. The sharp-eyed young fellow behind me, the only one of us with his eyes about him, had spied out a ram *Ovis ammon* standing on the summit of a hill to our right, fully a mile off. Luckily we had not been seen and the wind was blowing in our faces. We brought out the glasses and duly scrutinised the animal in the distance, but we had been so often disappointed that I for one had little hopes of ever getting a shot at him. For a quarter of an hour we watched him grazing and walking about, apparently by himself; he fed gradually over the brow of the hill, and disappeared little by little from view. When he was fairly out of sight, we sprang up from our cramped position, and made our way as fast as possible direct for the foot of the hill. Up we went, and at length, tired and breathless, reached the spot where the big sheep had last been seen. A minute or two to gain breath, and again a

cautious advance was made. We agreed to separate about 50 yards or so, and come over the brow in a line with one another. Almost immediately after my companion had crossed the summit, he fired twice, and at the moment I was unable to see over the crest of the hill in front of me, and did not know what had happened. I sprang forward, and below me to my left about 180 or 200 yards off, going at the speed of a racehorse, almost broadside on, was the object of my desire. There was no time to take a long or careful aim. I had a double rifle loaded with conical shells in my hand, and, aiming well in front, fired both barrels; one shot missed, but the other, the second, struck the ammon so heavily that he staggered and almost fell over; but, again recovering himself, made off as before, but at a less rapid rate. I pulled out my glasses and watched him anxiously; he was going very lame, and I could see a dark patch on his hind quarter, evidently where he was wounded, and sorely wounded too.

Then commenced a long stern chase; sometimes we gained on him, then he discovered his enemies, and again put miles between pursuers and pursued, and disappeared in the distance: we followed the drops of blood and sliding hoof-marks patiently till once more close up, when again the animal would observe us, and make off as before. My companion gave it up as hopeless and returned home, but the Bhootiahs and I still persevered.

After following the chase for upwards of two hours we came to more broken ground, where numerous ravines and nullahs ran and crossed each other in every direction. Here at last we were fairly baffled, and lost all trace of the wounded beast. Having marked the spot up to which we were certain the tracks had reached, I directed my men to keep working round in circles, and endeavour once more to discover spots of blood or print of foot. I was stooping down following the edge of a stony valley and examining the ground for spoor, when a shout from one of the men and a clattering of stones drew my attention to the wounded ram. He had been lying down in the bed of the nullah, close to us, but had sprung up, and was now, poor fellow, stiff from his wound, slowly ascending the opposite side of the ravine. He was only 100 yards or so from me, and a fair mark. I sat down, took a careful aim, and just as he reached the top of the bank, a shell struck him fair between the shoulders, and, with a crash, down he rolled to the bottom. In another minute I was standing over the hard-won and long-wished-for prize, and, as can easily be imagined, I felt supremely happy at having

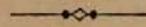
at last, after so many disappointments, slain so rare an animal. He was a fine young ram, with a coat in first-rate condition, and a very tolerable pair of horns. We took the skin off, cut the carcass up, and hid the greater part of the meat by piling stones around and over it; and then, heavily laden, bent our wearied steps homewards; we did not reach the tents without much difficulty and many a trip and stumble, but after such sport, I cared little for that, or the toil we had gone through to earn such a prize.



THE ARGALI OF NORTHERN ASIA.

PART II.

THE GAME BIRDS.



CHAPTER I.

I.—THE INDIAN PEA FOWL (*Pavo cristatus*, LINNÆUS).

With pendent train and rushing wings
Aloft the gorgeous peacock springs.—HEBER.

THIS bird is so well known, and so closely resembles the peafowl often seen in our own farmyards, that it is needless for me to describe it. It is exceedingly common over Northern India; and though a forest-loving bird in its natural state, yet even in the barest and most open-lying country in the plains there are few villages that have not a few birds in the vicinity. In many parts of the country, natives—the Hindoos at any rate—dislike sportsmen killing peafowl, as the birds are held by their religion to be sacred, and no one with any feeling would knowingly shoot them near temples or at the backs of villages, more especially as when found in such places they are invariably more or less tame, and there can be no sport whatever in slaying them. I have known serious affrays and disturbances occur through British soldiers unwittingly shooting peafowl in places such as I have mentioned above. In the jungles of our central provinces, where the real wild birds are met with in great plenty, it is quite another matter; and a perfectly legitimate sport.

When beating in line, and a bird rises in front, there can hardly be an easier one to bring down; but I have seen long strips of jungle beaten on the banks of rivers, with the guns posted well in front, and rocketing old cocks and hens rising several hundred yards back,

and passing overhead, with a strong wind to assist them, when it really required some knowledge of shooting to bring them down handsomely. I shall never forget witnessing a corner, with three gallant ensigns guarding it; presently a splendid old peacock, with a tail as long as a church steeple, rose above the cover with a tremendous flapping; he got five barrels at him, and at each shot kept rising higher in the air, leaving clouds of feathers behind him; he would certainly have escaped little the worse, with the exception of being minus about three feet of tail, had not an old hand stopped him with a charge aimed well forward.

Like our own cock pheasant, a peafowl will take any amount of shot in the back and rump, but a few pellets about the head or neck will bring him down easily enough. At the best of times, however, there is not much sport in shooting peafowl, and it is a great pity to kill such beautiful birds without a purpose. A peachick is, when properly cooked, a bird by no means to be despised; and I have often been asked, in out-of-the-way stations, where no turkeys were to be got, to look out for a young peahen for the table. An old bird even comes in handy for soup, and I have heard old Indians say that Mulligatawny is never correct unless made with a peafowl.

I was once asked to collect some plumes off the Indian peacock. When an old male is in full plumage, about the month of April or May, there is a patch of most lovely golden feathers in the upper part of the back, just below the neck, that is prized for ladies' hats, but only one plume can be got from each bird killed; and after shooting half-a-dozen old cocks for this purpose, it seemed such a pity—if a stronger term was not applicable—that I gave it up.

Our tame birds at home never reach the splendid beauty and perfection of the wild ones of the jungle. I should be afraid to say what I have heard mentioned as the length an Indian peacock has been known to reach, measuring from the point of bill to tip of tail, but it was something almost past belief, though quite true. It would be impossible for the bird to sustain the weight of such a long train, without dragging it along the ground, if the roots of the tail feathers rested on the extremity of the body. A cursory examination will show, however, that they extend far up the back.

Peafowl delight to frequent patches of jungle and forest bordering rivers, especially in the hot weather; the sides of hills covered with thick scrub and bushes, and the sandy nullahs and ravines of the

Central Provinces, are their chief resorts. I am speaking of the bird in its real wild state. Though common enough along the foot of the Himalaya, it never ascends the hill valleys to any height. In the plains of our North-Western Provinces whole gangs of peafowl may be seen feeding in the early morning in the open corn-fields close to villages, roosting at night in some neighbouring mango-tope, or burgot-tree; but, as I have already said, these can hardly be called wild birds or fair game, nor would I care to have one of these village birds put on the table.

When beating for big game in the hot season, especially for tigers, for peafowl inhabit the very spots that hold the big cats, I have seen scores, I might say hundreds, of peafowl pour out; and many a time has a rustle in the dead leaves close at hand brought the momentary hope that a tiger might appear; but presently the rustler turns out to be only a stately peafowl, who of course is allowed to pass scathless, with a muttered adjuration on his head for causing the disappointment.

I have already spoken of the wonderful eyesight of peafowl. In the Central Provinces, when a large tract of jungle is being drawn, all kinds of game, urged forward by the beaters, constantly pass close within shot of the guns posted in advance. I have had samber, cheetul, hog, and other animals, pass me on these occasions, quite unaware of danger; but presently an old peahen comes to the edge of the cover opposite, and, before crossing an open glade, stays a moment, craning her neck the while, and casting her bright eye around to see that all is safe; and ten chances to one, however well you are concealed, whether on the ground or sitting high up among the foliage of a tree, she spies you out, and, stooping down and uttering a croak of alarm to her chicks following behind her, hurries away back into the thicket.

The usual cry of the bird is a loud, melancholy call, uttered four or five times in succession, and sounding, curious enough, not at all unlike the word peafowl, with the second syllable prolonged. There are other notes also that the birds make use of. They often call on moonlight nights from their roosting perches, and when unusually clamorous in the daytime, it is the surest sign of rain that I know of. About sunset on a quiet evening a sportsman may know exactly—like a gamekeeper with his pheasants—how many peafowl there may be in the neighbourhood, for about that time they fly up for the night into burgot, mango, or other trees, like pheasants in a home covert; and the noise of wings in succession, as each bird mounts up, betrays their numbers.

Peafowl are very easily netted and snared; natives constantly bring them round for sale in an Indian cantonment, and have a barbarous custom of fastening the eyelids of the unfortunate birds together with a thorn, to keep them from fluttering about, I believe. Their principal food is corn, wild fruits and berries, and insects of all kinds, and I have frequently been told that they will also kill and eat small snakes and lizards, but am unable to speak as to the latter assertion being true, though I should imagine it to be not improbable.

Peafowl have many enemies; wild cats of all kinds, even young tigers and leopards, pounce on them. They are ruthlessly shot by British soldiers, and anywhere within ten miles of a cantonment soon become scarce. I have seen men at Jhansie return, after a day at peafowl, with upwards of a dozen birds. Jackals and foxes also catch them not unfrequently, and all kinds of eagles, falcons, and large hawks carry them off.

One day, with two companions, I was out shooting near Jhansie; we were busy driving an island in the middle of the Betwah, in hopes of coming across a pair of tigers that had been frequenting the neighbourhood, and doing immense damage for months past. At one beat over a score of peafowl flew out, and an eagle (*Aquila fulvescens*) soaring above, doubtless on the look-out for them, made a stoop with a tremendous 'wh-h-h-ish,' and a stroke at an old peahen. So suddenly and with such wonderful quickness did the royal bird descend, that before the unfortunate old hen could throw herself into the grass, the eagle struck her a heavy blow (with his foot, I believe), which I heard most distinctly, and sent her headlong and seemingly lifeless among some bushes close by. I sent the man who was with me to pick the bird up, which he did; the eagle followed him, and hovered over him, screaming, as though it would dig its talons into his head. On examining the peafowl I found it quite dead; its head was laid clean open by the stroke that the eagle had dealt.

II.—THE RED JUNGLE FOWL (*Gallus ferrugineus*, GÜMBELIN).

DESCRIPTION.

The cock-bird in general appearance much resembles our little bantam, but has still brighter plumage.

Bill, nearly black. Comb and wattles, red. Top of head, golden brown. Hackles, golden yellow, long, and drooping over breast and shoulders; these hackles are of a horny sort of substance. Scapulars and upper wing-coverts, glossy red-brown. Back, dark brown. Rump feathers, long, and of a beautiful glossy orange-red. Upper wing coverts, metallic green. Secondaries, brown. Primaries, nearly black; outer edges, pale buff. Tail, long, curved, and forked; of a beautiful metallic green and purple colour. Belly and under tail-coverts, black tinged with green. Throat, naked and red. Legs, brownish, and armed with long sharp spurs.

Female.—Of a very game appearance: face encircled with brown feathers. General colour of back, neck, and upper parts, pale grey-brown, finely freckled all over with white. Quills, whitish; breast, pale reddish brown.

THIS well-known, cheery little game bird abounds in nearly all our large northern forests, especially in the Terai and the lowest ranges of the Himalayas. The above-mentioned (*Gallus ferrugineus*) is the only variety found in Bengal, but is succeeded farther south by the Madras jungle fowl (*G. Sonneratii*), a totally distinct, very beautiful, but not a more game bird in appearance than our own little jungle cock. The latter is generally found in very thick jungle bordering rivers like the Sardah in Philibeet, especially where the banks of streams are much cut up and intersected by ravines, with thick patches of overhanging bushes. Wooded islands in rivers near the foot of the hills are also likely spots.

In the early morning, or towards evening, the birds come out from the dense thicket, where they retire during the heat of the day, to feed near the edge of the forest. They like to scratch about at the back of old cattle-sheds, and where crops grow close to the jungle side, and will enter corn-fields to feed. In some places, where the borders of the forest are much broken and irregular, and the villagers have cultivation here and there between patches of wood and bushes, I have seen capital bags made by a couple of guns, three or four beaters, and a few bustling spaniels. The plan is this: to beat out strips and patches separately, and make a corner here and there, placing the guns in the first instance between the patch or standing crop about to be beaten, and the forest, towards which the jungle fowl when flushed are certain to make. The birds, finding their retreat cut off, and pushed hard by the men and dogs, are forced to take flight, and when well on the wing offer as fine a shot as a sportsman could desire; flying very strongly and swiftly, and taking a good blow to stop them, and unless killed dead—with the exception, perhaps of the common Indian grey partridge—I do not know of a more cunning or persistent

runner, a more difficult bird to secure, often baffling the best of retrievers.

In the thick forest the sportsman will often catch a glimpse of the birds running with great swiftness in front of him, but will have great difficulty in flushing them. Without a dog it is frequently impossible to make them take wing, and it is quite useless for the sportsman by himself to attempt to follow them into the thicket with the object of making them rise, for they will very soon distance him, making their way through the bush much quicker than he can.

The jungle fowl is one of the most cunning and wary game birds that I am acquainted with. Although the sportsman encamped near the foot of the hills will in the early morning hear the cocks crowing in every direction, and seemingly close to his tent, yet unless he knows how to set to work and where to look for them, the probabilities are that after three or four hours' hard work, he will return with only one or two birds to repay him for all his toil. Even when on service in the Bhootan Dooars, where these birds are plentiful, and where I suppose a shot had never before been fired, I found it difficult to kill more than a brace or two in a day. It is very seldom that the sportsman succeeds in surprising them, as they nearly always become aware of his approach, and instantly dive into the thicket. I remember once coming round a corner suddenly, and catching no less than nine jungle fowl together, scratching about at the bottom of a nullah, and got a capital right and left chance, killing a brace—one a magnificent old cock with a splendid set of hackles round his neck. I have shot jungle fowl and kallige pheasants in the same day, and out of the same description of cover; but the former, though frequenting the lower spurs and ravines of our hill ranges, never ascends to any great height, as the latter bird constantly does.

Like the kallige pheasant, jungle fowl often, when flushed by a dog, will settle in a tree close by, offering a tempting mark for a pot hunter. When stationed at Cherra Poonjee in our eastern frontier, I often descended from the Cossyah hills to fish for mahseer in a river below—a very dangerous amusement, by the bye, on account of the unhealthiness of the forest. Jungle fowl were exceedingly common on both banks of this river, and I have often seen three and four together, close to the footpath. Very often the forests and jungles where these birds are most plentiful harbour various kinds of large game, such as tigers, samber, and cheetul, the latter especially; and

when such spots are visited by shooting parties, little notice is taken of the jungle moorghies, who are allowed to whirl away scathless, the hunters devoting their attention only to the larger denizens of the forest.

The cock birds, when full grown, are armed with tremendous spurs, longer in proportion to the size of the diminutive champion they adorn, than any game bird that I am acquainted with; and these spurs, moreover, are exceedingly sharp. I learnt this fact from one of the first jungle cocks I ever shot at a camping ground near the Dunwar Pass, between Raneegunge and Shergotty. I only winged the bird, and after a long pursuit I grasped him by the legs as he was ascending a bank, and in so doing drove one of his spurs deep into the palm of my hand. They are, I believe, most pugnacious, and much resemble, both in manner and appearance, our bantams. The wild jungle cocks are, however, more brilliant in plumage than their confrères of the farm-yard, and the hackles off the neck of an old cock are most valuable for making salmon and trout flies, as every angler is aware. The crow of the male bird is exactly similar to that of the bantam cock, except that the last note of the former is not prolonged, but terminates abruptly.

The bird is one of the very best for the table; in fact, I hardly know of a better.

III.—THE RED SPUR-FOWL (*Galloperdix Spadiceus*, GMELIN).

JERDON'S DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Head and nape dusky olive-brown: the forehead and round the eye pale whity brown, somewhat buff in some individuals; chin, throat, and sides of neck pale brown; the rest of the body, both above and below, rich brown chestnut or bay; each feather pale-edged; primaries brown; the secondaries and tertiaries more or less minutely mottled; tail with the central feathers chestnut, the others dark brown, more or less mottled, this disappearing with age; lower abdomen, vent, and under tail-coverts, olivaceous.

Female.—Has the crown dusky blackish, the neck olive-brown, and the rest of the upper plumage pale rufous brown, each feather with two or three blackish bands, and minutely speckled, and the tip pale; the rump and upper tail-coverts are minutely freckled; the tail mostly blackish, with mottled rufous bars, tending to become obsolete; primaries, their coverts, and the wingle, spotless dusky brown; throat albescent; neck olive-brown, the feathers becoming rufous in the centre, and tipped with black; breast and flanks bright ferruginous, with narrow black tips; belly dusky brown; under tail-coverts freckled rufous brown.

I HAVE only once met with and shot the Red Spur-Fowl, and that was many years ago, near the Kuttra Pass, on a range of hills some forty or fifty miles from Mirzapore.

The specimen I procured was a young bird, which unfortunately had not arrived at full plumage, and consequently was unsuited for supplying a description.

I have therefore transcribed Jerdon's admirable description of the male and female Red Spur-Fowl from the 'Birds of India,' and regret that I am unable to give any information regarding the habits of this handsome little game-bird.

IV.—THE PAINTED SPUR-FOWL (*Galloperdix Lunulosus*, VALENC).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Head, above, dark brown; neck, upper part of breast, and wing-coverts deep chestnut and beautifully spotted with white, each spot above and below black (remining one much, only on a smaller scale, of the spots and eyes on the neck, breast, and upper part of the horned pheasant, lower part of breast yellow, spotted with white, but the eyes fewer and larger.

Tail.—Dark brown, feathers thick and square at the tips.

Wings.—Short and rounded.

Furnished with a pair of long formidable spurs on each leg about an inch apart. The upper one the longer of the two.

Female.—General colour deep brown, altogether wanting the beautiful spots and rich tints of the male bird. A specimen that I have has two spurs, shorter than those of the male, sharp, and high up the leg.

I HAVE constantly met with this bird in the Jhansie district; it is also common on the banks of the Scinde and Betwah rivers. The male does not crow like the jungle cock, though both sexes make a kind of clucking noise like a true fowl. When running, these birds carry the tail up, not like a partridge. I have often watched them when hidden behind a bush or rock, waiting for the beat to approach; sometimes over a dozen have run past me. They move very fast, and seldom take wing till hard pressed. The flight is swift, and rarely at any great height from the ground. The birds take a good hard blow to bring them down.

I remember once in the Lullutpore district some of our Sahariah

beaters captured four small chicks that apparently had only been hatched a few days; while we were looking at them the old hen bird was on the top of a rock close by, calling and making a great fuss about the robbery we had committed. A friend of mine, when stationed in Central India, obtained a number of the eggs of the painted spur-fowl, and succeeded in rearing over a dozen chicks under a hen: the young things thrived and grew apace, but persisted in fighting with the inhabitants of the poultry-yard, and naturally, from their small size, were invariably worsted, often getting severely mauled in these combats. The consequence was that they one by one became sickly and died off.

The favourite haunts of this spur-fowl are rocky hills, or deep stony ravines, near rivers, far away from the habitations of man.

CHAPTER II.

HIMALAYAN PHEASANTS.

See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings.—POPE.

I.—THE MOONAL PHEASANT (*Lophophorus Impeyanus*, LATHAM).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Bill, blackish brown. The head is adorned with a tuft of dark, shining green feathers. The head, neck, back, greater and lesser wing-coverts and upper tail-coverts are of a dark blue mixed with green, and there are also some remarkably bright copper-coloured feathers, giving a lovely golden tint. The breast, primaries, and secondaries black, black also below; the rump pure white; the tail, which is short, and terminates almost squarely, and very unlike the tail of a true pheasant, is of a rich chestnut colour.

The hen bird is smaller than the cock, and of a sober tint in comparison with him; of a light brown colour, streaked with a darker tint, throat white. Not unlike a large grey hen, except that the tail is longer, and does not terminate so abruptly as that of the cock. The shape of the moonal is thick and heavy, and it does not belong to the true pheasants.

It is a beautiful sight to see an old cock moonal rise from some crag, and with wings half closed, soar across some deep valley below, the sun shining on his brilliant plumage and showing off the white, black, and red tints to perfection. I have seen them constantly fly upwards of a mile after being flushed, before attempting to settle again. That admirable writer on Himalayan game, 'Mountaineer' (Mr. Wilson, of Mussoorie), thus describes the flight of the moonal. He says: 'It gets up with a loud fluttering and a rapid succession of shrill screeching whistles, often continued till it alights, when it occasionally commences its ordinary loud and plaintive call, and continues it for some time.'

'In winter, when one or two birds have been flushed, all within hearing get alarmed; if they are collected together, they get up in

rapid succession; if distantly scattered, bird after bird slowly gets up; the shrill call of each as it rises alarming others still farther off, till all in the immediate neighbourhood have risen.'

In former years this splendid bird was very numerous on the summits of the middle ranges of the Himalayas, and is yet to be found abundantly in out-of-the-way spots. The sportsman constantly comes across them when shooting thar high up on the pastures above the forests. I have in October and November counted over twenty birds, cocks and hens mixed together, busily engaged feeding. With their powerful bills (the upper mandible of which, by the way, is considerably longer than the lower) they drill holes in the turf in search of certain roots, which they principally subsist upon. They also eat readily wild raspberries and other forest fruits. I have shot more moonal than any other description of hill pheasant, excepting perhaps the common kallige; and a by-day on the hill tops after this splendid bird, with three or four beaters, and a good retriever, was a very favourite amusement of mine. I have said that when on the look-out for thar in the higher ranges the sportsman is sure to come across moonal in the day's ramble. If he acts prudently, however, he does not fire at them, even should they rise well within distance, for fear of disturbing larger game; but makes a point of remembering the spots which the birds frequent for a future occasion, and probably the day before he moves his camp to some other quarter, he has a turn at the pheasants. I have found by experience that the best way of acting, to meet with success, is to adopt the following plan: take three or four men or boys with you, and make them walk in a line with and above you, at about fifty yards or more apart. The farthest beater from you, who should keep along the brow of the hill you are driving, should be rather in advance of his companions; you yourself skirt the edge of the forest below, and when a moonal is flushed out of the grassy nullahs above, he will come rocketing down, and, if you use straight powder, falls with a crash among the rhododendron bushes below, giving an opportunity to your dog to distinguish himself.

One day in 1869 I killed five old cock birds and two hens in one morning, besides missing several others, but that was unusually good work. One of the birds I recollect was flushed quite a quarter of a mile above me, and came down hill straight over my head at a most tremendous pace; aiming fully a yard in front of him, I let him have a dose of No. 3 shot, which had the effect of doubling him up completely,

ment it will eat grain. In a large cage or enclosure its motions are very lively, running about with great sprightliness from one part to another. It occasionally mounts into trees, but not so often as a forest bird might be expected to do. In the forests of the interior, in spring, it is often heard calling at all hours of the day. The call is a single loud, soft whistle, and may be easily imitated so as to entice the birds quite close. At other seasons it is never heard to call except when disturbed.'



CAMP AT GOOMUR TAL. SEPTEMBER 1864.

In former years this little partridge was very abundant in the neighbourhood of a small lake called Goomur Tal, situated a few miles north of the Pindur river, in Gurhwal. I several times encamped near this beautiful spot, and generally shot a few brace of the Black-Throated Partridge.

CHAPTER IV.

THE QUAILS.

While the quail clamours for his running mate.—THOMSON.

I.—THE LARGE GREY QUAIL (*Coturnix communis*).

THERE are several kinds of quail in Northern India, and at certain seasons the birds are numerous throughout the country. I am acquainted with six distinct species, and doubtless there are more. Two of these, the bustard-quail and the blue-breasted quail, are, comparatively speaking, rare, and I shall notice only two among the remainder as worthy of the sportsman's attention, viz. the common, and the black-breasted or rain quail; the bush and button quails are so small as to be hardly worth a charge, though I have occasionally shot the former.

The common quail of India is identical with the quail of Europe, and is so well known that it is needless to describe it. It is hardly necessary for me to say that the quail is a migratory bird; though a few brace, I believe, remain and breed here and there, yet by far the greater number come in early in March, sometimes later, stay a short period, and disappear as suddenly as they arrive. I cannot tell where they come from or whither they go.¹ In some years the birds are exceedingly plentiful, so much so that I am not exaggerating when I say that one could hardly take a step in corn-fields where I have been shooting, without flushing one or more. In other years only a few appear. Then, again, there are certain localities where, year

¹ I have been informed on the authority of a brother sportsman from the Bombay Presidency that quail come over in large numbers from the Arabian coast, and that in the months of November and December they have frequently been seen to land at Kurrachee in such an exhausted condition as to be almost caught by hand.

after year, as with snipe, large bags are made; but I may say that I have never yet been quartered in the Bengal presidency, at however bad a cantonment for shooting, where a bag of quail might not be made. Even at Allahabad, which is one of the very worst places for a sportsman to be stationed, I could generally manage at the proper season of the year to fill a quail-stick.

At Jhansie I saw sixty brace of quail shot before 9 A.M. by a party of five guns, and opposite the Dilkhoosha at Lucknow, on the banks of the Goomtee, I shot thirty-three brace of quail in one afternoon; and these bags are nothing in comparison with those I have known made in Lower Bengal.

Quail shooting is very pretty sport; but when the birds are flushed in the open, out of crops, on a dead level plain without a tree or blade of grass to get in the way, and they spring with a chirrup from under the feet of the gunner, as is generally the case, it is in my opinion the very easiest of all shooting, and there can be no excuse for a miss under such circumstances. A steady shot should kill five out of six fired at. The flight of the quail is very swift; but, unlike a snipe, the quail flies horizontally and steadily, generally only a few feet above the cover; and although the speed is great, a charge of No. 8, aimed well forward for a crossing shot, or slightly above a bird going straight away, brings the little fellow to the ground easily enough. Quail in the north-west of India arrive just when the crops are ripening, and the best time of all to make a large bag is when the corn is almost all cut, with just a few patches left standing here and there. I have seen such patches literally swarming with birds, and when the line of coolies approach the last corner of the crop, the birds rise in dozens, so that the cartridges cannot be dropped in quick enough.

The grey partridge is a desperate runner, and a jungle fowl knows how to make use of his legs when suspicious of danger, but the little quail beats them all. I have often seen a large piece of corn beaten, and not a bird rise till the very last few yards, and then, when closely pressed, one after another, perhaps a dozen get up; these have run through the field on hearing the approach of their enemies; and have only taken flight when pressed and almost trodden under foot by the line of coolies. So remember, young sportsmen, always be most particular when quail shooting to beat out carefully the last few yards of a field; and should there be some standing grass, bush, or thicket close beyond the last corner beaten, take the trouble to look them up,

for probably some of the little rogues have run across and taken refuge in the cover.

A poor snipe when winged seldom attempts to conceal himself, though I have known jacks do so, but hopelessly keeps jumping up, so that a bird in this condition is far more likely to be bagged in thick cover than one that falls dead, but a winged quail is the most cunning little rascal at concealing himself possible. I have known them in this state enter a rat's hole; they will crouch under a clod of earth, or worm themselves right into the roots of a clump of grass; in fact, in thick cover, without a dog, it is perfectly hopeless attempting to search for a bird only winged.

In the early morning or evening quail abound in short growing crops, only a few inches high, such as young corn or a kind of pulse called gram, especially if the field borders on a piece of sugar-cane or other high cover, into which the birds retire during the heat of the day. They are especially fond of fields of barley or other corn, near water-courses. In fact, the sportsman in search of quail should always make a point of beating crops near water in preference to others where the ground is very dry and no water in the vicinity.

In some parts of the country I have made good bags of quail out of rice-fields, when not too wet at the bottom, and the snipe-shooter, late in the season about February and March, generally at the end of his day's sport has sundry brace of quail, which he has picked up on the edge of some jheel or paddy-field, strung on his game-stick.

The usual manner of shooting quail is for a couple or more guns to turn out, with a line of coolies between them; the line should be always kept well dressed, or birds will continually rise and make off behind the guns. The distance the coolies keep apart should be regulated by the kind of cover about to be beaten; if very thick, only a few feet one from another, and *vice versa*. The men should each be furnished with a stick, which they should keep moving in front of them as they slowly advance; no talking should be allowed, nor a step made after a shot, whether the bird falls or not, until the 'all right' has been given by the gunner who has just fired and reloaded. It is a good plan always if possible to take the same men or boys with you for this kind of shooting, as in time they become accustomed and drilled to the work, and thus save a deal of trouble. It is sometimes very trying to the temper to go out with a lot of coolies who do not understand their duties, though probably most anxious to give satisfaction. One, on

seeing a bird fall, will rush forward, flushing half-a-dozen quail, and incur the wrathful displeasure of the gunners. Then when new to the work the men will not keep line, in spite of being continually expostulated with; so, as I said before, it is a good plan to procure, if possible, the same gang of men for each day's shooting, and thus save a deal of trouble and annoyance.

Generally speaking, a quail, when flushed and not fired at, or even when missed, does not take a long flight, but drops again within a few hundred yards, and it is always worth while, however numerous the birds are, to mark down as many as possible; they are such runners that you will not find them exactly where they pitch, though probably not far off.

A quail is very seldom seen on the ground; occasionally in very thin cover I have viewed one stooping and creeping along like a land-rail in front of a line of coolies, but not often; and I do not once remember seeing a quail on the wing that had not been flushed by man, dog, hawk, or something of the kind: The birds always, I believe, come in in the night. I have searched a field through one evening without finding a single bird, and happening to pass through that same field not twenty-four hours after, have found the crop literally teeming with birds, so that one would imagine that they arrived and dropped in a large flock. I have seen a whisp of snipe come in in broad daylight, but I never yet met with anyone who had witnessed quail arrive in like manner.

Some kinds of quail keep together in regular bevvies—the bush quail, for instance; but the common large quail are generally flushed singly or in pairs, though of course at the end of a field that has been beaten through, a number of birds that have been driven together rise simultaneously.

I have met with quail in corn-fields, and very plentifully too, in the interior of the Himalayas, not, generally speaking, on the sides of the hills, but in broad cultivated valleys. Between Almorah and Someser, in Kumāon, there is a valley, wide and flat at the bottom in parts, where in some years good sport may be had with quail.

The natives net quail in vast numbers and bring them round for sale to the residents of our stations to fill up their quaileries, or houses built on purpose to keep and fatten quail as required for the table. When the quail have arrived, many hundreds may be purchased for a few rupees. The natives keep the birds also for fighting; they are most pugnacious. The only way of preventing those in quaileries from

continually fighting is to keep them shut up in pitch darkness, and this plan is always adopted. It is a curious fact, I have noticed, that most quarrelsome game-birds, such as the jungle cock, the kallige pheasant, or the common grey partridge, are one and all armed with formidable spurs; yet the quail, of all birds about the most eager for the fray, has no spurs. Jerdon tells us that 'the female quail is larger than the male.' I was unaware of this fact.

Bush quail, as already mentioned, keep together in large beavies, and are not migratory. They rise all together with loud outcries, but are hardly worth powder and shot.

One would imagine, when the natives are cutting their crops, with men, women, and children moving about, talking, and laughing, that whatever game there was in the neighbourhood would very soon make itself scarce; but not so with quail. I have found birds in plenty within a few yards of a whole gang of natives, totally indifferent to the chattering and noise going on close at hand. Sportsmen should be very careful when shooting near villages, or in fields where the natives are cutting their barley, rice, or whatever the crop may be, or accidents will happen. I have on several occasions seen the people of the country hurt, though never severely, by quail shot. A native when cutting his corn squats down, so that often his white puggree or top of his head is just below the level of the crop; and though they may be perfectly aware that sportsmen are approaching, they are so heedless and apathetic in disposition that they will not move till a leaden shower perhaps stings one of them up; and then, although not hurt in reality, nor able to show a drop of blood, a great fuss is made, till a few rupees from the unlucky sahib who fired the shot makes the peace again. I must confess, however, that, speaking for myself, nothing makes me shoot so badly as people moving about in front, or the idea that perhaps a native may be concealed in the corn somewhere near. English sportsmen are sometimes thoughtless and inconsiderate when shooting quail, and with a line of coolies walk backwards and forwards in a field of heavy corn just ready for the sickle, doing immense mischief.

The little quail has numberless enemies to contend with. I have often watched large hawks, especially a fine light-coloured harrier (*Circus Swainsonii*), regularly beating a field up and down, till presently he comes over a quail not on the look-out; pounces down, and carries him off. Moreover, the natives train their hawks to catch quail. The Rajah of Benares, many years ago, had some splendid falcons and hawks

for this sport; the falcon used for large game-birds, such as floriken and wild ducks, was the 'byree' (*Falco Peregrinus*), and a smaller hawk, called the 'Shikra' (*Micronisus badius*), for quail.

The natives, I have already mentioned, net quail in immense numbers; and cats, foxes, and other vermin, continually catch them.

Quail are favourite birds for the table; and the little rogues, even in a wild state, are as fat as can be; perhaps as a tit bit, they are not equal to a snipe; but a quail pie, or curry, is a dish for a king.

There are two very small descriptions of quail, most lovely little birds, called 'button quail,' on account of their diminutive proportions. They are migratory, I believe, and found in much the same cover, and at the same time of year, as the large quail; but, on account of their small size, are not considered worthy of notice by the sportsman.

II.—THE BLACK-BREASTED QUAIL (*Coturnix Coromandelica*, GMELIN).

THE black-breasted quail is very similar in general appearance to the common quail, except that the black patch on the breast of the male bird is strongly marked, and at once distinguishes it from *C. communis*: the latter also is rather larger than the former. Jerdon, speaking of the two quails, says,—

'The two birds may always be distinguished by a glance at the primaries, which are unspotted brown in the present bird (*C. Coromandelica*), barred in the grey quail.'

I have often shot both varieties out of the same fields of corn in March and April, and only became aware of the fact when counting the slain at the end of the day, so much alike are the two birds in flight and general appearance.

The black-breasted quail is often called the 'rain quail' by sportsmen, on account of its appearing in great numbers during the rainy season of the year. I have in a few hours shot fifteen and twenty brace in the neighbourhood of Jhansie during the months of July and August. The bird frequents grass and bush jungle more than the common quail is in the habit of doing. The call is a measured 'twit twit, twit twit,' several times repeated, and the early traveller, during the rains, will hear the cry in every direction as he passes through grass and bush jungle, with fields of cultivation not far distant.

CHAPTER V.

THE SAND-GROUSE.

He rained flesh upon them as thick as dust: and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.—PSALM lxxviii. 28.

I.—THE LARGE SAND-GROUSE (*Pterocles arenarius*, PALLAS).

DESCRIPTION.

Top of head, and the whole of the upper parts pale buff, marked all over with black blotches and irregular transverse lines. Throat yellowish buff, with a black V-shaped mark. Lower part of throat greyish, gradually becoming paler, spotted with black. A black bar crosses the breast, below this a broad band of buff. Belly black. Lower wing-coverts yellowish-buff. Primaries grey-brown; quills brown. Bill brownish-grey. Legs feathered. Toes naked, and pale brown.

A thick-built heavy bird.

THIS fine bird is very numerous in some localities of Northern India, especially in the Punjab. I first met with and shot it in the Agra District, two marches out on the Gwalior road. There were two or three plains in the Allyghur district, where in the cold weather—the bird is only a winter visitant—a few flocks were generally to be found; and I again shot the large sand-grouse in the Calpee District, but in none of these places were they very numerous, as I have been told they are in the neighbourhood of Ferozepore, Umballa, and other of our Punjab stations, as also in many parts of Rājputana.

The large sand-grouse is a very powerful, swift flyer, and without exception will take harder knocks to bring down than any Indian bird of its size that I am acquainted with. I once killed five with two barrels 'into the brown' of a flock. I was up to my ankles in water, snipe shooting, when my companion, some fifty yards off, called 'Look out!' and then for the first time I noticed a large flight of birds coming

straight towards me; there was a large stone, most opportune to crouch behind; the grouse came close over, and the next minute my two barrels dropped five of them fluttering in the water, and with No. 8 shot, but they could only have been ten or twelve yards from me when I drew trigger.

I have invariably found the large sand-grouse a particularly wary and wide-awake bird, and seldom feeding on ground where a stalk was feasible. They frequently plough ground in the early morning, and in the heat of the day retire to sandy plains, with here and there patches of bushes; about nine or ten o'clock, they generally make for water, and fly straight backwards and forwards from their feeding ground to the pool or river where they drink, so that an observing sportsman, by hiding beneath the line of flight, may get one or more good chances. So cunning were these birds at Allyghur, that attempting to creep in for a shot was labour lost, so we made a practice of driving them, posting the guns behind bushes and stones, and then sending natives round to put them over. Of course our endeavours were often ineffectual, but occasionally several brace of birds were killed in this manner. One day, in a single drive, I remember a succession of them came directly over where three of us were posted, and after a deal of banging we picked up seven fine grouse.¹

The large sand-grouse is, I believe, occasionally seen in the Lullut-pore district, though I never once came across it; nor did I ever see one during my three years at Jhansie, though I visited every corner of that district. It is a most excellent bird for the table.

II.—THE COMMON SAND-GROUSE (*Pterocles exustus*, TEMMINCK).

DESCRIPTION.

Male. Length.—About 12 inches.

Tail.—4 inches, with two central feathers extending 3 inches further.

Tarsi.—Feathered down to feet; toes bare.

Upper and back parts of head light brown, inclining to yellow round neck and under throat. Upper part of breast, light yellowish-brown, with a thin blackish bar extending

¹ In Rajpootana they are usually shot from behind a cart or off a camel.

across from one shoulder to the other. Upper parts of wings mottled yellow and light brown, the lower ends of the feathers being edged with vandyke-brown, so as to form a small patch of spots on the shoulder. Primaries long and pointed, like those of a wild pigeon, crossing each other over the back when the wings are closed, of a dark-brown colour, with their inner halves white just where they meet on the back. Tail light brown, and two long central feathers nearly black. Breast, beneath the black bar, of a golden colour, verging into a reddish-chestnut under the abdomen and down the thighs.

Female.—Slightly smaller than the male, and not so brightly coloured. The spots on the shoulders are smaller and of a lighter tint, and the white halves of the primaries more dingy. Central feathers of tail not so long and tapering as those of cock bird.

THE sexes of the common sand-grouse differ so much in plumage from one another, that they are often mistaken for distinct species. I once saw in a museum two cock birds and two hens, classed separately; and it took some time to convince the scientific worthy in charge that he had coupled the gentlemen as one pair of sand grouse, and the ladies as another. This sand-grouse is gregarious, and about the commonest of all Indian game-birds. In some parts of the country they abound, and thousands may be seen on a single plain, and I have shot them till tired of the slaughter. They delight in sandy plains. They may also be found on stubble-fields and ploughed ground, the latter especially. They drink regularly twice a day, about 9 or 10 A.M. and again between 4 and 5 in the afternoon, flying in a direct line from their feeding-grounds to the water. The flock generally settles on some sand-bank; the birds run down to the water, take a long drink, and after a short pause, again take wing.

The Namaqua partridge of Africa, as described by travellers and sportsmen, must closely resemble our common Indian sand grouse. Their habits appear to be very similar, and the cry or call of the African birds has been said to resemble the words 'pretty dear,' uttered at regular intervals, and these words convey exactly the sound of the call of the Indian rock pigeon or sand grouse. They are called 'Buk Teeturs' by natives, or chattering partridges, and are rightly so named, for the birds are hardly ever silent, when on the wing, though I never yet heard one of them call like partridges when on the ground. The birds are regular grouse, and their small feet are feathered down to the very toes. It is extraordinary how difficult it is to distinguish a flock of sand-grouse, when crouching down on a plain or ploughed field, so exactly does their mottled plumage resemble the natural surface of the soil. I have often marked down a pack, and walked up to within

twenty yards, and yet for minutes together been quite unable to make them out. The flight, when the birds are well on the wing, is very swift and powerful, and like nearly all the sand-grouse tribe, they take very hard blows, often without coming down. When winged they never attempt to conceal themselves, and I have noticed that when they fall in thick cover, dogs have little trouble in retrieving them, so imagine that the scent of the bird must be powerful.

Very often the sportsman hears the clear 'wuk-tee-wuk' of the sand grouse high up in the air, long before he catches sight of it passing over head. As I have already said, the birds when flying are seldom if ever silent, and their sharp-pointed wings, dark under plumage, and peculiar flight distinguish them from other game at a glance. I have met with good sport by lying up of an evening a little before sundown, near some pool of water where grouse are in the habit of drinking, and for half-an-hour or so had capital shooting, as they kept coming and going. Like all other game-birds, when much persecuted by sportsmen, sand grouse become wary and suspicious of danger; but, unlike the large variety, which are invariably cunning and difficult to approach, I have usually found the common sand-grouse easy enough to get within shot of.

In the Jhansie district these birds were exceedingly numerous, and I have seen thirty brace and upwards killed in a day. We always made a point of turning out to shoot grouse on the 12th of August, and generally succeeded in making a bag. In Lullutpore, Gwalior, Saugor—in fact all over the Central Provinces and Central India—sand grouse abound; but in Lower Bengal, Assam, or such-like countries, they are far less numerous, in many places rare, in others not found at all. In the neighbourhood of Allyghur I have seen hundreds of them; also in the Agra district, but in Philibheet sand-grouse appeared to be very scarce. Jerdon remarks:—

'In some parts of the country, as at Mhow and Saugor, most of them leave the district after breeding in July, and do not return till the end of the rains.'

I can confirm the above remark, and I made a note to the same effect when at Jhansie, as applicable to that district; but am still at a loss to say where *Pterocles exustus* retires to during these two or three months, for I don't believe they migrate.

The birds are good for the table, though the skins are tough; the flesh is dark in some parts, white in others. I have seen the nest

more than once; the hen generally lays her eggs in bare open ground, with no attempt at a regular nest. When crossing an arid plain in the hot season of 1872, I, as nearly as possible, put my foot on to a sand-grouse crouching on her eggs; my boot was certainly within ten or twelve inches of the old bird, when she fluttered off, and until she moved I was quite unconscious that I had so nearly crushed her, her plumage so exactly corresponded with the nature of the ground. There were four eggs in this nest, of a light greenish-grey colour speckled irregularly with brown.

When in Thibet, during the summer of 1863, I shot a large description of sand grouse, *Syrrhaptes Tibetanus*, which I had never seen before; in fact, I believe it to be peculiarly a Thibetan grouse. I stuffed two specimens of this species, and have them still in my collection. They are considerably larger than *exustus*, neck in front light yellow, wings and tail very long and tapering, primaries of wing black, breast dull white much speckled with gray spots or small transverse markings, abdomen white. The Hooniahs and Bhootiahs called them 'kak,' from the cry of the bird. I should say that they hardly exceeded in weight the large sand-grouse of the plains; but they were altogether longer in the body, and not so thick-set and squat in appearance. I only came across these birds once, and shot five; they were sitting on the edge of a pool of water, and allowed me to walk close up to them. I remember at the time remarking that they appeared to be tired and weary, as if they had come a long distance quite recently, and had not yet recovered their strength.

III.—THE PAINTED OR BANDED SAND-GROUSE (*Pterocles fasciatus*, SCOPOLI).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Graceful in form. Head small. Chest much rounded and developed.

Bill red. Feathers at base of bill whitish. A black band across the front part of head, just above the nostrils; then a whitish band. Top of head pale fawn, streaked with black. Back of neck greyish buff. Back, upper and lower wing-coverts, rump, and tail, pale brown, transversely barred with blackish brown and yellowish buff. Wings, long and pointed, but not so much as *P. exustus*. Primaries, brown; margins, pale buff. Throat, reddish buff; lower part of neck greyish buff, edged with a broad band

of rich reddish brown, then a narrow pale-yellowish band on the breast, below this a blackish bar. Belly and under tail-coverts brownish, each feather having two blackish bars near the tip. The transverse bars on the wing white. Legs feathered to toes; toes naked, brownish.

Female.—Altogether of a duller tint than the male, and more spotted on the upper part of the body; minutely barred across the breast and lower parts with black and dingy white, and wanting the beautiful bars on the head, wings, and breast of the cock bird.

THIS is one of the most beautifully marked game-birds that I am acquainted with.

The only part of India where I have met with it has been in Bundelkund. In the Jhansie district it was very common. I remember we shot twenty-three and a-half brace of 'painters' one 12th of August within two miles of the cantonment. We generally found them on rising ground where covered with rocks and bushes, often in regular thick cover, and I have shot this grouse constantly on the sides of steep hills covered with thicket, where no other kind of sand-grouse would ever resort.

I have noticed the painted grouse on the wing after sunset, and long after other game birds have gone to roost.

I have described the large sand-grouse as an exceedingly wary bird, and the common species is, generally speaking, tolerably cunning; but the painted grouse is one of the most stupid of game-birds. The flight is not swift; and when the bird rises, as it usually does, within close range, there can hardly be an easier mark to knock over. Moreover, after being fired at, should the bird escape, it will probably, after circling about, uttering its peculiar clucking call, pitch again within a few hundred yards. Like other kinds of sand-grouse, the painted species is well worth procuring for the mess-table; it is an excellent bird.

There is a fourth species of sand-grouse which occasionally is met with in Northern India, but which I regret to say I have never come across. It is called the Pintailed Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles alchata*). Jerdon remarks, in allusion to this bird: 'It is said to swarm in countless numbers in Palestine. and Mr. Blyth believes, and with justice, that this bird, rather than the *Coturnix communis*, is the 'quail' of the Israelites.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BUSTARD, OOBARA, AND FLORIKEN.

The chase of the bird requires such caution and patience as would sorely try the temper of even a practised deer-stalker.—WHITE'S 'Selborne.'

I.—THE INDIAN BUSTARD (*Eupodotis Edwardsii*, GRAY).

DESCRIPTION.

Male. Height.—From $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 feet.

Bill.—2 inches in length, of a yellowish colour, nearly straight and pointed.

Iris.—Pale yellow.

Legs.—About 20 inches, and yellow. Three toes, with claws shaped like those of common fowl; no hind toe.

Neck.—16 or 18 inches.

Tail.—12 inches.

Wings, broad and rounded, when closed do not reach to within 6 inches of tail.

Upper part of head, where there is almost a plume, glossy black. Neck, which in old cock birds is covered with long feathers, white, duller behind than in front. A line, 2 or 3 inches broad, of dark brown feathers, extends across the upper part of the breast, from shoulder to shoulder. Remainder of breast down to end of abdomen, white, mottled with light fawn colour. Back and upper parts of wings reddish, beautifully variegated with very thin lines of dark brown. Tail the same, but with slightly darker tinge. The feathers not unlike those of a turkey. Primaries and lower feathers of wing black, with a tip of white on the end of each feather; altogether wanting the long moustache of the European bustard (*Otis tarda*).

Female.—Considerably smaller in size than the male, plumage not so bright. The feathers on the neck not so long, nor of so pure white, but speckled throughout.

THERE are many varieties of Bustard, and among the largest and most noble in appearance is the Indian. This bird is, in my opinion, the king of game birds, and the value of its feathers, its excellence as a

bird for the table, and last, though not least, the very great difficulty in shooting it, render it a prize to be much coveted; to slay an old cock bustard is or should be the ambition of every young sportsman, and an achievement only brought about by perseverance and a knowledge of the habits of the bird: many a sportsman spends the whole of his service in India without bagging a single one.

I first met with the bustard on the road between Mirzapore and the Kuttra Pass. I again shot it when marching from Allahabad to Saugor. And during my three years' service at Jhansie, I constantly came across this splendid bird; as also in Lullutpore and in Gwalior. Between Morar and Jhansie, in the neighbourhood of Dubra, there is a plain behind the Dawk Bungalow, a favourite spot for bustard. It is common in the Saugor country, and, I have been told, in the neighbourhood of Hansi; occasionally in the Meerut district. Once I heard of it at Mozuffernugger. I have never met with it in Bengal Proper, Assam, nor anywhere on our Eastern frontier. The Indian Bustard is not usually found on the dead level plains, as is often supposed to be the case, but frequents low, rocky, undulating hills, or high grounds interspersed with patches of bushes and scrub jungle.

Generally a pair may be seen stalking about together, sometimes a solitary one, occasionally four or five; and I once counted, within two miles of the city of Jhansie, no less than fourteen bustard, nearly all females, feeding in a field of young corn. The birds are not often met with in the hot weather; they are sometimes seen in the cold season, but the best time of all for finding them is early in the 'rains.' After the first downpour they may be seen on ground such as I have described.

The bustard is the most wide-awake and cunning of all feathered game, and seldom permits the sportsman to approach within close range. The eyesight of the bird is wonderfully keen; and they will hardly ever feed or settle near grass or cover high enough to screen an enemy, or to allow a stalk to be made. In attempting to approach the birds for a shot, the same tactics as I have already described for approaching black buck should be adopted: circle gradually round, keep your gun hidden behind you on the off-side from the game, walk leisurely, and never look towards the quarry, but so manœuvre as to appear to be passing by and not taking the slightest notice of them.

Many scores of times I have tried, by getting a bush in a line with the bird, to creep up stealthily within distance, but have seldom succeeded. When about a hundred yards off, the sharp-eyed bird had almost in-

variably discovered me and taken to flight. Perseverance, however, will be rewarded in time, and on one occasion I grovelled up a shallow ravine on my stomach to within forty yards of five cock bustard; one fell dead to the right barrel, loaded with B B shot, and a second dropped to a similar dose from the left, but again recovering himself, took to flight. I watched him till out of sight, but still keeping my eyes in the direction in which the bird had flown, I fancied, though not at all certain, that I saw him throw up his wings and settle in a large patch of high grass. Having picked up and duly admired the slain bird, I made straight for the high patch I have mentioned, and making my syce lead my horse and walk in a line with me, we crossed backwards and forwards three times, and beat the whole of the grass without finding what I hoped for. Just as I was wiping the perspiration off my face, and remarking to my attendant that I must have been mistaken, the bird rose within ten yards of us, and this time fell dead enough. I could see by the dry blood marks on the feathers, that he had been severely wounded by my first shot.

The flight of the bustard much resembles that of the common vulture, especially when at a distance, but the former bird may always be distinguished from the latter in the following manner. The vulture makes several powerful strokes, and then sails along with wings extended; again he strikes out as before, and once more glides along motionless. The bustard, however, slowly flaps his wings in a measured manner as he flies; but never once, from the moment he takes wing till the time he settles, however long a flight he may take, does he ever glide along with the wings extended as the vulture does; and the knowledge of this fact has often enabled me to decide between the one bird and the other at a very great distance.

The bustard generally flies tolerably straight when flushed, till he reaches the ground where he intends alighting, when, probably to see that all is safe, he sometimes circles round before he drops. It is a good plan, if the bird flies right away out of sight, to mark the line of flight taken, and probably, by following the direction carefully, you will again find him. The bird does not often rise any great height from the ground, is very awkward in getting under way, and carries its head and neck fully extended; the flight, though heavy, is powerful.

The food of the bird is principally locusts—when removing the skins of specimens I have found the stomach full of these insects—

grasshoppers, various kinds of beetles, worms, centipedes, and such like. It is said they will even eat lizards and small snakes, but I am doubtful about this, and have never once found anything of the kind when stuffing the birds. I have also seen them in the early morning busily engaged in a field of corn, eating the young green shoots. Jerdon tells us: 'In default of insect food it will eat fruit of various kinds, especially the fruit of the *Byr.* and *Coronda.*' Doubtless this is correct, though I have never discovered anything of the kind in the stomach of the bustard. I once flushed one, when shooting quail, out of a high piece of standing corn; he had the temerity to fly directly over my head and got two barrels of quail shot, which made him drop his legs and swing about; but again recovering himself, he made off. I thought that he had made good his escape, but about half-an-hour after, when we had finished our quail shooting, I was delighted to see my syce approaching with the bustard in his hand. We had left our horses about a quarter of a mile from our shooting-ground, bidding the syces wait our return. Our grooms had heard the report of my gun, and from where they were seated, on higher ground, had noticed that the bustard staggered and was badly hit; and, the bird flying in their direction, they were able to watch it for a longer time, and to keep it in sight a further distance than I could. They saw the bustard collapse suddenly, and fall dead on the open plain.

The finest old cock I ever shot, or rather assisted in shooting, was close to Jhansie; a friend and I flushed him, and marked him down again; we followed him up, and, by taking advantage of the ground, succeeded in getting within long range, about 60 or 70 yards, when he rose, and our four barrels were just sufficient to bring him down. This was a magnificent old cock; I stuffed him, and my friend, who took part in slaying him, sent him home to England. The bird was of such great length that it took a box the size of a coffin to contain him.

I have found it an excellent plan, where the birds are very wild and unapproachable, to drive them. The sportsman, who will day after day find the same birds on the same spots—very likely in company with sundry old black bucks for mutual protection—should mark well once or twice the exact direction the birds take when flushed, which will generally be over the same line of country. Next time he visits the place, to which the birds will be almost sure to have returned, let him

ensconce himself behind a bush or rock under the line of flight he marked on the previous day, but without allowing the game to witness what he is about, and then direct an attendant to move round and quietly put the bustard up; very probably he will from his ambush have the pleasure of seeing them make straight for the ambuscade laid for them. Of course this stratagem does not always succeed, but I have several times practised it with success.

One of Scindiah's officers at Jhansie had a buffalo trained for stalking bustard, and by this means killed several. The way he managed was as follows:—Guiding the buffalo by his tail in the direction of the game, he concealed himself behind the beast, and thus was able to get within shot of the birds, who, accustomed to see cattle grazing about, suspected no danger. This appears to be rather a poaching dodge, however, and I have never tried it.

The birds may often be seen stalking about, with natives cultivating their fields close by; and yet, directly a European sportsman comes in sight, the bustard immediately take notice of him, and utter their hoarse cry of alarm, sounding something like the word 'hook.' A fine-sighted, accurate-shooting small-bore rifle is a good weapon for bustard;¹ though I generally trusted to B B shot, with rather a large charge of powder.

The first bustard I ever killed, a fine old cock, was with a rifle bullet, but a desperate 'flake,' as the story will show. Many years ago, before I had been in the country a year, I obtained a month's leave to accompany two others on a shooting trip. I was then stationed at Benares; we travelled rapidly to Mirzapore, and commenced marching in the direction of the Kuttra Pass, on the Saugor road, till we reached a place called Lalgunge, where we put up at a small bungalow. My companions were both old sportsmen, though I at the time was a regular Griffin. I had brought a double Enfield rifle with me—about the worst sporting rifle that I am acquainted with—and was most anxious to shoot one of the numerous black bucks which we saw constantly on either side of the road. Within a week, after a goodly expenditure of ball cartridges, I had bagged two bucks. One of my companions, Captain P——y, had mentioned more than once that bustard were occasionally to be met with in the neighbourhood, but

¹ I can strongly recommend those made by Holland of Bond Street, as particularly suited for bustard-shooting.

never having seen one, I had only a meagre idea what the birds were like.

At length we moved our quarters to another bungalow farther on, a march of eight or ten miles; and, instead of keeping to the road, I made a detour in search of game. Within an hour of starting I severely wounded a fine black buck in the hind-quarters, but the creature made off. I followed him alone for a very long distance, until, quite tired out with running, I sat down on the brow of a hill to recover breath. While mopping my face with my handkerchief, I was startled by hearing a deep, harsh, guttural 'hook' behind me. I looked round and observed for the first time four large birds stalking away, and looking back over their shoulders at me. Not knowing what they were, I was watching them unconcernedly, when it suddenly struck me that they were the very birds Captain P——y had so often spoken about, and had been describing to me only the previous evening, viz. bustard. My gun was with my syce far behind, but I determined on taking a shot with my rifle. There was no time to spare, already the birds were preparing to take wing; so glancing along the sights, I took aim at the nearest, and fired just as one of the others took to flight. The bullet fell short, but struck the bustard as it ricocheted, and to my delight the bird dropped motionless; on running up I found that I had killed a magnificent old cock. The bullet had passed through the throat, just below the ear—a great piece of luck. Presently my syce and horse came up; we slung the bird over the saddle, and made for our halting ground. My companions were both astonished at my good fortune—and perhaps a little envious as well at the success of the Griffin—and wondered how I had managed to hit him so neatly; but, as was natural for a youngster, I did not furnish them with the whole facts of the case, but merely stated that I had knocked the bird over with an Enfield bullet.

The skin of the bustard is very thin, and stuffing one, or rather taking the skin off, is a laborious task, and requires much care, especially if, as is often the case, the body is covered with rolls of fat. At certain times of the year it is a good bird for the table, especially a young hen, boiled like a turkey, or baked, as some prefer. At the same time if the bustard of Europe (*Otis tarda*) is not superior when cooked to the Indian species, I think that its great excellence has been exaggerated, for I venture to say that the flesh of the Indian bustard at the best of times cannot compare in delicacy

with that of the floriken, nor, as I am informed, with that of the oobara. The feathers, I need hardly mention, are highly prized by the salmon-fisher for certain flies.

Natives often catch these birds; they watch and mark them down just before dark, and then draw a net over them. I have often seen them brought into stations for sale at a rupee each.

One day, when on horseback, I flushed three bustard; as they were making off, a large tawny eagle, with wings half closed, made a swoop at them; the bustard rose higher in the air, and I distinctly heard them uttering cries of distress. The eagle having regained a position above the pursued, came down again with a tremendous rushing noise like a bolt, but missed his aim a second time, and after a third unsuccessful attempt desisted from molesting them further. Having a partiality for anything in connection with hawking, I became excited at so grand a sight, and clapped spurs to my nag to keep pursuers and pursued in sight. Possibly I approached too near, and thus was the cause of the eagle giving up the chase.

I have often read about the pouch said to be in the bustard's throat for the purpose of holding water. Certain it is that the Indian bustard has no such appendage, for I have again and again most carefully examined the throats of both cocks and hens, and could discover nothing of the kind.

It has been said by certain writers that the bustard is 'swift of foot,' and more extraordinary still, 'has been coursed successfully by greyhounds.' I am only able to speak as to the Indian bird, though I imagine there is not any great difference in habits, if there be in plumage, between it and the African Pauw, or the Great Bustard of Europe. I myself have never seen the bustard run swiftly, or move in any other manner than a stately walk. Sometimes, when suddenly alarmed, they move away from the object that has frightened them at a rather quick pace just before taking wing, but that is all that can be said.

As to the second assertion, 'the coursing with greyhounds,' as regards our Indian bustard, I will answer for its being a fallacy, and a single day's trial would speedily convince the most sceptical on this point.

The bustard builds no regular nest, but about the end of July or early in August the female selects some suitable spot on the ground, generally a hollow in an open field, amid the sprouting shoots of some

young crop. There she deposits two eggs of a mottled brown colour, and rather larger in size than those of a turkey.

I have been informed on reliable authority that about the breeding season the cock bustard often utters a peculiar long-drawn droning note, and that this singular call is generally heard after nightfall.

Bustards may often be seen feeding in open fields; they are especially partial to patches of linseed, called by the natives *tillee*. It is not the crop itself which forms the chief attraction to the birds, but swarms of locusts and grasshoppers, which invariably abound in these fields of linseed, and, as already mentioned, form a favourite food of the bustard.

Before concluding my rather lengthy remarks on the bustard, I must mention that I have several times observed that the bird—all the *Otidæ* I believe are given to this practice—instead of making off on the approach of man or other disturber, sometimes crouches down and attempts to conceal itself, and I believe that this manœuvre is practised when the wary bird has come to the conclusion that there is no imminent danger, and squats down simply to avoid being noticed. Once, when crossing a vast plain on the back of a camel in the Mirzapore district, I observed while yet a long way off, on a low range of hills to my right, the white neck of an old cock bustard, near the track we were pursuing. The bird, after eyeing us for some time, as we neared the spot where he was standing, at length squatted down behind a bush with the design of allowing us to pass by without noticing him; and I daresay the same trick had often been practised before, but this was the last time, for I had observed through a telescope the manœuvre of the wily Otis. Directing the native on the saddle behind me to take the guiding string of the camel and to pursue his course slowly for the purpose of attracting the keen eye of the old bustard, doubtless still peering at our movements from his place of concealment, I slid down on the off side of the camel into a soft clump of grass. If we had gone through the ordinary performance of making the camel 'bâith' or kneel down to enable me to dismount, our halting, the usual, delightful customary gurgling of the brute, as he doubles in his legs for the position required, and our whole behaviour, would to a certainty have awakened the suspicions of the crafty gentleman behind the bush, and induced him to seek safety in flight; but I was in hopes that by dropping down quietly in the manner I have described, with the camel moving steadily on to take

the eye of our friend, I might, by taking advantage of the ground, steal within gunshot range. Most unfortunately I had only brought with me cartridges loaded with No. 5 shot, far too small for such game, but that could not be helped. There was a low, rocky ridge, behind where the bird had crouched. On the crest of this ridge I noted a certain high bush as a landmark, as nearly as possible opposite to where the bustard lay hid; and then stooping down to avoid being seen, I hastily turned back and retraced my steps in the direction we had just previously come. After walking two or three hundred yards, an opportune nullah branched off in the direction I wished to take; along the bottom of this I took my course, and at length fairly turned the enemy's flank by getting behind the ridge I have described, which screened me from view. Glad to be able to straighten my back again, I now rapidly made for the spot I had marked for taking my shot, and placing my mushroom-shaped hat on the ground, slowly peeped over, and there within thirty yards I had the satisfaction of beholding the bustard, fairly outdone, cunning as he was. He had his back to me, and had risen to his feet again, and was standing erect, with his eye still fixed on the camel, now some distance off; and doubtless was congratulating himself that he had been passed by unperceived. Poor deluded fellow! Chuckling to myself I strode towards him to gain a few yards for the small shot, and as he in the customary way of his species made two or three awkward flounders forward to get under way, and raised his heavy wings, I seized the favourable opportunity, and a single barrel dropped him dead.

II.—THE OOBARA (*Houbara Macqueenii*, GRAY).

THE Punjab is, I believe, the only part of the Bengal Presidency where the oobara is found, and it certainly does not frequent our North-Western Provinces; but as it is a very fine game bird, and may perhaps be found in certain localities in Bengal that I am not aware of, I have included it in its proper place among the bustard tribe. I myself have never had the good fortune to come across a single one; but the following interesting notes, supplied by a brother sportsman from the Bombay Presidency, will amply make up for my deficiency as regards this particular bird.

My friend's notes are as follows :

'So far as my experience goes, I have only met with the oobara in any numbers in Sind, although I have occasionally come across a few in the plains of Rajpootana, in the vicinity of Nuseerabad; but as a general rule I believe it may be assumed, that they are to be found in certain parts of Northern India where large tracts of sandy plains exist.

'In appearance the bird (which belongs to the *otidæ* tribe) is very like a small bustard, and about midway in size between that and a floriken. The plumage is of a mottled brown, white under the wings, and white-breasted. Both male and female have a ruff of white feathers round the neck, but in the male this is far larger, and in an old bird it has almost the appearance of a beard when in full plumage.

'The oobara, like birds of the same tribe, has only three toes. It feeds principally on wild berries, and in Sind on the leaves of the jamba or wild mustard, but will, I believe, also eat insects, and especially locusts. It is also justly considered a great delicacy for the table. The feathers of the oobara are much prized, and are extensively used in the manufacture of salmon flies; and there is also a small piece under the shoulder of the wing, which is much valued for ladies' hats.

'The oobara is a very shy bird, feeding only in the morning and evening. In the heat of the day it lies down generally under the shade of a bush. It seldom allows itself to be approached within range by a sportsman on foot, but can be stalked on a camel specially trained for the purpose, and then only in the heat of the day. When flushed it takes a long flight, and generally does not settle under half a mile, except in the very hottest part of the day.

'Oobara are generally to be found in pairs, but I have frequently seen as many as eight or ten together. They are very fond of ground covered with small sandy hillocks, in the shade of which they scratch about and repose during the heat of the day.

'The oobara I believe to be to a certain extent a migratory bird, leaving India about the end of February, and coming in with the first approach of the cold season. The earliest date I can remember to have flushed one was on August 28th; but this was unusually early, and the bird was a solitary one and quite out of condition.

'I had long laboured under a mistaken impression that oobara-shooting must be very tame work, simply from the fact that they had to be potted off a camel's back; but when I once took to it, and found what care and patience were necessary before a bird could be brought

to bag, I altered my opinion, and after this enjoyed several days' stalking, and came to the conclusion that the sport itself was not only good, but exciting.

'The way oobara are shot in Sind is off the back of a camel driven by an experienced shikary. The camels are specially trained for the purpose, and taught to circle round very slowly, obeying the slightest touch of the rein, and to stand perfectly still when stopped, so as to afford a steady shot. On coming on to a plain known to be frequented by oobara the shikary at once reduces the speed of the camel to a very slow jog-trot, and carefully examines the different tracks of the birds, which are to be seen in every direction. A good shikary will at once tell a fresh foot-print from one a day old, and how long since the bird has gone on. As soon as he has hit upon a perfectly fresh track he turns his camel short off, and proceeds to wheel round it in a large circle, until he has succeeded in determining that the track has not extended beyond the circumference of the beat. Being now assured that the bird is within the circle, he then proceeds very gradually to diminish the circumference each round, carefully examining each tuft of grass or small bush as he passes. The bird, the moment it becomes aware that it has been seen, crouches down, and, like the ostrich, fondly imagines that when its head is rammed into a bush its whole body is out of sight. The shikary eventually brings you to within twenty or thirty yards of a bird hidden in a bush; or, as I have often seen it, squatting down on the bare plain.

'The colour of the bird, which seems peculiarly assimilated to the nature of the country it frequents, renders it most difficult to see, and it often requires great practice and an experienced eye to discover it when squatting, even when within twenty yards. I have often been driven round a bird half a dozen times, with the shikary vainly attempting in a low whisper to point out where it was, before I could distinguish it myself. When the bird has been brought within range the camel is at once stopped (slightly to the right hand, of course, so as to allow a good shot), and if a hot day the bird will simply allow itself to be shot. I have, however, always found it far better to allow it to rise, feeling that there is far more satisfaction in bringing it down on the wing than in knocking it over on the ground. The moment it is dropped the camel is made to kneel down, and the shikary runs up to the oobara, and gives it the *coup de grace* by cutting its throat, after the manner of the followers of the faithful, and, slinging the bird behind

the camel-saddle in less time than I have taken to relate it, jumps up and starts off after another. Sometimes, however, towards the afternoon, when the birds are beginning to get lively, they will not lie, and in this case the best way of getting a shot is to circumvent them in a very large circle, and while the birds' attention is taken up with the manœuvre, to drop off the camel without stopping, and then run in sharply on foot. In this manner I have shot many a bird that would never have allowed me to approach within range on a camel's back.

'The largest bag I have made is eight oobara in one day in Lower Sind, but I have frequently known from ten to fifteen bagged by one gun, and I am told even more than this may be shot in a day in Upper Sind, where they are far more plentiful. It depends, however, entirely on the training of the camel and the experience of the shikary, for although it may seem simple enough, it is by no means as easy as it looks to stalk one scientifically.'

III.—THE BENGAL FLORIKEN (*Sypheotides Bengalensis*, GMELIN).

DESCRIPTION.

Male. Height.—About 22 or 23 inches.

Beak.— $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, nearly straight, and rather stout.

Iris.—Gold colour.

Legs.—Yellow, 10 inches in length. Toes, three only, small in proportion to size of bird.

Tail.—6 inches in length.

Wings.—Short, not extending when closed to within 3 inches of end of tail.

Long, loose feathers, hanging in the front of the neck, from the throat to the beginning of the breast, and also a kind of plume from the back of the head to nearly the lower part of neck. Black on the head and neck, and for two inches down the back; black down the breast and abdomen, where there is a reddish tinge. Lower parts of body to the tail, black. Back pale rufous, mottled with black. Wings white on outer parts, with here and there light brown feathers, and gradually merging into beautifully streaked brown, red, and black variegations; outer edge of three first primary feathers, black. Tail-coverts dull brown, variegated with streaks of a light fawn colour. Tail black, tipped with white.

Female.—Rather larger than her consort; a peculiarity of the florikens, though not of the bustards. Though perhaps less strikingly, can hardly be said to be less beautifully marked than the male. She has no plume on the back of the head, though the feathers are longish in that particular part; no long feathers down the front of the neck.

Head and neck, light fawn or yellow, variegated with streaks of brown across the feathers. The back beautifully mottled with numerous brown spots and splashes. Wings of a lighter tint. The primary quills darker, but no actual black or white on wings.

THIS floriken, one of the finest of our Indian game birds, is generally found in the open grass patches in the Terai, especially where the high jungle has been recently burnt, and the young grass shoots have again begun to sprout. In Assam it is very plentiful, especially in the sandy churs (or islands) covered with grass in the Berhampooter. Also in certain parts of the Purneah and Dinagepore districts; in the Nepaul Terai, Bareilly, and Philibheet country, the bird is common, especially near the banks of the Sardah. I have never once met with it in the Jhansie district, though the lesser floriken or leek was tolerably common, nor anywhere in the neighbourhood of Saugor or Jubbulpore.

I never shot the bird till in 1865, when quartered at Tezapore, in Assam, where, as I have already stated, it was common. On two occasions I killed five splendid birds in a day, and several times two or three. The old cocks, from their conspicuous black and white plumage, may be seen a long way off when stalking about, as they often do, near the edge of the grass jungle. When much hunted, they naturally become wild, but in out-of-the-way places I have had little difficulty in shooting them. It does not take much to bring one down; No. 3 shot is about the best size, and if a floriken rises within range, it can hardly be missed, so slow is the flight—a steady measured flap, not unlike the flight of an owl—hence its name ‘ooloo moor’ in some parts of the country.

It is a good plan always, if possible, to keep following up the same bird; whether it is that it becomes tired or not, I cannot say, but I have found that often at first, on the sportsman approaching, a floriken will rise very wild, and take a long flight; the same thing will likely occur a second or perhaps a third time, and then, after two or three of these flights, the bird will settle in some high standing grass, and not get up at all, allowing you almost to tread on it without moving.

A dog is most useful for this sport: I have constantly marked a floriken down, but have not been able to flush or find him again through want of a good setter, or bustling spaniel, to discover his whereabouts. Moreover, a winged bird if it falls in thick cover, is sometimes most difficult to find without a retriever. Sometimes if on putting up a floriken the sportsman conceals himself immediately, the bird, after

making a long flight, will gradually edge round and settle again near where it originally took wing.

It is a remarkable fact that in both descriptions of floriken, the hen bird is larger than the cock. This is not uncommon with certain kinds of hawks and falcons, but it is the only instance that I know of among game birds, except the quail and painted snipe. The floriken often makes a kind of cluck as it rises, and on settling I have frequently seen it run for some distance in a stooping position.

It is not unusual to come across two or three old cocks together by themselves. Their chief food is grasshoppers, locusts, centipedes, beetles, white ants, worms, and such like. I have observed them sometimes jumping up in the grass, and this habit often betrays them. When beating with a line of elephants in the Terai, I have seen twelve and fifteen of these birds in the course of a day, but usually they are not fired at, for fear of disturbing large game. The floriken is one of the very best birds for the table, having an excellent flavour, the meat being particularly rich and delicate. In Assam turkeys are scarce, but a floriken, at the head of a table, is an excellent substitute; and I have often been asked by ladies who had a dinner party coming off, to procure them a floriken. I have never once found the nest or seen the eggs of this bird. In Assam I believe they went away to breed, for at certain times of the year not a bird was to be seen for months together.

I always imagined that the Bengal floriken, like the bustard, was polygamous, but doubtless am mistaken when so good an authority as Hodgson tells us: 'The floriken is neither monogamous, nor polygamous, but the sexes live apart at no great distance.'

I have seen a peregrine falcon, belonging to a native gentleman, slipped at a floriken; but the latter, though twice flushed by beaters, persisted in throwing itself into the long grass so soon as ever the falcon attempted to gain a position above the quarry. At last the floriken took refuge in a very dense patch of grass, and baffled all our efforts to detect his hiding-place.

IV.—THE LESSER FLORIKEN OR LEEK (*Sypheotides auritus*, LATHAM).

DESCRIPTION.

Male. Height—About 12 inches.

Very similar in general resemblance to the large floriken, though much smaller, except in one remarkable point: the cock bird is decorated with a plume of beautiful thin curling black feathers, about three inches in length, commencing from behind the ear, and curling gracefully forward over the head; the tips of these feathers are flat and circular, and altogether this plume gives the bird a most elegant appearance.

The head, neck, breast, upper part of legs, under the tail, and abdomen, black; wings white, speckled here and there with light brown feathers, white also just above the round of the wings; the back, a beautiful mottled brown of a very gamey description. The eye full and large; a white spot on side of the head close to the ear.

Legs.—Rather long, and the toes same as bustard and larger floriken, viz. three, wanting the hind toe.

The Female is slightly larger than the male.

Of a pale yellowish brown, beautifully speckled on the wings. The down at the roots of the feathers, as in the larger species, is of a lovely pinkish hue.

UNTIL quite recently it was a matter of constant dispute among sportsmen and naturalists whether there were not two distinct species of lesser floriken; but this matter has now been set at rest to the satisfaction of all; and Jerdon, who to my personal knowledge took great pains to clear up all doubt in the matter, in the 'Birds of India,' speaks most decisively and to the point, giving his opinion most distinctly, and putting the matter, I venture to say, beyond further controversy, that there is only one species, and I have not the slightest doubt but that he is right. What gave rise to this difficulty was, that certain brown floriken were shot in various parts of the country, which, on being dissected, proved to be male birds, and then some asserted that the brown and black were distinct species of floriken; but the fact was, these brown cock birds were simply specimens of *Sypheotides auritus*, in a plumage which adorns the bird at certain seasons of the year. It is in the breeding season, as with all birds, I believe, that the lesser floriken appears in full dress; and when in perfect feather there can hardly be a more lovely bird, with his coal-black neck and breast, and strikingly beautiful upper plumage; but at other times, as already explained, he wears a garb more resembling the female.

Young cocks not unfrequently, like young black game, have a patchy coat of black and brown, reaching the complete plumage, I believe, in the second year.

I have not met with the smaller nearly so frequently as with the larger floriken, though in many parts of the country it is very common; in the neighbourhood of Nuseerabad, for instance. The first one I ever saw was close to the race-course at Lucknow, but afterwards I shot several at Jhansie, where they appeared in limited numbers soon after the first fall of rain, at the same time as the bustard. After two or three months, they disappeared again till the same time, about the first week in August, the next year. In habits this bird much resembles the larger kind, as also in the description of food it subsists upon. It also, I have been told, has the habit of jumping up in the grass, and thus drawing attention to its locality. Jerdon and other writers have stated, possibly correctly, that this peculiar habit of rising in the air a few feet above the grass, flapping its wings, and then dropping down again, is for the purpose of attracting the females. I am by no means sure, however, that this habit may not arise from the birds jumping up at flying insects just out of their reach.

I have never personally observed the lesser floriken going through this performance, though I more than once noted the larger kind doing so in Assam, and always about July and August, which is said to be the breeding season. But on the other hand it is the time of year when flying insects are most numerous. I may add that floriken are particularly addicted to feeding on the cantharides.

It is often found in vast plains covered with a short light-coloured grass; and at Jhansie I flushed and shot it on rising ground covered with grass and short scrub bushes, just where one would expect to find bustard. I once saw four together, but never more, and generally speaking one rose here and another there, at some little distance apart. If within distance, there can hardly be a simpler or more easy shot. It often, when alarmed suddenly, utters a croak. The flight is just like that of the larger kind, and the bird has the same habit of circling round, and also stooping and running with its tail held erect after settling. Like *S. Bengalensis*, the flavour of this bird is justly considered most excellent. The flesh of the body is dark; that of the legs a lighter colour. It is a curious fact, but I believe strictly the case, that although the two descriptions of floriken are found over large tracts of country, yet nowhere are they to be met with in one and the same spot.

The same remark applies also to the black and painted partridge, and the two varieties of jungle fowl. Jerdon tells us :

‘The floriken lays three or four eggs of a thick stunted oval form, very obtuse at the large end, and of a dark olive colour.’ I never have seen a nest, nor could I ever procure an egg, although I constantly have offered shikaries a reward to bring me one.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLOVERS.

Far from her nest the lapwing cries 'away.'—SHAKSPEARE.

I.—THE GREEN PLOVER OR CRESTED LAPWING (*Vanellus cristatus*).

THIS well-known bird, which it is unnecessary for me to describe, is seldom met with by the Indian sportsman. In certain parts of the Punjab it is, I believe, tolerably common. Jerdon states that it is only found in the Punjab, but here he is mistaken. In 1872, when shooting snipe at Philibheet, on the banks of a slow, sluggish stream, I came across a kind of common or downs; on which I observed several large flights of lapwings. After some trouble I managed to shoot six, and without a doubt they were the true green plover or crested lapwing, for I most carefully examined them. On the same plain I observed a small flight of golden plover and several curlew. This is the only occasion, however, that I ever shot or met with the bird in our North-Western Provinces.

There are other plovers, somewhat resembling the green plover, found in various parts of India, but unworthy of being included in the Game List. One of these, the Red-wattled Lapwing, or the 'Did he do it,' as it is called from its cry, is one of the very commonest birds in the country, and generally found on the banks of every village pond. It is a most tiresome bird, often by its cry giving warning to deer and other animals of the approach of the sportsman. Only 'Griffins,' or youngsters fresh from England, ever think of expending a charge on such worthless creatures.

II.—THE BLACK-SIDED LAPWING (*Chettusia gregaria*, PALLAS).

THIS is a bird I have never shot, though I observed several small flocks when on a shooting expedition in the Baraitch district, in Oude, in the cold weather of 1869. Unfortunately, they were too cunning to permit of a near approach, so I failed in procuring a specimen.

III.—THE GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius longipes*, TEMMINCK).

THE Indian golden plover differs somewhat from the English species, though very similar in general appearance; it is smaller, about 8 or 9 inches in length. It is by no means common anywhere in the north-west of India. I once shot a pair within a mile of the city of Jhansie; also several couple in Assam, where we occasionally came across small flocks. In Oude, golden plover were more numerous than in any part of the country that I have visited. One afternoon, in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, I was returning from a day's snipe shooting in company with a brother officer, when, quite by chance, we came across a large flock of golden plover in a marshy meadow, and shot several of them. I also shot three specimens in the Baraitch district, and observed one or two flocks in Philibheet, near the banks of the Sardah.

IV.—THE STONE PLOVER (*Ædicnemus crepitans*, TEMMINCK).

THIS bird, common in some parts of England, especially in the county of Norfolk (hence one of its names, 'the Norfolk Plover'), exactly resembles in plumage, I believe, our Indian bird. I have often observed it in the neighbourhood of our large rivers, such as the Ganges and Jumna, and it especially frequents ground in the vicinity of low sand-hills, with patches of bushes and coarse grass growing here and there. It is, generally speaking, by no means a wary bird, but takes a hard blow to bring it down. It is a swift runner, and, like others of

the plover tribe, crouches down behind stones or bushes to escape observation from anyone approaching. It is often called the 'goggle-eyed plover' by Indians, on account of its large full eye. The bird feeds at night principally, and, like the woodcock and other night-feeders, the eye is unusually large to enable it to detect worms and various insects in the darkness. I have often observed it in mango clumps and gardens, close to large stations. The cry is very loud and shrill, and is often heard on moonlight nights. The stone plover is especially clamorous if disturbed after nightfall, and I remember hearing an anecdote of a thief being captured owing to the timely alarm given by one of these birds.

The chowkeydar or watchman of a village in Rohilkund was one night sitting inside his hut, when the repeated cries of a stone plover near the outskirts of the village attracted his attention, and, imagining that some biped or quadruped was prowling about, he determined on having a look round his beat, and presently surprised a thief in the very act of stealing a bullock.

Occasionally I have come across large flocks of these birds; once at Jhansie I counted over twenty together; but usually a pair, or perhaps three or four, are seen at one time. They are at all times worth a shot, for the flesh of the stone curlew is excellent.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CRANES.

Part loosely wing the region, part more wise
 In common, rang'd in figure, wedge their way
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
 Their airy caravan high over seas
 Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
 Easing their flight.—MILTON.

I.—THE COMMON CRANE OR COOLUNG (*Grus cinerea*).

DESCRIPTION.

Stands erect, and is graceful in appearance; male about 45 to 48 inches in height.

Bill.—Strong and pointed; greenish yellow at base, lighter at tip.

Irides.—Red.

Colour.—Dark slaty blue or grey. A patch of white on back of neck and sides of head below the eyes. Black down the throat, breast, and underneath. Primaries, black. Wings and rump, dark grey. Legs, toes, and claws, bluish black. Tail, black, rather short, with a kind of plume or tuft of feathers drooping down on either side.

THIS beautiful and elegant bird, the common crane of Europe, is one of the earliest arrivals of the countless thousands of wild fowl that migrate southwards from Northern Asia. Not far from Allyghur, in the North-Western Provinces, there is a large jheel near a village called Somna, where formerly coolung, early in October and November, flocked in hundreds, and it was here that I first made their acquaintance, or rather dealt destruction in their ranks.

Soon after daybreak the bird may generally be found feeding in marshy or flooded ground; worms, grubs, and various kinds of insects forming its chief food.

The coolung is also a great devourer of corn, and in the early

morning I have constantly observed large parties feeding, in company with wild geese, on the crops of the villagers. In some districts they do much harm to young wheat. At these times, a sportsman may with care be able to make good his approach, and with a charge of B B shot bring down one or more. They are, however, wary birds at all times, and will often elude the best efforts of the gunner to creep within shot. When the sun gets high and powerful, they make off in a direct line to the sandy islands or banks of the nearest river, where they remain half asleep during the heat of the day, again winging their way to feeding grounds towards evening. The bird gets the name of 'coolung' from its cry resembling the word. I have often heard a flock of coolung in the air above me, generally about mid-day, soaring at such a height as to be almost undistinguishable, and circling round and round, with what object I never could rightly understand. The flesh is of a dark colour and most excellent flavour, one of the best of birds.

II.—THE DEMOISELLE, OR NUMIDIAN CRANE, OR 'KARKARRAH'

(*Anthropoides virgo*, LINNÆUS).

THERE is a smaller crane also common in Northern India, called by the natives the 'karkarrah,' from the cry it utters; *Anthropoides virgo* and Demoiselle Crane of naturalists. This bird, belonging, like the first-mentioned, to the *Gruidæ* family, is even more graceful than the common crane, and is smaller, though otherwise much resembling it in colour and habits. It has an elegant plume of pendent feathers drooping from the breast, and there is more black about the neck and head than with the larger species of crane. I have met with it constantly in the neighbourhood of Allyghur, where I have seen flocks of several hundreds. They were in the habit of settling about mid-day on a vast sandy plain, and on one occasion I managed to grovel up a ditch within close range, and with two barrels of heavy shot brought down five. Like the bittern, heron, and one or two other birds, a winged karkarrah is an awkward bird to handle, and occasionally it will strike a severe blow with its sharp bill. A dog should never be sent to retrieve one, unless the bird has fallen dead, for a wounded karkarrah

(and the same remark applies also to the coolung), has been known to destroy a dog's eye by a single stroke of its bill.

I notice a remark of Jerdon's in his 'Birds of India.' He says of the demoiselle crane: 'It betakes itself during the heat of the day to rivers to drink and rest, and never to tanks or jheels, as the Sarus and common crane do.'

This is not an invariable rule, however; for I have not once, but repeatedly, observed this bird on the margin of jheels, and once I shot two on the edge of a jheel near Somna, in the Allyghur district.

The karkarrah affords excellent sport to the falconer, more so even than the heron. I have seen one of these birds make good its escape after a long pursuit from a pair of highly-trained falcons. The crane rose to an immense height in the air, and at length, by its extreme swiftness of flight, altogether baffled its pursuers.

There is a third species of crane, the sarus (*Grus antigone*), well-known to every Anglo-Indian, and very abundant throughout our North-Western provinces of Bengal. It is considerably larger than the coolung, but much resembles it in carriage, habits, and to a certain extent also in general appearance; but does not migrate, breeding in the plains of India, on the banks of jheels, where there is an abundance of reeds, grass, and coarse vegetation to afford concealment to the nest.

I have several times discovered the nest of the sarus: the eggs are almost white, large in size, and two in number.

I have not included this fine bird in my Game List, as I do not consider it worthy the attention of the sportsman. It is seldom fired at, and is held to be sacred by the Hindoos.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WOODCOCK AND SNIPE.

And lonely woodcocks haunt the watery glade.—POPE.

I.—THE WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticola*).

THOUGH I have constantly come across this bird in my numerous rambles in the Himalayas, I have only twice shot it. Nearly always when I flushed woodcock I was in search of gerow or other large game, and feared that by firing a shot I might alarm them.

During the latter part of October 1869, when shooting over a range of hills near Elānee, in Gurhwal, I daily flushed woodcock in my rambles, and could easily have shot several couple had I felt so disposed, but, for the reason mentioned above, held my hand. These birds rose from a place where some springs trickled out of the hill-side, and flowed through a deep valley filled with ringall bamboos; and this spot, from the numerous tracks, was evidently a favourite retreat for gerow. So far as I could see from specimens I have examined, the Himalayan woodcock differs little, if at all, from our British winter visitor. They also appear to frequent exactly similar spots. I have more than once been informed of woodcock being shot in the plains, but should imagine it to be highly improbable if anywhere distant from the foot of the hill ranges. I have been informed by gentlemen staying through the winter months at Nynee Tal, that at the marshy end of a smaller lake called Bheem Tal, there is excellent cover for woodcock, and that in some winters the birds have been found there in numbers.

II.—THE SNIPE (*Gallinago scolopax* and *G. strenura*).

I HAVE included under one head the common and pintailed species of snipe; they are so very similar in general appearance, that it is only by a very close inspection one observes that they differ at all one from the other; and in a day's sport specimens of both varieties are usually shot, perhaps half the number pintails and the remainder common snipe, or thereabouts.

Snipe migrate from colder climates to the plains of India about the first week in October, and arrive about the same time of year as wild geese, ducks, and other fowl. The birds first appear in our Northern Provinces, and in a few weeks spread themselves over the whole country, and consequently there can be little doubt that *Gallinago scolopax* spends the summer months, and breeds in Northern or Central Asia, probably beyond the Altai mountains in Siberia, or in the vast plains of Mongolia. I have always been a lover and keen follower of snipe shooting, and each year looked forward with impatience for the first sign of the cold weather and the arrival of the snipe.

The bird is so well known, being exactly similar, I believe, to our English variety, that it is needless for me to describe him. As in Britain, the birds are very much more plentiful some years than others. It depends very much upon whether there has been a heavy downpour of rain during the months of July and August, so as to fill up the jheels, rivers, and tanks all over the country; in that case the birds are nearly always more or less numerous. If, on the contrary, but little rain has fallen, which is sometimes the case, and consequently there is little marsh and swamp, the snipe will not pitch or stay, but pass on to other spots where they can find feeding grounds more suitable for their requirements.

The best snipe shooting that I have ever had has been in Bundelkond, more especially in the Jhansie district; but I have also met with first-rate sport in the vicinity of Lucknow, also in Baraitch. There are numerous jheels famed for snipe all over the Allyghur, Bolundshuhur, and Meerut districts, in Rohilkund also, especially Philibheet, and in the vicinity of Moradabad. Goruckpore, again, is a well-known country for all kinds of wild fowl; but it would be tedious to the reader, and unnecessary for me to name other spots good for

this fascinating sport, so numerous and wide-spread are they; suffice it to say, that there is hardly a station in our North-Western Provinces from whence, either by rail, driving, or generally by a morning's ride, the sportsman may not reach the edge of some jheel where he may fire away at snipe to his heart's content.

One seldom meets with a good dog for snipe shooting in India. I can hardly call to mind, during my service, more than two or three animals really useful for this particular sport. There is so little scent, especially during the heat of the day, that it is almost impossible for the best of dogs to point a snipe, and he will be almost certain, through no fault of his own, to flush far more birds than he finds; and unless it be a steady, close working spaniel or setter, that will down charge and also retrieve, I may say dogs are worse than useless, and the sportsman has to depend on beaters, or rather men to walk in a line with him to put up the birds. This undoubtedly takes away somewhat of the pleasure of the sport. Speaking for myself, I would rather shoot ten couple of birds over dogs, than twice the number with beaters.

As my remarks are intended chiefly for the benefit of the young shikary, I will now give a few general rules to be observed by an Indian snipe shooter, which may, perhaps, assist him to fill the bag.

Always walk deliberately and slowly, taking short paces; be ever at the ready; learn to fire quickly and sharply, with both eyes open and well in front of the object, as soon as the gun can be brought up to the shoulder; and always fire at a bird if within distance, however difficult and twisting a chance it may offer. Never speak yourself, or allow your attendants to talk, and make as little noise or splashing in walking as possible. Try and mark where birds pitch that have risen some distance off: and if a snipe drops to your shot in thick grass or rushes, on walking up, throw your handkerchief as nearly as possible over the spot where you think the bird fell, before beginning to search; without such a mark, one is liable unwittingly to wander from the vicinity of the lost bird.

Walk down wind, with the sun at your back, if possible. As a rule do not begin your shooting till the sun is well up, and the air warm. Early in the morning the birds will seldom lie well, and by following them about from one spot to another you may drive them away altogether; whereas if you wait till later, say ten o'clock, these same snipe will afford you excellent sport. Employ the early hours of a cold weather morning in duck shooting: good snipe jheels generally hold

duck as well. If by yourself, four attendants or coolies are generally sufficient to take the field with; if possible, place the mall on one flank, so that your attention is then fixed in one direction, and you are prepared to turn that way only; whereas if your men walk on either side of you, it is doubtful on which side a snipe may rise, and your attention is divided.

The man or boy carrying your bird-stick or game-bag—the latter is hardly ever used in the tropics—should be close to you; he should be an extra sharp fellow, as it is his duty to assist you in marking where the birds fall; he also carries your bag of ammunition; do not burden yourself with a belt of heavy cartridges, but put a dozen or so into your pockets at a time. It is hard work continually drawing the feet out of deep mire and bog, and it is a pity to make a toil of a pleasure, so I recommend the young shikary to make a break in the day about the tiffin hour, and to take a good rest after his labours; before now I have taken a nap into the bargain. On resuming his sport, he will find that he shoots all the steadier for it. When shooting in company, and generally speaking, it is best to be in pairs, the sportsman next the water, if there is only a narrow strip of marsh skirting the edge of the jheel, as is often the case, will probably get more shots than his comrade on the land side, so it is a good plan every now and then to change places. Always carry a couple of cartridges loaded with duck-shot in a small upper pocket ready at hand to be slipped in in place of the snipe charges.¹ In large jheels, flights of duck and teal sometimes pass over head and give good chances.

In Bundelkund the natives make a practice of growing patches of rice in the vicinity, and below the level of large tanks of water. The crop is kept moist by allowing a small stream of water to trickle through from the tank. These places are, above all others, favourite resorts of snipe. The sportsman should wait till the villagers cut the crop of rice, or he will do much harm walking backwards and forwards in it; when the rice has been harvested, there is usually a long wet stubble left, and here the long-bills delight to dabble about; and, generally speaking, such a spot as I have described is a certain find. There are also in some parts of the country slow, winding rivers,

¹ It is a good plan to make a *fixed* rule always to keep different coloured cartridges for the various sizes of shot you are in the habit of using. By adhering closely to this rule you can carry them always in one bag or pocket, and yet be able at a glance when necessary to select what you may require to load your gun with.

such as the Surjoo, in Oude, and the sources of the Goomtee, in Philibheet; along the banks of which every now and then, are corners and bays fringed with rushes and grass, affording excellent cover for snipe. The sportsmen—there should be two guns, one on each bank, keeping exactly opposite to each other—may wander for miles and miles, each turn in the river opening out fresh views and new country; and not only are the ‘chahas’—as the natives call snipe—abundant, and afford capital sport, but every now and then a spring of teal or flight of duck, aroused by the firing, pass over head, and keeping over the water, as they invariably do, run the gauntlet, and receive the fire of both the gunners. This kind of shooting is, in my opinion, more enjoyable, and the sport superior to jheel shooting, or walking backwards and forwards in a marsh; but it is unfortunately exceptional to meet with rivers such as I have above described.

It may be only fancy, but I cannot help thinking that it is the case,—for I speak from experience,—that though to all appearance the same bird in both countries, the snipe one flushes in England on a frosty morning out of a ditch, or from the edge of a stream, is a swifter and more twisting flyer, and considerably more difficult to bring down, than the bird which the sportsman in Bengal puts up out of a rice-field or edge of a swamp.

I have heard of very large bags being made by a single gun in one day, such as fifty and sixty couple. I myself have never killed over thirty-eight couple (besides seventeen duck and teal) in a single day. I once made one of a party of three at Jhansie, when the bag reached eighty-seven and a half couple, besides over forty head of duck; and on another occasion I succeeded in shooting twenty-seven and a half couple of snipe and three quail before twelve o’clock, which perhaps was my best performance; this, I find by my game-book, was on October 8th, 1871, which year was a particularly good one for long-bills; moreover, the above was the opening day of the season, and the reason I left off shooting so early was that I ran short of cartridges.

There is always a little friendly rivalry at a station, who shall make the first bag of snipe. I had already made three rounds in the neighbourhood in search of any advanced guards, but had been most unfortunate, for the grand total of my bags on these three expeditions was one jack snipe. On this occasion I started on horseback about six o’clock in the morning, accompanied by one attendant and a red setter.

We visited various patches of water, but with no result, and I began to think that my luck would never change. I was riding along the edge of a kind of canal, about nine o'clock, when dog Dash poked up a snipe, which crossed the water and dropped within thirty yards, but on the other side, and the water between was broad and deep; if I wished to get a shot at the bird, I must retrace my steps a good half mile to a bridge, and then come back along the opposite bank. Now where this single bird had pitched was a most likely piece of ground for snipe, a long patch of marsh about fifty yards wide; but only three days before I had walked over every foot of this very place, got one shot, and only slew the jack snipe already mentioned, which was not encouraging.

I debated within myself whether it was worth while to take the trouble of making such a round, especially as it was time to be off to breakfast, unless I meant to make a day of it. At length I determined to have a look, as peradventure the long-bills might have come in since my last visit. So marking carefully by a bush the spot where the bird I had seen had dropped, I went round, and on arriving within a hundred yards of the ground, left my horse under a tree, dropped in a couple of cartridges, and walked up. I had hardly taken a dozen steps when a whisp of at least twenty birds rose close in front of me; two barrels into the brown of them, dropped three, and the whistling of the leaden shower among their ranks had the effect I had hoped for; instead of keeping together, they spread and dropped one here, another there, all over the place.

This looked like business. I retraced my steps to the tree where I had left my syce and pony; first tied the latter up with a rope, and took the man with me. I then took off my collar and neck-cloth, filled my pockets with cartridges, and tucked up my sleeves; back we went, and for the next hour and a half I fired away, for the birds were exceedingly plentiful, and lay like stones. At last, on demanding for about the tenth time from my attendant a fresh supply of cartridges to replenish my empty pockets, the reply I had been expecting for some time came out: 'Aur kuchh nahin hain, Sahib,' or, 'There are no more, Sir.' I had fired away every shot in the locker, or rather every cartridge in the bag, and I had come out with eighty. We returned to where the pony was tied up, and counted the slain, and, as I have already mentioned, the bag reached twenty-seven and a half couple of snipe and three quail; one quail and two snipe my dog had

failed to retrieve; but the result was satisfactory. Had I come provided with as many more cartridges as I had expended, I think I could have killed my fifty couple by two o'clock; but as it was, I felt more than satisfied with the morning's sport, and directing my man to follow at his leisure, I rode back at a good pace, and reached home just as the twelve o'clock gun was fired.

About the middle of March snipe begin again to collect in whisps, and by April 1, warned by the first blasts of hot wind, they are away to other climes. I find a note in my game-book of a strange occurrence. On May 2, 1871, when out tiger shooting, and when the hot weather had regularly set in, I shot seven snipe, and flushed several more on the edge of a tank near a village named Goorsora in the Lullutpore district. What had caused these birds to delay their departure so late I cannot imagine. I remember that when cooked they appeared to be thin, and wanting the flavour for which snipe are so justly famed.

Indian sportsmen cannot have failed to notice the number of hawks and falcons collected near jheels in the cold weather, and some of the smaller kinds appear to prey almost entirely on snipe, the larger ones on ducks. I have many times had a bird just fallen to my shot snatched up by one of these rascals; the marsh harrier (*Circus æruginosus*) is especially troublesome; several times it has been necessary to fire at the robber before he would drop the bird that he had seized, and on two occasions I have killed hawks with my snipe in their clutches.

Natives, generally speaking, name their birds by a word resembling its particular cry or call, and nothing, in my opinion, can be better or more exact than 'chāha' for the little long-bill.

The general habits of the snipe in India are so similar to those of the English bird, that there is no necessity to enter into further details. ✓

III.—THE JACK SNIPE (*Gallinago gallinula*, LINNÆUS).

THIS well-known bird corresponds exactly, I believe, with our own little juckock, and does not require describing, nor can I remember or find anything noted down in particular regarding him. He rises

in the same silent way, and after a short flight drops again, as in England.

I remember a pool of water in Assam where I invariably found a few couple of jacks, but never once saw a full snipe, which was so far remarkable that I do not think such a thing commonly occurs. Some gunners do not fire at jacks, but that in my opinion is a mistake; though a little chap, he is worth a charge.

Jerdon remarks: 'It makes its appearance later than the common snipe, and departs earlier.' Curiously enough, as regards the first part of this assertion, I had made a note to the contrary before I ever read the above, for when at Jhansie, I noticed that for three successive years we found and shot the little judcock before a full snipe had been seen, and I have been confirmed in this opinion by several experienced sportsmen. ✓

IV.—THE WOOD SNIPE. (CALLED ALSO SOLITARY SNIPE.)

(*Gallinago nemoricola*, HODGSON.)

DESCRIPTION.

- Top of head black, white on throat, breast light brown, with numerous spots and short bars of dark brown; abdomen, dull white, barred transversely with black; back deep black, with numerous longitudinal splashes of light reddish brown. Tail, black at the lower part, chestnut at tip.

THIS fine bird is seldom met with by the sportsman except in certain localities.

In size it is midway between the woodcock and common snipe, and many of the feathers, especially on the back, much resemble the mottled plumage of the former.

- The flight is heavy and sluggish, much like that of the woodcock, but not so rapid. The wood snipe often lies very close, and on rising utters a hoarse croak; after circling about for a moderate distance it generally settles again not far off.

It inhabits swamps surrounded by thicket and high grass, and generally situated at the foot of low bush-covered hills near the base of the Himalayas, in preference to open marshes, such as the common snipe delights to frequent. It often associates in small parties; I have seen three rise almost simultaneously from the margin of the same pool.

I have known old sportsmen who have shot all over the country, and have not seen, much less killed, one of these birds. I have twice been fortunate enough to meet with this snipe: once near the foot of the Himalayas I flushed one from the corner of a marshy pool, but so suddenly that I was unprepared, and before I could get my gun up he was gone. I did not see another 'nemoricola' for many years, till when shooting in the Philibheet district in January 1872, I came across not one, but over a dozen of these birds; they were close to one another. I was with my brother-in-law at the time; we had gone out one morning to shoot snipe from off the back of a pair of elephants we had with us, each in a howdah. The marsh was covered with a very high kind of rush, so that it would have been impossible to see sufficiently well to shoot on foot.

We soon put up several common snipe, and presently my companion fired at one, and I then saw a large dark bird, which I thought at the time was a solitary snipe, rise with a croak, and after curving about drop close by; we went up, and not one, but three rose, two of which fell to our shots. We soon found several more, and nine were killed altogether; they offered the easiest of shots, and did not rise till the elephants were close on them. They were particularly fine, gamey birds, and proved most excellent for the table. I stuffed two of the least shot among the lot, and have them still in my collection.

V.—THE HIMALAYAN SOLITARY SNIPE (*Gallinago solitaria*, HODGSON).

HERE we come to a bird with which I am unacquainted, so I borrow Jerdon's description.

DESCRIPTION.

Head, above brown, with pale superciliary lines; a dark band from the base of the bill, gradually lost in ear-coverts; upper plumage much as in the common snipe, but the whole of the feathers more spotted and barred with rufous; a conspicuous pale buff stripe along the scapular and inner edge of the wing; primaries brown, with a narrow pale edging externally, and the innermost tipped with white; secondaries and tertiaries broadly barred with dark brown and pale rufous. Tail, deep black at the base, with a broad sub-terminal band of bright ashy rufous, tipped brown, and the extreme tip pale; outermost rectrices olive brown with white dashes or white and brown bars, passing into white on the abdomen and vent, with some olivaceous bands on the upper

belly and flanks, and the sides of the vent and under tail-coverts whitish.

Bill.—Reddish brown; Irides dark.

Feet.—Greenish yellow.

Length.—12½ inches.

Extent.—20 inches.

Wing.—6¼ inches.

Tail.—3½ inches.

Bill at front, 2¾ inches.

Tarsus, 1½ inch.

Middle toe, 1½ inch.

Weight.—6½ ounces.

He continues: 'The Himalayan Solitary Snipe has hitherto only been found in the Himalayas, and no details of its peculiar haunts are recorded. It inhabits thin forests near swampy ground, and in winter has been killed at from 3,000 to 6,000 feet of elevation.'

Once, I firmly believe, I came across this bird, but, as is usually the case on such occasions, had no gun with me. It was on the edge of a small lake above the northern bank of the Pindur in Gurwhal, called 'Goomur Tal.' Having just arrived from a long march I took my setter down to give him a swim in the lake. There were some rushes and low cover on the margin, and my dog put up a heavy large snipe, which I am convinced was *Gallinago solitaria*, but unfortunately it made away.

VI.—THE PAINTED SNIPE (*Rhynchæa Bengalensis*, LINNÆUS).

DESCRIPTION.

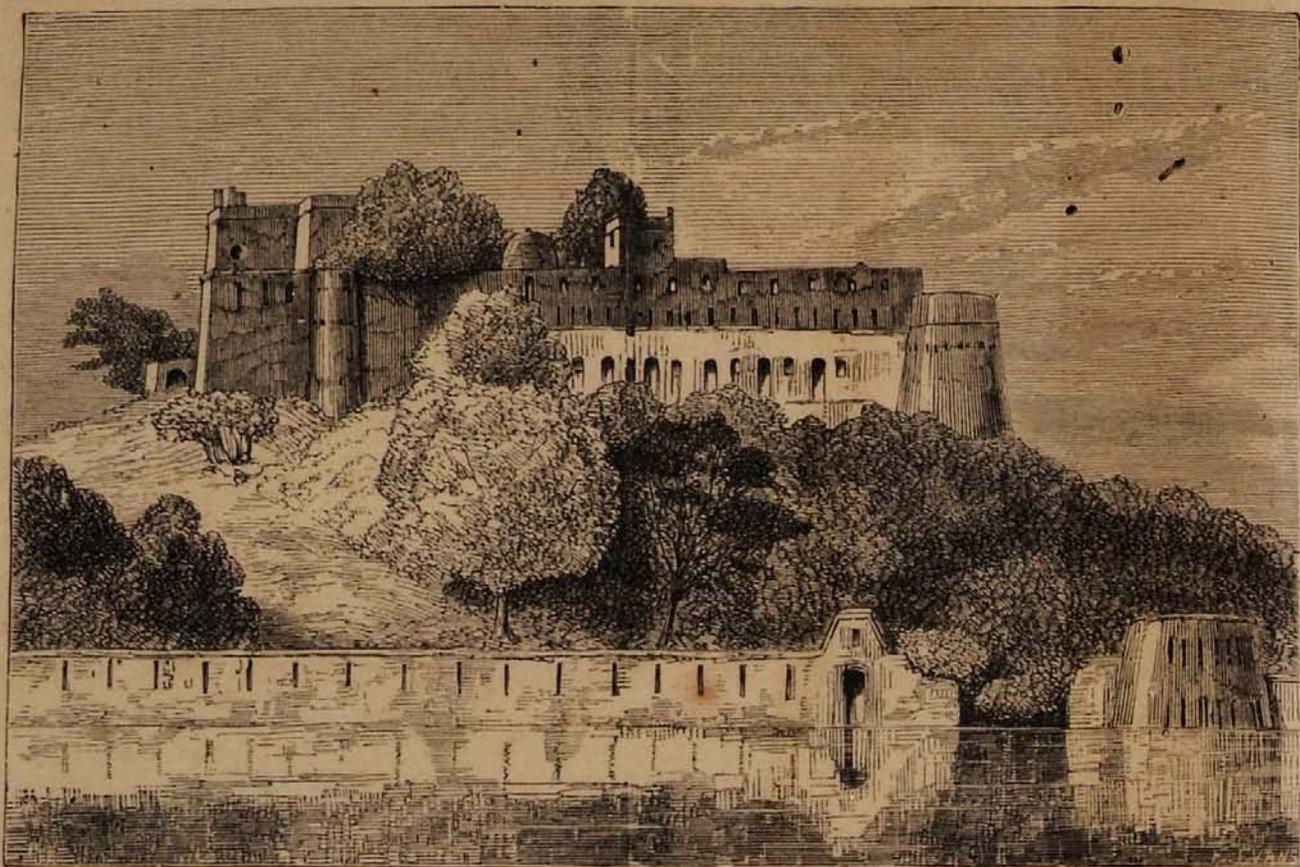
Larger and stands higher than common snipe; bill shorter and curved at the tip.

Bill light brown; chin dull white; upper part of head dark brown, with a light streak down the centre, also yellow streak behind the eye; a white bar across lower part of breast, and extending above rounding of wings; upper part of breast dark and speckled; lower part dull white, as also thighs, which have several long white feathers covering them; wings and back dark olive brown, glossed in places with green, and barred with yellow; tail dark grey, transversely barred with yellow; legs green.

THIS bird, although included in the game list, is no true snipe, and in my opinion is not at any time worth firing at. It offers the easiest of shots, flying quite slowly, and very like a common snipe that has been sorely wounded. Generally speaking when one is flushed, there are others not far distant. They often spring from very thick short reeds, where no true snipe would be found. They do not leave us for other climes, but remain and breed in the plains. My friend H—s informs me that he has often found the young of the painted snipe in

Lullutpore, and that the bird makes its nest about July among the sedge bordering jheels. When hatched the young resemble the young of the moorhen, but with the beak longer. The marking and diversity of colour on the wings of this bird are most beautiful; but it is much inferior to the snipe as a bird for the table, and offers no sport in the pursuit of it.

Jerdon tells us: 'In this genus the females are not only larger than the males, but they are also much more richly coloured.'



FORT OF BURWAH SAGAR, NEAR JHANSIE.

CHAPTER X.

ON WILD-FOWL SHOOTING IN INDIA.

While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.—MILTON.

BEFORE taking each one of the birds comprising our long list of Indian geese and ducks, and describing their particular ways and habits, I purpose saying a few words on the above subject, and the general method adopted in India to meet with success.

American writers on field sports constantly inform us that 'nowhere in the world are wild fowl so plentiful as in their own country.' Travellers and sportsmen who have visited Egypt, Canada, China, and other countries, tell the same tale of their belief and experience; but

I think Indians who have, during their service in the tropics, visited certain parts of Upper India—and doubtless it is much the same throughout the country—will bear me out when I say that the countless thousands that visit the country in the cold season, driven south by hard weather from other latitudes, can hardly be surpassed in numbers or varieties in any other part of the world. In Gorruckpore, Allyghur, Oude, Central India—all over the country, in fact—there are jheels and tanks where wild fowl congregate in dense clouds. Every Indian can recall to mind—for there is hardly one among us who, however little he cares for shooting, will not now and then have had a shot at wild duck—how, on some cold-weather morning, after creeping up to the edge of a jheel, where, from the quacking and general conversation kept up, he has reason to believe that sundry of the *Anas* family are collected, he has taken his shot 'into the brown' to commence the day with. Who can forget, when that first shot was fired, the tremendous roar caused by the wings of the rising thousands?

Their rising all at once was like the sound
Of thunder heard remote.

Then, as the gunner hastily reloads, what a scene is there overhead and around; what a whistling of wings and variety of calls and cries from the different swimmers and waders thus suddenly aroused into activity, as they wheel and soar round and round, some making off to other resorts, but the greater number pitching again in the water and reeds around.

There are certain of the duck tribe that remain altogether in the country, breeding on the banks of rivers and jheels—such as the spotted-billed duck and other species—but by far the greater number spend the hot-weather months in other climes, to which they migrate about the end of March; some disappear before. Most of these migrants are similar to, or merely varieties of species, that during the winter months visit the shores of Britain. They again return to India early, in October, to some districts sooner, to others later, but the first week in October is about the general time. I believe the migration of wild fowl depends greatly on the weather they experience in the cold countries they visit. I have noticed that near the foot of the Himalayas wild fowl arrive earlier than they do farther south; for instance, I see, from the notes in my old Game Register, that when stationed at Allyghur, in the North-Western Provinces, we shot

both duck and snipe on September 15th, but that at Jhansie, much farther south and more central, we did not once, in three successive seasons, shoot or find a bird till the middle of the first week in October. This is easily to be accounted for; the whole of our Indian wild fowl migrate to and return from the north, and I believe, though I am not perfectly certain on this point, that snipe breed in countries to the north of India, and return south from the same quarter as the geese and duck. Naturally, after their long flight south, the birds drop to rest and refresh themselves on the first and nearest patches of water and marsh that they meet with; and this accounts for their being found, in the first instance, on those lakes and jheels in the north of India below the Himalayas, and for their afterwards spreading themselves farther south.

There are several large lakes, such as the Pangong Lake, in Ladak, the Rhavan and Manasarowar Lakes, south of the Karakoram range of mountains, in Chinese Thibet, the Paltee Lake, near Lassa, and others to the north of Nepaul, and travellers who have visited these pieces of water during the summer months have reported that their banks and surface literally teem with thousands of wild fowl which have retired to these secluded spots for breeding purposes. And doubtless, though certain of the *Anatidæ* may journey much farther north to the lakes of Turkestan, and even Siberia, yet the Manasarowar and other lakes only a short distance, comparatively speaking, beyond the Himalayas, probably afford a refuge and breeding-place to the great proportion of the myriads of wild fowl which journey south and scatter themselves over the plains of India towards the close of the month of September.

In 1863, after spending upwards of two months in Thibet, I recrossed the snowy range towards the end of July, and to avoid the rains below—easily discernible by masses of dense clouds that filled the lower valleys—I kept rather high up for a month or two, about 12,000 feet, hunting thar and burhel, and also collecting the skins of moonal and other pheasants. One bright moonlight night early in September (the 8th, I find) I was encamped on the summit of a range of hills, and soon after dark, when sitting round the log fire, as was my custom, and conversing with some shepherds, who were grazing their flocks on the hills around, our attention was taken by the sound of birds' wings, and the quacking and chuckling of wild ducks. They were passing from north to south. As it got later the whistling of pinions increased;

and although we could not see the birds, there must have been many thousands crossing overhead. I was hoping that this exodus would have continued till daylight, but no; the following morning, though I was constantly on the look-out, not a bird was to be seen. I distinctly recognised the deep call of the Brahminy duck among the passing host high overhead; twice also I heard the peculiar whistling notes of the widgeon, which is not a very common bird in India. There were no geese apparently; their deep cry, if heard, could not have been mistaken. These birds were undoubtedly *en route* to the plains, for it was just the time of year when wild fowl arrive there, and likely enough they were coming from the very spots already mentioned.

Wild ducks are generally found in India resting and feeding on patches of water, with more or less cover, such as reeds, rushes, and grass on the edge. These 'jheels,' as they are called, much resemble the lakes and tarns of Ireland and Scotland. Some of them are very large, but generally speaking the best sport is to be found in the smaller-sized lakes and tanks, where the birds, being collected in a smaller compass, are more easily got at. There are certain jheels, well-known and famed for duck-shooting, where year after year the birds assemble in thousands, and remain throughout the whole season, in spite of being constantly persecuted by sportsmen and netted by natives. There are other lakes, to all appearance, just as likely, but which are not popular with the birds; probably in the latter places there is some description of weed or water-plant wanting, which the ducks require for their food. Besides jheels, there are regular tanks or ponds in many parts of the country—the Central Provinces, for instance—where the water is dammed up by high earthen mounds or walls. These reservoirs are often favourite places for various kinds of wild fowl; then again, there are certain narrow, winding, sluggish rivers, which are also favourite resorts, for duck and teal especially.

The first generally to arrive is the little teal; nearly always, in fact, a flight of teal is the advance-guard of the main body. Geese and coolang are also early comers; then the gadwall, pintail, and others flock in; the last to come and the last to go is the blue-winged teal or garganey. Some kinds of wild duck are partial to certain parts of the country, and do not resort to others; for instance, no wild duck is more common in the tanks and ponds in the Saugor and Nagode country than the beautiful pintail. Yet in the Jhansie district, not far distant,

we seldom shot many of that species, perhaps one or two in a day's sport, but not more. Again, in the large jheels about Jhansie there were nearly always one or two large flights of the red-crested pochard; but at Allyghur, though we occasionally found and shot this bird, it was not nearly so plentiful; and I might give many other instances.

The little teal seems to be abundant everywhere; even far away south in the Assam jungles any likely patch of water would be almost sure to hold one or two flights of these little beauties. They will often be found paddling about on flooded ground, with water only a few inches deep, as they are surface-feeders. It would be exceptional to find in such a spot any of the pochard tribe—birds with their legs far back to assist them to dive to the bottom for their food. These latter birds resort to jheels and tanks, where the water is comparatively deep; so does the pintail. It is a pretty sight to see a flock of the latter feeding; not diving out of sight, but with their heads down and tails in the air, plucking off the weeds and shoots that grow beneath the surface. Many of our common English wild ducks are rare in India, and *vice versá*. The mallard is by no means a common bird in Bengal, although it is occasionally to be met with. I have only seen it at all plentiful in one district, and that was Philibheet. The widgeon, again, is not often shot; but the gadwall, an uncommon bird in Britain, is very plentiful in India. The ruddy shieldrake, one of the rarest of birds in England, is met with everywhere in India, and so on. Our Nimrods are very careless about naming their game correctly. I have constantly heard the dark brown little white-eyed duck miscalled widgeon. The gadwall very often is erroneously named mallard, and I remember a gentleman—a good sportsman too—actually disputing with me that he was right in naming the spotted-billed duck a mallard. These miscallings give rise to much confusion and mistakes when accounts of shooting trips are sent to newspapers and magazines, leading the public to wrong conclusions.

Duck-shooting is carried on in various ways, according to the description and size of the water and the surrounding country. In some very large jheels little will be done without boats and numerous guns; in others, you can get very good sport alone and shooting from the bank. Sometimes, especially in jheels and ponds with little cover, the birds, after a few shots have been fired, make off, while in

others the gunner may fire away all day, and they will only go from one place to another. This is generally the case in extensive pieces of water. In some of our lakes there are corners where the tall reeds and grass afford concealment and protection from the sun, and yet are not so thick at the bottom as to prevent the birds from swimming about; there, about midday, a sportsman in a boat, punted along silently by a man behind him, will get sometimes capital sport; birds will keep rising one or two at a time within distance, while others only a few score yards farther on, from laziness, or because they are partly concealed, will not take wing till the noise of the approaching boat makes them fly up. The first time a duck-shooter visits a jheel he should mark well the course and direction the ducks take when flying round or going away altogether; it will likely enough assist him to fill his bag on a future visit. There are, generally speaking, certain points of land jutting out into jheels, or small islands, over which the birds continually keep crossing, and from whence a gunner, if tolerably well concealed, will get more shots and at closer distances than his companion labouring and following the birds from place to place.

About five miles from Jhansie there was a beautiful lake, surrounded by high hills. Unfortunately the back of one of these hills was used by the battery of artillery stationed at Jhansie as a 'butt,' and when the gunners were out at practice, it was of little use visiting the spot for sporting purposes. The heavy booming of howitzers and guns close by was too much for the feelings of the wild duck inhabiting the lake, and each morning, at the discharge of the first nine-pounder, they made off *en masse*.

At other times this lake was a favourite resort of mine in the cold season. It was not far distant from the river Betwah, and about sundown swarms of wild fowl, early in the season especially, poured into the jheel from the river to feed all night. Knowing this habit, I often drove or rode out from Jhansie of an afternoon to the spot, procured a boat from a village hard by, with a man to guide it, and then made for a creek at the far end of the lake, bordered on each side by high rushes and reeds, and a favourite feeding-ground for wild ducks. We hid ourselves at the farthest point of the creek, overlooking a long strip of open water running down the centre of it, and at the same time facing in the direction of the setting sun, so that in the short Eastern twilight we might see the wild fowl more clearly as they flew between us and the sky, where the last gleam of day still lingered.

Presently they would begin to arrive, and if luck favoured us, a goodly flight, after circling around, would prepare to pitch, though not on this occasion to feed, for it was a case of 'first come first served,' and the breech-loader was brought into play. Then the scared wild ducks would make off, leaving perhaps one or two of their number behind; but, hardly are the fresh cartridges dropped into the barrels, when another flight appears on the horizon, to meet with a similar reception; and so the sport continues for perhaps half an hour, when it becomes too dark to see to shoot longer. I have on three or four occasions, in a short space of time, shot over twenty duck and teal in this manner; and one evening, a friend and I, assisted by the light of a brilliant moon, bagged thirty-eight duck, besides losing at least half a score more in the darkness.

The flight of some ducks is much swifter than that of others. The little teal, especially when flying singly, surpasses, I think, all others in this respect. The pintail is another very rapid flyer, as also is the little white-eyed duck. The larger pochards, though powerful, and taking heavy blows to bring them down, are not so quick on the wing as those I have previously mentioned.

I have already said that small jheels can be commanded and shot from the edge with facility, but that in large jheels boats are necessary. Generally speaking, it is of little use for a single gunner to attempt by himself to shoot large patches of water; he will probably only alarm and drive the fowl off, without doing much execution; whereas with six or seven guns a good account of the ducks might have been given. I have often been one of a party of this kind, and I will describe the usual way of proceeding on such occasions. ✓

A day is chosen for the expedition; probably Thursday, as that day, through the kindness of our late Commander-in Chief, is strictly ordered to be a day of no parades or duty of any sort except what is absolutely necessary. Men are sent on before to pitch a tent near the lake fixed on for the duck-shooting, and to have breakfast ready at an appointed hour the following morning, for the arrival of certain hungry Nimrods. Instructions are also given to some trustworthy individual to collect a sufficient number of boats and get them ready the preceding evening. Sometimes duck-boats, usually made of wood, or with wooden framework covered with hides, are borrowed and sent out, should anyone in the station possess such things. I had one for several years, but sold it, finding that the expense of keeping

it in repair, and sending it out carried by four coolies, was too great. But the usual contrivance used by sportsmen for wild-fowl shooting on water, is made as follows: Two 'dug-outs,' or canoes made of logs hollowed out, are lashed firmly together side by side. About a yard or so from the bows, a native bedstead or charpoÿ, usually borrowed from the nearest village for the occasion, is placed across both boats, legs uppermost, and fastened by ropes in its place. The sportsman sits on the bedstead with one leg in each canoe, his cartridges by his side, and is propelled along by two natives using poles, and standing behind him, one in each canoe. This makes a tolerably steady and safe platform, from which a sitting shot can be taken with ease, and the only difficulty is to take a shot when a bird rises or passes on the right hand. Each sportsman should be accompanied by a sharp fellow in a single canoe, to assist him in retrieving the wounded and slain, or in putting up ducks that have settled on open water, where it would be useless attempting to get at them.

A certain number of birds, more or less, according as the cover into which they fall is thick or the contrary, are always lost in duck-shooting. It is a good plan, just before coming away after a day's shooting, when several birds have been lost, for one of the sportsmen to take a good retriever with him and examine the edge of the lake, where there is sufficient cover to conceal the wounded. Winged birds always eventually make for shore, though at first they may fall and dive about in the middle of a lake to elude their enemies. Some kinds of ducks, if winged by a shot, are pretty easily captured, while others, especially the pochards, are very difficult to retrieve, and I have often seen two or three boats take a quarter of an hour or more in open water before they could tire out one of these birds. With a dog it is a much easier matter, of course; but really good retrievers for this description of sport are seldom met with in India. As a general rule I would recommend the sportman not to attempt to pursue or catch a slightly wounded diving duck such as the pochard, especially if it has fallen into deep water, but to remain perfectly quiet, and presently the bird will be almost certain to reappear within shot and a second barrel gives him his quietus.

Of late years Government have encouraged the British soldiers to employ their spare time in shooting by lending them old smooth-bore muskets, capital weapons, by-the-way, for duck-shooting. The measure is excellent, but the result is that a jheel, lake, or river anywhere in

the neighbourhood of a large cantonment, is perpetually being visited, and shots fired at the birds on it. The wild ducks on such waters consequently soon become wary, and it is necessary in these times to look for good sport farther away from our large stations than in former years.

On reaching one of our Indian lakes in the middle of the day, especially if the sun is unusually warm, anyone unacquainted with the habits of wild duck would be apt to imagine that the water was deserted, and not a bird in the vicinity, so quiet and still everything appears, without a sound of any kind. But the sportsman who knows what he is about, will before leaving examine carefully with a telescope, if he has one, the edge of the jheel. Flocks of birds may be hidden by the reeds, or sitting with their heads under their wings basking in the sun on the muddy bank. I have found them many a time, under the above circumstances, collected in thousands, and with a little care the gunner may creep up and pour in a deadly volley of shot.

I have already stated that natives are in the habit of netting wild fowl during the cold weather. I have known hundreds taken in a single night by simply placing a net about six feet broad, propped up with sticks, across certain spots where the birds fly low before pitching to feed. The mesh of these nets is just large enough to hold a duck's head when thrust through, and in the darkness the birds fly up against the net, become entangled, and before they can extricate themselves a man comes in a boat and pops them into a basket. Where this netting work is much carried on, fowl naturally become extremely wary.

When shooting by myself, without a boat, I have found it an excellent plan, when the wild ducks are sitting on open water out of gun-shot, to fire a rifle bullet skipping along the surface. This is a most effectual way of causing every bird to take wing, and by hiding up, with good luck, a flock may come within distance.

There are two species of wild duck, mentioned by Jerdon as occasionally found in Bengal and our North-Western Provinces, which I regret to say I never have come across, and am therefore unable to include in my list. They are both rare in India. The first is the pink-headed duck (*Anas caryophyllacea*), and the second the Smew (*Mergellus albellus*), the latter by no means rare in the winter months on the shores of Britain.

CHAPTER XI.

WILD GEESE.

Up they rose with cry and clamour
With a whirr and beat of pinions.—LONGFELLOW.

I.—COMMON WILD GOOSE (*Anser cinereus*, MEYER).

It is unnecessary to describe this well-known bird, for I believe it to be exactly the same as the common grey goose that visits our shores in winter. In northern India, towards the end of September, or early in October, wild geese arrive in large flocks from the North, probably from Siberia and other climes. In company with the coolung or crane, they are among the earliest to appear. There are certain spots where year after year they congregate and pass the winter. In the Allyghur district thousands of wild geese spread all over the country, and a jheel close to a large Jāt village called Somna was, years ago, early in the season, an especially favourite place for them, as also for both descriptions of coolung.

Early in the morning the sportsman will find the birds feeding on the crops. Young wheat or grain is a favourite food, and they are most destructive to the corn of the villagers. They generally are cunning enough to keep well away from high cover, which might give concealment to an enemy; but now and then, by taking advantage of a piece of sugar-cane, a field of dhal, or some other high-standing crop, the gunner may make a successful stalk, as I have done many a time. Moreover, the birds are so taken up with their morning meal, that this is the best time of the day to get a shot at them. When the sun gets high and powerful, the flock takes wing with loud clamour, and makes straight for the banks of some neighbouring river, where,

during the heat of the day, they lie asleep till late in the afternoon on some sandy island or mud-bank, well out of harm's way. I have seen hundreds of geese about mid-day on the churs or islands of the Ganges and Jumna basking in the sun, with their heads under their wings. Towards sunset they again take flight to their feeding grounds, passing generally in a direct line from the river to the fields of young corn, grain, or swamp, and at no great height from the ground. A sportsman, by watching the birds and studying their habits, may waylay them as they pass to and fro, and get several shots; but the geese, after being fired at once or twice, become wary, keep higher in the air, and avoid spots from whence the gunner has spread death in their ranks. When lying on these sandy banks in the heat of the day, one or two vigilant sentinels generally keep wide awake to protect their comrades, though I have stolen a march on them now and then.

Many years ago, when proceeding by steamer with troops up the Ganges, we grounded and stuck fast for several days below Ghazee-pore;—no unusual event, by the way, on these trips—and a comrade, A——d of the 27th, and I amused ourselves by exploring the surrounding country with our guns, but met with little success so far as sport was concerned.

For two or three days in succession we had noticed a large flock of geese, settle about 10 or 11 o'clock on a long strip of sand in the middle of the river; there must have been several hundreds of birds, but the spot was so open, without a particle of cover anywhere near, that there appeared to be no hope of out-manceuvring them, and getting within shot. While watching them one day from the high bank of the river we noticed several large native boats, with sails up, pass close by the geese without alarming the flock, or even attracting their attention; and my companion observed, 'If we could only get on board a native boat we might have a capital chance;' and then I remembered that about half a mile above there was a ghat or ferry, with several dinghies plying to and fro; so we made our way there, and after some little trouble hired a long narrow boat with two men. The current of the river, which was running very strong, rapidly brought us in the required direction, without the use of either sail or oar. We lay down at the bottom of the boat, with our guns heavily loaded with B.B., in readiness, and directed one of the boatmen to steer us alongside of the sandbank. We presently glided within twenty or thirty

yards of the birds; and then, when all too late, one of the sleepy sentinels became suspicious of danger, and gave a croak of alarm, which was followed by the appearance of numerous heads from under wings. The next moment we poured in a raking volley, which left five birds dead on the sand; another dropped, with a broken wing, in the water, and I saw a seventh tumble head over heels into a clump of bushes on the river-bank; we recovered them all, and returned to the steamer in triumph.

On another occasion I was not so successful in a wild-goose chase, which occurred near Jhansie. I was out fishing a few miles below a place called Oorcha, but had brought a gun with me as usual. I observed some twenty or thirty grey geese, about mid-day, settle on an island in the middle of the river Betwah. They were too far from either bank to admit of a successful shot, though the river was not very broad at the spot; but at one end of the long shelving bank on which they were collected there was a mass of large rocks. If I could only get behind these boulders without being discovered I could obtain a fine chance for a shot. I had been wading when fishing for mahseer, and was already wet, so did not mind going into the water. Entering the river about three hundred yards above the island, and stooping, so as to get the rocks between myself and the geese, and thus screen me from their view, I slowly advanced, making as little splashing as possible. I had almost arrived within distance, with the water above my knees, when, just as I was preparing to land and peep over, I observed a long dark object, which I had hitherto taken for the upper portion of a slab of rock, slowly sliding into the river. Horror! it was a huge muggur, or crocodile. The chances are he would not have touched me, but the very idea of such a monster being close at hand was too much for my feelings, and, without thinking more of the geese, I made direct for the shore as fast as possible, and the next moment had the mortification to see the flock, which now had perceived me, rise in the air and make off.

The sportsman should avoid, if possible, taking his shot at a goose when flying towards him, for unless struck in the head or neck or a wing broken the feathers on the breast of this bird are so thick that even the heaviest shot often prove ineffectual. Always watch a bird that has evidently been struck, especially if he keeps wagging his tail as he makes off; likely enough, after proceeding many hundred yards, he will suddenly collapse and fall dead with a 'whop' that may

be heard a long way off. These birds are considered by many as coarse food for the table, but I have known them late in the season, when well fed with corn, to be most excellent; and when jugged in the same manner as a hare, a wild goose is not to be despised.

I have often attempted, when a flight of geese have taken up their station in some unapproachable position, such as an island in the middle of some large river, to try what effect a rifle-bullet would have among their ranks. One would imagine that a dense flock of birds huddled together would be an easy mark, but the contrary is my experience. Only once did a rifle-bullet prove successful, and on that occasion it cut off the head of a gander and passed through the body of an old goose close to him.

II.—THE BAR-HEADED GOOSE (*Anser indicus*, GMELIN).

THIS bird in general habits much resembles the common species, but it is, I believe, only found in India. It appears to arrive about the same time, and doubtless from the same countries; and early in October spreads over the whole of our North-Western Provinces. At Allyghur they were exceedingly plentiful, more so than the common goose. At Agra, and between that and Muttra, they were also very numerous. They were not so common at Jhansie, and still less so towards Lullutpore. I shot the bird several times in Assam, though it is by no means plentiful, at any rate in that part of the province where I was stationed. Generally speaking, I have found it easier to stalk a flock of bar-headed geese than the common kind. I have on several occasions—twice in the Allyghur district—seen the two feeding in one large flock together, though they separated on taking wing. The bar-headed goose is considerably smaller and lighter than the common goose; it has a small, handsome head, with yellow bill, and the dark bars across the back of the head are very distinct, the bird having altogether a very game-like appearance.

The cry of this bird differs from that of the grey species. Though not very common about Jhansie, we yearly shot a number, and I can remember a very successful day's work at a flock of bar-headed. I had received information that some of these birds were in the habit,

early every morning, of feeding on some young corn in a field, where formerly a large piece of water had been kept in by a bund or bank. The natives had drained the water off, and sown their corn in the bed of this lake. Early one morning, in company with three friends, I drove out to reconnoitre the spot, and sure enough there were some fifty or sixty of the geese, but right in the middle of the field, where there was no cover. After a consultation we agreed that I—being lame at the time—should remain on the bund, and mark wounded birds, and also look out for a shot, while the other three were to surround the flock, and then suddenly, on an appointed signal, rapidly creep in from either side. Our plan succeeded exactly as we had hoped. The geese, on observing their enemies, stopped feeding, but, on account of the number of their foes, were puzzled for the moment in which direction to make off, and while yet considering they allowed my friends to get within range. R—d, who was on the right, opened the ball by knocking over two; the flock then wheeled towards S—y and T—r, who dropped two more; and they then came right over my head, and I shot a fifth; a sixth bird, badly wounded, was also recovered soon after.

III.—THE BLACK-BACKED GOOSE (*Sarcidiornis melanota*).

DESCRIPTION.

The male is a heavy, clumsy bird, with an extraordinary soft protuberance on the base of the upper mandible.

The neck dull white, spotted with black; the back and wings very dark glossy blue and green, much like the colouring of the Moonal pheasant on the wings.

The female—remarkable for its small size in comparison with the male—is without the deep colouring of that bird.

THE 'nuktah,' as this bird is called by the natives, is very common in many parts of the country. It is not a regular goose, and altogether differs from *A. cinereus* and *A. indicus*, far more resembling, in fact, a large duck, such as the muscovy, than a goose; nor does it migrate, like the true wild geese, but remains in India, and breeds in lakes and sluggish rivers, where reeds, rushes, and grass abound, affording cover

for the nest. During the rains they spread all over the country, and may often be seen feeding in flooded fields. Unlike the common wild goose, this bird is by no means wary, and does not make straight away from a jheel after the first few shots, as wild geese are in the habit of doing, but keeps circling round and round. The disparity in size between the male and female is most remarkable. I should say, though I have never weighed them, that the male is quite twice the weight of the female.

The black-backed goose seldom resorts to large open lakes devoid of cover, but prefers swamps and jheels covered with weeds and grass. I have shot ten of them in a day; they generally offer single shots, or perhaps a pair of birds come past together. When flying in a flock across from one place to another, I have noticed that they are not so particular in keeping a line or acute angle as the generality of wild-fowl; the flight is heavy and slow, but the wings and feathers of the body are very thick, and will resist any but large shot. The glossy dark green and purple feathers on the wings of the nuktah have often reminded me of the resplendent coat of the Moonal pheasant, which they very much resemble in tint and shade. Though a coarse ugly bird in appearance, it is a mistake to imagine that it is not good eating. I was always of this opinion till a friend assured me to the contrary, and rightly so; for when properly cooked it is an excellent bird for the table—superior, in my opinion, to the grey or bar-headed goose.

In addition to the three species of geese I have mentioned as common to Bengal, Jerdon tells us of the Pink-footed, the White-fronted, and the Dwarf Goose being occasionally found in Northern India. I regret to say that I have never had the good fortune to come across these birds, and imagine them to be rare visitors.

CHAPTER XII.

WILD DUCKS.

The falcon, poised on soaring wing,
Watches the wild duck by the spring.—SCOTT.

I.—THE MALLARD (*Anas boschas*).

THOUGH so very common during the winter months in Great Britain, the mallard is only occasionally met with by the Indian sportsman in Bengal. I am, however, told that it is exceedingly plentiful in the flooded parts of Upper Scinde. Nowhere have I found it plentiful, nor have I ever shot more than two in a day. In the cold weather of 1872 I was shooting in the neighbourhood of Philibheet, in Rohilkund, and came across several flights of mallard, besides single birds; in fact, the common wild duck was more plentiful there than in any other part of the country that I am acquainted with. At Allyghur I occasionally shot one or two, but never more. During three years' residence in Jhansie, though constantly out duck-shooting, I only bagged one mallard. I have been informed that it is found in the neighbourhood of Gorruckpore, where there are numerous fine lakes abounding with wild-fowl in the cold weather.

 II.—THE SPOTTED-BILLED DUCK (*Anas pæcilorhyncha*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Head above dark brown, a dark streak from base of bill along side of head; neck and breast, greyish white, spotted with dingy black, the spots becoming larger on

breast and below; feathers on upper part of back dingy black, each feather edged with light grey; rump black; tail brown. Greater wing-coverts white, bordered with black; speculum, dark bluish green, margined with black and white; bill dark, tip bright yellow, with a red lump at base.

Female.—Much resembles male, but is rather smaller.

THIS particularly fine and handsome duck is, I consider, the most remarkable of all our Indian wild-fowl. Jerdon tells us that it is peculiar to India, or at any rate to Asia. I have been informed that it is found in certain parts of China. It does not migrate from the plains, but stays and breeds in rivers and lakes where there is plenty of cover. It is called the 'nullah duck' by some sportsmen, on account of its resorting to nullahs or watercourses. In the Bombay Presidency I am told that it is often termed the 'silver-grey duck.' Unlike other wild fowl, it is seldom if ever seen on the banks of large rivers, such as the Ganges or Jumna; but prefers slow winding streams, with plenty of reeds, rushes, and grass on the margin. It also frequents jheels with the same description of cover. A pair, or four or five will usually be found together; sometimes more, but never large flights. On being alarmed, and rising, the bird utters a measured quack, several times repeated, similar to, and hardly to be distinguished from, the call of the mallard. In fact, it is often called mallard by sportsmen who are not particular about naming wild-fowl correctly. It is not a wary bird, except where often alarmed and fired at by gunners. The flight is heavy and sluggish; and if within common range one of these birds can hardly be missed. Moreover, it is brought down with a less heavy blow, and with greater ease, than many other wild ducks. I saw a pair of spotted-billed ducks exhibited at the Crystal Palace Poultry Show of 1874. They were priced at 100*l.*; but doubtless the owner did not wish to part with them, and for that reason put a fancy price on the birds. The spotted-billed duck is an excellent bird for the table—unrivalled, in fact. I have shot it all over the country, including Assam; but it was more numerous in Bundelkund than in any other province I am acquainted with.

I have never seen the nest, nor could I ever procure an egg. Jerdon tells us 'it nidificates on the ground, among long grass, laying eight or ten greenish-white eggs.'

III.—THE WIDGEON (*Anas Penelope*).

THIS bird, like the mallard, though one of our commonest visitors in England during the winter months, is by no means plentiful in India, or at any rate in our Northern Provinces. During a season I generally shot a few, perhaps ten or twelve, sometimes not so many. Like the mallard, birds are often shot, and called widgeon, which are not really so. The bird is a swift flyer and may be recognised from other fowl, when high in the air, by its whistling note.

IV.—THE PINTAIL DUCK (*Dasila acuta*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Bill, bluish. Head, back of neck, and throat, brownish, speckled with pale brown and black. Breast and belly, whitish, spotted with pale brown. The whole of the upper parts dusky black, margins pale, and transversely barred with white. Primaries, greyish. Speculum, greenish. Tail, long and greyish-brown. Under tail-coverts pale reddish-brown. Legs and toes blackish.

The general colour of the female is brown, marked with blackish-brown.

THIS beautiful bird, about the most elegant of all the duck tribe, visits our Indian provinces in vast flocks. I found it exceedingly common in the tanks and jheels of the Saugor and Rewah country, and plentiful in the neighbourhood of Allyghur, but not nearly so common in the Jhansie and Lullutpore districts, though we generally picked up a few couple in a day's sport. It is very plentiful in certain parts of Assam. A friend and I killed nineteen couple of duck one day off the Lowqua lake, opposite Tezpore, on the Berhampooter, and more than half the birds were pintails.

They are exceedingly rapid flyers, and are unsurpassed among wild-fowl for the table. The pintail duck is at once recognised, however high in the air, by its long outstretched neck, long pointed tail, and the amount of white in the under part of the body. It feeds under water, not diving under the surface altogether, like the pochards, but ducking under, with half the body above the water, in the manner that we

often see swans feeding. It is, generally speaking, an easy bird to approach, even when feeding on open pools of water, though naturally, where much persecuted by sportsmen, it requires a little care to stalk a flight of pintails.

V.—THE GADWALL (*Anas strepera*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Bill, lead colour. Irides, hazel. Head and neck, pale brown, speckled with dark brown. Back, grey, marked with grey lines. Point of the wing, small coverts, chestnut-brown, tinged with orange. Greater wing-coverts, primaries, and secondaries, blackish. Speculum, white. Tertiaries, tinged with brownish-grey, margins paler. Rump, upper and under tail-coverts, bluish-black. Tail, brown, with pale margins. Neck, dark grey. Under parts, white. Legs and toes, orange; claws, black.

The general colour of the female is brown, marked with pale brown. Under parts, white.

THIS fine heavy duck in Northern India takes the place as it were of the mallard, and is about the commonest of our large wild duck. I have found it more or less numerous in every part of the country, more especially in the Allyghur district. It was also exceedingly common in the tanks, lakes, and jheels around Jhansie. It is one of the early birds to arrive, and is excellent for the table.

VI.—THE SHIELDRAKE (*Tadorna vulpanser*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Beak, vermilion. Irides, brown. Head and neck, greenish-black. Lower part of neck, a broad white collar, a broad chestnut band on the breast passing round between the shoulders and upper part of back. Back, upper tail feathers, white. Scapulars, blackish, edged with rich red-brown. Tips of wings and wing-coverts, white. Primaries, brown. Speculum, green. Tail, white, black-tipped. A broad line on breast and belly, rich brown. Sides and under-parts, white. Legs and toes, pinkish.

Length.—About 24 inches.

The female resembles the male, but is not so richly coloured.

THIS bird is far less common in India than in Britain. Only once

have I ever met with it, and that was at Allghur.¹ I found a pair, and, after infinite trouble, killed the drake. The amount of white on the plumage of these two birds, although there were thousands of wild-fowl in company, drew my attention to them, and I was in great hopes that I had shot some rare description of duck, until I picked it up, when, by its peculiar shaped bill, I at once recognised the common shieldrake.

VII.—THE RUDDY SHIELDRAKE, OR BRAHMINY DUCK (*Tadorna rutila*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Beak, lead colour. Irides, yellowish-brown. Head, cheeks, chin, and throat almost white, gradually becoming a rich red-brown on the lower part of the neck and body; near the base there is a black ring. Shoulders and scapular feathers, pale buff. Primaries, dark grey or blackish. Speculum, metallic green. Tail, dark grey. Legs and toes, almost black.

Length.—About 25 inches.

The female is smaller, but much resembles the male, the black ring of the neck being absent.

I HAVE given a short description of this bird, as it is very rarely met with in England, though one of our commonest Indian ducks. I have heard it asserted that the ruddy shieldrake sometimes met with in Europe differs somewhat from our Indian bird; but, judging from stuffed specimens, I must confess that I can perceive no difference in the plumage of the two. Sportsmen hardly ever take notice of this bird, though by the way the 'chukwah-chukwee,' as the Hindoos call the Brahminy duck, seldom gives a chance to the gunner, being one of the most wide-awake of all wild-fowl; and, when in company with others, often spoils a good chance, by giving notice of danger with its alarm-cries as it makes off. It frequents the banks of all our large rivers, more especially the Ganges, where it may be seen at all times feeding in the shallows, or mud-banks. As a rule it is seldom to be found in tanks, and it is exceptional to find it in company with other ducks. In size and shape this duck more resembles one of the *anser* tribe; and I remember one morning, when yet so early that it was

¹ I am told that it is very plentiful at the mouth of the Indus, where all descriptions of wild fowl congregate in myriads during the cold weather.

impossible to distinguish the colour of objects, I brought down three unfortunate Brahminy ducks passing overhead, in mistake for geese. They delight to paddle about in flooded fields, are also partial to young corn, and I have seen them feeding in company with wild geese on the young crops. When at Jhansie I noticed that the Brahminy ducks, on first arriving, appeared in large flights, but soon the flock divided into small parties of two or four. I have eaten one of these birds, and certainly it was perfectly good for food, though not, at the same time, to be ranked amongst the best birds for the table.

It has been stated that this bird is a foul feeder, and a writer in the Indian 'Sporting Review,' speaking of *Tadorna rutila*, says: 'It is often found devouring carrion on the banks of rivers, and is frequently seen banqueting in company with vultures, and associating with such other villanous companions.'

Jerdon quotes this passage, and strongly expresses his disbelief in such a statement, and I am convinced that the writer was quite mistaken; for though the bird certainly frequents the banks of our large rivers, I have never met anyone who could say that he had observed the ruddy shieldrake feed on anything but its natural food.

This bird, according to Hooker, has the peculiar habit of *Tadorna vulpanser* of breeding in rabbit holes. It is held to be sacred by the Hindoos.

VIII.—THE SHOVELLER (*Spatula clypeata*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Bill, lead colour. Head, greenish-black. Neck and scapulars, white. Back, dark brown; margins of the feathers, paler. Shoulders, lesser wing-coverts, and tertials, slaty-blue. Upper wing-coverts, white. Primaries and secondaries, nearly black. Speculum, green. Rump, upper and under tail-coverts, and tail, nearly black; breast, chestnut-brown. Legs and toes, orange-red; nails, black.

Length.—20 inches. The bill is long, wide at the tip, and rounded.

Female.—Brown, marked with darker brown streaks.

THIS is another very common bird, and in the winter months is found all over the country. It is generally met with singly or in pairs. I cannot remember ever once having seen a large flight of shovellers. They offer few attractions to a sportsman; and though I generally

took my shot at one of them passing overhead, yet at the end of the day my syce or some other servant was presented with *Spatula clypeata*, for he is not much of a bird for the table, however well cooked; and, moreover, has a habit of frequenting Dhobie's ponds and pools of water close to villages, which no well-bred wild duck would think of inhabiting. The plumage of an old drake shoveller is very beautiful, though the ungraceful bill detracts somewhat from the elegance of the bird. Unlike most wild ducks, I have frequently come across this bird in lakes and pools of water perfectly bare of cover, with nothing but mud and sand on the margin. The female much resembles the common wild duck, but has the peculiar broad-tipped bill, the same as the drake.

IX.—THE RED-CRESTED POCHARD (*Fuligula rufina*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Beak, vermilion-red; tip, white. Irides, reddish-brown. Head and neck, chestnut-red; crest of long soft feathers. Lower part of neck and upper tail-coverts, brown. Back, and scapularies, yellowish-brown. Upper wing-coverts, ashy-brown. Primaries and tail, greyish-brown. Out webs of secondaries, white. Breast, belly, and under tail-coverts, black; flanks white. Legs and toes, vermilion.

Female.—Without a crest; top of head, dark brown. Cheeks, throat, and sides of neck, greyish-white. Upper parts of body, pale rufous-brown. Shoulder and speculum, greyish-white. Breast, reddish-brown.

THIS fine duck, one of the largest and heaviest we meet with in India, is common in our Northern Provinces, frequenting large lakes in dense flights. At a well-known lake near Jhansie, called Dināro, there were always in the cold season several large flights of these birds. At Allyghur they were also common, especially on the Adown jheel. I also constantly shot this fine duck as far south as Assam. It is a strong, powerful flyer, with very thick plumage, so that heavy shot is necessary to bring it down. The male bird, with its lovely silky plume, red eye and bill, black breast, and white speculum, is a very handsome duck; but the female, with its sober grey and white plumage, is less striking. The 'lal seer,' as this bird is called by the natives, meaning 'red head,' is one of the diving ducks, feeding on the bottom of weedy lakes. A flight passing overhead in the dark may be distinguished from other wild fowl by the noise of their wings.

X.—THE RED-HEADED POCHARD (*Fuligula ferina*).

THIS well-known bird in Britain, called 'dun bird' by fowlers in some localities, is common generally over Northern India; and I have shot it in almost every station in the North-West where I have been quartered. It is a diving duck, as its legs, placed far back in the body, at once show; very thick-built, and not a graceful bird; feeding on various weeds, grass, &c., growing at the bottom of lakes, jheels, and sluggish rivers. I have heard this bird erroneously called the 'canvas back,' the well-known and far-famed American duck, which certainly belongs to the pochard tribe, but is larger, and never visits India.

Like all the diving class of ducks, this bird, unless shot dead, is, especially in jheels covered with weeds, lilies, and creepers, most difficult to retrieve, more so than any duck I am acquainted with. Unless in shallow water the best of retrievers are usually baffled, so cunning are these birds, often putting only the tips of their bills above water to breathe, with their bodies well concealed the while by a patch of reeds or rushes. This pochard has shortish wings, and is a heavy flyer; but the feathers are very thick, especially on the breast; and No. 5 shot, with a good charge of powder, is, in my opinion, the best for the sport.

XI.—THE WHITE-EYED POCHARD (*Fuligula nyroca*).

THIS bird, one of the smallest of the pochard tribe, is common in many parts of India, more especially in Bundelkund. General colour, deep reddish-brown; speculum, white; white under the chin; belly, white. Length about fifteen inches. At Jhansie it was exceedingly numerous, and in the cold weather afforded good sport. It is a swift-flying bird, occasionally found in flocks, but more often singly or in pairs. It loves to frequent jheels with plenty of cover. I have met with capital shooting about mid-day in tanks bordered with high reeds, with every here and there open pieces of water. Here, when the sun becomes powerful, the white-eyed duck retires, and a sportsman, seated in a boat, and noiselessly punted by a couple of natives, will, unless the birds have been much bullied and shot at previously, meet with good sport;

the ducks rising one or two at a time, and offering capital chances as they top the cover. I have noticed that on these occasions teal, gadwall, and other kinds of fowl, at once rise and make off on the report of a gun anywhere near, but that the little brown, white-eyed duck does not take alarm. The plumage of this bird is very thick and close, and, though small, it takes a severe blow to bring it down, and unless dead, like all the pochard tribe, often gives great trouble to recover. I have frequently, at Jhansie, lost the half of my winged birds in a day's sport. I have already mentioned, when speaking of the widgeon, that the white-eyed duck is often erroneously so termed, though it does not resemble a widgeon at all, either in shape or colour. I have noticed a rather remarkable fact in connection with this bird: on three different occasions I have shot specimens minus their feet, which I believe had been frozen off in some far-distant country. On all three occasions both feet were missing, so that it would appear improbable that a trap or gun had been the cause of the missing members in every instance; but I came to the conclusion that the birds had lost their feet by visiting some very cold clime, and that the webbed portion had become frozen and dropped off. If this was the true reason, it would appear that the little pochard migrates to colder regions than other wild-fowl, or why should this one species be affected in such an extraordinary manner?

It is only a tolerable bird for the table, not to be compared in this respect with the gadwall, teal, and others.

XII.—THE TUFTED DUCK (*Fuligula cristata*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Bill bluish; nail, black. Irides, yellow. Head, neck, back, rump, wings, tail and under tail-coverts, black. Head, partially crested, tinged on the cheeks with purple. Secondaries or speculum, partially white. Chin, white. The whole of the under parts of the body, white. Legs and toes, bluish-grey.

Length.—16 inches.

Female.—Dark brown. Under parts of the body, greyish-white. Speculum, white.

This is a rare bird in Northern India. I have occasionally met with it, but have only once shot it, and that was at Allyghur, in 1864. Strange to say, I have on several occasions observed tufted ducks

brought round for sale by natives who had netted them. So perhaps I have been unlucky in my attempts to meet with this bird. Its black and white plumage is so marked that it is easily distinguishable from other fowl when flying.

XIII.—THE MERGANSER (*Mergus castor*).

DESCRIPTION (from a specimen shot on banks of Sardah, Rohilkund, in 1872).

Male.—Bill, vermilion-red. Ridge and tip of the upper mandible and lower mandible, black. Head, crested, greenish-black. Upper part of neck, breast, belly, and lesser wing-coverts, white. Breast, tinged with pink, or salmon-colour. Back and scapulars, black. Primaries, greyish-brown. Secondaries, white, with black margins. Rump and tail, grey. Legs and toes, vermilion-red. Length 24 inches.

I never have had an opportunity of observing the colouring of the plumage of the female.

The thickly-toothed bill of the merganser enables it to seize its prey, small fish, with facility.

THIS is a rare bird in Bengal. I have only shot it twice; once on the banks of the Sardah, in the Philibheet District in 1872, and once in Bhootan in 1865. In fact the bird seems only to frequent rivers near the foot of the Himalayas. I never yet saw it in a jheel. Such is my experience, though I may be in error; but I have never once come across the bird far away from the hills.

When travelling in the Himalayas I have more than once seen the merganser flying up and down the Pindur river, in Kumāon; and I am inclined to think that they frequent all our hill rivers more or less, for I saw another flight of these ducks passing over the Ganges, in the interior of the hills near Teeree. The male bird is very beautiful; the rosy tint on the breast and under feathers is a lovely hue. I have never attempted to eat this bird, but should imagine its flesh to be coarse and strong-flavoured; for its bill, with its peculiar rows of teeth, proclaims it to be a fish-eater.

XIV.—THE GARGANEY, OR BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Querquedula ciria*).

THIS somewhat handsome little duck is larger than the common teal. It does not arrive so early as the above-mentioned bird; but I have each year noticed that it is about the last to leave the plains

of India. I have even seen small flights of this species in the month of May, which is unusually late for migrating wild-fowl. This was in the hot season of 1871, in the Lullutpore District. I find a record in my game-book that I shot on May 8 of that year five blue-winged teal in a small tank about thirty miles from Lullutpore. Certainly the hot season of 1871 was a mild one; and in the same month of May of that year I killed several snipe; quite as unusual a circumstance, if not more so, than shooting the garganeys.

The flight of this bird is swift, though not, in my opinion, to the same degree as the common teal. Like the latter species, the blue-winged teal often assemble in large flights. I can remember spreading destruction among a dense flight, bringing down fourteen with two barrels—not much to boast of, by the way—but at the time I was in want of game to send into Lucknow, where I was then quartered, so did not scruple to pour in a murderous volley at close range.

I think that this bird appears to be found pretty generally over our Northern Provinces; but nowhere have I seen such large flocks of garganeys as in Oude. In the cold season of 1869, in company with a friend, I visited a large lake and marsh in the Baraitch District, called Dehowrah, and I should be afraid to say how many head of wild-fowl we slew; but the number was very great, and a large proportion of the ducks we brought to bag were blue-winged teal. I met with this bird in the Himalayas several times, first at Nynee Tal, then at Bheem Tal, another lake near the former, where I shot three birds; again on the Pindur river; and, lastly, I shot three more in small patches of water high up in the middle ranges—two close to a tea-garden at Gwaldung, and a third at Goomur Tal, on the opposite side of the Pindur river. I do not think these stray birds remained to breed in the out-of-the-way spots I have mentioned, though it is possible, but I am inclined to think that they were merely resting themselves. The drake garganey, though not of such bright and gaudy hues as the common teal, is a most beautifully marked duck, and is considered a good bird for the table.

XV.—THE TEAL (*Querquedula erecca*).

IN speaking of the garganey, or blue-winged teal, I have mentioned that it is late to arrive, and especially late *in departing* from the plains of India. Exactly the contrary is the case with the common teal; it is

one of the earliest ducks to arrive, and does not delay its departure nearly so late as the garganey. I find that for a succession of years, when quartered in various parts of the country, a teal was almost invariably the first among the ducks to fall to my gun; and generally in Bundelkund a spring of teal formed the advance-guard of the wild fowl travelling south from the cold regions of Northern Asia and other countries.

There can hardly be among birds a more beautiful fowl than the drake teal. The lovely markings of the head and neck and the bright patch of green on the wing, together with the beautiful shades on the back and tail, form a perfect gem in beauty.

I am of opinion that of all wild fowl the little teal is the swiftest in flight, only equalled perhaps by the goose teal; and a single bird as it passes at full speed offers as pretty a shot as a sportsman could wish for. A teal, usually speaking, when winged, is not nearly so difficult to recover as many other kinds of duck. I have seen enormous flights—many hundreds together. It is a pretty sight to see a flight of these birds wheeling and curving about over a piece of water, with the sun shining on their wings, as they may often be seen. The birds when in a flock keep very close together, so that often six or eight may be brought down at a single discharge.

Teal may be found in flooded fields of corn or paddy, where no other duck resort. In some parts of the country they are netted in immense numbers. There are many wheels in the neighbourhood of large rivers without a single bird resting or feeding on them during the day; but at nightfall, generally speaking, just as the sun is setting, the fowl pour in in myriads from the sandbanks of the river, where they have been lying asleep all day. Native shikaries are fully aware of these spots and of the habits of the birds, and act accordingly, setting their nets during the daytime in the manner I have previously described. I have known teal, when a number are taken together, sell for less than an anna, or three halfpence, each.

XVI.—THE WHISTLING TEALS OR TREE DUCKS (*Dendrocygna major*.
Dendrocygna awsuree).

THERE are two kinds of these birds that I am acquainted with, the larger and smaller, but they are very similar in colour and shade, which is

of a rich red brown. They remain all the year round in the plains, frequenting weedy tanks covered with rank vegetation, and may often be seen in company with the white-bodied goose teal. They are, however, in my opinion, not worth powder and shot, and I never fired at them, unless to provide food for servants and villagers, for I do not consider them regular wild ducks. The flight is slow and laboured, and while soaring round they utter a continuous chuckling whistle; hence the name. I have several times seen this bird perch on trees and bushes.

XVII.—THE WHITE-BODIED GOOSE TEAL (*Nettapus coromandelianus*).

DESCRIPTION.

Male.—Top of head glossy black, a black line round the neck; back and wings glossy steel blue, mixed with dark green; a white patch on wings; face, neck, and breast white; white also below. Bill black, legs pale yellow.

Length.—12 inches.

Female.—Altogether of a duller plumage.

THIS pretty little bird is another of the duck tribe that does not migrate to colder climes, but remains and breeds in the plains of India. It is smaller than the common teal, and is not elegant in shape; but the glossy tints of green and steel blue on the wings are very beautiful. It is very common all over the country, I believe, resorting to lakes covered with water-plants and weeds, and may often be seen in company with the black-backed goose and whistling teal. It is an *amazingly swift flyer*, and generally flies very low, only a few feet above the water, uttering a chuckling noise as it wheels round and round the pool from which it has been flushed. It takes a severe blow to bring it down, the plumage being exceedingly thick, and resisting small shot at any but close range.

Jerdon says: 'It breeds generally in holes in old trees, often at some distance from water; occasionally in ruined houses, temples, old chimneys, and the like, laying eight or ten (sometimes, it is stated, as many as fifteen) small white eggs.'

I have heard this bird called 'the clucking teal' by some sportsmen, on account of its habit of chattering as it flies swiftly backwards and forwards; but it is quite erroneous so to name it, for the clucking teal (*Querquedula glocitans*) is an exceedingly rare bird, hardly ever met with.

CHAPTER XIII.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Evening comes on: arising from the stream
 Homeward the tall flamingo wings his flight;
 And where he sails athwart the setting beam
 His scarlet plumage glows with deeper light.—SOUTHEY.

THE FLAMINGO (*Phœnicopterus roseus*).

THIS beautiful bird, so well known that a description is needless, visits India in the cold weather months in company with the clouds of other migratory wild fowl which arrive about the first week in October, and leaves about the same time as the others, early in March. They are gregarious, often congregating in large flocks, but the Allyghur district is the only place where I have seen flamingoes in any numbers.

Flamingoes appear to be rare in Central India. I find that I have once only noted meeting with these birds during my three years' sojourn at Jhansie, and that was a small flock passing overhead. I should not have noticed them at all, had not one of the birds uttered its peculiar trumpet-call. They were flying in a line at a great height, and steering southwards.

A male flamingo stands about four feet high, but the body is small in comparison with the height of the bird; the female is rather less, and somewhat wants the brilliant rose-coloured feathers of her consort. They are wary birds, and have a habit of frequenting open lakes and jheels, with no cover of any kind to conceal an enemy, or behind which a sportsman might creep up within shot. Once I brought down three with two barrels, and twice I have killed single birds. Their

bills are of extraordinary shape, and they are said to feed like the *Anas* tribe.

One evening, when returning on horseback after a day's shooting, about six miles from Allyghur, I happened to pass near a large open sheet of water, and drew rein for a few moments to admire a beautiful sight. About a quarter of a mile from me, in the middle of an open plain, a large flight of flamingoes were standing motionless in some shallow water. There were, I suppose, over a hundred birds, and nearly all were standing balanced on one leg. It was about sunset, and the beautiful pink feathers of the flamingoes, brightened up by the beams of the setting sun, and rendered still more conspicuous by the reflections in the calm water, made a strikingly effective picture.

The flesh of the bird is only tolerably good; we once had one cooked by way of experiment, for the mess-table, but it was universally pronounced to be but a poor bird.

Natives constantly bring flamingoes round for sale, in our up-country stations.

THE BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*).

THIS bird is tolerably plentiful over Northern India, resorting to certain jheels, where it finds suitable feeding-grounds, and generally each cold season half-a-dozen bitterns or more are brought to bag. They generally are found when snipe-shooting, in marshy spots where there is an abundance of tall grass and low reeds. The bird will often not rise till the sportsman is close on him, and it is almost impossible to miss it, for the flight is very slow and heavy, and a few grains of snipe-shot are sufficient to bring it down; in fact, I know of no bird that is so easily killed. Generally, if let off once, the bittern again settles within a few hundred yards, and perhaps on the second occasion, without a dog to follow and flush him, will so conceal itself that the sportsman, after a short search in vain, passes on. The bittern is an excellent bird for the table.

When stationed at Tezapore, in Assam, I twice shot a small species, the Black Bittern (*Ardetta flavicollis*). It was by no means rare in that locality, but I have seen it nowhere else.

THE CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*).

THIS bird, so common and well known on the shores of Britain, is met with on the banks of our large rivers, and occasionally on the muddy edges of jheels and tanks. I have nowhere, however, found it numerous. I shot several when stationed at Lucknow, and in the Baraitch district, on the banks of the Surjoo, they were tolerably plentiful. During my three years at Jhansie I only shot one curlew, though I occasionally heard the well-known cry of the bird, as he passed overhead high in the air. I saw several in the Philibheet district, and shot a few in the neighbourhood of Allyghur.

As in England, the 'Whaup' is almost invariably on the alert against danger, and difficult to approach.

When travelling in the Himalayas in 1863, and steering for the Neti Pass, I observed a species of curlew on the edge of a river far below the road, feeding on a shelving bank of gravel, near a village called Jhelum. I carefully examined the bird through a powerful telescope, and feeling certain that it was worth obtaining for my collection, determined on making an attempt to get a shot at it. With some trouble I descended, and, as the bird rose, brought it down, but unfortunately it fell into the river and was swept away by the current. I never before or since have met with a similar species of curlew. I was close enough to see that the legs and bill were red, and that it had some dark markings about the head; and when years after I read Jerdon's description of a rare species of curlew (*Ibidorhynchus struthersii*) which frequents rivers of the Himalayas, it struck me at once that the bird I had lost was the Red-billed Curlew.

There is a bird common over our North-Western Provinces, and well known by the name of 'Black Curlew.' This, however, is an erroneous title, for the correct English appellation for the bird is the 'Warty-Headed Ibis.' I have shot it occasionally, but it is hardly worth a charge; and I can assert that it is undoubtedly a foul feeder, for a brother of mine once saw this bird hard at work feeding on the offal of a recently-slain black buck.

 THE WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*).

THIS bird is more common and less wary than the curlew. I have seen many on the banks of our large rivers and jheels, and shot several when stationed at Allyghur.

THE BENGAL GREEN PIGEON (*Crocopus phœnicopterus*).

THERE are several kinds of green pigeon frequenting the plains of India, besides others found in our hill ranges. Among the latter may be mentioned the well-known 'koklah.' I have met with at least four or five species in the plains, but the above-mentioned is the most common in the North-Western Provinces, and is called by the natives 'hurryal.' It can hardly be termed a game bird, though worthy of notice by the sportsman, on account of its being an excellent bird for the table.

Generally speaking, they are to be found in small flocks in peepul or burgot-trees, the fruit of which is a favourite food of the green pigeon; but I have seen, and not unfrequently, very large flights of green pigeons. The plumage of the bird, which is a lovely mixture of yellow, light and dark green, matches in an extraordinary manner (doubtless a provision of Nature for its protection), with the foliage of the trees that it is in the habit of frequenting. I have constantly stood under a peepul-tree with my gun in readiness, in vain endeavouring to distinguish among the leaves overhead the forms of several 'hurryal' which I had marked into this very tree; but until one of the birds had moved its position—and they have a cunning habit of remaining perfectly still when danger is at hand—I have found it almost impossible to make them out, so exactly similar in colour was the foliage of the tree and the plumage of the birds.

The green pigeon feeds almost entirely on wild fruit, seeds, and berries of various kinds; an especial favourite among wild fruits is the fig. The flight of the bird is powerful and rapid, and its feathers are so thick and close that small-shot is but of little use. The feet of the bird are somewhat like those of a parrot, and I have seen them high up in the branches of some fruit-tree, clambering about, head downwards, to reach fruit, in the manner of the *Psittacidæ* family.

When out shooting in the Lullutpore jungles, during the hot-weather months, our encampment was usually in the vicinity of some river, such as the Betwah, the Jamin, or Dessāun, and of an evening my friend H——s and myself often amused ourselves fishing for mahseer. One evening we had used our best endeavours, both with fly and bait, to capture a fish for our dinner, but in vain, and at length we had given it up as a bad job. My companion went home, leaving me

to finish a cheroot. While thus employed my attention was taken by a flock of green pigeons which had settled in a large fig-tree leaning over the river. I had no gun with me, or probably one or two of the birds would have been shot, as we were short of provisions. The fig-tree overshadowed a fine pool in the river, and from the birds moving about and feeding on the fruit, several over-ripe figs fell with a splash into the water. I noticed three or four fish move, but had no idea what they were after, till presently I distinctly saw a mahseer take down a fig the instant that it touched the water. A boy, my attendant, was quickly despatched up the tree for half-a-dozen ripe figs, and in the meantime I selected from my book a large-sized bait-hook; and presently, when the lad descended with sundry of the fruit, I buried the hook into the heart of an extra tempting-looking fig, and fastened it securely in its place with a piece of cotton. Then shortening the line, and carefully approaching the water, I 'bobbed' the fig on to the surface of the pool, but only for an instant; there was a mighty swirl in the water, and I caught a glimpse of a head and tail, and down went the line. A few moments after, I found myself hard and fast in a struggle with a six-pounder, which, after a determined resistance, was successfully landed, and ten minutes later was transferred to the camp kettle.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE INDIAN HARE (*Lepus ruficaudatus*).

I saw the hare that raced about with joy.—WORDSWORTH.

I BELIEVE Jerdon tells us of two species of Indian hares to be found in the plains, but I am only able to speak of one kind that I have met with below the Himalayas, or perhaps it may be that the two are so nearly alike that I have not noticed the distinction between them.

The hare of India is somewhat of the shape and colour of our own well-known animal, but much smaller, weighing little, if any more than a full-grown rabbit, and, in general habits, much resembling the latter. The animal when pursued will sometimes go to ground under rocks or stones, and will seldom be found lying out in open country where there is no cover. I have frequently met with them in the low valleys of the Himalayas, but they never wander to any great height; between Almorah and Nynee Tal I have shot several.

There is another species of hare found in Thibet, and occasionally on our side of the snowy range. This animal much resembles the mountain or blue hare of Scotland. I found them very numerous in certain localities of Thibet, and generally in stony nullahs where there was plenty of bush, grass, and cover. I shot thirteen one forenoon in the neighbourhood of a place called Tazang, where they were exceedingly plentiful. They were of a bluish colour, mixed with pale brown, with shorter ears, and in size rather larger than the hare found in the plains; moreover, the fur was altogether thicker, only natural for such a cold country as Thibet. I imagine that the coat turns white in winter, like the Scotch hare; but though I constantly put this question to the Bhootiahs and Thibetans, I could not get a clear reply in the affirmative, though I have little doubt that such is the case.

The hare of the plains of India is common all over our North-Western Provinces, and is very numerous in many parts, especially in the neighbourhood of Roorkee, Allyghur, and Agra. In the vicinity of the latter station I have shot twelve and fifteen in a day. In Bundelkund the animals abound, and are exceedingly common on the sides of rocky hills. In Bengal, though in some parts common enough, they appear to be less numerous than in provinces farther north. In Assam we seldom shot more than two or three in a day, and then only near to cultivation. Thick bush and grass jungle, with fields of corn in the vicinity, are generally the resort of the Indian hare, though they may be often found in fields of dhal or castor-oil, close behind villages, and I am perfectly certain in my own mind that these animals, which are found so close to the habitations of the natives, are not the choicest of feeders. The banks of small rivers, where much cut up and intersected by nullahs and ravines covered with scrub, are generally sure finds for hares; and in many parts of the country there are pools of water surrounded by a fringe of thick grass; these spots should be carefully beaten by the sportsman, as they are very likely to hold hares. In the month of March, when the quail come in, hares are often put up and shot in standing corn; and when snipe-shooting on the edge of a tank or jheel, if the ground is not too wet, the sportsman will often get a shot at a 'khurgosh' as he makes off.

In some parts of the country I have seen very fair coursing. At Allyghur we never shot hares in the vicinity of the station, as several of the residents kept greyhounds, and in the cold weather it was nothing unusual to kill six or eight hares out coursing in a morning.

The ears of the Indian hare are unusually long. The animals are constantly swarming with vermin. The natives, though not up to wiring them, net the creatures in great numbers, and bring them round in baskets for sale. With so many enemies to contend with, it seems extraordinary that the animals are not altogether exterminated, and were it not that they are so very prolific, doubtless this would be the case. The very spots where hares take refuge abound with jackals, foxes, cats, mongooses, and snakes. The pariah dogs turn out in gangs from neighbouring villages, and systematically hunt through every yard of cover in search of them, snapping them up in their forms, or running them down when they make off. Nor is this all that the unfortunates have to contend with. Eagles, falcons, and hawks are ever on the look-out to pounce on them should

they show themselves by day, and numerous owls constantly prey on them at night. I have often noticed large hawks sitting perfectly still on the top of a bush or tree, where they will patiently wait, watching the jungle beneath them, till some partridge, quail, or hare moves, and, unconscious of danger, exposes itself to view; the bird of prey immediately opens his wings, silently makes a swoop down, and, fixing its talons deep into the back of the victim, carries him shrieking away. Jackals, generally speaking, spring on hares and other creatures from an ambush, catch them when asleep, or creep up to them when feeding. In my opinion, they seldom fairly run a hare down by coursing it.

When speaking of the chikarah, I related an anecdote of a pair of jackals joining in the chase of a wounded gazelle, but that was exceptional, and I believe that it was the smell of blood that attracted the ravenous pair. But I once witnessed a fair course between a jackal and a hare, which at the time I noted as remarkable.

In the cold season of 1872, I was out shooting near Jhansie, in company with two brother sportsmen. We had during the morning shot over some snipe ground with tolerable luck, but in spite of its being the middle of October, found the sun extremely powerful; there was not a breath of air, and the heat and glare were intense. So about mid-day we retired to the side of a hill, where, *recubans sub tegmino* of some bushes, we discussed our tiffin and lit our pipes. While talking over what were to be our plans for the afternoon to fill the bag to the best advantage, our attention was taken by what we took at first in the distance to be a dog chasing a hare; this was nothing unusual, as the British soldiers from the barracks often came that way with dogs and guns. The pursued and pursuer came straight towards us, and from where we were sitting—well above the surrounding country—we had a good view of the chase.

From brake to brake she flies, and visits all
Her well-known haunts where once she ranged secure.

Presently the poor hare, hard pressed, made several quick turns to escape, but all in vain. She was fairly run into and killed. It was only when the two animals were within a short distance of the foot of the hill that we, for the first time, had doubts whether or not it was a dog that had so successfully chased the hare; the animal appeared to be too short in the legs for a dog, and, moreover, seemed to have a

bushy tail. One of my companions, S—y, had a rifle with him, and we suggested that he should clear up all doubt in the matter by knocking the gentleman over; so down he went. The animal was still worrying the hare, but looked up and observed S—y when yet a good distance off. He turned round and made off, but my friend made an undeniably good shot, rolling him over dead with a ball through the shoulder. We all ran up, and there lay a common jackal; it was a female, long and thin, and, to all appearance had cubs not far off. The hare, a fine one, was only slightly torn, and we carried it off.

When the ground is open the Indian hare offers an easy shot, but when beating through rough ground, with patches of grass and bushes here and there, and a hare is started, it often requires a good snap shot to roll her over. The animal dodges about, like a rabbit in furze, far more than is the habit of our English hare.



E. EVANS

A GROUP OF TROPHIES.

CHAPTER XV.

GUNS, RIFLES, AND SPORTING EQUIPMENTS; CAMP EQUIPAGE
AND CARRIAGE.

SPORTSMEN bound for the East very often ask, What is the best description of battery for India? but the question is not so easily answered. It is a strange fact, but nevertheless true I believe, that hardly any two sportsmen, however experienced they may be, hold one and the same opinion as regards the most serviceable guns and rifles for Indian shooting, and indeed in these times, with so many improvements, and ingenious contrivances constantly being developed and brought before the public by gun-makers and others, it becomes a difficult task, and requires much time and study to select from among so many clever systems and inventions, that which is really the most useful and efficient for Indian jungles.

I can therefore only offer my own ideas on the subject for the benefit of my brother sportsmen, and as my conclusions have not been hastily arrived at, but are the result of long experience, I trust that some few of my remarks may be of real practical use.

In the first place, I think all will agree with me, that in these times three good breech-loaders, *i.e.* two rifles, and one gun, are sufficient for all ordinary purposes. If the sportsman intends waging war against rhinoceri, and the like armour-coated beasts, a heavy single rifle may be added to the battery with advantage.

It is also, I consider, a matter of the greatest importance in an Indian battery, to have as many of your weapons as possible, of *one and the same system of breech-loader*, and of the same *gauge*, so that one description and size of cartridge may fit at least two of your guns.

I strongly recommend No. 12 as the gauge for the pair of large

bores, and for this reason: Eley's No. 12 cartridge cases are procurable almost anywhere in India; but there is often a difficulty in obtaining cases to fit guns of 10, 14, or 16-bore.

I would also advise that the stocks of all three weapons should be built *exactly similar* to one another in every respect, and copied if possible from some old favourite gun which the sportsman has been accustomed to use for years. The advantage of this plan is, I think, obvious enough: for a standing shot perhaps the length and bend of the stock does not so much matter, but for a quick snap shot from a howdah, or at game passing rapidly through cover, when there is only time to pitch your weapon up and fire at once, then is the time when a rifle or gun to which you are accustomed, naturally and instantaneously covers the mark, whereas, one too long, or too short in the stock, or that does not fit the shoulder, probably causes you to miss.

The following are the weapons with which I recommend the young sportsman bound for India to furnish himself:—

1. A double, central-fire, double-grip, breech-loading rifle, twelve bore, rifled on the late Captain Forsyth's system, to throw a spherical ball accurately up to 150 or 180 yards, and a heavy shell for short distances, to burn 4 to 5 drs. of coarse powder without unpleasant recoil. Weight, from $9\frac{1}{2}$ to 11 lbs. according to the strength of the sportsman. Pistol grip stock, barrels rather short, extractor and locks strong and powerful, sights to fold down flush, no fixed upright back-sight, or if the sportsman cannot do without one, let it be very low and with the nick cut deep and broad.

2. A double gun, of exactly similar breech-loading action and gauge to the rifle, rather stouter, and heavier than the ordinary type of smooth bore, to throw ball well at short distances, and moderately choke bored in the left barrel.

3. A double, central-fire, double-grip, .450 or .500 bore express, with as low a trajectory as possible, and extremely accurate up to 200 yards. To carry solid metal cartridge cases.

I am of opinion that these three weapons constitute a perfect battery for howdah-shooting, and in efficiency are fully equal to five double muzzle-loaders.

The pair of twelve-bores are well adapted for shooting on foot when driving the jungles for big game, such as tigers, bears, sambar, &c.; also for machan-shooting. To prevent mixing the rifle and gun ammunition when shooting ball with the latter, I recommend the sportsman

to make a practice of invariably using green cartridge cases for the one weapon, and blue for the other.

The express rifle will be brought into play against black buck on the plains of Bengal, gazelle on more broken ground, or for stalking cheetah in the early morning on the banks of rivers; and it is the weapon of all others for shooting burhel and thar on the upper steeps of the Himalayas, or gooral and kakur on the lower slopes of the mountains.

Each weapon should be fitted into a strong leather case, with the usual appurtenances, including spare strikers, a recapping machine, shell mould for heavy rifle, and a strong waterproof gun-cover, bound in leather, for each.

As regards explosive shells, I have tried three descriptions: Forsyth's swedge shell, the copper bottle shell, and the old hollow conical bullet filled with a detonating composition, and with a wax plug, and coating of varnish on the outside. I consider the two first inventions as decidedly the best, and both of them certainly more to be depended on for stopping dangerous animals, such as tigers, panthers, and bears, than any kind of round or conical bullet. Shells, in my opinion, are unsatisfactory missiles for shooting rhinoceri, and such-like animals with very thick hides. Often the shell bursts prematurely, and, instead of killing the creature, only inflicts a severe flesh wound.

Both the swedge and copper bottle shells have each their peculiar advantages, but they are both so good and deadly in their effects against animals with thin skins, that I consider them about equal in merit.

Let me warn the young sportsman against one thing. The detonating composition (composed of chlorate of potass and sulphate of antimony), used for filling rifle shells, is of such a highly dangerous character, that I would advise his only mixing a small quantity at a time; should there be any over after filling his shells, let him throw it away rather than keep it for future purposes. I can remember two serious accidents occasioned by reckless sportsmen putting away detonating powder, in the first instance in a cap box, in the second in a stoppered bottle, and both gentlemen had their hands severely injured by explosions taking place on their opening the cap box and bottle, by turning round the lid of the box and the stopper of the bottle respectively.

I am of opinion that in a country like India it is a great mistake for the sportsman to burden and tire himself with numberless belts and pouches.

For rifle-shooting, one broad belt round the waist, with a hunting knife and pouch attached to it, the latter to contain ten or twelve rounds of ammunition, is quite enough to carry. I am speaking of shooting on foot, in the hot weather months. In the hills, a small telescope, or pair of field glasses, may with advantage be added, and such small articles as a pocket knife, pipe, tobacco, and lights, and two or three yards of stout string, may also be stowed away in the coat pockets. An attendant should carry spare ammunition, a small brandy flask, and if the sportsman is out for the day, some sort of cooked food or biscuits.

I used for many years the double-edged dagger-shaped hunting knife, termed the 'Shakespear knife' (after the well-known sportsman of that name), and I venture to say there could hardly be a better description of weapon.

It should be carried in a leather sheath on the left side, attached to the waist belt by a frog, and with a spring to prevent the knife being pulled out and lost, by a bough or twig catching the hilt when passing through thick jungle.

The ball pouch—also attached to the waist belt, and carried in front of the right side,—should be made of some waterproof cloth, or covered with a piece of otter or leopard skin, capable of keeping the cartridges perfectly dry, even in a deluge of rain.

I will now pass on and make a few remarks relating to the best kind of dress for an Indian sportsman.

Perhaps, all things considered, a rather short, close-fitting, but nowhere tight, Norfolk jacket, with a band round the waist, and with plenty of pockets, is the best cut of coat for shooting purposes. A good thick, broad patch of leather on either shoulder, enables the sportsman to bear the weight of a heavy rifle, without tiring or bruising his shoulder.

The trousers should be of the same material as the coat, and, like it, fitting rather close, but at the same time easily, to the figure.

I can strongly recommend a good roll of flannel or cashmere stuff, called in India a 'cummerbund,' wound rather tight round the waist, and worn *under* the jacket, and *over* the upper edge of the trousers as a protection to the loins against the sun, and also as a support to the body.

The material and colour of the shooting suit are also matters of considerable importance.

For the plains I recommend a kind of 'Chowsootie' or four-threaded cotton or linen fabric dyed a grubby green tint, as best suited for the jungle plains of India, and also for the lower ranges of hills; where covered with forest and thicket.

For the upper ranges, among bare crags and rocks, and where the cold is often excessive, a good suit of woollen stuff, of a gray or stone colour, will be found the best.

I have tried many descriptions of solar hats, and helmets, and my experience is, that a good pith, mushroom-shaped hat is the best for *resisting an Indian sun*. One great advantage of a pith hat is, its extreme lightness, but unfortunately there are two or three serious objections to the mushroom-shaped 'topee.'

In the first place, when riding on horseback, at even a moderate pace, it is impossible to keep it on the head without a chin strap, and even then it is most awkward and inconvenient.

Again, it is a bad hat to wear when passing through dense thicket, on account of its shape and size. Brambles and twigs continually catch the brim, and not only hinder the sportsman's advance, but make a rustling which is very liable to scare deer and other game.

In spite of these drawbacks, however, on account of the excellent protection from the sun it affords to the head and neck, I prefer the mushroom hat to the best felt helmet, even when provided with a good puggree.

We have now only to speak of boots and gaiters, to conclude these remarks.

For real hard wear and tear on the plains of India, or for marching up the hill valleys, I have found few superior to the ammunition boots as served out to our European soldiers. They are very strongly put together. It is a good plan to soak a new pair in oil for several days, before attempting to wear them. The leather is generally so hard that a galled heel is often the result of neglecting this precaution.

For walking in the jungles, when on the look-out for samber, cheetul, and such-like vigilant creatures, to ensure success it is perfectly necessary to have soft shoes unshod with iron, and which do not creak. Samber leather is well adapted for making this description of shoe, and is also well suited for gaiters. Some prefer knickerbockers, which certainly are comfortable, but they are not proof against thorns, or 'spear' grass, so common in the plains of India, and which can only be kept out by a good stout pair of gaiters.

When shooting in the hot weather on the plains, I consider that a good single-pole tent is absolutely necessary as a protection from the heat of the sun. If in a country where the roads are fairly good and carriage easily procurable, this may be supplemented by the addition of a sleeping-tent or *pál*, and also a cooking-tent or *rowtie* for the servants; but where locomotion is difficult, the sportsman must content himself with a smaller camp. It may be as well here to describe the various tents I have alluded to.

A single-pole tent is generally about twelve or fourteen feet square, with inner and outer walls, and also a double roof about two or three feet apart. The inner roof sometimes has a felt cover to it, which is an excellent plan, and renders it almost impervious to the rays of the sun, even when the tent is pitched in the open. This tent has from six to eight entrances, which are each fitted with fine mat blinds called *chicks*, and screens (called *purdahs*) to keep out the dust, heat, or cold, as the case may be. A carpet, with a common set of strong and serviceable camp furniture completes the tent, which in ordinary weather makes a comfortable abode. I may mention that a portion of the inner wall, screened off, serves the purpose of a bath-room. A tent of this description, complete, costs, when new, from 50*l.* to 70*l.* and can be carried by two or three camels.

There is a smaller description of tent somewhat similar to the above, called a hill-tent, but with only one wall. The chief advantages of the latter are, its lightness, and also that it can be pitched under trees where a single pole could not go. It is also far cheaper, costing from 35*l.* to 40*l.* On the other hand, it is not so capable of resisting either heat or rain.

A sleeping-*pál* is a single stretch of canvas about four folds thick, open at each end, and over a ridge pole. The ends can be closed at pleasure. Its advantages are, the ease with which it can be carried and pitched, and its cheapness. It costs from 8*l.* to 12*l.*, according to its size, and it makes an excellent sleeping or dressing tent.

A *rowtie* is a humble description of *pál*, but only two cloths thick; it costs, perhaps, from 5*l.* to 8*l.* It is indispensable to have a tent at all seasons of the year for your servants, or they are sure to get ill from exposure when most wanted.

When travelling in the hills, where nothing can be carried but on men's heads or backs, and where the heat is much less, the very smallest quantity and description of tents can only be taken; a small *pál* for the

master and a blanket tent for the servants is generally considered ample for all hill purposes. The best places to procure tents are Jubbulpoor, Futtehghur, or Cawnpore. These tents are always provided with every requisite, including mallets, pegs, packing-bags, and necessary tent. In the hills or on rocky ground a set of iron pins, with rings through the heads to serve the purposes of tent-pegs, are indispensable.

A few hints as to pitching a camp and the spot to be selected may here not be out of place. Always pitch your tent, if possible, under a tree, and within easy reach of, but not too close to, a village, and in such a position that it may be protected from the midday and afternoon sun, in the hot weather facing the breeze, and in the cold season in a sheltered situation. The cook-room tent should be at a convenient distance, and always to leeward. Pitch your tent, if you can manage it, right under a thick mangoe or burgot tree, cutting away, if necessary, some of the limbs, so as to make way for it. Avoid a tamarind tree, as it is popularly supposed (though I will not guarantee the fact) to be conducive to fever. In selecting your site for a camp, be most careful that there are no bees' nests in the vicinity, or you will speedily be ejected by these vicious insects. I have already related one or two anecdotes to illustrate the danger of provoking or even approaching these creatures. Endeavour to select a spot near running water, or the shores of a lake, but avoid carefully low-lying ground, or the vicinity of stagnant pools.

Good drinking-water is a most important matter, and should be carefully sought after. I well remember an occasion when I and my followers were nearly poisoned through inattention to this point, and all through carelessness in drinking from a foul well. This happened near Lucknow in 1868.

In India we are frequently visited by violent storms, especially about the middle of June, when the monsoon is at hand: it is always advisable to be prepared for these sudden squalls, however fine and settled an appearance the weather may bear; so never neglect to have a trench dug round your tent, and the ropes slackened should there be a sign of coming rain.

A few words as regards carriage will suffice. Always procure camels, if possible, to carry your tents and baggage, unless you should be out shooting in the monsoon. It is most dangerous to use these animals on wet or slippery soil, though they are invaluable over sandy or broken ground.

In the hills nothing can be carried except by men.

A good camel will carry from 300 to 400 lbs., a fair-sized hackery or bullock-cart about 1,000 lbs., and a hill-man about 40 lbs. The hire of a camel is from 6 to 8 rupees a month, and a baggage-camel can be purchased for about 120 rupees, or 12*l*.

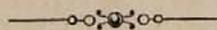
If bullock-carts or men be used, special contracts should be entered into before starting.

The average length of a march in India is from eight to twelve miles, but when necessary twice the distance can be covered.

In conclusion let me add that a perwannah, or permit, from the chief magistrate of the district through which the sportsman intends travelling, is very necessary for procuring supplies, and to ensure all your wants being attended to.

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