


JUNGLE SPORT
IN CEYLON

MARCUS W. MILLETT

4/a
1927



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THE AUTHOR

JUNGLE SPORT IN CEYLON

FROM ELEPHANT TO SNIPE

BY

MARCUS W. MILLETT

AN OLD CEYLON^H SHIKARI

WITH MANY SKETCHES AND
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

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DEDICATED

*to Sir Peter C. Walker, Bart., an old friend,
a keen sportsman, and one of the best of com-
panions, in memory of an exciting Elephant
shoot and good times spent together in Ceylon
years gone by.*

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JUNGLE SPORT IN CEYLON

CHAPTER I

WHAT CEYLON OFFERS THE SPORTSMAN

TO those who are fond of a Bohemian existence let me recommend for real pleasure the life led by sportsmen on shooting expeditions in Ceylon. The free-and-easy, do-as-you-like, go-where-you-please kind of feeling one experiences on these occasions, camping and roaming about with the gun at will, takes one through a wild-game country, with delightful changes of scenery. This, together with the varied animal, bird and other tropical life that meets the eye, the healthful, invigorating exercise, combined with the rough-and-ready work and balmy air, form to my mind a most fascinating life.

Amongst other attractions for the sportsman the Island affords a charming and unique variety of sport, the game to be secured consisting of elephant, buffalo, bear, leopard, sambur, several other kinds of deer, jackal, crocodiles, wild pig, peafowl, jungle-fowl, many kinds of duck, snipe, plover, and a large variety of pigeons.

The fauna generally is very interesting, and the exertion and skill which have to be employed in its tracking through forest and other cover sheltering it, add considerable zest to the pleasures of the chase.

Although tropical and by some considered warm, the climate of Ceylon is healthy, and contrasts favourably with that of India. The Island's geographical position lies between longitude $79^{\circ} 41' 50''$ and $81^{\circ} 54' 50''$ east, and latitude $5^{\circ} 55'$ and $9^{\circ} 51'$ north. The temperature varies in parts, but at Trincomalie, where I started on most of my adventures, it ranges in the shade from about 75° in December to 98° in the hottest months of May, June and July. This heat happily is rendered tolerable by the regular and steady sea breezes.

In praise of the salubrious nature of the climate I may mention that throughout my long residence in this part of the Island I enjoyed the best of health. This, perhaps, was due in a great measure to the regular and active life I led with my gun in pursuit of game, and to the exceptional opportunities I obtained of tracking up the different kinds of animals indigenous to the country, and studying their nature in a wild state.

To prepare an expedition there are, of course, many little things that have to be considered if the affair is to be a success. I will therefore endeavour to aid my readers in this respect by offering a few remarks and suggestions which may be of service.

Naturally, the first question that sportsmen intent on a shooting trip to Ceylon will ask is, "What's the best time of year to go out?" The answer will, of course, depend upon the nature of the shoot desired. Sport there differs somewhat according to the monsoon blowing, for monsoons blow half the year from the S.W. and the other half from the N.E.

During the S.W. monsoon the months of June, July and August are usually very dry, and "waterhole shooting" can be indulged in. This is a most interesting and fascinating sport, and shooting trips can also be made after elephant and other big game, but not for deer and small game. The N.E. monsoon blows from



CAMP LIFE

WHAT CEYLON OFFERS THE SPORTSMAN 5

October to March, the rainy months. Then snipe and duck are in, and as these are open months there is no restriction as to what game may be shot from an elephant to a snipe.

Should the dry season be preferred, the best time to leave England would be about the first week in May, arriving in the Island in time to include "waterhole shooting." On the other hand, if it is considered desirable to go out later in the year during the cooler or rainy season, arrangements should be made to leave about the second week in September, so as to arrive about the middle of October, when duck and snipe are in, giving excellent sport. It should be noted, however, that the close season for game, i.e. sambur, chital or spotted deer, peafowl, etc., in the eastern province, is from March 31st to October 1st.

The passage out to Ceylon takes about four weeks, and always provides a most enjoyable trip. A delightful sensation will be experienced on first sighting this beautiful Island, for its lofty mountain ranges and shores, luxuriantly clothed with rich green foliage down to the water's edge, furnish a vivid contrast to the dry and sandy desert between Port Said and Suez, to the burnt up appearance of the lands bordering on the Red Sea and the dreary, barren-looking, volcanic Rock of Aden.

On arrival at Colombo, the question of the best hotel accommodation will arise, and personally I can recommend the following, all of which are excellent in their service and moderate in their charges: the Grand, Bristol, or Galle Face. Suppose we stay at one of these for a day or so to settle down and make such arrangements as are necessary for travelling overland to Trincomalie (in the eastern province), the best sporting district in the Island, to which I propose to take my readers and to establish headquarters for a time.

The large open verandahs of these hotels present to

the visitor interesting scenes of an animated and diverting nature. Passengers of all nationalities arriving and departing by steamer assemble here with all the bustle and excitement attendant thereon. Native merchants, Indian, Cingalese and others, in their Oriental costumes, and insinuating suave manners, do brisk business in disposing of their showy wares, while snake-charmers and conjurers may be seen in other directions entertaining groups of interested spectators. As night approaches one's attention will possibly be attracted to the little house-lizards which may be seen running about the walls, making a chirruping noise like that of small birds. "Kevuli" they are termed by the natives; they are pretty little creatures of a greyish colour, with black bead-like eyes, perfectly harmless, living on mosquitoes and other insect pests. Their means of catching them with the tongue, which can be shot out a considerable distance, are most interesting to watch.

During the day, while walking along country roads, one may also be startled by the tree lizard, nine inches to a foot long, scuttling across one's path. They are also harmless, but it is advisable to let them alone, as they are armed with a formidable row of sharp processes along the back and tail, which cause nasty wounds if handled.

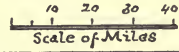
Another interesting and striking feature which brings home to the visitor the fact of being in the tropics are the myriads of toads and frogs which hibernate beneath the earth during the dry weather. These only awaken and come to the surface on the appearance of heavy rain, filling the air with the din of their loud croakings, from the faintest sounds of the smaller fry to the deep guttural croaks of the largest bull frog.

Trincomalie is distant about 160 miles by rail and road from Colombo, and game of every kind can be obtained in the neighbourhood. Indeed, the whole of

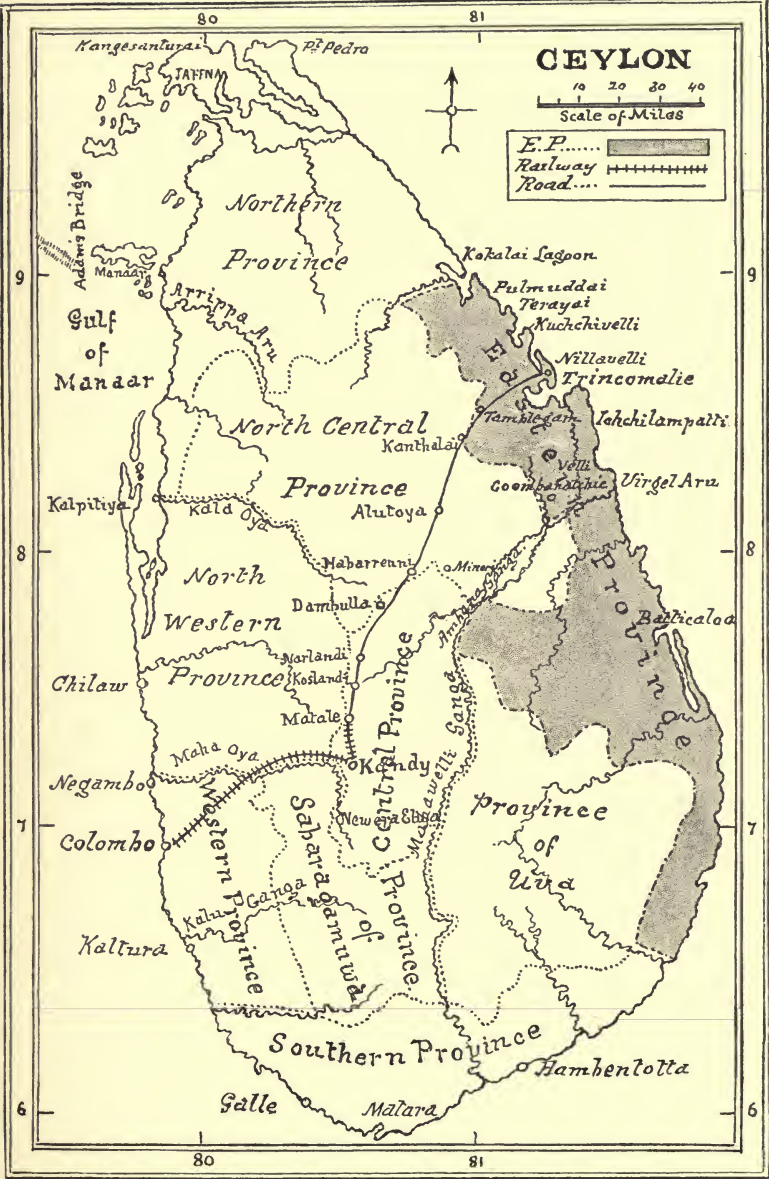
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CEYLON



E.P.	
Railway	
Road	



this province, extending from the Kokalai Lagoon in the north to within thirty or forty miles of Hambentotta in the south, affords some of the finest shooting in the Island.

The question of servants has now to be thought of; they can easily be obtained in Colombo, but little trouble should be experienced in engaging through the hotel management the personal staff required for an expedition. Presuming the party to number two, the follow-



INNER HARBOUR, TRINCOMALIE
WITH SOBER ISLAND IN THE DISTANCE

ing are necessary: An appu (butler) each, either Tamil or Cingalese; a native cook; a good coolie; and two kuthrie-karrens (horsekeepers), at rates of pay varying from twenty to thirty rupees per mensem for appu, twenty to twenty-five rupees per mensem for cook, ten to fifteen rupees per mensem for horsekeepers, and ten to twelve rupees per mensem for coolie, whose duty is to assist generally. The present value of the rupee is 1s. 4d.

A saddle pony each should also be hired or purchased

These can be obtained for a small sum, and will be found to be of great service, adding materially to one's comfort and enjoyment, and they are easily disposed of when finished with.

Trackers and coolies can be engaged nearer the base of the shoot, but supplies sufficient for three or four weeks' consumption should be secured now and packed into convenient cases for easy handling.

These are described in detail in the appendix entitled "How to fit out an Expedition."

Let us now make our way across country to the hunting grounds.

The first stage will be by rail from Colombo to Matale, a native town sixteen miles beyond Kandy, with a good rest house, to which place the servants and horsekeepers are sent on in advance in charge of ponies and camp necessaries. We travel and arrive somewhat later, thus giving them time prior to our appearance to hire bullock carts and pack stores ready for the road journey (ninety-seven miles), which takes about two and a half days to accomplish.

After dinner we fix ourselves comfortably in the sleeping compartments of the carts. The mardu-karrens (drivers), with a few incentive words of encouragement, twist the tails of the bulls, and we start off at a trot, which, needless to say, soon slackens down to a walking pace.

The Matale bullock cart is a large, heavy-looking, narrow conveyance, but picturesque in appearance, and quite a work of art. It is very long and commodious compared with other carts in different parts of the Island, being low on the wheels, and cleverly covered over with a superstructure of bent jungle sticks or split bamboos, with platted leaves of the cocoanut tree (termed cadjans) and matting combined, ingeniously fixed in place by a network of native-made coir rope, rendering it perfectly



A MATALE BULLOCK CART

waterproof. The inside is divided by a platform, the upper part of which is reserved as accommodation for sleeping, and the lower space for carrying stores. The sketch gives an idea of one of these carts, with a pair of slow but willing and patient coast bulls and a characteristic type of Kandyian driver.

Rest houses, under the management of the Government, are placed along the road en route, about ten or twelve miles apart, for the convenience of travellers, where plain refreshments and sleeping accommodation are obtainable. These rest houses are:—Matale, Koslandi, Narlandi, Dambulla, Haborrenni, Alutoya, Kanthalai, Tamblegam, Trincomalie.

Should one desire, however, to break the journey by stopping over night at any of these, it is advisable to send word beforehand by postcard to the native rest house-keeper, in order that he may be enabled to make suitable arrangements.

There are several places to be seen on the trip of great historical interest and antiquity, which will well repay a visit. For instance, there are:—

The famous Buddhist Rock Temple of Dambulla, twenty-eight miles from Matale, with caves and marvellous stone figures of Buddha and Hindu deities. It lies close to the Dambulla rest house.

The ancient fortified Rock of Sighiri, which can be seen from the road between Dambulla and Haborrenni, and the magnificent tank, or lake of Kanthalai, twenty-five miles from Trincomalie.

Travelling by bullock cart across country is in itself delightful, but for variety and to fill up time some amusement may be got out of the gun by walking on ahead of the carts. Different kinds of game are frequently met on the road, as well as jungle fowl and many varieties of pigeons.

Once I was travelling in this way with a friend, walking

ahead of the carts between Dambulla and Haborrenni, when we stopped for a rest by the roadside. Whilst enjoying a pipe, we were amused by some passing strolling native conjurers who, in their primitive way, gave us a performance. They imitated to the life the chattering and other sounds peculiar to different kinds of monkeys, and uncovered a round flat basket which contained their "stock in trade of snakes"; several cobras at once rose therefrom with hoods distended, their singularly bright spectacle markings being very conspicuous, looking anything but pleased at being disturbed. The performer then produced and played on a unique musical instrument made from a gourd, resembling the drone of bagpipes. This had a magical effect, causing the snakes to rise and fall in graceful motions at his will.

While thus entertained we were surprised to see a herd of spotted deer spring from the jungle on to the road, a little way off, and trot up to within a few yards of us, no doubt attracted by this strange music, which evidently had its charm, and enabled me to secure a fine head.

While on the subject of snakes, I may state that I have had various curious experiences with them, and the following may be worth relating. Standing one day in conversation with my tracker on a sandy plain near a mangrove swamp, when on a deer shoot, my attention was suddenly attracted to a large snake on the sand in the distance, with elevated head, making straight for us for all it was worth. I raised my gun to fire, but my native shikari was evidently better acquainted with the ways of these reptiles than myself, for with a knowing wink and smile he advised me to pause, pointing at the same time to a hole in the ground near our feet, which from his gestures I understood to be the snake's habitation. I accordingly moved away and watched its approach, and was glad when I saw it take a dive and disappear

down the hole. Although it turned out to be a harmless rat-snake, about eight or nine feet long, yet the sensation on seeing it approach one so rapidly in this strange manner was, to say the least of it, startling and un-



THE R.N. YARD, TRINCOMALIE
FROM SOBER ISLAND

pleasant. Snakes may be said to be numerous in Ceylon, but Europeans are seldom troubled by them.

Another time, when journeying across country by bullock cart, I casually wandered off the road down a jungle track. Suddenly I was confronted by a large bear, which luckily fell to my gun first shot. Elephants are sometimes seen, and crocodiles are now and again come across, lying on the jungle roads during heavy rains. Jackals are very numerous, and their audacity when in search of food is surprising.

One night I slept by the roadside under cover of the stars, with a view of continuing next morning the track after an elephant a friend and myself had been pursuing that afternoon, but had given up owing to darkness

setting in. I was suddenly startled from my slumbers by alarming shouts from the coolie watcher. Thinking the elephant was upon us, I jumped up in haste and seized my rifle, but, to my chagrin, found the excitement was only due to two jackals, who had stealthily sneaked up, and were caught in the act of devouring the contents of our lunch basket, which was lying between us.

Trincomalie itself is a pretty little seaport lying on the N.E. coast, with a population of about three or four thousand. It has a picturesque land-locked harbour, studded with islets and promontories, covered with luxuriant foliage which droops down to the rippling waters, the brilliant crimson "Flamboyer" being very conspicuous at certain times of the year.

Before its naval and military establishments were abolished a few years ago (I had the honour of being in charge of the naval establishment) it was an important



REST HOUSE, TRINCOMALIE

station. It was the headquarters of the East India Fleet, and a large number of natives were employed by both services. It was then a thriving, busy little town, but probably by now it has undergone considerable



CATHERAMATAMBY
REST HOUSE KEEPER



SHOOTING ABRAHAM
A TRINCORNALIE CELEBRITY

change, and no doubt the native population has dwindled down, owing to their means of support having gone ; nevertheless it is still an extensive cultivating district, which gives employment to many, and the adjacent country, with its vast extent of forests, plains, paddy fields, tanks, open glades and swamps, offer ideal cover for every kind of game.

It makes an excellent base for shooting expeditions in its immediate neighbourhood, and no difficulty will be experienced here in obtaining coolies and replenishing stores.

A rest house is situated in a good position on the Maidan, facing the sea, from which can be obtained a view of the interesting and fine old fortification of Fort Frederick, lately vacated by our troops, but built by the Dutch over 200 years ago.

The rest house keeper, one Catheramatamby by name a most excellent, obliging and attentive host, is a grand old specimen of a Tamil gentleman. He has been in charge for many years and is a very interesting character.

Perhaps I might here say a few words about the ubiquitous crow of the Island. Wherever one goes, there's the crow. It turns up everywhere most unexpectedly, and is about the most devilish, cunning, daring, thievish, and cheeky bird known. It will invade the bungalow and take things from the table under one's very nose. I once saw six carry off a roasted hare prepared for tiffin, which they afterwards dropped in the compound. Nothing is safe from their depredations, even to forks and spoons.

I was much amused one day watching their cute manœuvring to sneak the food from a monkey I had fixed to a pole by a chain. It was done in this way. The food of rice and curry had been taken to the monkey by my boy in a tin pannikin, and was detected by the quick eyes of some crows in the trees close by. They flew down and surrounded Jacko, who went on busily

eating, pretending to take no notice. Eventually one of the crows, evidently intentionally, waddled up dangerously near, but quite on the alert to make its escape. This was the ruse. The monkey at once left his food and made a spring for the crow, when another crow in the rear immediately took advantage of the opportunity to pick up the can and fly away with its contents. These carrion crows are so numerous and increase to such an extent in Trincomalie as to become a great nuisance,

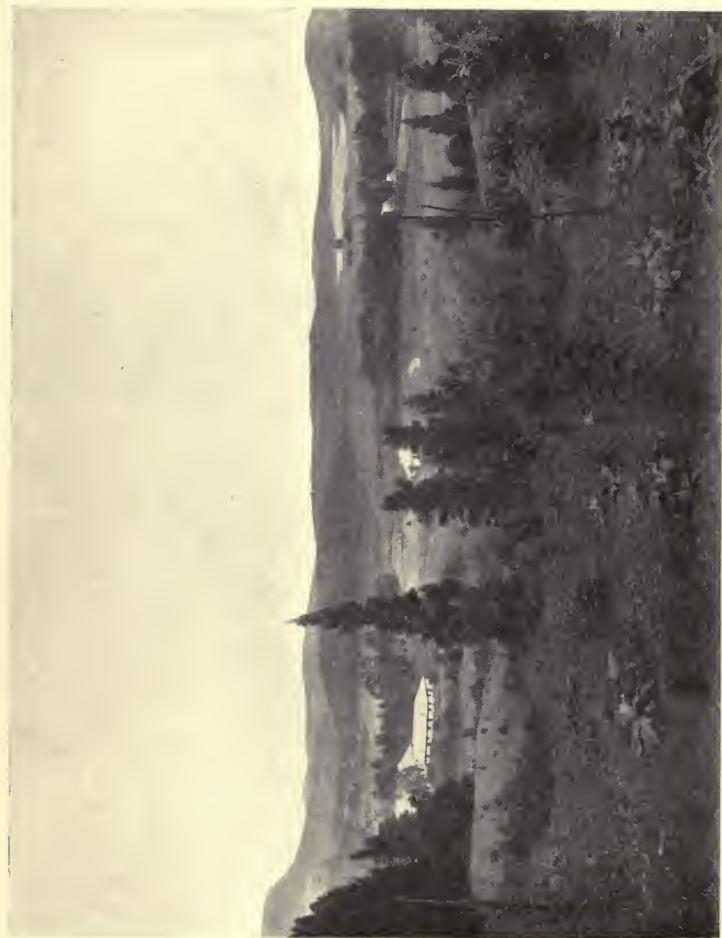


THE BAZAAR, TRINCOMALIE

and frequent battues were some years ago organized to keep them under.

Disposing of the Matale carts, we make this our abode for a few days, to overhaul gear, replenish stores, arrange a shoot, and procure the necessary licences, for which the following sums have to be paid :—

- 100 rupees for an elephant.
- 20 rupees for wild buffaloes.
- 10 rupees for ordinary game.



A VIEW OF NEWERA-ELIYA

There are two other ways than that given above of reaching Trincomalie from Colombo if so preferred. One, owing to the recent opening of the railway line through the Island to Jaffna, can now be taken overland via Anuradhapura, which makes the road journey somewhat shorter, although perhaps not as interesting. Another way is by sea, there being a regular weekly service of steamers that ply round the Island touching at all ports.

At this point I ought, however, to remind my readers that nothing more effectually knocks one up and interferes with the enjoyment of sport as the want of timely and refreshing sleep ; also that moderation in the pleasures of the table, adherence to temperance in the enjoyment of stimulants, together with regular exercise and frequent use of the bath, form the way to keep in health and make life worth living. Beer and spirits should be avoided as much as possible when on the shoot.

Should one at any time feel "run down" and require "bucking up," a trip to the Island Sanatorium, Newera-Eliya, 6,000 feet above sea level, where the climate is cool and bracing, will be found beneficial and effective. The scenery en route is remarkably fine, and Newera-Eliya possesses, amongst other attractions, a good club and an excellent golf course.

One of the most important things to remember is, to avoid chills, which are produced by sitting or standing about in draughts and dry winds with damp clothes. Should a warning sensation of chilliness at any time appear, the sportsmen should change at once into some warm dry clothing and take a little quinine.

The camp should not be pitched in or near swampy ground or stagnant pools, and at night a sportsman should always sleep under mosquito curtains.

These will not only preserve one from the attacks of mosquitoes and other jungle pests, but are at the same time great preventives of malaria.

CHAPTER II

SPORTING LOCALITIES

THE best sporting localities near Trincomalie may be, roughly, classified as under :—

		<i>Distance from Rest House.</i>			
ANDAN KULAM	..	3½ miles	..	Kandy Road	.. E.P
TAMBLEGAM	..	13	..	Kandy Road	.. "
VANDRASSEN KULAM	..	24	..	Kandy Road	.. "
KANTHALAI	..	25	..	Kandy Road	.. "
NILLAVELLI	..	8	..	North Coast Road	.. "
KUCHCHEVELLI	..	20	.. (about)	North Coast Road	.. "
PERIYA KULAM	..	6½	..	North Coast Road	.. "
TERAYAI	..	29	.. (about)	North Coast Road	.. "
PULMODDAI	..	35	.. (about)	North Coast Road	.. "
VELVERRI	..	7	..	Anuradhapura Road	.. "
PAN KULAM	..	15	..	Anuradhapura Road	.. "
ALLAI, TOPORE	..	14	..	Kottiar Side	.. "
PUTUR	..	19	.. (about)	Kottiar Side	.. "
VELLI	..	28	.. (about)	Kottiar Side	.. "
COOMBANATCHIE	..	35	.. (about)	Kottiar Side	.. "
ICHEHILAMPATTAI	..	23	..	Kottiar Side	.. "

ANDAN KULAM is a pretty little tank, close to Trincomalie, and is about two miles round. One can get here a shot at crocodiles, and teal in the wet season. Prior to its restoration some few years ago, by its retired position, it formed an attractive spot for game, many specimens of the Ceylon fauna having been secured by the writer. Since the water has been let in, fine trees which were a feature of the place have died, and the cover and feeding grounds have disappeared, as well



VANDRASSEN KULAM, NEAR KANTHALAI

as the game. A casual elephant may now and again visit it, and bears are to be found in the neighbourhood.

TAMBLEGAM is at the thirteenth mile on the Kandy Road. Here there is a comfortable rest house where one can put up and obtain refreshments. About a quarter of a mile from this is one of the largest stretches of marsh and paddy fields in the district, affording some of the finest snipe shooting in the Island. The walking up is fairly heavy, but this is compensated for by the birds being somewhat lazy on the wing.



A LAGOON NEAR NILLAVELLI

Painted snipe are frequently flushed in the swamps, but jack snipe are somewhat rare. Deer and other game are to be met with round the borders.

VANDRASSEN KULAM is a smallish tank close to Kanthalai, lying in a secluded position. It is a favourite resort for elephant, buffalo, sambur and other game. Peafowl are plentiful, as well as waterfowl, and snipe when in season.

KANTHALAI. The jungle surroundings here are as varied as they are extensive, affording splendid cover for every

species of game. In the adjoining paddy fields good snipe shooting is to be had, as I have explained in the next chapter.

NILLAVELLI is eight miles distant on the North Road, and has a good rest house near the sea. A great native industry is carried on here in the cultivation of salt, which forms a source of revenue to the country. The salt is manufactured by raising sea-water from the shallow estuary close by, and placing it into salt pans, about sixty or seventy feet square and twelve inches in depth, which are formed by levelling and embanking the deeply impregnated soil. Then, as evaporation from the intense heat takes place, the dry salt crystals are left behind. These are carefully collected and stored.

Owing to this trade and the fact that the village is somewhat thickly populated, game is scarce in the immediate neighbourhood, although elephant, wild buffalo and deer are sometimes met with within a few miles of the rest house. There are paddy fields close by where snipe lie in the season. About a mile or so seaward rises a rocky formation known as "Pigeon Island," so named from the great numbers of "blue rock" pigeons which collect there. Its isolation, rugged nature, and thick green stunted growth of vegetation make it an ideal breeding ground. There are several outlying smaller rocks similarly clothed, and flights of pigeons may be constantly seen passing over from one to another, affording some fine sport.

To work a shoot here satisfactorily, a large native canoe is necessary to convey the sportsmen and camping necessaries to the main Island, where some of the guns are placed in commanding positions. A second canoe (small kind) which is towed behind is required for planting other guns on the outlying islets, and picking up the birds falling in the water.

The author has often made such excursions to the spot



KUCHEVELLI REST HOUSE

in company with friends, and has returned with heavy bags.

Turtle are frequently come across in the many sandy nooks to be found near the water's edge.

PERIYA KULAM is about one and a half miles from Nillavelli rest house. It is a fairly large tank, and is well stocked with crocodiles. Teal are plentiful here during the wet season, and the surrounding country with its paddy fields is good for miscellaneous shooting, including snipe.

KUCHCHEVELLI has a good but somewhat unique-looking rest house near the sea, and lies about twelve miles north of Nillavelli, in a good sporting country. Deer are plentiful, so are leopard, besides all other game, as the numberless tracks passed on the road testify.

TERAYAI is about nine miles further on, has a convenient rest house, and lies more inland, in the heart of a deer country, with plains, salt marshes, swamps, lagoons, low scrub and big jungle, in which deer delight ; it is a favourite haunt also of the elephant and buffalo. Leopards are also numerous, and hares are frequently put up amongst the heathery growth of the salt plains. Delicious oysters, curiously enough, are a feature here, and are obtained in any quantity from the salt lagoons within a mile or so of the bungalow.

What strikes a sportsman as particularly interesting are the large troops of monkeys which can be seen assembled here on the plains in the afternoon for recreation, from the big wanderoo to the small " macacus sinicus " or little brown monkey. They take great precautions to guard themselves from the intrusion of unwelcome visitors, and place several cordons of sentries, generally wanderoots, on the tops of the highest outlying trees, who keep careful watch, and on the first indication of approaching danger give a warning signal, a low " coo

whoop!" from one to the other, until it reaches the main body perhaps hundreds of yards away, when the whole will at once gradually retire to the cover of the nearest jungle in as regular and orderly a manner as a company of soldiers.

The writer has many times, out of curiosity, watched these assemblies from a secluded spot, and been greatly amused by their antics. On one occasion he came across a number collected together sitting round in a large circle, and by their chatter and gesticulations were no doubt busily engaged arranging some very important form of lively entertainment. Many little chaps nestled in the laps of their mothers, while others were mounted on the shoulders of the older monkeys looking on, taking as much interest as any in the proceedings going forward.

The nature of the sport settled, an amusing scene then took place, reminding one very much of a well-known old country game played at home by human beings, "kiss in the ring." Their ridiculous tricks made it appear absurdly real. A knowing "old sportsman" with plenty of the old Adam in him, tail erect and a merry, mischievous twinkle in the eye, would commence by quietly strolling round the circle in a most sedate and dignified manner, apparently quite unconcerned and indifferent to the excited and modest emotions displayed by the gentler sex present.

When, after careful inspection, he had selected his "best gal," he vigorously pulled her tail, and then made off for all he was worth, screaming with exultation and every expression of intense delight and laughter, the other in full chase in and out and round about the assembled company. When caught there would be an embrace and a bit of a "rough and tumble," which probably answered as a very fair substitute for the usual osculatory salute, in which the spectators seemed greatly interested



TERAYAI REST HOUSE

and pleased, showing their appreciation by excited shrieks and grimaces. After this, order was restored, the ring assumed its original form, and the game continued or changed to another, perhaps more ludicrously funny, the monkeys evidently immensely enjoying the fun.

Monkeys' mimicry and amusing tricks in captivity are nothing compared to what they are in their native condition.

PULMODDAI, the next station, is another six miles distant, and very similar to that of Terayai as to the game in the neighbourhood. Elephants, perhaps, are more numerous, and good peafowl shooting is to be had.

VELVERRI is a small native village, with a little rudely built structure used as a Roman Catholic Church. It is about seven miles from Trincomalie on the Anuradhapura road, and is good for waterhole shooting. Bear and leopard abound in the jungle round about. There are five holes within a radius of four miles, one of which lies within half a mile.

PAN KULAM is eight miles further on, and has a P.W.D. bungalow overlooking the tank, which, like most other tanks, swarms with crocodiles. The country round about affords some good miscellaneous shooting, including teal and snipe.

Here may be seen the native fisherman busily engaged capturing "lulu" (tank fish) by the novel means of a bottomless basket, which he places over likely spots in the shallow water; then, by inserting his hand through the aperture above, he feels for the fish in the mud below, which, when caught, are strung on a piece of ratan cane, and trailed behind from the fisherman's waist.

During long droughts, when the tanks dry up, the "lulu" will travel some distance across country in search of water; it also hibernates. It is then interest-

ing to watch a native with his mammoty (spade) make a hole in the hard-baked surface of the crusted earth and bring forth fish from the soft clayey soil beneath.

The writer has witnessed on his jungle travels at such times great numbers of these fish in the act of migrating overland from one tank to another, under a broiling sun, hopping along gaily through hot sand and dried-up vegetation covered with dust.

The "lulu" in appearance somewhat resembles the



BASKET FISHERMEN CATCHING "LULU"

carp; they are good eating in the rainy season, but at other times have a muddy taste. A good fish may weigh three or four pounds.

ALLAI is another large tank situated on the Kottiar side of Trincomalie, near the Moor village of Topore. It is well stocked with crocodiles, some of which are exceedingly large. It is almost a sure find for elephants,



RETURNING FROM A DEER SHOOT, TERAYAI
CROSSING A LAGOON

and the country in the neighbourhood is generally good for game. Some of the finest duck and teal shooting can be had on the great lake, the long grass and weeds growing thereon giving the birds splendid cover, at the same time forming excellent feeding grounds. Topore also possesses a fine stretch of paddy fields, where the best of snipe shooting can be enjoyed.

Once when strolling round this tank with a friend (Sir Peter Walker), a keen sportsman and an excellent shot, the author came on the fresh tracks of a very fine alien (solitary elephant). Anxious to give his friend a shot before he left the Island, as he was only on a short visit, they decided to follow up.

The tracks led through many interesting varieties of jungle, which eventually, after two hours' hard tracking, brought them up to the quarry, lying asleep in jungle most difficult to penetrate.

Its form could just be made out in the dark and uncertain light of the forest, but owing to the density of the brushwood they could not further advance without disturbing the brute, much less get a shot. The situation was certainly awkward.

After a short consultation it was determined to break quickly through the undergrowth, getting as near as possible, and taking their chance. This they did, and in a second the brute was on its legs, making straight for them with a low grunt and a wild scream of rage.

Sir Peter then fired a shot which dropped it. Rising immediately, it was again on its legs, about to charge; but, luckily, before it could do any damage it fell dead within a few yards by another well-directed shot, which reached the brain.

My friend's delight at such an unexpected stroke of good luck may be well imagined, this being his first elephant, and a record one, too! The brute was a well-known dangerous "rogue" that had haunted the neigh-

bourhood for some time, to the danger and annoyance of the native cultivators. Its measurements were:—height, from centre of back, ten feet five inches; the circumference of fore feet, sixty-two and a half inches.

A few days later he left overland for Colombo, en route to England, and again had the wonderful good fortune to bag another on the road, in rather a unique manner. He had arrived at the Alutoya rest house, about thirty miles from Trincomalie, where he stopped for lunch, the bullock carts with all his personal belongings remaining in the compound. Here he met an old acquaintance, who told him about a rogue elephant, on the road close by, that had been chasing coolies and had also held up the mails. A few minutes later his boy "Punch" came running in, in a wild state of excitement, shouting "Anei! Anei! Durai!"

Both ran out, and sure enough there it was, within a few hundred yards of the bungalow, coming on with its trunk swinging from side to side. Immediate action was necessary, but the gun was lying packed at the bottom of the cart with a lot of gear on top. Quickly turning out the things, he secured the gun case, got at the gun, put in a couple of cartridges, and with a few spare cartridges handy in his pocket, he managed to creep up and get under cover of some bushes near the trunk of a large ironwood tree by the side of the road.

The elephant soon approached, enabling him to make a sure shot that killed it on the spot. He thus secured two fine elephants within the short space of a few days—both record ones, too—a most unusual stroke of good luck and a very satisfactory termination to a short but no doubt pleasant visit to Trincomalie.

PUTUR is a little native village five or six miles further on. It lies in a good game country. Elephants frequently roam about here, and bears are particularly thick in the neighbourhood. There is a waterhole four



A TYPICAL CAMP SCENE, PULMODDAI

miles off, in a secluded part of the jungle, well known to the villagers, where on a moonlight night one can be well entertained by a bear shoot.

VELLI is an interesting and large plain, surrounded by jungle, in a splendid game country. It is a feeding ground for the elephant, and is described in my chapter on "Elephant Shooting."

COOMBANATCHIE is about seven miles distant from Velli. A branch of the Mahawellaganga river runs close by. It is an ideal haunt of the elephant and all other game, and is also alluded to in my chapter on "Elephant Shooting."

ICHEHILAMPATTAI lies about nine miles down the Batticaloa coast road from Topore in a good game country, noted principally to sportsmen for the numerous waterholes in the vicinity, affording the best bear and leopard shooting in the district. It is also referred to in a chapter on waterhole shooting. There is a rest house here for use of travellers.

Other well-known sporting localities which the writer can recommend :—

THE GUNNERS QUOIN, half-way between Trincomalie and Batticaloa, E.P.

TIRIKUNAMOTTUWA and KANDA KADU, within a few miles of Coombanatchie, N.C.P.

VADDAKACHCHI, about nine miles south-east of Kanthalai, N.C.P.

MINERI TANK, about twelve miles from the Haborenni rest house, on the Kandy Road, N.C.P.

Although game has been described as plentiful in the different localities mentioned, the various animals are not much seen in the open, which is no doubt due to the grand cover the forests afford. All wild game are, as a rule, timid and shy by nature, so they instinctively hide from view in the most out-of-the-way, secluded, shady glades and nooks of the jungle, where they feel

secure from being disturbed. They therefore require some hunting up.

Many animals escape observation by their colour harmonizing so much with the foliage and undergrowth of the background, so the sportsman should therefore try and cultivate what is termed by shikaris "a jungle eye," that is, an eye trained to quickly distinguish animals from their jungle surroundings, but this can only be gained by practice and careful observation.

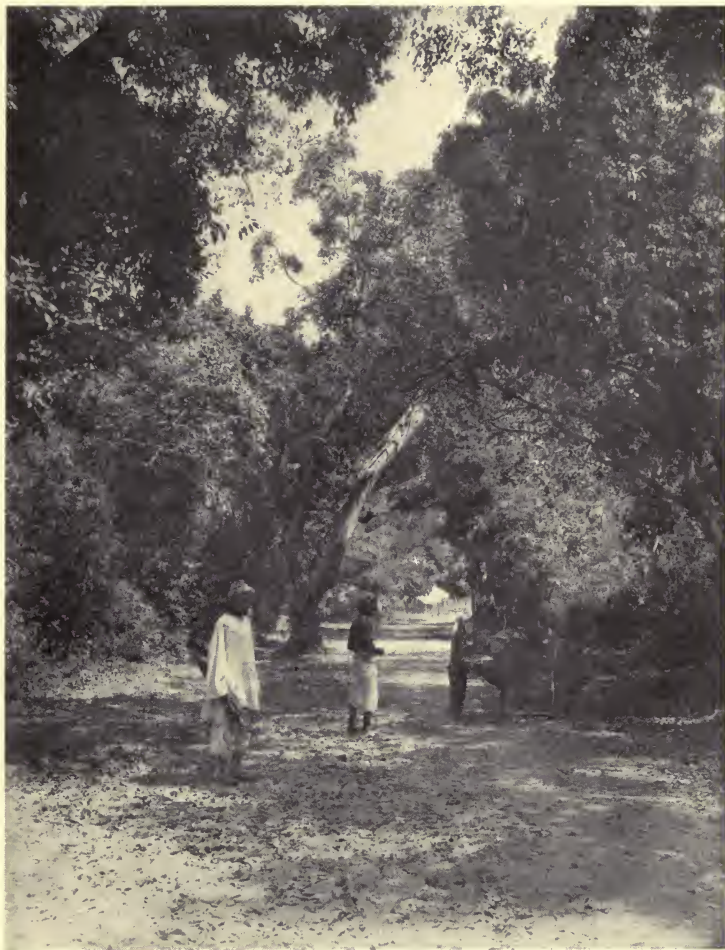
In the chapters following are given a few descriptive sketches of typical low-country shoots, taken from the author's diaries and illustrated by incidents that he has experienced.

The author might perhaps be allowed to mention here that although he introduces two friends shooting together, in his hunting sketches, to show that such companionable trips are often made, he would not recommend this arrangement to obtain the best sport. Besides the extra noise made by numbers in tracking, and the greater likelihood of being seen by wild game, the plan interferes more or less with the shooting, and therefore better results may be expected from going alone.

Let us, however, assume that the necessary licences have been obtained, and the close months are over, and it has been agreed to commence with a miscellaneous shoot around the famous tank of Kanthalai, by way of initiation and to get a general idea of sport in Ceylon. All the gear can be conveyed along the road by bullock carts, and on this trip coolie bearers will not be required. Trackers, as well as any casual labour necessary, can be obtained on the spot.

The express and smooth bores will be found the most useful guns, and, in addition to the ordinary supply of rifle and ball cartridges, some six and eight shot cartridges should be included for small game and snipe.

All camping requirements should be arranged and



COAST ROAD, TERAYAI

packed, including provisions for about four days. They should be placed in carts engaged for the purpose, and started on the road by daybreak, together with the native attendants. We who form the actual party follow somewhat later on the ponies.

Bullock-cart travelling being proverbially slow, we soon overtake the expedition, and eventually, after a



CAMP NEAR SNIPE MARSHES, TAMBLEGAM

pleasant morning's ride, pull up at the Tamblegam rest house (thirteenth mile), half-way, for tiffin, and to refresh the bullocks, our arrival being greeted by the whoop! of the wanderoo and the chattering of other numerous monkeys in the surrounding woods.

Near this rest house are extensive paddy fields and snipe marshes considered to be the best in the district. Large bags have been frequently made here, and to give an idea of the vast numbers of snipe that at times

settle on these marshes, the writer may mention that he has often had three to five birds down without moving from one position, and has known as many as a hundred couple falling to one gun in a day during the season.

Having rested, the carts are again put in motion, and the latter part of the journey of twelve miles resumed. Mounting our nags we ride on ahead, the rest following on as best they can. After a pleasant canter we leave the monotony of the road, arriving at our destination in good time. Here a delightfully cool and refreshing view of the fine lake of Kanthalai in all its beauty lies before us. This lake is doubly interesting from its great historical antiquity and artificial origin. There are, however, many such tanks in the Island, constructed nearly 2,000 years ago for irrigating purposes, by the then ruling kings of Ceylon, and during an age of forced labour. Their formation was effected by throwing a gigantic stone bund or embankment across the embouchure of a valley enclosing a range of hills, thus arresting and retaining all flowing waters.

Dismounting and putting up our horses in the stabling provided, we enter the rest house, and take possession of two long chairs in the verandah overlooking the tank on a level with the top of the ancient bund. Here we light our pipes and enjoy the captivating scene.

There is little wind, and hardly a ripple disturbs the mirror-like surface of this splendid and extensive sheet of water, in which are reflected the distant hills and much luxuriant foliage. Herds of buffaloes are seen grazing near the water's edge. Other herds are lying about in the grateful shade of the trees of the surrounding forests. A little nearer some crocodiles are basking in the sun on a spit of sand, and a number of cormorants, looking grotesque with outspread wings, are airing themselves on an arid island rock.

On our right a number of huge white pelican are lazily



KANDY ROAD
NEAR TAMBLEGAM

flying across the hazy tank, while several pelican, with their conspicuous long beaks and dilatable pouches, are resting on the glassy surface of the placid water, busily engaged in piscatorial pursuits. Flights of duck, teal, and many other kinds of waterfowl are to be seen on the move in all directions, and numerous darters and other diving birds are constantly popping up, only to disappear again almost immediately under water. Below us, creating quite a wave, is a large crocodile cruising round.

Our thoughts, I am afraid, have been taken up so much with this charming picture that time has been flying by unnoticed. Now it is getting late, and in the distance is heard the rumbling and squeaking of wheels, mingled with the jabbering of native voices. A little later our boys turn up, and report the arrival of the carts. They look somewhat tired and dusty, but are evidently pleased at having come to the end of a long, dry, and hot journey.

While they are busily employed unpacking, our attention is attracted by the gorgeous sunset across the lake. Its roseate and golden glow lights up the sky and all the surrounding scenery with marvellous brilliance, and this vista is reflected in the water, making a most strikingly beautiful and harmonious picture. Such wonderful richness and blends of colour are only to be seen under the influences of a tropical sun.

A few minutes later darkness sets in, and Marmosi, a well-known Moor Shikari, appears in the dim light of the verandah for orders. We engage him, and also two Tamil coolies, with directions to be ready for us at daybreak.

CHAPTER III

ON A MISCELLANEOUS SHOOTING TRIP

IT may be taken as an axiom by sportsmen that the more remote from civilization the better are the chances of sport, as game is not so likely to have been harassed. Another useful hint is this—provide yourself with a shrill metal whistle for stopping deer when breaking cover and bolting across a plain. A loud shrill blast generally has the desired effect, and gives a capital opportunity to pick out a good head.

Low scrub jungle, long grass and swamps, are likely places to find buffalo, sambur, spotted deer and pig.

The most telling and effective shot for deer is just behind the shoulder. This also applies to most game except the Indian elephant. Make as little noise as possible, and avoid treading on brittle pieces of dead wood when tracking or stalking. Don't walk in an upright position when hunting up game in scrub jungle and glades bordering thereon. Keep the gun and body low, so as not to attract attention, and look well under the bushes.

In long grass, where the body of a deer would naturally be more or less hid from view, look out for the flap of an ear or movement of antlers just above. In stalking, be sure the wind is not blowing from yourself towards the quarry. Keep low down and take advantage of every tuft of grass or bush to screen yourself from view.

Provide yourself with a small muslin bag of wood

ashes. This, flicked with the finger, will give the direction of the wind when doubtful, and no sportsman should be without it.

The author had once an interesting stalking experience which may bear relating. A large pith hat, which had been painted green to make it rainproof, was one day accidentally sat upon. On being forced into shape again the paint surface was much cracked, and the new white markings gave the remainder of the green paint surface the appearance, at a distance, of vine leaves. With this on his arm as a shield, he crept along on hands and knees, endeavouring to stalk a herd of spotted deer grazing in the open, with little or no cover. So well and successfully did this ruse answer, that he got within fifty or sixty yards and was covering the finest head, when one of the herd, a doe, curious at seeing so strange an object on the plain, actually trotted up to him within a few feet, when, suddenly struck with alarm, it gave a loud warning bark, but too late to prevent the stag falling to the gun.

When short of matches it is a good plan to take a shot cartridge, remove shot and wads, and place a piece of rag in their place. Then fire at a bank or trunk of a tree, when the rag will be found to be sufficiently ignited to kindle a fire.

A simple snipe carrier which will be found both handy and useful is easily made of a thin piece of tough wood $\frac{3}{8}$ " by 3" by 24", with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " slot cut up the centre, terminating at one end with a round hole $1\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter, in which a movable wooden plug is inserted. It is slung and carried by a piece of cord made fast through holes at the ends.

We turn out duly a little before daybreak, have some early breakfast, get into shooting rig, see to our guns and ammunition, pack up some refreshments in the

haversack, and then, handing the rifles, cartridges, bags, and other gear to the tracker and coolies, pick up our shot guns, which are handier and more adaptable than the rifle for the snap shots we are likely to get in cover.

Leaving the rest house on our left, we soon reach the bed of the tank, skirting the jungle. The morning air is cool, crisp, and refreshing, but the long grass through which we walk is uncomfortably cold and wet, and so are the bushes, from the effects of the heavy dew during the night. Happily, we soon get accustomed to these discomforts, and trip along elated at the prospect of some good sport ahead.

Our intention is to commence on the larger game, such as buffalo and sambur chital (spotted deer), afterwards trying our luck on peafowl, duck and snipe, making a complete circuit of the tank, about fifteen or sixteen miles, getting back to the rest house about mid-day, and winding up in the afternoon by a snipe shoot on the other side of the bund close to our headquarters.

The weather is all that could be desired, dullish, with a gentle breeze blowing in our faces. Thanks to the recent rains, the spoor shows up very clearly. It is just the right kind of morning to find game about, so we proceed at a quickish pace, as the country is somewhat open, keeping a good look-out in eager anticipation of getting the first shot. Soon we near the edge of the water, going through clumps of long grass, while snipe and snippets are getting up on every side. The "did he do it" plover is hovering around making its shrill, alarming call, and the adjacent forest is alive with chattering monkeys that spring from tree to tree.

Entering some scrub jungle, we come on some patches of velvety grass land, dotted here and there with splendid screening bushes and plenty of shade. This is an ideal

grazing ground for deer. Indeed, numerous tracks of deer are visible, besides those of a large leopard, evidently on the hunt.

Suddenly I hear two shots ahead, and, hurrying up, I find my friend had eased off two barrels at a deer as it sprang past him. Rapidly we take a look round, and in a few minutes the tracker spots fresh blood marks on a dead leaf, which he draws our attention to. This is quite sufficient inducement to follow up, but we do not go far before we hear something struggling amongst the undergrowth.

Marmosi gets quickly through the brushwood and gives a triumphant "Ugh!" call, which brings us soon to the spot. There we find at his feet a full-grown chital stag with a grand head. It had been killed by a good shot, one bullet having entered just behind the shoulder, the other grazing the back. Placing it in the fork of a tree to save it from jackals, and marking the spot, we move onwards, encouraged by the result of our first kill.

A little later Marmosi draws my attention to the fresh spoor of a big elephant. "Periya anei!" says he, much interested, and by the size of its footprints he was right. It must have been there but a few minutes before, and made off on hearing the first shot.

We are now nearing the head of the tank, keeping close under cover of the jungle, when suddenly the tracker again stops short, and whispers in my ear "Mān! Mān!" (Deer! Deer!), at the same time pointing with his finger. Looking in the direction, I see a herd about 400 yards off, half-way between the water and jungle, in a clearing of grass. There is a fine stag amongst them, and as it is necessary to stalk these, we enter the jungle and creep along as quickly and noiselessly as possible, every now and again taking an observation through the openings in the foliage.

Our progress, however, is soon arrested by the density and impassable nature of the undergrowth. While searching for a way through, I surprise a fine sambur about fifty yards away on my right, with a fine spread of antlers. This is a chance not to be missed, and by a quick snap shot, I roll it over as it is in the act of bolting ; but recovering itself immediately, it is up and again about to make off, when another shot drops it and kills it.

We mark the spot and move on again, now by the side of the jungle, with the long grass and tank on our left. In a few minutes another stag is sighted some 250 yards off. Taking advantage of all cover that is handy, and doing a little manœuvring, I manage to get within 150 yards of it. Then, when it raises its head, I take careful aim with my Express and bring it down. On getting up to it I discover it to be a fine young chital stag, but not quite such a good head as the first. Placing this, like the others, in safety, we continue our tracking, and are soon at the further end of the tank.

As it is now past eight o'clock and the sun fairly hot, we sit under the grateful shade of a large kumbook tree, near the edge of the water, and enjoy a snack, lubricated with a refreshing and frisky bottle of Pilsener beer, most acceptable after our strenuous morning's exertions, and in due course indulge in a smoke. While thus pleasantly occupied we are much interested watching the many kinds of waders and other waterfowl we see before us. A little distance away we can see rose-coloured flamingoes, ibises, various kinds of herons and storks, including the great and dignified marabou, with its featherless head and enormous beak, wading in the shallows with majestic and stately measured strides. Nearer are innumerable waterfowl, including the "quack-a-duck" cotton teal, fleets of Coromandel teal, darters, bittern, curlew, and many other varieties too numerous



CONFRONTED BY A WILD BOAR

to mention, besides different kinds of bright-plumaged kingfishers.

By a gentle pressure on the arm, Marmosi draws my attention to a huge crocodile in the act of crawling out of the water on the opposite bank, about seventy-five or eighty yards off. Without being observed, I slip a cartridge into my Express, raise it very quietly, aim for the shoulder and fire. The crocodile shows no movement for a little time, then opens its capacious jaws, turns over on its side, and is motionless. As it is somewhat late we get up and commence the homeward march, putting a couple of No. 6 shot cartridges in the smooth bores for small game.

The crocodile just shot lies in our path. Approaching it, we take its measurement. It is 13' 6" in length, and very bulky in proportion. The shot had taken effect just behind the shoulder, the bullet having gone clean through, making a large hole on the opposite side, due to the expanding bullet. Just then a flight of whistling teal pass over our heads. Aiming at the foremost birds, we ease off four barrels, bringing down nine.

Gathering these up, we next try our luck on snipe in the long wet grass, and for some little time amuse ourselves with this delightful change of sport. The snipe patches round this side of the tank are very sketchy, and birds are only come upon here and there, but nevertheless we get some fair shooting.

Arriving at a deep stream which threatens to bar our progress, we have to make a detour through the forest on our right. Emerging again on the tank about a quarter of a mile further on, we pass through some low scrub jungle and water, in which are numerous large earth-worm mounds. Wading through this for some time, we are suddenly confronted by a large wild boar, standing almost upright, with its fore feet resting on the top of one of the hummocks, looking very fierce and

formidable with its sharp, curled-up, awe-inspiring tusks. Luckily, I had already replaced the shot cartridges by ball, and, firing full at the chest, with a grunt it fell dead.

Immediately afterwards, to our surprise, we are surrounded by a sounder, pig appearing in all directions, seemingly powerless to bolt, fascinated no doubt by the motionless body of their lord. Before they eventually clear off they lose five of their number.

“That’s a bit of warm, exciting work!” say I to my companion.

“Hard to beat, and most entertaining,” he replies with a smile. After which remark Marmosi and the coolies place the game under the shelter of some bushes, and we continue our march.

A number of ominous dark, heavy-looking water buffaloes are now seen a little way off, with noses in the air, sniffing and gazing at us in a somewhat threatening manner. This is due most probably to curiosity, and as we enter some long grass they are soon lost sight of. Before leaving the bed of the tank we manage to bag a jungle cock and a few more snipe, eventually fetching up at the rest house at noon very warm, dusty and thirsty, glad of a cool whisky and soda. Then, making arrangements for coolies and carts to bring in the bag, we tub and have tiffin, with a special entrée of snipe.

At three in the afternoon we, with our shikari men, make a start for the snipe ground, taking a good supply of No. 8 cartridges. We engage two snipe boys from the village as we pass through, and these are utilized to pick up the birds and carry spare cartridges, and in a short time are busy in the paddy fields.

The scene presented to us now is quite different from that of the morning. We find before us in bright tropical sunlight a large expanse of marsh and paddy fields bordered by jungle growth. Native cultivators are busy



A MOOR "SNIPE BOY"
WITH EARLY MORNING BAG

at work in different parts, tilling the land with the clumsy-looking but patient and hardworking water buffaloes that toil through the sticky mud, yoked to very primitive wooden ploughs, their hairless dark brown hides shining in the sun. In other directions are numerous buffaloes grazing on the drier portion of the marsh, while other buffaloes are lazily lying about wallowing in muddy swamps, for the sake of coolness and to rid themselves from the annoyance of flies and other insects, and are surrounded by numbers of egrets and other white paddy birds, some of which are seen perched on the animals' backs. Wherever one looks, these birds, together with many other kinds of waders, are to be seen; while the ever-present and conspicuous Brahmany kite, with its bright brown body, white head and neck, is hovering above, only waiting an opportunity to swoop down on some unfortunate bird that may attract its attention. So daring are they that the author has known them to catch and carry off birds in the act of falling on being shot. They will even swoop down and seize such game when it is lying dead at a sportsman's feet. Snippets (small waders) are also very plentiful and baffle one considerably while snipe shooting, getting up constantly in all directions with their peculiar shrill cry. One's attention is therefore very apt to be drawn off by their unexpected and sudden flights.

Snipe are plentiful and not too wild. To work the ground properly my friend and myself arrange to separate for the time and meet later on at the further end of the fields. So with a native shikari on one side and a boy on the other, to work up the birds, we in this formation commence our shoot, gradually increasing the distance between us. Snipe are rising all round, and our guns are kept well employed. In about an hour's time we meet at the appointed rendezvous with a good show of birds each. After enjoying a smoke and a chat we work back, exchanging

grounds. Although the shooting is not quite so brisk as before, we have no reason to complain, as the birds are still fairly plentiful, and keep us entertained. We get back to headquarters a little later on and count the bag—thirty-six and a half couple between us—not so bad for two and a half hours' work. The carts with the morning's shoot have arrived during our absence,



A BOAR TUSK TROPHY

and the heads of game are laid out for inspection in the compound.

These comprise one sambur, two chital stags, one crocodile and five pig, to which must be added nine teal, one jungle cock, and forty-six and a half couple of snipe, the result of a very enjoyable and satisfactory day's sport.

A few coolies from the village are now engaged to do the skinning. The flesh of the animals, after taking what we require, is handed over as a present to the villagers and is distributed through their "headman" by beat of "tom-tom," although I may add it has its marketable value.

The pleasure of a miscellaneous shoot lies, of course, in its great variety.

Here I might perhaps add an account of a rather amusing and exciting incident which occurred one day on returning from a snipe shoot at Tamblegam. Driving back in the dogcart I happened to be passing an abandoned cocoanut plantation. It was a very hot morning, and clouds of dust were rising from the road, making one feel somewhat thirsty. The horsekeeper, who had been evidently looking with a longing eye at the juicy nuts in the trees, could no longer resist the temptation, and at last came out with "would master like one green cocoanut?" which meant, of course, six for me and half a dozen for himself.

As I thought the cool milk of a green cocoanut would, at that time of the morning, be most refreshing, I said: "Yes, but how can you manage to get them?"

"That's all right, Durai (Master)," said he, "I climbing."

He was a nimble, wiry little fellow, so making a loop with a piece of coir rope, he put his feet into it, and was up the tree like a monkey, his arms clasping the trunk.

I watched him ascending, and as he neared the crown or head of the tree where the nuts were hanging, and was about to screw one off, I heard him suddenly exclaim "pambu!" (snake), at the same time letting go his hold and falling to the ground, the snake following. By good luck his fall was broken by tumbling into some bushes, while the snake hurried off to its hole.

He was out of that thicket in a "brace of shakes,"

and in another minute was standing before me panting, looking terribly scared and excited, giving his version of what happened. It appeared that when he had ascended to the top of the tree he saw, to his great alarm, just above him, and within a few inches of his face, the head of a cobra, with hood extended, hissing, about to strike. This gave him such a sudden fright as to make him let go his hold and fall. The cause of the cobra's anger was due to his pinching of its tail against the trunk with the hand by which he was clinging to the tree. With the exception of a few scratches, and the fact that his usual natural warm brown colour had temporarily changed to a sickly spotted pea-green, he was none the worse for his adventure, but it was a narrow escape for him, although rather amusing to the looker-on.

CHAPTER IV

AFTER THE INDIAN BUFFALO

INDIAN water buffaloes (*Bos bubalus*) in a semi-tame state are found all over Ceylon. They are utilized by the natives in many ways—the cultivation of crops, cart drawing, and as pack oxen (tavlems). Long files of the last-named may be often encountered on the jungle roads. They are provided with mellow tinkling wooden bells, and move slowly along in the tropical heat and glare of the sun, laden with sacks of paddy and other products. Hunters also use them in shooting game, concealing themselves under cover of the animal trained to the sport. Steering with a rope from the horns, they are often able to approach close to their quarry unobserved.

These buffalo are heavy and awkward looking, of a dunnish slate colour, with hides scantily supplied with hair. They possess strikingly massive and long, flattened horns, which are angulated and strongly marked with transverse wrinkles. When in quick motion they have an extraordinary way of lifting the head, stretching out the neck, with nostrils in the air, making the horns lie flat on the shoulders.

This no doubt is a provision of Nature, for it enables them to get through the thick bush.

It is sometimes very disquieting to the nerves when passing herds of these formidable creatures browsing in the open to notice the great interest aroused in them

by the sight of an European. Quickly raising their heads with a snort, and concentrating their gaze in the direction of the intruder, they advance slowly for a time, then suddenly wheel round and form into line, with a great clashing and clanking of their massive horns, as if about to charge, looking very ferocious. Although warlike, this action is, as a rule, only the result of curiosity or nervousness.

In the calving season they are uncertain and dangerous in disposition, attacking one sometimes without provocation. Should a sportsman therefore be in their vicinity at such a time, it is as well to give them a wide berth and always be prepared in case of emergency with a bullet.

An interesting feature is the attraction they have for the white paddy birds, which swarm round them in numbers in the paddy fields, some mounting on their backs, while they are listlessly grazing. Crows may often be seen perched there also, regaling themselves on the tics of which the hides and ears are plentifully stocked.

The wild buffalo, "Kula Mādu," as they are termed by the natives, differ somewhat from the domesticated ones. Although similar in build, they are finer animals, better set up and more active and formidable in appearance, standing about fifteen hands at the withers. The bulls have a quantity of rough dark brownish hair over the neck and shoulders. This stands up when the animals get excited, giving them a ferocious appearance. Their haunts are the tall grass jungles in the low country of the northern and eastern provinces, in the neighbourhood of swamps and low jungle, where rivers, lagoons and old tanks abound.

In these waters they seem to delight, immersing themselves in the muddy depths, with only the tops of their heads and horns above the surface. They thus protect



THE CEYLON WILD BUFFALO

themselves from the annoyance of flies and other insects, and luxuriate on the long succulent sedges growing in the shallows. They feed chiefly on grass, in the evening, at night, and in the morning. They rest in long grass or in low scrub jungle during the day, and may also be found about this time in the marshes bordering the large tanks. They are not, as a rule, seen in large numbers together. The most the writer has come across at one time has been five or six.

Solitary bulls will often mix with tame herds. It is then difficult to shoot without perhaps wounding others, as the females are always surrounding and guarding them. Their sense of smell is extraordinary, and perhaps more acute than any other animal at long distances. On crossing plains sometimes, they may be observed nearly a mile off, with outstretched necks taking the scent. Their tracking, therefore, requires the greatest care and caution, as these savagely inclined, ponderous brutes are apt to charge unexpectedly when suddenly confronted.

The best shot is just behind the shoulder.

Some years ago a perilly (dangerous) buffalo haunted the neighbourhood of the large Mineri tank in the N.C.P. It had been the terror of the cultivators for some time past. Many sportsmen had been after it without success, and, although often shot at, it seemed to bear a charmed life. Therefore one day I thought I might try my luck, and accordingly made arrangements with a well-known Cingalese tracker, one "Christian Appu" by name, who lived in the neighbourhood of the tank and knew its haunts, to track it up.

We arrived at the tank early one morning and were soon on its spoor. After considerable tramping we saw in the distance a large herd of buffalo, which we made for, in the hope of perhaps finding it amongst them. As luck would have it, a good breeze was blowing in our

faces, and as we were well under cover, we did not attract attention, and got up fairly close to the herd.

Then Christian Appu at once spotted the wild bull. There was no mistaking it from its manner and appearance. We immediately commenced a careful stalk, and got within 100 yards, the long grass affording excellent cover. Some considerable time elapsed, however, before I could put in a shot, as for some reason the animals appeared to scent danger and the bull would not leave the centre of the herd, by which it was surrounded. By chance it eventually exposed itself, enabling me to put in a right and left, and although I distinctly heard both shots hit the animal, to my astonishment it did not fall, but went off with the others at a gallop.

I looked at Christian Appu, who did not seem surprised in the least, but said: "Many gentlemens firing all the same, and no killy, master!"

"Well!" thought I, "this is strange," and I continued to watch the herd as they were bolting across the plain. Suddenly they disappeared down the bed of a stream intersecting the plain, reappearing on the other side soon after. One showed signs of going slow, and in another moment it had lowered its head, spun round and fallen over; the rest of the herd disappeared in the jungle beyond.

We soon got down to the edge of the stream, and saw the bull on the opposite side, lying on all fours, with head erect. On taking a casual look round, I was surprised to find several Cingalee natives all armed with knives. From whence they came seemed a mystery, but they had evidently been following us unnoticed, with the object of cutting the throat of the beast when shot, drawing blood, thereby relieving religious scruples, and enabling them to eat the flesh.

All hesitated for a time to approach the wounded buffalo, when one, more daring than the others, made a dash across the stream and was soon alongside. He had

his knife ready, and was feeling the edge of it with his finger, when the bull suddenly got on his legs, and, with a loud snort, made straight for him. There was a bit of clear ground beyond, on which stood the stump of a large rhododendron tree. This stump the Cingalee went straight for, and was up it and into the fork like a rigger, but only arrived just in time to get out of reach of the bull.

The enraged animal then began to stamp and plough up the ground with its fore feet, bellowing furiously. While this was going on, I crept up close, the bull being too busily engaged to notice me, and placed a shot behind the shoulder, and the beast fell dead.

I would mention that while afterwards seated on the animal taking a rest, I felt some curious and hard lumps under the skin on its side. Being inquisitively inclined, I made incisions with my knife, and took out no less than six different kinds of bullets, proofs of the many attempts that had previously been made by various sportsmen to bag it without success.

The carcase was eventually tackled by the Cingalee followers, who were allowed to take the flesh on condition they brought in the trophies that I marked off.



A BUFFALO FOOT TROPHY

CHAPTER V

SPORT WITH THE LEOPARD, DEER, JACKAL AND WILD BOAR

LEOPARDS are the only formidable members of the tiger race in Ceylon. They are numerous in the low country, living in cavities formed by masses of granitic gneiss boulders piled on each other. A rare black variety not spotted is seen occasionally. Leopards are found frequently in the vicinity of pasture lands, patenas, and other resorts where deer and cattle graze. On these animals they prey, but do not confine themselves to particular localities. Frequently they are seen prowling about big forests, up dry beds of streams, and often on the main road lying in wait in the side drains for stray cattle or dogs that may pass. They are, therefore, very likely to be met with on miscellaneous shoots, where one is led through open country and so many varieties of jungle.

Driving along the Kandy road one day with a friend, I saw near the fifth mile from Trincomalie a splendid specimen make a spring from the jungle seven or eight feet high, landing gracefully a few yards in front of the horse. It stood for a moment surveying us with its large expressive eyes, and then with slow majestic strides, as though contesting every inch of ground, entered the jungle on the opposite side. Although I followed it quickly with a gun, I could not find it. No doubt it had sprung on a bough of a large tree, and by its harmonizing colours failed to attract attention.

The partiality of leopards for dogs is extraordinary. They will take them at times from under one's very nose, and in the most daring manner. Cases have frequently happened where dogs have been actually seized from covered bullock carts while travelling in company with their masters.

The author had once a little pet Maltese poodle of which he was very fond. One day, while visiting a tank infested with crocodiles, it was carried by a friend of his for safety's sake. On meeting some people he knew, the friend put the dog down in order that he might greet them, when it immediately took advantage of the opportunity to run back to its master, who was only a few yards behind. Unfortunately, before it had got half-way, a leopard sprang out from the scrub jungle close by, seized, and made off with it before one could realize what had taken place. No doubt the little white dog had attracted its attention some time before by its barking, and the beast had followed it, waiting for a chance to secure it.

The following remarkable and interesting incident occurred some few years ago on an occasion of sending home a leopard as a presentation to the Royal Zoological Society of London. The writer had caught it as a cub while on an elephant shoot in the north central province, and had kept it in captivity some four or five years. This shows how their wild nature may at times be suddenly changed to one of affection. It was a fine animal nearly full grown.

Placed in a strong travelling cage, it was taken on board a local steamer for passage round to Colombo. From thence it was to be transhipped to a Government transport for conveyance to England. The passage from Trincomalie to Colombo occupies about four days by sea, allowing for stoppages at the different ports. A supply of fowls was therefore sent on board for its food,

with directions that two were to be given daily. Amongst these birds was a bright little brownish-coloured speckly hen, which, like the others, was in due course put into the cage. This bird the leopard would not touch, although it did not hesitate to devour the rest of a different colour. It took an extraordinary fancy to it, and would fondle and caress it all day, and, strange as it may appear, both remained together shut up in this cage on the most affectionate terms, all the way home. When, however, the leopard had to be transferred to another cage at Portsmouth for the journey to the Zoo, it thought, perhaps, that it might be separated from its little friend. At all events, it then killed and ate it.

Another peculiarity of the leopard is one for which natives as well as English sportsmen vouch. It is that if, when a head of cattle is killed, the animal chances to fall, so that its right (or liver) side is undermost, a leopard will make off and not return to devour it. The writer has seen practical evidence of this singular nature, and in such circumstances it is hardly worth while sitting over a kill of this kind, with a view of shooting the spoiler.

A leopard's power is prodigious, and with the greatest ease it is capable of springing with ordinary native cattle over a five-foot fence. One did so while I was camping one day close to a cattle kraal on the Velli plain, afterwards dragging its prey over two hundred yards to a stream before devouring it.

Leopards are frequently seen at waterholes on a moonlight night. The best shot is through or just behind the shoulder.

The Ceylon elk or sambur is the largest member of the deer group in Ceylon. The height of the buck varies from four to five feet and a little more at the withers. These sambur are of a uniform dark brown colour throughout, but some tend to exhibit yellowish

and greenish tinges. The under parts and inner surfaces of the limbs are lighter and more of a yellowish white. Externally they are characterized by coarse, wiry hair, which on the neck and throat of an adult male is much thicker and longer than that of a female. The massive spread of antlers with three tines have a characteristic rough external surface, and attain a length of about thirty-six inches, the span averaging somewhat the same. The brow tines are nearly of equal length and very formidable, the basal girth being about eight or nine inches.

A good specimen of a sambur may weigh from 450 to 550 lbs. Its habits are nocturnal, feeding chiefly at night. It is often come across feeding during the morning and evening in park-like glades, intersected by shady rivers, near lagoons, marshes and swamps in the low country. Its food is principally grass, but it also browses on young shoots and leaves of trees. It is seldom seen in numbers, single stags and hinds being met with as a rule. A favourite resort is in the neighbourhood of old, secluded, dilapidated tanks. It also haunts the forests of the mountainous regions of Ceylon, where it is hunted for sport by mixed bred packs of hounds.

The chital or spotted deer (*Cervus axis*) is, perhaps, the handsomest member of its tribe, and most characteristic of all Indian mammals. The coat is of a reddish-brown colour. The body is marked with longitudinal lines of bright white spots. The head and neck are of a uniform brownish tint. A black line runs from the nape of the neck to the end of the tail. White prevails on the inside of the ears, chin, throat, and under parts of the body, as well as on the rump and under surface of the tail.

In certain parts of India these animals are larger than the species known in Ceylon. The latter stand from 2' 6" to 2' 8" at the withers. The antlers, which have

three tines on each, run to an average length of thirty inches. The span varies considerably, and may be anything between sixteen and twenty-eight inches, with girth above the burr of about five and a half inches. They are nocturnally inclined in their habits, although they may be found feeding in the early morning after sunrise, and again in the cool hours of the afternoon, seeking the deep shade of the jungle for repose during the heat of the day.

Like the elk, they graze and browse, feeding on grass and the young shoots and leaves of trees. In habit they are gregarious, and are to be seen in herds on the confines of large open plains and salt marshes in the low country. Their favourite haunts are also the shady glades on the margin of streams and lagoons, low scrub jungle, and long grass. A dreaded enemy is the leopard, and, when pursued by one, they seem to lose at once all idea of control over the management of their antlers. In headlong flight they will foul creepers and all else through which they pass. The writer has seen them, when thus pursued, suddenly emerge from the jungle in their fright, foaming at the mouth, with quantities of tangled masses of creepers about their horns trailing to the ground. These deer are good swimmers, and should they, by chance, come to a stream at such a time and swim over, a leopard will not follow them, but will give up the chase, so strongly does it object to wet its paws.

One thing perhaps strikes the observer in regard to this handsome spotted axis, and that is the somewhat heavy appearance of the body in proportion to the seemingly frail limbs that have to carry it.

The para or hog deer (*C. porcinus*) is a small animal with brownish-coloured fur, tinged with yellow and red. The under parts, as in the spotted axis, are paler, and nearly white is the colour inside the ears and the under

surface of the tail. It stands about twenty-four inches at the withers, has comparatively short legs for its size, and is devoid of mane on neck and throat. The antlers seldom exceed nine or ten inches in length, are mounted on very long pendicles, and, after giving off the brow-tine, have nearly a straight beam, till the small terminal fork, the front of which is longer than the hind one.

As a rule, it is only met when alone, but now and again two may be seen together. It frequents the low grass jungles and bushy neighbourhoods bordering on large marshy plains, and is also seen at times in big jungles. It has not the graceful movement of the spotted deer, and takes its name from the hog-like manner of its gait in rushing with head down through long grass when alarmed.

As it is very apt to dart from under one's feet in tramping through long grass, only giving one time for a snap shot, the smooth bore with a charge of No. 6 shot will be found handier to bring it down than a rifle.

The muntjac or barking deer (genus *Cervulus*) is a small animal, standing about twenty-one inches at the shoulder. It is of a deep chestnut colour, darker on the back and lighter below. The chin, upper part of the throat, and under portions of the body and tail are almost white. The face and limbs are brown, and a black line extends from the inner surface of the pendicles of the antlers some distance down the ribs of the face

The antlers are very small, only three or four inches in length, on pendicles of the same or even greater length. The brow-tine is short and directed upwards, while the tip of the undivided beam is more or less inclined inwards. It has a wonderfully powerful voice for so small an animal. Its loud, resonant bark is remarkably clear and distinctive in the depths of the forest, and this it utters whenever disturbed by a strange sound or suspects the existence of danger. When once disturbed it may

continue barking at intervals for nearly an hour, making it easy for the sportsman to discover its whereabouts. It is a solitary creature, usually found singly, though sometimes in pairs. It has an odd way in running, somewhat like that of the hog deer, with head low and hind-quarters elevated.

The bucks are armed with two long projecting tusks in the upper jaw, which turn outwards in a peculiar way, and with these they can inflict a nasty wound.

The mouse deer or chevrotian (family *Tragulidæ*), an elegant little creature, is the smallest of the deer kind existing in Ceylon. It is about the size of a hare. Its height is only ten or twelve inches at the shoulder, and it weighs about five or six pounds. It is antlerless, but it is furnished with two sharp little tusks in the upper jaw, those of the male being more pronounced and projecting below the mouth. In colour it is a variable shade of brown, minutely speckled with yellow, while its sides are spotted with pale buff on a brown ground, its legs and feet being the daintiest imaginable.

It is common in the low country, and usually lies concealed in the moderate long grass and brushwood of low scrub jungles, only venturing out to feed in the mornings and evenings. Although timid and shy, it is easily tamed, and will become very gentle when made a great pet. Its habitation is in the crevices of large boulders and rocks, in which it passes the day, and into which it retires on the approach of danger.

It is frequently put up on a morning's shoot, when one walks through the grass patenas and clearings that ordinarily give it cover. It is marvellous how quick can be its movements when suddenly surprised, but it is easily rolled over with a shot gun.

The Ceylon wild boar (*S. crista'us*) is similar to its Indian brethren, and abounds in the low country. It is to be met with in herds on the plains, marshes, in low

grass jungles, and almost everywhere where swampy ground exists. The beds of old tanks are its favourite haunts, and much difficulty is experienced by the native cultivators in keeping it clear of their paddy fields, where it often creates great havoc amongst the crops.

The boar stands about thirty to forty inches at the shoulder, is of a dark grey and brownish colour, with a somewhat thin but wiry coat of hair over the body, and a crest or mane of long black bristles running from the nape of the neck and along the back. It is furnished with tusks in the upper and lower jaws, and those of the lower jaw project about three inches, and are kept as sharp as razors by wear against the upper set. These tusks form exceedingly formidable weapons, and are capable of creating the most diabolical wounds. The lower tusk of a fine boar, when extracted from the jaw, measures about eight or nine inches, and cases are known where they have considerably exceeded this length.

A great characteristic is its habit of rooting, i.e. turning up the ground with its snout in search of food, such as wild yams and underground nuts, and these earth disturbances serve as indications of its proximity. It has been known also to feed on the carcasses of animals. During the day it reposes in any convenient cover, such as long grass, the secluded and dryish parts of mangrove swamps, low jungle and forests. It is somewhat nocturnal in its habits, but may often be seen feeding in the mornings and evenings.

A full-grown boar is a formidable-looking brute, and, when angered, is about the boldest and fiercest of any animal. It is a perfect fiend to look at, and it is therefore advisable to be very cautious in approaching a wounded animal. It is wonderfully tenacious of life, and takes a lot of killing, unless one is fortunate enough to hit it in the right place.

The following amusing incident will give an idea of

its daring and tenacity of life. In the neighbourhood of Terayai, about twenty-nine miles north of Trincomalie, on the coast road, there are some extensive sandy plains. On and near the borders of these plains are mangrove swamps, low jungle and shady green swards, an ideal and favourite shooting ground for small game. One day when in this locality on a deer shoot, in company with an old friend, a somewhat portly but keen sportsman, a Mr. O. D., I chanced to see a herd of pig, in a line, crossing a plain about 200 yards off. Amongst them was a fine boar, at which I took a steady shot, making it jump.

Instead of falling as expected, it recovered itself and bolted with the others back to the jungle. In doubt as to whether it was hit, we walked to the spot with a view of tracing possible blood tracks. These we found, and, while deliberating on the action we intended taking, with our two gun-bearers standing by, my attention was drawn to a boar, evidently the wounded one, about 150 yards off, making straight in our direction. When it got fairly close I fired, rolling it over, but getting up almost immediately, it charged as before. Giving it another shot, it fell again, and before I could reload it had again got up and renewed its attack, selecting myself as the object of his vengeance.

While this was taking place I had wandered some little distance away from the group, round whom I found myself making a rapid circular movement, with the boar after me, only stopping to put in a shot when chance offered. The grotesqueness of the scene caused my portly friend a convulsion of laughter, at the same time calling upon me to stop or he would die. I exclaimed, "If I do, so shall I!"

Fortunately, the pig eventually fell exhausted. On examining the carcase we discovered that no fewer than nine bullets had gone into it. It seemed to bear a

charmed life—not one shot hitting a vital spot. Perhaps this was not to be wondered at, in view of the unique and awkward position in which the retreating sportsman had been placed.

The jackal (*Canis aureus*) is also found in Ceylon, and if there be anything likely to startle the sportsman on his first acquaintance with camp life in the Ceylon jungle, it is the peculiar, unearthly, blood-curdling cry of a pack of jackals, which may be heard any time between sundown and sunrise. This cry may be described as consisting of two parts, the first a long wailing howl, three or four times repeated, each note a little higher than the preceding; and then a succession of three quick yelps, also repeated two or three times.

The jackal abounds everywhere. Although nocturnal in its habits, it does not confine itself in its wanderings to the night, but may be seen prowling about frequently during the day, especially when anything dead is lying about. It is a small animal in itself, and, from a casual glance at a distance, it, by its colour, shape of the head, body and bushy brown, black-tipped tail, gives one the idea that it may be a leggy fox.

As to size, its length, including head and tail, is about three feet three inches. It stands at the shoulder from sixteen to twenty inches. It is a great scavenger, eating any carrion it may come across, also the flesh of small game which it kills. It will also eat the inside of green cocoanuts, maize, fruit, etc. Its sense of smell is marvellous, and it is astonishing how quickly it appears on the scene after an animal has been shot. No doubt it smells the scent of blood at a great distance.

The author one morning dropped a fine bull buffalo on an open plain, a quarter of a mile from any cover. There was no sign of any living animal about which might do it harm, and, thinking it perfectly safe, he left it. He returned to camp about three-quarters of a mile

distant, with a view of sending out coolies later on to bring in the head and other trophies, and although hardly an hour had elapsed, the coolies, on arrival, found it surrounded by jackals, who had commenced devouring it, spoiling the head by eating off one of the ears. As it was a fine head, I had it set up and the ear replaced by one from another buffalo, which was uncommonly well done by Messrs. Lazurus and Son, taxidermists, of Colombo. Jackal skins when in good condition make very good rugs.

The Ceylon jungle cock is numerous in the low country in the neighbourhood of woods, park-like glades, and scrub jungle. The male birds have very handsome plumage, with showy comb and wattle of rich cadmium yellow, fringed with carmine. The hens are also prettily marked, somewhat resembling in size and colour ordinary pheasants. They are very game and lie close, and it requires some good shooting to bring them down.

The cock bird has a peculiar and distinctive shrill crow, sounding like the cry of "John Joyce!" It is most pugnacious, and armed with very formidable long, sharp-pointed spurs, will fight to the death. In fact, it is so ready to accept a challenge that it is ludicrous to see the easy way it can be drawn towards one, from its seclusion in the jungle, by a few smart raps in succession on the thigh, imitating the flapping of another bird's wings, which it usually does prior to crowing.

The writer has under cover of a thick bush drawn them from a considerable distance in this way, repeating the operation at intervals. On one occasion he was so successful as to cause the bird to actually run between his legs.

The Ceylon dugong is an extraordinary and interesting animal which is often seen on the coast. It is plentiful in and about the Gulf of Manaar, and resembles somewhat a huge, thickly-made, bluff-headed seal. The

female has a very uncommon way of carrying her young by one of her powerful flippers, while swimming with the other, and also suckles it holding it to her breast by the same means.

It is frequently caught in the large shallow lagoons near Trincomalie, where it enters the narrow mouths at high water in search of a certain kind of food of which it is very fond, and where it gets stranded by the receding tide, when it is easily captured.

The flesh is good eating, resembling fine corned-beef.

This is what Sir Emerson Tennent says in his "Natural History of Ceylon" regarding this marvellous creature :

"One of the most remarkable animals on the coast is the dugong, a phytophagous cetacean, numbers of which are attracted to the inlets, from the bay of Calpenty to Adam's bridge, by the still water and the abundance of marine algæ in these parts of the Gulf (Manaar).

"The rude approach to the human outline, observed in the head of this creature, and the attitude of the mother while suckling her young, holding it to her breast with one flipper, while swimming with the other, holding the heads of both above water, and, when disturbed, suddenly diving and displaying her fish-like tail—these, together with her habitual demonstrations of strong maternal affection, probably gave rise to the fable of the 'Mermaid,' and thus that earliest invention of mythical physiology may be traced to the Arab seamen and the Greeks, who had watched the movements of the dugong in the waters of Manaar."

CHAPTER VI

THE CEYLON ELEPHANT IN THE JUNGLE

THE Lord Paramount of the Ceylon forests is the Ceylon or Indian elephant (*Eliphas Indicus*).

He may be met with singly and in herds in almost every district where woods afford shelter and shade during the heat of the day, from whence he emerges in the cool of the evening to roam about in the neighbourhood of grass plains, rivers, park-like pastures, and old dilapidated tanks, retiring into the seclusion of the forests again about nine or ten o'clock in the morning.

Herds numbering ten to thirty and even more are frequently come across, the adults averaging from about eight to nine feet in height. Solitary elephants are, as a rule, higher. Their habits are herbiforous, feeding on leaves, shoots of trees, bark from young stems, grass and other herbage, including wild fruits, such as wood apples and plantains.

Ceylon elephants differ in shape and appearance from the African species. The head is larger and ears smaller, and they are not furnished with such massive tusks. (Drawings of the skull showing the position of the brain, with other particulars, are given in another chapter on Elephant Shooting.)

The highest point of the Indian elephant is the centre of the back, whereas in the African elephant the highest point is at the withers, gradually sloping down to the

tail. The Ceylon elephant, as a rule, does not possess tusks, but is furnished with stunted ivories, termed "tushes," of a uniform shape throughout, varying



THE INDIAN ELEPHANT

from fifteen to twenty-four inches in length, and from one and a half to two and a half inches in diameter.

Tuskers, although scarce in Ceylon, are, nevertheless, now and again met with, and specimens have been secured by the author and his sporting acquaintances at different times. The tusks of those that have been shot are small, and could not in any way compare with the enormous tusks of the African elephant. The age attained by the Indian elephant is not accurately known, but it is generally computed at anything between 100 and 150 years.

The female has generally only one calf at a birth, twins being rare. The ordinary period of gestation is about twenty months. She has a single pair of teats between the fore legs, from which the new-born suckles its parent by its mouth—not by the trunk, as might be supposed.

Herd elephants generally, from the writer's experience, are not, in their natural state, viciously inclined, being more likely to bolt than attack, but nevertheless are uncertain in temper and not to be trusted. Females with young are always dangerous, as are males during the rutting season, when they are subject to fits of madness, known by the terms "mudda" or "must."

They have a wonderful gift of hearing, also an acute sense of smell, but are timid. The snapping of a brittle piece of dead wood is sufficient to make a whole herd stampede, during the confusion of which it is marvellous how quickly they can shoulder and carry off their calves. Kneeling down with shoulders touching, two adults will, in the course of a few seconds, pick up and place a little one in the hollow formed between their two backs. Then rising with it in this position of safety, they again join in the general rush. Although at the time there may be tremendous crashing, breaking of timber and other startling noises, a minute or so later no sound is heard. The elephants are probably still fleeing through the jungle, but recovered from their fright. This shows not only how speedily they form up in order again, but how quietly they travel.

Another wonderful provision of nature by which these animals are gifted is the peculiar formation of the knee-joint of the hind leg, which enables them to kneel and adjust the weight of the hind quarters, which would otherwise overbalance and force them headlong forward when descending steep declivities.

On coming to the brink of a river where the bank may

have an abrupt fall of ten or twelve feet, one or two of the largest of the herd, as a rule, kneel down, and with their fore feet and prodigious strength combined, push and force the earth down before them, making a firm and gradual slope. In this position, almost sliding, they work their way to the water, the others following in their wake. They are quite at home in water, and expert swimmers.



ELEPHANT DESCENDING A DECLIVITY

It is a curious sight to see them sometimes in headlong flight crossing a deep river, their bodies completely immersed, with only a number of grotesque-looking trunks elevated in fantastic forms, like so many gigantic leeches, above the surface of the water. What has struck the writer as very remarkable on some of his tracking expeditions are the extraordinary and seemingly

impossible places elephants manage to get through when on the march. Amongst other apparent impossibilities are the wedge shape openings now and again met with between large masses of rock. Here the narrowness of the footway may make it even difficult for a man to walk, and impossible for an elephant to plant a foot on the level, yet herds will pass through such openings in a marvellously quick and easy manner.

They have an interesting system of tracks through the jungles, leading from one place to another. These are closely adhered to, and regularly made use of year after year. They remind one a good deal of rabbit runs on a gigantic scale, but the outlets are generally nothing more than a hole through the bushes, which is somewhat difficult at times for the sportsman to get through. During heavy showers they cannot (like most other game in the country) stand the constant and irritating drip, drip of raindrops, falling on their bodies from leaves of trees overhead, in the shelter of the jungle. At such times during the rainy season they therefore clear out of the woods and are seen moving about in the open.

Great heat and glare they also dislike and avoid. As a consequence, during the dry season and when the sun is at its full power, they spend most of the day in the cool and shady depths of the forest, devoting the night only to roaming about feeding and bathing. The bathing they delight in ; so much so, that they may be seen in quiet retreats indulging in the luxury all hours of the day, no doubt for the sake of coolness and to rid themselves from the annoyance of flies and other insects which they detest. Mosquitoes especially are perfect terrors to them, settling down on their bodies in clouds and causing the greatest discomfort. Instances are known where elephants have been driven out of districts through the constant worry caused by these pests. The hide of an elephant, which, from a casual glance, appears hard,

thick, and proof against such mites, is really, when clean and fresh from a bath, most flexible, soft and sensitive, and is as capable of feeling the irritating sting of a mosquito ("kosu," as they are termed) as a human being.

A curious incident in connection with mosquitoes occurred one day when the author with his tracker were on the look-out for a solitary or rogue elephant. We stood in a pool of stagnant, green, slimy water, in a clearing near the edge of the jungle, alive with mosquitoes, waiting for the rogue to appear, when suddenly the tracker raised his finger in an enquiring and warning manner, at the same time exclaiming, "Durai (Master), Anei! Anei! (Elephant! Elephant!), listen!"

Sure enough, a sound like that of the distant screaming of an elephant could be faintly heard, and in a few minutes the peculiar sound was heard again. This time, to our astonishment, we found it emanated from clouds of mosquitoes that were being disturbed by our movements in the muddy and stagnant water. They gave a most wonderful resemblance to the cries made by elephants at a great distance. The mosquito makes a peculiar sharp little singing noise on the wing, and when thousands are doing this at the same time there is no mistaking their presence, independent of their bites. It may be added the anei never appeared on the scene, and as we were informed afterwards by a native herdsman living in the locality, it had been driven away by these pests.

Another interesting and characteristic feature of the elephant is its trunk, "thumbikei," as it is called. It is one of the most delicate, sensitive and important parts of its body, its organ of touch and smell, and the sole means by which it conveys food to its mouth. It is put to a multitude of other uses indispensable to daily necessities, and without it an elephant would be helpless and unable to exist. Therefore, to injure it so as to

render it useless in its functions, would mean the animal's death. As an instance of the effect of such an injury being inflicted, the author gives the following story as told him by the headman of a village he once passed through, where an elephant had been recently killed by a cut on the trunk from a katti or heavy native knife.

An old Tamil man with his little boy were one dark night watching some paddy or rice fields, with the object of driving off wild pig and other animals that frequent these places at such times and destroy the crops. They had a shelter composed of a small mud hut, roofed over with cadjans (cocoanut leaves), and a square hole in the wall answered the purpose of a window. In this retreat they had laid down to rest, after firing off the usual blank charge from a rusty gun to alarm such marauders that might be lurking in the neighbourhood.

Some little time after the man was aroused from his slumbers by feeling something cold and snake-like moving over his body. He grasped his katti (knife), which lay by his side, and made vigorous slashes at it, the snake or whatever it was immediately clearing off. On getting a light he found a quantity of blood about the floor, but no snake. A day or so later the dead body of an elephant was discovered some few miles away, with the end of its trunk nearly severed, having bled to death from the wound. From the tracks left behind, there was no doubt but what this animal had visited the hut, and, out of curiosity, had put its trunk through the hole in the wall on the night in question, receiving the severe cut in the trunk which ended in its death.

A Parsee gentleman, whom the writer made the acquaintance of in Trincomalie shortly afterwards, informed him that there was a certain caste of native elephant hunters in India who made a business of killing elephants in this brutal manner for the sake of securing their tusks. It was an undertaking accompanied by



SINNACOOTY, ALLAH PITCHEI, SINNATAMBY
ELEPHANT TRACKERS

great risks ; but armed only with a long spear and Indian knife, these intrepid hunters in deep jungle stealthily crept up until quite close to the animal. Gently touching a convenient part of its body with the point of the spear, they caused it to turn its trunk in that direction, when immediate advantage was taken to slash it with the knife, in an endeavour to cut off the end. This rendered the animal helpless, and generally proved fatal from loss of blood. The hunters then followed the beast in its tracks until it died.

Trackers take an important part in the different shooting sketches which follow, so the author introduces them to his readers by their portraits on page 93. They are all well-known Moor shikaris, and hail from the village of Tepore, near Kottiar, Trincomalie.

The centre figure, Allah Pitchei, whose name appears oftener than the others, is a well-known character, so a few words concerning him may perhaps be of interest. A splendid specimen of a native, well built, full of vigour and pluck, one who knew no fear, he would think nothing of going up to an elephant and giving it a slap on the hind quarters, with a view to turning it, so as to give the shikari a better shot—i.e. if he had reliance in him. He was as “wiry as they are made,” of great personality, and a favourite with most sportsmen. He was considered in his time the best and most reliable tracker in the Island, and many an elephant and other head of game have fallen to the writer’s gun through his marvellous and clever knowledge of tracking. As he was nearly always with him on his shooting expeditions, he knew him well, and looked upon him in the light of a friend as well as that of a native shikari.

The poor fellow died from elephantiasis some few years ago, of which his swollen foot tells a tale, and may be noticeable in the picture. Many interesting stories can be told of Allah Pitchei. Thus it may be mentioned

that, owing to his wonderful ability, he was the tracker selected to accompany the late King (when Prince of Wales) on an elephant shoot, during his visit to Ceylon in the latter part of the seventies.

The pay of these elephant trackers ranges from one or two rupees per diem according to their abilities. A present is added of a few rupees if the sportsman is brought up to an elephant, but a better present is given if the elephant is bagged.

Tracking, of course, is the most important part of a native tracker's duty, and marvellous is the manner in which a good man will lead the way almost at a trot through all the different kinds of jungle. He will keep the track with that inborn self-confidence and instinct peculiar to the native shikari who understands his business, when, to the uninitiated, even after most careful observation, there appears nothing to show that the animal has recently passed over the same ground.

So small a thing as a leaf turned the wrong way, the inclination of bushes, a stone freshly turned up on the path, a slight scratch or nail mark, a little sand kicked up, a freshly broken twig or bit of stick, even blades of grass trodden down, are things never lost sight of. Indeed, they are detected at a glance by the quick and trained eye of the native tracker. Another important thing he takes notice of are the droppings of an elephant, for from their appearance and condition at different stages of the track, the proximity of the animal may be known. So experienced are these native trackers in this matter, that by touching the spoor now and again by the foot they are able to tell the time within a few minutes when the animal passed the spot, and its probable distance from the party at that moment.

When the tracking becomes confused and the foot-prints mixed up, they say that the elephant evidently has hesitated there and is very probably close by, making

arrangements for a siesta. It is as well then to stop and listen, for it may be possible to hear some indication of his presence—for instance, the noise caused by the flap of an ear, movement of the tail, breathing, rustling of leaves, the report of a tree falling. Perhaps he is sleeping and snoring heavily. If so, that can be heard some distance away in the stillness of the jungle. Then the little muslin bag of wood ashes comes in useful. A flick of its contents will give the direction of the air, and enable one to further approach the beast without giving the wind. In this manner, if careful, one may gradually creep up to within a few yards and get a good shot.

If the elephant be passing through water at any time, be careful when following not to move or make a noise, unless the animal is also on the move. Should it stop, wait until it is heard moving on again, when its noise will deaden that of its pursuer. On his leaving the water, which may be fairly surmised when the sound of its movements has ceased, remain perfectly still for a while. Then cautiously proceed again, keeping a good look out on either side, in case he may have turned off at right angles, and be returning parallel to his own tracks. This they have been known to do at times, when some noise or other behind has disturbed them, making them suspicious and crafty. It is then wise to be on the alert in the event of coming trouble.

CHAPTER VII

PLEASURES OF ELEPHANT SHOOTING

OF all big game sport in Ceylon, elephant shooting is *par excellence* the grandest, carrying with it an indescribable charm peculiar to itself. I refer, of course, only to the hunting of such as are



AN EXCITING MOMENT

termed "rogues" or solitary elephants, where a spice of danger is thrown in.

These "rogues" are so termed because they are outcasts of their kind. In most cases they have been



A DEAD "ROGUE"

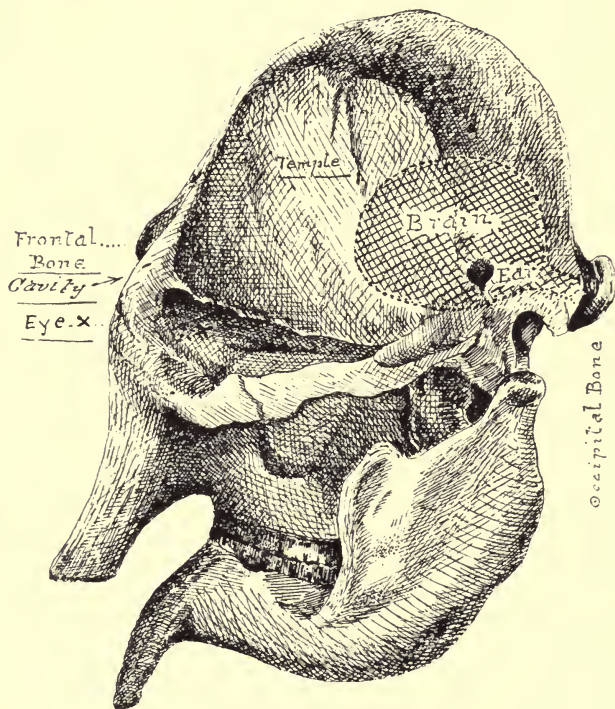
beaten in conflicts with other male elephants for supremacy of the herd, a contest which ends frequently in the vanquished one having its tail bitten off. It then leaves the herd, lives a solitary life, and becomes morose, ill-tempered and dangerous.

The tracking of one of these animals is therefore exciting, as well as agreeably entertaining, for it imparts that delightful feeling of knowing one is being led through a splendid sporting country, with many interesting varieties of jungle, from long grass of the p'ains to low scrub, mangrove swamps, clearings and fine majestic forests, where game of all kinds may be met with and tropical vegetation seen in all its natural luxuriance and grandeur.

Amongst other many striking peculiarities in the jungle one cannot help noticing the quaint formations of the majestic forest trees, with their gnarled and twisted trunks, tangled masses of snaky-looking roots, and strings of long ropy offshoots. Giant creepers with extraordinary spiral stems climb to a great height, their prolific foliage covering everything they come in contact with, only to fall in graceful festoons to the ground, where they afford agreeable cool retreats. There are also tree ferns and other arresting specimens of tropical botanical life, too numerous to mention, but which particularly attract and interest the eye.

The tracking may also carry one through open country, up the beds of dry rivers and streams, and over rock formations, all of which form an interesting variety of scene. This, together with the joyous freedom of camp life, the early cup of tea, the preparations before starting, the refreshing coolness of the morning air, the awakening of bird life at sunrise with all their different calls and warblings, the hum and buzz of myriads of insects, with the distant "whoop whoop" of the wanderoo and chattering of other monkeys, denote the dawn of day.

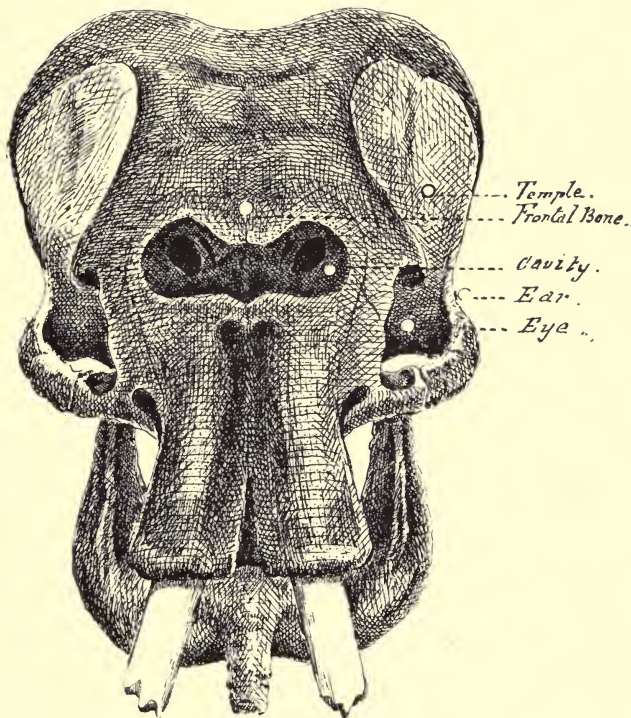
Combined with the sweet fragrance of scented flowering trees and shrubs, and of the jungle surroundings, the exhilaration and interest excited by the anticipation of sport, and the likelihood of coming across all kinds of game on the early morning tramp, they constitute a life enchanting beyond description.



ELEPHANT SKULL
PROFILE

Before venturing upon an expedition of this kind, which perhaps may be attended with more risk than that of the generality of smaller game, an idea as to where the most sure and telling shots should be placed may be useful. Two anatomical sketches of the skull, front and profile, are therefore given with a view of

showing sportsmen the position of the brain, which should be studied, the brain being the only recognised vital spot to aim for in the Indian elephant. To shoot it in any other part of the body is not only considered unsportsmanlike, but the chances are that that would only enrage without stopping the animal, causing a



ELEPHANT SKULL
FRONT VIEW

nasty wound of which the poor beast may ultimately linger for some considerable time, and die in agony in the depths of the jungle. There are four shots:—

1st. The front, for cavity in centre of bump in forehead between eyes.

2nd. The temple, between the eye and the ear.

3rd. The ear, at right angles.

4th. One behind the ear.

All of these if well directed will reach the brain and be effective.

I also add these hints :—

To avoid accidents, never carry the gun at full cock through jungle, unless in the near presence of the quarry.

Do not attempt to approach an elephant unless the wind is blowing from it in your direction.

Make as little noise as possible when tracking up, and avoid treading on dead and brittle pieces of wood in your path.

Speak always in an undertone or by signs.

Don't have anything about your dress of a conspicuous nature.

See that your gun is carefully loaded, and that you have spare cartridges about you handy, as well as a cartridge extractor.

When on the track of an elephant one must give up all idea of shooting other game, however tempting.

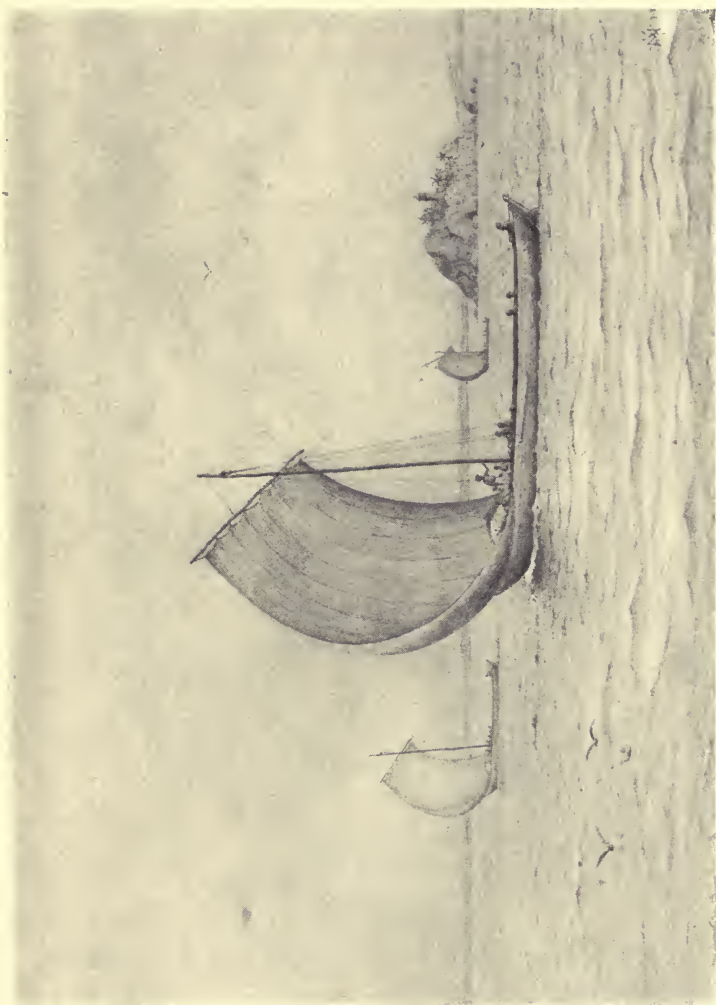
Don't shoot baby or cow elephants.

The elephant has a wonderful power of scent and hearing, but its eyes are small, and the sight is accordingly poor. Remember, therefore, should the animal make for one at any time, always run "down wind," taking advantage of dodging behind trunks of trees to avoid it.

Twice round the circumference of the forefoot, taken at the largest part, gives a fair average of the elephant's height.

A reward is generally offered by the Ceylon Government for the killing of rogue elephants, and is usually advertised in the *Gazette*; in such cases no licence is required.

Do not forget to carry the little muslin bag of wood



NATIVE CANOES PASSING ROUND ISLAND FOR KOTTIAR

ashes for giving direction of wind, referred to in the section on Miscellaneous Shooting.

With this information, a military friend (Captain T.) and I make preparations for a trip, packing up all necessary gear, including guns, ammunition and provisions for about two to three weeks, but keeping the different packages within the coolie load. We then engage a sufficient number of native bearers at from thirty-seven and a half to fifty cents per day, and hire a large canoe from the inner harbour, at a cost of three or four rupees for the whole boat, giving the tulikan (coxswain) directions to be at the Kachcherri pier by 5.30 next morning for conveyance over to Kottiar. Elephants have been reported troublesome on that side of the water between Topore and Velli.

Rising early, we superintend the transport and shipment of the stores and coolies, the latter arranging themselves forward in the hold of the canoe, after which my companion and myself step on board. The sail is then hoisted and we are under way with a fine breeze blowing aft, soon passing Round Island Lighthouse, leaving Trincomalie in the distance, and landing in another half-hour at Kottiar, after a delightful crossing of eight miles in one and a quarter hours. The rest house is close by, where our cook and boys are soon busy with culinary duties and preparing breakfast. The ponies and horsekeepers, we are glad to find, have also arrived, having come overland.

Breakfast over, the coolies are given their loads and make a move towards Topore, six miles distant. We follow on the ponies later, engaging in the village two bullock carts, in which we can take shelter from the sun if so inclined. The "hold-alls" (see appendix) now prove useful, fixed to the framework of the carts inside, and are already more or less filled with useful articles. The country through which we pass is very pretty and interesting,

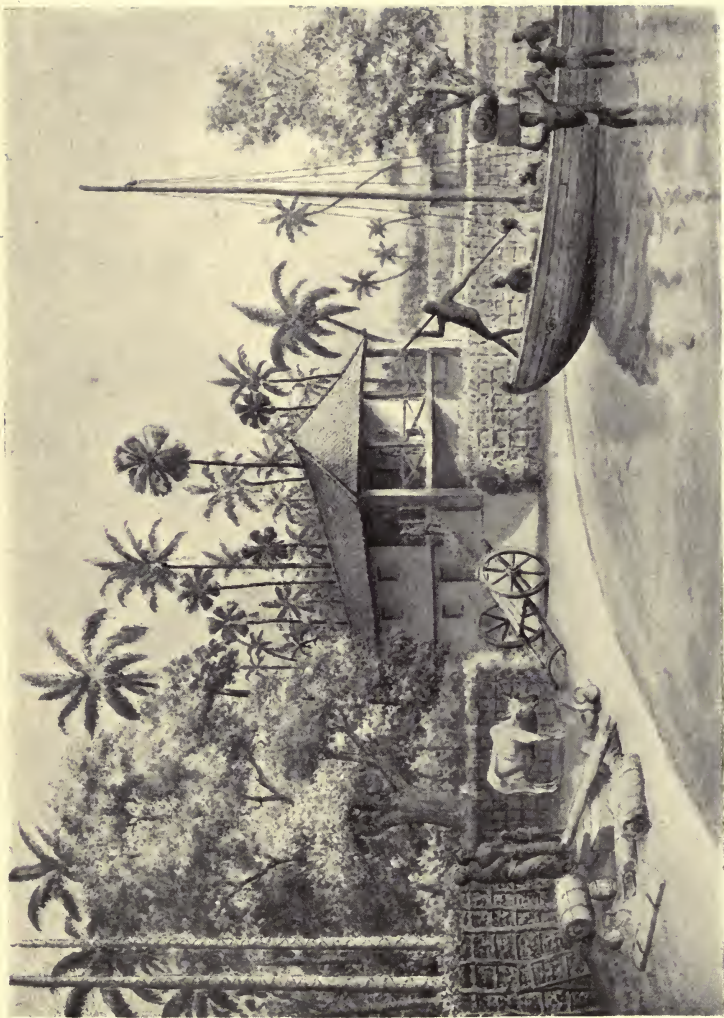
alive with bird-life, but the roads are bad. Eventually we hear native dogs barking in the distance, and a few minutes later enter the village of Topore, which lies in the midst of cocoanut trees. Our arrival and business appear to have been previously known, for upon fetching up at the P.W.D. bungalow, several native shikari men are waiting to offer their services. We engage



TYPICAL KOTTIAR BULLOCK CARTS

two—Allah Pitchei, the well-known intrepid tracker, and another, one Sinnacooty, both Moors, sending them off at once to gain the latest information as to the whereabouts of the elephants.

Topore supplies a very convenient snug bungalow, prettily situated, overlooking a picturesque portion of Allai Tank. The water comes close to the garden fence, and teems with waterfowl of many different kinds, besides being plentifully stocked with crocodiles and



KOTTIAR REST HOUSE
THE LANDING

freshwater fish. It has a good compound, containing rough stabling, bathroom, and other conveniences. A quite agreeable pastime on a moonlight night is to sit in this compound with a cigar after dinner and shoot whistling teal, as they pass overhead. Elephants are generally to be found on the borders of this tank, and other game also abounds in the neighbourhood.

Having refreshed ourselves with some tiffin, my friend and myself take long chairs in the shade and coolness of the verandah, where we recline at our ease. Whilst we are in a somewhat pleasant dreamy state of meditation, due possibly to early rising, sea air, warmth, and the tranquil surroundings, the trackers turn up. They inform us that the elephants were busy round the tank two days before, but had since moved on in the direction of Velli. We therefore decide, as it is now somewhat late, to follow them early next morning, and accordingly put our guns in order, as their services may possibly be required on the road. In reference to this subject I would like to mention that I have great belief in the following method of loading the heavy rifle for elephant shooting: to place a steel-pointed conical bullet in the right barrel and a spherical bullet in the left. As a rule, one has, on the first shot, when the animal is standing steady, more time to take aim, and the steel-pointed bullet is then better for penetration and more likely to drive home, if not diverted from its course by stems and branches of trees that may lie in the line of sight. In the event of a miss and the animal charging, the spherical bullet will then be found more dependable, as it has a more crashing and stopping effect, and is also not so easily turned aside. The smooth bores as second guns should be supplied with ball cartridges, and capable of taking a fairly heavy charge of powder, say, four and a half to five drachms.

At daybreak next morning we pack up once more

and start the coolies and others to "Putur," a small native village six miles off, through which we have to pass. Here we intend to stop for breakfast, afterwards continuing our journey for another ten or eleven miles to Velli, the latter part of the track being through dense jungle. The travelling is slow, owing to the bad state of the road or track, with its cumbrous roots, fallen trees, and other obstructions which lie across the path



NEAR THE SPILL, ALLAI TANK

to impede progress ; the axe is in constant requisition to clear the way for the carts.

Fresh spoor of elephants are now very noticeable. Newly felled trees and broken branches strew the ground in all directions, and other indications testify to the recent presence of a herd. Following these tracks for a few miles we eventually emerge from the dull monotony of the forest, and Velli is before us, an extensive open plain, with tame buffaloes and native cattle quietly



THE REST HOUSE, TOPORE (see page 107)

grazing near their kraals. This is a bright picture and welcome change of scene.

We find a good camping ground under the shade of some trees in the vicinity of water, and the tents are pitched, beds and tables are fixed, and things are made to look a bit ship-shape and comfortable. In the meantime the cook is busy warming up something for lunch, while the trackers and coolies are looking to their rice and curry. This over, our native shikaris start off



A CORNER OF ALLAI TANK, TOPORE

to hunt up tracks, and we with our shot-guns have a look round also with an eye to bagging something for the table.

Shortly after our return to camp, Allah Pitchei arrives, and reports having discovered the whereabouts of the herd, and also, in another direction, the footprints of a periya alien (large solitary elephant). The latter animal is what we want, and so we decide to follow it

up first thing in the morning, as it is now too late in the day, and the light fast failing. For the want of something better to do, we light a pipe and sit in the open,



A CAMP, VELLI PLAIN

chatting, and enjoying the cool evening breezes, listening to the calls and warblings of the feathered tribe, which are now and again drowned by the howling and shrieking of jackals on the prowl, the distant low hunting "whoop!" of the leopard, and the barking of deer.

After watching for a time the brilliant effects of the glorious setting sun, we tub, dine, and turn in. In the middle of our slumbers we are awakened by Allah Pitchei entering our tent and excitedly exclaiming, in a subdued voice, "Master! Anei! Anei! (Elephant! Elephant!)." Getting up at once, we go outside. It's a beautiful clear moonlight night, and everything appears as bright as day. "Where's the anei?" I ask. He points to a dark object in the distance, which might be taken for a clump of bushes or anything else. We watch it for some time. It appears quite motionless, and yet



ARRIVAL OF BULLOCK CARTS, PUTUR (see page 112)

we can distinctly hear it busy pulling up and feeding off the long grass. It gradually gets more indistinct, as it moves away, and then disappears from view. Noting the direction it has taken, we again turn in and sleep uninterruptedly until four o'clock.

Rising early, the camp is soon astir. We plunge our heads into cold water "as an eye-opener," and after partaking of early tea, see to our guns and pack up some refreshments in the haversack, which, together with the rifles, are handed to the trackers and coolie to carry. We then mount our horses and make a move in the direction where the alien or solitary elephant was seen over night.

We find the cool morning air, combined with the fresh sweet smell of vegetation, delightfully exhilarating. Quickly we pick up the tracks, which take us some two miles across the plain, now white with heavy dew, when we enter thick jungle. Dismounting, we send the horses back to camp, and do the rest of the tracking on foot.

It is now absolutely necessary to go quietly. All talking ceases, as, should the elephant by any chance catch the sound of the human voice, or any foreign noise, such, for instance, as may be caused by the clinking of bottles or gun barrels together, it might possibly become alarmed and make off and not stop again for many miles.

Allah Pitchei is on ahead, I follow next with my companion, while Sinnacooty and a coolie are behind. In this Indian file formation we move on the track for some little time, going through varied kinds of jungle. So far it has been fairly easy work, thanks to recent rains making the spoor clear. Now we are passing through a piece of open jungle with fine trees, somewhat park-like in appearance, with pretty velvety green swards here and there. A few "did he do it" plover, with their shrill, alarming cry, are hovering round, while

a herd of chital a little way off are suddenly startled, and make a bolt for cover, disappearing in the undergrowth. Several peafowl are seen strutting about, and a hare is also put up making a hasty retreat, soon followed by another.

The tracks now lead us again into deep, heavy jungle, with its interesting botanical curiosities, through which



ALLAH PITCHEI IN HUNTING RIG

we trudge along, keeping a good look-out, and listening for any sound that may denote the presence of our quarry. The spoor, owing to the thick undergrowth, is for the present lost, but Allah Pitchei still keeps to the tracks by other indications, such as the inclination of shrubs, bushes, or a fresh broken branch, and by good luck we get on them again. They appear quite fresh,



VELLI PLAIN (see page 112)

and the second tracker touches the droppings with his foot, listens a moment, and with a self-satisfied smile quickly hands my companion his rifle.

I am carrying mine, and the hunt is becoming exciting, as the anei is apparently very near. Making sure the guns are properly loaded, we cautiously advance, keeping eyes and ears open. A slight movement ahead amongst the bushes is heard. We listen with bated breath. There is a rush and crash through the jungle on our left, with much rustling and breaking of undergrowth.

"Anei! Anei!" says Sinnacooty excitedly, but in another moment or so all is quiet again. After waiting a little time, we cautiously advance in the direction from whence the disturbance came, and discover tracks showing that that had been a false alarm, due to the sudden bolting of a wild buffalo frightened at our approach. We have to be thankful, as had it been the anei things might not have gone so well, for we were in rather a tight corner, unable to see but a few yards ahead on account of the density of the foliage, and had no decent tree handy to dodge behind in case of a charge.

We continue the tracking, which now leads us through a large clearing of long grass, scrub, and open glades, coming suddenly upon two fine sambar stags, with antlers interlocked, testing their strength. A little further away may be seen a sounder of pig, busy rooting, all very tempting, but we must not fire, as it would destroy the object of our shoot. Entering some fine open forest a little later, we hear a tree go down with the report of a cannon.

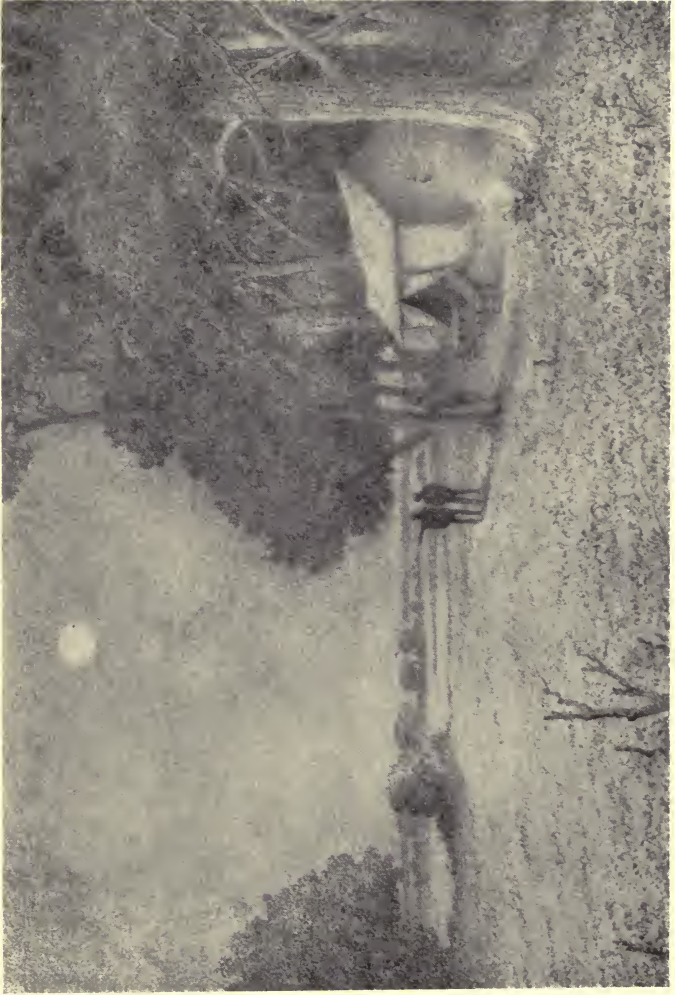
"Anei! Anei!" says Allah Pitchei, with a knowing smile. He seldom makes a mistake. It is beginning to get exciting. A few minutes' tramp brings us to a mangrove swamp, with innumerable aerial roots standing clear of the water. The spoor here is very distinct,

giving one a good idea of the size and close proximity of the quarry. Its immense foot impressions have sunk deep in the mud, with dirty, frothy water still running into them. This and recent fresh droppings show that the elephant had but a few minutes before passed over.

A noise as of something passing through water is now heard in front. Allah Pitchei, who has been listening intently, turns round, finger raised, and with rather a troubled expression on his face, whispers in my ear, "Anei!" It is evidently on the move, so we carefully wade through this swamp, stopping to listen every now and again. The sound of disturbed water ahead gets more distinct, and enables us to proceed at a brisker rate, the animal making sufficient noise to drown ours. Suddenly it ceases.

Waiting a little while, we hear the cracking of undergrowth. The elephant has now evidently left the swamp, and is moving on dry ground, so we proceed, making our way through the water as quietly as possible. In a short time we are out of it, but nothing can now be seen or heard of the elephant's movements. Allah Pitchei seems much puzzled, and thinks perhaps it may have winded us, and is somewhere ahead lying in wait, listening. After resting a bit, we move on again, looking well about us. Getting out my muslin bag of wood ashes, I give it a flick. There is very little air, but what there is appears to be in our favour.

We know the anei cannot now be far off, and Allah Pitchei in front seems to be extra cautious, peering into the jungle right and left, now and again stooping and crouching low down to look under the dense foliage. We are doing much the same. It is hot work and getting intensely exciting, when lo! and behold! to our consternation, without warning, the brute suddenly breaks through the jungle, and makes a charge straight for us



THE ELEPHANT IS SEEN IN THE DISTANCE (see page 116)

unexpectedly from the right, where it had evidently been lurking.

Coming on like a huge locomotive, I could see its massive head, with curled-up trunk and savage-looking little eyes, towering above the bushes, quite close. Taking quick aim just over the eye, I fired, and then all was at once strangely still. Getting quickly through the smoke, I found the elephant down, in a kneeling position. Going up close, I gave it another shot through the centre of the forehead. This I afterwards discovered was unnecessary, as the first bullet had gone clean through the brain, killing and dropping it on the spot, within a dozen paces from where I stood.

“That was a near thing, T.!” said I to my friend as he appeared on the scene.

“A mighty close shave,” said he; “from my position I was unable to fire! But your shot was indeed splendid and a marvellously lucky one.”

It was a fine bull, measuring from the centre of the back 10' 5", and the circumference of fore feet 61½". It proved a grand wind-up to a somewhat long but very pleasant morning's tracking of four and a half hours, so, hailing the coolie (Muttiah) with the refreshments, we have a well-earnt and refreshing w. and s. and something to satisfy the cravings of the "inner man," afterwards enjoying a pipe discussing interesting incidents in connection with the capture of the quarry now lying in view before us.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RETURN TO CAMP

BEFORE returning to camp, I take the tail, and point out to the trackers other parts of the elephant to be brought in, for curing and setting up as trophies. We then commence the return journey, retracing our steps as nearly as possible. As we are not now likely to meet more elephants, we carry shot-guns, putting a ball in right and a No. 6 cartridge in the left barrel, for a chance of bagging something for the table.

After making our way for a mile or so through pretty thick bush and nearing some open ground, a most unpleasant smell arises. It is so bad that we have to put our handkerchiefs to our noses. Allah Pitchei, who is the first to detect the cause, says with a smile, "Periya pambu!" (big snake). We approach nearer and observe a most extraordinary and gruesome-looking object—a thick, scaly, unshapely monster, with a large pair of horns and a tail, lying under a shady bush. On close examination it turns out to be an immense python in a comotose state, digesting a large deer, which it had swallowed up to the antlers, and was then evidently waiting for the antlers to rot and drop off in the ordinary course of events.

Leaving this interesting but repulsive sight with its abominable stench behind, we enter a nice open clearing. It is a likely spot for game. My companion skirts this,



ELEPHANT CHARGE
COMING ON LIKE A HUGE LOCOMOTIVE, I TOOK QUICK AIM AND FIRED

while I keep the track. Before getting through, I hear two shots, and soon after my friend T. turns up with a hare and hog deer. We hurry back now, as the sun is getting up and becoming very hot, and have lots to do in camp when we get there. Passing through another open space with long grass, something rushes by. I fire, rolling over a mouse deer, not much larger than a hare, with the daintiest of feet and prettily marked.

My companion is now roaming round on my left, and shortly I hear another shot in his direction, accompanied by a terrible howling and yelling, evidently that of a pig. We gradually work up to him, and find he has just bagged a large boar, with a fine set of tusks. Dragging it under the shade of some bushes, we leave a trail of broken branches behind to mark the spot, and then proceed again on our journey, and gradually there opens Velli plain. Then we get a view of the camp in the distance, and by dodging in and out earth hummocks and long grass for about twenty minutes we eventually reach the spot, very hot and moist, glad of a long chair and a cool, refreshing drink.

After resting a while we tub and breakfast. Allah Pitchei and Sinnacooty, having also been refreshed by rice and curry, start off with some coolies to bring in the feet and other portions of the elephant marked off for curing, including the pig, while we amuse ourselves cleaning the guns, and yarn about our successful morning's shoot, with which we have good reason to be pleased.

In the foregoing little sketch the tracking ends by a somewhat unexpected and exciting charge of the elephant and a marvellously lucky shot, which fortunately stopped its mad rush and ended its career. The author has experienced many such charges with varying success, sometimes killing on the spot, at other times only wounding, ending perhaps in a mill. In the majority of his expeditions he has, in most cases, by careful stalking,

been able to approach within fifteen or twenty yards without alarming the quarry, thereby obtaining a steady and almost sure shot; but even at this close range killing is not always a certainty. The animal frequently gets away owing to the shot missing its mark, leaving the sportsman rather surprised and in much wonder.

This may be accounted for by the two following reasons: The miss may be due to the bullet having been diverted from its course by branches and twigs in the line of sight, but unnoticeable in dark jungle. Or very probably it may arise from the fact that although, to all appearance, the elephant seems to be standing perfectly steady, he is not actually so. The head is always on the move when the animal is stationary, swaying from side to side, as one may observe on seeing one in captivity. Thus from the time of taking aim to the pulling of the trigger, the head probably has altered its original position several inches, with the result that the shot goes wide of the mark. It is by no means easy for one to notice this movement on first acquaintance with the anei in the sombre light of deep jungle. Experience alone teaches.

Sometimes after a long tramp I have come within a few yards of an elephant, when it has been impossible to see it owing to the density of the undergrowth. It is then necessary to stoop down and look under the bushes for any indication of the trunk, legs and feet. Having discovered these, and noted the direction of the head, the utmost care must be taken to further approach and get a view of the head. This is a time when the muslin bag of wood ashes comes in useful in giving the direction of the wind, be it ever so light.

If the wind is satisfactory, pick your way through the bushes as quietly as possible, avoiding treading on brittle pieces of dead wood, carefully watching for any opportunity that may offer to get a glimpse of the head.

As soon as this has been obtained take steady aim, and fire at the most vital part presented, as advised in Chapter VII, pages 103, 104.

Having spent a few days at Velli, we go on a little further to Coombanatchie, another favourite sporting locality. The condition of the road is much the same as from Putur to Velli, being through thickly wooded and heavily rooted jungle, the axe as before being in constant request to clear the way for the carts. Nevertheless, the country is very interesting, as game of all kinds are to be found there.

After travelling about three or four miles we come to a clearing and native cattle kraal on the banks of a branch of the Mahawellaganga, the main river of the Island. We stop here for breakfast, and the madu karren (herdsman) close by will supply one with buffalo or cow milk if asked. This will be found very refreshing after a long morning's tramp.

Having rested for a time, we again resume our journey, diving into the jungle for about another three and a half miles, and then emerge from the forest on Coombanatchie, a nice, clear, open, but more or less swampy plain, with a tributary of the Mahawellaganga running close by. This is an ideal haunt of the elephant, as well as of every other kind of game, the vegetation and jungle growth in the vicinity being most luxuriant and fine. Some magnificent and sweet-scented flowering trees and lofty trees covered with richly coloured convolvuli and other creepers, drooping gracefully down to the running water, throwing off delicious but powerful perfumes which can be smelt at a considerable distance, add great charm to the scene.

In this delightful and inviting game country we settle down for a few days' more shooting, observing that lots of snipe are to be found in the neighbourhood of the swamps on this plain, and furnish a very useful change

of sport on returning to camp after a long morning's tramp pursuing big game. It may be as well to mention here that we are now close on the boundary of the North Central province, and must therefore obtain another set of licences from the Government Agent of that province, whose headquarters are at Anuradhapura, if we desire to enter it in pursuit of game, as each province has its own regulations in this respect, and arranges its close seasons.

In the circumstances we will for the present, after completing our shoot here, return to Trincomalie, and arrange another expedition in some other direction of the Eastern province.

CHAPTER IX

SETTING UP AND CURING OF TROPHIES

SPORTSMEN generally like retaining their trophies of the chase. Indeed, the variety of useful and ornamental articles to which the feet, hide, and other parts of the elephant can be converted are endless. As it may interest my readers, I give a few suggestions :—

The feet—tantalus stands, footstools, receptacles for wastepaper.



A FEW ELEPHANT AND OTHER TROPHIES

Hide, when softened in pickle, can be moulded to any shape, and made into anything desired.

Ear can be kept in its natural state, or its skin may be made into cigar-cases or purses. It is prettily mottled.

Trunk, when cured, moulded and dried, may be cut into lengths, each segment being adaptable for conversion to some useful article.

By lining a section with wood, fitting to it a handle and a glass bowl, and placing round it a band of silver, it makes a curious and handsome biscuit holder, or the trunk as a whole can also be so moulded as to be made into a unique cornucopia-shaped stand for any purpose.

Tusks or tushes can be retained in their natural state.

Teeth can be retained in their natural state, or may be cut, polished, and made into paper weights and knife handles.

Skull.—With suitable inscription on forehead this forms a grand trophy in itself.

Feet.—The feet should not be cut off too low down, but at a point a little above the knuckle joint. When they are first brought into camp no time should be lost in setting the coolies to work with their knives to remove all the bones and flesh from the inside. This must be carefully done, and the coolies should be cautioned not to pierce the skin. After the bones and flesh are taken out there is still a whitish gristly substance at the bottom about half an inch thick, known as the sock. This must also be taken away, leaving only the hard horny sole. Then the nails must be attended to.

In each nail will be found a hard bony substance, which must also be carefully removed. When properly done, the nails, if held up to the light, will appear transparent. This operation satisfactorily completed, the feet should next be well painted with arsenical soap inside and out, and filled with nice warm dry sand. The

sand should be removed every twenty-four hours and replaced by fresh sand, allowing the feet to remain empty for about an hour or so between the operations for the purpose of airing. Sand is generally procurable somewhere in the neighbourhood.

The feet should not be placed in the sun to dry, but



ELEPHANT FOOT TROPHY
TANTALUS STAND

somewhere in the shade, else they may shrivel up and be spoiled. If kept in a dry, airy place they will remain good for some considerable time. To complete the curing—which may be done later—they should be passed through a pickle composed of the following: 6 lbs. of alum, 2 lbs. saltpetre, 12 ozs. common salt—to 4 gallons

of water. This should be mixed together in kerosene tins or anything else convenient, and placed on the fire until boiling, when it should be removed and allowed to cool until the hand can just bear the heat.

A foot should then be placed in a tub and the pickle poured all over it. The skin will soon become soft, and can be doubled up, when the others can be treated in a similar manner. The feet should remain in this pickle twenty-four hours, and then taken out and drained. The pickle should then be warmed up again, and the operation repeated for another twenty-four hours, after which the feet must be taken out, well drained, and filled with warm dry sand, and moulded to shape desired. The hot sand in the feet should be replenished frequently for a few weeks.

This will complete the curing. The author has some feet by him now cured in this way that have lasted nearly thirty years, and they are still in perfect condition.

Tail.—This should be slit up on the inner side, the bones taken out, and it should then be painted with arsenical soap, after which it should be sewn up, filled with warm dry sand as prescribed for the feet, and hung up to dry in the shade. The writer has many tails simply cured by painting them over with arsenical soap, and by then applying carbolic acid to the raw part where the tail was cut. They were then dried in the sun. As the flesh is not of a greasy nature it dries quickly.

HINTS FOR CURING.

Ears.—The gristle of the inside should be carefully taken out. The ear should then be painted with arsenical soap, and hung up to dry in the shade.

Trunk.—This should be skinned like one would do an eel, removing all superfluous flesh. The skin must then be painted inside and out with arsenical soap,

filled with warm dry sand, moulded into shape, and laid in a dry place in the shade to dry. The sand should be frequently changed. The skin will soon dry and become hard.

Hide.—Superfluous flesh that may be adhering should be removed from the hide, which should then be painted with arsenical soap, and hung up to dry in the shade.

The ears, trunk, and hide should pass through similar pickling as the feet to complete the curing.

Tusks and Teeth.—These should be scrubbed and cleansed with a weak solution of carbolic acid.

The Skull.—If this is to be kept as a trophy, it should be left in the jungle for a few weeks, when ants and other insects will most effectually eat off all the flesh, leaving it perfectly white. It may then be removed and brought in. Should the sportsman be camping anywhere near the sea, he should have it immersed therein for a time. The salt water will do a lot to cleanse and get rid of any unpleasant odour that may remain. After this it should be thoroughly scrubbed and well rinsed with carbolic fluid, taking care to run the carbolic well into the brain pan and all hollows. It should then be placed in the sun to dry and purify by time.

Other preservative prescriptions appear in the Appendix.

CHAPTER X

SOME ELEPHANT SHOOTING EXPERIENCES

ONCE when dining at the military mess at Fort Frederick a friend of mine, a Captain L. H., of the R.A.M.C., appeared much interested in elephant shooting. He told me that he had never shot or been after an elephant in his life, but expressed a great wish to accompany me on one of my expeditions. He was a fine, tall, square-shouldered, well-set-up and jovial Irishman, and an excellent companion. I said it would give me much pleasure to take him, and accordingly arranged a shoot some few days later, little thinking at the time that it would end, as it did, with one of the narrowest and most marvellous escapes I ever had.

Putting a few things together, we made our way across the water to Topore on the Kottiar side, where we obtained trackers, and early next morning started to prospect round the banks of the tank, soon coming on the spoor of a fine "alien" or solitary elephant, which had been doing damage and giving trouble to the native cultivators. By the freshness of its track and other indications it had but a short time before left the open, and was evidently now on the march, seeking some cool, secluded retreat in the depths of the forest.

We followed it up without delay, and, after three hours' hard tramping through dense and heavy jungle, the tracks suddenly ended in a confused mass of foot impressions, trodden-down bushes, droppings, and sundry



OFFICERS' QUARTERS, FORT FREDERICK, TRINCOMALIE

broken branches of trees strewn about. The anei had no doubt stopped here and been hesitating as to where to settle down for his nap. My tracker, Allah Pitchei, and myself were now somewhat in advance of my friend, who had been provided with another tracker in case of getting separated. While carefully examining the spoor to see in what direction the animal had moved off, we heard deep stentorian snoring some distance away.

“Anei! Anei!” whispered Pitchei in my ear. We then left the track, and, steering cautiously through the undergrowth by the sound, soon came up to our quarry, lying stretched out full length fast asleep, with its head resting on an anthill for a pillow, in a secluded little clearing, with a stagnant pool of green water lying conveniently near by for a bath after the siesta.

So far we had approached without disturbing it. Its back was towards us, and a few paces off was a large ironwood tree, which we made for, getting now so close to the anei that Allah Pitchei picked up a small leaf and actually placed it on the back of its head, and whispered to me with a broad grin, “Master there shooting! Master’s elephant!”

This remark, of course, was not serious, but only a little joke of the tracker’s, as he was aware that I wished my friend to have the first shot, and then only when the animal was up and on the move. While waiting for him to appear on the scene, I was surprised by hearing two reports and the whizzing of bullets unpleasantly close to one’s head. My friend, who was but a short distance behind, had no doubt also heard the snoring, and being, as may be supposed, somewhat nervously excited, this being his first experience, had possibly imagined he saw the elephant and fired through the undergrowth in the direction of the sound, evidently forgetful of my presence just ahead in the line of fire.

This roused the anei, which immediately got up and made off with a great rush, crashing through the jungle and bearing down everything before it. I was too close then to shoot, so I quickly followed in its tracks, putting in a shot as chance offered. It was a magnificent animal, and by the size of its footprints, over ten feet high, with a fine pair of tusks, which I was anxious to secure. I ran after the brute through the thick jungle, with nothing more before me to be seen than its great rump, which made the shooting very difficult, and it was only by luck now and again one got a glimpse of the head, at which I shot, with a view of stopping or turning it.

I had fired several shots in this way without effect, when by the dense undergrowth I lost sight of the beast for a minute or so. It then appeared again, this time, to my surprise, with its head towards me in full charge, caused evidently by the tracker having headed and turned it in my direction. I was in the act of reloading, and had just time to put in one cartridge, raise my gun and fire, but whether it was that my hand was unsteady, or my sight affected by my previous exertions, I know not. In any case I made a bad shot, and, after that, all I remember at the time was hearing a loud shriek of rage, and seeing an immense head towering above, with trunk curled to one side, and a pair of vicious little eyes, coming straight for me.

In my endeavour to jump aside out of its way, my foot unfortunately caught in a creeper, which threw me down with my gun underneath, knocking my wind out. "Done for now," thought I.

The brute immediately stopped dead and stood over me. While I was lying face downwards between its legs, expecting every moment to be flattened out by its feet, I could feel the hot air from its trunk, as it sniffed and blew dust over my head and face; but strangely



A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE
THE BRUTE IMMEDIATELY STOPPED DEAD AND STOOD OVER ME

enough, for some extraordinary reason, it hesitated to do me harm. Its attention at the moment had apparently been drawn to some startling object which had suddenly caught its eye close by—possibly the apparition of my friend, as suddenly I heard two loud reports, and the next moment saw daylight, the huge brute having fallen over on its side, and, by good luck, clear of me.

As soon as I found myself free, I was up in quicker time than it takes to tell. I obtained the cover of a tree, reloaded my rifle, and once more felt fairly safe. Hardly had I done so, when the elephant was also on its legs again. It had been only momentarily stunned, and, with outstretched trunk, was soon busily engaged scenting all round endeavouring to get wind of me. At last it was evidently successful, for it approached in my direction at the run. Taking as steady an aim as I then could for the centre of the forehead, I fired and rolled it over; but, to my astonishment, it was up again and off in a second, crashing through the jungle in full retreat.

I was beginning to blame my luck and bad shooting, when I thought I heard my name called, and looking round saw, to my astonishment, standing a little distance away among the leaves, my friend L. H., whose providential and timely presence a minute or so before had been the means of so miraculously saving my life.

On explaining matters, it turned out that he and his tracker had strayed from the tracks, and were being guided in my direction by the sound of the firing, when suddenly and quite by chance his attention was drawn to a large elephant standing amongst the bushes on his left some forty or fifty yards off, at which he impulsively fired both barrels of his Express with soft expanding bullets, little thinking that I was at the time actually lying between its legs. Those shots had, as I said, only the effect

of stunning the animal, but nevertheless they caused it to fall over, and so released me from my perilous situation.

A little later we were seated on a boulder close by having a peg to pull ourselves together a bit, and he related to me his sensation of wonderment and surprise when he saw me rise from under the very elephant he had dropped. It certainly must have been a bit of a shock to him, and no doubt we were both somewhat a little shaky after the excitement. Noticing my friend was looking somewhat pale, I happened to mention the fact. His reply was, "Is it pale that I am? Perhaps so; but when I come to look at you, my bhoy, I may say that your face is hardly the colour of a carnation!"

I daresay he was right. It was indeed a narrow squeak and a most miraculous escape, quite enough to put one a bit off colour. News was brought next day that the elephant was found lying dead about three miles away near the banks of the Mahawellaganga.

Another time, when spending a few days with some friends at Allai Tank for a little duck and snipe shooting, I had another close shave. I had been enjoying some capital sport, and had made some excellent bags, when it was arranged one evening amongst ourselves, for the sake of a little variety and change, that the next day each should go on his own, selecting whatever line of country and game he chose.

I accordingly got hold of my old native friend, Allah Pitchei, from his village close by, and talked the matter over with him. He at once suggested crossing the tank to the opposite side to try our luck in tracking up an old anei, which had haunted the neighbourhood for some time past to the danger of the native cultivators, whose crops had suffered considerably by his depredations, and had been seen but a day or so previously. The idea attracted me at once. Accordingly next

morning I got ready the elephant rifle, put a few sandwiches in my pocket, had a canoe brought alongside and made an early start.

The morning was deliciously cool, and wildfowl of many kinds were flying about in all directions, as they rose disturbed by the noise of the paddling. When nearing the other side, my tracker, who had been carefully on the look out, suddenly caught sight of the anei in a shady glen near the edge of the water, just as it was about to disappear in the jungle.

Making our way downwind for a short distance we landed, and then cautiously worked our way up, until we came on the tracks, and were soon busy following up the spoor. Judging from the footprints, it was a large animal, somewhat over nine feet. A heavy dew overnight made the tracking fairly easy, and, after a rather long tramp of a little over two hours, we came up to it in difficult jungle, standing with its hind-quarters towards us. There was little or no wind, and what there was seemed very variable.

In order to get a shot it was necessary to work round to one side to obtain a view of the head. Before doing so I took the precaution to give my little bag of wood ashes a flick to make sure of the wind. This test being satisfactory, I gradually crept up, and was just about to raise my rifle, when the animal must either have seen or scented me, for it suddenly gave a grunt and bolted, trumpeting and crashing through the bush, levelling everything before it.

We immediately gave chase, and again getting fairly close, got a running shot, but without effect. In another moment it was lost to view, when, hearing it still breaking through the jungle on our right, we made for a dried-up watercourse, down which we ran with a view of cutting off its retreat. We had not proceeded far before I heard Allah Pitchei's voice in my rear shouting "Anei!

Anei!" I looked round, and, to my utter astonishment and surprise, found the huge beast within a yard or so towering above and nearly on top of me. It must have doubled back on its tracks, which gave it the scent, and, entering the watercourse behind us, came on at the charge.

On the impulse of the moment I did the only thing one could do in such an emergency. I jumped aside, throwing myself into some bushes. It was not a second too soon, as the brute swept by within a few inches of my body immediately after, and was fortunately carried on some distance ahead by the impetus it had on, allowing me time to gain the shelter of a tree in the jungle just above. Here I was soon joined by Allah Pitchei, who had also done the same thing a minute or so before.

The anei had now evidently lost our wind, and could be heard cruising round. While on the look out for it to reappear, I felt something warm trickling down my face, and on putting up my hand found it to be blood issuing from a wound in the top of my head, which I must have received in my fall. As I was unable to stop its flow, and to prevent it getting into my eyes, interfering with my sight, my friend, Allah Pitchei, came to the rescue with a dab of mud. He clapped this over the spot, and in a short time it effectively stopped the bleeding. No sooner had this been done than he touched me on the shoulder, pointed with his finger in a certain direction in great excitement, whispering at the same time "Periya anei."

I looked round, and to my surprise I saw a tusker, which had suddenly and mysteriously appeared on the scene, standing within twenty yards broadside on, with ears cocked, looking down the bed of the watercourse. No doubt it had been disturbed and drawn to the spot by curiosity after the recent firing and other noises.

As its position gave me a good line for the ear, I raised my rifle and fired, dropping it dead first shot.

This sudden turn of fortune cheered me immensely, although I regretted the firing had scared away the other elephant, as nothing more was heard of it. The weather was exceedingly hot, and, feeling somewhat tired and thirsty after the long tramp and excitement of the morning, I enjoyed a cool w. and s. with some sandwiches, making use of the fallen elephant as a seat, while Allah Pitchei chewed his betelnut and took measurements.

I had every reason to thank my stars for my narrow shave and escape but a few minutes before, and for the wonderful good luck that followed in bagging the tusker, the first that had been shot in this part of the Island for many a year.

The measurements were—height, 9' 2"; circumference of fore feet, 55". The tusks were small, under 3'.

Some few years ago I also went for a shoot in company with Admiral the Honble. Sir E. R. Fremantle, who was then commanding the East India station. We crossed the water to Kottiar, the native Moor village lying in the bight of Tamblegam bay, already spoken of, and made our way to Coombanatchie, about twenty-eight miles further. It is a noted district for elephants, and early next morning, shouldering our rifles, we made a start to explore the country round about. In a short time we came to the dry bed of a watercourse, into which we descended, soon discovering tracks of a large solitary elephant.

Following these, they eventually led us after several miles of tracking to the banks of the main branch of the Mahawellaganga, a deep, impassable river, infested with crocodiles, over which we thought, to our disappointment, the anei must have crossed, as fresh spoor could be seen near the water's edge. We, therefore,

sat down on the bank close by, and consoled ourselves with a little refreshment and a smoke, and began to talk over matters and arrange the next best thing to do. Suddenly we heard the snapping of a piece of dry wood in the thick forest in front of us.

“Anei!” said Allah Pitchei at once, and we jumped up, and after listening a moment discovered by the grunting sounds and rustling of leaves that the beast was making in our direction, so we made ready to receive it. In another minute its ponderous head appeared through the bushes above us about twenty yards off. Making a sign to the Admiral to aim for the bump in the forehead just above the eyes, he raised his rifle and fired. The animal lowered its head, half spun round, and fell over dead.

While examining it, Allah Pitchei suddenly spotted another fine anei which had mysteriously appeared on the scene. It had evidently seen or heard us, as it quickly turned and made off in another direction. We immediately hurried through the jungle with a view to heading it, which we did successfully, and then waited for its approach. The head and trunk soon appeared above the undergrowth within a short distance, bearing down branches of trees and bushes, making a way for itself, coming straight towards us. I was standing a few yards away to the Admiral’s right watching its movements, when I was startled by the shriek and trumpeting of an elephant immediately in our rear. On turning round, I saw a young bull charging down full upon us.

I had just time to warn the Admiral, and to take a snap shot at the same moment. I then heard two shots fired in extraordinarily quick succession by the Admiral, within six feet of whom the animal now dropped dead—very close work! The other elephant had made off, alarmed at the firing.

Glancing at the Admiral, I noticed his coat was on

fire, and blood issuing from wounds in his chest and neck. Hurrying to his assistance, I helped him into a lying position, making use of my coat as a pillow. "Good God!" thought I, "he is dying!" The colour had left his face, but after applying my whisky flask to his lips for want of something better, he, to my delight and relief, gradually revived, and then said that he couldn't help thinking but what a bullet must have ricocheted and entered his chest.

To convince him to the contrary, I got Allah Pitchei to cut two jungle poles, and, by their aid as levers, we managed to lift the head of the animal sufficiently for him to see both bullet wounds made by his gun—one in the head just above the temple, and the other a little further off. The sight of these cheered him and greatly relieved my anxiety. On examination of his gun, I saw at once what had taken place. I felt certain that the accident was due to the breech of the rifle opening when the discharge took place, it not having been properly and securely locked by the underlever beforehand.

This caused a part of the metal portion of the cartridge, some brown paper packing and powder to fly back, striking him in the chest and neck, at the same time setting fire to his coat. For some unknown reason both barrels were fired almost simultaneously, possibly due to excitement. As he soon began to feel better, my thought was to get him back to camp as quickly as possible. After temporarily dressing his wounds, we made a litter from materials which the jungle supplied, and carried him by the help of his coxswain and tracker for some considerable way through dense bush, cutting a road by the use of knife and axe. At length we came to a shady spot near a pool of greenish water, where we made a ha't.

I now sent Allah Pitchei back to camp for coolies, rope, canvas, and refreshments. While he was away,

the coxswain and myself built a shelter over the Admiral to screen him from the excessive glare and heat of the midday sun. To further improve matters, we kept him constantly fanned with wet handkerchiefs dipped in the stagnant pool we had fortunately near at hand. While so engaged I was very glad when I heard the voices of natives in the distance, and these men with Allah Pitchei soon appeared on the scene with all requirements, enabling us to construct a more comfortable and serviceable litter with a canvas canopy. Then, hastily partaking of some of the good things which had been specially brought to meet the cravings of the "inner man," we commenced the march back to camp, which by the extra coolie assistance now at our command we soon reached.

Placing the Admiral on his bed, a special messenger was dispatched with a note to the captain of his flagship, informing him of the accident, and requesting medical assistance. I then redressed the wounds, which made the patient feel so much more comfortable as to cause him to make light of his injuries and indulge in a cigarette, chatting cheerfully over the morning's exciting adventure.

It was astonishing to me to see how quickly the Admiral had bucked up, and the interest he was now taking in all the little arrangements I was making for his speedy return to Trincomalie. He even reminded me to open a bottle of "fizz" to celebrate the deaths of the two aneis! I, of course, obeyed with alacrity, and drank to his speedy recovery, in which I am happy to say he was then able to join me.

Early next morning, before sunrise, we had struck camp and made a start, the Admiral reclining comfortably on his litter, with relays of coolie bearers ready to take their turn as required. We had twenty-eight miles of jungle before us to get through before reaching

our destination, Kottiar, where we intended staying the night prior to crossing the water to Trincomalie.

The journey was accomplished without hitch and in good time, arriving in daylight. The flag captain and surgeon turned up a little later in the ship's steam cutter, leaving again after the latter had attended to the Admiral. The following morning we crossed over to Trincomalie in a native canoe, and I was indeed glad to be then relieved of my anxiety and my responsibility.

The pluck and endurance displayed by the Admiral in his condition was from beginning to end marvellous, the wounds being of a serious nature. A charming man, full of anecdote, and a most entertaining and genial companion on the shoot, I was indeed greatly pleased when a few months later I heard of his complete recovery.

A very extraordinary feature on the return journey was the large amount of game we came across, especially in view of the noises made by the chattering coolies, which included two large elephants, sambur, chital, pig, and almost everything else; but of course at such a time one could not shoot.

CHAPTER XI

ABOUT CROCODILE CATCHING

WHEREVER water lies in the low country crocodiles are pretty sure to be present. They infest the estuaries and rivers, and literally swarm in the tanks.

The estuarine crocodiles that inhabit brackish water and flowing rivers are larger and much more intrepid and ferocious than those which live exclusively in fresh water. They attain a length of over twenty-five feet, and are exceedingly prone to attack human beings. Cases have also been known where even the tank or



CROCODILES AT HOME

marsh crocodiles (*Crocodilus palustris*), considered to be more timid, have assailed man when pressed by hunger, and have chased cultivators along the bunds on returning



CROCODILE CATCHING
BAIT SUSPENDED OVER WATER

from their labours. Certainly they do so without hesitation should one unfortunately be in difficulties in the water. They frequently carry off cattle. Dogs they are particularly partial to, and by their depredations generally are cordially detested and dreaded by the natives. One is therefore always prompted with a desire to destroy them whenever an opportunity offers.

They are, at the same time, great scavengers, and possibly in this direction do a certain amount of good, as they roam about over the land at night in search of any decayed and putrid flesh that their acute sense of smell may lead them to, and this they devour with the greatest gusto.

I have often come across them in the jungle on my early morning tramps. Sometimes they were a consider-

able distance from any water, and no doubt were returning after a marauding expedition during the night. Once when on a miscellaneous shoot in the Terayai district with Admiral Sir William R. Kennedy, who was at the time commanding the East India Squadron, a thorough sportsman and jovial companion, with whom I had the pleasure of many delightful shooting expeditions, I was assailed by one in a forest.

The creature came straight for me with its jaws wide open, hissing like a steam engine. Waiting until it got quite close, I put the Express nearly down its throat and fired, blowing out the back of the head and killing it on the spot. When opened it had a large wanderoo monkey in its inside. This originated an amusing story—an account of which is given in some sportsman's yarns further on.

Two terrible cases I can recall of human beings being seized and carried away by these blood-thirsty brutes. One took place some few years ago at the great tank of Mineri, in the North Central province, while a Mr. J. M., of the Forest Department, a well-known sportsman and friend of mine, was busy one evening in his tent cleaning his rifle, after returning from an official inspection of the forests in his district. A native ran up to him wild with excitement and exclaimed, "Master must come quickly with gun, as one 'muthalei' (crocodile) has seized a woman and is taking her away."

My friend immediately ran out with his gun, but was too late to do any good, although in time to see an arm raised just above the water holding a native chatty (earthen bowl), which was being carried at some considerable speed through the water. It was a moonlight night, and the natives were directed to watch and inform him where the crocodile landed the body. Later in the evening news arrived that it had come ashore and was lying under a bush half a mile distant.

He thereupon endeavoured to stalk it, and after some little difficulty in getting through brushwood and other impediments he successfully accomplished and killed the brute with his elephant rifle and an explosive bullet. The reptile, he informed me, measured over twenty-three feet, and when discovered was resting with its enormous head and forearms on the woman's chest. The poor woman, from the natives' account, was with others bathing, and in the act of throwing water over herself with a chatty, in what was considered a perfectly safe fenced-off piece of the tank used for this purpose, when suddenly she was seized by the monster and carried over the fence. My friend afterwards presented me with one of its great teeth as a memento, and I have this mounted as a curiosity and set up as a flower vase.

On another occasion and more recently, two gentlemen known to me were shooting duck from the bund of a tank in the Trincomalie district. Some teal fell into the water thirty or forty yards distant, and the coolie in attendance was persuaded to retrieve them. He had waded to a point within a few feet of the game, with the water above his waist, and was just about to grasp the birds when, to the horror of those looking on, he was observed to be suddenly seized and pulled under. His turban remained floating on the surface, and a second or so after two arms were seen above the water endeavouring to clasp the turban, only to be dragged down again immediately, and the poor man was seen no more.

Crocodile catching is frequently indulged in both by Europeans and natives, and will be found to be a most entertaining and exciting diversion. In connection with it the following information may be useful, for it will give an idea how to prepare suitable tackle for the purpose, as well as particulars as to the baiting and laying out of the lines. The materials required are few, and consist of some strong half-inch hemp rope, sailmaker's twine,

and a few large hooks. From these are constructed three fishing lines. You take a piece of the hemp rope, say fifteen to twenty fathoms long, and attach to this, at one end, a snood, made of a hank of sailmaker's twine about a fathom long, fifty threads thick, tied together at intervals of about nine inches, then the hook. A cringle let in at both ends is useful to prevent chafing. (See sketch.)

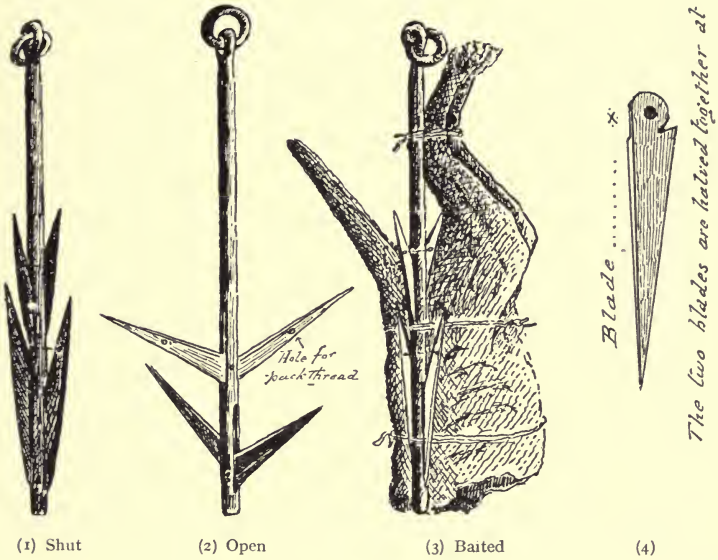


The reason of the hank of sailmaker's twine being placed between the hook and the rope is on account of the creature's enormously powerful jaws, with which it can bite through almost every other kind of material closely twisted. In the case of loose twine this is not so easy, as it becomes soft and pliable, lies flat, and gets into the interstices of its teeth, and is thus protected. I have known cases where thick hemp rope and even wire rope have been bitten through by crocodiles like cheese.

A great deal also depends on the kind of hook used. Owing to the peculiar formation of a crocodile's mouth, which is tongueless, there is no place where the ordinary fish-hook is likely to hold, except in the leathery substance of the lower jaw. Here it seldom takes effect. I have accordingly designed a hook to meet the case which answers beyond all expectations.

It is made of a piece of $\frac{5}{8}$ " steel rod 16" long, with a ring at one end, and at the other four pointed steel blades 5" by $\frac{3}{16}$ ", which are let into two slots at opposite angles. These only open to a certain extent when the bait is seized, and form a star of four sharp hooks, one of which is sure to penetrate the leathery skin of the lower jaw and hold the crocodile firmly. (See sketches and specifications on opposite page, which will

CROCODILE HOOK
(INVENTED BY THE AUTHOR)



Holes are drilled through the blades to receive a piece of packthread to fix them in place when closed, as shown in Sketches 1, 2 above.

MADE OF $\frac{5}{8}$ " STEEL ROD

Length of shank	..	..	..	16 inches.
,, blades	..	..	..	5 ,,
Width of ,,	..	..	..	$\frac{3}{4}$ " tapered to point.
Thickness of ,,	..	..	..	$\frac{3}{16}$ " ,, ,,



explain the details and give an excellent idea of the instrument.)

In lieu of this, the next best is the "kedge hook," which consists of three large shark hooks welded together in the form of a kedge anchor, finishing the shank with a ring for attaching the sailmaker's twine snood; the points of the hooks should be bent a trifle more out than they usually are, and the shank made at least a foot long.

Let us assume the three lines are now completed, and baited either with a monkey, portion of a dog, or anything else of a similar tempting nature. The next thing to do will be to lay them out. For this purpose it is as well to take a stroll round the bund of the tank and find some likely secluded spots to place them, where the lotus and other green weeds cover the surface of the water. Having selected these, a light pole ten or twelve feet long is cut wherewith to hang the bait over the water from the bank. We then take about eight feet of the line from above the bait, make two half hitches, and slip it on the end of the pole. The remainder of the line is taken across the bund to the jungle side, and made fast to a strong and springy young sapling. Now the bait is lowered over the water by the pole, which is kept in position by two light native rope side stays, as well as by the main line made fast to the sapling, as shown in sketch at commencement of this chapter.

Observe that the bait should be kept about two feet above the water, so that the crocodile must rise and open its jaws to take it. If allowed to rest on the surface of the water it would only get nipped by the fore teeth and dragged off the hook to no purpose.

The object of making the main line fast to the sapling is to prevent it being snapped on the first pull, as the sapling gives gradually to the sudden strain.

Strange as it may seem, these creatures, in the absence

of live bait, much prefer decomposed flesh to that freshly killed. The stronger it smells, the more enticing it becomes, and as they have a wonderful keen sense of smell, decomposed flesh will draw them from long distances. Nevertheless, should anything suddenly attract their attention, such as a duck falling into the water with a splash when shot, they are at once on the alert, and would seize the duck without hesitation.

The native way of capturing them is by a hard piece of wood about one foot long, tapered to a point at each end, and grooved in the middle for the purpose of attaching a line made of raw hide. (See sketch below.)



At the other end of this hide line, which is about six fathoms long, is attached a buoy made of light jungle wood. The pointed piece of wood is then placed inside a monkey or other kind of bait, and the whole thrown into the water, the buoy floating on the surface. In due course the bait is swallowed by a crocodile that swims away with it, the buoy acting as a tell-tale to the reptile's movements. This the native carefully watches until sufficient time has elapsed for digestion, which releases and allows the pointed piece of wood to open across the crocodile's chest, fixing it effectually.

The buoy is then picked up and the brute hauled ashore and killed. This takes time, and the services of a canoe are required to retrieve the buoy, which may possibly be taken to some distant part of the tank.

There are numerous tanks in the neighbourhood of



PERIYA KULAM

Trincomalie where crocodile catching may be indulged in. The following may be mentioned :—

Kanthalai	..	..	..	distant	25	miles
Vandrassen Kulam	..	..	..	„	24	„
Andan Kulam	..	..	..	„	3½	„
Allai Tank	..	..	..	„	14	„
Periya Kulam	..	..	..	„	6	„
Pankulam	..	..	..	„	15	„

As Periya Kulam is within a short distance of Trincomalie and easy to get at, it will perhaps be as well to try one's luck here first. The best time for fishing is on a moonlight night. The tent should be pitched somewhere near the scene of operations for the purpose of conveniently inspecting the lines from time to time as desired.

The guns required will be the Express and smooth bores. The Express with expanding bullets is for despatching the crocodile on being hauled ashore, and the smooth bores are for diversion during the day when the lines have been baited and laid and the game proves shy. Four coolies only, beside the personal staff, are required. Two bullock carts are also necessary to carry stores.

There is a public works bungalow on this tank, the use of which could no doubt be easily obtained on application being made to the officer in charge. Like other officers of the department, he is generally most courteous and ready to oblige, and this precaution obviates the necessity of carrying a tent.

The catching appliances being ready, we pack them, together with the necessary camping gear and provisions for a few days, into the carts, and make an early morning start from the rest house, arriving an hour or so later at the tank. Here, after the bungalow is put in order,

we have tiffin, and then see to the baiting of the lines, usually with pariah dogs previously shot.

These miserable, half-starved and mangy curs infest the district. They have few if any owners, living on any carrion they can pick up in the streets, gutters and refuse heaps, and are so numerous as to become a nuisance. It is, therefore, a mercy to destroy them, and for a rupee or so no difficulty is experienced in obtaining any number



THE BUNGALOW PERIYA KULAM

required. A fair-sized dog will make two good baits when cut in two and placed on the hook, as shown in a previous sketch.

Having satisfactorily fixed the baits to the hooks, we take the three lines and lay them out in the different selected spots on the bund, in accordance with instructions already given. This done, we return to the bungalow, pick up our shot guns, get down on the paddy fields adjoining, and amuse ourselves during the rest of the day snipe shooting (if in season); if not, then by a miscel-

laneous shoot in the country round about. On returning to the bungalow we have a look at the different lines.

If they are all right and not disturbed, we refresh ourselves with a tub, dine, and take it easy until, say, 9 o'clock, when we again have a look round with perhaps the same result. At 10 o'clock another inspection takes place. We find the first and second baits have not been touched, but the third has disappeared, the rope is strained like a bar, and the sapling is very much bent forward. I catch hold of the line and can feel the movements of the crocodile at the other end, apparently firmly hooked. A signal is then made for the coolies, who soon appear on the scene, catch hold of the rope and commence to haul, but for a minute or so do so without effect. The crocodile is evidently holding on to some roots below and will not budge.

The coolies still keep a steady strain on the rope, when suddenly it gives, and then the line comes in. Some little disappointment is felt at this, as it is thought the line is either broken or the crocodile has got off. In a few seconds, however, our disappointment is changed to surprise by a sudden commotion and lashing of the water by the reptile's tail a little way off, and we see it clearly now in the bright moonlight on the surface, being gradually drawn to the bank.

My companion and I take up a position on one side with the Express, ready to fire so soon as its head is clear of the water. It struggles and plunges tremendously as it nears the shore in its wild and frantic efforts to escape, and the coolies have as much as they can do to hold it. In another moment or so its huge head is drawn partly up the bank, and two well-directed shots, one through the shoulder and another near the orifice of the ear, end its career.

Although the reptile is now apparently dead, one must not be tempted to venture too close, as their tenacity

of life is marvellous. It may at any time revive and possibly sweep one into the water by a swish of the tail, or make a snap at one with its formidable jaws when least expected. If possible, the hook is then removed and the line relaid, leaving the body to be skinned in the morning. We then return to the bungalow, continuing to visit the lines at intervals during the night.

It is a most interesting pastime on a bright moonlight night to lie concealed on the bund where a line is set, and watch crocodiles in the act of taking the bait. They are very suspicious and shy in their natural state, and one must, therefore, keep out of sight and remain perfectly still, as on the slightest movement being noticed they sink at once below the surface. They are also so well acquainted with every detail of the tank that even the pole newly fixed up on the bank with its tempting bait creates suspicion for a time, until, becoming accustomed to it, they get more fearless. As the flesh on the hook decays, and the exhalation from the putrefying matter gets more pronounced and tempting, it then proves irresistible, and they will swarm round it with just the tips of their eyes and noses above the water. When this happens one of them is pretty sure to make a sudden rush for the bait, rising well out of the water and widely opening its immense jaws to take it in. It is an awe-inspiring sight, creating a feeling of dread as to the terrible fate awaiting one if placed by any unfortunate accident in their power.

A leakage usually takes place through the bunds of these tanks, and deep pools are formed on the jungle or land side. When covered with undergrowth these pools become favourite haunts for these creatures, and the following incident may show how much on the watch and how careful one must be when engaged in this somewhat hazardous entertainment.

One moonlight night I was lying on the bund of a tank, intently occupied in this sport, with my legs stretched down the slope of the bank in the direction of the jungle. I was looking over the top of the bund, at a number of crocodiles swimming round the bait, expecting every moment to see one rise and take it. I had for some unknown reason an instinctive feeling of being in imminent danger, and this prompted me to quickly turn and look round. I was not a minute too soon. Within a few inches of my feet was a huge crocodile, which had silently climbed up from behind. Suddenly jumping up, I so startled the crocodile that it retreated full speed to the safety of its swampy hole amongst the bushes before a shot could be got in. The natural timidity of these reptiles on land is well known, and this no doubt saved my life.

Their fondness for dogs is astonishing. A barking dog near the edge of the water will quickly attract their attention from a considerable distance and bring them to the spot, so those who value their dogs should not take them to these tanks unless led by a leash. Crocodiles not only have an acute sense of smell, but have also wonderful good sight. When floating near the surface of the water, only the tips of the nose and eyes are visible. These are almost unnoticeable amongst the weeds and other floating matter in which they lie, yet they get a clear view of everything going on about them, and with their instinctive cunning will quietly sink below the surface, appearing again almost directly in a most uncanny manner close to the object of attraction, without intimation or the slightest disturbance of the water.

This brings to mind an incident that occurred some few years ago during a picnic at Andan Kulam Tank, a few miles from Trincomalie, at which I was present. A lady of the party, the wife of an artillery officer, had

a fine Irish terrier, a great pet, of which she was exceedingly fond. In view of this fact, I one day advised her that the dog had two mortal enemies in the Island—namely, the leopard and crocodile. I told her as she valued her dog she should therefore on no account when driving along jungle roads let it run after the trap, but always take it in with her, and if visiting a tank lead it by a leash and never let it run loose along the bunds, or she would surely lose it.

For a few weeks the precaution was carefully observed and all went well, but on the day of the picnic it was relaxed, and, as a special treat, the dog was allowed to run loose just for a little recreation. All were seated on the grassy slope of the bund, a merry party, chatting and enjoying the repast, and the dog was amusing himself barking and gambolling about near the edge of the water trying to catch little frogs and fish which were jumping and exciting his attention. Suddenly before the eyes, and within a few feet of all present, an immense pair of jaws suddenly opened, took in the dog, and disappeared with it in a second, to the astonishment of everybody and to the great dismay and grief of the poor lady who owned it.

On another occasion, while snipe shooting and passing through long grass, I stumbled and fell over what was thought to be a log of a tree. It was on fairly dry ground, and without getting up I turned round and had a look at the obstruction. It was a crocodile, apparently fast asleep; but as it did not move after some considerable time, an idea struck me that it might possibly be dead, so after lighting a pipe I, to make doubly sure, placed the muzzle of my shot-gun close to its armpit, and fired a charge of No. 8 shot into it.

There was still no movement, and being now convinced it was dead, I took it easy, and continued my smoke, glad of a rest, merely watching the crocodile



ANDAN KULAM AND WATER BUFFALOES

in a contemplative mood. To my utter astonishment I noticed the jaws gradually begin to open, until they were at their full, and then a cloud of smoke was emitted, the jaws closing again by degrees soon after. The cause of this was no doubt shooting at such close quarters, which not only sent in the charge, but smoke too.

Two friends who were shooting near came up shortly after, and, with their combined assistance, the brute was hauled through the long grass on to a bit of high ground under the shade of a tamarind tree, where the lunch basket was opened and contents spread out on the ground. Then all three sat on the crocodile's back, which made an excellent seat, and were soon busy with the good things provided, when suddenly, to the utter surprise and astonishment of us all, it lashed out with its tail, smashing the crockery, including the only bottle of whisky. This happened a good half-hour after it had been shot, and was no doubt a muscular action, which similarly and instantly affected those sitting on its back.

When duck shooting on the tanks from a canoe it is necessary now and again, if the birds are in flight, to conceal oneself from view under cover of bushes growing out of the water. On several occasions when so engaged, and occupied watching the movements of the birds on the wing, I, standing in an upright position, have had that peculiar and mysterious feeling at times of knowing that I was being watched by some uncanny thing. This has prompted me to look down, and generally I have found one of these repulsive-looking creatures lying alongside, with blinking eyes, and only waiting a favourable opportunity to make a snatch at me when off my guard. To prevent any further affectionate attentions, a shot planted in the centre of the back of the head has generally proved an effective antidote.

A friend of mine, an officer in the Public Works

Department of Ceylon, once told me the following amusing story about a crocodile.

“As you may be aware,” said he, “during long droughts in the dry season, when water is scarce and tanks dry up, crocodiles bury themselves several inches under the mud and remain in a state of torpor until the rainy season sets in and releases them.

“My duties often carried me many miles through jungle, and one morning, having pitched my tent on the bed of a dried-up tank, I made myself comfortable while the cook prepared breakfast. Somewhat later I heard shouts proceeding from where the cooking was taking place of ‘muthalei! muthalei!’ (crocodile! crocodile!). As the noise and excitement amongst the coolies increased, I went outside to find out the cause. I was just in time to see a crocodile at some little distance wriggling along at great speed. It was on its way to a small pool of muddy water which still remained in the centre of the dried-up tank, with a flat piece of caked earth fixed to its back, on top of which could be seen the smoking embers of a fire.

“The cook had, it appeared, strangely enough, lit his fire over the very spot where it had just before been hibernating, a few inches below the surface. The heat soon woke it up and made it lively, its struggles breaking the crust of mud above and freeing it from its imprisonment. Then, with its mouth wide open, and hissing like escaping steam, it suddenly made off, upsetting the cook and his pots and pans, including the eggs and bacon he was in the act of frying at the time for my breakfast, and carrying away with it in its eagerness to escape a portion of baked earth, on which the fire was still burning.”



AN ISOLATED WATERHOLE
EARLY MORNING

CHAPTER XII

WATERHOLE SHOOTING FOR BEAR AND LEOPARD

LET us assume that the month of July is well advanced, the weather has been very hot and dry for weeks past, the country round about looks parched up for want of rain, and the moon in a few days will be full. A better time for a waterhole shoot could not be sought. It certainly furnishes us with an opportunity not to be missed ; so packing up the necessaries, an old sportsman, Jonathan Milne, and I make a trip across the water to Kottiar, en route to Ichehilampattai, where the bear and leopard abound, arriving late the same afternoon.

The same arrangements are made regarding the engagement of coolies and canoe for crossing as in Chapter VII., six coolies being considered sufficient in addition to personal staff and trackers, as most things necessary can be carried by bullock carts, hired at Kottiar, at the small cost of one rupee per diem. These coolies will, besides ordinary carrying work, be found useful for skinning and curing trophies, assisting trackers in setting up chungs (stages in trees) to shoot from, and in bringing in game.

Ichehilampattai lies on the coast-road to Batticaloa, about fifteen miles east of Kottiar and nine miles from Topore, over sandy and open plains. It possesses a fairly good rest house adjoining the village, so tents may possibly be dispensed with. We shall establish ourselves here for about eight days, i.e. four days before

and for four days after full moon, as during these periods there is good light to see to shoot.

This waterhole sport quite reverses the ordinary arrangements as regards other shooting, for one has to be up at night and rest during the daytime. Luckily there are numerous waterholes within a radius of six miles of the rest house, and among the best are :—

1. Sinnative Calchuni	..	..	distant	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	miles.
2. Palakerni Calchuni	..	..	..	3	..
3. Pachechola Calchuni	..	..	..	3	..
4. Kalupetti Calchuni	..	..	..	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	..
5. Pulandi Calchuni	..	..	..	5	..
6. Chattie Odatchie Calchuni	..	..	..	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	..
7. Anei Settha Calchuni	..	..	..	6	..
8. Thamarikerni Calchuni	..	..	..	6	..
9. Sinna Arnie Volanda Calchuni			..	6	..

The nature, position, and surroundings of these waterholes differ considerably, and it is necessary in some cases to erect chungs in trees to have command of the holes, while in others a simple screen, breast-high, quickly made of dead wood, bushes, stones, or any suitable material that may be close at hand, is all that is required. (Nos. 1-6 and 7 of the above list require tree platforms.)

Before proceeding further a few particulars about the Ceylon sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*), the animal whom we hope will entertain us at the waterhole during the night, may perhaps interest my readers. It is a formidable, thick-set, rather ugly-looking beast, measuring, taking in length of head and tail, from about five feet to six feet six inches. Its height at shoulders varies from two feet three inches to two feet six inches, and large, full-grown males weigh anything between 200 lb. and 300 lb.



ICHEHILAMPATTAI REST HOUSE

It is covered with coarse long black hairy-looking fur, which is longer and thicker at the shoulders. Its chest is marked by a white chevron. The head is large, with a long grey muzzle and mobile snout, in which are set two small cunning eyes. It lives in the hollows of rocks, or in caves hollowed out in the banks of dried-up water-courses in the deep and quiet recesses of the jungle. In some places these caves are so numerous as to be styled by the natives "karadi (bear) villages."

It is nocturnal in its habits, and is not carnivorously inclined, the food consisting generally of fruit, insects, including the white ant, of which it is particularly fond, young bees and honey, and also the sweet gummy berries of the ironwood tree, which is its special favourite. I have sometimes come across these bears on my jungle travels in the act of feeding on white ants from anthills. Scratching and enlarging a hole in the mound, they insert their snouts, and with a snort suck up the ants with their marvellous power of inhalation. At times their faces and paws are covered by the insects, but of this they appear to take little notice, rubbing them off now and again by their paws, humming and licking themselves the while, evidently enjoying the dainty repast.

When the fruit of the ironwood tree is ripening the natives are in great fear of the bear, as then it wanders more about during the day than at other times. It also becomes more fearless and is bolder in its manner, sometimes attacking human beings without provocation. In its ordinary natural state it is a somewhat shy and timid animal. At the same time it is sly, uncertain, and not to be trusted. It is immensely powerful, and its claws, which are between three and four inches long, can inflict terrible wounds.

This reminds me of a little incident I once witnessed on one of my elephant shoots in the North Central pro-

vince. Two friends and I were on the march to our next camping ground, Kanda Kadu, nine miles further on, when some of our coolies gave trouble. This ended in several loads being left in the jungle, and the bearers were sent back to Trincomalie, from whence they came. We proceeded on our journey with our trackers, Allah Pitchei, Sinnacooty, and the few remaining coolies for about four miles, and then stopped to take a rest. We were just about to start again, when Sinnacooty, with some agitation, exclaimed, "Wild men! Veddahs! Master! Keep out of sight!"

Obeying this injunction, we hid by the side of some bushes, and then Allah Pitchei, who had come across them before and could talk to them in their native tongue, went up and explained matters. Whatever he said evidently satisfied and allayed their fears, for in another minute or so they all came up to us, looking somewhat shy but warlike, with their unkempt, thickly-matted heads of hair, bows and arrows, and a small axe stuck in the piece of hide they wore round their waists. Otherwise they were as simply dressed as Adam.

We explained to them through Allah Pitchei the awkward position we were in, owing to our stores being left in the jungle, whereas we required them on arrival at Kanda Kadu. They seemed to take in the situation, and at once volunteered to bring them on. The spokesman of the tribe, a wiry, pleasant, athletic-looking little fellow, full of animation, was conversing in his peculiar language to Allah Pitchei, making arrangements, and I was interesting myself at the time looking on and noting his somewhat regular and becoming features, when suddenly he happened to turn round in my direction. To my astonishment I was faced by an awful transformation. A death's head! The poor fellow had no flesh on the left side of his face, and all that could be seen was the bare bone of the skull and a plug



A VEDDAH WITH CAPTURED BOAR

of fine grass stuck in the socket, where the eye should have been, for the purpose of keeping out the wind, which created unpleasant whistling sounds, he said.

On being questioned as to the cause of his ghastly disfigurement, he, still smiling, as far as he was able with the other half-portion of his face, informed us that one morning six moons ago, when busy gathering honey from the hollow of a tree, a karadi (bear) came suddenly upon him unperceived, and before he could get out of its way or defend himself, stood up and struck him in the face with its formidable paw, tearing away the whole of the flesh from the top of the forehead to the chin, taking the eye out at the same time. In this state he was found some time later by some of his own people, and taken to his mud and leaf dwelling, where, after being attended to by a medicine man, the wounds quickly healed. And here he was out and busy again in the short space of a few months, quite indifferent to the great inconvenience that this frightful disfigurement must be causing him, and apparently as happy and contented as his companions.

These Veddahs are a hardy, wild, uncivilized and peculiar small race of people, remnants of the original inhabitants of the Island, now gradually dying out. Their food consists of grain, the produce of the chase from their bows and arrows, fish and honey. They live in rudely made huts of mud and leaves, caves, or any other kind of shelter they can find, concealed in the depths of the forest—sleeping at night on roughly made platforms in trees. After making many salaams they departed, and we resumed our march to Kanda Kadu, where a short time after our arrival the Veddahs also came in carrying the loads, having performed the journey in a marvellously short time. Money was no use to them, so we gave them some tobacco, salt and sugar, with which they went away very pleased and satisfied.

CHAPTER XIII

A MOONLIGHT WATERHOLE SHOOT AT KALUPETTI

WE wake up refreshed from a good night's rest and stroll into the verandah and seat ourselves in two comfortable long arm-chairs, where our Appu brings us some early breakfast. The morning is deliciously cool, and the scene we gaze upon, a large open plain surrounded by low scrub jungle, is new and interesting, although parched. Allah Pitchei and the coolie Vallipullei now make a start for the water-holes round about, with a view of reporting on the best one to visit, and the one where fresh tracks of bears have been seen. Getting ourselves into shooting rig, we potter round the jungle in the adjoining neighbourhood with our guns in search of other game, returning for tiffin, remaining at the bungalow during the heat of the day, until the time comes to make a move for the waterhole. The trackers give a good report of Kalupetti Calchuni, so it is decided to try that hole, and as it is getting late I arouse my slumbering companion, telling him it is about time to be thinking of starting, several things having to be done beforehand. As it is to be an "All-Night" sitting, a good feed is also necessary. "Right oh!" says he, rubbing his eyes and springing to his feet from the reverie in which he appeared to be indulging—at once all activity and ready for action—"I am at your service."

We accordingly arrange our guns and ammunition, not forgetting to provide a little chunam, which is lime for fixing on the fore ends of guns as night sights. This chunam, which is made from the bark of the kumbuk tree, is edible, and used by the natives for chewing



VALLIPULLEI
COOLIE

purposes with betelnut to assist digestion. It shows up well in the moonlight, and enables one to quickly draw a bead on the object to be fired at.

The most useful weapons for this occasion are the 12-bore rifles and smooth bores, with a supply of ball cartridges. Conical and steel-tipped bullets are not required. It is as well to have also a few No. 6 shot cartridges

for use in the event of coming across peafowl or other game on returning from the waterhole in the morning, for these will come in useful for the table.

We roll up a couple of dark-covered pillows in a rug or piece of canvas, the latter to sit or lie on, pack up some refreshments in the haversack, not forgetting some hard-boiled eggs and a bottle of tea each, and then we direct the madu karrens (bullock cart drivers) to get the carts ready with plenty of straw to ease the jolting. We make a start at 3.30 p.m., trackers and coolies following carrying guns and cartridge bags. After three and a half miles' "rough and tumble" over earth mounds and other liver-stirring experiences, we arrive at the Virgel Aru (Virgel river), a tributary of the Mahawellaganga. Leaving the carts here for the night, we cross over by a native ferry, and then, after a short tramp, leave the road and bear away to our right, entering some low scrub jungle.

Putting out our pipes, as the smell is likely to spoil sport, we proceed in single file very cautiously, as we are now in a wild part of the country where the karadi (bear) may be met with unexpectedly at any moment. Numerous footprints are seen in all directions, and we eventually get through this belt of jungle and arrive at the foot of a homogeneous mass of flat, low-lying, weird-looking rock, the surface rough, black, weather-beaten and worn by climatic causes and the gradual decay of ages. Over this we climb, and in a few minutes reach the waterhole, a curious-looking cavity, naturally formed by the wasting effects of time.

At the bottom of this hole is a little green, slimy, muddy water, full of tadpoles, frogs, and other abominations, with a few green lotus leaves floating on the surface. It lies on the slope of the rock, and in somewhat close proximity to the jungle. Lots of fresh bear tracks are observable running to it, a sure indication of good sport. Just above this we note a low breastwork of loose stones



WATERHOLE SHOOTING BY MOONLIGHT

overlooking the hole, and behind this we ensconce ourselves for the night. Before settling down, however, we have a glance around and take a survey of the picturesque but lonely situation. We get a sense of complete isolation there, far away in the depths of the jungle. The romantic, wild and rugged nature of the scene, together with the singular prevailing stillness, proves enchanting, yet solemnly majestic and impressive, and leaves one with a feeling of calm, dreamy repose and restful solitude.

This is really an ideal haunt of the bear, leopard, and other wild denizens of the forest at night. Indeed, these gruesome, partly dried-up waterholes are the favourite places for wild animals to quench their thirst after sundown. They prefer these spots to the rivers and tanks. Possibly this is accounted for by their natural timidity and shyness, and because they feel more secure and at home in the depths and seclusion of the jungle.

It is now nearly six o'clock. The sun is fast going down, and daylight is on the wane. We have now comfortably settled in our position of observation. Guns are loaded and sighted with white chunam, and all is in readiness should a bear or leopard appear unexpectedly on the scene. We have concealed ourselves as much as possible behind the screen of stones, and are keeping a good look-out.

Numerous kinds of beautifully coloured small birds now appear on the scene, twittering and flitting over the surface of the water, taking a parting drink before retiring to rest. Then a jungle cock, with its brilliant plumage, makes its appearance, and proudly struts up for the same purpose, giving a shrill but dignified little crow before departing. It is followed by a wild cat and porcupine. A large flying squirrel darts from tree to tree, and a hare or so may be seen close by gambolling on a plot of grass on the edge of the jungle, all with that instinctive air of fearlessness and perfect freedom

which only the security of their seclusion naturally gives them.

They are quite unconscious of our presence. In a few minutes the scene changes. The sun has gone down with a rich roseate glow. Darkness is gradually creeping on. All bird life has disappeared and gone to rest. The moon is gradually appearing over the tops of the low-lying distant trees, casting its long deep shadows on the rocks below, and all that is now heard in the indistinct light is the deep, guttural sound of the tree lizard, the low, soft, rich "work, work" note of the common nightjar, and a faint subdued squeal now and again of some small nocturnal animal.

Little air is moving, and what there is, is warm to the cheek. Not a leaf stirs. All is still, calm, and peaceful. Anything may now suddenly appear. With our eyes just above the breastwork, we intently peer into the uncertain light of the jungle before us, eagerly listening for any sound that may indicate the approach of a bear or other wild animal.

After a little interval we are rewarded by hearing in the stillness of the forest a slight cracking of dead wood close by, and a movement amongst the dry, fallen leaves, which continues for a minute or so, accompanied by deep breathing and sniffing.

"Karadi! Karadi!" (bear! bear!), says Allah Pitchei in a whisper, with a grin of satisfaction, which excites and interests us. We now continue to listen, and pry into the confusing lights and shadows with more eagerness than ever, when suddenly something catches our eyes, a dark, indistinct object in the shade at the foot of the jungle we have not noticed before. This is no doubt the bear.

Our uncertainty is soon set at rest, as in another minute it ambles slowly and hesitatingly into the light, and up to the hole within ten or twelve yards of us, grunt-

ing, snorting, and sniffing, with its cunning little eyes looking in our direction, evidently suspicious, and scenting danger. This is a most exciting and critical moment, as on the slightest observable movement or noise on our part, it may possibly make for us, or bolt and vanish before a rifle could be raised and a shot got in.

The moon is now fairly well up, and throws a bright light on the scene. The bear, with its long, shaggy, coarse fur and grey, mobile snout, is standing out in bold relief, showing the white horseshoe form on its chest very clearly. It looms very large in the moonlight, and is facing us at an angle giving a splendid shot for the shoulder. From my position I have a better view of the animal than my companion, and with the greatest care I raise my gun, take steady aim, and fire.

A frantic yell follows, and then, standing upright, it falls over, rolls down the rock to the edge of the jungle. After a little struggle and a grunt or two all is still, and the first bear is killed. We quickly make our way down, pull the dead brute up the rock clear of the hole, and out of the wind, then go back to our place of concealment with as little delay as possible to be in readiness for the next that may appear on the scene.

We have hardly settled down, when lo and behold! another unexpectedly appears, within ten yards, over the rocks on our right. It has evidently got our wind, as it is about to turn and make off, when my companion, Jonathan, at once fires, knocking it over. In a second it is on its legs again, and, with a fierce grunt and growl, appears bent on mischief. The brute is now standing on a higher level than we are, and I can see the horseshoe crescent on the chest distinctly, at which I quickly fire. This time the shot has been more effective. The animal gives a grunt, rears itself on its hind legs, and with a loud howl falls dead. At once we drag it out of the wind, and place it alongside the other, and occupy

our retreat again, where we now partake of a little refreshment, keeping our weather eye lifting (to use a nautical expression) should anything chance to appear in the meantime.

It is now nearly nine o'clock. The moon is well up, showing a clear disc, and everything is brightly illuminated by its greenish rays. The slightest movement of the air causes the leaves of the trees and bushes near to scintillate and shimmer like silver. This, together with the ever-changing, peculiar, vague, and indistinct lights in the shadows, and the fanciful forms they convey to the mind, are very bewitching and fascinating, reminding one of a most enchanting fairy scene.

A touch on the shoulder by one of the natives warns us that game is again afoot, so we keenly resume our watching. We have not to wait long before a report is heard in the distance as of the snapping of a dead limb of a tree. This is followed later by the cracking of brushwood and a disturbance of dead leaves near us. Anxiously we scrutinize the edge of the jungle in the hope of seeing more than one bear appear on the scene in view of the unusual noise. A little later something large pushes its way through the bushes on our left, and under cover of deep shadow advances by the foot of the jungle in our direction.

This is most exciting. It re-enters the jungle and wanders about for a while, re-appearing again almost opposite our screen. "Anei! anei!" (elephant! elephant!) whispers Allah Pitchei, excitedly, and gently pulling my sleeve. The animal is still in the shade, hesitating, and evidently taking stock of the surroundings. Apparently satisfied that the road is clear and safe, it moves slowly forward, and with two or three long strides stands perfectly still at the foot of the water-hole, within a few yards of us, full of wild, natural majesty, its ponderous form looming immense in the glare of the

bright moonlight, truly a grand sight. It puts its trunk into the water, takes a long drink, pours a little over its back to clear off the flies and mosquitoes, stands motionless and undecided for a moment, raises its trunk in our direction, wheels quickly round, and then suddenly disappears again in the darkness of the bushes, no doubt having got our wind at so short a distance.

We could easily have bagged it had we felt disposed, but did not shoot, as one would not have derived much pleasure or satisfaction in taking rather a mean and unsportsmanlike advantage under cover of our concealment to slaughter such a magnificent creature. We take another bite of a sandwich and again settle down to watch, and have hardly done so when a fine leopard suddenly appears at the brink of the hole, placed there as if by magic. They often disappear in like manner, and it is as well to be quick. It is evidently a male, and shows a good flank. I aim just behind the shoulder and fire—the beast utters a loud growl, springs five or six feet into the air, and falls flat on its side, stone dead first shot. I am in luck! We let it remain for two or three minutes to make sure that life is extinct and no shamming, and then we go down and drag it out of the way to the spot where the two bears are lying, placing ourselves quickly behind the screen again.

This exciting little incident arouses us, and we carry on our listening and watching with renewed energy. It may be mentioned here that the leopard instinctively makes no noise on approaching a waterhole, their nature being crafty. They live by stealth, and often spring on their prey while drinking in these secluded spots, their noiseless, velvety paws and cat-like action enabling them to get close to their quarry unobserved. On the hunt for food, they do not follow game by scent, but artfully track it down by eye and ear. When seated at these holes at night one may often hear the loud but deep "whoop"

note of the leopard on the prowl—now and then varied between a grunt and cough. At times they make a blood-curdling roar, which has a most terrifying effect on cattle when kraaled, making the poor panic-stricken creatures tremble to an extent painful to behold.

The distant loud but mellow “lute” call of the sambur deer, the sharp rap of one hard substance against another, and a slight rustling of leaves close by, causes us again to concentrate our attention on the depths of the mysterious fanciful lights and shadows of the scrub jungle before us. As nothing, however, comes forward, I recline on my pillow for a few minutes to rest my eyes, while my companion watches. While gazing upwards at the sky, with its myriads of twinkling stars, in a contemplative mood, I feel a little pull at my coat sleeve that somewhat startles and ends my reverie.

I involuntarily raise myself and get into position as quietly and quickly as possible, and carefully look over the breastwork of stones, expecting to find a bear at least, but nothing is to be seen. I look inquiringly at Allah Pitchei, and he, with a warning finger, points in a certain direction and says in an undertone, “Mādu-mān” (sambur deer). We listen attentively for a minute or so, and hear something moving mysteriously about amongst the bushes in front, but are doubtful as to what. Fixing our eyes in the direction of the sound, we discover that an indistinct outline of some object is just discernible.

It is in deep shade, perfectly still, and remains so for two or three minutes. Satisfied that all is well, it advances a few paces, mounts the rock, and appears before us at the waterhole. It stands statue-like in the light of the bright moon, a magnificent specimen of a sambur deer, forming with its massive spread of antlers and in its stateliness a perfect picture. Being close season, we do not molest it, and in another minute it has, phantom-like, disappeared.

A few minutes later we hear great grunting, scratching, and sniffing noises going on below. This continues for a time. Then there is a pause, and after a few more grunts two porcupine are seen coming up the rock, still grunting and sniffing loudly, looking very formidable with their quills standing on end. They appear very energetic, running and gliding about the rock in all directions as if propelled by clockwork. As they are good eating when properly cooked and served up with mango sauce, and their quills are also useful, we fire almost together, bagging both. After dragging them out of the wind we make a midnight meal and arrange a watch and watch for the remainder of the night, a little rest being necessary. It falls to my lot to take the first "slant off the land." I make the most of it, and leave my friend Jonathan watching while I doze.

In the middle of my slumber I am suddenly awakened by a shot, accompanied by an unearthly yell. Then follows another shot and more yelling and snorting. I get up quickly, and am just in time to see a dark, furry mass rolling down the rock to the jungle below. It picks itself up with a loud, angry growl, grunts, and disappears in the darkness of the bush. "Only wounded," says Sinnatamby, with a look of disappointment. Everything is soon quiet again, and we wait and listen for a few minutes, and then hear the brute some distance away still howling, which terminates in a loud, piteous, bewailing shriek, and all's quiet. "Dead," says Allah Pitchei, but we have our doubts.

It appears that shortly after I had lain down, a bear, without any warning, had suddenly appeared from behind the rocks before the waterhole. Taken by surprise, Jonathan fired on sight, not giving himself time to take careful aim, and made a bad shot.

It is now my turn for watch-keeping while my companion has a sleep. In fact, all are asleep except Allah

Pitchei and myself. We settle down, not expecting anything to turn up for some time in view of the firing and other noises which have recently taken place. It is nearly half an hour before anything occurs to excite our curiosity. Then a grunt and loud sniff behind the rock on our right are suddenly heard, denoting the presence of a bear. Again the rifle is grasped ready for action. It makes a great noise, but for some reason will not come forward.

We put this down to the smell of blood about. We hear it still sniffing and moving about in a restless manner, and then catch the low, menacing growl of a leopard, which has also evidently appeared on the scene. The two, out of sight, screened by the formation of the rock, are having a great altercation, growling and snarling at each other as if about to fight. If they would only take a few steps in our direction !

With feverish excitement we wait, but no luck ! They have departed, to settle their differences in some remote part of the forest. A few moments later there is a patter amongst the leaves, deep breathing and sniffing. While I am looking in the direction of the sound, an immense black object comes into view, and without hesitation wabbles up directly in front to the hole. It is a fine female bear with two young ones on its back, looming very large, and looking straight at us sniffing. It is a little side on. I take a careful aim at the shoulder and fire. It falls dead on the spot without a groan, and the two young ones scamper off into the jungle. The firing has roused my companion, and together with the assistance of Allah Pitchei, we soon drag the bear away from the hole and place it with the others. The cubs are heard wandering about down below, and may be caught later on when it gets light.

I now look at my watch and find it past three o'clock. Daylight will be upon us in less than two hours. The

moon is going down fast, casting long, dark shadows over the rocks. The light is also failing, making it somewhat difficult to see to shoot. It is getting beyond the time to expect more visitors at the hole, so we leave Allah Pitchei, Sinnatamby, and the coolie to watch in turn while we lie down and take it easy for a time. We don't require any rocking, and in a few minutes, with the cool night air blowing gently over us, are fast asleep. A sudden pull of my coat sleeve again startles me, and I rise quietly, only to find that both my companion and I were snoring so loudly as likely to scare animals away. We make up our minds to be more careful, lie down, and are soon off again.

Shortly after this I feel another pull at my sleeve. I look up, and this time Allah Pitchei whispers, "Bear!" I am awake at once. Quietly rising and grasping my rifle, I look over the stone screen, and there before me I see a bear actually drinking at the hole. As the animal is below me, I raise myself on my knee, take steady aim between the shoulder blades, and fire. There is a tremendous grunt, followed by a howl, but this is soon stifled by the brute tumbling into the waterhole with a splash. Some struggling and a few gurgling noises are heard, and then all is still. At once we get down, and in the shadow find the bear partly immersed, with head and fore paws out of the water, resting on a ledge.

Although the task is somewhat difficult, we manage to draw it out and place it alongside the other bears, and return to our shelter. At this unexpected piece of good luck we have a whisky and soda, and watch for some time longer; but as nothing comes and there are no signs of anything on the move, we again recline on our pillows, and after a short but refreshing snooze are awakened by Allah Pitchei, who informs us it is daylight. While sitting up and rubbing our eyes we hear the distant "whoop whoop" of the wanderoo, the

shrill little crow of a jungle cock, and the singing and twittering of many birds, all proclaiming the break of day.

Getting on our legs, we stretch our limbs and watch the beautiful effect of the early sunrise. Then, filling a pipe, we enjoy a delicious smoke, which is made doubly sweet by the restriction observed during the past night.

We now stroll over to have a look at the result of the night's shoot—four bears (three male, one female), one leopard (male), and two porcupine. This is a very respectable show, and the two trackers and coolie look on with smiling and appreciative countenances, knowing that it means a good santosium (tip) later on. Allah Pitchei, with axe in hand, appears very anxious to start tracking up the wounded bear. We therefore pick up our guns, and are soon busy in the scrub jungle below, where blood tracks are quickly found and followed up for some considerable distance and then lost, bleeding apparently having ceased.

In doubt how to proceed, we separate and hunt round in all directions, but nothing can be found to help us. We are almost giving up hope, when we hear a "ugh!" call from Allah Pitchei not far off. We follow in the direction of the sound. We catch another "ugh!" close by, and there we see our friend the tracker standing by a boulder in thick bush with the dead bear at his feet. "Well! well! this is a bit of good luck," we say to ourselves, "and a fine male, too!"

Marking the spot, we go in search of the two little chaps we can hear yelling in the distance. We are soon upon them. On perceiving us they are off again at a gallop in and out the brushwood and bushes, snapping and snarling, and very angry. We try every means to catch the little beasts, but find them much too cunning and nimble for us. As the sun is fast getting up, and there is a lot before us to do, and as they are evidently quite

capable of taking care of themselves, we have reluctantly to leave them and retrace our steps to the waterhole, fixing up and bringing in the "lost karadi" on our way. This is laid with the rest of the family group, and proves a welcome addition to an already good bag, although perhaps not altogether a record one.

The following extracts are taken from the clever and scientific work on Ceylon by Sir James Emerson Tennant, a former Governor of the Island, in reference to the bear :—

"Of the carnivora, the one most dreaded by the natives of Ceylon, and the only one of the larger animals which makes the depths of the jungle its habitual retreat, is the bear, attracted by the honey which is to be found in the hollow trees and clefts of the rocks.

"Although the structure of the bear shows him to be naturally omnivorous, he rarely preys upon flesh in Ceylon, and his solitary habits whilst in search of honey and fruits render him timid and retiring. Hence he evinces alarm on the approach of man or other animals, and, unable to make a rapid retreat, his panic rather than any vicious disposition leads him to become an assailant in self-defence. But so furious are his assaults under these circumstances that the Cingalese have a terror of his attack greater than that created by any other beast of the forest. If not armed with a gun, a native, in the places where bears abound, usually carries a light axe, called 'kodelly,' with which to strike them on the head. The bear, on the other hand, always aims at the face, and if successful in prostrating his victim usually commences by assailing the eyes. I have met numerous individuals on our journeys who exhibited frightful scars from these encounters, the white seams of their wounds contrasting hideously with the dark colour of the rest of their bodies."

CHAPTER XIV

WHY SPORT IS OFTEN SPOILT

THIS finishes our shoot at Kalupetti Calchuni for the present, and the next thing we have to do is to get back to camp. Accordingly we pack our gear, and fix the leopard to a pole. Being the most important head of game, it is brought in with us, and we leave the bears to be brought in later. We then make a move, retracing our steps over the rock and through the belt of jungle to the ferry, but before leaving we cast an eye round and take in the scene as it appears in daylight.

Everything is changed. Moonlight has disappeared, and the dark grey rock is lit up by the sun's rays. Lights and shadows are reversed to what they were on our arrival. Now the foliage of the jungle is bright and gay with rich sunny tints of browns, greens and yellows, instead of the prevailing dark sombre tint of the previous evening and in contrast to the then singular stillness, the whole surroundings are animated and alive with the hum and buzz of insect life, screeching of paroquets in their flights to the feeding grounds, twittering and singing of small birds, the crowing of the jungle fowl, barking of deer, and the chattering of monkeys. It is indeed a great transformation !

After taking a last parting glance at this unique picture, we bid it adieu and resume our homeward tramp. Jonathan and I lead the way with shot guns, the others following a little behind. We are nearly out of the wood when a fine jungle cock rises some thirty yards in front. My companion bags this, and immediately

after drops two hens with a splendid right and left. Nothing else is seen until some time after arriving at the ferry. We wait at the river until the others come up, and then cross over and join our bullock carts, which are in readiness to take us on. The cartmen had heard the shots and had made arrangements accordingly. The leopard is put into one and we get into the other, and on we start again.

After proceeding for about a mile we get out and walk on ahead, coming shortly to a large expanse of swampy-looking ground and long grass, with groups of semi-tame water buffaloes standing and lying about in the water some distance off, with outstretched necks, gazing curiously in our direction. We skirt these, passing along by the side of the jungle, hearing every now and again the "mayil" call of the peacock. Looking ahead, I spot a herd of spotted deer, and while drawing Jonathan's attention to them, several peafowl suddenly rise from a clump of long grass. Bang! Bang! We fix two, a cock and a hen. After this we come across nothing but a few jackals, and as we near camp our approach is heralded by the yelping of many pariah dogs from the compounds of the native dwellings, and in a few minutes more arrive at the bungalow again, fairly warm and moist, glad to be relieved of the weight of the jungle and peafowl shot on the way—time, 7.30 a.m. The trackers and carts arrive half an hour or so later.

We at once make arrangements for starting the coolies to bring in the game from the waterhole, and then have a refreshing bath, partake of a good breakfast, after which we have a pipe and take it easy until the return of the coolies, when there will be a busy time. For the purpose of skinning, the animals are taken some distance away in the neighbouring jungle, and afterwards their skins are brought back to be pegged out and cured in the compound of the rest house.

The jolting and squeaking of springless bullock carts, the sharp incentive expressions of drivers to their bullocks, such as "muk! muk! peeta!" and the jabbering of coolies, soon awaken us from our slumbers. "What's all the noise, boy?" say I. "Sir, the coolies have come back from the waterhole." So we go out and inspect. The night's shoot is already laid out in the compound, together with the jungle and peafowl recently shot—they consist of five bears, one leopard, two porcupine, three jungle fowl, and two peafowl—and all the village appear on the scene, gazing through the fence full of animated curiosity. "Well, Jonathan," I ask, "what do you think of the bag?" "Most excellent!" I think so too, and suggest we should celebrate the event. Looking at me with a merry, innocent smile, he links his arm in mine and we re-enter the bungalow.

It must be understood, however, that such a bag as that depicted in the foregoing little sketch, although not a record one, is exceptional for one night's shoot, and occurs only now and again. Many things may happen to interfere and spoil a shoot of this kind, such as shiftiness of the wind, rain, and many other reasons.

For instance, on one occasion I went with a friend (Captain H——, R.N.) to one of these waterholes, five and a half miles away, and, having arrived rather late on the scene, we at once took up our positions behind a shelter without first examining the hole to see if any fresh tracks were observable. We remained carefully watching all through the night, and although animals of all kinds were heard moving about in different directions, nothing would come into view—which appeared very mysterious, as the conditions in all respects seemed most favourable.

When daylight made its appearance, I got up feeling rather stiff and disappointed, lit my pipe, strolled up to the waterhole, and had a look down. To my surprise and astonishment, I found an immense python coiled up

below in the muddy slush. I put a couple of shot cartridges in my gun, and then beckoned to my friend to come up and witness the cause of our poor sport. The reptile had evidently observed me, for when I got again to the mouth of the hole to shoot I found it had moved the position of its head, which was previously resting on the top of its coils, and had since placed it out of sight under a fold. I traced its body up the neck as near to the position where the head should be, and fired; it immediately rose several feet above the hole, showing the ugly gun shot wound in its neck. It opened and distended its capacious jaws, closed them again, then disappeared below, repeating this operation several times, until I finally despatched it with another shot. When we drew it out it measured nearly eighteen feet, and was as thick round as a man's thigh. The unpleasant and peculiar bitter odour it emitted was very noticeable some distance off. Animals with an acute sense of smell, and who have an instinctive dread of such reptiles, very naturally keep away from the hole.

It is the common habit of the rock snake (such as the python) to immerse itself in the stagnant muddy water of these secluded holes, with its head resting just on a level with the surface. It is hardly discernible from the logs with which the waters are generally filled, and it will lie thus concealed in wait for deer and other animals that may come there to drink, when they are suddenly seized.

On another occasion I had similar bad luck through omitting to inspect the hole before taking up my position, and I found next morning the decomposed body of a deer in the water.

A shower of rain is always fatal, and should this occur it is just as well to pack up and return to the bungalow, as nothing is likely to come after rain.

Sometimes the cause may be that the hole is dried up. In such cases I have employed coolies to replenish it

by chatties of water sent out in bullock carts in the morning, with excellent results the next day. On these occasions it is a good thing to spill a little water over the rock from the hole to the jungle before leaving. Of course, where holes are situated far away this cannot be so easily arranged.

To lessen the chances of disappointments, such as those referred to, it is as well to send the trackers round to the different holes some time prior to going out and get their reports, and then act according to them.

On arriving at a waterhole in the evening where it is intended to shoot, one is naturally interested to see whether there are any fresh tracks leading up to it. This should be got over quickly, as the longer one remains pottering about the stronger is the scent left behind, and therefore one is more likely to get winded by animals approaching the rock, spoiling sport.

The important thing to do is, on finding fresh tracks to the waterhole, to settle down in the shelter or chung and get ready with as little delay as possible, as one can never tell when something may unexpectedly appear on the scene.

What strikes the eye of the sportsman on these expeditions is the remarkable resemblance of the bear's foot impressions in the sandy tracks over which they roam to that made by human beings.

SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL CEYLON FAUNA

ENGLISH.	TAMIL.
Elephant	Anei.
Buffalo	Mādu—Erumei mādu
Bear (sloth)	Karadi.
Leopard	Puli.
Wild cat	Kattuppunei.
Civet cat	Punugu Pillai—Punei.
Sambur	Mādu mām—Marei.
Deer.. ..	Mām.
Spotted deer	Pulli mām.
Stag	Kalei mām.

Hog deer ..	..	..	} Sinni m̄an.
Barking deer ..	..	..
Mouse deer..	..	..	Sarugu m̄an.
Pig ..	..	..	Pāndi.
Wild pig ..	..	..	Kattupāndi.
Jackal ..	..	..	Nari.
Porcupine ..	..	..	Mullam pāndi.
Monkey ..	..	..	Kurangu—Manthi.
Squirrel ..	..	..	Anil—Anippillei.
Hare ..	..	..	Musal.
Mongoose ..	..	..	Kiripullei.
Crocodile ..	..	..	Muthalei.
Lizard ..	..	..	Palli—Kevūli.
Snake ..	..	..	Pambu.
Cobra ..	..	..	Nalla pambu.
Python ..	..	..	Malei pambu.
Peacock ..	..	..	Mayil.
Peahen ..	..	..	Pen mayil.
Jungle-fowl..	..	..	Koli—Kānan koli.
Pelican ..	..	..	Kulei kada.
Flamingo ..	..	..	Sengān nārej.
Eagle ..	..	..	Kalugu.
Duck ..	..	..	Thārā.
Snipe ..	..	..	Ullān.
Teal ..	..	..	Kiluvei—Thannir thāra.
Pigeon ..	..	..	Purā.
Paddy bird ..	..	..	Kokku.
Dove ..	..	..	Purā.
Hawk ..	..	..	Rāsāli.
Parrot ..	..	..	Kili.
Kingfisher ..	..	..	Min koththi.
Quail ..	..	..	Kadai.
Woodpecker ..	..	..	Marang kotti.

To the above list may also be added :—

The loris, pengolin or scaly ant-eaters, iguanas, cabragoyas, the venomous tic-polonga and many other kinds of snakes, including the rat snake; flying foxes, flying squirrels, ibises, tucans, hornbills, paroquets, owls, ospreys, storks, curlew, and waders of many kinds.

CHAPTER XV

A SPORTSMAN'S YARNS

THE following marvellous story is told by "Barcus," an old sportsman, of an artifice resorted to by crocodiles in catching monkeys :

"On returning one morning from a shoot at Terayai I brought into the compound of the bungalow where a companion (a naval officer) and myself were camping a large crocodile, which I had shot in big jungle a short time before. The sight of it at once interested my friend, who tried to prize open its jaws.

" 'One thing will astonish you when you have succeeded in your task,' said I, 'and that is, you will find the crocodile has no tongue.'

" 'The fact of hearing that statement,' said he, 'makes my work doubly interesting.' So he continued his exertions with renewed energy until it was accomplished, exclaiming at the same time, 'Barcus! You lie! Here is the tongue!' Taking a casual look, sure enough there it was, although of a somewhat hairy nature.

"This placed me and my statement in rather an awkward position. But, on later cutting the reptile open, we took out a large wanderoo monkey, and the tongue then disappeared, as it was the monkey's tail protruding we saw; it had not been entirely swallowed.

"Taking the monkey from the inside gave rise to grave speculations and wonder as to how a large,



CROCODILES DISSEMBLING

The monkeys swarmed up their bodies and disappeared down their capacious gullets as fast as they could be conveniently taken in

cumbrous creature like this crocodile could possibly be quick and active enough to catch such a wide-awake, nimble little creature as a monkey. This puzzled us both amazingly, and so deeply interested was I that I could think of nothing else and dreamt about it.

“The next morning I determined to solve the mystery at any cost, and laid my plans accordingly. These were to return to the spot where I had shot the crocodile the previous morning, find a tree harbouring monkeys, fix myself in another close by, and watch. The place selected was in big jungle near the edge of a plain in the middle of which was a mangrove swamp, the haunt of the crocodile.

“Accordingly, towards evening, having made a good meal, I put a few sandwiches, a bottle or so of soda-water, and my flask in the haversack, picked up my gun, and started off, arriving in good time to make myself a snug chung, into which I soon climbed, and hauled up my gun with a piece of line I brought with me for the purpose.

“Having settled down and made myself comfortable, I took notes of the surroundings, particularly of a clear space I noticed between myself and the tree opposite, which I could see was full of monkeys chattering away for all they were worth before retiring to rest. I filled my pipe and had a smoke. On looking at my watch I found it was eight o'clock, and as nothing was now likely to happen till nearly dawn, I had at least eight hours to wait before the monkeys would be astir, grubbing for ground nuts, of which they are particularly fond.

“To pass away the time I opened the haversack and had some supper, then another smoke, and dozed off into dreamland in which crocodiles figured conspicuously. I had seen some standing upright in the middle of a tank the morning before, with their jaws wide open,

looking for all the world like logs of trees nearly split in two, when I heard also the loud startling bark they can make. This accounts for my dreams, I suppose. At last aroused from my slumber by hearing the rustling of leaves underneath, I quickly but quietly raised myself into a sitting position, and looked over my screen of leaves into the undergrowth below, with all its bewildering lights and shadows caused by the moon still brightly shining, but could not detect anything.

“ I have another look at my watch, and find it to be nearly half-past three. I peer again into the uncertain light where the rustling of leaves still continues, but which is more in front now and near the clearing, and to my surprise, in the bright rays of the moon, I can see an immense crocodile who lifts its head, has a look round, moves a few yards to the left, and remains perfectly still. Presently another appears, and takes up a position a few yards nearer, and then a third comes on the scene, taking up a position still nearer.

“ A little later, hearing a noise as if sand were being thrown on the surrounding bushes, I look down again, and find all three busy digging holes with their forefeet. For a moment it struck me they were busy trying to hide or recover some treasure, but evidently this was not the case, as the largest of the three soon left his position and came to the first hole, put its forearm down, then withdrew it, and with a look of satisfaction went to the other hole, and did the same, and returned to its former position.

“ ‘ This is indeed most extraordinary,’ thought I ; ‘ the brute has evidently gauged the depth of these holes for some purpose ! How absorbingly interesting all this is, and how glad I am that I came ; I wouldn’t have missed such a sight for worlds.’

“ I am intently watching, full of all kinds of strange fancies, and the dawn of day is fast approaching. A

few minutes later I notice the crocodiles have put their tails into the holes, and are busy filling in the earth round them, stamping it down with their hind feet. 'Whatever can be the meaning of this?' I say to myself with breathless excitement. The largest is evidently the leader, and has some way of signalling his wishes to the other two, for they now with himself rise bolt upright, with their tails firmly planted in the earth, giving them a grip. In this position they remain, statue-like, for a few minutes. Daylight is now appearing, and the monkeys in the trees are beginning to wake up and commence chattering prior to descending a little later in search of their coveted nuts.

"I observe the biggest crocodile makes a distinct signal by a slight flap of its right paw, and immediately the whole three dissemble, with their mouths wide open, arms and legs thrown into all kinds of positions, their bodies being supported by their imbedded tails. One had the appearance of an old tree struck by lightning, with its trunk nearly rent in two. Another looks like a weather-beaten old stump, split and decayed by ages, with branches broken off short, while the third looked like an aged trunk much the worse for wear, very open on top, with roots laid bare by floods. What perfect acting!

"The transformation astounded and stupefied me. I then thought to myself what would my companion have given to be in my position, seeing such a marvellous sight as this! Evidently something more marvellous was to follow; I haven't long to wait, as it is now daylight. The monkeys have descended from the tree and are very busy gathering their nuts amongst the leaves and undergrowth, when a sudden loud bark from the big crocodile startled me, making my hair stand on end. The monkeys were even more alarmed, and when in that state they always seek the hollows of trees or

any such shelter to hide. To my utter astonishment I saw them swarming up the crocodiles' bodies, which so resembled fantastic old tree trunks, and disappearing down their capacious gullets as fast as they could be conveniently taken in. My feverish excitement at the moment made me impulsively exclaim, 'Hurrah! I have solved the mystery!' Which expression I am afraid was evidently overheard, as their ponderous jaws suddenly closed with a loud snap, and the monsters, pulling themselves together, quickly waddled off to their swampy retreat amongst the mangroves with a merry twinkle in the eye and as full up as tics.

"On returning to the bungalow later on, I related to my companion my experiences of the past night. 'Barcus!' said he, 'I am dumbfounded. Indeed, it is such a wonderful and amazingly interesting story that had I not heard it from you yourself, I should certainly have been inclined to think it was a fairy tale.' 'Just so,' said I, with a smile and a feeling of natural pride at the great success of my night's adventure, 'we live and learn.'"

Another story relates to the bagging of two elephants without firing a shot.

"'What?' said my old pal and shikari friend (J. M.), 'you don't believe it?'

"He had been recounting to the assembled company a very interesting but remarkable incident which he had witnessed on one of his jungle expeditions. 'You don't believe it?' said he again, with a look of surprise; 'that's just like you young, inexperienced fledgelings, you think all old sportsmen's yarns are either of the "traveller or fisherman" type. You have a lot to learn yet, my boys! What say you, Barcus, eh?' 'I am with you, Jonathan,' said I. 'And if my friends would care to listen, I could tell them a story which perhaps may even appear more extraordinary in their sight, but nevertheless true.'

“ ‘Hear, hear!’ they all shouted with deafening applause. ‘Do let’s have it!’

“ They were really a good set of fellows, so I responded to the call.

“ Well, gentlemen, one afternoon not long ago I was out on a miscellaneous shoot in the Tirikunamothuwa district with my old friend and shikari, Allah Pitchei, who is, as is well known, a perfect athlete, nimble and lightfooted as a deer, and could, when occasion arose, get over the ground like a hare. I had made a fairly successful bag, and was on my way homeward bound, strolling along by the side of the jungle forest, which was on my right, with open country on the left. Although I had seen several peafowl during my afternoon tramp, yet, by their timidity, combined with natural cunning, they had up to now eluded my gun, and I was very anxious to bag one before getting back, so accordingly kept a good look-out.

“ My hopes were in the end rewarded by a fine specimen dropping to my gun in a very remarkable manner. We had, during our walk, come across fresh tracks of elephants which led us into some fine jungle, through which we made our way, keeping the clearing on our left in view. Suddenly Pitchei stopped, touched me on the arm, and pointing ahead, said, ‘Mayil, mayil!’ (peacock, peacock!). The forest was fairly dark, and it took me a minute or so before I detected anything. Eventually I spotted it strutting about among some trunks of trees. Without hesitation I took a snap shot, rolling it over, when to my great astonishment that part of the forest seemed suddenly to clear away and broad daylight appeared in its place, the air being full of the trumpeting of elephants bolting, leaving the dead peafowl lying in the open.

“ I at once saw what had occurred. We had unexpectedly come on a herd of elephants, unobserved

in the darkness of the jungle, and had fired at the peacock between their legs, which by the obscurity of the surroundings had been taken for trunks of trees. Picking up the peacock, we proceeded on our journey. I had brought my heavy rifle with me in the event of meeting an elephant, and, to our surprise, a minute or so later, two stepped out of the jungle on the right, making their way across the plain. We at once concealed ourselves from view until they were some fifty or sixty yards clear of the forest. Then Allah Pitchei excitedly beckoned me to follow him, and in a few minutes we were on their track a few yards behind, crossing the plain together, and so close that we could have placed a biscuit on their backs.

“ A strong wind was blowing from them to us, which accounts for our close presence not being detected. They were a male and female, and from the affectionate attentions of the male, who every now and again put his trunk round the female’s neck, drawing her to him for a caress, no doubt were an engaged couple. All this was very interesting, but we might go on walking in this way for ever, unless some definite plan of action was decided upon. So passing a bush I drew Allah Pitchei aside, and asked him what he thought about it. He appeared surprised at my question, and said, ‘ Durai (master) not know water some little distance further on, where these aneis drinking, and then durai getting good shot.’

“ The idea seemed sound, so we moved on again, and soon got up to them, keeping a distance of about fifty yards. Tramping along for another ten minutes or so, we saw some water in front. ‘ Now’s the time,’ thought I; ‘ they will stop and drink here.’ But no, not a bit of it ! On they went through the muddy slush. I looked at Pitchei, who returned my look with a somewhat puzzled and disappointed expression. ‘ Something

gone wrong, master,' said he in an excited whisper. 'They must have heard us, and are now suspicious of danger.'

"We entered the water just as the elephants were leaving it on the other side, when suddenly they turned round with a snort, and confronted us with an enquiring sort of a look, as much as to say, 'What the devil do you do here?' I immediately raised my rifle, and, taking a steady aim for the centre of the forehead of the bull, pulled first one trigger and then the other. Click! click! but no result. Two miss-fires!

"'Now what's to be done?' thought I. 'Leg bail! Quick, master!' shouted Allah Pitchei, making off without delay. The bull, I noticed, had selected me for his special delectation, while the female went for my native friend, whom I saw nothing of for some time after, all my attention being concentrated on the brute pursuing me. I had a clear half-mile in front before cover of any kind could be reached.

"I was running for all I was worth, and seemed to be gifted with supernatural agility as I sprang along, every now and again looking over my shoulder, only to find the elephant surely but steadily gaining on me. Still I went on, and when next I looked round a few yards only separated us! I was beginning to lose all hope, when a sudden thought inspired me. As a youth, when living in Devonshire, I was very fond of wrestling, and the Cornishman's 'fore-heel trip' I well remembered, being rather a champion at it. 'Now if ever is the time to make use of it,' thought I.

"Feeling the hot air from its trunk close behind me, I suddenly put out my foot, catching the brute's leg just on the right spot, tripping him splendidly. He came down with a thud all of a heap, and, to my utter surprise and gratification, I found the fall had dislocated its neck, dying in a few minutes. In my run for life,

I had thrown away my gun, which I soon found and brought back to the dead elephant, and, upon examination, I found, for some unaccountable reason, I had forgotten to put in cartridges—hence all the trouble:

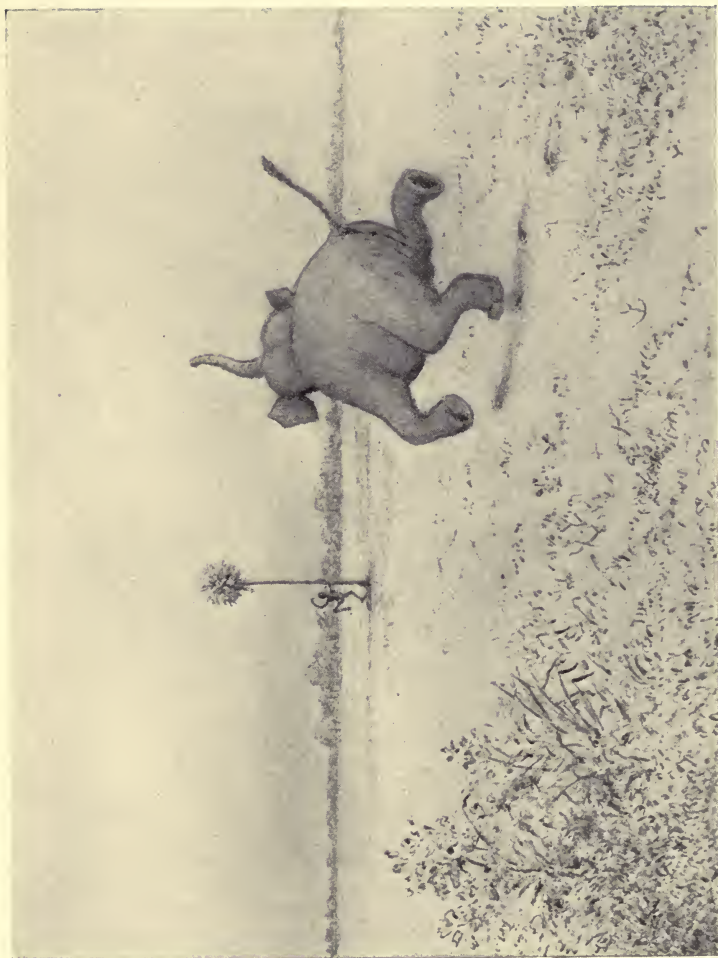
“ I felt very pumped as I sat on the carcase of the animal, taking a drink from my flask. I spotted Allah Pitchei in the distance going for all he was worth for a palmyra tree, with the female elephant after him in full cry.

“ This surprised me amazingly, as the jungle appeared to be much nearer at hand, and its cover would have afforded him better protection. The female anei was simply shrieking with rage in her endeavour to overtake him, but Allah Pitchei still went on full speed ahead without turning.

“ ‘ Whatever can be his object in making for this solitary tree ? ’ thought I.

“ I was not kept long in suspense, as in another second or so he had gained the tree, and then, holding on to it with his two hands with head bent on one side, watched the rapidly advancing elephant. Although Allah Pitchei is usually so very wide-awake and full of resources when in trouble or hard pressed, yet the dangerous position he now appeared to be in filled me with the greatest anxiety. Happily, I pretty well grasped his intentions as soon as I saw him suddenly leave the tree, and fantastically dance on one side of it, looking straight at the elephant, as much as to say, ‘ Which way round ? ’

“ As the animal closed on him, he commenced a circular movement as fast as his legs could carry him round the tree. The elephant pursued, trumpeting and shrieking. Round and round they went. Allah Pitchei’s plan was no further a mystery ; I saw exactly what he was up to. He was trying to make his enraged pursuer so giddy as to cause it to fall stupefied by its gyrations.



ELEPHANT IN PURSUIT OF ALLAH PITCHEI

“ While intently watching the performance I noticed the huge brute suddenly oscillate, stumble, pick itself up again, then stumble frequently, until it fell head over heels. ‘ Hurrah ! He has done the trick ! ’ said I to myself, with an impulsive cheer. Now deeply interested, I then saw him leap on its body with the agility of a tiger, and without delay cut its throat with my hunting knife.

“ With all haste I ran up to my old friend, who was greatly exhausted, and gave him a nip from my flask, which bucked him up at once, and congratulated him on his marvellous achievement, then brought him over to where my elephant was lying dead with its broken neck. Contemplating it for a few moments, he grasped my hand and wept with joy, ostensibly I thought at our merciful deliverance, but more probably at our unexpected bit of good luck in bagging the two record elephants without even firing a shot, which meant to him a good santosium (present). I believe in the excitement of our childish delight and ecstasy that then and there on the heather-covered plain we went through a few steps of the ‘ pas de quatre ’ ! A somewhat touching yet nevertheless happy termination to an exciting and splendid day’s sport. ‘ Gentlemen, ’ said I, stretching out my hand for my glass to clear away the cobwebs after the yarn, but to my surprise it had gone and been replaced by a ‘ kettle. ’ A joke, no doubt, but the meaning of it still puzzles me.”

Here, however, is a story of a monkey outwitting a snake.

“ Returning one morning after a long tramp tracking up buffaloes, I was sitting under the shade of a bush, out of the heat of the glaring sun, smoking my pipe, chatting to my native friend Allah Pitchei. My attention was suddenly drawn to a tamarind tree some sixty yards away, full of monkeys, that appeared for some reason

to be in a very restless and excited state, for they were jumping from bough to bough chattering and making most extraordinary and unusual noises.

“ ‘What’s the matter with the monkeys?’ said I to Pitchei, who was concentrating his eyes in the direction, with his right hand raised shading his face. Neither of us were able to understand the cause for some minutes, when the largest and evidently the oldest of the troop came rather low down, bounding up again almost immediately with most remarkable whoops and guttural sounds. He did this several times, and then Pitchei whispered in my ear, ‘Durai (master), look! look! Periya pambu! (large snake) at foot of tree!’

“ I took out my glasses and then distinctly saw a large python coiled up close to the trunk, with its head and part of the body raised about four or five feet, hugging the bark. In this position it appeared to be waiting an opportunity to strike, should one unwarily come within its reach. The oldest monkey, a large wanderoo, with a very striking personality, evidently in command and on whom the responsibility and safety of the whole troop seemed to rest, was apparently issuing directions for all to ascend to the top of the tree out of danger. This manœuvre being accomplished, he now slowly descended by himself to reconnoitre, while the others looked on in profound silence.

“ When within twelve feet of the huge snake, the latter began slowly to ascend until it got to its limit and within a foot or so of the wanderoo, remaining so for some time, the old monkey the while lying to all appearance quite unconcernedly in the fork of the tree serenely gazing on. The snake, I suppose, feeling somewhat tired, then gradually lowered itself and the monkey moved a little lower down; the snake again raised itself, the monkey doing likewise. The reptile once more lowered itself, the monkey also going still lower. The snake then appeared

to be getting more active, and suddenly rising nearly caught the monkey, but Jacko was too quick for it and was out of reach in a second. 'What's the meaning of all this, Pitchei?' said I. 'Durai,' said he, 'the monkey is tiring the pambu (snake) for some purpose!'

"For half an hour we watched repetitions of this remarkable proceeding until the snake, evidently thoroughly done up and worn out with fatigue, appeared suddenly to collapse, settling down with its head resting on its coils. The old monkey remained for some time where he was, intently watching, and having apparently satisfied himself that the reptile had at last fallen asleep, he left his position in the fork of the tree and cautiously descended. It was a moment of intense suspense and excitement.

"When the old wanderer reached the ground it quietly went over to where the snake was lying, and, putting his ear close to its head, listened. Then, being assured by its loud and regular snoring it was sound asleep, it immediately, to our amazement, seized the snake by the neck with both hands and commenced furiously rubbing its head against the rough bark of the tree until it was completely rubbed off, the python all the while being rendered powerless to do harm by the extraordinary quick action of the monkey, who when he had completed his work flung the writhing carcase aside, wiped the sweat from his brow, gave a rather low whoop, a signal for the others to come down, then sank to the ground apparently exhausted; the strain had been too much.

"I could see no more, as he was immediately surrounded by all kinds of chattering and sympathizing monkeys that had just descended from the tree.

"A pretty and pathetic scene followed. Two little monkeys of the *Macacus urificus* tribe, feeling deeply concerned on seeing their deliverer so nervous and shaky

from his terrible exertions, had run off to a small stream close by and were seen returning toddling along on their hind legs, one little chap bearing a cocoanut shell full of water, the other laden with monkey nuts, no doubt intended as a 'pick-me-up' for the cute old sportsman, whose head could now be seen nestling on the shoulder of another wanderer, possibly his wife, in a state of dreamy repose.

" 'What an absorbingly interesting incident to witness. It seems like a dream,' I said to Pitchei, as I lit my pipe and resumed our journey. 'Of all the marvellous things I have ever seen, this takes the cake!' 'Durai,' said Allah Pitchei pensively, putting a good old quid of betelnut into his mouth, 'wonders never ceasing, Master must know!'"

Another reminiscence of Barcus relates to a tug-of-war between an elephant and crocodiles.

Barcus, thou invincible elephant slayer, how many an hour hast thou beguiled one with thy ever-ready tongue!

I remember well one night after a hard day's tracking of a wily anei, and had finished our frugal meal, for we were many miles from the nearest European habitation, I begged Barcus to spin a yarn.

"With pleasure, my dear boy," he replied, for Barcus was not a shy man—far from it. "What sort of a yarn would you like? I know you are fond of sport, and I will tell you a true yarn, and an interesting one into the bargain.

"I am not a man of 'half measures,'" rapidly continued Barcus, helping himself to a really stiff glass of Mountain Dew, and with a little "Ahem!" to clear his voice he began: "You are doubtless aware that during my many years' experience in shooting in Ceylon, it naturally follows I must have seen many strange sights, and none stranger than that I am now about to relate to you.

“Some little time ago I was on a shooting trip in the North Central province with my old native shikari friend Allah Pitchei, on the look-out for big game, and had bagged a few elephants and bears, when suddenly I noticed the fresh tracks of an unusually large anei. ‘This,’ thought I, ‘is evidently the long-advertised-for rogue.’ This idea afterwards turned out to be correct, as the inhabitants of a village close by stated that he had been the terror of the neighbourhood for some time past. Here was a chance, and one of which I immediately availed myself. ‘Do or die’ is my motto,” shouted Barcus, replenishing his glass. “Do for choice.” I ventured to remark. “Order, please,” quoth Barcus, emptying his glass. “I repeat, my motto is, ‘Do or die.’”

“As it was getting late I determined to follow up the spoor in the morning. Daybreak saw me on the track, and after some considerable heavy tramping through thick jungle I came to a large dried up tank, and there I found my friend strolling round evidently in search of water. Disappointed, he moved on again, myself following up closely in the rear. Truly he was a big beast, and I longed for his tail.”

“Oh, hang his tail!” I exclaimed. “Pass the bottle and go on with your tale.”

“All in due time,” said Barcus. “Everything has an end, like my tale and the elephant’s tail.”

“And whisky also,” I interrupted, sorrowfully, for it was our last bottle, and Barcus was a very thirsty mortal.

“Order, please,” said Barcus. “And now comes the strange part of my story. We soon came to another tank with water. This I saw at a glance was full of crocodiles. I sat on the bank under the shade of some bushes and was busy with the lunch basket, when to my surprise the anei came through the jungle on my right and made for the water, where in he floundered,

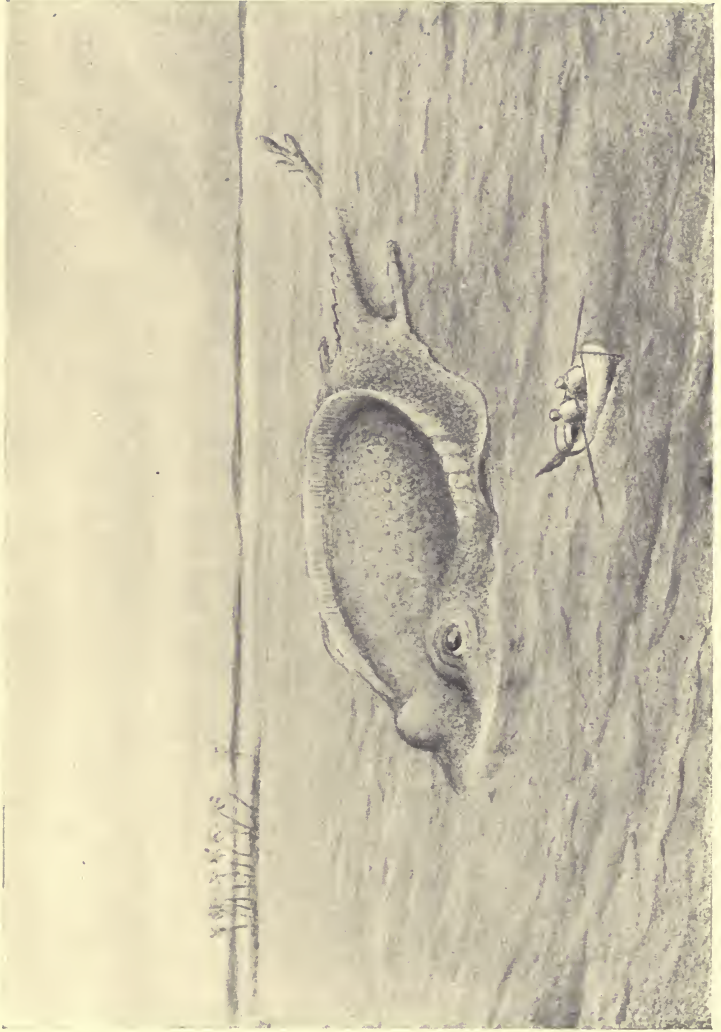
and down went his trunk for a drink. Suddenly he started and began to struggle out of the water backwards, which surprised me. I ventured as close as I could with safety to find out the cause, and saw its trunk stretched out in front at straining point. A large crocodile had seized it, and was holding on to it. A brief struggle, and the anei began to walk away ; but soon there was a check, and then, to my astonishment, I saw another 'croc.' had got No. 1 by the tail, but still anei got the pull, when a third and then a fourth 'croc.' fell in, each holding on to the other's tail.

"It was a grand sight, and I became quite excited. I offered Allah Pitchei 'evens' on anei, which he took. Suddenly another 'croc.' fell in, then the anei began to give, slipping on the slimy mud. I began to think it was all up with him, but as he was being drawn towards the water I noticed the wary old chap gradually inclining his body to the right in the direction of a stump of an old palmyra tree standing out of the mud. I at once saw what he was up to, and that was to hold on to this in some way to check further slipping, which he did, as soon as he was near enough, by taking two half hitches round it with his tail, which effectively did the trick.

"Allah Pitchei claimed a foul. I, however, overruled his objection."

"But how did it end?" asked I, yawning, for it was getting late.

"I will tell you," said Barcus. "Anei brought his native cunning to bear where force failed. He took a deep breath, and blew with all his force down No. 1 croc.'s throat, which made it let go its hold at once, at the same time inflating it to such an extent that it resembled a gigantic animated soda-water bottle floating on the surface of the water, frantically but fruitlessly endeavouring to get under. This tickled Allah Pitchei



THE SAUCER FISH

and myself immensely, and then the anei with a chuckle walked away. Thus ends my yarn."

"Humph," said I, "truth is stranger than fiction."

"M—yes," said Barcus, absently smelling the cork of the empty whisky bottle.

The next story relates to the "Saucer Fish."

"It was one of those sultry days in April, such as is only experienced in Trincomalie, with the thermometer about a couple of hundred in the shade and more in the sun, when an old friend, a naval officer of H.M.S. *R*——, a great fisherman, dropped in at my bungalow, and said, 'Barcus, old man, are you busy?'

"'Not particularly,' said I.

"'Then what do you say for a turn on the water, for something to do? It will be cooler than on shore, and we might catch a fish.'

"'Right o!' said I, giving orders for my little boat to be got ready.

"We put a few things together in the lunch basket, and were soon afloat. It was infernally hot. There was little or no wind, and a heavy mist hung over the surface of the water, which was as calm as a mill pond, while the light drill Chinese lugsail flapped monotonously against the mast, so we drifted along rather than sailed.

"My companion, a thick-set, sturdy, bronzed, weather-beaten old salt, and 'as hearty as you make 'em,' did not, like myself, care to over-exert himself on such a day, so we lolled in the stern sheets and yarned. As time sped on my friend hinted something about lunch. As it was a good idea, I said we would see what the lunch basket contained as soon as we could find a suitable place to land.

"We were gradually nearing the shore, when the haze became so thick that it hid all the surroundings from view, and as we had no compass, we lost our bearings.

We accordingly lowered the sail, unshipped and stowed the mast, and took to the sculls.

“ We had been pulling for some time, when my friend in the bow, on turning and looking ahead, shouted ‘ Land o ! ’ A few minutes later we had hauled up the boat and made her fast. Finding two convenient hummocks, we sat down on them, opened the basket, and soon made short work of its contents. The novelty of the scene gave the meal extra zest, for there we were on a little island, so to speak, not more than forty feet across, enjoying ourselves like sand boys. In my gleeful humour, I began kicking or playing, as some say, ‘ the devil’s tattoo ’ with my heels against the mound on which I was sitting, when I noticed my companion’s usual ruddy face suddenly change colour to a pea-green, at the same time making frantic signs to me to look down to where my feet were.

“ This I did. To my utter surprise and alarm, I saw moisture running freely from what appeared to be an immense eye, over which I was sitting. Then the thought flashed across my mind that we must be sitting on the back of some sea monster. ‘ Great Scott ! ’ it might possibly be a—but no ! the idea was too horrible.

“ I shall never forget my sensation at that moment. My one idea now was how to save our lives. There was only one thing to be done, and that must be done at once. Without giving my companion the slightest hint of our danger, I quietly but quickly made my way to the boat, telling my friend in a casual way to hurry up and bring along the lunch basket. As soon as we had launched the craft, I whispered a word in his ear which had an electric effect, making him spring into the boat as if shot out of a gun. I followed immediately, shoving off with the boathook.

“ I was only just in time. Our imaginary island in

another moment had become marvellously active, showing every sign of life, the remaining uninjured eye blinking and gazing round about in a most uncanny manner. Its vision being evidently somewhat marred, the hideous monster fortunately was unable to spot us. It then opened a tremendous cavern of a mouth, lashed out with its tail, finally making a spring in the air, and dived below, nearly swamping us. We pulled for our lives to the shore, and were thankful when we touched land. It was once more seen to come to the surface, take a look round, then disappear, and, as I thought, it turned out to be an immense 'Saucer Fish,' so called from its extraordinary means of lifting an inner or secondary circular fin, thereby converting its back into a gigantic saucer, often enclosing shoals of fish, which they retain imprisoned in this way as food for future consumption.

"Really, it is a huge specimen of the Indian ray, and the hillocks on which we sat were nothing more nor less than its eyebrows, standing up like those of frogs, and at the time I was amusing myself kicking with my heels I was unconsciously pummelling the eye, making it water to that extent as to luckily attract my pal's attention. His timely warning was the means of our escape."

Another reminiscence tells how Allah Pitchei planted his potato crop at the expense of the Mikado.

"What o! Barcus, how goes it, old son?" said I, entering his bungalow one morning, where I found the old sportsman busily engaged setting up a zoological specimen.

"Oh, pretty fit, thanks," said Barcus, looking up with a smile. "What news?"

"Nothing much," said I. "I have just been calling on the Jap warship lying under your windows, where I have been very much amused and entertained. She's

a smart ship, and the officers are such a merry, interesting little lot. One thing struck me as remarkable was the great reverence in which they held their Mikado."

"Yes," said Barcus, "I know them well; they are indeed a marvellous little people, and clever too. Talking of the Mikado and Japs reminds me of an amusing incident which occurred once when taking out that Imperial magnate for a snipe shoot, and the awkward position I was placed in, in guarding my old friend and shikari, Allah Pitchei, from the vengeance of his wrath.

"Sit down, 'old boy,' and I will spin you the yarn," said Barcus, handing me a chair, at the same time calling his boy for drinks and smokes. "It is not a long story, yet may interest you.

"It happened in this way—but perhaps before I proceed with the story it will be as well to let you know that the Mikado, like some other Eastern potentates, has exceedingly small feet, giving one an idea that they had never been used for the purpose intended. Whether this peculiarity is hereditary or from want of natural exercise I am not prepared to say, but nevertheless, whatever the cause might be, as I said before, his Imperial trotters appeared to be absurdly small and almost invisible when rigged out in his shooting toggery."

"But," I ventured to remark, "was he not provided with leggings or gaiters?"

"No. Putties were his fancy," said Barcus, taking a nip and pulling hard at his cheroot; "and now to continue.

"Having arrived on the ground, we found Allah Pitchei and snipe boys ready waiting for us, and at once commenced the shoot, Allah Pitchei being specially told off to attend on his Majesty.

"The birds were plentiful, giving good sport. My companion was an excellent shot, very few birds escaping

his unerring aim, although terribly handicapped by the size of his lower extremities, which gave him little support and allowed him to sink deeply in the soft soil, causing considerable exertion to get over the ground.

"Seeing the heavy weather he was making of it, I, to cheer him up a bit, now and again ventured to hail him with 'How goes it your Majesty?'

"'Oh, it is great fun,' he would reply, with a merry little chuckle; 'plenty leg-pulling, but very good the shooting.' He was a plucky little chap and game to the bone.

"Having fairly worked this piece of marsh, we had tiffin under the shade of a fine old tamarind tree, and while so engaged I noticed Allah Pitchei a little way off with a bag, the contents of which he appeared to be particularly interested in. Out of curiosity I went over and asked him what was in the bag. 'Durai,' said he, smiling at the question, 'plenty foodstuffs carrying for wet day.' With this remark I was satisfied, and took no further notice, and again joined my companion, whom I found ready to make a move.

"Before resuming the shoot, however, Allah Pitchei, whose knowledge of the marshes and lie of the birds was law, came up to me with a knowing wink and said, 'Master, I know one little spot not far away where snipe so thick they jostle one another. Would the great Durai (the Mikado) like to go?' 'Certainly,' said I, 'lead on, and the sooner we get there the better.'

"The news pleased his Majesty immensely, so off we started, and by taking the short cut were soon on the ground. Allah Pitchei, now beaming with smiles and very pleased with himself, said to me in a confidential whisper, lest he should disturb the game, 'Durai! Here! too many birds! therefore walking up and down plenty times.' He was right. It was indeed an ideal piece

of snipe marsh, damp, fairly soft with buffalo tracks, and a low heathery growth on the surface forming splendid cover. The birds were, as stated, as thick as they possibly could be, getting up in numbers from under one's feet, the shooting being very brisk, occupying all our attention.

"Casually glancing my eye in the direction of the Mikado, I observed Allah Pitchei in a stooping position just behind him, with the bag I had previously noticed in one hand and very busy with the other. 'What the devil is he up to now?' thought I.

"With a feeling of curiosity I approached him. In doing so, and not to attract any undue attention on the part of 'his Loftiness' to the object of my movements, I asked his Majesty in an off-hand manner *en passant* what he thought of the ground. 'Magnificent, said he, laughing and chuckling, while mopping the perspiration from his face, which was full of animation and pleasure. 'Grand sport. My gun made very hot, though,' and on he went again, firing away right and left.

"I then took my opportunity and fell back on Allah Pitchei, who was still stooping busy with his work behind, following in his footsteps. Touching him on the shoulder, he suddenly sprang to his feet, startled and confused. 'Ah, a guilty conscience,' thought I. 'What are you up to, you ruffian?' I asked. 'Nothing, durai,' said he, 'only plenty good doing for myself, master!' 'What!' said I in surprise. 'What had you in that bag? Hand it to me.' It was empty.

'On putting my hand inside I felt a little round indiarubbery substance at the bottom, which I took out and examined. My suspicions were at once aroused. I then went back some distance over the Mikado's tracks, carefully examining and looking into the foot impressions, which were clean cut, deep and regular, and there found to my astonishment proof positive, confirming

my suspicions. A seed potato was reposing calmly at the bottom of each.

“ ‘Well,’ said I to myself, ‘this does indeed take the cake for downright barefaced impudence.’ The rascal had actually been planting up this piece of ground (his property) with seed potatoes, taking advantage of the opportunity to sow them in the foot impressions or holes made by his Majesty the Mikado as he walked on ahead, thus saving himself considerable time, labour and expense. ‘No wonder!’ as the thought then struck me, ‘Allah Pitchei made the remark he did on entering the field, “Durai, too many birds here! therefore walking up and down many times.” This tells the tale!’

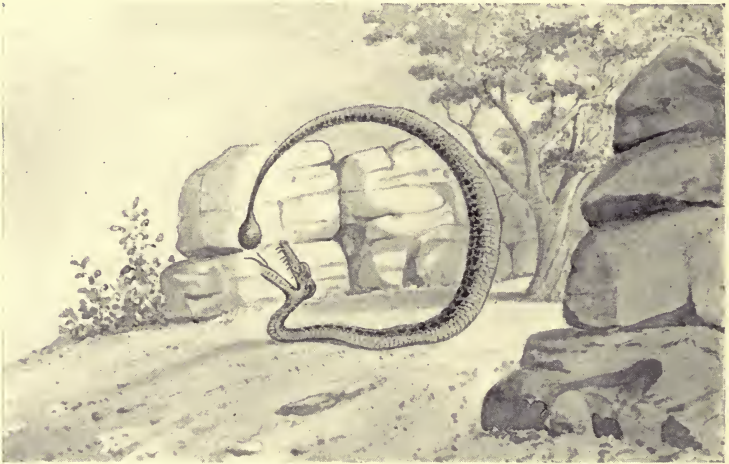
“I was very angry, and asked him what the devil he meant by such outrageous conduct as to plant his blooming potatoes on such an occasion, and at the expense, too, of my guest? ‘Not blooming yet, master,’ said he. ‘Don’t interrupt!’ said I, ‘and mind you, Pitchei, should the Mikado hear of it, you are lost.’

“Looking round, there I beheld his Majesty close by listening to the conversation, but luckily did not understand the native language. As he seemed somewhat perplexed and looked to me for some explanation, I thought it as well to say something, and so interpreted to him as much of the story as I considered advisable. ‘What!’ said his Majesty. ‘Did that dog’—pointing his finger at Pitchei—‘dare to presume to——’ His anger now rising beyond control he was unable to complete the sentence. ‘By the sword of the Rising Sun I’ll have his——’

“It was now time for me to intervene, so using all the powers of diplomacy I could command to save my old friend and shikari from the vengeance of his passion, I said to his Majesty, ‘I can assure you, sire, that the

poor man has really done nothing to offend, indiscreet as his conduct appeared to be. He was only endeavouring to do great honour to your Majesty according to native custom, and in worshipping the very ground over which your Imperial Mightiness has trodden, he has but planted a shrub in each of your Royal footsteps to revere and immortalize your name.'

“ ‘ Ah! Ah! I now understand! That is good,



THE HOOP SNAKE

very good,' said the Mikado, once more himself again, beaming all over with smiles."

" A capital story, Barcus," said I, " and Allah Pitchei is a mighty resourceful man. Chin, chin, old chap! I think you mentioned something about trotters. Yes, that reminds me I must be trotting home. Ta, ta! "

This is an anecdote about the " Hoop Snake."

" Well, boys! " said Barcus, " as you so particularly wish it, I will tell you a yarn this time concerning a very rare and deadly snake, which, although living in our midst, is seldom seen and perhaps less heard of, but

let me say before I begin that the story is a perfectly true one without any romancing, ahem !

“ As we all know, venomous snakes are to be found everywhere, but of all, the Ceylon “ Hoop or Trundling ” snake is the worst and most deadly. In fact, it is the most venomous snake that exists, and exceedingly rare ; but once seen never forgotten. A full-grown specimen may attain a length of twelve feet, and fairly thick in proportion, having a diamond-shaped head, small neck, and a tail ending in a reddish-coloured ball, known as the tomato on account of its shape and colour. Its markings are bright and somewhat similar to those of the venomous tic-polonga.

“ Its habitat is the high mountainous gneiss ridges in the country, the fine rubble and dust of which gives the reptile a good grip for speedy movement. Its food consists generally of small game, but its means of locomotion when in pursuit of the same is most extraordinary. On one occasion when walking along the top of one of these ridges, the sides of which are scantily clothed with low scrub jungle, I came across one of these creatures lying full length across my path, with its head looking down the slope, intently watching something in the distance below. On looking in the direction I saw a hare busy with its morning toilet, and as it skipped about, I noticed the snake getting somewhat excited, the end of its tail at the same time gradually rising in the air, with the tomato-coloured ball dangling from the end.

‘ As its agitation increased, the tail rose higher over its back in the direction of the head, similar to that of a scorpion when irritated, until it had formed a complete circle. Suddenly it grasped the ball in its mouth, and began a circular movement, trundling down the hillside like a hoop, hence its name. It increased its speed as it went on in a marvellous manner dead on for the hare,

who happened to see it just in time to jump aside and clear out of the way.

“The snake came in collision with a young tree, which the reptile in its disappointment and anger bit furiously. Then crawling some little distance away, it remained with its head erect, watching for the effect of its bite. A moment later the tree swelled to an enormous size, turned a bright satanic green, withered and crumbled into dust. I then continued my walk, gentlemen.”

“Good old Barcus! But say, did that tree really die from the snake bite?”

“Certainly! What else did you think it died of?”

“Well, perhaps——”

“No questions. ‘The correspondence must now be considered closed,’” said Barcus, pulling hard at his cheroot.

This story relates to parrots and monkeys.

“We had just arrived near a large sandy plain after a tiring and somewhat long morning trudge homeward bound, when my companion, a hardy old sportsman, cried, ‘Here’s a nice shady nook for a spello boss to rest and have a snack,’ flopping down as he spoke by the side of an inviting bush near by.

“‘Right o!’ said I, following suit, only too glad to get out of the glare and roasting heat.

“Finishing our repast, we lit our pipes and lazily gazed at the curling smoke. The sun was scorchingly hot, the air resembling that coming from a fiery furnace. It caused a peculiar steamy vapour to hang over the view before us, but gradually it cleared off, and a little later a dark object appeared in sight about a quarter of a mile away, which aroused our curiosity.

“‘What do you make of it?’ I exclaimed to my friend.

“‘Well, as far as I can see it is a damaged specimen of the gum elasticus Indianis,’ said he.

“ ‘ So it is,’ said I ; ‘ but what remarkable colouring for a rubber tree ! One side appears brown, as if burnt up by the sun, while the other is a brilliant green, indicating the presence of water.

“ Our bottle having run dry, I thought it would be a good opportunity to tramp in the direction and prospect, with a view of replenishing it.

“ We should have had to cross this plain in any case to get back to the bungalow, so we got up and made a start. As we neared the tree, the brown colour became more pronounced, and the green side more brilliant. We stopped and gazed at it in wonder for a time, puzzling our brains as to the cause, as nothing of a greenish tint even could be seen anywhere to harmonize with it. All was parched up and dry, the sand on which we were walking being so uncomfortably hot as to blister the feet and make us hop.

“ A most extraordinary thing then happened. Without warning, my friend’s gun went off, with a devil of a report.

“ ‘ Whatever did you fire at ? ’ said I, turning suddenly round.

“ ‘ I didn’t,’ said he ; ‘ the gun went off on its own account. I’m afraid the heat of the sun ignited the powder ; but look, look ! Look at your tree, it has disappeared ! ’

“ I looked, and there to my amazement the tree had vanished, and only a few whited, withered limbs remained, the air the while being filled with the shrieking of thousands of green parrots flying round in all directions, and on my right in the distance could be seen a large troop of brown monkeys, hurriedly making their way towards the nearest jungle.

“ I was soon on the spot where the illusory tree stood, examined the spoor, and was at once able to solve the mystery and strange phenomenon of colours which

the tree had presented in the distance. One half had evidently been occupied by brown monkeys and the other by green parrots, all of whom vanished immediately on being alarmed by the report of the gun."

Oh, Barcus! how you can tell 'em!

The last story relates to the "Swish Shot."

One evening around a bright log fire sat three sportsmen in animated conversation. By the way they were constantly slapping their faces, backs of the hands, and other parts of their bodies, the mosquitoes were evidently giving trouble, and no wonder, as they were close to a swampy marsh. They had, it appeared, just returned to camp from a hard day's duck shooting, and were interchanging and airing their views on the subject.

The most talkative was smoking a short clay and was loudly extolling his knowledge and great experience on such matters. He almost prevented the other two from getting a word in sideways, for he recounted some wonderful shot he had made that morning, bringing down, so he said, no less than five birds with a "right and left," winding up by exclaiming, "Without fear of being challenged, I say our bag for the day is a record one and not to be beaten!"

"What!" said Barcus, dropping in unexpectedly among them, "what's not to be beaten?"

"Hello, Barcus! Is that you, old man?" shouted all. "Have a drink?"

"I never refuse a good offer," said Barcus, filling his pipe and taking a seat on an empty whisky box; "but first of all, gentlemen, let me know what's 'not to be beaten.'"

"I was at the time referring to our bag for the day," said the talkative one.

"What's your bag?" asked Barcus.

“Forty-five head of duck in four and a half hours, three guns,” said he.

“Is that all?” said Barcus, with a contemptuous look of surprise.

“Yes. Have you ever known it beaten?” said the talkative one.

“Beaten? Rather. Do it myself daily, with only one gun, too!” said Barcus, with an air of superiority; “and take my advice, young fellow, whenever you are inclined to ventilate your sporting views again be sure beforehand that no better sportsman than yourself is near, or perhaps experienced old shikaris like myself, ahem! might be apt to chuckle. My motto is a very good one, and that is, ‘You can’t be too careful.’ With these few words kindly pass the bottle.”

“But tell us how you manage it,” they all cried in chorus.

“Well, gentlemen it is a secret, but on this occasion I don’t mind telling you,” said Barcus, with a slight cough, slapping himself at the same time on a tender part where a mosquito was biting savagely. “Give me time and I will explain. The birding-iron I use for the purpose is a ‘six-footer,’ takes a heavy charge of powder and a few handfuls of shot, which is sufficient to bring down a whole flight of duck. With this at my shoulder I make a swish shot.”

“A what?” said the talkative man.

“A swish shot, I repeat,” said Barcus, “and please don’t interrupt. It is so called, gentlemen, from the swaying motion one gives the gun in making this shot. The *modus operandi* is as follows:—On a flight of duck approaching, you aim a little in front of the first bird, and then pulling the trigger, gradually make a swish or sweeping movement of the gun, drawing it from left to right, raking the lot fore and aft or vice versa; but one must remember on no account to commence swishing

until he finds the shot beginning to travel up the barrel. This is easily detected by placing the ear close to the breech as one gently pulls the trigger. Very simple," said Barcus, with a genial smile, "but, of course, it requires practice and patience, like most things, before one becomes efficient. Remember my motto, gentlemen, 'You can't be too careful.'"

Saying good night with a knowing wink, Barcus departed in the darkness, and the talkative one took a back seat.

APPENDIX

HOW TO FIT OUT AN EXPEDITION

A MATTER of first importance is the selection of the right clothing, tents, camp furniture, provisions and battery, and so perhaps the reader will bear with the author for a little time while he offers a few suggestions on this vital subject.

With the object of making certain technical points clear, diagrams and sketches are given where necessary. But first let us spend a few minutes considering the best way to fit out an expedition. For instance, in the matter of dress, it is important as it is essential that it should be made of light material to suit the tropical conditions of climate. At the same time the colour should be in keeping with jungle surroundings, and should not be conspicuous.

Comfortable shooting suits can be obtained or made locally by native tailors from very serviceable and suitable cotton material, procurable in Colombo or from Madras, which is considered better for the purpose than that obtainable at home.

The Madras Weaving Mission have always a good supply of their own manufactured cotton stuffs of many different kinds of textures and patterns, some of which are excellent and difficult to beat, being more or less invisible at a distance, strong, light and durable. These do not catch thorns passing through bushes, and have the advantage of being cheap and washable.

A "button-up suit," consisting of tunic and trousers, or

instead of the latter, breeches and gaiters will be found sufficient for an ordinary day's wear. Waistcoats are not necessary, and the underwear should be of the lightest. If there be any difficulty in obtaining material in Colombo, a line to the Manager, Basil Weaving Mission, Madras, will procure patterns and prices by return of post. The best colour to select is a heather tint, a mixture of browns, greens and greys, which harmonizes splendidly with everything, and therefore the least conspicuous, and not easily seen by quick-sighted animals. The suit when made up should not



LIVING TENT
SHOWING END WING OPEN

in cost exceed eight or nine rupees. Two of these suits are necessary, one to use while the other is in the tub. A few flannel shirts are useful, and also a light flannel suit will be found a luxury on returning to camp after the day's work.

A thick pith helmet, covered with the same material as the shooting suit, will be necessary for ordinary use in the sun. A darkish soft thick slouch hat and cap for forest work and night shooting are also required, and can be procured locally. The boots should not be too heavy, but able to withstand water. It will be found that strongly-made light boots are more convenient and comfortable for walking and tracking up game. They make less noise and are not so tiring as heavy boots.

Two or three pairs of socks and shooting stockings, made of some soft woollen material, will be found useful. Also a pair of leech stockings, as a protection from leeches, mosquitoes, etc.

At the same time it must be admitted that the enjoyment and success of a shooting trip depend very much upon the comfort to be obtained by a light, well-arranged, roomy tent, both for protection from the weather and as a cool and shady retreat in which the sportsman may retire and take it easy after a hard day's work in the sun. For ordinary purposes three tents will be found sufficient : a general living tent ; a shelter for coolies ; and a shelter for the horses.

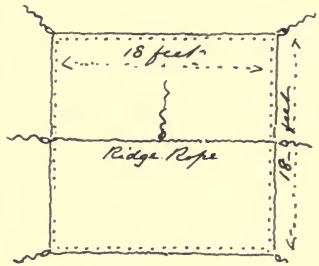


FIG. 1

There are, of course, many kinds of shapes and sizes in tents to be had, but as a rule they are fixed up by the use of poles, which are generally heavy and cumbrous. I have therefore devised one which can be erected without poles, and which proves on experience much lighter and more portable for transport—a great consideration in jungle travelling. The following descriptions and sketches give

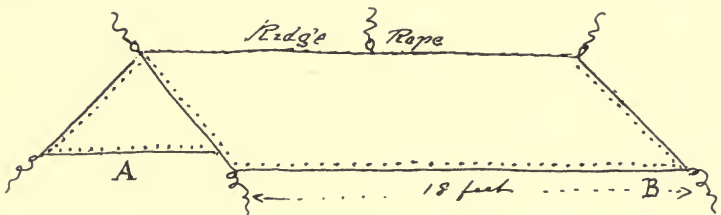


FIG. 2

an idea of one type I had in use for many years. It answered admirably, because the jungle affords an unlimited supply of trees, to the limbs of which these tents can easily be suspended, and at the same time afford grateful shelter.

In this living tent, the roof or apex is simply composed of

a piece of Willesden or other waterproof canvas, 18' square. It has a strengthening bolt rope sewn on all round the edges, and fitted with a cringle at each of the four corners for attaching hauling-out lines. Brass eyelets are let in the edges of the canvas, 9" apart, for lacing and fixing up sides and ends.

A ridge rope is sewn across the middle with a loop in the centre and at each end, to attach hoisting ropes (see diagrams, Figs. 1, 2).

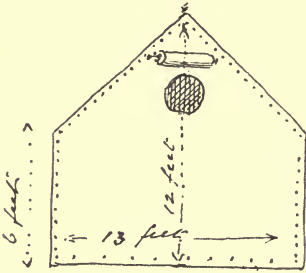


FIG. 3

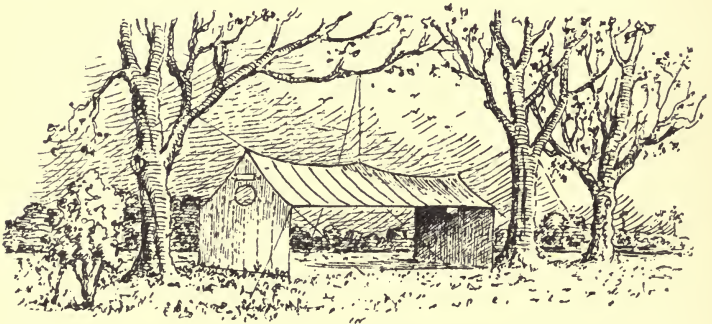


FIG. 4

Two end pieces of lighter material are required of size and shape given in Fig. 3, to fill in the ends at A and B with ventilating holes 18" in diameter, over which curtains (canvas) are fitted outside, to be raised or lowered at pleasure. Also two side wings, 18' by 6', for front and back, slit up in centre to form doorways (Fig. 4). All these pieces require eyelet holes, fitted 9" apart, for lacing to eaves of roof, corners, and pegging down.

The two end pieces (Fig. 3) should be fixed to roof before hoisting, and when properly fixed up between the trees the shelter should appear like sketch below.

To erect this tent, you should select two suitable trees



about 25' to 30' apart, throw the rope fixed to centre loop of canvas over the most convenient bough, and haul up the canvas to height required. Then do likewise to the two end ropes, through forks of the trees, near the trunks, and you have the canvas suspended. The four corners must then be hauled out by the lines attached, and fastened to pegs roughly cut from the jungle and driven into the ground. A few other lines attached to some of the eyelet holes and made fast in the same manner are necessary, and they greatly improve the set of the canvas.

Attach now the front and back wings and the tent is complete, with a clear roomy space inside of 18' by 13'. If the wings are lifted and propped up with jungle sticks, much more covered space can be obtained, as well as the advantage



TENT, SHOWING DOUBLE ROOF

of plenty of fresh air. To make the tent cooler and less affected by the heat of the sun, it should be fitted with a double roof. This should consist of another piece of light canvas, 18' by 15', fixed to the inside, allowing a space of about 1' between the roofs. This is also strengthened by a bolt rope round the outside edges, fitted with eyelet holes and a ridge rope across the centre. To it are attached pieces of line 18" in length, 3' apart, to suspend it at the proper distance, to the under part of the upper canvas, which should have necessary corresponding loops to which to make the lines fast.

When properly slung it should appear like the above sketch.

The coolie and horse shelters are both made alike. The roof consists of one piece of canvas only, say 12' square, and fitted similarly to the outer covering of living tent. Brass eyelet holes are not required, but in lieu of them a few cringles



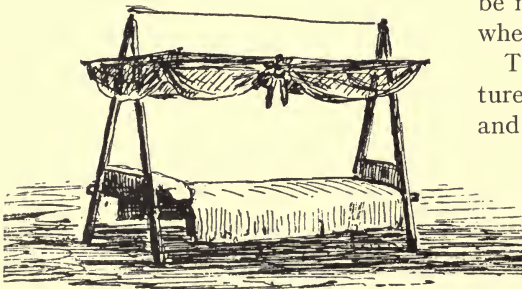
COOLIE SHELTER
WITH WEATHER CLOTH ATTACHED

are let into the bolt ropes along the front and back edges for the purpose of fixing lines to haul out and stretch the canvas, and attaching a weather cloth, 12' by 6', as may be desired. They are fixed up in a similar manner to the living tent.

No trouble will be found in discovering suitable camping grounds where these tents may be erected, for they are to be met with everywhere.

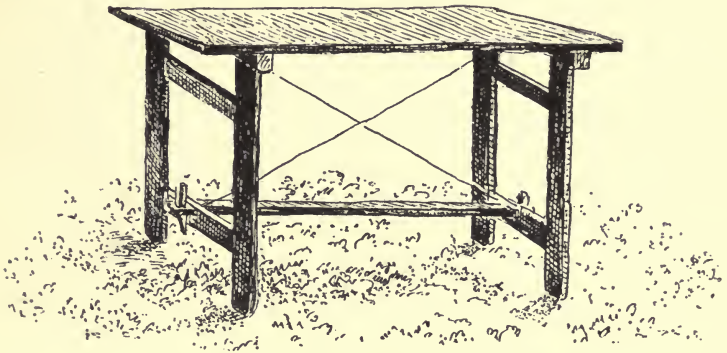
The camp furniture should be light and as portable as possible.

The letter "A" bed is, perhaps, the simplest and most service-



LETTER "A" BED

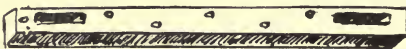
able for rough jungle work. It is understood by natives, is easily and quickly put together and taken to pieces, and makes up into a small package. This bed, when fitted with mattress, pillow and mosquito curtains, is most comfortable. They are obtainable in Colombo from about twenty to thirty rupees complete.



COLLAPSIBLE JUNGLE TABLE

The tables should be made collapsible, of light wood, and of a convenient size for carrying on a coolie's head—3' 6" by 2' by 2' 6" high is a useful size.

The above sketch gives an idea of an excellent, simple and strong table designed by the writer, which can easily be put up, taken to pieces, and packed in a small space. It is constructed as follows:—Get a piece of deal, 3' 6" by 2' by $\frac{5}{8}$ " for top. Strengthen this by fixing two chocks of wood to it, 2" by $1\frac{1}{2}$ " by 24", each piece being placed 4" from the ends. Two mortice holes are then cut in these chocks to receive the tenons of the legs, viz.: The legs are



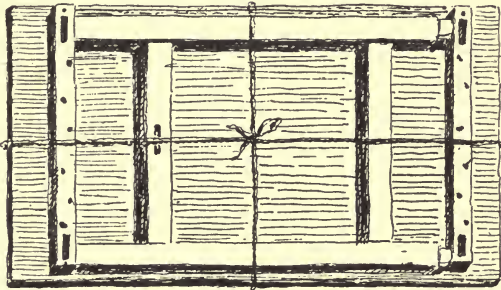
made of deal, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " by $\frac{5}{8}$ " and 2' 4" long, tenoned at one end to fit mortice holes in chock as per sketch :



The legs being placed in position, a batten

is then fixed between the two lower bars to keep them apart. Then two pieces of cord which have been run through a hole in the centre of each chock and knotted at the end, to act as cross stays, are made fast as shown in first sketch, making the table firm and rigid.

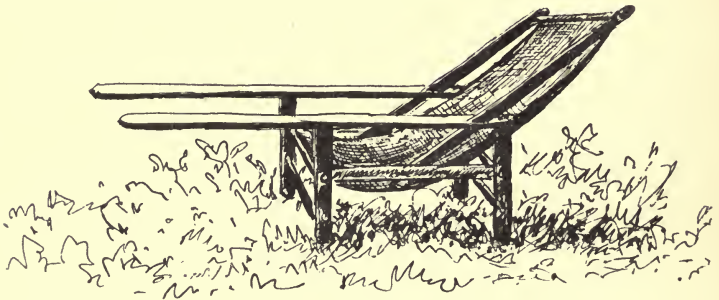
When the table is taken to pieces, the legs and other parts are stowed and laid flat in the space between the two chocks or strengthening pieces, thus :



Packed for Travelling

This table gives convenient leg room which many do not, and when set up the lower part can be utilized as a rack for guns, to keep the guns off the damp grass.

Collapsible camp chairs, with or without backs, can be obtained everywhere at a small price. A comfortable long arm-chair is a great luxury on returning to camp after a hard day's work in the heat of the sun. Ordinary makes



THE SPORTSMAN'S LOUNGE
MADE OF YELLOW PINE FOR LIGHTNESS

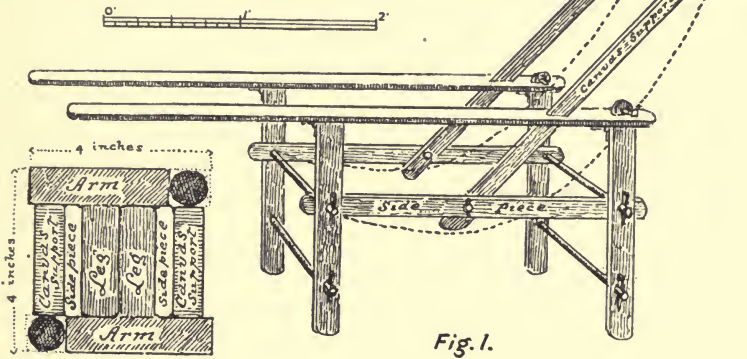


Fig. 1.

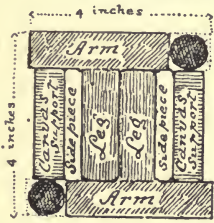


Fig. 8.

DIMENSIONS

Arms	54" by 3" by 1"	Side pieces	30" by 2½" by ¾"
Legs	20" " 2½" " 1"	Cross rods for legs ..	28" " 1" dia.
Supports for canvas ..	36" " 2½" " ¾"	Ditto for canvas supports ..	27" " 1¼" "

USEFUL PARTICULARS

- Fig. 1.—DOTTED LINES—CANVAS, LEGS ARE HINGED TO UNDER PART OF ARMS, the back legs have tenons which pass through slots in arms and are fixed in place by pegs.—See Fig. 2.
- Fig. 3.—Front legs are also tenoned, but only to the extent of ½ inch, so as not to go through arm.
- Fig. 4.—CANVAS SUPPORTS pass through slot in arms, and are fixed to side pieces (at lower ends) with a wooden button and peg, as per sketch. See also Fig. 1.
- Fig. 5.—ROD FOR CARRYING CANVAS AT HEAD OF SUPPORTS. The ends should be cut as shown, and when fixed in position will not turn.
- Fig. 6.—HOLES IN CANVAS SUPPORTS are cut to the shape shown to receive ends of rod. Fig. 5.
- Fig. 7.—STRENGTHENING CROSS RODS; the ends finish with a neck, slot and peg.
- Fig. 8.—Section of parts packed for travelling.

Fig. 2.

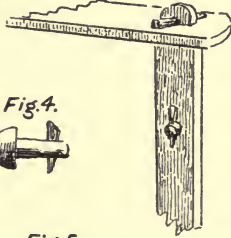


Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



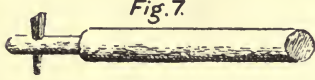
Fig. 3.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



are too bulky and awkward for transport on a shooting trip, and are therefore not considered worth the trouble of carting about. In view of the utility and comfort of having such a chair in the distant wilds, the author also invented one of these for his own use, which packs into a small space, is strong, light and portable, can be quickly put together or taken to pieces, and will be found a most delightfully luxurious lounge, inviting one to repose. A sketch of this chair is given on page 252. The drawings, specifications and necessary particulars for making appear on page 253.

A collapsible indiarubber bath will be found a luxury, also a zinc bucket canteen. This can be purchased from any store, and contains a lot of most useful articles. Amongst other things, there are a fireplace and a sufficient number of plates, cups and saucers, knives, forks, spoons for two, also salt and pepper jars, a bowl, kettle, fry-pan and saucepan. The lid and bottom of the outer case in which these things are stowed can be utilized as a pail and as a basin for washing-up purposes. In short, a canteen is a most serviceable and indispensable combination, and, of course, packs into a very small space. The addition, however, of a few glass tumblers and earthenware plates will add to one's comfort.

There should also be a light wooden canteen for provisions. One 2' by 1' 2" by 1' 2" will be found a convenient size. In this case are carried tea, sugar, coffee, salt, pepper, curry powder, candles, matches, tinned provisions, and condiments. Also a few bottles of beer or other beverages that may be required at short notice. It should be partitioned to prevent bottles knocking against each other, and care should be taken when packing to see that the box and contents do not exceed a coolie load.

Two nine-gallon kegs for carrying water should also be provided. These should be fitted for slinging under bullock cart.

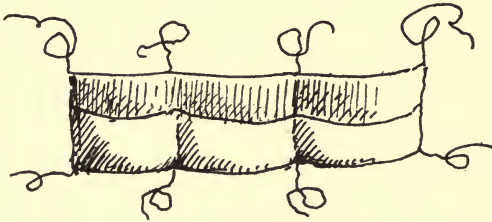
The ordinary native earthenware chatties are generally used for cooking purposes and answer well. The cost of them is small. In addition must be carried one or two enamelled iron pie dishes, a zinc wash-up basin, tea and coffee pots, bread graters, spice box, kitchen knife, and an iron spoon; this pretty well completes the list.

A pair of punkah table candle lamps, however, as per sketch, obtainable in Colombo for a few rupees, give a good light and are not affected by winds and flying insects; also a hurricane lamp for general lighting purposes and a common lantern for kitchen and coolie use.



PUNKAH
CANDLE LAMP

Two or three hold-alls will be found very useful, either when travelling by bullock cart or in camp. They are simply and easily made. Take a piece of canvas 1' 10" by 3', turn up 7" or 8", and divide off into three equal parts, then sew up so as to make three loose pockets, as per sketch. The edges are bound with some suitable material, and short pieces of cord, about 15" in length, are made fast to each corner and to the two middle seams top and bottom, for fixing to the framework of a bullock cart. These rough hold-alls will be found invaluable for stowing away any little article that may be required on the march, and are always at hand. There should also be two convenient canvas bags with shoulder straps for carrying refreshments, and one or two pieces of waterproof canvas, 6' or 7' square, fitted with eyelet holes, for protecting bed-



HOLD-ALL

ding. A hank or so of sailmakers' twine and some strong thread and needles are always handy.

A good, strong hunting-knife, with hand guard and blade of about 8" or 9" long, in sheath, should be fitted to each waist belt, and the expedition should further carry a few skinning knives and a small axe. A light-made box, 6" by

4" by 4", with partitions for a few small bottles of certain medicines, will be found useful. The chest should contain, if possible, quinine, chlorodine, boracic powder, iodine, permanganate of potash, vaseline, bicarbonate of soda, pills, lint, a lance, needle and silver wire. A thermo flask and pocket filter must also not be forgotten.

The provisions form an important matter for consideration, for, so soon as the sportsman leaves the vicinity of civilization for the jungle, he is then beyond the reach of fresh purchases, and is left entirely to his own resources. It is therefore necessary that he should lay in a stock of flour, tinned and other kinds of preserved provisions, and drinkables, sufficient to last the entire term of the expedition. As fresh bread soon becomes mildewed, rusks and biscuits should be provided as a substitute. A well cured piece of bacon and a dried ox-tongue or two keep well, and will be found a welcome addition to the breakfast table. So far as fresh meat is concerned, the gun must be the means of supply, with the exception of fowls, which may be obtained in any native village. The servants, trackers and coolies provide their own food.

Throughout the fitting out, a good motto to bear in mind is "Don't encumber yourself with unnecessary things." Remember that everything more or less has to be carried by coolies when travelling through difficult jungle, and to travel comfortably a coolie load as a rule should not exceed 45 lb.

It is very essential that one should possess a good reliable battery, and the author therefore cannot do better than recommend a similar one to his own, by Messrs. E. M. Reilly and Co., which has answered all requirements. It consists of:—

A double 12-bore rifle, capable of taking 6 dchms. powder and a 2 oz. bullet. This gun will be found to be heavy enough for elephant, and good for all other big game, and yet not too weighty to be carried by the sportsman himself. This is an important consideration in tracking dangerous animals, when its services may be suddenly required.

A 500 Express, which is a most useful gun for bear, leopard, deer and pig.

A pea rifle is not absolutely necessary, yet it comes in handy for smaller game, including peafowl, which are plentiful, and frequent the high trees on the borders of jungle and grass plains.

A double 12 smooth bore, not choked but made sufficiently strong to take a charge of 5 dchms. of powder and a tight-fitting bullet, as well as ordinary shot cartridges. This can be used as a second gun in cases of emergency, and is most useful for miscellaneous shooting.

With the exception of the pea rifle all these guns should be furnished with reloading apparatus in the case of running short of cartridges on the shoot. It is advisable, therefore, to preserve empty cases, and to keep a supply of powder, shot, caps, and wads. A considerable saving of expense will thereby be effected, especially in the case of snipe shooting, where cartridges are so freely expended.

The following useful recipes for preservative soaps, powders, and solutions, which the author has had by him for many years, may prove of service to his readers :—

ARSENICAL SOAP

Arsenic	1 lb.	Soft soap	2 lb.
Whiting (or powdered chalk) 3 lb.		Camphor or tincture of musk	2 oz.

Place the arsenic in an old saucepan (which must not be used for any other purpose on any account whatever), and put the whiting over it. Next pour sufficient water over it to make it into a thick paste. Then add the soft soap, stir the whole well together, add a little water, and place on the fire to boil, adding from time to time water sufficient to render the whole mass the consistence of gruel. When it boils up it is sufficiently well done. Take it off the fire, and place outside in the open air to cool, as the fumes, if given off in a close room, are highly prejudicial to health. When nearly cold, stir in the camphor, previously pounded to a fine powder by the addition of a few drops of any spirit—spirits of wine, gin, rum, turpentine, or benzoline. If musk is used it is sufficient to stir it in the mass, or 1 oz. of pure carbolic acid (previously melted) may be substituted for either the camphor

or musk. The reason for stirring in the camphor, musk or carbolic acid, when the arsenical paste is nearly cold, is two-fold—first, to prevent the inhaling of the metallic fumes, which readily attack the lungs; second, to prevent the said fumes or heated air carrying off with it the volatile essences of those drugs. The quantities given are sufficient to fill two six-pound Australian meat tins, which latter form capital receptacles for arsenical paste, especially when soldered up. As this quantity is, however, perhaps too much for the amateur, the proportions may be decreased by one quarter, and what is not in actual use had better be soldered up in preserved salmon tins, which will be found very useful for these and other purposes (paint pots, to wit). Carefully label this preparation “Poison,” and place out of reach of children.

PRESERVATIVE SOAP

Whiting or chalk	1½ lb.	Chloride of lime	2 oz.
Soft soap	1 lb.		

Boil together the whiting and the soap with about a pint of water. Then stir in the chloride of lime (previously finely pounded) while the mixture is hot; if this point is not attended to the mixture will not work smoothly. This will about fill a 6 lb. Australian meat tin. Caution—it is not necessary to hold the mouth over the mixture while hot, as chlorine is then rapidly evolved. This mixture has stood the test of work and time, and supersedes the arsenical paste or soap.

These preservative soaps should be applied by a brush.

SOLUTION OF CORROSIVE SUBLIMATE

For brushing over the feathers of stuffed birds, legs, toes and beaks for their preservation.

To a wine bottleful of spirits of wine add a large teaspoonful of corrosive sublimate. In twelve hours draw it off into a clean bottle, dip a black feather into the solution, and if on drying a whiteness is left on the feather, add a little more alcohol.

Care must be taken not to handle the bird more than

absolutely necessary after this operation, as it is a mercurial preparation (i.e. bichloride of mercury), and the less handled the better for health's sake.

BROWNE'S PRESERVATIVE POWDER

Pure tannin	1 oz.	Camphor	1 oz.
Red pepper	1 oz.	Burnt alum	8 oz.

Pound and thoroughly mix, and keep in stoppered bottles or canisters.

The foregoing preparation, though perfectly efficient for birds and small animals (say up to squirrel size), is not sufficiently strong to penetrate the skin and thoroughly fix the hair of the large animals. For this purpose the older taxidermists used a wash or powder, composed of equal parts of alum and nitre (saltpetre). This had the double disadvantage of rendering the specimen cured by its aid almost dripping with humidity in damp weather, and efflorescing with the double salts around the eyes and mouth in dry weather. Alum alone was frequently used by those unaware of its peculiar property of deliquescing in heat as well as in humidity.

I have, I believe, Mr. Brown states, at last succeeded in arranging the proper proportions, and in substituting for the worse than useless crude alum the alum ustum or burnt alum, which is not affected by moisture (at least to any appreciable extent); the proportions are:—

PRESERVATIVE POWDER FOR SKINS OF ANIMALS

Burnt alum	1 lb.	Saltpetre	$\frac{1}{4}$ lb.
------------------	-------	-----------------	-------------------

Pounded and thoroughly mixed.

This, well rubbed into the skin and fleshy parts of animals, is a certain and thoroughly trustworthy cure, and will penetrate through skin a quarter of an inch or more thick, fixing the hair or fur in a most admirable manner. It has the double advantage of being harmless to the person using it, and beneficial even if it gets on the outside of the skin of the specimen. Indeed, I myself constantly rub it in on the fur side if the specimen is at all "high" when brought in. In all cases it is a good plan to thoroughly rub the outside of the ears, eyelids, nose and lips with this composition before

skinning. I consider this the greatest boon to the animal preserver ever invented, and those to whom I have imparted the secret are loud in its praise.

If the proportions given are adhered to, no crystallization of salts will take place around the eyes and mouth. Should this, however, happen from any cause, a piece of wool dipped in olive oil may be used to remove it and prevent its reappearance.

After the animal is stuffed and mounted, it may be washed over with the following, which ought to preserve the specimen from the attacks of insects :—

PRESERVATIVE WASH

Corrosive sublimate	..... 1 oz.	Tincture of camphor (or	
Methylated spirits	..... 1 qt.	musk)	..... 1 oz.

This solution must be kept in a bottle carefully labelled "Poison," and when used is not to be touched with the hands, but laid on with a brush. The high price of pure spirits of wine is such that I substitute methylated spirit, as it is much cheaper and sufficiently pure for the purpose. Corrosive sublimate being a remarkably difficult thing to dissolve, even in pure spirits of wine, it may not be generally known that the addition of a saturated solution of sal ammoniac, in weight about half an ounce, is sufficient to dissolve many ounces of corrosive sublimate. Thus a solution useful for some purposes hereafter to be described is easily made as follows :—

PRESERVATIVE SOLUTION

Saltpetre	..... 2 oz.	Corrosive sublimate	..... $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.
Alum	..... 4 oz.	Sal ammoniac	..... $\frac{1}{8}$ oz.
		Boiling water,	half gallon.

This, it will be seen, is a modification of the old Goadby solution, which was :—

GOADBY'S SOLUTION

Bay salt	..... 4 oz.	Corrosive sublimate	..... 4 gr.
Alum	..... 2 oz.	Boiling water	..... 2 qt.

Both of the foregoing must be kept in bottles labelled "Poison."

Another solution which, like the two preceding ones, is useful for pickling fish and reptiles in preparation jars is :—

ALCOHOLIC SOLUTION

Methylated spirits	1½ pt.	Burnt alum (pounded) . . .	2 oz.
Water	½ pt.		

This, which is to be well shaken together, becomes milky at first, but will soon fine down, and may then be decanted off.

Another formula sometimes used in the medical schools for preserving parts of subjects, and useful as a pickle for fish and reptiles, is a preparation called Moller's Solution :—

MOLLER'S SOLUTION

Bichromate of potash	2 oz.	Distilled water	3 pt.
Sulphate of soda	1 oz.		

A saturated solution of chromic acid is also used for the same purposes. The chief disadvantage which both this and Moller's solution possess in common is their colour—a rich golden one—which of course stains everything with which it comes in contact.

A preparation of borax has been brought out by Mr. Robottom, of Birmingham, who claims for it that it preserves all animal and vegetable tissue, as well as being useful for tanning skins. I shall refer again to this preparation further on.

Carbolic acid (pure) will be found a valuable ally of the taxidermist. Calvert is the chief if not the only maker of the pure preparation, which is sold in ½ lb. or 1 lb. bottles in a solid crystalline state, as if it were frozen. The bottle, with the stopper temporarily removed, must be plunged in boiling water to melt out as much as is required, to which must be added four times its weight or quantity of water. This diluted preparation will be found of infinite service in the hot summer months for pouring in the "gentle" infested throats or wound of birds and animals preparatory to skinning. Diluted and poured on a little burnt alum or pure tannin, and the mixture well shaken together,

it forms an exceedingly strong preparation, as well as a valuable one for painting the noses or pickling the tongues of animals before or after skinning. Carbolic acid is a caustic poison, and therefore must be handled carefully.

It sometimes happens that the taxidermist, if in a large way of business, is called upon to destroy the insects infesting, it may be, the entire collection of heads or skins hanging in some gentleman's hall. No better or more effective way of doing this is to be found than plunging them entirely in a bath composed of:—

CARBOLIC ACID WASH

Carbolic acid	1 lb.	Sal ammoniac	½ oz.
Corrosive sublimate	3 oz.	Pure tannin	4 oz.
Hot water, 4 gallons.			

Mix this up in some out-house, or in the open air away from the house, if a fine day; and when cold, plunge the heads or skins in, holding the former by the horns, and stirring the latter about with a stick; in fact, allowing the mixture to touch the hands as little as possible.

It may be more efficacious if laid on hot than cold, but the danger to health is greater. Deadly though it be, and dangerous to work with, it has the advantage of being used as a finishing preparation, and therefore need not, except in extreme cases, be handled.

Instead of rectified spirits of wine the following has been used with much success as an exterior wash for valuable bird skins:—

PRESERVATIVE WASH

Pure sulphuric ether	1 pt.	Corrosive sublimate	6 gr.
--------------------------------	-------	-------------------------------	-------

Keep in a stoppered bottle labelled "Poison," and when used apply with a brush. This is more rapid in its evaporation than spirits of wine, but is very expensive. Of course, the more rapidly an agent evaporates and deposits any poison previously held in solution, the better chance you have of not spoiling your specimens.

A cheap preservative fluid for the preservation of small fish or reptiles :—

SALINE SOLUTION FOR BOTTLING FISH AND REPTILES

Bichloride of mercury (corrosive sublimate)	..... 1 gr.	Chloride of sodium (common salt)	..... 90 gr.
Distilled water, 1 pint.			

Intimately mix, set aside, let settle, and when clear, decant and preserve in stoppered bottles.

Another recipe is this: To distilled water sixteen parts, add one part of rectified spirits of wine and a few drops of creosote, sufficient to saturate it. Stir in a small quantity of best prepared chalk, and then filter. With this fluid mix an equal quantity of camphor water (water saturated with camphor), and before using strain off through very fine muslin.

For animals, it is recommended there is nothing better than burnt alum and saltpetre, followed by a wash of benzoline twice a year, or any one of the carbolic or mercurial preparations given.

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Happy the day when first we met,
 And first we met on this day;
 And first we met on this day,
 And first we met on this day.

The birthday cake was cut and the following verses were read:—

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