



THE AUTHOR "DRESSED" FOR THE JUNGLE

The hat is a single Terai, dark green in colour, and is only used for early morning, evening, and jungle work, never for open country in hot sun. Coat and trousers are of thin but strong dark green drill, unlined, of course; the shirt is dark green flannel. The trousers are tied below the knee, "navvy" fashion, by tape or straps, to prevent drag on the belt. The boots are cheap Indian-made canvas hemp-soled boots.

# HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

By  
HARRY STOREY

*With Contributions by*

THOS. FARR; LIEUT.-COL. E. GORDON REEVES  
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WITH 69 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND 1 MAP

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HUNTING & SHOOTING  
IN CEYLON



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DEDICATED  
WITH ALL RESPECT AND AFFECTION  
TO  
*MY MOTHER*  
TO WHOM I AM AFRAID MY SPORTING  
PROCLIVITIES HAVE CAUSED MANY AN  
ANXIOUS HOUR



## PREFACE

I BELIEVE that Ceylon is still considered worthy to be included in the list of sporting countries of the world, but, though most of the other countries are well represented in sporting literature, the fact remains that for *fifty years* the only complete book dealing with personal experiences of Ceylon sport is Sir Samuel Baker's "With Rifle and Hound in Ceylon."

Following humbly in the footsteps of such a mighty predecessor, it is with the utmost diffidence that I venture to place this book before the sporting world and my brother-planters and fellow-sportsmen in Ceylon.

The truth is, however, that matters have so entirely changed since Sir Samuel Baker's day that his book must stand for all time by itself as a record of what Ceylon *was*. I hope that my work will show Ceylon as it now is, or, more correctly, what it has been during the last fourteen or fifteen years; and also I touch upon a number of minor sports which were probably beneath that mighty hunter's notice altogether, but which belong most essentially to Ceylon of the present day.

My low country experiences have been gained during short shooting trips taken yearly, and sometimes twice a year, since 1891, often alone, but occasionally accompanied by a friend. I have made no big bags—have never tried to do so—nor have I any great number of trophies to show, but I have *seen* enough in my wanderings to justify my attempt to gather together what I know into book form.

## PREFACE

My task has been greatly simplified by the fact that I have kept a diary, in detail, of my shooting experiences ever since I first took gun in hand in Ceylon, recording everything shot from a humble pigeon to an elephant, with a short account of each and every occurrence.

Thus my book is not an effort of memory, and contains nothing but absolute facts as far as experiences go, both of my own and of my valued contributors.

Not being in any way a scientist, and my knowledge of the scientific details of natural history being of the slightest, I have only touched very lightly on that subject, confining myself to short descriptions of the game and its habits which must of necessity accompany a book of this class.

In my descriptions, however, preferring to be accurate, and not caring to trust entirely to my own observations, I have freely drawn on such standard authorities as Sir Emerson Tennent, Messrs. Lydekker, Blanford, and Captain Legge.

My readers will not find much in the way of hair-breadth escapes, or even very exciting incidents; for I have found in my own experience that such things seldom really occur even to a big game hunter.

I would also warn my readers that trophies, in the true sense of the word, are very, very scarce in Ceylon, thanks to the lax manner in which our Game Laws are enforced; and for the same reason game is also very scarce, so that a big bag is an impossibility in Ceylon as far as big game is concerned.

With a view to supplement my own experiences, where wanting in some branches of sport, and also to tone down somewhat the inevitable egoism of a book of this sort, I invited some of the best-known sportsmen in Ceylon to write here and there an article or a chapter; and I now tender my most grateful thanks to that king of elk hunters,

## PREFACE

Mr. Thomas Farr, for his excellent chapter on elk hunting; to my old friend Lieut.-Col. E. Gordon Reeves, for his unique contribution on pig hunting, a sport almost peculiar to that well-known sportsman; to Mr. J. J. Robinson, the veteran planter and sportsman of Passara, for his exciting adventures in his beloved sport of elephant hunting; to that veteran sportsman, Mr. North C. Davidson, for his equally exciting elephant and buffalo adventures; to those veteran foresters, Messrs. E. L. Boyd Moss and H. R. Spence, for their most interesting contributions of incidents in elephant hunting, a sport of which they have probably experienced more than any other man in Ceylon; to Mr. F. L. Reeves, son of Lieut.-Col. Gordon Reeves, and a "chip of the old block," for his well-written article on elk hunting; to Mr. M. L. Wilkins, an old friend, and one of the best shots with both rifle and fowling-piece I have ever met, for his contribution on hunting with a "bobbery" pack, and buffalo shooting; to Mr. S. Payne-Gallwey, one of that well-known family of sportsmen, for his exciting account of Mr. Cecil de Winton's adventure with a leopard; and to Mr. R. A. G. Festing, for his excellent chapter on Ceylon fishing.

To my lasting regret I have never taken up photography, so that I have had to draw (no pun intended) on my friends all round for photographs to illustrate this book, and I hope my readers will be satisfied with the result. My best thanks are due to Mr. H. C. P. Bell, Archæological Commissioner to the Ceylon Government, for the fine landscape photographs he permitted me to make use of, and other sporting photographs; to Mr. H. F. Tomalin, Provincial Engineer, for a number of excellent landscapes (river and tank scenes) which he placed very kindly at my disposal; to Mr. Thomas Farr, for the excellent photo-

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graphs so necessary to illustrate his chapter on elk hunting ; to Lieut.-Col. E. Gordon Reeves, for various little hunting scenes ; to Mr. J. J. Robinson, for an enviable trophy picture ; to Mr. M. L. Wilkins, for camp scenes and hunting incidents ; and to Mrs. E. Benham and Mr. Alfred Clark (Forest Department), for unique photographs of elephants.

I was also most ably helped by Messrs. F. Skeen and A. W. Andrée, photographers, of Colombo, and Mr. F. Molteno, photographer, Kandy.

That this book is crude and full to the brim of imperfections I am painfully aware ; but as I and my contributors are either busy planters or equally busy Government officials, perfection can hardly be expected and I venture to hope that imperfections will be leniently overlooked.

HARRY STOREY.

MATALE, CEYLON, *June* 1906.

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## INTRODUCTION

SIR SAMUEL BAKER'S vigorous "Rifle and Hound in Ceylon" serves merely to remind us, at the present day, that fifty years ago Ceylon was a veritable sportsman's Paradise.

Even at that time, however, that great sportsman foresaw and foretold the destruction of game which has since so unmistakably taken place, not due to any natural laws or the advance of cultivation, but entirely to the unlimited possession and use of firearms by the natives.

True, we have Game Laws which our Government seems to consider sufficient, and so they might be if they were efficiently enforced; but, as nobody apparently takes the trouble to enforce them, in the low country they are almost inoperative, and the native, practically unchecked, shoots and slaughters all the year round. The evil is that he does this not for his personal food or use, but as a matter of trade, there being a ready sale for all horns, hides, and dried meat in the country.

With regard to the great destruction of deer, the Ceylon Game Protection Society did its best some years ago to awaken Government to the state of things, and I myself worried through a resolution asking Government to prohibit the *sale* of horns, hides, and meat, but allowing the natives at *any* time to shoot game for their own consumption, but all to no purpose, for the "powers that be" would not hear of it. In their mighty wisdom they pro-

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hibited the export of horns and hides, and considered there was no more to be said, entirely forgetting that there was, and still is, a perfectly ready sale for them in the country, and also quite shutting their eyes to the fact that the dried meat trade is the essence of the whole matter and flourishes as freely as ever. Previous to the above action by Government I worked out, some years ago, for the information of a high official, the details of the annual slaughter of deer, from figures of the export of deer horns during a period of seven years, and evolved some startling results. From the Customs figures supplied to me of the weight of horns exported for that period, namely, 6274 cwt. of spotted deer horns and 4728 cwt. of elk horns, I subtracted, in the case of spotted deer, 75 per cent. for shed horns, and in the case of elk horns, 85 per cent., allowing 1 lb. per pair as the average weight of spotted deer antlers, and 3 lb. per pair for elk antlers. This worked out at a *yearly* slaughter of 21,000 spotted bucks and 3300 buck elk; and, touching the meat supply, you can safely add two does for every buck to the above total of slain. It may be said that I have taken a very low average weight for the antlers, but, from my own experience, I very much question if they will *average* more; still, to be as fair as possible, let us double the weight and thus halve the slaughter, the figures then giving us 10,500 spotted buck and 1650 buck elk shot *yearly*, to which add 21,000 spotted does and 3300 doe elk shot for meat and hides, and you have the appalling total of 36,450 deer slaughtered yearly!

The figures sound incredible, especially when applied to such a small country as Ceylon, being, as it is, not quite so large as Ireland; but when you come to consider the number of guns licensed among the natives, it will be

## INTRODUCTION

seen that the above slaughter is quite within the bounds of possibility.

Mr. Alfred Clark, in his "Sport in the Low Country of Ceylon," estimates the guns in the hands of the low country jungle villagers at nearly 15,000, so that, as they all shoot, this would only mean an average of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  deer per man per year to account for my "slaughter" figures; but whatever it means, or however wrong may be the figures, I know as a positive fact that the daily slaughter of game is enormous, and will end eventually in putting Ceylon out of the list of game countries. I admit it is almost an impossibility to enforce the present Game Laws in the wild jungle country, but I submit that the stoppage of the *trade* in the island in *all* produce of the chase would keep the unlicensed slaughter within reasonable bounds and yet impose no hardship on the villagers, if allowed to kill game for their own use at any time of the year, which, in my opinion, they have a perfect right to do. They must, however, be protected against themselves, or they will, very soon now, ruin one of their principal sources of food supply for ever.

Owing to persistent representation of this state of things our Government has, of late years, established game sanctuaries in various parts of the country, and is contemplating still more, and in these sanctuaries game increases and flourishes amazingly, but still no steps are taken to prevent the natives carrying on their unlicensed slaughter *outside* the sanctuaries, which occupy some of the best hunting country in the island, thereby closed to the European sportsman. I maintain that the country as a whole does not benefit by these sanctuaries, but those lucky natives who live or camp near their boun-

## INTRODUCTION

daries have a fine time of it, and that is all that can be said.

Pigs, of course, are not protected, nor are they ever likely to need it, as very many of the low country inhabitants will not eat the meat, the Mohammedans, of course, avoiding defilement, and many of their Tamil neighbours abstaining from it out of deference to these same Mohammedans owing to their constant intercourse with them.

Buffaloes are slaughtered on the quiet in considerable numbers, no water-hole watching native ever refusing such a grand "take" of meat as is offered by that animal. It has to be done quietly, because the licence for shooting a buffalo costs Rs. 25, so a buffalo when shot is usually skinned, cut up and dried, native fashion, over a slow fire, on the spot, and all tell-tale evidence got rid of. Once dried, the meat will pass as deer or any other kind of meat.

Buffalo have, however, been a good deal decimated by murrain during the last century, though they were exceedingly plentiful in Sir Samuel Baker's time, and now are nowhere to be found in any numbers.

Referring again to deer, the stately elk (always spoken of by that misnomer in Ceylon) is being exterminated in the low country with appalling rapidity, and will soon be as extinct as the dodo, as its bulk, like buffalo, presents an irresistible attraction to the native meat hunter. Soon this grand animal will be confined to the hill-forests or the unget-at-able large forest blocks of the low country.

Elephants are about normal, neither too many nor too few at present, but are not nowadays found in the large herds which existed in former days—in fact it is an unusual thing to meet a herd exceeding half-a-dozen members in these times. They are protected, and very little shooting

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is done amongst them, but their numbers are kept down by the periodical "kraals," organised by native headmen, by means of which they are caught, tamed, and sold into bondage. Wild elephants do a vast amount of damage to the natives' crops amongst the jungle country villages.

Bears and leopards are fairly numerous, as they are not especially sought after by the natives, the Rs. 5 reward for their skins not being a sufficient inducement to those energetic gentlemen to tramp perhaps 50 miles to the nearest Kachcheri to get it.

The foregoing is the condition of things in 1904, and how long it will so continue before more stringent action will, and must, be taken I cannot say.

Game, particularly deer, are very conservative, sticking to a locality through thick and thin, and are not driven away by being shot at—merely altering their feeding hours to meet the circumstances. Localities which ten years ago teemed with game are now almost void of life, entirely owing to native hunting and shooting, and I am sorrowfully watching, at the present day, my own favourite shooting grounds, in which I take but meagre toll of the game, being steadily but surely shot out by endless parties of natives. Their favourite method of evading the law, in the open season, is for one or at most two men in each village to take out game licences, and on the strength of these licences every man in the village shoots, for they all possess guns, going out in small parties of three, four, or five at a time, always accompanied by the, or one of the, licence-holders. Yet such is the amazing ignorance of the officials as to this state of things, that I remember, when our agitation for protection was at its height, in his yearly report one official, speaking of game, actually said, to the best of my recollection, that he did not think so much gang

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shooting went on as was generally supposed, for he had that year *only issued twenty-three shooting licences!*

It seems to be beyond the mental power of the average official to grasp the fact that any native dare offend against the LAW, but only let him go down to the low country in the months of August and September (close season in every province), and visit, if he can, the water-holes, and he will find a shooting stage erected at every one of them, not, as he may suppose, for the slaughter of bears and leopards, but for the sole purpose of shooting every miserable deer, pig, or buffalo that may venture to come to drink during that drought-smitten time of the year. So the merry game goes on, and has gone on from time immemorial, but the introduction of the gun, and unlimited possession and use thereof, will soon put an end to it by the total destruction of all the game. The pity of it!

It must not be supposed, however, that the natives' sole method of shooting is by means of water-hole watching. They do an immense amount of fair stalking work the moment the wet season sets in—far more than outsiders think or are aware of—and, their objective being principally meat, they shoot mainly does on such occasions, bagging a buck occasionally if a chance offers. They also do a fair amount of night stalking, by moonlight, under cover of a stalking buffalo, by means of which they can readily approach a herd of deer if the wind is favourable.

And now, after the foregoing tirade, my readers will be wondering where any hunting or shooting can be found in Ceylon at the present day, but I can assure them there is still fair sport to be had if they know where to go for it, and are not afraid of considerable hard work and discomfort.

Though you will no longer meet with herds of fifty elephants, and though your eyes will no longer be gladdened

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by the sight of peaceful herds of graceful spotted deer in every "park," and though no longer can you shoot the wild buffalo in the plains of Minneriya, or the *wilas* of Tamankaduwa, until you are satiated with slaughter, yet I hope a perusal of this little work (a very *magnum opus* to me, I assure you) will show you that, with a little trouble, patience, and untiring energy, you can still get, if not quantity or superlative quality, at least "sufficient unto the day."

The arrangement of the book matter caused me much anxious thought, and I finally decided to take the game more or less in the order in which I first met with it, beginning with the birds, and local sport on or near the estates, and finally taking the jungle folk in their order of precedence as nearly as possible, ending up with all the useful information I could collect or think of. The inevitable egoism of a book of this class has been, I hope, toned down by invaluable contributions from several friends, most of them already veteran sportsmen when I was a mere beginner at the game.



# HUNTING AND SHOOTING IN CEYLON

## CHAPTER I

### SNIPE SHOOTING

EVERY sportsman in the world must have heard of the glorious snipe shooting to be had in the East, and very naturally resident sportsmen, or visitors, turn their attention to that branch of sport first of all. Ceylon, during the season, will certainly rank high as a snipe country, and in a good year some very fine bags can be secured by a good shot, in paddy fields or swamps, or round the low-country irrigation tanks.

A vast amount of energy (not to mention thousands of cartridges) is expended in pursuit of this tiny game-bird; and I suppose the desire for its pursuit is induced by its sporting flight, plus its excellence as a table bird. Many men I know out here care nothing about any other branch of shooting, devoting their whole energies and spare time to snipe—such is the strong attraction of this branch of sport—and, it must be admitted, in a good snipe ground the fun is fast and furious while it lasts.

As there are more kinds of snipe to be occasionally met with out here than one, the following description of the various birds, culled from Captain Legge's grand work,

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

“Birds of Ceylon,” may be of some use and interest to my readers. The common snipe (*Gallinago scolopacina*) has only been met with, according to Legge, on one or two occasions, and so may be “counted out.” The same may be said of jack snipe. The painted snipe (*Rhyncoæa capensis*), however, is fairly common, and well worth attention. It is a permanent resident in Ceylon, and breeds in the south, where it is fairly plentiful, but I have not seen many in the North Central Province, though I believe it is common at times in the northern part of the North Province. Captain Legge’s description, condensed, is as follows: the bill is much shorter than in the ordinary snipe or the pin-tail, being only about 1.9 inches long; crown and just in front of the eye, between it and beak, greenish black, with a buff mesial stripe down to base of bill, and a broad band of buff round behind the eye; neck at back and sides grey, mottled with black, paling on fore neck and chest, across which colour is edged blackish; chin, gorge, and lower face whitish buff, passing into the colour of the fore neck; back, parts of wing coverts, rump, and tail cinereous, with black cross-pencillings and bars and spots of buff-yellow; the part of the back between the folded wings, and the large feathers of the lower part of the wings, clouded with greenish black and glossy brown, with a purple sheen in some lights, many of the feathers barred and marked with buff, and some with broad central and lateral stripes of buff, and white; wing coverts generally olive green, barred and spotted with buff, the spots edged black; breast and lower parts and median under wing coverts white, passing through the olive and blackish sides of the upper breast in a band which extends round to the shoulders.

In the female the throat, cheeks, fore neck, and centre of hind neck ferruginous, paling to whitish on chin and

## SNIPE SHOOTING

deepening on chest and sides of breast into olive-black; back and wing coverts deep olive-green variegated with black cross rays and ashy bars; breast and lower parts white, passing over the dark sides of the upper breast in a band round to the shoulders, continuing down the sides of the back as a narrow buff line; a tuft of pure white lanceolate feathers beneath the scapulars.

Length of male bird,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches; female,  $9\frac{3}{4}$  to 10 inches; legs and feet greenish. This is a swamp bird, and may be found round tanks or in paddy fields. When flushed singly, as is usually the case, it flies straight, but slowly, with leisurely flappings of the rather large wings, and is apt to alight again almost as suddenly as a quail. This bird is a good swimmer also, according to Legge, and I myself once saw a wounded bird of my own swim across a channel in a swamp in its endeavour to escape. A sportsman need not go in search of this species, as he will meet them, if at all, during his search after pin-tail.

The pin-tailed snipe (*Gallinago stenura*) is the bird which gives us such fine shooting, and is really the only snipe to be taken into account. It is not easy to condense Captain Legge's description, but here goes for a try:—

Length 9.5 to 10.5 inches; bill  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches; weight averages 4 oz. 3 drachms. Females are larger than males. Bill, upper mandible blackish to dark olive at tip; legs and feet olive-green. Crown, back of head, top part of back and lower part of back, velvet black; face, throat, head stripe, lateral edges of upper back, buff; upper and lower parts of back boldly barred and striped with rich rufous; hind neck, back and wing coverts blackish brown; back and coverts with bars and tips of yellowish grey and buff-whitish; long wing feathers and shorter ones dark brown, tipped white; middle wing feathers barred rich brown and

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yellow; tail, broad feathers black crossed by wide band of reddish yellow, and tipped whitish; the stiff lateral pin-feathers, usually six on each side, brown with white tips; fore neck and chest fulvous, barred brown on basal portions of feathers; breast and lower parts white; flanks barred brown.

Most sportsmen, I imagine, know a snipe when they see one, and I hope the above description will suffice for the identification of the pin-tail, at any rate. If my readers want more exact scientific detail I must refer them to any of the standard works on the avifauna of the East.

To resume the subject of the pin-tail: these birds begin to arrive in Ceylon early in September, as a rule, few at first but gradually increasing, until vast numbers are to be found in their favourite haunts all over the island. They settle in swamps, around irrigation tanks, throughout the paddy fields, and along watercourses, from sea-level to as high as 4000 or 5000 feet above it, but not in any great numbers at these higher elevations, and they remain in the country until about the end of April. The best shooting grounds are the swamps and paddy fields of the west and south-west coast, the low country from Polgahawela to Kurunegalla (off the railway line), the Anuradhupura District of the North Central Province, and last, but probably best of all, the paddy fields under Kantalay Tank, and at Tampalakamam, from 15 to 30 miles from Trincomalee on the Trinco-Matale road. All but the last-named can be reached by railway. The Trinco district will eventually be connected with the railway by coach to and from Anuradhupura, in all probability, but at present the mail-coach runs from Matale to Trincomalee, a distance of about 100 miles. No special description is needed of the habits of the pin-tail. They like mud, with not too

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much water ; a little cover in the shape of weeds or young paddy is acceptable, and in such places they will remain all day long if not disturbed, "boring" with their long bills for their food, consisting mainly of aquatic insects. If there is too much water about, however, they may be found in all sorts of unlikely places—in scrubby weed-grown land, in patches of short grass, even under trees in thick forest—anywhere, in fact, but in their usual haunts. When disturbed, also, in the heat of the day by sportsmen, they are very apt to alight in any scrub or jungle cover near by.

A novice will find himself much bothered at first, in the low country, by the presence in the snipe grounds of numberless "snippets" (sandpipers) of various kinds, which get up with a flurry in all directions, uttering their shrill squeaks, and probably disconcerting the new-comer so much that he either fires at one of them by mistake, or fails to perceive the snipe which may rise amongst or near them. The flight of the pin-tail is fairly steady, and not the erratic zig-zag of the common snipe.

On the question of guns, "every man to his taste," but the lighter the better, as a gun gets terribly heavy after an hour or two mud-plugging under the tropical sun, and fails to come up to the shoulder readily, the result being many misses. The left barrel should be choke, as at times the birds are rather wild, rising at 40-50 yards. Smokeless powder is a *sine qua non*, and No. 8 shot the best. Snipe sticks, for carrying dead birds, are excellent, and good large waterproof cartridge bags are advisable. For costume, any old clothes not too light or glaring in colour, old boots or shoes, puttees or not, as you please, and woollen socks or stockings, as a better protection against damage to the feet, by grit, than cotton or merino articles. A good "topee" is

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an absolute necessity. Presuming that you are ready to start for, say, paddy-field shooting, you proceed to select as many boys as you require (always available at 25 cents each), hand your cartridge bag to one and snipe sticks to another, and wend your way to the shooting ground. Having reached the fields, and decided on the way they are to be worked, you line out your boys on either side of you, with orders not to get ahead, but, if anything, keep a wee bit behind the guns, and, above all, not to rush forward to pick up fallen birds—these are to be gathered as the “line” reaches them. If the fields are standing paddy you must on no account walk through the paddy—if you do there will be a row, to say the least of it! You must travel along the narrow ridges only, and shoot from them also; you will get used to it after a bit. The boys retrieving fallen birds in the paddy will not be interfered with, as they are careful for their own sakes to do no damage. If the growth of the paddy is somewhat advanced a little “shoo-ing” will be needed to put the birds up, but in ploughed unplanted fields silence is best, as the birds see you all the time.

In paddy fields surrounded by village lands and gardens you must be careful where your shot is likely to go—if not, there may be a coroner’s inquest!

In shooting round irrigation tanks it is best for the shooter to walk along the very edge of the water, with two or three boys only on the land side. The reason of this is that most of the birds lie close to the water and very often fly across or partly over it when put up. Do not allow men and boys to follow you indiscriminately; if you do you will soon have such a “tail” as will preclude any chance of sport, their object being usually to pick up your empty cartridge cases, which they put

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to all sorts of uses. As a last hint, when you have been industriously tramping through mud, or along ridges, for some hours, successfully or otherwise, and feel the need of some liquid refreshment, there is nothing in the wide world to equal the water of the young coconut, known to the natives as *kurumba*. These can usually be procured from any village garden for a consideration of a few cents each; the end of the husk is deftly sliced off with a knife, baring the young shell, which is then equally deftly opened, and you proceed to absorb a drink "fit for the gods"—cool, sweet, and delicious.

To turn now to personal experiences, I think I am justified in feeling a little pardonable pride in the following account of my own first essay in the art of shooting. My knowledge of shooting was a minus quantity, as I had never shot anything in my life before, and barely even fired off a gun. I had become the proud possessor, owing to a mistaken idea on the part of my people at home, of a double-barrelled gun consisting of, right barrel No. 12 cylinder bore, left barrel a rifle bored to take a Snider cartridge, the whole thing weighing about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  pounds; and with this gun, one afternoon in November 1889, I made my first appearance as a snipe shooter, or indeed shooter of any sort. My bungalow was close to a fine range of fields, so I recruited four Singhalese youngsters from the village and away I went. Before I had advanced ten yards into the fields a snipe got up close to me, flying away, somewhat from left to right. Up went the gun and, covering the bird as best I could, instinctively allowing a little, I pulled trigger and—down fell my first snipe! Scorning to show any surprise or emotion before my boys, I instructed one to retrieve it and walked on, but my heart was

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bursting with pride. From that moment my "hobby" became developed, and shooting has been my principal recreation and delight ever since.

I then spent about two hours perambulating the paddy fields, firing altogether nineteen shots and bagging no less than eight snipe, all with this heavy gun having no second barrel available. I began to have rosy visions of myself as a crack snipe shot, and naturally considered that I could very considerably improve on this first effort, but—I *did not!* During my first season, I bagged altogether 164 snipe for an expenditure of 393 shots, equal to 41.75 per cent. of kills, all in the local paddy fields. The next season I find I killed, also mostly in the local fields, which never held many birds, 146 snipe for 295 shots, equivalent to 49.5 per cent., and I certainly have not done better in average since, though I have, of course, become possessed of more serviceable guns than the one I mentioned. It may be that I did not go in for it sufficiently strongly, for I was never anything but a "potterer" as far as snipe shooting is concerned, being content with a morning's shoot and a bag of 10 or 12 couple at any time, even in the teeming low country, usually preferring some other branch of sport for the rest of the day. However, I always enjoyed my shooting, probably the more because I never made a labour of it, and I know of nothing pleasanter than a few days in a good snipe ground. An incident which once occurred in the low country is perhaps worth recording. Two or three years ago I and my friend and neighbour H. D. Garrick "biked" to Haburane (47 miles) for a week-end after snipe. We arrived at the rest-house in time for eleven o'clock breakfast, and, in the afternoon, tramped round various tanks and paddy

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fields in the neighbourhood, getting fair sport—in fact we accounted for 25 couple between us that afternoon. At one time, ending up a set of paddy fields, narrow, jungle on two sides, village on third side, we found ourselves in a really hot corner and for a few minutes the fun was fast and furious, the birds having all been driven towards that end by our shooting up the fields. When we had finished, Garrick came to me and asked me to find out what his cartridge man, a local Singhalese, had been trying to make him understand, as Garrick did not speak Singhalese and the man knew no Tamil (the “Estate” language). I, from my long residence in Matale and continual working of Singhalese, being fairly at home with the language, asked the man what it was, and, to my surprise, he told me he had tried to point out a leopard to Garrick, just inside the undergrowth at the end of the fields! Garrick’s emotion was too deep for utterance. He said the man pointed to something and he thought it was a jackal, whilst it was so near he could have about killed it with No. 8! This animal was seen directly after, by another man, crossing a piece of open making for big jungle. It must have been quietly watching us all the time!

There is nothing particularly calling for remark in shooting the medium elevation paddy fields in well-populated country, except that, as a rule, the surroundings are such as should appeal to the admiration of anybody not absolutely blind to the beauties of nature; but in the low country, especially if you happen to hit upon the ploughing time, a perfectly amazing scene of bird life will be presented to your view. Sandpipers of many different species are flying in all directions, uttering their shrill calls, the little “mud” cranes stalking about, here and

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there the larger white cranes, or a solitary stately grey heron, and the ubiquitous red-wattled lapwing will be there with his irritating "did-did-did-he-do-it" call. Constantly hovering about overhead are many hawks, kites, brahminy kites, little hawk-eagles, and white-headed fishing eagles, all on the look-out for a chance of food such as frogs, lizards, and snakes, but not disdaining a dead snipe, for I have more than once seen one of these birds of prey, especially the brahminy kite, swoop down and take a snipe the moment it had been shot. Such is the scene which will present itself to the view of the sportsman in the low country, but he will have little time or opportunity to take in its wonders when he once commences to shoot, if the birds are in any way plentiful. However, there is a glorious uncertainty about snipe shooting out here which rather adds to the interest of it. You may find the fields thick with every kind of bird you do not want, but the snipe may be all but absent. Cross a stream, however, or a belt of jungle, into the next set of fields, and, like magic, the scene may change; the snipe may be there in countless numbers, and your difficulty will be to load and fire fast enough. Your attendant boys will be as busy as possible picking up your birds (always provided you hold a "straight gun"), and a feeling of sweet content will take the place of your previous irritation at the want of game. Mentally you keep your score and wonder how the other fellows are getting on, for, as like as not, you will have a humble rupee sweep on the bag, and also, if you carefully counted your cartridges before setting off, you will like to know your percentage of kills. Now and then you may pick up a "painter," or have the luck to come across a flock of golden plover; or an odd pigeon or two crossing the

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fields may be added to the bag and give variety to your dinner. The sport is excellent, and you require to be in good training to keep it up, for the walking is hard under our tropical sun; but just don't you appreciate your bath, feed, and long chair at the end of the day!

In the local paddy fields I could seldom secure more than two to about six couple of birds, during a morning or afternoon shoot, partly on account of my poor shooting and partly on account of the scarcity of birds, which were few and far between.

I may say also that the shooting, having usually to be done off the narrow dividing ridges which only afford about six inches of precarious foothold, is anything but easy.

Birds do not come in such numbers nowadays to our fields owing to the great extension of tea and cacao cultivation, clearing up the scrub land in the vicinity of the paddy fields. The following entries, taken haphazard from my diary, show the style of sport I was able to enjoy of a morning or evening, and, for that matter, in a good year can still enjoy in the fields around the estate:—

3 snipe for 6 shots.	Local fields.
10   "   26   "	"
6   "   16   "	"
6   "   10   "	"
11   "   21   "	"
11   "   17   "	"
16   "   26   "	"
5   "   5   "	"
6   "   8   "	"
9   "   14   "	"

And so on, some years birds being more plentiful than others. I usually put in a little snipe shooting during

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big game shooting trips, but never take down more than 100 or 200 cartridges for that purpose, not devoting any special time to it.

I find from my diary that I visited Minneriya for the first time in February 1891, on my way to shoot an elephant. There were not many birds there, for I find, the first time I went out into the tank, I only fired 23 shots and secured 13 snipe, and my diary notes that they were very wild. A few days later, at Topawewa, I picked up 8 couple one evening and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  couple another evening, again finding them very wild, rising at 40 yards or over.

Not long ago, however, being at Topawewa, birds were fairly plentiful, and my cousin Roy Storey, who had accompanied me, going round part of the north end of the tank one morning, alone, secured  $28\frac{1}{2}$  couple. In the afternoon I joined him and we both went right round the tank south-about (10 solid miles, as I live, by pedometer), but did not find many birds, my cousin bagging  $11\frac{1}{2}$  couple and I  $12\frac{1}{2}$  couple, making a total of  $52\frac{1}{2}$  couple for the day.

An hour or two after snipe used to be a pleasant relaxation during a big game trip, but, as I said before, I never took cartridges enough to make a business of it, but kept that part of the sport for an off day.

I find an entry in my diary, of an evening's stroll along the water side of the great Diwulani swamp in Tamankaduwa, following a hard day after elephants, resulting in a bag of 10 couple of snipe and a few other water-birds.

Another time I find recorded  $6\frac{1}{2}$  couple secured one evening in the tank at Vavoniya, and 11 couple next morning in tank and paddy fields.

Haburane gives me a bag of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  couple one afternoon

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and 7 couple of snipe and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  brace of teal next morning. My diary contains scores of such little entries, but nowhere a big bag. I have never had any particular yearnings for a record bag—probably owing to inability to accomplish such a feat, but I prefer to think it is because I do not care to turn a pleasure into hard labour. The sport is charming and there is no need to overdo it, but I suppose man's ambition must be satisfied, and, no doubt, a sportsman coming upon a really "hot" range of fields will go for it for all he is worth, with a bag of at least 50 couple in his mind's eye. Such a chance occurs now and again, so when found make the most of it, and good luck to you! You may feel quite satisfied with yourself if you can average 50 per cent. for the season, in all-round shooting in tanks, swamps, and paddy fields, taking your chance at all within range, without picking your shots. The following records show what can be done by good shots:—

Captain Legge mentions a bag of  $71\frac{1}{2}$  couple made by an officer near Trincomalee in the "seventies," in one day's shooting. Lieutenant Rice, stationed at Trincomalee in 1893, made the record bag for Ceylon, which stands good to date (1904), namely,  $103\frac{1}{2}$  couple. This fine bag was made, I believe, at Kantalay, and was published in the *Field* in 1894.

My friend, M. L. Wilkins, of Madulkele district, a good all-round shot with both rifle and fowling-piece, made a bag of 44 snipe for an expenditure of 49 shots, one morning in February 1903, a fine performance.

The late "Barney" Parrinton, at the time on Keppitigalla Estate, Kurunegalla district, once told me that on one occasion, having gone down to the paddy fields, below the estate, with 12 cartridges in his pocket, he

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brought back 14 snipe! This was effected by bringing off double kills on two occasions, with a kill for each of the other cartridges. "Barney" was a phenomenal shot, however, and I believe could generally count on his 90 per cent. of birds. He was also a wonderful "trick" shot, for I have seen him, time after time, smash a bottle, thrown into the air, with a bullet out of an ordinary 12-bore.

Mr. J. J. Robinson, the veteran Passara planter and sportsman, in company with two other veterans, Mr. W. Stewart Taylor and Mr. R. P. Macfarlane, records a fine bag at Butale in February 1893. They arrived on the ground in the evening of 2nd February, and had about an hour's shooting close round camp, after a long, hot ride, bagging 10 couple of snipe. The next day, not shooting systematically together but separate most of the time, they secured a fine bag, though they made a very long stop for breakfast owing to the great heat, and Mr. Taylor did not shoot after 2.30 P.M. Mr. Robinson's score was 55 couple; Mr. Stewart Taylor got 75 couple, and Mr. Macfarlane got 35 couple, a grand total of 165 couple that day. The next morning only Mr. Robinson and Mr. Taylor went out and found the birds very wild, but they did fairly well, as the record for the short evening shoot of first day, second full day, and half third day pans out a grand total of 275 couple snipe and some 20 odd couple of pigeons, plover, and a few teal, a very notable performance.

Mr. Robinson tells me that this was the last really big snipe year, and that, since that time, the number of birds arriving every year has become less and less, as far as the south country is concerned. Large out-of-the-way tracts, never shot over, but which used to teem

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with birds, he says, now hardly hold a bird. He thinks some disease or Indian droughts must account for it. Another absentee, Mr. Robinson has noticed, during the last six years, a former arrival with the north-east monsoon, is the harrier-hawk. Snipe also arrive there later than formerly and remain well on into May, whereas, years ago, not a bird was to be found after 15th April.

Personally, I have certainly noticed a shortage in Matale, but that may be accounted for by the opening up of the jungle, or chena lands, which formerly surrounded the paddy fields, but I also am of opinion the north country is not what it was when Lieutenant Rice made his great bag. 1893 seems to have been the last big year for the north also.

A well-known sportsman, writing to me on the subject of snipe, says :—

“The chief change of recent years is that improved weapons and means of transport have made the snipe much less plentiful than they used to be. Fifty brace in a morning is a bag very rarely secured nowadays, whereas it used to be a not uncommon occurrence. The facility with which birds can be sent to Colombo, and the great demand for them, has called into existence a body of professional native sportsmen who, during the season, do nothing but shoot, so that all places within reach of the railway are in a very short time left practically bare of birds. This evil is likely to increase, and there can be little doubt that snipe will continue to decrease year by year. I also very much doubt whether so many birds come in now as used to—the increased destruction leaves fewer to return to India and proportionately fewer, therefore, to return in the season.”

No one is better able to form an opinion on the

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subject than the writer of the above, and my own opinion of the growing shortage is the same as his, though Mr. J. J. Robinson disagreed with me when I suggested it to him.

In the meantime enjoy the sport whilst you can. There is nothing like it for training eye and hand, and for bringing you into hard walking condition.

## CHAPTER II

### PIGEONS

CEYLON, like most or all eastern countries, is well endowed with doves and pigeons, both in numbers and varieties. To my mind the pigeons form one of the great charms of the jungle country. I like to watch their swift, graceful flight, and love to hear their melodious calls; the "ku-rukity-coo" of the common spotted dove; the low, plaintive "coo," from the depth of the forest, of the lovely bronze-wing; the deep "wuk-woo" of the grand imperial green pigeon, and the beautiful whistling call of the pompador green pigeon; listening to them, and other wonderful jungle sounds, the cares of life and trammels of civilisation are forgotten, and one feels at peace with all the world.

Strictly speaking, pigeon shooting hardly counts as a branch of sport. It is usually only an "off-day" recreation, or when in want of something for the pot. They are not met with in such numbers as to offer an inducement to make a day of it, except, perhaps, in the case of fruit-eating pigeons at the time when many of the jungle trees are in fruit, as in August and September. They then seem to lose their usual caution, but generally they are so shy and wary that, although when you begin shooting there may be hundreds about, by the time you have fired two or three shots they will all have disappeared like magic. If you really want to make a bag, however, for camp food, the only way is to find a fruit tree to which they, particularly the orange-breast

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and the pompadour, are resorting, hide yourself near at hand, and "pot" them when they come to the tree or bag them just when preparing to settle. This sounds unsportsmanlike, and so it is, but if the country is thick it is the only way to get them, and if you have no fresh meat in camp it is very often the only way to provide it, as you would not bring off as many flying shots in an hour as would provide yourself only with a satisfactory meal. If you happened to be near a dry paddy field you might bag a good many spotted doves on flight, but they are poor eating. Taking all the foregoing circumstances into consideration, I will therefore confine myself to a brief description of the birds to be met with in Ceylon, merely, however, naming the rare or occasional visitors, without any detailed description.

Of the rarer, or strictly local birds, Captain Legge lists the following:—

The purple wood-pigeon (*Alsocomus puniceus*). An Indian pigeon and only a very rare visitant in the north.

The common Indian dove (*Turtur risorius*) is found in parts of the Northern Province.

Length 11 to 12 inches; bill blackish; legs and feet purple-red; claws black.

Head, throat, and breast vinous grey; lower part of hind neck, back, wing coverts, &c., brownish-grey, to bluish-grey on lower breast.

Indian red dove (*Turtur tranquebaricus*); rare visitor.

Hodgson's turtle-dove (*Turtur pulchratus*); rare occasional visitor only.

Southern green pigeon (*Crocopus chlorigaster*) is to be found in the extreme north of the island only.

So much for the rarer kinds, which no one but a naturalist or collector would go out of the way to look for.

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To deal now with the more common varieties, we have:—

The spotted dove (*Turtur suratensis*). By far the commonest species to be found in Ceylon, frequenting the whole of the low country, and up to as high as 3000 feet above the sea.

Length about 11 inches; bill dark; legs and feet red.

Head, throat, and breast ashy-grey; black collar spotted white; back and wing coverts, &c., ashy-brown to reddish-grey; white or reddish-grey spots all over back and wing coverts. Though these birds look fine and plump they have very small bodies, are hard to kill as they can carry a lot of shot, and are poor eating, being rather tough. May usually be found in numbers in dry paddy fields and such-like open spaces.

The bronze-wing dove (*Chalcophaps indica*), one of the most beautiful of all doves, may be met with throughout all Ceylon forests as it is a lover of deep damp shades, whence its plaintive melodious "coo" may be heard at all times. It is a solitary bird and not to be found in numbers except in the fruit season, on the trees they affect, though in the low country at the height of the dry season they may be seen in fair numbers congregating at the water-pools towards evening for a drink. Length 10 to 10.5 inches; bill red; legs and feet red. Forehead white, blending into ashy-blue on the crown; neck, throat, and breast purple-brown; back and wing coverts a lovely metallic blue-green, showing a wonderful bronze hue in some lights; lower back sepia-brown, crossed by two broad bands of bluish-white; tail blackish.

These lovely little birds are excellent eating, and usually very plump. An occasional flying shot may be got at one on a jungle road crossing from side to side, or flying down

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the road with meteoric speed; but, as I have hinted previously, if you really want a "bag" you will have to stalk and "pot" them, guided thereto by their low plaintive call, which, by the way, is deceptive and ventriloquistic as to distance. Twelve years ago I used to be able to secure plenty of spotted doves around the estate, and occasionally a bronze-wing. Now, however, as there is little natural cover left, even the spotted dove has become scarce, and I don't see a bronze-wing once in a year. I have more than once seen a bronze-wing fly through the whole length of my front verandah (78 feet). Their speed is terrific, and they cannot always stop or guide themselves, for they have been known often enough to dash against a bullock-cart cover on a jungle road, killing themselves on the spot.

There is an estate bungalow in the Madulkele District, situated on a small plateau, so outlined by trees that, at a distance, its whitewashed walls present the appearance of a gap amongst them. Pigeons on flight passing that way make for the apparent gap, dash against the wall and are instantly killed.

I am indebted to Mr. J. J. Robinson for the following little experience in Uva low country with bronze-wings. He says:—"I was out after quail, and when approaching a bit of forest I saw a few bronze-wings feeding on some fruit trees. I cautiously got as near as I could and sent my coolies round to beat through the forest towards me, with the result that I enjoyed a most perfect quarter of an hour's sport, bagging 17 bronze-wings and 2 imperial green pigeons as they were driven over or past me, whilst quite other 15 bronze-wings escaped unshot at. In twenty-nine years' wanderings I have never before seen so many of these lovely pigeons together."

I remember once, on my way to visit a neighbour,

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having my gun with me, I came upon a jungle tree, in a bit of forest through which my path led, in full fruit, bearing a sort of berry. There was a lot of fluttering going on in the tree, and as I came near out flew some bronze-wings. I waited near the tree and bagged 5 in less than five minutes, getting them as they approached the tree in the preliminary flutter before settling. I had to do this as they came to the tree through the jungle, and I could not see them until quite close. My friend and I enjoyed our breakfast that day!

The orange-breasted green pigeon (*Osmotreron bicincta*). This is one of the fruit-eaters, and may be found all over the Ceylon low country.

Length 10.3 to 10.6 inches; bill greenish to bluish; legs and feet coral-red.

Forehead, face, and throat yellowish-green, becoming greener on the fore neck and crown, to grey-blue on hind neck and upper back; back, wing coverts, and upper tail coverts brownish-green; tail bluish-ashy, with a median dark band; a narrow lilac band across upper part of chest, and a broader band of orange colour; lower breast yellowish-green to yellow. The female has not the lilac and orange bands, and may easily be mistaken by the casual observer for the female pompadour pigeon. This is a very handsome bird, and distinctly good to eat. May be met with in small flocks on the outskirts of any forest, generally near fruiting trees, or on tall detached trees. Their flight is swift and straight, giving good sporting shots, especially towards evening, if you happen to be in a neighbourhood where they are plentiful. Their call is a hoarse kind of croak or chuckle. I have shot them occasionally in the Matale Valley in the fruiting season, and, of course, made an occasional bag in the low country. I remember once

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when on a trip with my friend T. Y. Wright,<sup>1</sup> our camp was clean out of meat. We were after bears in August, the close season for deer, so we looked around for pigeons. We soon found some fruit trees to which the orange-breasts were coming in numbers, and tried at first to pick them off as they flew, but the country was not open enough, so our success was small. We then took our stand near the fruit trees, and went in for "potting" with such success that in about a quarter of an hour or less we had bagged 24 birds, to the huge delight of our coolies, who are rather fond of game-bird curry, and we ourselves thoroughly appreciated our dinner that night.

The pompadour green pigeon (*Osmotreron pompadora*). Also a fruit-eating pigeon, common to all forest and well-wooded parts of Ceylon low country.

Length 10.3 to 10.6 inches; bill green; legs and feet purple-red.

Forehead and face greenish-yellow, blending into purer yellow on the throat, and ashy-blue on crown and nape; ashy-green on hind neck; upper back and most of wing coverts maroon; lower back and central tail feathers dull green.

Female: not quite so yellow, and wanting the maroon mantle.

This is perhaps the most toothsome of all our pigeons, besides being a very handsome little bird. Its habits are about the same as the orange-breast, but it is if anything shyer and more difficult to get a shot at flying, though they may be killed in numbers during the fruiting season, in the trees they feed on. Their call is a most melodious whistle, easily imitated, and by which natives often lure them to perch on a tree under which they lie concealed to shoot them.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lieut.-Col. T. Y. Wright, Officer Commanding Ceylon Planters' Rifle Corps.

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The rock pigeon (*Columba intermedia*).

Length 13.2 to 13.5 inches; bill leaden; legs and feet pinkish-red; claws black. Head and upper part of throat dull bluish-slate, blending into metallic green on neck and chest and upper back; back, wing coverts, &c., pale slaty-blue, the wing coverts being crossed by two black bands; upper tail coverts and tail dark slate-blue.

This is a fine pigeon, and, to the casual observer, almost a counterpart of the big wood pigeon to be found at home. It was formerly supposed to be extremely local, confined to one or two colonies on the sea-coast, but Captain Legge questions that, and says there are more colonies of these birds in the interior than is usually thought. Whether it is when on the travel or in search of feeding grounds I don't know, but I have found them fairly common in the North Central Province, and have now and then shot them fighting, or stalked and potted them when resting, as they sometimes do, in the very tops of the tallest forest trees, whence may, now and then, be heard the low deep "coo-oo" which seems to be their usual call.

These pigeons are grain-eaters, I believe, almost entirely, and, Captain Legge says, may be met with in large flocks near the shores of Kottiyar Bay, Trincomalee, feeding in the paddy fields, whilst in the Southern Province, near Hambantota and Tangalla, they are met with in great numbers, feeding in all open spaces, dry paddy fields, threshing floors, and dry-grain cleanings. I have never seen them in flocks in the North Central Province jungle country, but they pass overhead in fair numbers, singly or in pairs towards evening, generally flying eastward. This may be when there is no feeding ground available near the coast, causing them to travel inland in search of fresh fields. There used to be a colony of these birds in a gorge

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through which a stream flows near Nalande—the Nalande Oya—but they are not to be found there now. Captain Legge also says there may be a colony near Mihintale, and I think there may be a colony on Dimbulagalakande (Gunner's Quoin), on the east side of the Mahaweliganga in Tamankaduwa district of the North Central Province. I have found them wary when fighting or resting, and not easy to get within shot of. They are good eating.

The imperial green pigeon (*Carpophaga ænea*) is certainly the grandest pigeon to be met with in Ceylon.

Length 15.5 to 16.2 inches; bill greeny-bluish; legs and feet lake-red; claws olive-green.

Head, neck, and throat bluish-grey; forehead, close to base of bill, whitish; back, upper tail coverts, and wings dark blue-green, with a coppery lustre viewed against the light; in fact, roughly speaking, wanting the white head, this bird is a very large edition of the bronze-wing, though its colours are duller and darker.

This magnificent bird is quite common in all the forest-clad portions of the low country. Usually shy and wary, alighting in the extreme tops of the highest trees it can find in the forest, it is not easy to stalk, though towards evening good fighting shots may often be got. It is an excellent bird for the table. Its note is a guttural "wuk-woo," the "woo" being a very deep sound, and the effect, heard in the jungle, is quite startling. I have shot very few of these grand birds.

The Ceylon wood pigeon (*Palumbus Torringtoniæ*) is peculiar to Ceylon. Length 13.5 to 14.3 inches; bill bluish; legs and feet reddish; claws white. Head, nape, and upper throat purple-ashy, passing to a more purple tint on chest, paling to a more reddish colour on the belly; hind neck and upper back reddish-bronze, with

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metallic green; a broad black half-collar on hind neck spotted white; back and wings leady-bluish, to blackish-slate tail.

This splendid pigeon is confined to the mountain forests at elevations above 3000 feet, and, personally, I have never shot one, though I have occasionally seen them when on a visit to high elevation estates. It is sometimes erroneously spoken of as a "black pigeon," and certainly looks very dark in colour when merely seen on flight. It is a very shy and wary bird, not easy to bag, except, as is usually the case with all wild pigeons, when feeding, at which time they are less watchful.

They also give, at times, fine sport to the Haputale residents when flighting, or by beating the jungles they frequent, when, occasionally, really good bags may be made. I find these pigeons are often spoken of locally as "blue rocks"—quite a misnomer.

This closes the list of pigeons to be found in Ceylon, and most of them are well worth "finding."

## CHAPTER III

### SMALL GAME HUNTING WITH DOGS ON ESTATES

I THINK about ninety-nine planters out of every hundred in Ceylon keep a dog or dogs, for companionship at least, whilst almost all with any sporting tastes possess dogs capable of running a scent of some sort. Those who can afford it import English harriers or beagles; those who cannot afford such luxuries confine themselves to country-bred offspring of such imported dogs, or cross-breeds with as good a sire, or dam, as possible. English beagles, harriers, and foxhounds do well on all kinds of deer out here, but cross-breeds, such as beagle-terriers, beagle-dachshunds, beagle-spaniels, or even beagle-pariahs are certainly the best dogs for hare, particularly when they have to be hunted in "lantana" scrub and such-like awkward cover. Pure-bred dogs waste too much time puzzling over a cold scent—the half-breeds do not, for, as soon as the scent gets faint, the latter will leave it and range round at speed to try and pick it up fresher, whereas the pure-bred dog sticks to it, goes back to the check, starts again, and certainly eventually puzzles it out, but with an unnecessary waste of time. Again, if a pure-bred dog hits on the scent of vermin such as a mongoose or civet cat and the like, he will stick to it for the rest of the day, and night probably. The cross-breed, not having such pluck and spirit, tires after a bit and leaves it—a very desirable consummation. Small game such as hares, and vermin such as mongoose, civet

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cats, palm cats, wild cats, porcupines, and jackals, according to situation or elevation, exist, more or less, on almost every estate in Ceylon, whilst pig, red deer, and elk can be hunted on such estates as have forest boundaries. Concerning the three latter I give an account further on, in my chapters on pig, elk, and deer shooting. I am not a "dog" expert, and know very little about them, but the following short account of my own methods of keeping dogs (a few only—never more than three or four) may be of some use to others. I have no experience of the high elevation estates, where wet and cold are the main things to guard against, but confine my observations to the rather hot climate of the Matale Valley.

To keep the dog-kennel, or house, free from vermin I find nothing to beat a regular application of tar, inside, walls, bench, and floor beneath it. To keep the dogs vermin-free you need not be eternally washing them, but give them a thorough rub-over every few weeks with margosa oil. It stinks abominably, I admit, but it will keep your dogs free from all vermin, and, to a great extent, skin diseases of various sorts.

Work your dogs pretty hard, or at least give them any amount of exercise, and, if you want them really to hunt, do not turn them into house-dogs. Bed them on clean paddy-straw, rub them dry when they come in wet, and last, but most important of all, give them plenty to eat, including a good allowance of meat and bones. I have found, for many years past, that a diet of equal parts of boiled rice and "bovinia" (the latter being a meal made of various Indian grains), with the meat and bones from an ox-head, keeps my dogs in excellent condition, and on it they can stand a vast amount of hard work.

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To turn now to the use of your dogs, the most common "small game" to be hunted is undoubtedly the hare.

The Ceylon species is *Lepus nigricollis*, the black-necked hare, so called from the peculiar velvet-black of the back of the neck. It is a good deal smaller than the English hare, and greyer in colour, a good-sized male seldom weighing over five pounds.

They exist all over Ceylon, at all elevations, in scrub, grass, patches of jungle and any thick undergrowth, and are of course vegetable feeders. They usually abound in the sandy wastes on the sea-coast, but are very plentiful almost everywhere, especially in the low country.

In shooting hares over dogs the art of snap-shooting must be cultivated, as it is seldom that an easy shot in the open offers itself, the usual chance being when dodging through the tea or crossing a narrow path. When your dogs go into cover, however, there is a glorious uncertainty as to what will be turned out. It may be a hare, a jackal, red deer, chevrotain (commonly known as mouse deer), or a pig; or they may get on cat or mongoose and run round and round the patch of scrub for hours, until you tire of it and go home. Again, they may "bail up" a porcupine, in which case you may expect some nastily wounded, occasionally blinded dogs full of quills stuck in their heads, noses, and chests—they never seem to learn the necessary caution.

Two of the best dogs I ever owned were sisters, "Vic," a pretty little beagle-terrier, well marked, and "Patch," a throw-back of some kind, being a minute lop-eared terrier, so small as always to be spoken of as the "pup" by natives, but absolutely the staunchest little animal I ever met. They were between four and five years old when I first got them, and not properly entered

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either, but still they knew what a hare was, and when, after some two or three months' patient work, I got them to understand that hunting was their business, they lived, from that time forward, for nothing else, the keenest of the keen. I also had, at that time, another curious bitch known as "Carbolic," so named, I think, because she owed her recovery from a bad attack of mange, in her youth, to a liberal treatment of carbolic oil (*i.e.* olive oil or sweet oil containing a small percentage of carbolic acid). She was by a pariah out of an English bull-terrier bitch, and, in appearance, was a rather large, good-looking black-and-tan terrier with somewhat of a "bull-terrier" shaped head. She took to hunting very keenly at first, but soon found herself rather large for working the lantana scrub. She then, entirely "on her own," adopted the curious plan of standing quite silent by me, whilst the other two worked the cover, absolutely quivering all over with excitement, never even breaking silence when they found and gave tongue, but the moment the hare broke she was after it like a shot, uttering shrill, excited yelps. If I killed a hare she would stand over it, merely licking it all over and keeping the other two, inveterate "worriers," off. If wounded and still running she would inevitably run it down, and many is the hare I owe to her, run down, or found in cover having got away badly wounded. I always carry a gun on chance when I take my dogs out, though I may not get a shot, sometimes, for a week; it keeps a man in form, however, and quick "on the drop." Here is a typical account of a successful morning's stroll round the estate, taken from my diary:—"On my round this morning I took my dogs out as usual, and soon put them into a small patch of scrub in the middle of a native dry-grain clearing adjoining the 'Dehipitiya' tea field.

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Patch soon found, and almost at once ran the hare out at a corner about 70 yards from where I stood. It was a hopelessly long shot for my right barrel with No. 6, but I fired, with, of course, no effect, following it up almost instantly with my left loaded with swan-shot. The hare, however, ran on towards the tea field and disappeared in the belt of scrub bordering it, so I ran round into the tea to the point where I had seen the hare disappear and called up the dogs. Vic and Carbolic only turned up to range the tea, when I soon heard the latter growling, and running up, found the hare dead and Carbolic, as usual, standing guard against Vic. I found that one swan-shot had caught it, breaking the left shoulder and probably damaging the lungs. Sent the hare to the bungalow by a cooly, and went to have a look at my pluckers in the 'Elwela' field. There I put the dogs into an isolated bit of scrub, having tea field on three sides and a paddy field watercourse on the other. Patch again found, and, after a lively chorus from her and Vic, turned the hare out near where I had taken my stand on an ant-hill, giving me a fair view amongst the tea, and, as it ran almost towards me, it gave an easy shot which I took advantage of."

So much for a successful stroll round, but many and many are the days when I have not even had a run, besides which I should think that for every hare shot at I run three at which I never get a chance, not to speak of an occasional miss. The following "scores," taken haphazard from my diary, show the style of sport my dogs give me:—

1895							
March	16	.	.	.	.	.	1 hare
"	20	.	.	.	.	.	1 "
"	22	.	.	.	.	.	1 "
"	26	.	.	.	.	.	2 "
"	29	.	.	.	.	.	1 "

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March	30	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 hare
"	31	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 "
April	9	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 "
"	11	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 "
"	15	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 "
"	16	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 "
"	24	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 "
"	25	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 "
"	30	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 "

In 1903 I find sport almost as good as ever, as the following entry will testify:—

*7th October* 1903.—“Had good sport near Irulanthie’s land in abandoned ‘chenas.’ I got a quail by a neat shot, and the dogs ran a hare which I did not get sight of. Went on to the grass field—blank. Tried a ‘chena’ adjoining it and a hare was turned out into a narrow strip of tea, where I knocked it over by a good snap-shot. Went on to Dehipitya field and put the dogs into a ‘chena,’ separated by a path from the tea field, out of which they soon dislodged a hare which broke before any warning tongue was heard, and darted across the path into the tea. I made a very quick snap-shot at it, and was properly pleased when I saw it double up. Home at dusk well satisfied, and getting to like the new 20-bore very much.”

Even after all these years of hunting in and around this estate I find I am still recording five or six hares bagged per month during the wet months when scent is good, but I get very little sport in the dry months.

Here is another extract of a recent date from my diary: “Had a melancholy experience yesterday evening, when I fired two double-barrelled shots and one single shot at a hare and missed it every time. I must plead that they were all long

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shots. This morning, however, I made up arrears a bit. My coolies, pluckers, and manurers were all in the bungalow field, so, when visiting them, as the ground was damp I took my dogs out, with the result that in less than an hour I bagged two hares and a mongoose, the dogs working well and holding the scent without a falter."

I have literally hundreds of such-like incidents recorded in my old diaries, vastly interesting to me when looking up reminiscences of years ago.

Speaking of the habits of hares when hunted, I think their commonest and most successful trick, and one which baffles dogs to the utmost out here, is to break into a tea field, and, after running here and there for some time, to suddenly squat under a tea bush as still as a corpse. I have, time after time, seen the dogs run past a hare so squatted within two feet and never see it, the extra "whiff" of scent thus got only exciting them to rush more madly forward. If the hare remains in this way dead still it is perfectly safe, if unseen by the shooter, or unless some painstaking dog works its way *slowly* along the scent, when "Mr. Lepus" may be dropped on. These hares take a good deal of killing sometimes, and can carry a lot of shot, necessitating the use of both barrels very often, unless you are using a largish size like No. 4 or 5. I have more than once seen a hare running hard on the *bones* of its broken fore-legs for some distance, before dropping dead.

Such a thing as this must mean that their sense of pain cannot approach that of human beings—a man with both legs broken would not only be unable to move, but, more than likely, be insensible with pain and shock. Another account of a run, or rather a series of runs, with Vic and Patch, a real "red-letter" day, may be of interest, and is certainly worth recording:—After playing in a cricket

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match at Matala one afternoon (Saturday) I went on to Beredewelle Estate to spend Sunday with my old friend J. B. Tennant, having sent my gun and the two little bitches over with my "box" cooly. Two other cricketing neighbours, both sportsmen, J. C. Tribe and S. K. Bousfield, were also Tennant's guests. On Sunday morning we went over the hill to Dullewa, intending to try for hare in the chenas surrounding the clearings of an estate belonging to Hodgson Bell, which, we knew, were generally sure finds. Bousfield and I walked some distance ahead of the other two, who were on horseback, we gaining on them up the zigzag road by taking short cuts across bends. Just over the hill-top, on the path going down into Dullewa hollow, I put the dogs into a small bit of scrub (lantana), when they soon treated us to a little burst of music and were not long in turning out a hare, at which Bousfield got a double shot but missed. After a bit of a check it was put out again on my side, but my shot only succeeded in breaking one of its hind legs and it got into the cover again, only to be turned out once more, on my side, enabling me to bag it. Tribe and Tennant then arrived, and just then the dogs gave tongue again in same cover, running hard up the hill then down again, in full cry. I was standing at the lower side in a small, dry paddy field, when Tennant, who was up on a bank above the scrub, called out to me that the hare had come out and gone in again near me when my attention was directed elsewhere. The dogs soon followed up, and after awhile hunted it out near me again, and this time I was ready, bowling it over at once. We then went on to what we called "Long Island," being a long, narrow coconut grove full of scrub, in patches, with short grass spaces between, the whole almost surrounded by paddy fields, isolating it from other uplands. Dogs soon

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found here, ran for a while, then checked; found again, tongueing well, during which I saw the hare cross an open patch where the dogs again checked. As I was working them on this check I heard Tribe fire twice, and he then called to me that the hare was breaking towards my side. I nipped into a dry paddy field, outside the scrub, and the hare broke into it, dragging a broken hind leg. I missed a longish shot, first barrel, but bowled it over with the second as it ran more or less in my direction, when, to my disgust, it got up again and disappeared into a native garden close by, whence the dogs soon dislodged it, Bousfield finally bagging it. We then crossed over to the Polwatta lands, near a cocoa estate belonging to Tennant, quickly getting the dogs on to another hare, which gave a most exciting run, in and out of cover, giving no chances, and eventually breaking into standing paddy, running here, there, and everywhere, finally falling to Tribe's gun by a very sporting shot. Going on to other extensive lots of scrub we ran some six or seven other hares, Bousfield and Tribe each getting one and Tennant missing three, I getting no shot. On to other places, one hare getting away unshot at, until we came amongst the cocoa clearings, where another hare was put out close by where I stood, running through the cocoa, not getting far, however, as I stopped it first shot. We were not done yet though, for a further move resulted in another bag by Bousfield, whilst one more hare got clean away. This ended a thoroughly enjoyable morning, our bag being eight hares and at least eight others having been found and run, the whole of the work having been done by these two little bitches, which, I think, may be reckoned a very fine performance.

Their very small size enabled them to run through the nasty network of twigs in these scrubs just as easily as the

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hare, size being a very important factor, for I have seen big beagles, in the same kind of lantana scrub, lie down utterly done, unable to walk, after less than half the work gone through by my two little bitches that day. I killed 71 hares over these two before Patch pegged out to a dose of distemper. Vic eventually had to be put away, through old age and debility, after being in at the death of 127 hares. I have kept many dogs since, but none better than those two. The foregoing runs are very typical of all such hunting, so that any more accounts might tend to monotony. To the end of 1904 I have bagged 250 hares, mostly in and about the estate I live on, but this bag has extended over ten years, as I have not kept dogs continuously during that time, being often months or a year without them. All the same, when you consider that for every hare shot my dogs have run at least three others at which I do not get shots, not to mention misses, my total represents a very considerable amount of hard work for both man and dogs.

Let me see, now, what else my diary can furnish in the way of other "hunts" of sorts. Looking back a good many years I find an account of the death of a porcupine, and, as they are not common in this part of the valley, it stands out as an incident.

My dogs were ranging through a block of lantana scrub bordering a tea field and I was waiting outside, in the tea, ready for anything that might be turned out. A whimper from Driver, soon followed by unmistakable "tongue," quickly calls the other dogs to him, and one by one I heard Ruby's grand note, old Warrior's "roar," Gaylass's shrill tongue, and the frantic yaps of the little terrier Joe, not to mention the clamour of two or three other nondescripts I at that time possessed, gradually blending

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into one noisy but musical chorus. Backwards and forwards they went, but nothing broke; round and round again, time after time, and with such frantic excitement that I was puzzled to know what it might be. Presently there was a lull, followed by loud barkings from the thickest and most matted growth of the scrub, showing an unmistakable "bay." Again I wondered what it was, but two or three shrill yelps of pain, followed by more barking, soon solved the problem, and I knew I must slay that porcupine without more ado or my dogs would be in a mess. Down I went on my hands and knees and crawled into the matted mass of lantana, shoving my gun ahead of me, but presently it became a case of lying flat on my face and wriggling under the chaotic mass of branches, for it was a patch of old growth of scrub on fine soil. I heard now and then the extraordinary buzzing rattle of the angrily agitated quills, and the peculiar stamp of the hind feet of the "spiny pig," followed by more yelps and angry barkings from my dogs, so I hurried forward, as much as I could, half-choked with dirt and perspiration, until I got in sight of an agitated mass of hard-breathing, yelping, barking, growling dogs. I seized the nearest tail and pulled its owner out of my way, cuffed and shoved away one or two more, and then got a view of an enormous porcupine in all his glory of erect, bristling, black-and-white quills. I did not waste much time admiring his peculiar style of beauty, as my dogs, encouraged by my presence, were ready for another rush-in, so I shoved a cartridge into my gun and blew a hole through our friend forthwith.

I then laboriously dragged it out, a fine specimen weighing fully 20 lbs., and turned to my dogs to examine damages.

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Joe had three quills in his head, luckily no damage done ; Driver had one in his nose, another along the top of the skull, under the skin, just missing the eye, with two more in his chest ; cunning old Warrior was unscathed—catch him making a fool of himself ; the others had, here and there, a quill in head or chest, but luckily no harm done. Some Singhalese villagers turned up, and I gave the meat to them, sending a “haunch” to the bungalow as it is really good eating, something like young pork with a chicken flavour, and grand “crackling.” The Indian porcupine (*Hystrix leucura*) does, I think, more damage to gardens, or to any particular plants or trees you may value, than any other animal in existence, and must be looked upon, most decidedly, as vermin, to be destroyed accordingly. Not very long ago I purchased an estate in Madulkele District for some of my relatives, which has, in the lower division, a field known as the “rocky field,” a chaotic and picturesquely beautiful mass of rocks tumbled from a huge cliff above, extending over many acres of ground. This “field” had been beautified still more by the former owner, a well-known veteran planter, by carefully planted trees of many varieties, and, as the soil was very fine, I planted cardamoms all over it, retaining the beauty, but with an eye to profit. When the cardamoms began to put out shoots, no less than 900 were destroyed by porcupines in one month ! This was before the appointment of a resident superintendent, but when my old friend and “valley” neighbour Fred Brockman took charge, he declared war and engaged a Tamil, cunning in the art of hunting the beast, at so much *per capita*. Within two months he had paid for twenty-seven of the marauders and the nuisance ceased. They are very ubiquitous, for this damaged field is at an elevation of 3400 feet above sea-

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level, and yet porcupines are exceedingly common in the extreme low country, but, being strictly nocturnal in their habits, are seldom seen.

I have not exhausted my diary's store of variety of incident, for here is yet another phase of estate hunting:—

I let Magpie and Midget (two imported small English beagles) and Pup (a country-bred terrier with a faint trace of some hunting dog) out for a run this evening, not feeling inclined to turn out myself. After disporting themselves in my verandah and on the grass in front of the bungalow for a while, Magpie sloped off into the tea and presently a whimper made the ears of the remaining two prick up. A joyful tongue, a moment after, galvanised them into instant life, causing a precipitate rush down the verandah steps and bolt down the slight hill into the thick cover of tea on the flat below, joining in full cry with Magpie as soon as they struck scent. I got out my 12-bore Winchester long-barrelled repeating shot-gun for a possible long shot if the hare happened to run near the bungalow, but did not trouble to go out. After a bit of a run amongst the tea, however, there was a check for some time, but presently there ensued such a burst of music as made me leave my book and give attention to it. The run was so prolonged and at such a pace right through the tea, up and down, round and round, without pause or check, that "Jackal!" said I to myself, and grabbing the gun, hatless, in my slippers only, I made a bee-line for the scene of operations. Striking a pathway I hurried along it towards the dogs, and presently meeting another path at right angles to the one I was on, I took my stand there as the dogs were running that way and I knew the habit of the beast they were "chiveying." The tea was too thick and the ground too flat for me to see anything in the cover, but presently

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the jackal jumped into the path, and, as I expected, stopped, turning his head to listen to the whereabouts of the dogs. Fatal habit—the long Winchester speaks, with No. 4 shot, though it is a full 70 yards, and “jack” winces to it but goes off into the tea again, followed quickly by the dogs tonguing their loudest. They ran him some distance in the tea and into a native garden bordering it, where I heard them barking, so, following up, I found the jackal lying in a small hollow amongst weeds and scrub, done for. I put him out of his misery and returned to the bungalow well satisfied, with my equally satisfied but tired dogs following at my heels.

I had a somewhat unusual experience not long ago, bagging one morning a hare and a jackal, and actually making a similar bag in the afternoon. I was going round the estate with my dogs as usual, carrying my 20-bore loaded with No. 3 shot, when the dogs picked up a scent in one of the tea fields, ran it very vigorously without my gaining a sight of the chase, and eventually followed their quarry into a piece of scrub. I came up soon after, taking my stand about 20 yards from one corner of the scrub, having tea on both sides of and behind me, as I could hear the run coming in my direction. Very soon there was a slight rustle in the thick undergrowth just in front of me, followed by the sudden appearance of a fine jackal which pushed its way out of the cover, stood on the edge of the boundary drain and looked to the right then to the left but—fatal error—not to the front where I stood, so I filled him with No. 3 shot, and he died forthwith.

Soon after this the dogs found and ran a hare, which I also killed, which sufficed for the morning. In the evening I tried the “bungalow field” for jackal, and the little

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dogs soon found in the tea and I got a shot almost at once, crossing a path, but made a bad miss. Then ensued a long run over the hill to the back of the bungalow and back again into the tea, where I had another long shot which may have tickled "jack" up a bit. Back over the hill it went and into some scrub where it skulked and dodged for a long time, during which a hare broke from the same cover and I bagged it. After several checks, doggedly worked out by Midget who is "death" on jackals, followed by even more vigorous runs on the part of the dogs, the "jack" caved in and bayed in the scrub bordering a path, being held up by Pup and Midget. I was puzzling how to get at it when Magpie ran up, and, going in, caused the "jack" to break bay, driving it out into a path on which I stood. Never seeing me, as I remained perfectly still, the doomed animal loped along the path towards me at a slow trot with hanging head and protruding tongue, meeting an unexpected dose of No. 3 at 15 yards, which finished its career at once.

I don't think he was actually run down unless hurt by my previous long shot, but he was a sulky beast and had more than once, during the run, turned snarling on the dogs; but the three of them cowed him and he could not face their frantic clamour and apparent fierceness, though, between ourselves, a determined attack would have sent them flying!

The jackal (*Canis aureus*) is a marauder, and therefore must receive vermin's treatment. They are found all over Ceylon low country, and up to probably 3000 feet elevation. I hear their peculiar long-drawn howls, followed by their equally curious shrill yaps, very often at night, but they are not so numerous now as they were when I first came to Matale. I have never heard their call while camping in the

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jungle; they seem to be more silent there but give tongue near the villages, and also wander about at all hours of the day.

In shape they are like well-built dogs of about 20-30 lbs. weight, with rather foxy head and ears, and a bushy tail.

Colour generally a brownish-grey, somewhat reddish about the muzzle and ears and outside of limbs; tail grey to reddish-brown, with black tip.

Still another phase of "estate" hunting. Let us suppose the dogs have gone into a small patch of bush or scrub, and with frantic clamour chase their "find" round and round and round, without a check or a break, running almost all the time just inside the scrub, along the extreme edge of it—you may then "bet your boots" it is a mongoose. The instinct of these little creatures teaches them that their only chance of escape is to make their way through the thickest, most matted, thorny undergrowth they can find, which is generally round the outside edge of our *lantana* scrub, and through this the dogs push their way, crawl on their bellies, wriggle under the branches, or run round outside and in again, yelping, shrieking, gasping, choking, coughing and sneezing, but, mad with excitement, they stop at nothing, and chivey the miserable *Herpestes* for hours. They will seldom break unless another cover offers very close, such as merely crossing a path, under which circumstances they sometimes nip across; but they do occasionally, if they hear no noise outside the cover, slip out, run along the edge of the undergrowth for a few yards and in again. A chance like this enables you to bag them occasionally, as well as when crossing a path, but you have to know where and when they will break, as they don't give much time.

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They are, of course, vermin, and at times very destructive to poultry. These and all the succeeding animals, except the real cats, may be roughly described as being of the well-known weasel or pole-cat build—that is, with long bodies and tail, short legs, round ears, and sharp snouts. The most common kind I meet with in Matale is *Herpestes fulvescens*, peculiar to Ceylon; a small animal, not more than 26 to 28 inches in length over all; blacky-brown in colour, minutely speckled dull yellow. I may be wrong in my classification, but it seems to fit Blanford's description in his "Fauna of British India" of *H. fulvescens*. I once also killed, over my dogs, a specimen of the ruddy mongoose (*H. smithi*), a much bigger animal than the above, and almost exactly like a small fox in appearance and colour. They run to 40 inches in length over all, and the one I killed must have been nearly that size. They are not common in Matale, though I believe they are very plentiful in other parts of the low country, notably the Kelani Valley. The common Indian mongoose (*H. mungo*) is more of a low-country animal in Ceylon, and I have not often met with it in Matale, though very common in the low country. It is almost silver grey in colour, its wiry hair looking rather "hedgehoggy" in appearance, and is larger than *H. fulvescens* but much smaller than the ruddy mongoose.

Our fourth species is *H. vitticollis*, and is larger than the ruddy mongoose. It carries a fine bushy tail, and has two black bands from ear to shoulder, whilst its face markings, very like a badger, have given it the name of "Ceylon badger" or "badger-faced mongoose." Its colour is usually greyish dark brown. I have never seen this species in Matale, but I believe they are very common near Newera Eliya (6200 feet elevation), and I have also seen them in

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extreme low country. The small Indian civet (*Viverricula malaccensis*) is common in Ceylon and my dogs often hunt it. It is a grey animal, with longitudinal black bands on the back, no marks on head and neck except a black spot at the base of each ear on the upper side, and longitudinal rows of black spots on the sides; black and whitish ringed tail, body and tail about 36 inches. The "civet" smell (from the secretion in the civet gland) seems to drive the dogs frantic with excitement and they run these animals very hard. Being larger than the little *Herpestes* they have to run in less matted cover, and consequently get hard pressed by the dogs at times, though unlike a mongoose, which is never more than 10 or 15 yards ahead of the dogs, they keep 30 or 40 yards ahead, and will break cover when they get tired, often running a long way through the tea to another cover. Curiously enough, after being run for some little time in the new cover to which it may have broken, the civet almost invariably makes for its original bit of scrub again, and this habit gives you your chance to bag it, but you must keep quiet and a sharp look-out, as it will break far ahead of the dogs and sneak very quietly along, taking advantage of any chance cover.

Visitors to Ceylon are not likely to go in for hunting the foregoing animals, but they form part and parcel of our "estate" hunts wherever dogs are kept, for they *will* run these "cats" no matter what you do to prevent it.

I have also killed over my dogs a few specimens of *Felis rubiginosa*, the rusty spotted cat. These are pretty little animals, exactly like the ordinary domestic cat in appearance, but smaller in size. The difference is in the colour, the wild animal being fawn-coloured on back and sides, merging into white on the belly, whilst the whole body is spotted with brown spots, darker on the

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back, becoming somewhat lighter down the sides. They may be found in any bit of undergrowth, usually in somewhat uneven ground.

The jungle cat (*Felis chaus*) I have never seen, though, I believe, in some places they are common enough. Blanford, in his "Fauna of British India," says that in size they exceed that of the domestic cat. Colour of the body varying from sandy-grey, or yellowish-grey, to greyish-brown; back darker, often rufescent, sometimes dusky; lower parts fulvescent or rufescent white, &c. &c. The limbs are sometimes transversely barred with dusky bands, sometimes not; there are usually two broad dusky bands inside the forearm. Tail ringed with black near the end, tip black.

In adult specimens there are usually no markings on body or limbs, but exceptions occur.

As to dimensions, Blanford quotes Hodgson:—"Head and body, 22 inches; tail, 11 inches; height at shoulder, 16 inches; weight, 14 lbs."

Clark, in his "Sport in the Low Country of Ceylon," describes it as of a bright tawny colour, mottled with black on the back; large ears tipped with black hair, and a tail with black rings at the end.

There probably is a good deal of difference between the Ceylon and Indian species, and colour exceptions occur in both countries. This cat is said to be a very savage little animal, and would probably successfully stand up to a single dog.

Our largest cat is the fishing cat (*Felis viverrina*), commonly known as the "tiger cat." This is a larger animal than the above, and must reach at times nearly 4 feet in length over all. I have never seen a live one, but have examined several skins. The ground colour is dirty

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white and the animal is spotted black all over, except on the head and neck, which are marked with longitudinal black stripes. I have heard of a few being killed in this district, and they are known to be very savage. Blanford quotes the weight as about 17 lbs.

In addition to the cats previously mentioned, we have the Indian palm civet (*Paradoxurus niger*). This is, of course, not a cat; but we usually speak of all the genus—*Felis*, *Herpestes*, *Paradoxurus*, &c.—as “cats” for convenience. It is a dark grey little animal with the usual “ferret” head, but not so sharply elongated as in some of the other species, the body colour varying from dark grey on the back to light grey on the under parts; fur longish and soft; size, about 30 to 34 inches over all. They are nocturnal animals and may be found in any bit of jungle or jungly garden of the low country. I have shot a few at dusk, catching them up in trees, especially in “toddy” palms.

There is another species of palm civet peculiar to Ceylon, but which I have not seen, the *Paradoxurus aureus*, or red palm civet. As its name implies, it is dull chestnut red in colour, and the fur is soft and fairly thick, especially on the tail, which is somewhat stumpy. I believe they run to 36 inches in length over all. They are usually found in hill forests at an elevation of 1500 to 3000 feet, and are particularly fond of taking up their residence in your bungalow roof, not disdaining the levying of toll on your fowl-house in spite of their usual vegetarian habits.

Lastly, as a “specimen,” there is another strictly nocturnal animal, the flying squirrel (*Pteromys oral*), brown in colour, I believe, in India, but here distinctly dark grey, with soft fur, thickish on the body but very thin on

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the "parachute." A big animal will measure fully 40 inches over all. I killed a few, at night, when I used to live in Elwela village during the building of my present bungalow. It is very interesting to see one "sail" from tree to tree. The animal leaps into the air, extends its "parachute" (a membrane of skin forming, so to speak, an extension of the skin of the animal's sides, connected to fore and hind legs as far as each wrist), and sails to a tree perhaps 20 or 30 yards away, always alighting at a spot a little lower than the starting-point, though they gain a little on the descent by turning themselves abruptly upwards just before they alight on the trunk of the tree aimed for. I believe there is a smaller, reddish coloured species on the hills, though I have not met with it; but Blanford mentions *Sciuropterus fuscicapillus* as found in the hills of Travancore and Ceylon at moderate elevations. The above animals are not huntable, but I mention them as they may be met with in the neighbourhood of any fairly low elevation estate if there is any forest or big tree growth about.

The little "red deer" (*Cervulus muntjac*) is often hunted; but, as I deal with this animal in the chapters on low-country shooting, I do not propose to enlarge on the hunting of same with dogs. Suffice to say that it carries a very strong scent, and dogs therefore run the little animal very hard, though it is not easily forced to break cover. It is easily killed with big shot, at shotgun range. The meat is most excellent eating. Spotted deer, elk, and pig are also hunted with dogs. In the case of the first named this is only done on or near such estates as are situated on the edge of the low country. Elk and pig hunting are dealt with under their own headings later on.

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## HUNTING WITH A BOBBERY PACK

BY M. L. WILKINS

This is a form of sport, in my opinion, which entails an amount of physical exertion in no way commensurate with the results obtained. I devoted a good portion of my spare time to it, and during something like eight years only bagged about 25 red deer, 2 pigs, and 150 hares, besides jungle fowl and other game. Patna hunting in this district seems particularly hard on dogs and I lost a large number, pneumonia being the chief complaint. But notwithstanding the objections referred to, and the large proportion of blank days, I can look back to many a pleasant Sunday morning's sport with neighbours and friends with pleasure and satisfaction.

As regards dogs, I have found hardy half-breeds, harriers, and beagle-terriers amongst the most useful. Imported hounds could never stand the climate. A good finder is the most useful member of the pack.

A 12-bore Holland's "Paradox" is my ideal weapon for this form of sport, loaded with ball in one barrel for anything like a clear shot, and AAA in the other for a snapshot at a red deer or even a hare. An accurate .303 rifle carried by a boy is on rare occasions useful, when, say, you have a commanding position and a deer, sneaking up an open ravine below you, offers a by no means easy test of marksmanship.

Good topographical knowledge and an intimate acquaintance with the deer runs are essential to success, and, when these are obtained, nothing but straight shooting and a sound condition of wind and limb will yield satisfactory sport.

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It is, unfortunately, almost invariably impossible to distinguish the sex of red deer, and, as the bucks are extremely cunning, numbers of does are shot; but the species, being very prolific, breeding at all seasons, cannot (in this province) be bagged without dogs, and possess vast natural sanctuaries in the thousands of acres of scrub, so there is not the slightest fear of its numbers being appreciably reduced.

I know one favoured spot where a certain sportsman with a scratch pack bagged some thirty-seven deer during his temporary stay of about six months. I hunted this place some eight or ten months after he left and in one morning ran no less than eleven deer, of which I bagged three. There is very little description possible of this experience. The country was new to me. I was placed by a local Singhalese "shikari" on certain runs, the dogs were put in at some distant spot, and after a patient wait of from a quarter of an hour to two hours, some yapping could be heard in dense lantana scrub. Standing at the ready you would get an extremely difficult snap-shot at a red flash, which I happened to bring off on three occasions. In the last patch a sounder of pigs were put up and I saw them climbing a steep face opposite me, out of gun reach.

A well-known Elkadua sportsman, owner of a very nice little pack, some neighbours, and myself camped at this village in 1904 for four or five days. The first evening, with a retriever and two terriers, we found two hares close to camp and we bagged one of them. Two hundred yards on I got a long shot at a red deer, only wounding it, but the dogs ran into it shortly after. Next morning was blank owing to our not knowing the cover. In the evening we tried in another direction—

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found almost at once, and bagged the deer after a fine run. Shortly after a hare was put up which H. bagged, and near the camp we turned out three hares together, of which I accounted for two—a right and left.

On the second morning we put up some pig. H. gave a nice boar a dose of S.S.G. as he dashed past him. We heard the shot hit but he ran on quite 100 yards before collapsing into a drain. Another pig was put up and I missed a running shot with the Savage rifle at about 140 yards. In an adjoining patch I shot a hare and the dogs found a deer, which gave a very long run but escaped. In trying to get on to the line another deer was found. I missed him with Paradox ball. Climbing up the face of a cliff along various ledges this deer considered himself safe at the top of it, and he stood there for some time, when a shot from my Savage rifle dropped him. That evening we tried some scrub near a temple. A jungle cock was missed, and I got shots, in quick succession, at a hare and a deer—both bagged. Yet another hare was secured on the way home.

The third morning we had a long run after a most unobliging pig, who would persist in breaking back, and we were on the point of returning to camp when the dogs found a deer which after a time ran below H., who got him; a nice buck. We got nothing in the evening, but had two fine runs after deer, at both of which I had long rifle shots. I was not present during the next two days, but H. and another gun bagged a pig (after an exciting hunt), a hare, and a jungle cock. One of the best terriers was bitten by a cobra on the ear, and died before he reached camp, only half a mile distant.

Our last morning's hunt was exactly opposite camp. The dogs found at once, running down a steep face.

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We heard a shot in the hollow below us; the dogs then turned and ran up. A doe broke above me and I dropped her. Found again soon after—two deer. S. got one and the other escaped after a long run. A dog was missing, and we learnt that a native had shot it by mistake. Of course we were unable to discover or punish the culprit. We witnessed the cremation of a native headman in the afternoon, and later on went out for our final hunt, which resulted in a fine long run but we got nothing. Thus ended this little trip. Total bag—8 deer, 2 pig, 8 hares, &c.

On the Madulkellie patnas there is a belt of jungle in a long, narrow ravine, extending from the river to nearly the highest point. This is a favourite game cover, and I have found many a deer in it. On a certain dull and drizzly morning in 1900, C. W. Wood and I, with a scratch pack, decided to try this gully. He commanded a well-known run about half-way up, while I took a position near the top after a good climb. The pack was put in at the bottom and we could hear the dog boy's voice as he worked up towards us. Owing to the high grass and fern on each side of the belt our chances of a shot seemed rather poor. The dogs were almost out at the top, and I had given up all hopes of a find in this cover, when I saw a sudden movement in the grass on the face of the hill opposite me, at about 120 yards distance, and shortly after a long black snout, with a gleaming tusk, appeared. I missed him with ball in the Paradox. The boar dashed down-hill, and was lost to view in thick fern. He appeared again, however, on my side of the ravine, and I got a snap-shot at him, stern on, tearing down the gully. While the pig was running down one side of the belt, Wood, the dog boy, and the dogs were

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rushing up the other! However, the pack soon got on the line, and, running for only 200 yards, brought the old hog to bay in some thick fern. They were wise enough not to tackle him, and we spent quite half-an-hour in trying to move or view the old brute. He then gave us a long run and we both got some difficult snapshots before he made his final stand in some very thick scrub near the river. To move him seemed impossible; the dogs were too frightened to go in, and we tried firing No. 4 shot, throwing stones, &c., without success. Two hours were spent at this game, and, losing all patience, I decided to go in myself. The dogs were at my heels, and I had forced my way about 10 yards into the thicket when they made a short rush past me. There was a grunt and a crash—the dogs dashed back and I stood at the ready—then all was still. Crouching down and peering into the dense undergrowth, I saw a black mass not 5 feet from me. It was not a dog, I knew, as I counted them. I decided to fire after learning the position of Wood and the dog boy (who was up a tree). The dogs rushed forward to the shot and I knew that the fight was over. A fine boar he proved to be. My first shot had broken his hind leg just below the hock, while the last shot completely raked his body.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TANKS AND TANK SHOOTING: THE WILAS

I CAN hardly enlarge on the shooting to be enjoyed in and about the tanks without some account of these wonderful remains of ancient engineering practice. The inhabitants of the low country of Ceylon, where perennial rivers are few and far between, must have found out at a very early date the absolute necessity of water, and plenty of it, if they wanted to live. The only obvious way was to catch and hold the water when it did come, and this was done by throwing a primitive earth bank across some hollow or course of some jungle "drain." We know, as far as the Singhalese are concerned, that they were forming tanks over 2000 years ago, the first recorded tank in the *Mahawansa* (Ancient Singhalese History) dating back as far as 430 B.C. As time went on each successive king or queen, knowing well the importance of the water supply for the good of the country, seemed to vie with each other in making more, and larger, tanks. From the primitive little village tank of 4 or 5 acres in extent, with a 6-foot bund, they gradually developed into enormous schemes, damming up whole rivers, forming bunds miles in length and up to 50 and 60 feet in height, and, instead of the primitive method employed in the small tanks of cutting a trench through the bank to let water out, they were fitted with fine stone culverts, having cut-stone sluice chambers on the inside of the bund, in which were, no doubt, fitted sliding wooden doors to regulate



Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., C.C.S., Archl. Commr.

A VIEW OF THE GREAT MINNERIYA TANK, TAMANKADUWA, N.C.P.



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

VENDERĀSAN TANK, NEAR KANTALAY



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the flow of water. Some of these enormous tanks have two, three, four, or five of these sluices and culverts discharging their waters into various channels meandering for miles through the country. Not a drop of water was wasted. Every tank, big or little, sent its surplus water, either from its overflow, or from the paddy fields served by its channels, into another tank, and another and another, and so on. Some of the big tanks, damming up rivers, served as our modern "compensation reservoirs"; that is, they stored up the water of that river and discharged it along the river-course, keeping it at a constant flow, and from the river-course the water would be taken off to the paddy fields by minor channels. Not satisfied with mere jungle "drains" as sources of supply, some of the large tanks were given a perennial supply by boldly damming up a big river, 10, 20, 30, or even 50 miles away, and turning its whole stream down an excavated canal cut from the river to the tank. These vast remains are to be seen all over the country; notably the great Elahera Canal, starting from a point on the Ambanganga, where, to this day, the remains of the stupendous stone dam are to be seen, and flowing thence to the great Minneriya Tank, overflowing from there to the equally large Kaudulu Tank, and past that to the equally great Tank of Kantalay, a total distance of 54 miles!

Another vast scheme is the enormous Kaláwewu (*wewa*=tank) damming up the Kalá Oya in the North Central Province. Thence a huge canal runs a total distance of over 50 miles to supply the smaller tanks situated in and near the great ancient city of Anuradhapura. The foregoing are only two out of many such vast schemes, but where these big tanks, covering an area of 2000 to 5000 acres, exist in tens, the medium-

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sized tanks from 500 to 1000 acres exist in hundreds, and the small village tanks from 5 to 50 acres and over exist in thousands! Many hundreds, if not thousands, of the smaller tanks are still in use, and other thousands, abandoned, forgotten, and grown up in forest, are being discovered, daily, by the Topographical Survey parties now at work. One has only to look at the new topographical sheets of the Northern, or North Central, or North-Western Province to grasp the extent of the ancient irrigation system. How they found their levels for banks, overflows, sluices, and channels is a mystery, seeing that the work must have been carried out in big forest, as a rule, originally; and though their banks are clumsy and of unnecessary bulk, and though want of knowledge in dealing with rockwork led to disaster, still these monuments of industry have stood, some of them, for two thousand years and stand to this day, in many cases, as good as when first built. All the bigger tanks have their earth bank lined on the inside with stone "pitching," to save wash by the lapping of the waves, and this has led more than one writer into the error of thinking that the banks are built of solid stone—even Sir Samuel Baker making the same mistake. None of the banks are made of stone; the only stone embankments in use were those made to dam up rivers turning the streams down some other course. The visitor to the low country will find these wonderful tanks everywhere—the most ancient, or least used, all grown up in forest; others forming large plains of grass or swamp with more or less water, here and there, in pools. Many have been repaired by Government, and an Irrigation Department has a large staff of engineers at work repairing others, though I rather deprecate the policy of tackling

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the very large ancient schemes as there is no population nowadays to take up the land again, and moreover the soil, as a rule, is now too poor to repay cultivation.

The tanks, from October to about the end of April, during which time they contain plenty of water, simply abound in bird life. The sedge, reeds, water weeds, and lotus growth hide thousands of birds of many varieties, and there is a never-ending scene of movement as they fly here and there, circle overhead, rise or settle, and dive, swim, or dart about in search of their insect food, the cries and calls of each species forming a medley of sound impossible to describe. Not being a naturalist I have not investigated beyond the game birds to be found amongst them, and so can only name the commonest varieties. On any fair-sized tank in the North-Central Province, during the season above-mentioned, you will see, out in the open water, pelicans, darters, and the smaller cormorants, and amongst or near the water-weed growth, whistling-teal, the little goose-teal, and grebes. Stalking about on top of the weeds and lotus leaves or picking about in the shallows you will see blue coots, water-pheasants, red-shanks, green-shanks, and sand-pipers of several varieties, various cranes, herons, and perhaps a few egrets, whilst overhead are ever circling many kinds of hawks, kites, and eagles, one and all engaged in the great struggle for existence. Along the water's edge the pin-tailed snipe will be found in fair numbers, and on higher dry ground, further from the water, an occasional flock of golden plover may be met with. On any bit of bank, or rock projecting out of the water, you are certain to see numbers of loathsome crocodiles basking open-mouthed in the sun; repulsive creatures, yet looking quite in place amongst their tropical surroundings, for

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I own to feeling quite disappointed if I fail to see a few crocodiles in and about a tank.

I have not, however, named a tithe of the creatures an observer or naturalist would discover in such places, but I think I have made mention of sufficient to show the stranger what he may expect to see when he visits the "tank" country.

In addition to the bird life a remote tank affords also plenty of scope for big game shooting, for it will be frequented by animals of all sorts, from a pig to an elephant, but unfortunately mainly at night, though deer and buffalo may be met with up to eight or nine o'clock in the morning at certain seasons.

The effect of sunrise or sunset viewed from the bank of one of the large tanks forms a scene never to be forgotten, fittingly framed in the surrounding forest, and forming a picture the beauty of which cannot be excelled anywhere in the world.

As far as the sportsman is concerned, apart from big game, the only things worth shooting in a tank are the teal, snipe, golden plover, and crocodiles, with an occasional long shot at a pelican with a rifle. The other birds are of no use except as specimens if you are a collector, or for your coolies to eat. Several other kinds of teal, duck, &c., may be got in the coast islands and lagoons, but they do not come to the inland tanks.

The whistling-teal (*Dendrocygna javanica*), length, 16.5 to 17.5 inches; bill, blackish; legs and feet, lead colour. Forehead, crown, hind neck, and top of back, wood-brown to dark slaty on the back and wing coverts; lower hind neck and upper back broadly edged with yellow-grey and reddish-yellow respectively; face, sides of head, and neck dusky whitish, passing into fine ruddy-chestnut on



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

OUTLET FROM RESTORED SLUICES OF KANTALAY TANK



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

KANTALAY TANK



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the whole breast and under parts; lesser wing coverts maroon-red; tail, reddish to brown, edged yellow. Exclusively fresh-water birds, to be found in every tank, almost, throughout the island. They are excellent eating, though some people consider them unfit for food. Gregarious, rarely less than a dozen found together; fond of weedy lotus-grown water, and not very easy of approach, though when put up they are apt to fly round and round the tank, uttering their peculiar whistling call, at a low height at first, but gradually rising higher and higher, eventually settling in the tank again unless much shooting is going on, when they will leave it for some other tank. It is during this circling habit of theirs that they can best be shot, though, on first cautiously approaching their haunt, you can often get a "pot" at them among the weeds inshore, or whilst perched on trees standing in the water, before they take flight. The guns of the party more or less conceal themselves, at spots commanding the "circle," and send natives round wading through the sedge to put them up, or else one of the guns goes with the natives—a much better plan, as he shoots his way along and thoroughly disturbs every bird in the tank.

At the same time, besides the whistling-teal, you get your chance at the little goose-teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus*), a most excellent table bird, whose swift flight offers very sporting shots. Length, 12.5 to 13 inches; bill, greenish-black; legs, yellowish-olive. Forehead, centre of head, and nape blackish-brown; rest of head, neck, breast, and all beneath, white; black ring tinged above with green completely encircling hind neck and lower fore neck; back and wing coverts metallic dark green to purple; wing coverts, secondaries fine metallic

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green-edged, half-inch white ; primaries mostly green-black, middle part of longer feathers white, extending across to the inner tips ; tail coverts brown to greyish, the whole stippled with small dots.

Their haunt is about the same as the whistling-teal, but when disturbed they fly, all together, at tremendous speed, very near the surface of the water, uttering their peculiar, somewhat guttural, twittering call, circling two or three times only, eventually settling among weed growth as remote as possible from the source of disturbance.

Given a small undisturbed unshot tank, frequented by these two kinds of teal, and a fine bag may be made, but if a tank is pretty frequently shot over you will not get many chances, the birds being up and away very quickly without much waste of time in "circling." I once, near Anuradhapura, with three other friends on a snipe-shooting trip, came upon a small tank of not more than 5 acres in extent, surrounded by dense forest with many trees and bushes growing in the water, and every tree was filled with whistling-teal perched on every branch. They were literally in thousands, but they had retreated there from a much-frequented tank which we had also cleared out, and Tom Wright and I, the only members of the party who had found this tank, merely succeeded in bagging two or three before they were all up and off again. Let me try and give my readers some idea of a typical shoot, including tank and paddy field, in the low country.

Looking through my diary, the following seems to about represent the style of shooting to be met with, at any rate in the northern part of Ceylon :—

I and my neighbour Hodgson Bell had "biked" 100 miles to Vavoniya in the Northern Province to put in

## THE TANKS AND TANK SHOOTING

a week-end with our mutual friend E. R. M'Donnell of the Irrigation Department, and on the Sunday morning we travelled in M'Donnell's cart 3 miles to a nice tank with some paddy fields under it. We tackled the paddy fields first for snipe, but did not find very many; going down the fields and up again, M'Donnell and I, however, accounting for ten or twelve couple, Bell not being a snipe-shooter. This only took about an hour, so we then adjourned to the tank, which was a fair-sized one, too big to be well worked by only three guns. However, Bell and M'Donnell posted themselves under some dead trees, out in the water about thigh deep, whilst I and two natives set off to wade round the sedge to put the birds up. Picture to yourself a peaceful expanse of water about a mile long and half a mile wide, surrounded by forest, a thick fringe of sedge, lotus, and reeds round the edge; here and there, in the open water, parties of the lesser cormorants and a few darters, whilst nearer the sedge may be seen little flocks of teal, and overhead the attendant eagles, hawks, and kites, whilst there is the never-ending movement of parties of teal, grebes, cormorants, and other birds flying from place to place. What a change takes place at my first shot! With a perfect roar of wings up get scores of whistling-teal uttering their sibilant whistle; flocks of the little goose-teal flash past with their peculiar, rather guttural, twittering cry; huge cranes and herons rise and fly away as hurriedly as their usual deliberate movements will allow them, the grey herons uttering their hoarse "crake-crake" as they go; sand-pipers dart about all over with their shrill calls; the lapwing hovers around with his irritating "did-he-do-it" cry, and multitudes of other birds too numerous to mention. I am sorry to note in all this riot that the whistlers are flying

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rather high, but soon my friends' guns begin to speak merrily, and I push on, getting a shot here and there at a teal but only bagging one very occasionally, as they don't give me any easy chances. I am waist deep in sedge and water, but here and there have to make for dry land as I come upon a channel too deep to wade. Along the water's edge I pick up a few snipe, with an occasional shot at an odd teal though the "circlers" don't often come my way, but hearing all the time my friends banging away in great style. Gradually I work my way round and the shooting gets less and less, and I see no more teal, only picking up a few more snipe along the edge of the water, until finally we meet on the bund and count the bag. Nothing very great, as we are none of us really expert shots, but we total up 23 teal and  $14\frac{1}{2}$  couple of snipe for not much more than two hours' work. A pleasant little shoot of this sort can be had at many places any day of the season from October to as late as April, unless there has been an exceptionally dry year, leaving the tanks short of water.

On another occasion H. D. Garrick and I, shooting at Haburane, had some fair sport in a small tank of not more than 15 or 20 acres in extent. There were a few teal in it, so, posting Garrick at one side, he being new to the game, I waded round. There was no such "life" here as in the preceding account, and only a few teal, but of these we accounted for nearly all, very few getting away. Our total bag at the finish came to 10 whistling-teal, 10 goose-teal, and 2 smaller cormorants. I could give many other instances of these pleasant little experiences, but there is more or less of a sameness about them which would become monotonous to the reader though certainly not to the sportsman when in the enjoyment of them. To find

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ducks and teal of many varieties in their thousands, also the elegant flamingo, and other coast birds, you must, however, visit the coast lagoons and islands, an experience I have not had the luck to try. The inland tanks are not a patch on them, either for number or variety of the bird life to be met with. The principal drawback is the difficulty of getting there as the coast roads are mere sand-tracks, whilst if you use a boat you must have unlimited time at your disposal, and be prepared to rough it, literally.

Occasionally in the drier parts of the beds of tanks, or in the dry paddy fields, the sportsman may have the luck to come upon a flock of the golden plover (*Charadrius fulvus*). They are not difficult to shoot unless they have been much disturbed, and form a welcome addition to the table. Length, 9.3 to 10 inches; bill, 1.1 inch; legs and feet, leady colour. Top of head, back, rump, dull black, paling on hind neck, wing coverts, and tail to brown, the greater feathers being lighter than the rest; the feathers of the head have broad lateral margins of golden yellow, and those of the back, rump, and scapulars lateral and double terminal spots of the same; the paler portions are similarly spotted with lighter hue, those on wing coverts and tail being whitish; greater coverts and lateral tail-feathers tipped and edged with white; forehead, face, and throat whitish, paling into pure white on breast and belly; face, fore neck, and chest with dark centres to the feathers, and the flanks barred with the same hue; on the chest the dark centres are broadest, imparting a dark appearance to it.

These birds come in with the snipe in October, and depart with them in April. They fly fast, all together, and sometimes circle round, swooping down and up, after

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being shot at, if not previously disturbed. Their call is a two-note one, not loud, which they give voice to when put up. Captain Legge represents it by the coined words "*til-wee.*"

Referring again to teal, a curious thing about them, at any rate in the North Central Province, is that they do not all spend the night in the tanks they frequent. Just at dusk you may hear their peculiar whistle and soon see flocks streaming overhead, all going in one direction, and, if you have ascertained the line of flight, some very pretty shooting may be obtained, but you will want a good gun and largish shot as they then fly rather high. Again, if you are up just at faintest dawn, they may be seen returning to their haunt. I do not know quite where they make for when they leave the tanks, except that many go at dusk to newly sown paddy fields, in the season, to eat the freshly scattered grain. In Tamankaduwa district of the North Central Province they may go to the vast swamps, known as *wilas*, which are to be found near the Mahaweli-ganga (our biggest river), extending, on both sides of it, for a distance of 30 or 40 miles. If you are shooting in Tamankaduwa you are more than likely to visit one or two *wilas*, and you will then find these great swamps are not concurrent, but separated from each other by higher lands, usually forest, and there are villages to be found near most of them as they form fine grazing ground for cattle. They have been mistaken for tanks by many people but are entirely natural swamps, with, in some cases, thousands of acres of open water in them about 4 to 6 feet deep, all over, and hardish bottom. They are filled by the overflow of the river every wet season through tortuous channels called "*kotaliyas*," like canals, meandering through the forest. Being surrounded by lotus, weed,



Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., C.C.S., Archl. Commr.

STONWORK OF ANCIENT SLUICE IN KAUDULUWEWA



Photo by R. H. Storey, Esq.

HÉWANPITIYA WILA, TAMANKADUWA



## THE TANKS AND TANK SHOOTING

and reed growth, they naturally form the resort of myriads of water-fowl, and are more prolifically populated than the tanks. These swamps are also full of fish and crocodiles, and are a favourite resort of elephants. Bird shooting is not easy, as the extent is too vast, but fair sport may be obtained with a little trouble. I and Wright, on an elephant shooting trip, once spent some three or four days at Diwulani village (Moorish), and, as it is situated on the edge of the very largest of all these swamps, we had some very pleasant little shoots in and around it, and also enjoyed some good fishing by the help of a dug-out canoe. I find in my diary an evening's shooting there, recording a bag of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  couple snipe, 4 whistling-teal, 6 goose-teal, 2 blue coots, 3 water-pheasants, and 3 smaller cormorants—the birds, other than the snipe, having been shot from a canoe. Pelicans are also plentiful on the larger sheets of open water in most of these *wilas*, and they are also the chief resort of the white egret, a great prize on account of its valuable "plume" feathers so well known as ladies' hat ornaments in Europe. On that account they are ruthlessly slaughtered by natives and are consequently becoming rather scarce. To secure a specimen, however, it is worth your while to shoot one or two, if you can, but they are very wary and hard to approach. Again, as a specimen, a pelican (*Pelecanus philippinensis*) is worth securing, but in this case you will have to use a rifle, as you certainly cannot get near enough for shot work.

I will not give a description of this fine bird as there can be no possibility of mistaking it when seen on a tank—by far the largest bird to be seen there.

They look very large in the distance, their bulk being almost as great as that of a swan. When flying they look

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simply enormous, their huge wings flapping slowly and regularly, the head and neck held well back into the chest, as it were, and the great bill projecting horizontally forward like a prow or bowsprit—a string of these birds thus sailing along in single file forming a grand sight. The first time I ever shot one was during a trip with Wright, and we were then putting up in the tank-bungalow on the bund of Topawewa, in ancient Polonnaruwa, one of the famous buried cities. We saw a pelican far out, and Tom would try a shot at it with his Lee-Speed .303. Asked as to the range, I gave it in my opinion as 400 yards with a coarse sight, but Tom's shot, taking it at that, went just over the bird. It was not disturbed, however, so I tried with a finer sight, hitting it, breaking the wing just at the middle joint as we found after some men had retrieved it by means of a canoe.

On another occasion I stalked one from behind the bund of a tank, and killed it at about 80 yards with a Mauser automatic carbine. However, there is no sport in it, and it is enough to be able to say you have killed one. Crocodiles, in the tanks, can occasionally be shot from the bund when basking on rock islets in the water or when floating on the surface of the water. A shot from a heavy 12-bore, like a "Paradox," at the back of the head, or anywhere fairly in the head, from above, as in shooting off the bund of a tank, will usually kill at once, for I have found the head, after such a shot, smashed almost to a pulp, not a whole piece of bone left. In the dry season crocodiles may occasionally be met with in the jungle journeying in search of water, and also are sometimes found in the forest lying dormant for a long time, in which state nothing will move them and they only "bellow" like a bull if prodded or pulled about. I and my friend M'Donnell once came upon one, at Giritella Tank, in a big burrow

## THE TANKS AND TANK SHOOTING

under a sandbank, quite 100 yards from the water. Needless to say we slew it. They usually run about 7 to 10 feet in length in the tanks, but I have seen many which must have been very much larger. I always wondered how they captured fish, as they are not particularly swift movers, but I once saw an occurrence which seemed to solve the problem. Garrick and I were at the time on a trip in the Northern Province, and were lying on the bund of a small remote tank waiting for anything to turn up. There was a puddle of dirty water in the tank about 200 yards long by 50 or 60 yards wide, and towards the farther side were lying, in shallow water, two large crocodiles side by side about 10 yards apart, both facing us. There they lay without moving, heads just out of the water, for a full hour, when suddenly we both saw one of them throw up its head, holding a fine fish between its jaws, head hanging down at one side, tail at the other, and which could hardly have been less than 2 feet in total length, weighing probably 3 or 4 lbs. After holding it thus for a few moments the head was lowered again and the fish eaten. I can only suppose that the crocodiles lie with mouth open under the water until some unsuspecting fish swims between the jaws—a comfortable, easy method of getting a meal! Crocodiles are abominable reptiles, and should be shot on every available opportunity. Apart from the sport to be had, a tank, or *wila*, to a naturalist would prove a “thing of beauty and joy for ever,” and it would take him a long time to collect all the “specimens” therein to be found. A few days spent among the tanks and *wilas* would amply repay any man fond of bird shooting, and the best time for such a visit would be in January or February, when there is the maximum of water in both tanks and swamps, and the weather is fine, but not too hot.

## CHAPTER V

### QUAILS, PARTRIDGES, SPUR FOWL, JUNGLE FOWL, PEA FOWL, AND OTHER JUNGLE BIRDS

To turn now to bird shooting on dry land, we have a few varieties well worth the attention of sportsmen. Beginning with our smallest game birds, the quail family, we have three varieties, the black-breasted bustard-quail (*Turnix taigoor*) coming first as the one most commonly met with. This bird, apart from the black breast, may be roughly likened to a miniature partridge, about 5 to 6 inches in total length, and as it is only plentiful enough to make it worth special attention in very few parts of Ceylon, I hope my readers will be satisfied with the above description. These little birds may be met with in any open grassy or weed-grown country from an elevation of about 2000 feet to sea-level. The females utter a peculiar kind of "purr," which can be heard some distance, and which attracts other females, the meeting ending in a fight. It is very difficult to make these birds fly without dogs, but when they do get up they fly, with a "whirr," at great speed for about 50 yards and then settle with extraordinary suddenness. You require to be pretty nippy with your gun to bring them to bag, though once you get accustomed to their peculiar flight it is easy enough. Abandoned dry grain clearings are favourite resorts and I get a few every year in these places near the estate. The most I ever got at one time was five, which I bagged for as many shots one evening. They are excellent eating.



Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., C.C.S., Archl. Commr.

HANDAPÁN WILA AND GUNNER'S QUOIN, TAMANKADUWA



Photo by Lieut.-Col. E. Gordon Reeves.

CROCODILE



## QUAILS

Next we have the Chinese quail (*Coturnix chinensis*), also a very small bird, being only about 5.5 inches long. This bird may be briefly described as of a rich brown colour, with here and there a touch of black, the tail coverts being slaty blue in centre to chestnut at edges. The legs and feet are a strikingly vivid yellow colour.

I have shot one or two of these pretty little birds in the *chenas* near the estate, but they are principally to be found in the low country of the west of Ceylon, in damp spots such as grassy hollows in the jungle.

Finally there is the jungle bush-quail (*Perdicula asiatica*), the largest of the species in Ceylon. It is more or less of the miniature partridge type, and is practically only to be met with in the low country of the Eastern Province, where it is fairly numerous. These birds run to about 6.5 inches in length, and are stout, plump, and good for the table.

From quail we pass on to partridge, of which we have two varieties in Ceylon. The grey partridge (*Ortygornis pondiceriana*), usually spoken of as the "red-legged partridge," is entirely confined, according to Legge, to the north and north-west coast of Ceylon and the islands off that coast. It is found as far south as Puttalam, and is never to be met with more than 5 or 6 miles inland, confining itself near the coast to sandy soil studded with low bushes and stunted jungle. Dogs are very necessary for the shooting, otherwise they can never be got to fly, preferring to run. Personally, I have never shot any of these birds.

The other partridge is the painted partridge (*Francolinus pictus*), and Legge says it is entirely confined to the patnas of Uva and Haputale, at an elevation of about 4000 feet, more or less. They are found in hollows and on slopes amongst thick bushes or grass, and never seem to come into the open. They can only be successfully flushed by

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

dogs. I have no personal experience of these birds to record.

The next sporting bird on the list is the spur fowl (*Galloperdix bicalcarata*), which also, I regret to have to confess, I have never shot. As this bird is only found in Ceylon, I must give a description of the same culled from Captain Legge's fine book:—"Length, 13.5 to 13.8 inches; bill, legs, and feet red. From head to tail, all along the back, except the principal wing coverts, black, brownish to brown on principal wing coverts; head and neck spotty-striped white, changing into narrow drop-shaped spots, black-centred white on wing coverts; face, throat, and all the breast, whitey feathers with marked black margins. The females are brown to blackish-brown, with white chins; legs, feet, and bill not so dark red as in the male."

The males have the spurs, generally two on each leg, sometimes three on one, two on the other, from which they get their name; the females have one on each leg generally, sometimes two on one leg, and at times wanting on one. This peculiar bird is found all over Ceylon forest country, more or less, except the far north, from low country up to about 5000 feet elevation. Personally, I have often heard its call, a curious piping whistle impossible to describe except by musical notes, in the low country forests, but have never even set eyes on the bird as it is about the shyest of all in the island. Sometimes they may be met with on hill estates, bordered by forest, feeding along the edge of the jungle at dawn—about the only chance of ever getting a shot at one unless you have dogs and are lucky enough to put them up in fairly open jungle. I don't recommend a special journey to bag these birds unless you are keen on getting a specimen. Having ex-

## SPUR FOWL

hausted the "local" birds, I now come to a grand species which may be met with practically all over Ceylon, at all elevations from sea-level to 8000 feet, namely, the jungle cock (*Gallus Lafayetti*). I have met with it, in great profusion, in all the forests of the North Central Province and central parts of the Northern Province. It is a forest dweller but is found often enough in the "lantana" scrub in the planting districts. This grand bird, which is peculiar to Ceylon (the Indian species differ), may be roughly likened to a very brilliant-coloured domestic cock, with a huge red-and-yellow comb and red wattles. Captain Legge's technical description, condensed, is as follows:—

Length of examples with fine tails, 26 to 28 inches; face, throat, and wattles livid or purplish-red; comb, bright red, with a large interior yellow patch; bill, brownish-red; legs and feet, wax-yellow; hackles and margins of lesser wing coverts, pale, shining golden yellow, changing to glistening yellowish-red on back, median wing coverts, chest, breast, and lanceolate portions of the rump feathers, and into the duller hue of head and nape; tail and greater wing coverts, greenish black; belly and thighs, dull black. The hen is very much of the hen pheasant type and colour, and is a good deal smaller than the cock. These fine birds are the shyest of the shy in the remote forests, but curiously enough they often come out into a cart-road and do not mind carts passing them, though a man on foot will send them scoting. In the early morning, at midday, and again in the evening, their peculiar "George Joyce" call may be heard everywhere in the jungle. Captain Legge says that this species does not, like the domestic fowl, utter its call before daybreak; but in this I venture to think he is partly wrong, as here and there one does crow before daylight, for I have more

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

than once, most distinctly heard the call at 3.30 and 4.30 A.M., when camped in the jungle.

The chance of a flying shot is very remote and these fine birds are very difficult to stalk, being as alert and wary as any bird or animal in the world; but, owing to their pugnacity, or, at any rate, curiosity to *see* a rival, they may be beguiled into showing themselves by an imitation of the challenging flapping of the wings, which is exactly accomplished by folding your handkerchief, holding it in the hollow of one hand, and striking it smartly, at regular intervals, about the same as the natural flappings, with the other hand.

This is great sport for an off-day, or when travelling along a jungle track from camp to camp. The cock is too wary, as a rule, to come out to a cart-road; but even there he may be circumvented if you enter the forest some time before you get opposite him, and make your way in until he is more or less between you and the road. He will then often come to the challenge; and I have, but once or twice only, even bagged him when cautiously approaching a cart-road to see what dared to challenge from there. He will come rushing to you on a wild forest path, but not usually in scrub or out of forest into grass-land, though I once "diddled" one in park country. The cock was crowing in a patch of jungle, about 40 yards from a path, in a big grass plain, and in another patch of jungle, nearer the path, a hen was clucking. I got the "hen" patch between me and the cock, and challenged. He, thinking another cock was daring to approach the hen, came flying, or rather running, out into the grass and I bagged him before he had time to think.

Another tip—don't overdo your challenge. If you

## JUNGLE FOWL

are on a forest path, and hear a cock, go into the forest a little way noiselessly, give your flaps, and wait, crouched down or otherwise, gun at full cock, watching the direction from which you expect the cock to come, and don't make a sound or movement. If he is coming he will crow no more, but make his way towards you, sometimes running, sometimes with great caution, and the moment you get a good sight of him fire, or he will be off if you as much as wink an eye. If a cock continues to crow after you have challenged once, and perhaps again, tentatively, you may move on, for he won't come—he has his harem with him and you must come to him, not he to you. If a cock is a long way off when you challenge, give him plenty of time if he stops crowing to your first attempt; don't flap again if you have to wait long, for he will do that if he can't find you and is really "on the job." You may then, if he is fairly near you, give two or three quiet gentle flaps, as much as to say, "Here I am!" Ready with your gun, and you have him! I have introduced many friends to this style of shooting, and it has greatly delighted them. It is an old trick, but curiously enough few men know of it; and, in the north at any rate, it is almost unknown to the natives. The cock is rather tough eating, but distinctly good, and the hens are excellent. I never lose an opportunity of bagging one or the other for the table.

I have killed as many as 10 or 12 in a fortnight's trip, only trying for them when on the travel from camp to camp; and on one trip Wright and I accounted for no less than 21 between us, I getting 11, he 10. As I said before, it is great fun for an off-day, or when travelling, and I can recommend it to the attention of sportsmen in the low country. Up in the mountain

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

districts, when that peculiar plant the "nellu" flowers (about once in seven to ten years), the jungle fowl assemble in great numbers to feed on the seed, and as they seem to get a bit "silly" over it, they are then easily shot. Another bird, worth shooting for the trophy he carries, is the crowned hornbill (*Anthracoceros coronatus*). This fine bird frequents remote low country forests, alighting only in the tops of the highest trees, and is very wary and difficult of approach. Their extraordinary grating, harsh calls and croaks may be heard at a great distance. A detailed description of these birds is not necessary—once seen, they cannot be mistaken, with their huge toucan-like bills crowned by a high horny ridge, the bill being 6 or 7 inches long or more, and the ridge, or casque, extending about half-way along the same, bill and casque being quite 4 inches in height together. The colour of the bird is black, with white tips to the wings; and the whole under portions, from the breast to end of the tail, white. A light rifle would be handy for securing specimens as it is seldom possible to get within shot-gun distance, though I have bagged one or two myself with a shot-gun.

There is a smaller hornbill (*Tockus gingulensis*) peculiar to Ceylon, but which has not the casque on the upper mandible, nor is the bird more than half the size of the crowned hornbill. It also frequents lower jungle and may often be seen flying across your path, but is not worth shooting as a trophy unless you are a collector.

We now come to those truly regal birds, the pea fowl (*Pavo cristatus*). No need for any description of these birds, known the world over. They are frequenters of the dry low country of Ceylon, the south of the Southern Province, most of the Eastern Province, fairly common in the North

## PEA FOWL

Central Province and the Northern Province, but not so common in the North-West Province. They are usually to be found somewhere near water, and I have once walked up and shot a hen in a wet swamp. They are exceedingly wary, and a more difficult bird to approach does not exist anywhere. Here again a light rifle would come in handy, or a .303 with a solid nickle-covered bullet; for you cannot, as a rule, get within 100 yards of your bird. In open plain or swamp, the sight of you 300 yards away will send them running into long grass or scrub. They are easiest approached when perched in a tall tree in the forest, but even then the cock will most likely spot you before you see him and be off. The sight of a cock in full plumage flying, with the sun shining on his wonderful colours, is a sight not soon to be forgotten, and even when stalking about on the ground he forms a most striking spectacle well worth watching. Curiously enough I have never killed a cock; in fact I have never even fired at one, not for want of a chance, but because some other reason has usually occurred to prevent me, such as meeting or seeing the cock when stalking a buck or an elephant, when a rifle-shot would inevitably have lost me my chance at the bigger game, though it has often been a case of "a peacock in hand worth a buck in the bush." Once, watching for bear at a water-hole with Tom Wright, towards sundown a cock called in the scrub not far away. I imitated the call and gradually drew him up to the water-hole, where Tom shot him just as he was emerging from the scrub; very unsportsmanlike, but——!

My friend Wallace Westland, of Matale East, on a trip with me a short time ago, secured a fine cock by a neat rifle-shot in Hinguruwatdamana (the old Minneriya paddy

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

land). Once also, when I was watching on the ground by a pool of water in a tank, a hen flew down out of the forest just at dawn, alighting quite near me, so I promptly bagged it, as the hens at least are fair eating, the cocks being very tough. I believe the Hambantota District (Southern Province) is one of the most prolific for these birds, and I have also seen very many along the course of the Maduru Oya in the Eastern Province.

Mr. M. L. Wilkins contributes the following account of a shoot in the Southern Province:—

“The shot-gun is of little use in the plains, and I have only used it amongst scrub or in abandoned ‘chenas,’ where the birds, if put up, rise at close quarters. For stalking in the plains a light rifle is necessary. My last morning’s sport in the Southern Province was rather noteworthy. On my way to the plains I flushed a hen in thick scrub, out of which she rose with a tremendous ‘whirr’; but a dose of No. 4, at about 30 yards, in head and neck settled her. Arriving at the first plain I saw no less than 19 pea fowl scattered over it, at about 300 yards’ distance, so set off for a stalk under cover of a bank. I disregarded the wind, as I did not believe the native yarn that these birds possess the power of scent; but after a 70 yards’ crawl, when I peeped over the ‘bund,’ not a bird was to be seen! Half-an-hour’s walk brought me to another plain, arrived at which I took care of the wind in my look round for birds. I eventually spotted some on a slab rock out in the open, and had to make a long *détour* to enable me to reach cover for the approach. Arrived at a clump of cactus, I had then no choice but to crawl on hands and knees towards my last bit of cover, a tuft of grass, on reaching which I sat down to recover breath. The birds were quite

## PEA FOWL

unalarmed, and feeding towards me; so! at about 80 yards I fired at the cock with my .256 Männlicher, dropping him in his tracks. The flock scattered, but I was lucky enough to pick out a young cock at about 100 yards before they finally disappeared. On my way back to camp I sighted a fine cock in an open plain, but he got suspicious and stalked off among some scrub and boulders. I thought my chance of a shot was gone, but looking round I saw my tracker making a flank movement to get the bird between him and me, so I 'effaced' myself behind a cactus and loaded the rifle with a solid. Presently the cock appeared stalking solemnly along, suspicious, but not yet frightened, so waiting until he began to cross a small piece of open I dropped him at once, to my great satisfaction—a good finish to an excellent morning's sport."

There is a close season for pea fowl in each province, more or less useless and disregarded, like the rest of our game laws, by the natives.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PHYSICAL FEATURES AND HUNTING DISTRICTS OF CEYLON: THE DIFFICULTIES OF TRAVELLING AND CAMPING

I AM now approaching the subject of big game shooting in the low country, but before entering upon it I had better introduce my readers to the general features of Ceylon.

Take the map which you will find at the end of this book, and, with it before you, let me conduct you through the country, province by province, beginning with the Northern Province.

At the extreme north is what may be called the island of Jaffna, and this may be neglected by the sportsman, as it is mostly under cultivation, until he comes south as far as Elephant Pass, where a causeway connects with the mainland. At Elephant Pass good fishing and a fair amount of water-fowl and partridge shooting may be obtained.

The mainland portion of the province is dead flat, and consists almost entirely of scrub and forest, and contains very little open sporting country, such as there is being merely the abandoned or inhabited lands in and about the irrigation tanks. A strip of scrubby, sandy waste may be found along the coast, with here and there a lagoon alive with water-fowl. In this strip the grey partridge may be found along the west, north, and north-east coasts and on the islands, and probably lots of hares, or an occasional deer or pig, whilst both west and east

## THE PHYSICAL FEATURES

coasts, wherever there is swamp or lagoon, abound in water-fowl of all sorts.

A railway connecting Colombo and Jaffna is now in course of construction (1904), and runs through the very middle of the province parallel to the great north road. This road is metalled and in good order as a rule. A metalled or gravelled road runs from Mankulam to the Agency station of Mullaitivu on the east coast, and another gravelled road runs from Madawachi, in North Central Province, to Manaar, on the west coast; a fairly good gravel road runs from Vavoniya to Parayanalankulam on the Manaar road; and another fairly good road starts at Kallalunkan Puliankulam on the north road and runs to Mullaitivu. Apart from the above roads all others are mere tracks, some very sandy, others mere earth tracts, all more or less impassable for carts except in dry weather. Some good but not plentiful shooting of all sorts may be had at Tunukkai, a village 12 or 13 miles west of Mankulam, at the junction of the north and Mullaitivu roads, but the road from Mankulam is very bad, and bearers would be difficult to procure.

Fair sport may also be obtained by taking the track running due south from Tunukkai, *via* Mundumurippu, to Puvarasankulam on the Vavoniya - Parayanalankulam road, but the travelling again is awful for a cart. There is some fine forest in the southern parts of the province, and I have found the little red deer very plentiful in the forests along the Puliankulam-Mullaitivu road. Pigeons and jungle fowl may be met with all over the province, and pea fowl are fairly plentiful comparatively near the coasts. I do not, however, recommend visitors to this part of Ceylon—it is essentially a place where sport can only be got by a man who knows every inch of it. There

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is no place in it where a sporting party can camp for a week and get all-round shooting. The only way in which shooting may be obtained is by travelling, putting in a day at one place where you may get a shot or two at deer and such-like, moving on to another similar place next day, and so on. The travelling, however, is very hard work if you have a cart, as the minor roads, or rather tracks, are usually loose sand or ordinary earth, impassable in the wet season and fearfully rough in the dry season. The natives also, being all Tamils, consider themselves of too high and mighty a caste to condescend to carrying a traveller's goods and chattels, so you will get no help from them. The wet season is from October to January inclusive, the rest of the season being dry, except perhaps a little rain in April and May. Want of water is the great difficulty except in the wet season, as there are no perennial streams or springs, and after the end of the wet season water soon dries up.

We now come to the North Central Province. This is certainly the sporting province of the northern half of Ceylon, and, like many other parts of the island, teemed with game fifty years ago. The greater part of the province is forest-covered, broken up by more or less scattered villages, tanks, and paddy fields, and is not, strictly speaking, flat, as the country undulates a good deal and is full of small, rocky hills rising everywhere out of the plain. To the ordinary passer-by, however, the country is flat, and these hills only become evident when the country is viewed from the summit of any one of them. The extreme north-west corner of the province, known as the Wilachiya Korale, is very gamey, being a vast uninhabited plain, composed of forest, scrub, open "park" land, and huge swamps or *wilas*. A large part of it is,



Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., C.C.S., Archl. Commr.

A GLIMPSE OF ANCIENT POLONNARUWA



Photo by R. H. Storey, Esq.

THE MAIN FERRY OVER THE MAHAWELIGANGA IN TAMANKADUWA, ON THE  
TOPAWEWA-MANAMPITIYA ROAD. AUTHOR'S CAMP BAGGAGE AND COOLIES  
CROSSING



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however, now closed to sportsmen, having been turned into a game sanctuary. In all parts of the province elephants may be found, but not in any great numbers; deer, pig, bears, and leopards are not plentiful, and only get-at-able in open country, of which there is little. Anuradhapura is a good centre to travel from, and is now reached by rail from Colombo. It is a fine snipe-shooting centre in the season, and pigeons, jungle fowl, and other game birds abound.

The ruins of the ancient city of Anuradhapura will form a great attraction to visitors of antiquarian tastes, and the rest-house affords excellent accommodation.

The only other really good shooting ground in the province is the south-eastern division, called Tamankaduwa, which, roughly speaking, occupies the country between Matale District and Trincomalee. This district contained the second great capital city of ancient Ceylon, known then as Pulastipura, but now known as Topawewa (corrupted into Topare), and as it is only some 500 years since the capital was abandoned, the country still contains vast plains of grass land which formed the ancient paddy fields and other cultivated lands or sites of towns and villages. The whole province is full of ancient irrigation works and contains some of the most gigantic tanks in Ceylon, and Tamankaduwa District is exceedingly well supplied in that respect. The approach to this part of the province is by cart-road from Matale or Trincomalee, leaving the main road usually at Haburane. There are also minor approach roads (very bad travelling) from Alut Oya and Gal Oya, but I don't recommend them.

From Haburane, where there is a rest-house, to Minneriya, one of the biggest tanks in Ceylon, is 16 miles,

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and there is an unfurnished bungalow<sup>1</sup> at the tank. Fine snipe shooting in the season, pigeons, pea fowl, and a few deer and wild buffaloes.

From Minneriya you can visit the great abandoned tank of Kaudulu, about 8 miles away, a good shooting place for all game.

You may then proceed to Topawewa, 12 miles from Minneriya by road, and can usually put up there in the empty tank bungalow, but you must understand there are no rest-houses proper, and everything will have to be taken with you as on a regular camping trip.

Topawewa country is full of ruins of surpassing interest, and is, moreover, a grand centre for various shooting excursions to "park" country, tanks, and *wilas*. This part of the country was very fully exploited by Sir Samuel Baker fifty years ago, and at that time simply swarmed with game (*vide* "With Rifle and Hound in Ceylon").

Elephants, and especially wild buffaloes, abounded, and deer were to be found in every bit of "park."

Now, however, the sport is not to be called good, but here and there, in out-of-the-way corners, some very fair shooting can be enjoyed.

In the wet season of December and January, if a man likes to face the difficulties and discomforts of travel and camp at such a time, quite good sport is obtainable, as then all animals are on the move and frequent the open country up to quite late in the day. In the dry season some very good shooting may be had at bears and leopards at the many water-holes all over the district.

East of Topawewa (7 miles by road) lies the Mahaweli-ganga, our largest river, which, rising near Adam's Peak

<sup>1</sup> I believe the furnished "Irrigation", bungalow is now available for travellers, if not officially occupied.—AUTHOR.



Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., C.C.S., Archl. Commr.

THE GAL OYA AT THE KAUDULUWEWA CAMP

The river here forces its way through jagged masses of white quartz



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flows into the sea at Kottiar Bay, Trincomalee, after a course of about 170 miles.

Along both banks of this river, and usually a quarter of a mile to 1 mile inland, lie the series of great swamps (*wilas*) previously alluded to, where fine bird shooting can be had in the season, and elephants, buffaloes, pig, and deer are met with all the year round. Cross the river at the principal ferry and you can make your way towards Gunner's Quoin, a fine rocky hill rising 1700 feet above the plain, in the neighbourhood of which you will find grand "park" country; whilst if you make your way farther south from there you will find a good deal of dense forest, more parks, and the country of the wild Veddahs, the supposed aboriginal inhabitants of Ceylon, but to get there you will find no roads, and only mere footpaths impossible to follow without guides. Northward, again, from Gunner's Quoin along the river are more *wilas* on both sides, where buffalo and elephants may be found. The inhabitants of Tamankaduwa are Singhalese in the interior villages, Moors along all the *wilas* on the west side of the river, and Tamils and Moors on the east side, with a few Veddah villages near Gunner's Quoin.

Taking it all round Tamankaduwa is one of the easiest of the inland wilds to visit and travel in, whilst the country is very pretty, and the sport, though not plentiful, is fair. The wet season is, as usual, October to January inclusive, a little rain in April and May, the rest of the year dead dry and very hot. The Mahaweli-ganga is the only perennial river.

As the Eastern Province forms the eastern boundary of Tamankaduwa and the North Central Province, I will deal with it next. This is a long, narrow, irregular-shaped province extending along fully three-fourths of the whole east

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coast of Ceylon, fairly flat, having a few ranges of hills rising here and there towards the west side. This is a very "gamey" province, but an awful place to travel in, as there are no roads beyond the main road to Batticaloa in the centre of the province, and to Trincomalee in the northern part, with a good road for some miles along the coast north and south of Batticaloa. The coast-line is broken up by lagoons, into which numerous streams run in the wet season. For a few miles inland the country is very scrubby, and farther inland all forest, but there is a lot of open and scrub country south of Batticaloa extending along the coast right away down to the Southern Province. Travelling is very difficult and water bad, but there is good shooting to be had in many places practically all over the province, so that I cannot pick out and particularise any one place, almost all being equally good, for all kinds of game, and almost all being equally impossible of access without unlimited time and money at your disposal. Coaches run to Batticaloa from Bandarawela, and to Trincomalee from Matale.

Rainy season October to January inclusive, rest of the year very dry and fearfully hot. Perennial stream the Madura Oya only, but even this fine stream dries up into standing pools in August. This province is a great place for paddy and coconut growing near the coast, where the inhabitants are all Moors and Tamils. Batticaloa is the headquarters of the Agency, and at Trincomalee, the great naval station of the East,<sup>1</sup> is an Assistant Agency. There is steamer service from Colombo to Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

We will now cross the country to the North-Western

<sup>1</sup> The naval station has been closed altogether since writing the above.—  
AUTHOR.



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

PRETTY VIEW OF THE VEERGIL RIVER, ONE OF THE BRANCH OUTLETS  
OF THE MAHAWELIGANGA



Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., C.C.S., Archl. Commr.

THE MAHAWELIGANGA. TAMANKADUWA DISTRICT



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Province. There is not much to be said about this as a sporting province; it is full of game, but the country generally is not open, something like the Northern Province. The narrow strip in the extreme north of the province used to be fine sporting country at one time, and it now adjoins the Wilachiya game sanctuary. The coast-line abounds in water-fowl in the season, and the grey partridge may be found north of Puttalam. Three main roads meet at Puttalam, the principal town, one, a coach road, from Colombo *via* the coast, one from Kurunegala, and one from Anuradhapura. Puttalam is a great salt-producing centre, by means of saltpans and evaporation, in the vast mud and sand flats along the coast. The province is mostly flat and heavily forest-covered, but gets hilly towards the east side and near Kurunegala. It is fairly full of elephants, and there is fine snipe shooting in the season, besides the usual pigeons and jungle fowl. Parts of it get a fair amount of rain in both monsoons, but otherwise water supply is precarious. The new northern railway runs through the middle of the eastern half of the province.

The Western Province is densely populated, and offers no shooting grounds except for snipe and water-fowl along the coast lagoons and paddy fields. The fishery along the coast forms a great industry. Kalutara is a good snipe shooting centre, and a railway from Colombo serves the whole coast-line.

The Province of Sabaragamuwa is of no use to sportsmen, though it is in places fairly full of elephants. It is very mountainous, and all forest or scrub covered outside of the village lands or estates. It is the great gemming centre,<sup>1</sup> and Ratnapura town, the Agency, is a starting-

<sup>1</sup> Mining for gems has been carried on in this Province for centuries.—  
AUTHOR.

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

point for the western ascent of the famous Adam's Peak.

The Central Province, again, is all mountains, and contains the great Tea districts. Visitors wishing for sport in this province must have "friends at court" to enable them to enjoy "small game hunting on the estates with dogs and gun," and if they visit Nuwara Eliya, friends can introduce them to the "sport of Princes," by which is meant the hunting of elk "to the knife" in the Nuwara Eliya forests, or the Horton Plains a few miles south of Nuwara Eliya, at 7000 feet elevation. The railway traverses this province. Wet seasons are October to January, April, and June to August inclusive.

The Province of Uva contains many fine sporting centres to be reached from inland *via* Bandarawela and Badulla. The mountains are full of estates, and in the triangle between the Nuwara Eliya-Badulla road and the Badulla-Bandarawela-Haputale road are situated the famous Uva patnas, rolling hills, and downs of short grass, the home of the painted partridge. Diyatalawa, on the edge of these patnas, was the site of a large "camp" of Boer prisoners, now used as a military sanatorium and exercise camp, the climate being cool, dry, and bracing, the general elevation being about 4000 feet above sea-level. In the hill forests, above 3000 feet, are to be found the lovely wood pigeons peculiar to Ceylon (*Palumbus Torringtoniæ*), and a visitor, if he has local friends, may enjoy good sport amongst them.

In the northern low country portion of the province, which may be reached by road and bridle path from Kandy, some good snipe shooting may be had in the season, also general shooting, a little way inland from the river, at all kinds of big game. Coming southward and skirting the

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foot of the hills to Bibile, on the Batticaloa road, good snipe shooting is to be had in the season, and travelling farther east from there to Nilgala lovely park country is to be found, where general shooting can be indulged in. The eastern half of the province is rather hilly, and is full of forest and scrub, but the southern part is flat and very "gamey," containing some "park" country as well as forest and scrub. Good shooting may be got from the rest-houses on the Haputale-Hambantota road — which, by the way, is a bad travelling road for carts. There are very few roads or even tracks in the wild parts of this province, and travelling is very difficult. Wet season October to January, showery only at other parts of the year. Water to be found usually in several good rivers.

Finally we have the Southern Province, *par excellence* the sporting part of Ceylon for non-resident visitors in particular. There is fine snipe, teal, and water-fowl shooting all along the coast and in the tanks and paddy fields during the season, whilst pea fowl, jungle fowl, pigeons, &c., abound as soon as you get beyond Tangalla. The shooting country is easily reached, by rail to Matara, and thence by coach or carriage to Hambantota and Wirawila, fine shooting centres. This is *the* only part of Ceylon where the visitor is expected, and provided for. Competent guides and shikaris, under Government licence and supervision, can be engaged at Hambantota and at Wirawila and other places, and necessary carts for transport are always available at cheap rates, whilst most of the rest-houses form excellent centres to shoot from. The country east of Palatupana, to the Menik Ganga,<sup>1</sup> is supposed to be closed to non-resident sportsmen, and beyond that, between the Menik Ganga

<sup>1</sup> Also known as the Yala River.

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and the Kumbukkan Oya, the sea-coast, and province boundary the country is reserved as a game sanctuary. The usual shooting country for visitors is around Wirawila, and here one can hardly fail to bag deer, pig, buffalo, elephant, pea fowl, and all manner of small game, as this province is unquestionably the "gamiest" part of Ceylon.

The foregoing short accounts of the class of country in the different provinces will, I trust, be of some use to the intending sportsman or visitor previously unacquainted with the country and help him in a choice of itinerary.

Ceylon is not an easy country to travel in off the main roads. As far as they are concerned, the travelling is delightful; good roads, easy gradients, and above all the inestimable blessing of the excellent and well-kept rest-houses, provided and upkept by Government for the use of travellers, at distances of from 10 to 14 miles along each and every main road, and even on some of the minor gravel roads. No other country in the world, I believe, can show such excellent accommodation for travellers, particularly as regards the nearness of the rest-houses to each other, so that if a breakdown occurs to your conveyance, whatever it may be, you are never more than 7 miles from good shelter, complete accommodation, and, at the very least, the humble fowl and curry and rice if you have no food-stuff of your own with you.

Leave the main roads, however, and your difficulties begin. You find a rough track, sandy or lumpy in the dry season, and impassable in the wet season. If you have a cart it gets upset or has to be continually unloaded, and your rate of travel will be about 5 miles per day. There is no accommodation in the low country off the main roads unless you are lucky enough to find a P.W.D. or Circuit



Photo by M. L. Wilkins, Esq.

THE ALUT OYA ON THE KAUDULUWEWA ROAD, NEAR ALUT OYA REST-HOUSE



Photo by R. H. Storey, Esq.

THE AUTHOR AND CARRIERS CROSSING THE MADURU OYA, TAMANKADUWA



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Bungalow, and they are unfurnished. Water is bad, and you have to know where to find it before you can camp. If you are a stranger you are at the mercy of your hired native servants and the thieves you may have to take as coolies, or you have to leave everything to your professional shikari picked up in Colombo (some of whom, by the way, are good men enough), and pay "through the nose." If you leave your cart, carriers are very hard to get and ask for exorbitant pay, in agreeing to which, and in over-paying the local trackers, the casual visitor "spoils the market" for all time.

In my younger days I used to travel entirely on foot, carrying my bag and baggage by means of pack-bullocks, but I don't recommend this method to a stranger. I knew my men and could get all the work I wanted out of them and their bulls, but they were often a great nuisance, though they certainly enabled me to get to places unapproachable by cart and where I could not have got carriers. Their drawbacks are, their packs do not take kindly to irregular-shaped objects, such as camp beds, chairs, cooking pots, gun cases, &c., and at first starting some of the bulls are sure to kick off their packs and do a bit of a bolt. Again, in camp they have to be tethered close by as a protection against leopards, thus attracting insects of all sorts and fouling the camp with their droppings. When out to feed they are apt to wander, and have to be closely watched—in fact are too much of a nuisance to be used as a regular means of transport. Nowadays I send a cart off, with all my things and three or four coolies, to the point where I leave the main road, a week before I start myself, and then I do the journey in one day on my bicycle. I will then find, when I reach my men, a gang of villagers waiting to carry my things, arranged for previously by letter to a

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headman, but this sort of thing can only be done by a man who knows both place and people.

Added to bad water, great heat, and difficulties of travel, the low country abounds in insect pests of all sorts. As a cousin of mine remarked of the low country, "It is very pretty, but every tree pricks and every insect stings," which is approximately true. Ticks, minute creatures no bigger than a mustard seed, form the greatest pest. They hang in clusters on leaves, or blades of grass, which you brush against, taking them unto yourself in thousands. Their most favourite resting-place is between your toes, and their bite, sting, or boring process, previous to sucking your blood, may be likened to slowly driving a red-hot needle between your long-suffering toes, or indeed into any part of you they may patronise. The dry season of the year is the worst for them, and the only thing to do is to pick them off, kill them, and soak all your clothes in boiling water every time you come in. In the wet season you have leeches and mosquitoes, and a hundred other abominations. I have seen friends, strangers to the country, whom I have "personally conducted" on shooting trips in the low country, come out a mass of sores from head to foot in a week, solely from insect bites, ticks, &c., while I, the case-hardened "old resident," had not a mark.

Ants are another fearful nuisance—it is next to impossible to pitch camp in a place free of them, for if they are not there when you arrive they very soon will be, and will take possession of all your belongings. During the day the minute eye-flies simply drive you to bed under your mosquito curtains, as they are unceasing in their attentions. Snakes you need not fear—they are very seldom seen or met with in *pukka* jungle country. Don't be discouraged, however, gentle reader, you cannot expect camping and

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tramping in a wild tropical country to be all "beer and skittles."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, brother sportsman or traveller, resident or non-resident, if you are wise, before starting on a trip you will purchase from the Survey Office, Colombo, a map of the country you intend to travel through and thoroughly study it. Most excellent maps on scales of 1 mile, 4 miles, and 8 miles to the inch can be procured now, absolutely correct and up-to-date, and of these I most strongly recommend the coloured 1 mile to the inch sheets mounted to fold on cloth and carried in a portfolio. Index maps can be studied which will show you the numbers of the sheets you particularly require. We have now, thanks to the decision of our late Governor, Sir West Ridgeway, and the energy of our lately retired Surveyor-General, Mr. F. H. Grinlinton, a correct and up-to-date map of Ceylon, all former maps having been very sketchy and incorrect.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II.

## CHAPTER VII

### ELEPHANTS

I DO not propose to write a history or description of the Ceylon elephant, and must refer those who wish for details to Sir Emerson Tennent's "Natural History of Ceylon." The elephants have been a prominent feature in this island for ages, and at the time of the English occupation existed in great numbers all over the country. Major Forbes in his "Eleven Years in Ceylon," between 1820 and 1830, speaks of elephants being met with 25 miles from Colombo, and relates that when he was Military Commandant at Matale he also superintended elephant catching operations, and was able to visit no less than five kraals in a morning from his bungalow! It would be a difficult job nowadays to find an elephant within 20 miles of Matale. After 1831 the destruction of elephants was encouraged owing to their depredations and numbers, and Major Forbes mentions the killing of 106 elephants in 1837 by a party of four Europeans in three days, and the slaying of no less than 9 in one morning by a gentleman who was at the time Government Agent at Kurunegala. Coming to later times, in the 'forties Major Rogers is credited with having slain upwards of 1400; Captain Gallwey over 700; and Major Skinner, "the roadmaker," almost as many.

Sir Emerson Tennent relates that in the 'forties and the 'fifties rewards were paid for the destruction of no less than 5500 elephants! I do not know when the policy

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of destruction ceased and the opposite steps were taken to preserve them, but certain it is that the country is not overfull of elephants nowadays. Some years ago the number to be found wild in Ceylon was estimated at 5000, but I very much doubt if there are as many as 2000 at the present day.

They are found in the greatest numbers in the North-Western, Eastern, Southern, and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, and are certainly not plentiful in the Northern or North Central Provinces. I think, some years ago, Mr. R. W. Ievers, when Government Agent of the North Central Province,<sup>1</sup> estimated the number of elephants there at about 170, and I think he was very near the mark. He was a good sportsman and knew what he was talking about. The largest Ceylon elephants are undoubtedly to be found in the *wila* country of Tamankaduwa, along the course of the Mahaweliganga, where a limited number of really abnormal sized elephants exist, some of which reach close on the very unusual height of 10 feet at the shoulder.

Sir Samuel Baker says that elephants are "naturally savage, wary, and revengeful"—wary they certainly are, but savage and revengeful in their wild state certainly not, except in the case of undoubted "rogues," luckily very, very few and far between. There were more elephants, and therefore more "rogues," to be met with in Sir Samuel Baker's day, and as far as herd elephants are concerned, any animal almost will turn savagely at bay if driven, harassed, bewildered, wounded, and maddened, as were the unfortunate members of herds he fell in with, under his determined pursuit. Compared with their height Ceylon elephants have very large feet,

<sup>1</sup> Lately deceased, sincerely regretted by all who knew him.—AUTHOR.

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

far larger in proportion than those of the African elephant, as can be seen by reference to figures in Rowland Ward's "Records of Big Game." The largest elephant I ever killed out here measured over 9 feet 9 inches at the shoulder as nearly as I could make it, by means of a long stick and a 2-foot rule, and the foot was 59 inches in circumference when fresh. A large tusker bull which I bagged in Central Africa in 1902 measured 10 feet 1 inch at the shoulder, taken by steel tape between uprights at shoulder and sole of the foot, yet the foot only measured 53 inches in circumference!

Herds of more than seven members are not common, but solitary elephants, not necessarily "rogues," may be met with in all jungle country frequented by elephants, and a solitary is rather fond of taking up its residence in the neighbourhood of a village, helping itself contentedly to the villagers' produce. Elephants have in general acquired a contempt for the presence of the ordinary villager, and will walk through a fence nowadays as soon as look at it and help themselves to growing crops in spite of the watchers' presence, shouts, or even firing of guns. A good deal of this indifference is, I think, due to the fact that there are many *deaf* elephants to be found all over the country, more than people imagine, and such animals are quite indifferent to any amount of noise. Let an elephant, however, once become aware that he is being hunted and he becomes as wary and alert as possible, for he has certainly learnt what fear is during the last fifty years!

Finally, before commencing with personal experiences, let me remark that an elephant out here is really very easily approached in forest, as his sense of hearing is not over-acute and his eyesight decidedly poor, but his sense

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of scent is keen, and the wind must be carefully noted when making your approach. He is usually a nocturnal feeder and traveller, though I have several times found elephants out in the *wilas* feeding and bathing as late as 7 A.M., and have, in remote "parks," found them out in the open, still on the feed, as late as 9 A.M.

They usually, however, take to cover at dawn, moving slowly along in the forest feeding leisurely until about 9 or 10 o'clock, after which they lie up until about 4 or 5 o'clock P.M., when they get on the move again. Elephants should not be approached, if it can be avoided, in thick scrub, thorny thickets, or very thin small bush, as the risk is too great, because if your first shot fails to kill and the elephant turns on you as it may at times, or tries to run blindly *over the danger* as occasionally happens, you will be in poor case if your second barrel also fails to stop it, having no means of escape. In heavy forest there is small risk, as even a charging elephant is easily avoided by merely stepping behind a tree, even if no thicker than your thigh, and keeping perfectly still, but don't try any fool-tricks such as trying to shin up a tree about as thick as your arm, or indeed any tree—you are much safer on the ground.

If you are new to the game you had better tackle your first elephant with a friend who you know will stand by you, or who "knows the ropes." If you are by yourself you will have to rely on yourself, for let me assure you, except in rare instances, you will have no spare gun to fall back upon, as your "tracker" is almost certain to blaze off both barrels of your "stand-by" the moment you have fired.

He won't run away—no fear of that, as he is too well used to elephants, but he gets excited and blazes off

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

before he has time to think, and with the vaguest aim. I'll tell you what occurred to me the first time I tried my hand at the game. This was in 1891, nearly four years after my arrival in Ceylon, and I had been reading "Sport in Ceylon," by a "Planter," a *brochure* produced and printed in the island, which inflamed me with a desire to go and do likewise, having already acquired a "taste" by two or three years small game shooting on the estate.

I wrote to (the late) Mr. Ievers, then Government Agent at Anuradhapura, for a licence to shoot an elephant (Rs. 10, only, in those days), but he declined to grant me a general licence, telling me, however, I could have a free shot at a "rogue" which had been chasing the tapal<sup>1</sup> coolies near Polonnaruwa. I promptly hired a cart from my local cart contractor, loaded it up with a few necessaries, and armed only with a 12-bore Paradox (for which I had myself cast the necessary ball and loaded the cartridges with 4 drachms best black powder), I set off brimful of enthusiasm. At Dambulla I had to lie up a day—boil on my ankle—and this troubled me for the rest of the journey. Leaving the main road at Haburane I turned down the Minneriya track, and a track only it was at that time, there being no excellent gravel road as now. We had to unload the cart at every watercourse, and had great difficulty in making Minneriya (16 miles) first day. I stayed there two days snipe shooting and then pushed on to Polonnaruwa, where I put up in an empty newly built (mud and thatch) dispensary. The next day, having engaged some trackers and explained that I was after the rogue, I was conducted to the south end of Topawewa, where an elephant of fair size had

<sup>1</sup> "Tapal" = letter post. It is pronounced "taval" by the ordinary cooly.—AUTHOR.



Photo by F. Skeen & Co., Colombo.

AN ELEPHANT IN MISCHIEF



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., F.W.D., Ceylon.

LARGE ELEPHANT SHOT BY LORD RONALDSHAY IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE



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evidently been to water during the night. About five natives had followed me, all armed, much to my discomfort of mind, with old "gas-pipes," and after inspecting the track we entered the forest. A very short track brought us within sound of our quarry, and, making my way cautiously forward, I soon saw him standing in a tiny open patch of grass, in the midst of the forest, not more than 20 yards in diameter. I sat down at the edge of this to cool and steady myself a bit, and to have a good look at my first wild elephant. I was very much impressed. His huge bulk, flapping ears, and restless movements, as he flicked at flies with a bit of broken branch, or scratched one leg against another, combined to make a picture, framed in a background of fine forest, impressive in the extreme, especially to a novice like myself.

He was standing, heading away from me, showing about quarter face left side, and I was very uncertain about the spot to aim at, so decided to try for the heart. I calculated the position as well as I knew how and let drive, when, to my horror and disgust, such an explosion went off behind me as nearly lifted my hat off my head—every one of those infernal men had let off his old "gas-pipe" at the miserable elephant, the moment after! Away went the elephant like a tornado, crash, smash, through everything, and away I tore after it, groaning at every step, for the boil on my ankle was giving me "beans." After a mile of this I was utterly done, and so sent on two of the men, whilst I sat down to rest. They came back in about an hour reporting the elephant to be still going, which I had reason to think afterwards was not true, so I limped back to camp. The next day I sent men out to look for it again as I could not put foot to the ground, and they returned reporting no find,

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but I heard, some time after I got back to the estate, that the dead elephant had been found, and no doubt my men did not want the trouble of bringing in the feet, &c. Small satisfaction to me, however. I then inquired if this was the "rogue," and was calmly informed that it was not; that the "rogue" dwelt at the other side of the tank nearer the ruins of the ancient city. I was rather sick over this, as I had no right to shoot at an ordinary animal, but determined to go for the "rogue" all the same, so two days after I started again, this time with only two men, the only spare gun being an ordinary 12-bore fowling-piece of my own loaded with 13 gauge ball and 3 drachms powder.

We soon picked up a track near the road and followed it, my men this time acting with considerable caution, partly through the ancient ruins to some rather scrubby jungle with no big trees in it at all. Tracking very cautiously in this we soon came in sight of the elephant, which was standing perfectly still broadside to me about 15 yards away. I got on to a low ant-hill from which I got an excellent view of his head through a clear space in the bush, and sitting down with my elbows on my knees, fired right into the dark centre of his left ear. To my great delight down he went stone dead, though I made certain by running in and putting another shot into the brain. I got a small broken tusk out of him, took off his feet, of which the fore-feet measured  $54\frac{1}{2}$  in. (*vide* Rowland Ward's "Records of Big Game"), ears, and tail, and returned to camp rejoicing, sending men to carry in the trophies. I had the skull of this elephant brought to my bungalow later, and it is now in my verandah.

It was on this first trip of mine that I met and made the acquaintance of my very good friend the Mudaliyar, G.

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Jayewardene, Revenue Officer of Tamankaduwa, from whom I have since, on many occasions, received every kindness, help, and attention, and I think all visitors to Polonnaruwa, during his tenure of office, will be able to say the same.

After using the "Paradox" for some time as an elephant gun I began to think I ought to use something heavier, so went in for a double-barrelled smooth 8-bore with short barrels, by Tolley, which would take 8-10 drs. powder and a 2 oz. spherical ball, and a very handy weapon it proved to be in spite of its  $13\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. weight, being excellently balanced.

However, the first time I used it I nearly came to grief and failed to kill my elephant, which was a very nasty "rogue."

I got notice from my friend the Mudaliyar that a very big elephant was "playing the deuce" amongst the cattlemen in the great swamp of Diwulani, and had been "proclaimed" for destruction. Curiously enough Diwulani is the place which Sir Samuel Baker calls the "tank of Doolana," where he had one of his earliest experiences with a "rogue," or rather two together, in course of which he had a narrow escape. I put a few necessaries, tinned foods, &c., in a couple of boxes, sent off three coolies three days ahead of me, and followed by coach to Haburane. From there I made a forced march by night to Minneriya in faint moonlight, in course of which I walked slap into an elephant in a dark swampy hollow when crossing the end of the tank, and I don't know which of us was the more startled, I or the elephant! Anyhow he made record time for the jungle and I sat down to let my nerves recover a bit and to reassure my men, who were a little upset. I got to Minneriya Tank Bungalow about 3 A.M., and stayed there until daybreak, as I had brought the "post" along for two officers

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who were on a trip and were then in that bungalow, and also for the Mudaliyar, who was at Minneriya to hold "court." I left again by 6 o'clock, as soon as I had seen the Mudaliyar, and tramped on for Polonnaruwa, getting there about 10 A.M. about done, as also were my coolies, the heat being very intense, and distance walked, with three hours' rest, being 28 miles, I carrying a gun all the time. At Polonnaruwa my friend M'Donnell, being in residence, ministered to my wants and I stayed there that day and night. Next morning I tramped off to Diwulani, distance about 7 miles, and put up in a small thatched shed which had been erected for the Government Agent some time before. This is a biggish Moorish village on the side of the great swamp, which at this point exhibits a grand expanse of open water fringed with a wide margin of weeds and lotus growth, the whole being bordered by big forest. I got some trackers here, and after breakfast set off accompanied by an old Singhalese "arachi" (minor headman), to cross the water in a miserable dug-out canoe, in which we had to sit lop-sided to keep a huge hole at one side of it out of the water. Arrived at the other side of the swamp we crossed the short grass space between the water and the forest, on the edge of which we at once picked up a fresh track of the elephant, and a bigger track I have never seen before or since—like young wells in the soft ground! Entering the forest I took the 8-bore, giving my "Paradox" to the Arachi, while some of the Moormen took up the tracking. The forest here was very dense and the track gradually led us into an awful thicket of thorny rattan creepers, into which I was fool enough to follow it. We got into this deeper and deeper until, suddenly turning a corner in the track, we saw the stern of the elephant disappearing round another corner about 20 yards ahead of

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us. We stopped to hold a council, when, without a moment's warning, the elephant uttered a tremendous snort, turned round, and came back down the track like a locomotive gone mad! I retreated a few yards back from the corner I was at until the elephant could no longer see me, and when his head appeared round the corner I let him have it, aiming for the fatal ear shot. It failed to drop him but he heeled over like a ship in a storm, turned back, rushed into the thickest part of the jungle, and simply tore around, smashing down everything he could lay hold of—I never heard such a row! During this ~~I~~ and my men *and I* took stock of our situation and managed to get to the neighbourhood of a fair-sized tree with "buttress" roots. Just after reaching it there was a lull in the smashing performance which had been going on only about 40 or 50 yards away, but a few moments later we heard the "tornado" coming straight for us again.

The Moormen disappeared somewhere, and old Naynda Arachi stood pluckily near me with the "Paradox," whilst I took my stand by the side of our tree with the 8-bore ready. So thick was the undergrowth that I never saw a bit of the brute until his head smashed through the mass of creepers within 10 feet of me. I had no time to aim, but fired full at his head as best I could, the only result being that he screamed with rage and came striding over the buttresses of the roots to get at me. This was unpleasant, so I backed away round the tree, always facing him, dodging his trunk, which was hovering over me, and getting over the buttresses as best I could. Finally, in desperation, I fired my second barrel right up into the under side of his head, and this gave him such a staggerer that he left me and made off. As he went I was amused, on looking round, to see old Naynda Arachi let fly both barrels

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of the "Paradox" straight up into the air, he having remained very near the tree during the "ruction," and that night, over the camp fire, I heard him tell the gaping audience how the elephant was just on the point of striking me down when he fired both barrels of the spare gun into its head, drove it away, and saved my life! The Moormen appeared as soon as the elephant cleared off, not having gone farther than behind the nearest trees, and we mutually congratulated each other on a lucky escape, though I felt a bit sad over my failure to bag such a fine and distinctly dangerous animal. That elephant I believe travelled many miles after he started off, for he was seen crossing the "ganga" a long way from the shooting point that same afternoon by some men of the next village, and was not heard of again. An experience such as the foregoing shows how easily you may fail to kill an elephant with even such a heavy gun as an 8-bore. The Ceylon practice is usually to shoot at the head, trying always for the fatal brain shot. This may be accomplished if you are immediately in front of the animal facing you, by firing at the lower part of the *bump*, which may be seen in the centre of the head almost on a line between the eyes, and below the *hollow* of the forehead. Curiously enough both "Keddah" Sanderson and "The Old Shikarry" speak of aiming at the *hollow* above the trunk, which I think must be simply a clerical mistake on their part, for they must have known the "bump" as well as anybody—no one better. Another shot is at the temple, when the elephant shows you about three-quarter face, taking aim at a point midway on the line between the eye and centre of the ear.

Shot the third, and to my mind the easiest of all, is when the elephant is full broadside to you, and you then fire right into the dark centre of the ear, rather behind

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than forward of the actual orifice. This same class of shot can also be taken if, instead of being immediately at right angles to the head, you are at a point about a right angle to his tail and, say, about 10 or 15 yards distant from him. You then aim into the hollow behind the ear, taking care not to hit the huge knob of the lower jaw-bone "hinge."

Except as stoppers, however, the day of big bores is over. The penetration of the modern high-velocity small bore is so terrific that, with solid nickel-coated bullets, a .303 military rifle can send a ball right *through* an elephant's head from almost any position, so that you can calculate on reaching the brain, if your aim is correct, no matter from what point you take your shot. The big bore, whatever its size or charge of powder, cannot do this except from very close quarters.

The following experience, also with the 8-bore, shows again how easily a "moral certainty" can be missed, and also shows how equally easily it can kill when properly held—it is all a question of hitting that little brain pan.

In 1894 I got the chance of a shot at no less than four condemned "rogues," or at least elephants which were committing damage, in Tamankaduwa, one of which had certainly killed a man. I made this journey with pack-bulls by the *tavalam* track from Kaikawela on the Matale-Rattota road, *via* Ambane and Elahera, and thence through the forest to Topawewa. From the last place I proceeded to Magamtota, crossed the "ganga," and went to Manampitiya, a Tamil village, in the vicinity of which "rogue No. 1" was said to be.

Here I was met by Kanavathie of Muttugala, a renowned elephant nooser, with whom, and one Kanappan of Manampitiya, I set off to look for the "rogue." We

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made our way round the north end of the great *wila* near the village, skirted a smaller swamp, in the middle of which was feeding a huge boar whom we left in peace, and entered big gloomy forest. The local man knew the elephant's usual haunts, and after a mile or two we came on its fresh track, showing it to be a very large elephant, as are most of these swamp frequenters. We followed the track, Kanavathie, the "Nooser," leading, and presently heard the animal some distance ahead of us—more than that, we heard it lie down and start snoring away like an old bellows! Just then a leopard roared loudly close to our back-track, so I ran back a little to look for him but without success. We then, after testing the wind, approached the elephant and found he had entered an extraordinarily dense little clump of thick creepers and undergrowth, into which he had forced his way, turned round, and lain down facing the entrance. We tip-toed along the only side left available to us by the wind, peering through the matted mass of twigs and branches, but could not get a single place for a shot, or make out any particular part of his massive bulk. Kanavathie and I then did what I think was about the maddest thing we could have done—we deliberately crawled into the thicket by the way the elephant himself had forced his way in, and presently found ourselves squatting down, unable to stand upright, within *ten feet* of the massive head of the animal. He was not asleep in spite of his snores, for I could see one wicked little eye blinking at us with surprise, and he almost immediately began to raise his head from the ground. I waited until it got into a favourable position and fired, but, to my dismay, he continued to rise, so, the moment he got to his feet I fired my second barrel, whereupon, to our great relief, he turned round and crashed

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his way through the thicket at that side, for had he come forward we were absolutely unable to escape and must have been trampled to pulp. I can only suppose he was too astonished and dazed to attack us, and I can assure you I was so taken aback at the failure of my shot to kill at such close quarters that I thought the time had come to "hand in my check." Kanavathie gave his opinion that it was no use following the elephant, but we did track it for about 2 miles, and as a matter of fact unless an elephant is very badly wounded it is of little use following it nowadays, as it runs a tremendous distance before it stops. If the country was open a follow-up might be made, but through our dense jungles you can only progress at a very slow pace, whilst the elephant can travel through it faster than you could run even in the open.

The next day we travelled to Kuda-ulpota, a tiny hamlet of about three houses, under the south-western precipice of Gunner's Quoin, one of the inhabitants having been killed by an elephant a few weeks previously.

The unfortunate man was on his way to a little paddy field near the village, and, with a small son, who was walking in front of him, met the elephant face to face just as they emerged from a small belt of scrub. The poor fellow caught up his youngster in his arms, and at the same moment the elephant, probably as much in fear and surprise as anything else, struck the man with his trunk, killing him on the spot, and ran right over him, one nail of the foot slightly gashing the boy's forehead, he being otherwise unhurt. The animal was described to me as having a pair of small broken tusks and a scar in the shape of a longitudinal slit in his tail, and was said to frequent Bandia Wila, a large swamp about 4 miles away. This information was given me by an extraordinary

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little monkeyfied man, a wandering Veddah, who had settled for a brief space in this neighbourhood. We set off then for Bandia Wila, and on reaching it, a very grassy, weedy swamp with little open water, found shelter in a tumble-down little hut which had been built by some cattle-keepers.

During the night we heard an elephant in the swamp pretty near us, and at daybreak there he was not 300 yards away, on the opposite side of a stretch of water. I examined him with my glasses and saw he had small tusks, making it probable that he was the "murderer." He was in no hurry, and gave us ample time to walk round the end of the swamp before he moved towards the forest. We, however, reached the forest first, and, entering it, moved along just inside, keeping pace with the elephant, who was walking along the jungle edge just outside it. Presently he turned in and, the forest being very open, offered me a fine broadside shot as he crossed in front of me at about 30 yards. I got him in the ear but failed to kill, the only effect being to cause him to literally sit down, his hind legs collapsing beneath him.

Recovering, however, almost immediately, he turned round and came straight at me—it could not be called a charge, for he must have been too dazed to have any fixed idea beyond escape—so I, crouching to see under the cloud of smoke of the first discharge, waiting until I got a favourable shot, gave him my left barrel fair in the temple, dropping him dead just 10 yards from me. An examination showed the split tail, so there was no doubt I had got the right animal. The fore-feet measured 52 inches, and his height at the shoulder 9 feet 1 inch approximately, between uprights, whilst the tusks showed about 6 inches projecting beyond the lips. Being anxious

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to move on I went to Horawila, a Tamil village some 2 or 3 miles away, and sent men back from there to cut out the tusks and cut off the fore-feet. I got two worn and broken tusks, each about 18 inches long and weighing each about 5 lbs., both of which were, later, made into silver-fitted inkstands, coming in very useful as wedding presents on two occasions. Next day I travelled some 11 to 12 miles northward along the *wilas* to Muttugala, where the other two condemned elephants had been damaging paddy fields.

The next day I set off, with Kanavathie and his brother, the two men being a fine pair of muscular Tamils and both expert "panikkans" or elephant catchers, to track down an elephant which had been damaging a "chena" crop, and had trespassed the very night of my arrival. After a long track through forest the footmarks led us into an old remote abandoned "chena," where we saw the elephant standing near a dead tree in the middle of an open space. This "chena" was short grass, with clumps of bushes and odd trees here and there, so getting the tree by which the elephant was standing between us and his head, the wind being favourable, we walked up to the tree, though how the animal failed to hear us I don't know, for the ground was gritty quartz gravel, which grated with what seemed to be a fearful noise at every step.

Arrived at the tree I could have patted the elephant by hand easily, so close were we, for he was partly leaning against it quite still. Losing no time, however, I fired into the back of his right ear with the 8-bore, the muzzle of the gun being not more than 3 feet from the point of aim, and down he sank at once. Kanavathie was going to fire at him again but I told him not to, like an ass, nor did I take the precaution to put in another shot myself,

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result being—I lost my elephant. As I was curiously examining it, less than a minute after the shot, it got up with amazing suddenness and started for the jungle at express speed. I hurriedly fired at its head but with no result, and away it went, blood pouring out of the first wound in torrents, we tearing after it. We tracked it for miles, and it bled to such a frightful extent that I got covered with blood pushing through the undergrowth on its track, and wonder to this day how *any* animal could have lost blood to such an extent and yet live. It never stopped moving, and after some miles the blood got fainter and fainter, finally giving out altogether. We at last gave up and returned to camp, but we took up the track again next day and followed it until it became hopeless, for the animal had never stopped travelling. I heard of an elephant suffering from a bad wound in the head being killed some weeks after this away in the Northern Province, which might easily have been this same one. Thus was I taught for the third time that an 8-bore, if your aim errs by the slightest degree, is just as fallible as any other weapon. However, nothing daunted, next morning I got word that the other elephant accused of damage, which frequented the jungle on another side of the village, had during the night about devastated a small paddy field, so off we set again. We took up the track, the footprints being very large, at the said paddy field, in which the young growing paddy had been all eaten or trampled into mud, and followed it many miles through forest, finally coming into some awful thorny scrub interspersed with little stretches of bare, sandy, quartzly ground so poor as not to even grow grass. The elephant had followed these stretches of open as they like easy walking, and we presently came upon him standing dozing in the middle of a small pool of water occupying a tiny hollow

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of about 30 yards diameter, surrounded by thick, thorny scrub, except for a very small opening behind the elephant, and the opening by which we had entered. We reconnoitred from behind the scrub and I could not see my way to a clear shot, so decided to walk very quietly into the open hollow on the chance of getting in my shot before he realised the danger. The moment, however, I appeared in the open hollow the elephant, with a snort of surprise and fear, turned round very quickly and made for the tiny opening behind him previously mentioned. As he passed me I fired into his ear, and such was the impetus of his rush that it carried him fairly into the opening in the scrub, where his fore-legs gave way and he came down full on his head, his fore-legs bent underneath, his forehead being absolutely flat on the ground, and his hind quarters remaining *erect on the hind legs*, tail standing up straight and stiff, all on the quiver.

I and Kanavathie ran up and easily saw he was not dead. I tried all I knew to get past him to enable me to get a shot at his head, but he so filled the opening, and the undergrowth was such a dense mass of thorns, that I could not manage it, so in desperation I fired into his stern, at an angle, upwards, in the hope of breaking the spine near the tail. This did not move him until a few seconds after, when, as though wakened by an electric shock, he got up and dashed into the bush, I after him. I was very soon brought up, however, "with a round turn" by almost running into the animal which had stopped and turned to face me, so I fired hastily at its temple but missed the fatal spot, upon which it turned to bolt again, but as it turned I got my chance at the ear shot, and dropped it dead with my second barrel. I made certain of this one, anyhow, by promptly putting two more shots

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into its head, though it was dead enough, and the ground around was swimming in blood in five minutes. This is the elephant, the measurements of which are referred to in page 92, the largest I ever killed in Ceylon, and there is no doubt it was one of the giants of the breed of large elephants which frequent the *wilas* of Tamankaduwa. We cut off the tail and one ear and returned to camp, it being then too late to send for the feet that day, but they were brought in next morning, each fore-foot being a very full load for two men. Many months afterwards I had the skull brought to my bungalow, where it now is, and one of the illustrations shows it in comparison with the skull of my first elephant, which had been considered a fine skull at one time but looks a pigmy beside the giant. This great skull measures exactly 3 feet 7 inches in height when standing on the ground on the lower jaw bone, and the animal must have been an old one, as it had the four full-grown teeth only and none of the smaller ones. The other skull only measures 3 feet same way. The few incidents which I have related, out of my elephant shooting experiences, will serve to show my readers the kind of thing Ceylon elephant shooting is, with some of its difficulties, dangers, and uncertainties, but I do not profess to be much of an elephant shot and have not done anything in that branch of sport for some years. The drawback to elephant shooting is, to my mind, that you have to let other animals alone for fear of disturbing your game, but as a matter of fact you see little or no other game in elephant country, and so do not get a chance at it unless you move to fresh country. It would be a most unusual thing, if not an impossible occurrence, to find an elephant in Ceylon which has not been fired at, and more than once. In all the



FINE SNAP-SHOT PHOTO BY MR. ALFRED CLARK OF THE FOREST DEPARTMENT



SKULLS OF TWO ELEPHANTS SHOT BY THE AUTHOR

Vertical Height .  
3 feet

Vertical Height  
3 feet 7 inches



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elephants I have killed any number of bullets, mostly round ball, up to a dozen have been picked up from head and body, after the flesh has disappeared, weeks or months afterwards. I am very much of opinion that irritation caused by these old and comparatively slight wounds is accountable for many otherwise harmless, but thievishly disposed, elephants turning "rogue."

I once saw a very interesting sight in a case of an elephant I had fired at and failed to kill. In running away it ran blindly into a matted mass of thick woody creepers and actually stuck! It drew back and pushed forward again like a battering ram, but again stuck, though branches flew in all directions, breaking with reports like pistol-shots. Again it retreated a few feet and made a most determined effort, this time smashing its way through, great creepers, twigs and branches cracking, snapping, and flying all over the place. I was so interested in the sight that I did not fire again, but let him go. Of trophies to be secured from our elephants the feet rank first—tusks you can leave out of the count—there are very few tuskers in Ceylon, besides which they are not allowed to be shot. These feet have to be most carefully cleared out, which is a wearisome job for your coolies, as they are a mass of bone and gristle, and then rubbed inside with burnt alum and saltpetre (Montagu Browne's mixture), filled with dry sand or straw, and put out in the sun to dry. Dull weather will soon cause them to "sweat" and go rotten. They make fine footstools, liquor stands, or, if cut long in the leg, umbrella stands. I once designed and got made by Orr of Madras a very neat thing in the shape of bon-bon dishes made out of an elephant's toe nails. I selected the best nails, had them polished, lined with silver, and supported by two silver feet at the

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curved side. They came in handy as wedding presents. The ears can be split, part way down, lined with cloth or silk, and used as newspaper racks to hang on the wall. The tails are usually stuffed and hung up, but you can make bracelets out of the thick tail bristles.

Elephant shooting is, without a doubt, exciting, and, even in our forests, possesses a fair element of danger, but nothing to compare with the dangerous open-country shooting which usually has to be done in Africa—open country or almost impenetrable cane or reed brakes. It will be a pity from a sentimental point of view to see elephants wiped out, but I really think, out here at least, they do about as much damage as they are intrinsically worth. They are not much used for work in Ceylon, being mainly “Temple ornaments.” For an account of an elephant kraal read Sir Emerson Tennent’s fine description, or Mr. Modder’s account of the great kraal in the North-Western Province, a few years ago, when something like 90 elephants were enclosed.

It is hardly necessary for me to refer to the well-worn subject of the height of elephants. The usual height is from 7 feet 6 inches to 8 feet 6 inches at the shoulder, and any animal over 9 feet is a very large one—in the face of these figures the measurements given of some of my own kills will seem a bit “tall,” but they were all *wila* elephants and of most unusual size. I have met elephants in many other parts of Ceylon and seen their tracks, but none to compare for a moment with the Tamankaduwa *wila* breed, the only ones to approach them in size being possibly a few odd ones of the Southern Province or Uva Province.

Of “pukka” tuskers, I had never seen one in all my wanderings, though I must have seen, one way or another,



#### A PLUCKY FEAT

Elephants in a kraal photographed by Mrs. E. Benham of Colombo. The centre one with his ears cocked is a dangerous bull, and was about to charge when the photograph was secured.



MRS. E. BENHAM'S FINE PHOTO OF FEMALE ELEPHANT AND CALF IN A KRAAL



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some hundreds of elephants in the wilds. They are now exceedingly rare, and I have only heard of two or three being killed during the last twelve to fourteen years by sportsmen. The shooting of a tusker, unless it is a proclaimed rogue, is however forbidden, and heavy penalties attached to an infringement of the order. A fair number of tuskers are in service here and there, one or two quite good ones, but they must be of considerable age and were probably caught many years ago. Very many Ceylon elephants have leprous-looking pink blotches on the head and ears or parts of the body.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ELEPHANTS (*Continued*)

IN my experiences related in the previous chapter I was alone, but later I had some very pleasant trips in company with my friend T. Y. Wright, in which we met with some exciting incidents.

On one of our trips we had actually gone to the extravagance of paying Rs. 200 for licenses to kill two elephants, as no "rogues" were available. We put in some little time amongst the deer and pigs first, and then moved on into elephant country, camping in the Moorish village of Tambála in Tamankaduwa. This village is at the eastern extremity of the fine range of "park" country, mentioned, in my chapter describing the physical features of the country, as having originally formed the old Minneriya paddy fields, and in this park, and its attendant jungle and forest clumps, a good many elephants may be found at any time other than during the dry season.

We got news one morning that an elephant had been seen crossing the path between Tambála and Pangurane, so set off in the afternoon with two Moormen as guides and trackers. After finding the place where the elephant had crossed the path we had a long and difficult track through open park and scrub, eventually finding a place where he had had his midday rest still warm from the impression of his body. Not long after this, in some rather poor forest, we came within sound of him, and presently, as we were walking quietly down a narrow

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grassy glade, I saw, through the trees, the elephant coming down another narrow glade at right angles to the one we were in, and so Tom and I walked quietly but quickly forward to the spot where the glades joined, and there met the animal face to face within 5 yards. It being Tom's turn for first shot I urged him in a whisper to shoot, but he hesitated, not liking the position of the head at the time as not offering a good chance, and the elephant turned round and walked back up the glade it had come down. We followed quietly about 10 yards behind it, and it kept partly turning round to glance at us, until at last, suspecting something wrong in our persistent advance, it turned half round towards us and Tom let fly at its ear with my 8-bore as soon as it was broadside on, knocking it clean over. "That's settled it," says Tom. "Not a bit of it," said I, and running up to it began putting some bullets into the back of its head (Dum-dum bullets, by all that's holy, out of a .303 Lee-Speed!), whilst Tom ran round to try for a front shot with the 8-bore.

This was a silly game on our part, as the obvious thing to have done would have been to put an 8-bore bullet through its spine at once and then kill it. The cartridges for the 8-bore were rather old and had swelled, so Tom could not get the used one out, whilst in the meantime the elephant was reviving and trying to get up in spite of my efforts with the .303 and the Dum-dums. Presently it got up altogether, and turned towards me very nastily. Tom disappeared somewhere and I disappeared also, with marvellous celerity, behind a small bush through which I watched the puzzled and distinctly dazed elephant very anxiously. It waved its trunk about a bit and took some steps towards me, stopped, turned, and made for the jungle edge, which was only 20 yards away. As it went I heard

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the 8-bore speak again, and the elephant instantly turned round, standing motionless, facing down the glade. I heard Tom cursing quietly as he struggled with the cartridges, so ran out into the glade again, and, standing about 15 yards away in front of the elephant, opened on it with the .303, aiming carefully at the fatal "bump." I fired five shots quite deliberately, but the only effect was to cause the animal to retreat one step backwards at each discharge. Finally it turned and went quietly into the forest, Tom after it. I ran to our two trackers and changed the .303 for an old .577 with Snider cartridges, running back as soon as I got it, but in the meantime I heard Tom fire twice, and, meeting him directly afterwards, he said he thought he had killed the elephant as it was down. I ran along and found it dead on its knees, but gave it two more shots to make certain. We did not attempt to measure the height of this animal, but the feet measured only  $49\frac{1}{2}$  inches, so it was not a large one. We got back to camp pretty tired, getting into the middle of a small herd of elephants on the way, at dusk, and enjoying a very interesting sight of them.

Another experience we had together was rather out of the common. Our local Government Agent had written to both Tom and myself asking us to go and have a shot at an elephant reported to be doing damage in Galboda village, so we arranged to go off together. Galboda is only about 20 miles from Matale, so I bicycled to Kaikawela, 5 miles on the Matale-Rattota road, where I met Tom as the bridle path to his estate turned off from there. We had sent coolies and things on the day before, and from Kaikawela I walked and Tom rode by the old Taman-kaduwa *tavalam* track, a very picturesque route along the Kaluganga, to Ambane, on the Ambanganga, and thence

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round the extreme north end of the Matale East hills to Galboda, which we found to be a picturesque little village situated under a half-circle of frowning precipices of forest-covered cliffs and bare rock, rising in places fully 2000 feet above the level of the village. These precipices form the extreme north end of the Matale East range of hills, which are also part of the great Hunasgiriya range, the eastern boundary of the Matale Valley. We took up our residence in a sort of shed, sent for an ancient headman, and made inquiries, when we soon found that there were many elephants about, all doing damage. The valley of this village contained several small jungle-covered ridges running north and south parallel to each other, usually having native pathways in the bottom of the small valleys between them, these same bottoms forming pretty glades of short grass. The scrub of this valley was awful impenetrable thorn scrub, and the forest on the ridges was almost laid down flat by the depredations of elephants. We found broad elephant roads along the summit of every ridge, hard trodden, and resting-places under every shady tree along these roads, recent traces of elephants being visible everywhere. The very night of our arrival an elephant visited the village and destroyed some coconut palms within 200 yards of our "lodging." For two days we did not get a shot, though we saw two elephants, but on the third day, walking down one of the little valleys, we espied an elephant calmly feeding amongst low jungle up on the hillside 300 or 400 feet above us. The villagers were no use as hunters and afraid of elephants, so the men with us were of no assistance. After a consultation we decided that I should go up the hill, get above the elephant, and try to drive it down to Tom if I could not kill it, so off I set. After a fearful crawl and scramble through horrible undergrowth

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I reached a point above where I expected to find the animal, but hearing nothing made my way to the spot, and found my calculation correct as to place, but the elephant had gone. This did not surprise me, as I must have taken nearly an hour over my climb and cautious approach, so getting on a tree stump whence I could see Tom I signalled him to come up, and he also made signs which I interpreted to mean that the elephant had gone up the hill and away, and this turned out to be the case.

When Tom and the men arrived we tracked to the top of the ridge and there found the usual broad beaten road, but we also found a recent track descending to the other side, which the villagers assured us was that of our elephant, and that it would be hopeless to follow. Tom was inclined to agree with them, but I was not at all satisfied that it was our elephant's track, so set off by myself along the ridge. I ought to explain that the ground was dead dry, so that tracks several days old looked as fresh as those of an hour unless overlaid by other tracks. I went carefully along, using my eyes and getting more and more convinced that I was right, when at last I came upon fresh droppings, putting the matter beyond doubt. I ran back, called up Tom, and off we set along the ridge. After a while we came to the extreme end of the ridge, the elephant road ended, and we saw nothing but small jungle sloping down on three sides of us, and no sign of our elephant. Just then, however, we heard a slight grunt and snort, when, stooping down to look under the bushes, I saw the animal not more than 30 yards away having a standing snooze. Our villagers fairly trembled with funk and wanted us to begin volleying at once, but we sat down to hold a consultation, and then, as the wind was right, decided that Tom, who was to take first shot, should with the 8-bore

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approach the left broadside, whilst I walked up to his full front to be ready for him if Tom failed to kill. I, having only about 20 yards to go, soon got into position and found myself in full view of the elephant barely 10 yards away. Looking to my right I saw Tom some 20 yards away, so gave him a nod, whereupon he put up the 8-bore, fired, and with a slight gasp the elephant sank on its knees stone dead. I ran up, however, and put a "Paradox" ball into its ear, and Tom, coming up, seeing its perfectly natural position, exactly that of an elephant rising from a kneeling posture, and seeing the head gently nodding, exclaimed, "By Jove! it is not dead yet," letting fly into its head again with the 8-bore. The head still nodded, and Tom, being yet incredulous, fired again, but it was as dead as a stone to the first shot. For a long time our men dared not approach, but at last they did, and we cut off the tail and measured the feet, just over 50 inches, after which we returned to the village. There was tremendous excitement on our arrival, and every man, woman, and child capable of walking set off at once to see the dead elephant as it was not more than a mile away, our coolies going as well to cut off the feet, and having to spend half the night clearing them out. We made our way home next day well enough pleased.

As a final hint about elephant shooting in Ceylon, if your Singhalese trackers go steadily along the track and inform you that the jungle ahead is *mookalahna*, which means "big forest" (Tamil, *sholey kahdoo*), you are all right and the shot will probably be an easy one. If they go a little more cautiously and inform you that the jungle is *landa* (Tamil, *siroo kahdoo*), it means that there is more undergrowth and few or no big trees, so that an approach needs care, and more so the shot, as it will not be so easy to

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get out of the way if you fail to kill and the elephant charges.

Finally, if your men stop and tell you the cover is *kanatta* (Tamil, *cheddy*), which means practically "scrub," you had better leave your elephant alone until he comes out again or goes through into better jungle. With the best weapon in the world no man can be absolutely sure of killing, and so I consider it very foolhardy to attack *any* elephant in such stuff, as your chance of escape is a poor one in case of a determined charge—you can't break through the scrub, but an elephant can!

## CHAPTER IX

### ELEPHANT SHOOTING

BY J. J. ROBINSON

I HAVE accepted with very great reluctance the Editor's kind invitation to contribute some of my own elephant shooting experiences, for the reason that the rifle is much handier to me than the pen.

It is, however, a real joy to recall to memory some of my old battles in the forests and jungles of Uva; but the task of committing them to paper is, to me, not an easy one, and I cannot hope to convey thereby to my readers more than a faint idea of my own pleasure and enthusiasm in the chase.

Ask any man in Ceylon who has done a bit of elephant shooting if he considers our "monarch of the forest" a dangerous animal to tackle, and he will probably say "No—very tame sport"; but for all that there is a large element of danger in it, dependent in particular on the nature of the beast and of the country in which it is met with. In ordinary cases the animal is located by trackers, the sportsman is led up to it, and usually gets time for a deliberate shot which, with a little care, should prove fatal; or, in the case of a herd, the animals are in full flight before the smoke of the first shot has cleared away.

I can only call to mind two occasions on which I was charged by unwounded elephants—once by a celebrated old rogue at Butala, and once by a rogue at Nilgala. The latter had been hunted by several sportsmen, and when I

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went after it, it charged me at once as soon as I got into its near neighbourhood, luckily falling, however, to the fatal front shot as it came. I had considerable difficulty in getting any natives to track this beast, as it had killed several unfortunate villagers during its career as a rogue.

Had I not shown the men my heavy rifle I could never have got them to take up the search; they have faith in a heavy gun, but none in a small bore.

When in Badulla one day in November 1894 the late Mr. Frank Fisher, then Government Agent (a true and mighty hunter of big game), told me about the Butala rogue. It had killed two villagers, damaged lots of crops, and even molested some carts coming along the high-road, so Mr. Fisher asked me to go for it, and gave me every assistance by sending orders to the local headmen to provide me with proper trackers, &c.

I got my trackers all right, and one of them, an old man by name Nippuna, turned out to be a real artist, though he very nearly caused my undoing by bolting with my spare rifle at the critical moment, as will be seen later.

On arrival at Butala I was disappointed to find no news of the rogue, his presence not having made itself felt in the neighbourhood for some days past. A rogue is very sly, and usually leaves a place where he has been doing a lot of damage alone for some time, making his reappearance at intervals with unexpected suddenness.

For three full days I and my men tramped the country round in vain, and it was about 6 P.M. on the third day, as we were crawling back dead-beat, and I had made up my mind to give it up for a time, when old Nippuna suddenly halted and examined a twig lying in the middle of a game



SOME OF MR. J. J. ROBINSON'S TROPHIES



A FAIRLY TYPICAL HEAD OF A CEYLON WILD  
BUFFALO, SHOT BY THE AUTHOR



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path, whispering to me, "This is fresh, master!" We went on very cautiously, spreading out a bit to keep a better look-out, our party consisting of two Singhalese and two of my Tamils, one of whom was only a small boy named Govinden, my snipe marker, who had wept bitterly when I had refused at first to take him out after elephants. He begged me to try him, swearing to be quiet and not afraid, and I have reason, as the sequel shows, to be for ever grateful that I did try him on that occasion. We soon picked up fresh tracks, but had to give up as darkness set in, and we returned to camp. I got up next morning full of hope, feeling there was a "red letter" day before me, and was soon off in search of tracks, which we came upon with very little delay, quite fresh, and naturally leading us to expect a speedy meeting.

Not a bit of it, however; mile after mile, hour after hour the track led us, up hill and down dale, through forest, scrub, and swamp, until we were almost "cooked." At one time a dark form appeared silently before me, but it was only a grand buck elk, on which I "drew a bead," but allowed to pass unscathed—nobler game was my object that day. Shortly after this, just as I entered a small open glade, one of the trackers suddenly said, "Look out! here is the elephant!" and the next moment I saw him, trunk tucked up, ears spread, almost on top of me, coming through a patch of grass which reached to his chin. I was taken by surprise, having only just time to cock my rifle and let fly both barrels at his head, at a few feet distance, as he came along screaming like a steam siren, finding myself on my back next moment grasping a broken-stocked empty 12-bore rifle (unfortunately a borrowed one), and feeling "all at sea."

I looked round for old Nippuna and the spare .577,

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but he was *non est*, whilst, to pile up the situation, the rogue had stopped and was feeling around for my wind, with his infernal trunk waving gently in all directions.

I cautiously rose and was making tracks to get behind the only decent-sized tree available when, to my joy and relief, the barrels of my faithful .577 were pushed under my arm, and the next instant the elephant came charging down on me like a tornado, only to fall stone dead to my shot, and I then found, standing quietly behind me, the bringer of the gun, young Govinden, who had rushed after old Nippuna, seized the gun from him, and brought it to me at the most critical moment, undoubtedly saving my life, for without a rifle I was about equal to a rat in a trap.

The youngster did not seem to understand why I made much of him, his faith in "master's" infallibility never seeming to be in doubt.

He is still with me, as keen a sportsman and staunch gun-bearer as ever drew breath, having been in at the death of many rogues since that famous occasion.

I will try and describe one more set-to with a rogue. I have pursued many elephants, but the fighters have been few and far between, though the memory of the encounters will remain green as long as life endures. A hard worked-out track ending in a fight to a finish in the almost impenetrable thorny scrub of Uva is, in my opinion, about the most exciting experience a Ceylon elephant hunter can have, and contains elements of danger enough to satisfy any one. There is no easy avenue of escape, your aim must be true, your nerve steady, and your head as cool as you can keep it, otherwise you may find yourself flattened out with a vengeance.

Report was brought to me that an elephant was doing

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a lot of damage near Bibile, and down I went to interview him. On arrival I was shown the place where he had dined the night before, and he had "done himself" right royally, having casually lifted the roof off a combined watch-hut and grain-store, helping himself liberally to the contents, the two occupants of the hut crouching in fear and trembling at the other end.

We took up the track and followed it to a dense patch of scrub, into which I crawled on my hands and knees, followed only by the faithful Govinden. I reached a small comparatively open patch, and had just risen to my feet when the elephant appeared, from the opposite side, coming out into the open not many yards from me.

I took a hasty shot at his head with a heavy muzzle-loading rifle and down he went, but was up again almost instantly, bolting away with shrill screams. Handing the empty gun to Govinden in exchange for the .577, I took up the track again, and, after some miles of hard work, once more came on the animal at a stand-still in dense scrub. I let him have both barrels of the .577, but was too shaky after my violent exertions in forcing my way through the scrub, and failed to floor him. He went off at speed again, keeping in the thickest scrub, but soon slowed down to sullen deliberation. Govinden having come up with the reloaded muzzle-loader, I sent him round to try and turn the elephant into more favourable ground, which he successfully did, as it broke across a small paddy field, enabling me to put in a shot with the old muzzle-loader. The next moment I was sitting on the ground with blood streaming from a burst nose and cut lip, Govinden having evidently in the excitement of the moment overcharged the old gun heavily, and the concussion had fired both barrels practically simultaneously!

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The hammer had cut deep into my nose and lip, and luckily the fearful explosion had scared the elephant away, for it was very unlikely he had been hit.

I called a halt for breakfast, and after an hour's rest went at it once more, taking up the track from the last encounter but losing it again soon after. We were searching about when one of the men heard a branch break, and there was our friend in the very centre of a patch of thick scrub, into which I made my way in spite of the strong remonstrances of the trackers; old Wellasie Gamarala, a grand old "shikari," saying, "You will not have a chance if he winds you!" I instructed them, however, to keep on quietly talking to divert his attention from me, and in I went, accompanied by Govinden. I was crawling along on my face when I heard a slight movement alongside of me, and to my horror I perceived that I was almost under the belly of the elephant, which was standing stock-still, trunk raised, quietly feeling the wind. We backed away as quietly as we could, and the next moment he commenced to move in the direction of the trackers, whereupon I forced myself upright through the matted twigs and fired at his ear as near as I could get it, but failed to drop him and he again dashed away.

We did not get up to him again for some miles after this, though he must have got a very nasty jar, and we eventually sighted him walking slowly along through the scrub.

I got close up behind him, having almost impenetrable thicket on either side, waiting for a turn of the head to give me a chance of the ear, shot, and behind me came my followers, last man being the cooly with the tiffin basket on his head.

Suddenly, without any warning, round wheeled the

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elephant, and he came charging down on us like a hurricane. I had only just time to dive head first into the dense wall of thorny scrub as the animal dashed by, and fully expected to find half my followers laid out, but to my surprise and relief no one was hurt, they having bolted in all directions like rabbits, the only damage being a broken plate or two in the tiffin basket.

Native fashion, the others of course abused the tiffin basket coolly for dropping his basket instead of carefully placing it down before bolting, entirely forgetful of the fact that they, one and all, "stood not on the order of their going."

I fancy the heavy pounding the elephant had received must have dazed him, hence our lucky escape; otherwise, if he had been fully alive he could have picked us out at his leisure and made mincemeat of somebody.

Once more we pursued him, and found him not far away, standing just outside another piece of scrub.

I made my way straight towards him over trampled-down thorns and undergrowth, which made very awkward walking, and fired at him at about 6 yards' distance, which once more failed to floor him but provoked another charge. In trying to get out of his way I stumbled and fell right in front of him, my feet being so held by the trampled thorns and twigs that I could not at the moment get up. The elephant fumbled about my body with his trunk, trying to pick me up, but only succeeded in pushing me to one side, after which he seemed to hesitate a bit and then walked over me without doing me any hurt, the blood pouring out of his trunk, making a ghastly mess of my clothes, for I got the benefit of a lot of it as he passed.

He then went slowly on and I was keen enough to follow, but had only one .577 cartridge left, so allowed

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myself to be dissuaded by my trackers and we returned to camp. The elephant was found dead next morning, and I counted sixteen old and recent bullet-wounds in his head. This was the hardest chase I ever had in my life, but the pleasure and excitement of it will ever remain green in my memory.

Tuskers are very, very rare in Ceylon now—they may be said to be practically non-existent—for in all my rambles I have only seen two, more's the pity.

The largest elephant I ever killed in Ceylon measured 9 feet 6 inches at the shoulder as near as I could make it, for it is almost impossible to get exact measurement of a fallen elephant.

### ELEPHANT SHOOTING

BY NORTH C. DAVIDSON

Hearing that there was a rogue near a village about 15 miles from the estate, I went down, interviewed the villagers, and heard that there were *two* rogues, one that haunted a "chena" quite close, and one in the neighbourhood of a small village about 4 miles off. The weather was very dry and windy in the afternoon, very bad for tracking. However, early next morning I started out, picked up the tracks in the "chena," and ran the elephant down in about an hour in some scrub jungle rather more open than usual. As I crept up he was feeding on twigs and leaves that he was pulling off the top of a bushy tree; he was quite unconscious of my presence, so getting within about 6 yards of him, I took careful aim just in front of the ear-hole and pulled. He simply dropped his trunk and stood perfectly still; as I was about to press the other trigger a tree against which he was apparently leaning gave way, and he fell with

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a crash on his side stone dead. Having cut off the feet and tail I returned to camp, had a bath in the river and breakfast. While at breakfast a villager from the distant "chena" arrived, saying that the rogue had chased them out of their "chena" the night before, and that he was in the scrub quite close to the clearing. I did not think the chances of getting up to him were very great, but the villager I had had out with me in the morning had proved himself to be a really good tracker, and, as he volunteered to go with me, I started off in a blazing hot sun. We got to the clearing, but the tracks were very hard to pick up, and as a strong, shifty wind had risen my hopes sank to zero. However, we followed up the morning tracks with constant delays, but eventually got on to fresh signs. All at once the tracker pulled up and listened; *I* had heard nothing, but he insisted that he had heard a branch break. After a bit the sound was repeated, and this time I heard it myself. It was rather down wind, so the tracker decided to leave the track, make a *détour*, and try and work up wind by the sound of the elephant feeding. It was trying work, as we had to make our own path, and the wind kept veering round. However, we got up to within about 20 yards, and I could make out the elephant stern on to me. Taking my rifle I crept cautiously up, but when within about 10 yards of him the elephant spun round and charged. I gave him a shot through his curled-up trunk and down he came, but got up again on to his fore-legs, screaming with rage. His hind legs seemed paralysed. I gave him a second shot, which only seemed to make him angrier, if that was possible, and as I got quite close up to give him a *quietus*, he lashed at me with his trunk, and as nearly as possible got me. He struggled so desperately, and swung his head and trunk about so rapidly, that I had to give him

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five more shots before I found the brain and he collapsed. My first shot, which took him through the curled-up trunk, must just have touched the brain or the vertebral column, as his hind quarters were apparently useless, which was lucky for me, as he evidently meant business. He was a fine big elephant, as big as the one I had shot in the morning, and I returned to camp dead-beat, but more than pleased with myself.

On another occasion a villager came up to say that there was a bad rogue near his village, which had taken to chasing the villagers on the road to their clearing. This was also in very dry weather; in fact their clearing had only just been burnt off. I went down to the village that evening, and next morning started off for his haunts. Getting on to his tracks, we followed through some awful stuff till we got out on to a small open space consisting of a long hog's back-shaped rock, with short grass, the open space being about 50 yards long by about 20 broad. Leaving the rifle with me, the tracker made a cast round to see where the elephant had re-entered the scrub. Seeing him beckon to me I crept up, and there was the elephant standing with his tail towards me about 6 yards in from the edge of the jungle. The stuff was very thick and thorny, and I was debating what I should do, as there seemed no chance of getting a shot for the brain, when he settled matters by spinning round and charging. I had only time to give him one in the forehead, but it stopped him, and he turned and went off grumbling and gurgling. I followed as fast as I could, but the going was very difficult, and I handed the rifle back to the tracker as the stuff took me all my time to push my way through. We could hear the elephant grumbling ahead of us, when suddenly all was still, and I had just taken my rifle from the tracker when

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the thick scrubby thorn in front of us was smashed down and the elephant was on us. The tracker seemed to make a dive right into the bush, and I gave the elephant one in the forehead as his head towered over me. It seemed to delay him and I stepped backwards, but something caught my foot, the barrel of the rifle, which was still at my shoulder, struck a branch, the rifle went off, the toe of the butt catching the point of my shoulder, upsetting me, and I fell with my right arm and the rifle under me. As the smoke cleared I found the elephant standing alongside me, with one foot actually swaying over my body, and I with my empty rifle and one arm under my right side, powerless to move. I simply lay there and gazed up at him, thinking I was caught at last. After what seemed minutes he turned and went off slowly, but grumbling horribly. I scrambled up and saw a cooly flattened against a small tree trunk, but it turned out to be the cooly with the refreshments. The cooly with the second gun was, however, close alongside, but it was too late to get a shot. Just then the tracker crept on to the scene with his skin all torn and bleeding, and his hair and face full of thorn and leaves. He was surprised to find me alive, and absolutely refused to follow on the track of the elephant, which we could still hear, but suggested that we should make for the path to the clearing, which was quite close, and run along it and try and head off the elephant, who was making in the direction of the burnt clearing. The path we struck ran almost parallel with the line the elephant was taking, and we broke out on to a bit of swampy open land together, he slightly ahead of us but down wind. He still seemed to have lots of fight in him. As soon as he got our wind he pulled up and came slowly for us, but I had a clear, open shot, and waited till he was close up and dropped him dead.

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The cause of his lameness was explained by the accidental shot having taken him just below the joint of the knee. The bullet had gone completely round under the skin and come out at the back under the knee. This must have numbed the leg, and accounted for his swaying his foot over me in such an extraordinary manner. The two stunning shots in the forehead, which must have both gone close to the brain, must have dulled his senses, which, with the heavy smelling smoke, prevented his noticing me lying at his feet. It was the narrowest shave I have ever had. This elephant meant fighting from the very first, and must have noticed us when we were on the hog's-back rock. Had I not stumbled I think I should either have downed him or turned him with my second barrel, as I am convinced no elephant will charge *through* a well-placed shot from a heavy 12-bore.

### AN ADVENTURE WITH A ROGUE ELEPHANT

By E. L. BOYD MOSS, Assistant Conservator of Forests

In July 1888 I was down in the Katragam district with my brother and a friend. We were camped on the banks of the Menik Ganga, at a place called Demodera. We had a tent 17 by 12, and the servants and the coolies had huts thatched with *iluk* grass. The stables for the horses were the same.

The river here is of the same character as at Yalle, and the country about, except the usual strip of fine open forest on either bank of the river, consists mostly of thick thorny jungle interspersed with glades, a good country for buffaloes, deer, &c.

We had been shooting here for some days, and had not come across a single elephant. One night, about 2 A.M.,

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we heard a tremendous commotion down the river, and knew it was caused by elephants. We were up at daylight, and after early tea proceeded down the river.

My battery consisted of a pair of heavy 12-bore rifles and a .450 express.

My brother had a 12-bore double rifle, a heavy 12-bore ball gun, and a .450 express. T. had a 12-bore double rifle and a 12-bore gun.

After walking about a quarter of a mile we came to a regular crossing, and a big pool in the river where the elephants had been bathing when we heard them. They had then crossed to our side and scattered about, feeding as they went. One large elephant had stuck to the path, and his tracks we followed. On former occasions when after elephants with a new hand—such as T. was—I had always agreed to let him have the first shot at any elephant except a tusker, but I had done this so often without ever seeing one that I omitted to do so this time. We had tracked the elephant across a large plain, and entered the jungle on the opposite side. The tracker was leading, and I came next. We had hardly gone 100 yards when suddenly the tracker started back and said, "Ettah." I looked up the path in rather thick jungle, and to my astonishment saw a fine tusker, with a perfect pair of tusks, facing me. I turned for my rifle, and hesitated a moment, as I had promised T. the first shot, when a sudden puff of wind in the wrong direction reached the tusker and he whirled round and made off. My disgust can be imagined. Up to the moment of seeing the tusker we had not heard a sound, nor were there any indications of the animal being so near, so I was quite unprepared for his sudden appearance. We took up the tracks and followed fast for about a mile.

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The tusker had now joined the herd, which was a large one, and, the ground being trampled over, we could not distinguish his tracks. The wind was unfortunately bad and blowing in all directions, and whilst we were looking about among the elephants for the tusker they got our wind and were off. We followed on for a long distance, and once more came up with the herd, which was now scattered about. We went about cautiously looking for the tusker but could not see him anywhere, and I fancy he had taken a line of his own, which is often the case, and gone off in some other direction. While looking about I came on a huge elephant standing quite by himself, on the outskirts of the herd. The jungle was thick and I could only see his legs, when he heard us and went off slowly, growling and ending up with a scream. I knew at once that this meant mischief, and that I had before me a rogue, such as often consorts with a herd, but keeps just outside, and is of the worst description to encounter. As he was a very fine beast, and there seemed no chance of the tusker, I followed him. He only went a short distance and pulled up, but every time we got near went off growling and screaming as before. At last he made a rush forward, and, thinking he was off, I ran after him as well as I could through the thick stuff, when suddenly there was a tremendous crash and a vicious scream about 20 yards from me, and he charged straight at me. I could see nothing but a mass of creepers and jungle stuff bearing down on me, and had to guess where his forehead was, and, firing into the mass, I jumped behind two small trees which luckily happened to be near me. The elephant came right up against these trees, nearly shaking them down; and, finding he had not got me, tried to come round them. I put

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up my rifle, and the muzzle was barely 18 inches off his head when I gave him the left barrel as near as I could see into his ear-hole. Down he went on his knees and I turned for my spare rifle, but the man had disappeared; but just at that moment my brother ran up and gave the elephant two shots as he was trying to struggle up. This only seemed to revive him, and he got up and lumbered off at a great pace, and, though we followed some way, we never saw him again.

My last shot, which must have passed close to his brain, took all the fight out of him. It was a narrow escape, and lucky for me that the trees were close by. Had the man with the second rifle been by me I might have added his tail to my collection. We were a long way from camp, and did not get back till 2 P.M. I talked to the gentleman who had my spare rifle!!! I was thoroughly disgusted about the tusker. I had only seen one small one previously, in many years' shooting, and, though I have done a great deal since, have never seen another.

### THE DEATH OF THE RUGAM ROGUE

BY H. R. SPENCE, Assistant Conservator of Forests

For some years this elephant had been a terror to the people near Rugam Tank and to the "tappal" runners from Badulla to Batticaloa, and was credited with the death of eleven persons. It was his habit to wait just inside the forest, near the roadside, and rush out on passers-by. He used also occasionally to overturn loaded carts, and smash them up. In December 1890 news was brought in that he had killed another "tappal" runner, whose body was found pounded to a jelly, and the mail bags were also much

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damaged. Government at once doubled the reward for his destruction, and the Government Agent said to me, "Why don't you have a try for him?" I said, "All right, I will bring him in," and started off next day, but hardly hoped to be successful as several well-known shikaries, among them the late Mr. Frank Fisher, had tried in vain.

This elephant was very cunning, and changed his feeding ground daily.

My first attempt was when I reached the rest-house, called Tumpalancholai, 20 miles from Batticaloa, near which place he had just killed the "tappal" runner.

Being informed that he usually crossed the road at a particular place full of elephant tracks, and the night being clear, I procured a rest-house chair and seated myself just inside the forest, and awaited developments. It must have been about ten o'clock when I heard an elephant moving up to where I was, and he had got quite close to the road when a gang of Moormen passing unfortunately heard him too, and set off as hard as they could leg it, yelling like fiends. This was too much for the elephant, who tore off and broke cover farther down the road, and though I ran as hard as I could, was just in time to see him disappear.

There was nothing to be done after this but to take up his tracks, which I did, and followed him for two days without being able to get a shot. At the end of the second day, however, I had got in late, dead tired, and was camping at a cattle watcher's hut at the far end of the tank, which was then almost dry. It was getting dusk, when at the eastern side of the tank I saw three objects moving, and pointed them out to the trackers, who said, "They are buffaloes." They had hardly spoken when I saw one of the supposed buffaloes reach up and break a branch off a

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tree. They then at once said, "It's the rogue." I asked them, "Can we get there before it's too dark?" to which they replied, "Yes, if we run all the way." So off we went, I with a 12-bore rifle, and a "pannikan" following with my 4-bore. Then a strange thing happened. There were two elephants feeding together, and the rogue (who was said to be deaf) some distance away. Apparently the two either winded or heard us, and they at once ran up to the rogue, seemed to give him a mild shove with their heads, and then off they went. Not so the rogue, however; he came straight on in our direction, and we waited for him in the small bushes which surrounded the tank. To divert his attention I sent my third man up wind, with instructions to get up a solitary tree, which was handy, so that the elephant should get his wind, and give me a better chance of a shot, but he took no notice of the man and came on, scenting up our trail with his ears well forward, and evidently in a vile temper.

As he came round the bush behind which I was standing he saw me a few feet away, and made a rush as I fired with the 4-bore. As this rifle burns 16 drachms of black powder it may be imagined what the smoke was like, and I could not see if he was down. I jumped back, and my 12-bore was put into my hand at once. It was not needed, however, as on the smoke clearing there he was, stone dead, and a good thing for us all, I fancy, as it was nearly dark by this time and the Kayan bush was almost impassable. We cut off his tail and had to shout for a lantern to get back to camp, very tired but very pleased.

Next morning I started out before six o'clock, and though the natives could have had no other means of knowing the elephant had been shot beyond hearing the report of my big gun, we found a very large crowd of people from

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

all the surrounding "chenas" gathered round the elephant, kicking him, spitting on him, and abusing all his female relatives. They said they were going to send a piece of his skin to the Postmaster-General, but I don't know if they did. Having removed the feet, these and the skull were brought into Batticaloa by cart amid much rejoicing all along the road, I was told. The reward of Rs. 100 was duly paid and distributed, and the feet were sent later on to the Lieutenant-Governor, who had expressed a wish to have them.

### A CLOSE SHAVE

BY H. R. SPENCE, Assistant Conservator of Forests

I had followed up a fine elephant (which had been proclaimed a rogue) from near Panala village in Wallapane, and reached the Mahaweliganga, which was in flood, just in time to see him climb up the other bank.

I had to go some miles up the river, to a ferry called Wendura, and then crossed and went down river to take up his tracks.

By this time, however, it was getting dark, so I determined not to go on till next morning.

Accordingly, having made a scanty dinner off some sandwiches I had with me, we turned in under the trees on the river bank, a somewhat moist bed but soft. Next morning we took up the tracks, and came on the elephant about midday. He had gone into some very high and thick lantana, which was quite impenetrable except for the track he had made.

Pushing my way through this I suddenly almost ran into the elephant, who was standing waiting for us with his ears cocked.

## ELEPHANT SHOOTING

I had just time to fire and throw myself down when he came right over the top of me through the smoke, luckily only brushing me with his feet. I thought it was all up with me, and felt as if a bucket of water had been poured down my back. My old tracker, who was close to me, was knocked over, but also unhurt.

My shot was a very hurried one, as the elephant was towering right over me, but it must have stupefied him, as he went straight on.

Going back on our tracks I saw two figures rapidly coming down trees outside the thorny scrub. These were the men with my spare rifles, who had funked coming into the lantana, and had laid these up against trees outside.

They had been seen by the elephant and chased by him, and now expecting to be chased by me they made a clean bolt, and I never saw them again, as they never stayed in their village when they heard I was in the neighbourhood. The elephant had recrossed the river, and, as I had to get back to the estate, we had to give it up for the present.

A little later I went down again with a friend who had never shot an elephant, and after a couple of days came upon the elephant who was "*must*," and was with a big female out of a neighbouring herd.

Trying to get up to them they winded us, and without a moment's hesitation came right on.

I gave T. the shot, but it was too much for his nerves these two brutes coming on close together, and he not only failed to stop them, but in some unaccountable way clean missed them both. Luckily the 4-bore was handy, and I dropped the bull almost at our feet, the cow wheeling off at the first shot. I found my old bullet-mark, which was nearly healed, had been about a couple of inches too high.

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

Going down, about a fortnight after, to remove the skull, I was followed by a large crowd of villagers. On reaching the spot we heard a peculiar noise like an asthmatic engine letting off steam. Some one whispered "Alia," and in a second not one man was visible. Sure enough there was the herd asleep all round the remains of the big elephant, and I had to clap my hands sharply several times before they moved off.

## CHAPTER X

### THE BUFFALO

NEXT to the elephant in size, amongst Ceylon mammalia, comes the buffalo, *Bos bubalus*. This animal is the same as the Indian species, but, as usual in all cases where similar species of animals exist in both India and Ceylon, those of the former country have larger and more regular horns. In India they seem almost all to curve boldly outward and upwards, finally curving in towards each other at the points. In Ceylon they are very irregular, and usually much shorter, though occasionally they may be more massive than Indian horns. The commonest form are those curving outwards and upwards crescent form, but not with the bold, almost half circular, sweep of the Indian heads. The females' heads are much more irregular than the males, the horns are thinner, and, whilst the *fronts* of the horns in both sexes are corrugated, the corrugations in those of the bull are much deeper.

They are heavily-built, clumsy-looking animals, dark ashy-grey in colour, thinly haired when young, bare leathery hided when old. They have very massive shoulders, the ridge of the back rising to its highest point above them. The head is carried very low on a longish, massive neck ; the ears are large, and muzzle very broad, and the feet are broad and "splay," which makes them good travellers in mud. A large wild bull will stand perhaps 5 feet in height at the shoulder. The wild buffalo is usually larger than the domesticated animal. The latter are used to plough paddy fields, to trample the paddy

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on the threshing-floor, to draw carts in some parts of the country, and also to act as pack bulls carrying loads of various sorts. The haunt of the wild buffalo is usually forest or scrub within reach of water, swamp, or mud holes. They may be found in or near almost any remote abandoned tank in the low country, and feed on the grass in remote tanks or parks in the early morning and late evening, as well as during the night. In quiet, undisturbed parts of the country they will remain in their feeding grounds all day, or until heat and flies drive them to water, in which they will lie for hours, immersed to the head, with great contentment. They are not now so numerous as in Sir Samuel Baker's day, but still may be found in considerable numbers in parts of the Northern Province, North Central Province, Eastern Province, and Southern Province. They, or individuals, often mix with the herds of half-tame village buffaloes and inter-breed with them. A wild bull now and then takes possession of a tame herd and lords it over them, as well as resenting the approach of the native owners.

The wild buffaloes are very wary animals, keen of sight and scent, and often very difficult to stalk. A wounded buffalo can be a very nasty customer, and a cow with calf is at times very dangerous, but they are certainly not now, at any rate, so savage as in Sir Samuel Baker's day unless wounded or cornered. Coming across a herd of buffaloes in a low-country tank or park, if it consists of wild and so-called tame animals, the wild ones will at once make for the jungle, whilst the tame ones will form up in a half-circle, heads erect, giving vent to an occasional snort or stamp, and look decidedly nasty, but this is mainly, I think, their way of expressing their apprehension and alarm at the unusual sight of a white man in their remote wilds. The

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buffalo has no natural enemy in Ceylon except man, though occasionally a straggling calf may be killed by a leopard, and it is in its fear of man that its wariness and caution are exercised. Very few are killed nowadays by Europeans, but I think the native meat-hunters kill a fair number on the quiet. Vast numbers were probably slain before the game laws came into force, whilst an occasional murrain also accounts for some of the diminution in numbers.

It is rather curious that crocodiles never seem to attempt an attack on a buffalo in the water, though they have no hesitation whatever in attacking an ordinary domestic cow or bull, and will often go for them when merely drinking at the edge of a tank.

The buffalo may be said to spend as much time in water as it does on dry land, and the muddier the water the better it seems to like it. I once saw an interesting sight when I happened to be on the banks of the Ambanganga at Elahera, where I had been having a look at the stupendous remains of the ancient stone dam which formerly turned the waters of the river down the famous Elahera Canal. Some village buffaloes were crossing the river above the modern small dam built by Government a few years ago, the still water at the spot being perhaps 50 or 60 yards across. Towards the middle most of the animals swam for about 10 or 15 yards, but one, which evidently knew the depth to an inch, actually walked the whole way across on the bed of the river, though at the deepest portion, where the others swam, it was only able to keep just its nose out by elevating its head to the utmost. The water was clear, so that I could see the animal all the way across, and the sight was curious and interesting, but it seemed extraordinarily unnatural, somehow, that a bulky animal like a buffalo should walk under water!

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Padawiya, the great abandoned tank in the north-eastern corner of the North Central Province, is, or used to be, a great place for wild buffaloes, as there is plenty of water to be found in the winding channels of the streams feeding it, great pools remaining even in the driest weather, and another attraction being the long *rambe* grass which occupies the whole of the open part of the bed of the ancient tank, whilst the surrounding dense forest affords the necessary shade and retreat.

A fair number of buffaloes also frequent the great tanks of Minneriya, Kaudulu, and the country near ancient Polonnaruwa, also the neighbourhood of the Mahaweliganga throughout the low country, and the "parks" of the Bintenne country, and they are quite common in the wilder portions of the Eastern and Southern Provinces. I mention these parts particularly as they are all districts where general shooting may be had, though there are scores of other places in the lowlands where they are also to be found.

I killed my first buffalo at Padawiya several years ago, entirely unintentionally and by a curious mistake. I was wandering through a portion of the bed of the tank accompanied only by a Moorman (Mohammedan), one of my own men, when I suddenly caught sight of something in the long grass about 30 yards ahead. The grass here was not so thick or long as usual, and after watching a few moments I concluded it was a pig, and said so to my man, who, not liking its neighbourhood, suggested we should move on. I told him to keep quiet or I would ——!

To make quite sure I watched until I could have sworn I saw a twinkling tail wave about pig-fashion, and I distinctly saw its ears, so, being satisfied, I took careful aim with my faithful "Paradox" and let fly. The result

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rather astonished me. I heard a heavy thump on the ground, followed by more thumps and several deep hollow groans, which caused me and my man to look at each other in amazement, but as that did not help matters I ran up, and beheld to my surprise a huge buffalo in the throes of death, with the "Paradox" bullet-hole right through the body! I have, moreover, a miserable suspicion that it was a half-tame village buffalo, though I could see no brand marks, for just beyond it I saw another one standing gazing at us in amazement before lumbering away. The slain animal was lying down when I shot it, with portions showing above the grass, hence my mistake. It carried a miserable head, which I did not take.

I regret, for my reader's sake, I have no adventures or hairbreadth escapes of my own to record in connection with buffaloes. I have not gone in for shooting them much, not being particularly attracted by the sport.

For the information, however, of advocates of the modern small-bore rifle, the following experiences may be of interest. During a trip in Tamankaduwa with my cousin Roy Storey, not long ago, whilst looking around for game in general, one morning we came upon a small herd of buffaloes in a little "park" remotely situated. After taking a good look at them, my cousin had his shot with a double-barrelled .303 rifle, Holland's "peg" bullets, at the largest of them, which we thought was a bull. At the shot it went lumbering towards the jungle, receiving a salute from my .303 as it went, the rest of the herd scattering in all directions. We followed up, and found the animal lying just inside the edge of the jungle, not more than 150 yards from where it was shot, gasping its life out with both bullets through its lungs. On another occasion I and my friend Fred Brockman, each

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armed with a .303 "Savage" rifle (my favourite rifle for all ordinary game), during an evening's round from camp, came upon a buffalo standing apparently by itself in a small open space in dense jungle. We were just inside the edge of the forest, and the animal was about 60 yards away. Fred fired, intending to take it behind the shoulder, and down it dropped, literally, in its tracks. At the shot about half-a-dozen more buffaloes came tearing out of the forest and long grass near the fallen one, and all bolted except one, with what looked like a good but peculiar shaped head. This animal snorted and pranced round the fallen one, offering a chance too good to lose, so I gave it a shot which broke the left shoulder. It stopped for a moment and seemed somewhat surprised, but went on prancing round again on three legs. I gave it two more body shots, which sent it lumbering off to the jungle, where, about 150 yards away, it fell, and I finished it off with a ball through the brain. It turned out to be a big cow, with one long horn stretching outwards almost horizontally, the point turning *forward* a few inches, and the other horn, a short malformation, bending slightly downwards from the horizontal. When we came to look at the other animal it was dead, and we found the bullet had gone through the *top* of the shoulder, probably breaking both, and some splinters must have injured some very vital part to kill it so quickly. We had no time to hold a *post-mortem* as it was late evening, and we broke camp next morning, so we merely secured the heads.

Another rather interesting experience I had, not long ago, is perhaps worth telling. I was down in Tamankaduwa on business connected with some land I had taken up for experimental cultivation in a rather wild part of the country well beloved of elephants, buffaloes, and pigs. The local

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men with me were Moormen from the villages along the Mahaweliganga, on the bank of which we were camping, and they requested me to kill a lusty young wild bull buffalo which had taken possession of one of their herds in a swamp, and would not permit the men to approach their own animals. I was keen enough, and the revenue officer, my friend the Mudaliyar (Mr. G. Jayewardene), who was with me at the time, telling me he could, under the circumstances, authorise me to shoot it, off we set down river in a canoe, myself, my friend H. S. Cameron, who had accompanied me on this trip, the Mudaliyar, and some of the Moormen. On the way down the river we had the luck to find the water so low that I was able to show Cameron, who had never been in the low country before, a perfect view of that extraordinary relic of antiquity known as the "Elephant's Head." This is such a curiosity that I have no doubt my readers will pardon the digression if I give a short account of it. On the west bank of the river, at a point nearly opposite Katuwamwila village (which is on the east bank), are some boulders, some of them in the water, others just on the edge of it. Rocks are scarce about here, by the way. One of these boulders just at the water's edge has been admirably carved into an excellent representation of a life-sized elephant's head and shoulders, trunk curved round towards its side, tusks and all complete. The river is seldom so low as to uncover more than half of it, but this time it was completely uncovered down to the "pedestal" so as to expose the fore-feet, which are, unfortunately, badly carved, representing the elephant as getting up from the kneeling position. There are signs on the rocks above it of there having been possibly a small building of some sort near it, but not a trace of inscription, and absolutely nothing is known of the meaning or origin

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of this mysterious head. There it has been for centuries, at times buried under the water, but generally half submerged, looking exactly like an elephant having a bath or commencing to wade across the river.

We pulled our canoe right up to it, and examined the whole thing very carefully. I had seen it before, but Cameron had not, and I could hardly tear him away from it, so great was his interest. Mr. H. C. P. Bell, the Archæological Commissioner, has a photo of it half submerged, with a native boy sitting on the head, and the life-like illusion is perfect.

To return to our "muttons," or rather "buffalo beef." We landed on the east bank a little way lower down river, and, accompanied by about twenty local Moormen, made our way through a belt of luxurious vegetation bordering the river, to a "wila" or swamp about a mile inland. There we found the herd of buffalo out in the swamp, and, though we were half a mile away, the wind was in that direction, and half of the herd, probably more wild than tame, bolted for the jungle. The rest, mostly cows and calves, stayed where they were, and the doomed bull was pointed out to me amongst them—a fine young animal, fully grown, with a small but symmetrical head of horns. Accompanied by one native I walked quietly out into the swamp, as there was no cover, luckily finding a strip of dry land to walk on, and every time the herd got restive I stopped or sat down and waited until they became quiet. The bull was very suspicious, and stood, head erect, watching us the whole time. In this way I got to within about 150 yards, which I considered near enough as the cows showed signs of bolting, and sat down to wait until the bull offered me a broadside shot. Not a bit of it, however; there he stood full face and watched us, like a

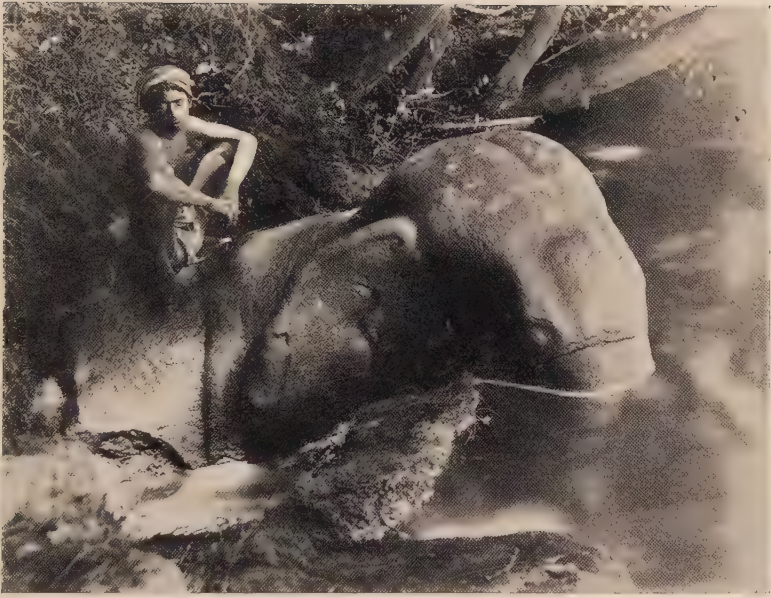
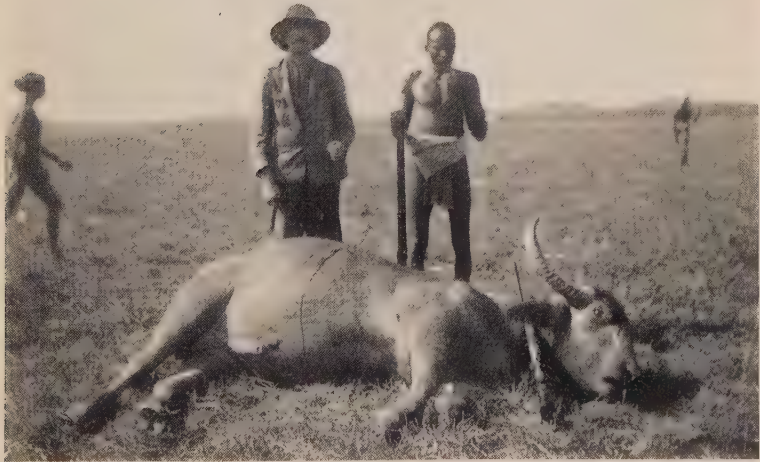


Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., Archl. Commr.

THE CARVED ELEPHANT'S HEAD ON THE BANK OF THE MAHAWELIGANGA  
AT KATUPILLÁNE, TAMANKADUWA



DEATH OF A WILD BUFFALO



## THE BUFFALO

statue. Getting tired of this, the sun being deadly hot, I decided to fire, and debated whether to give him a solid body-raker or a soft-nosed ball in the throat. I chose the latter, and, taking careful aim with my "Savage," fired for the centre of the neck. At the shot the bull capered about a bit, and I put in two more body shots, whereupon he trotted slowly off, along a strip of dry land, into the middle of the swamp. The cows and calves remained, restless but huddled together, and at once prepared to resent our approach when we tried to pass them to follow the bull; so, as he stood full broadside to me about 250 yards away, I lay down and put a solid into his shoulder. At this he walked slowly into the water, until only his head showed above the surface.

I could easily have got close to him then and polished him off, but this did not suit the villagers, all Mohammedans. They wanted it killed on dry land to enable them to cut the throat orthodox fashion and secure the meat, so suggested I should go round the swamp to the opposite side and they would drive it across to me. Round I and Cameron then went (I had returned to the others for a palaver when the bull went into the water), and the small mob of men drove away the cows and made their way into the swamp as close to the bull as they could get, and hurled sods and abuse at him, but he would not budge an inch. They then borrowed a small Winchester carbine of the Mudaliyar's and began blazing at him, but as they were 50 yards away and could only see about half his head, I think they only hit him about once in a dozen shots, and of that he took no notice. Getting sick of this I waded into the swamp waist deep as far as I could get, and came to a dry patch from which I could just see his horns and the back of the head above the water about 200 yards

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

away. The bit of head showing was only the crown, but I sat down and opened with solids. The first "zipped" so close to the top of his head, fair between the horns, that he put his head a fraction higher in surprise; the second shot struck the water immediately behind his head and "ricochetted" over the top; the third shot went fair to the mark and dropped him dead, to the loudly expressed amazement of the natives, who can't understand the small-bores yet. As one man the "mob" dashed into the water, and, reaching the animal, solemnly cut its throat, though it was as dead as a herring, and then towed it across to our side, where we cut off the head and I examined the shots. The first one, for the throat, had struck some 2 inches too much to the right; the others were fair in the body, and might eventually have proved fatal; whilst the solid in the shoulder had gone right through, apparently doing little damage. The fatal shot showed a tiny hole at the back of the head. The villagers gazed with reverence on the rifle, and as many as could enjoyed the pleasure and satisfaction of trying to insert the end of the little finger into the bore at the muzzle!

They had been deeply impressed by a shot I made at a buck the evening before, from bank to bank of a branch of the river, related in the chapter on deer, and this last performance clinched the impression. We sent the head to camp, and made our way back overland in preference to a laborious "poling" voyage up the river.

Mr. J. J. Robinson tells me of a very exciting bit of buffalo shooting he and a friend enjoyed a good many years ago. They were out after deer at the time, and were met by an ancient half-Veddah, who asked them if they would like to shoot some wild buffaloes. Naturally they did like, and followed the old man into the jungle, where he told

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them to walk very quietly, as the buffaloes would be found in water pools in thick forest, the country generally at that time being very dry, undergoing a severe drought.

They visited pool after pool, and sure enough there were buffaloes in every one of them. The shooting while it lasted was fast and furious, as the animals were, as usual, well on the alert, and either fled at once or charged their assailants, so that no standing shots were obtained, only the snappiest of snap-shots. Between them they accounted for five buffaloes.

Mr. Robinson also recounts a curious incident in connection with a buffalo which occurred to one of his men during a trip. Some villagers had begged Mr. Robinson to kill a very savage bull buffalo which usually lurked in a forest near their village, and had made itself the terror of the place, so he and a friend made their way to the place, and arranged to have the animal driven out of its jungle haunt.

Having posted themselves in convenient places the beat commenced, with much shouting and yelling, suddenly culminating in a perfect pandemonium of yells coming from a certain point, and followed by dead silence.

Robinson and his friend waited in anxious expectation, and were presently surprised to see a party emerging from the jungle carrying an evidently wounded man. It turned out that the buffalo had charged back at the beaters, and this man, being in its direct path, had sprung up and caught hold of a branch of a tree, but before he could draw himself out of reach the bull was on him, making a vicious thrust at him with its horns, the point of one actually piercing clean through one of the man's feet. The bull got away, and was not again seen near that village.

## CHAPTER XI

### BUFFALO SHOOTING

BY M. L. WILKINS

MY experience of buffalo shooting is not great, having been in at the death of only ten, seven of which were bagged by myself. These were either stalked in the open park or swamp country, or surprised in a mud puddle in the depths of the forest, but this latter method is rather a tame performance, as the close range renders a shot with a heavy weapon almost a certainty; still, this is preferable to pumping lead into an animal at long range and merely wounding it. It was at a forest water-hole I surprised and bagged the bull which carried my best trophy. It was a huge animal, and I have never seen another approaching it in size. The horns are not extra long, but are very massive, and measure from tip to tip round the curve and across the forehead  $82\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The widest span is 40 inches, and the girth at the base is  $15\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

The head, the skin of which I took, was well set up by a native taxidermist in Kandy, and in 1900 it was borrowed by the Ceylon Government to send, along with other Ceylon trophies, to the Paris Exhibition, where it was quite the largest of the heads there shown. The photograph of this head, along with two ordinary ones, will give some idea of its proportions.

My best sport with these animals was in 1901, in company with my friend H. D. Garrick of Ukuwela. We first found a herd of thirty-one in an open park, but the wind



HEAD OF BUFFALO SHOT BY J. J. ROBINSON, Esq.



MR. M. L. WILKINS' BIG BUFFALO HEAD



## BUFFALO SHOOTING

being changeable, they stampeded before we got within range.

On the next occasion I discovered a single buffalo in a large park a long way off, and had to make a détour of about a mile on account of the wind and cover before we could commence our approach.

Proceeding with caution, we got to a clump of trees from which we expected to be able to see our game, but on looking about it seemed to have disappeared ; we discovered a calf, however, about on the line of our intended approach, but we still went forward with extra caution, on our hands and knees, through the grass towards an ant-hill, lying "doggo" when the calf looked in our direction, and on again when it resumed its grazing.

Eventually we reached the ant-hill near which were a few stunted trees, and peering cautiously over it, discovered, to our astonishment, a herd of about a dozen buffalo within easy range.

The first shot was mine, so singling out what looked like the biggest of the lot I let fly with a double-barrelled 10-bore rifle, which gave me a nasty jar on the cheek and fingers. Away they all went helter-skelter, and I gave, as I thought, the same bull the left barrel.

After running about 100 yards two animals lagged behind, one turning round as though with some idea of showing fight, but we opened on them, I with a double-barrelled .303, and Garrick with a .256 Männlicher, and in a few seconds both were down. Their heads were poor, unfortunately, though they looked big enough before we fired ; but still they were wild buffaloes !

We found each had a 10-bore ball through the shoulder, the bullet being under the skin at the opposite side, the result of the first two shots.

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

On our way back to camp we lost our way, being ahead of our guides, and found soon after that we had described a circle, coming back to our morning tracks! The next attempt we hit it off all right and got to camp.

About four days after this we came upon a small herd of buffalo in a park, in which also we saw a herd of twenty-three spotted deer, which we at once went for, being in want of meat. We bagged one, and found to our satisfaction that the buffalo, being a long way off, had not taken alarm at the crack of the .303, so we then turned our attention to them.

The stalk was not easy as the park was very large, and it took us quite half-an-hour to get within 140 yards, by which time they had become suspicious and restless, so we opened fire on a big bull with .303's, as the range seemed a bit far for good shooting with heavier rifles. We actually put in quite a dozen shots, as the herd careered about, at this bull, which he did not seem to notice in the least, including three solids, which I also fired into him. He then went off to the jungle, and we followed after a little time had elapsed. On the way we met with a crippled calf, said to have been mauled by a leopard, which began to bellow lustily at the sight of us, with some effect, for hearing a noise on our right, we looked round and saw "mama" tearing along in our direction in a way that very evidently meant "business." Cover there was none, and the jungle was too far away, so hastily snatching the 10-bore I let fly when she was about 100 yards off, the bullet telling with a loud smack.

Round she spun and departed as quickly as she had come, and, I hope, not much the worse for her attempt to protect her calf, as there was no blood-spoor, and my impression was that the bullet hit one of the horns.



SOME OF M. L. WILKINS' TROPHIES



## BUFFALO SHOOTING

We then went after the wounded bull, which we tracked to the "ganga," then in flood and 200 yards wide, and so to our great regret we lost him.

From this and other experiences I am of opinion that the .303 is not suitable for buffalo shooting unless steady, picked shots can be taken. The larger express rifles would be much more suitable weapons in most cases.

Two days after this we had a fine example of how much lead a buffalo can carry. We were asked to destroy a very fierce-tempered cow which the villagers were much afraid of, and we found her in an open plain. It took three 8-bore, three 10-bore, and three 12-bore bullets to despatch her, and she was full of fight to the last. Given a .303 instead of the above heavy guns, and she might have made things very lively for us.

## BUFFALO SHOOTING

BY NORTH C. DAVIDSON

Nine times out of ten there is not much danger in "buff" shooting, but it is risky work following up a wounded bull in thick jungle where there is a close undergrowth, and native trackers would much rather follow a wounded elephant than a wounded "buff." They can easily see the former over the underwood, while the latter can lie in wait and charge out in the most unexpected manner. Even good experienced trackers will sometimes refuse point-blank to follow up a wounded "buff" in bad jungle.

I was walking down a narrow glade one morning on the look-out for "buff," as there were lots of their tracks about, when one dashed across the glade about 80 to 100 yards from me. I had just time to throw up my 12-bore

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

rifle and fire, and he came down on his nose, but was up and into the jungle before I could get my second barrel into him. On getting on to the tracks we found plenty of blood and some froth, which looked as if he had got it through the lungs. He had pushed his way through the undergrowth and we had to follow almost on all-fours, and after about 100 yards of it the tracker refused to go ahead. I accordingly took my rifle from him and crept along with my gun cooly close at my heels. The track was easy to see, but the going was very bad. At one place it turned abruptly to the left, and as we were turning on his tracks I caught sight of the feet of an elephant, quite close to me, and on looking up saw his trunk extended and withdrawn, as if he were feeding on the leaves, &c. I could not make out his head at all, but pointed out the feet to my cooly, who nodded excitedly. Raising my rifle I tried to run the sight back from his trunk to where the brain should be, when we heard a deep sort of moan about 50 yards from us. I at once decided to go on and finish the "buff," and come back and tackle the elephant. We crept along the track, and found the "buff" standing tail on to us and looking very sick. I was just trying to get the angle behind the shoulder when he spun round and charged, and I killed him literally at my feet with a lucky shot between the eyes. The tracker who had followed us began to talk, but I checked him and told him about the elephant. He said he had not seen it, but was willing to track it up if necessary. We accordingly went back on our tracks to the spot where we had seen the elephant, but there were no signs of it, and though we cast round there were no tracks, and I came to the conclusion that it must have been a most extraordinary optical delusion, and, strange to say, that, kneeling in the same spot, try as I would, I could not dis-

## BUFFALO SHOOTING

cover what I had taken for its feet and its trunk, and I really think I should have loosed off at it had I not heard the "buff" moan. The curious part is, I was not thinking of elephants at the time.

On another occasion on the sea-coast we saw some "buffs" standing in a lagoon, at the end of a large grass glade. They were about half a mile off, and the only possible chance of getting within shot was by crawling along the edge of the lagoon in grass like short hay. The jungle came down to within about 50 yards of the lagoon, but as the wind was blowing from the jungle towards the lagoon, the only hope of not giving the "buffs" our wind was by keeping as close to the water as possible. It being my shot, my friend stayed behind to watch the proceedings, and I started on my stalk, the tracker in front, I in the middle, and my gun cooly close up behind, all on our faces. It was very slow, hot work, and we had to pull up constantly to rest. As we were crawling along, every now and then the tracker cautiously raising his head to see that the "buffs" were not alarmed, my cooly touched my heel, and on peering round I was astonished to see a huge sow with a very large sounder of three-quarters grown pigs standing within a few yards of me. They formed a semi-circle, with the old sow in the centre. She had her little eyes fixed on us, and kept stamping her feet. I went "shoo," on which she gave a snort, and rushed forward a little; each time I "shoo'd" she snorted, and seemed on the point of charging, and the tracker was getting very nervous, and pushed my rifle back to me. At last I thought of getting out my handkerchief, and spreading it out, and moving it about. This scared her, and off she went with her following, but after we had crawled another 50 yards or so back she came, and the whole performance

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had to be gone through again. She must have taken us for a big "croc" or snake, as she could not get our wind. My friend was an amused spectator of the whole business. Having got rid of the pigs, we crawled on to find that the "hay" ended abruptly about 200 yards from where the "buffs" were, and we had to lie still for some time, as one of them was facing us. However, luck was with me and this one moved out of the water and, followed by the rest, sauntered out of sight round a bend of the jungle. As the wind was now in our favour we jumped up and hurried after them, and were just in time, as they were entering the jungle about 80 yards from me. The biggest, a fine bull, was only about 10 yards from cover when I took him behind the shoulder with a heavy 12-bore bullet. There was a regular stampede, and on entering the jungle we were at a loss, as the tracks went in all directions. We picked out a big track, but it soon joined the others, and we followed hard on the line, when suddenly there was a snort and a crash, and "buff" after "buff" dashed through the thick underwood. Apparently the small herd I had been stalking had joined a much larger herd in the jungle. I only got glimpses of them as they dashed off. After following for some time without coming on blood tracks, we decided to give it up, and were returning on the back track, and had almost got out of the jungle, when the tracker pointed to a speck of blood on a leaf, and below it the tracks of a big "buff" leading away almost at right angles to the line taken by the herd. We pushed along very cautiously, and soon the blood became very profuse, the bush being covered with it, and my clothes were soon smeared with it too, as the blood was on both sides of the track. It was jumpy work, as the bush was very thick and quite impenetrable to the eye. I, of course, had

## BUFFALO SHOOTING

to go ahead with my rifle, ready for a sudden charge, the tracker stopping every few steps to listen and peer under the bush. After about twenty minutes of this we heard a deep sigh and a gurgle, and creeping forward found a fine bull just breathing his last. The hardened 12-bore bullet had taken him behind the shoulder and gone clean through him.

One day we came upon a big bull wallowing in a mud-hole. My friend had a heavy 8-bore smooth, and I a 12-bore rifle. When we had got within about 50 yards the bull jumped up and made off. My friend fired, and the bull went over like a rabbit, but picked himself up, and was making off when I raked him with a shot that took him in the right stern, and lodged under the skin in front of the left shoulder. We found the 8-bore bullet imbedded at the base of the horn. It was in too tight for us to pick out with our knives, and my friend had the head set up with the bullet sticking in the horn.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CEYLON ELK

THIS grand deer, the *Cervus unicolor*, is found in India and most other Oriental countries. In India it is known as the *sambhar*, and in Ceylon it is called the elk. This is, of course, a misnomer, as it is not an elk, but as most animals are misnamed in Ceylon, and as the names have obtained practically ever since the English occupation of the island, I see no reason to alter the generally accepted nomenclature in this case.

The buck elk is a strikingly fine specimen of the deer tribe, and his somewhat shaggy appearance gives one the impression that he would look more at home in a North American forest than in a tropical country like Ceylon.

A good buck stands from 13 to 14 hands in height at the shoulder, and, according to Sir Samuel Baker, a low-country buck will weigh as much as 600 lbs., the mountain elk being somewhat smaller.

The usual colour of a buck is dark brown throughout, though very old bucks become almost a blacky-grey. The body colour is darkest on the back and upper portions, growing lighter on the belly and insides of the limbs. The buck carries a stiff coarse mane on the neck and under the throat. The whole fur is very coarse, so that the skin makes a poor trophy.

The females are smaller than the males, and are, as a rule, somewhat grey-brown in colour.

Elk hide is much used in Ceylon for shoe-making, as it

## THE CEYLON ELK

forms a very soft kind of leather, and this is one of the principal inducements for the ruthless slaughter of this fine animal by the natives.

The buck's antlers are three-tined, having a brow tine, and main tine with one branch tine. Irregular heads with extra abortive points are found occasionally—I once saw an antler bearing seven points.

As usual, Indian heads are far better than Ceylon heads, although I believe the latter may occasionally be more massive, but nothing near so long.

The record head for Ceylon would seem to be 31 inches (*vide* Alfred Clark's "Sport in the Low Country of Ceylon"), whilst for India Blanford mentions a head of 48 inches, but says that exceptionally good heads measure 35 to 38 inches.

Any head over 28 inches would be exceptionally good for Ceylon.

The alarm call of both sexes is a deep metallic note, best likened to a single cough uttered into a megaphone. The note of the buck is deeper than that of the doe.

The buck's "love call" is an amazing series of grunts, snorts, coughs, and wheezes, calculated to thoroughly surprise a novice on first hearing such extraordinary noises in the depths of the forest.

If a sportsman is lucky enough to hear the above sounds, he stands a grand chance of bringing off a successful stalk, as the buck is fairly easily approached at that time, and can be deceived by similar noises into thinking that another buck is approaching.

I have only once had the luck to get such a chance, and then, as related further on, I brought off the stalk all right but failed to bag the buck.

The pity is that these grand animals are being so

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

rapidly exterminated in the low country that soon they will be absolutely wiped out, unless very strong measures are taken to prevent such a lamentable result.

Unlike India and other Eastern countries, where they are usually found in the hills, in Ceylon they are to be met with in forest at all elevations from sea-level to the top of Pidurutalagala, at 8300 feet above sea-level. They are more or less nocturnal in their habits, though hinds may be often seen in the open during daytime in remote "parks," whilst during the wet north-east monsoon the bucks may occasionally be seen out on the feed up to late in the day. They are not gregarious, the bucks being usually solitary, but sometimes four or five does may be seen together. At the present time elk are fairly numerous in the hill forests, but, as I said before, are being rapidly exterminated in the low country, as their size renders them an irresistible prize to the native, who, sitting over a water-hole at night, for the small expenditure of one charge of powder and ball may secure several hundred pounds of meat, a pair of antlers, and a comparatively valuable skin. When camping in the low country years ago, the peculiar alarm call of the elk could be heard in all directions; now only a very occasional one is heard, and the time is not far distant when they will be as extinct as the dodo, more's the pity. By reason of their scarcity in the low country I imagine few men have *stalked* and shot them, as sportsmen do not often go a jungle trip in the height of the wet season, the best time for finding them in the open, and consequently I am not able to give my readers much matter in the "still-hunting" line. They lie up in any thick bit of undergrowth in the forest during the day, and when travelling through forest quietly you may occasionally



TYPICAL CEYLON ELK HEAD, FROM THE AUTHOR'S TROPHIES  
Length round curves  $24\frac{1}{2}$  inches, circumference above the burr  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches



YOUNG ELK "SPIKE" BUCK



## THE CEYLON ELK

walk one up, but you will get no chance of a shot. You will suddenly hear a crashing rush of some heavy animal in front of or to one side of you, and may catch a glimpse of a dark body fleeing through the trees, but the chances are about 100 to 1 against your being able to put in even a snap-shot. Like most deer they are fairly tenacious of life, and it takes a properly placed bullet to kill them, though I think they are easier killed than a spotted deer. The flesh is coarse and hardly worth eating, but highly prized by the natives, who consider the tougher the meat the stronger will become the eater. The marrow-bones, however, are very good, being full of excellent marrow.

Reverting to the slaughter of these fine deer by natives, this is most usually accomplished during the dry season by watching at water-holes on moonlight nights during June, July, August, and September, according to the dryness of the year. All kinds of deer are thus slaughtered, bucks and does indiscriminately, the beautiful spotted deer by day and the elk generally at night, in spite of the fact that our game laws forbid night shooting; but the authorities seem quite indifferent to the matter. Such shooting is poaching in every sense of the word, because in every province the dry season is also the close season for deer of all sorts.

Ceylon is such a wilderness of jungle, and so comparatively limited is the open "park" country, that it is a thousand pities the legitimate game, in the shape of deer, are being so rapidly exterminated. Europeans conscientiously take out the required licences and shoot with some discrimination; but the native "dodge," as I have said elsewhere, is for one man, or at the most two men, in a village to take out game licences, under the "pro-

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

tection" of which *every man* in that village shoots game throughout the season as a matter of business or trade.

Another thing which may account for the official apathy to a great extent, and which certainly prevents an outsider like myself from taking action, is that our game laws are so wonderfully perfect in their protection of the *poacher* that, unless you actually *see* a man who has no licence fire a shot and kill a deer, you cannot possibly secure a conviction!

In the close season you might run in a man for being in possession of deer-meat if you caught him red-handed, otherwise the meat, once dried, can be sworn to as years old, and there is no means of disproving it.

However, I am getting off the track, and if I once get on the "protection" question and let myself go, this book would not contain a tithe of the matter I could pour into it!

To return to our game, and my own limited experience of elk shooting, I remember, some years ago whilst on a trip in my favourite Tamankaduwa district, an old "tracker" conducted me one morning from camp, just after my 11 o'clock breakfast, to a remote park I had never visited before. After a tramp of 3 miles through forest and jungle, along an almost imperceptible track, we came out into a small patch of grass interspersed with big trees and clumps of scrub and jungle, looking most attractive after our tramp through the dark forest, and the first thing that met my eyes, after a glance round, was a fine young "spike" buck elk—that is to say, a buck with his first year's horns, or at any rate a very early pair of horns, a long way removed from the future antlers of the mature buck. This was a trophy quite worth securing as a bit of a curiosity, so I made up my

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mind to bag him. I only had my "Paradox," and this necessitated my getting to within 100 yards if possible, so, there being no available cover for the approach, down I went flat in the grass and wriggled along for about 100 yards without disturbing my quarry, which was busy feeding on the leaves of a shrub. Being now within about 80 yards and in a nice position, I took careful aim for the point where neck and shoulders join, and at the shot the buck dropped in his tracks, but, to my chagrin, a magnificent full-antlered buck darted out of the bushes just beyond the fallen animal and was gone before I could move.

However, I had bagged my game and was fairly satisfied—the unusual part of the incident being that it was about 1 P.M. and a blazing hot day in February, a time at which nobody with any knowledge of the subject could possibly expect to meet with elk on the feed out in the open, in Ceylon low country at any rate.

In the early days of my sporting experiences I more than once slaughtered an odd elk at a water-hole—better men than I have done the same, so I do not see any reason to be ashamed of having done so once in a way, in my "griffin-hood," instead of leaving all that game to the natives. On one particular occasion I was watching, on the ground, by the side of a long, narrow, canal-like pool of water in the forest, waiting for bear or leopard; but nothing came until very late, perhaps 1 A.M., when a huge shadowy form silently appeared approaching the water opposite my "hide."

The moonlight was very dim, but I fired and down it fell, almost immediately getting up again, rushing through the water and scrambling up a steep bank on my side of the pool. Near the top, however, it fell,

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rolling down into the water, and I ran along the side of the pool to intercept it if it got out again; but it never got out, for on reaching the place where it had fallen in I saw it swimming strongly up the centre of the pool, until it entered a dark shadow under the trees where I lost sight of it and all sound ceased.

I ran round to the end of the pool and waited, but saw and heard nothing, so finally retired to my "hide" again until morning. At daybreak I and my men soon made it out, a good buck elk dead and drowned in the middle of the pool, caught in some branches lying in the water whence we soon dragged it, securing the meat, hide, and antlers, the latter being an ordinary Ceylon pair measuring only  $22\frac{3}{4}$  inches along the curve and 22 inches spread from tip to tip.

I lost a fine buck, to my sorrow, only last year, a chance in a hundred!

I was returning towards camp in company with two trackers, after an exploring tramp in very remote parks, when, just about to turn out of a park into a forest track, we heard a buck elk "making love"—the most weird sounds you can imagine. A deep grunt, a snort, a shrill cough, a wheeze, a deep cough, more grunts—not continuously, but at longish intervals—the "sound effect," coming out of dense jungle, being most extraordinary.

In I went with care and caution, replying now and then to the grunts to hide any noise of my approach, and to make the buck think another buck was at hand. By dint of crawling under the undergrowth I finally came in sight of the buck's hind quarters, broadside to me, the rest of him being behind a big tree, and so, having taken the "Paradox" with me in preference to my rifle, I fired with the object of smashing the pelvis, but very evidently

## THE CEYLON ELK

failed, for the buck went off at speed. We followed on a good blood-track, but soon had to give up, as dusk was setting in and we were some miles from camp. However, I returned to the spot next morning and took up the track again, but we found the buck, by his tracks, going very strong, with no sign of a broken limb, and by the blood splashes we located the wound as probably through the fleshy haunch, too low down for the pelvis and missing the bone. I sincerely hope the wound was not a bad one, for we failed to find that buck and he had not been forced to lie down during his flight. My cousin G. W. Sharpe, whilst on a trip with me a few years ago, bagged a very nice buck under almost exactly similar conditions, except that the old tracker so nicely imitated the grunts that the buck came towards them and so met his fate, falling to one shot of a .303 Lee-Speed rifle.

Another somewhat peculiar case of coming across an elk in the open occurred to me in 1900. I was at the time accompanied by my cousin Roy Storey, and we had caught sight of a small herd of spotted deer in the park we were then traversing. My cousin went off for the stalk, and I stood still to give him a chance. Suddenly I heard a sort of grunt behind me, and looking round I saw a young buck elk running past me full speed, not more than 35 yards away, whilst a doe was bolting in another direction. Seeing that the buck would alarm the herd of spotted deer I fired at him at once, which I had no business to do, by the way, as he carried no trophy—merely sprouting young horns—and to my surprise he halted at once, and stood still about 40 yards away. My cousin then fired at him from a position nearly in front, but failed to move him. I had a single-barrelled breech-loader .303 rifle at that time, so I quietly reloaded and plugged him again in

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

the shoulder, which at last brought him to the ground. On examination we found both my shots had caught him fair in the shoulder, and my cousin's shot had entered at the neck, in front, and gone out again at the top of the back, behind the shoulders, and why either of the two first shots did not floor him was a mystery.

Elk are so scarce now in the low country of Ceylon as to render it not worth while making, or trying to make, the animal a special object of pursuit. You may by chance come upon one when in search of other game, and the best time which gives you a chance of so doing is during the wet north-eastern monsoon, in November, December, and January.

A very curious incident was witnessed on one occasion by Wright and myself during one of our trips together. We were camped on the Alut Oya at Puliankulam, in Tamankaduwa, 4 miles from Alut Oya rest-house on the Kauduluwewa-Minneriya road, waiting for carriers and trackers to arrive from Diwulankadawela, 7 miles away, and during the afternoon we went out with our shot-guns after pigeons, jungle fowl, and such fry, in some parks, formerly paddy fields, bordering the river and close to camp. When in one smallish park we heard, to our surprise, some dogs barking in the depths of the forest, which we could not account for, as there was no village within 7 miles of us; but Tom had declared he saw a dog on the edge of the forest down the road the previous day. The Kauduluwewa road or track traversed this park, and just as we heard the dogs two spotted does darted across the plain near us.

We thought more deer might follow, so hid behind a bush, but nothing came except a jackal which appeared on the road track close by us. I filled him full of small

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shot, but off he went, and at the sound of the shot we heard the dogs barking loudly, on the move in our direction. They kept to the forest, however, and were heading for the road, so we ran as hard as we could to the edge of the park where the road entered the forest, and, at that moment, to our amazement, a buck elk broke from the forest into the road, so "done" that he could only walk, followed by three biggish pariah dogs, also so exhausted that they could only trot slowly along at the buck's heels, tongues hanging out, letting out a hoarse bark now and then, and snapping feebly at his heels. The buck crossed the road, entered the forest again, cut across the corner of it and entered the park, where we were ready for him, having run up the edge of the forest to intercept him. I let fly at his broadside with the No. 5 shot at less than 20 yards, and Tom did the same from the other side. I do not think we hurt him much, but he broke into a feeble gallop, still followed by the dogs, for about 40 yards and fell. Tom ran up and knifed him, but he was already dead, and *stiff* in five minutes!

He was a full-grown buck with a miserable head of horns, and had been actually and literally run to death by the three pariahs! Two slunk away at our approach, but the other, a white and yellow beast, lay mouthing the deer and growling at us for some time, eventually getting up, retiring a little way and lying down, "done to a turn." Our trackers turned up just then and were much surprised. They recognised the dogs as belonging to the Veddah village of Rotáwewa, near Minneriya, and fully 8 miles from this spot. We tried to make friends with the bolder dog but he would have none of us, so we cut up the deer and returned to camp.

Mr. F. L. Reeves, son of our veteran planter and sports-

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

man, E. Gordon Reeves, has been kind enough to permit me to make use of the following excellent and, I believe, very typical account of an elk hunt with dogs and gun in our hill forests—a style of hunting I have had no experience of whatever.

Mr. Reeves wrote the article for the *Field* in 1904, so I hope the editor will forgive my bit of crimping.

### AFTER SAMBHUR IN THE HILL FORESTS OF CEYLON

Having determined to try for a certain old buck sambhur on the following morning, W. and I ordered tea to be on the table sharp at 5.30 A.M., to enable us to be at the jungle edge before sunrise, thus giving the hounds a chance of finding before all scent disappeared. I know nothing more exhilarating than being out on a fresh February morning before sunrise, gun in hand, and an extremely merry pack at heel, with the chance of a good day's sport before you. On our way up the hill to the valley we proposed to draw, we could hear the big grey-faced Wanderoo monkeys hooting high up on the forest-clad cliffs, and now and then an old jungle-cock would utter in clarion tones his curious call of "Tsk, George Joyce!" and would be answered from a neighbouring knoll, back and forth, to and fro, for half-an-hour on end. As we near the jungle the dogs begin to get excited, and are with great difficulty kept from rushing in, chained and coupled as they are, after a herd of red monkeys, with which the forest swarms.

It would be well here to describe the lay of the land which we intended to hunt. From the boundary of the tea fields the jungle runs in a steep slope to the height



ELK HINDS, A YOUNG BUCK AND A SPOTTED DOE



Photo by M. L. Wilkins, Esq.

RESULT OF A HUNT IN KELEBOKKA DISTRICT



## THE CEYLON ELK

of about 6100 feet above sea-level; not smooth and unbroken, but intersected with mountain torrents, rough and jagged cliffs, and covered with a matted undergrowth of bamboo and a plant known in Ceylon as the nilu, on the young shoots of which sambhur feed. The high forest is chiefly composed of keena and madool trees.

Our pack consisted of one couple of half-bred bull terriers, a couple of dachshund terriers, a couple of half-bred harriers, a Chow-bull terrier, a dachshund, and, last but by no means least, a pariah—four and a half couples of good dogs and true. Taking a track that ultimately led to the top of the ridge we kept on for about 400 yards, and turning to the right, dropped down to the head of the deep gorge, which was an almost certain find; here we uncoupled the dogs and sent them in with the dog boy, whilst we went round the head of the ravine to a big game track on the opposite knoll, which hunted sambhur generally took. Nor had we long to wait before there was a single bark from Jimmy, the harrier dog, followed almost immediately by a ringing challenge from a buck sambhur that made us both jump. Soon the whole pack was on, and the ructions down that narrow gorge were something to be remembered. Dogs and sambhur went tearing down the hill, waking monkeys and jungle fowl, which added their full share to the general outcry; but the din ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and nothing was to be heard but a steady crashing, as the big buck forced his way through the rank and luxuriant undergrowth which grew down the banks of the stream; but where he went, there went the dogs also, and he was soon forced to come to bay. Now the game began. With his back to a big keena tree, and surrounded by thick bushes, the wily old buck stood, and woe betide any dog who was rash enough to venture within

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reach of those wicked fore-feet. Luckily all our dogs knew the game only too well, from bitter experience, and so kept their distance. Round and round him they flew, one moment baiting him in front and the next taking a hurried snap at his heels.

Meanwhile W. and I were racing down the hill, regardless of "wait-a-bit" thorns and overhanging branches, thinking of nothing but the game ahead; soon we were within 50 yards of the bay, and the fun waxed fast and furious. We could hear the buck snort as he leapt at a hound, and the thrash of his antlers as he made terrific sweeps from side to side in vain endeavours to impale an unwary hound. Presently, when we were within a few yards of him, and still unable to see anything, owing to the thickness of the undergrowth, there was a crush and a crash, and the next thing I saw was an avalanche of solid, living flesh coming straight for me. I only just had time to throw myself on one side as the great buck rushed past, and gave him the right barrel on an off-chance of hitting as he disappeared through the trees.

On rushing to the place I had last seen him we could find no traces of blood, but on going another 20 yards we found two big blotches, which showed us that at any rate he was hit, but where and how we could not tell. We were now puzzled to know what to do, as there was not a sound to be heard of dogs or sambhur, so, waiting a minute or two, we listened, and presently there was a faint sound which might have been 2 miles away; but there was no time to wait and consider what it was, so off we went at the same mad rate in the direction from whence it came. On topping a knoll at the edge of the tea clearing, we could hear them plainly baying about half a mile away, below a tremendous cliff which towered up some 800 feet above the forest. Our

## THE CEYLON ELK

shortest way now was through the tea clearing, and in five minutes we had entered the jungle again and were making for the bay.

The question now was how to reach him, as he was sure to be very much on the look-out after his experience, and, moreover, was not hard hit, judging from the way he was going for the hounds. After a short consultation it was arranged that W. should work up to the right so as to get above him, whilst I stayed where I was in case of his breaking back the way he had come. My excitement was intense as I heard W. cautiously creeping away, and I expected every moment to have the stag on top of me; it seemed ages that W. was taking to get into his position, and the noise grew deafening, as the dogs, knowing that we had arrived, plucked up courage and went in boldly, only to be driven off again and again.

I could stand the waiting no longer, and determined to creep up and get a view of the fight. Slowly and cautiously I crept up, foot by foot, on hands and knees, keeping the 12-bore well in front, so as to fire at a moment's notice in the event of a charge. I managed with luck to get up behind a large boulder within a few feet of the arena, and, parting the branches of a stunted keena, I saw the whole of the proceedings. There stood the buck, with the long mane round his neck erect, lips drawn back in a savage grin, and covered with blood from a long gash reaching from his hind quarters to within 3 or 4 inches of his spine where the bullet had grazed him. The ground all around for about 10 yards was ploughed up, and all the young saplings razed to the ground; the dogs kept in a wide semicircle, rushing in now and then when an opportunity occurred. I now took a cautious look round for W., and presently saw him crawling on his

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stomach across a slab rock immediately above the bay, and, being unable to fire myself, for fear of the bullet glancing on the rock, I motioned to him to do so; but the buck lived yet, and before W. could shoot he had caught one of the dogs in a sweep of his horns, and throwing it high in the air, charged as it fell. But W. was in time to save a catastrophe, and, with a quick snap-shot with his .500 Express, put an end to the finest fighting stag I have yet met with.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ELK HUNTING

BY THOMAS FARR

BETWEEN five and seven thousand feet above sea-level in the uplands of Ceylon, where the climate is more English than tropical, the sport known as elk hunting holds a high rank in the varied sport to be obtained in this charming island. The sportsman must of necessity "travel light," impeded by nothing that he cannot carry with ease and comfort to himself. He must be sound in wind and limb, for there is no greater test of endurance and fitness than a long day among these rough hills and forests, with a good pack of foxhounds, in pursuit of the sambhur.

The sport is attended with a considerable amount of luck one way or the other. There are the blank days, and there are the days when a cold rain soaks you to the skin. There are the days, too, when a howling wind utterly prevents your hearing the note of a single hound, and in elk hunting nearly everything depends upon hearing and a knowledge of the country. With hounds once in the forest, the owner hesitates to leave them, be the weather never so wet and windy, and lost hounds are a very serious item in the game. Unless you have a good balance at your banker's, the loss of a hound costing you perhaps over a hundred rupees is no light matter, let alone his individual value as an elk hound. Besides, is there not some stronger feeling that impels the master of a pack to leave

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no stone unturned to find a lost hound? Dog boys are all very well in their way, but there is always the likelihood that they may not penetrate far enough into jungles they are unfamiliar with.

It is weary work sometimes, that anxious search for lost hounds. On rare occasions the whole pack, except the seizers and a few shirkers, may be away after some "straight-necked" young stag, found late, and perhaps headed by some of the field, or coursed a short distance by the long-dogs. Where the pack has got to, and how it got there, is a puzzle no one can solve; but away they are in some deep valley of forest, and, for all the hunter knows, baying a grand antlered "Monarch of the Glen," or silent, save for an occasional angry growl or two, chewing up the carcase of a hind. How they topped that long, high ridge without a soul knowing it, or without our hearing Bountiful or Columbia or deep-voiced Lifter, is a mystery; but no time is to be lost while leopards prowl hungrily along the open game paths.

Then the search begins, and the mournful note of the horn may be heard re-echoing through the forests, and echoing back twice and even thrice across deep ravines from scarped precipices of rock or rugged peaks.

Should the weather be fine and hunger stayed by a hasty snack, this prowl through unfamiliar and perhaps utterly unknown forest has a great charm and fascination.

Along some ridge path, kept open for ages by the mighty elephant, who in his herds has roamed these forests for all time, it is a very simple matter, but pushing a way along a game path, through the unyielding and close-growing "nilloo" or clinging and maddening bamboo, is quite another thing. A path through which the elk forces his way, the undergrowth bending and parting before his

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weight and closing behind him as he goes, sometimes in a stooping posture almost bent double for half a mile at a stretch, the paths lead the hunter through thick matted brambles and other more abominable thorny scrub. Again in sheltered hollows, where lycopodium and ferns clothe the ground, and where noble trees, whose straight, stately stems are crowned by a leafy canopy, check all undergrowth of bush or sapling.

In the cool shade of such forest as this progress is easy and pleasant; provided it is fine. There is always, too, the chance of meeting a solitary elephant, and the sudden swaying of young trees and disturbance of branches brings the sportsman up sharp for a moment. A troop of Wanderoo monkeys, however, is the cause as they swing away from tree to tree in needless panic.

Then when reward follows the search, and after a long day the hunter returns to camp with all his errant pack and perchance a fine trophy, his cup of happiness is full. His knowledge of woodcraft, aided by his compass, has led him unerringly through many a valley and deep gorge, and has brought him up to the scattered remnant of his lost pack. Halting upon some prominent spur or upon some precipitous crag, the sound of the horn has reached the ears of old Lifter, and an answering howl gladdens the heart of the hunter.

Another and another take up the mournful note, and soon hounds begin dropping in to their master's heel; they seem almost to spring out of the ground, so noiselessly and suddenly does their number increase. The next morning a fresh draw is tried in fresh country. Not that a pack of hounds in full cry will drive sambhur out of any forest for more than a few hours; but one is apt to think, and rightly too, that a wily old stag with the cry of hounds still ringing

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in his ears may take up his morning lair farther inside the forest. He may, too, restrict his nightly roaming to feeding grounds more remote than the previous night when he sent his challenge across valleys of patna as he fed towards his rival in the open. Anyhow, the master has probably harboured a stag for this particular morning. He has taken a stroll round the edges of a mile or so of patna, where the green fringe of short grass shows recent and continuous grazing, or the rubbed and scarified bark of a rhododendron bears conspicuous testimony to the presence of a stag, either getting rid of his velvet, or rubbing his well-worn and polished antlers as they approach the season of their shedding. By the pale light of stars, or perhaps a moon, the master will jog out with his pack, afoot of course, and with an eager and pressing crowd at his heels. No couples for this sport, if you know your hounds and your hounds know you—that is to say, no couples going to the covert side. A good long thong to your hunting-crop is all you want, and the name of each hound, even in the dim light of early morning, at the tip of your tongue. The air is crisp and cold, and the hoar-frost is lying thick on the grass; your dog boys walk gingerly, as their bare feet become encrusted with this unwonted covering of rime. At 7000 feet elevation, a late December or January morning on the Horton Plains before sunrise is something to remember, and who does not feel a thankfulness to be about on such a morning has an evil liver or a guilty conscience. It was 5.15 by the master's watch ten years ago that we left the rest-house with a strong pack at our heels and 3½ couple of seizers led by the dog boy. Down by the stream and all over the Gem Pit Flat the hoar-frost lay white and lovely in the soft moonlight, and as dawn broke and we topped Chimney Hill, each leaf on



MR. THOS. FARR OF NORTH COVE ESTATE, BOGAWANTALAWA, WITH HIS  
PACK OF ELK HOUNDS



Photo by Thos. Farr, Esq.

HOUNDS AND DOG BOYS



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the rhododendron drops glittered with its frosty covering, and down by the falls lay a piece of drift timber from which one could scrape quite a snowball. At a jog we went down the river-side path, not a word spoken, for it was no time for conversation, Bountiful and Lifter with their heads just past the master's knee, a place of honour ever insisted on, and jealously guarded by those two grand old hounds. The line of a travelling hind brings down the noses of a whole pack in a moment, and then heads are raised, keen and with working nostrils; however the dog boy has an eye on them, and stands with ready whip whilst the master moves forward a bit faster along his path, and with a word to his pack gets them together again in their places at his heels. As we pass Figure of Eight and Diamond Pools a fat brown trout or two rise, sending rings of wavelets to either bank, and farther on an otter is seen plashing through the shallows above Slab Rock Falls.

Far away in the distance from the slopes of Kirigalpota the resounding clamour of Wanderoo monkeys, answered from the steep crags of Kuduhugalla, disturb the silence of the still morning, and a covey of spur fowl cackle noisily amongst the tall trees by the river's bank. Overhead across the sky, a pair of Lady Torrington pigeons wing a business-like flight to some group of Kudadowala trees, their present feeding grounds, and beneath our feet a snipe rises and flaps lazily away for 20 yards or so, looking for all the world, in that dim morning light, as large as a woodcock. Just as we top the ridge above Baker's Falls the rising sun lights up the top of Kirigalpota Peak, whilst down below stretches in dim shadow the Gallagamma Valley, so named from the falls two miles below. Here this lovely stream plunges over 2000 feet of precipice and slab rock into the Gallagamma paddy fields. Thence

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among mighty boulders and through deep rocky gorges it tears and roars down to Belihuloya, and on by gentler slopes through paddy fields and native gardens to the Wallaway Ganga until it reaches the sea near Hambantota. Halting at the summit, and before we drop into the valley below, whence no sound of voices shall reach the jungle we had decided to draw first, a few minutes are occupied in giving orders about the long-dogs. Smiler and Wallace being fast, are told off to command a wide stretch of patna. Grip and Sandy are placed at one of the well-known game-crossings half a mile below, towards which, down any one of the steep slopes, a cunning old stag may try to slip away; Slavin and Zulu remain with the master to be held outside on the patna ridge as soon as the hounds are taken into the forest. A short pack in the matter of seizers, but so strong in finders that to-day's stag will have to be a good one to beat them.

Old Tip, a fast lurcher, half-greyhound and retriever, is allowed to run with the pack. The tracks of a heavy stag are noticed among some old rootings of pig on the ridge above Tiger's Pool, and a freshly rubbed rhododendron tree points to a hard head. The sharp points of the antlers, too, have scored a branch high up, proclaiming an exceptionally large stag, and the dust of the bark lies dry and powdery in the cup of a fallen leaf, which proves the rubbing to have been of this morning, or last night's shower would have washed it off. Bountiful and Malibrán, both steady line hunters and good finders, begin to feather on a line in a ferny hollow beyond us and near the jungle edge, and Juno's tawny stern is seen disappearing through the brambly fringe of the forest. As an elk hound Juno is the type of what a hound should be, keen, and quick to find, but sparing of her voice until there should be no mis-

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take about a good line, and then her sharp, light note shall be heard incessant through the run. But she has a fault, as many good hounds have, and hers is a sneaking fondness for pig. She has got herself into trouble more than once over this weakness, and through it her kennel companions have often suffered more than herself. She is not a thorough-bred fox-hound like Bountiful, Lifter, and most of the others; but she is pretty near it, and it must be a very bad scent that she cannot carry through the driest of country. Lifter, an independent old hound of some three seasons, has disappeared some time ago, and the master, well aware of his value as a finder, has just asked the dog boy when he last saw him, when a single note is heard high up on the hillside. A deep baying note it is, and unmistakably Lifter's.

Simultaneously almost, in the deep shade of the forest trees just beyond the fringe of long grass and brambles, a sudden burst of music is heard, and high above all Juno's light note rings out sharp and clear. We hurry to the chorus of hounds as the ominous "Woof-woof" of an angry boar greets our ear, and a black form is seen tearing its way through the thick stuff around us. A double find, and, as far as we can tell, only Lifter with the stag. The boar shows himself for an instant on the patna just as we get back to the open. A thicket of bramble is no place to stay in with a boar rampaging through it with a pack of hounds at his heels! Now we await developments, and within a few minutes a savage bay takes place not twenty yards from where we stand, then "Woof-woof" once more, and a hound howls with pain, followed by a sudden silence. Soon an angry roar of hounds rings out, as headed by Juno the pack re-forms and the line is once more taken up. The boar has had a nip on the hocks from old Lector, a plucky

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upstanding half-bred dog of English parents, and now makes his point at full speed. In the meantime Lifter must look after himself, and the master tells off a dog boy to keep in touch with him and Bountiful, who has fortunately joined him.

Having ascertained, more or less, the direction he has taken we turn all our attention to the pack, now in full cry, and across a ferny hollow we get a momentary glimpse of the old boar's back as he gallops through the bracken. Now as he tops a low ridge on the edge of the forest, some few hundred yards off, he stands for a second and half turns to listen. A grand beast without a doubt, but not yet hard pressed enough to adopt offensive measures against the yelling pack at his heels. At a good swinging trot he runs a steep slope topped by a patch of thick jungle of a few acres in extent, and the proverbial pocket-handkerchief could cover his pursuers, as they stream up the hillside and dash into the forest on the line. Soon a savage bay is heard as some eight couple of hounds "bail him up" in a dense thicket of bamboo. We are now close up, having saved nearly a quarter of a mile by a short cut down a ravine and up the other side. Knives are ready and seizers are slipped, but in the deep shadow of forest trees and dense scrub it is hard to distinguish hounds from boar. He makes short, swift charges into the thick of them, and the pack divides to let him through, and closes up again as he turns to face them. A yelp of pain is heard again and again as the fight proceeds, and as we close in upon him once more the wicked "Woof-woof" seems right in amongst us. How he passed through without one of us getting a taste of his gleaming white tusks is a miracle, but he breaks his bay again, and makes his point across a narrow strip of patna. The bamboo has been too thick for the long-dogs

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to take an active and efficient part in the fight, and we long for a fair field and no favour, at any rate for the pig.

Another fast five or six minutes up a steep rocky ravine in thick forest and we can hear (100 feet above) hounds baying furiously. Climbing up by the edge of the ravine, hand over hand, hanging on to saplings and moss-covered boulders, we reach the lip of a waterfall of about 20 feet. The water, thick and muddied by the fight going on above, splashes past over a perpendicular rock into a small deep pool below. A foothold here is hard to find and keep, but a narrow ledge of rock some 3 feet below the lip of the fall enables one of the field to get on terms with the infuriated boar. The noise is deafening in this narrow precipitous ravine, and what with the sound of the falling water and the baying of hounds, it seems impossible to make our shouts of encouragement heard by the now more weary pack. They have tackled a stiff customer in a difficult country from the find, and doubtless there are many wounded amongst them. However, brave old Zulu, the grandest seizer that ever faced a stag or seized a boar, catches sight of the nearest sportsman, who now stands, knife in hand, facing the pack and about 2 feet behind the boar. The old dog takes heart of grace and springs full in the face of those wicked tushes, and the sportsman, taking a quick step upwards, stands on the rock beside, and the trusty knife goes down into his heart, whilst Zulu seizes him as best he may. A quicker step back, and in a moment a black and brown mass passes like a flash before the hunters' vision, falling with a loud splash into the pool below, a dead boar and a gallant old dog unwounded and full of fierce anger, as he worries his fallen foe. It has been a short run, lasting not half-an-hour from find to finish, but so much the better, with two of the best of the

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pack away on what promises to be a very fine stag. At the sound of the horn, and the "Who-whoops" around the slain, hounds come tumbling down anyhow through the tangle beside the fall, five or six couple at least, and, handing his whip to one of the field, the master quickly leads them out into the open, a few hundred yards away. No succulent reward from the carcass is distributed to the pack, for he who would keep together a pack for elk hunting should discourage the hunting of pig. It is undoubtedly, however, an exciting adjunct to the sport, and if the master can afford a strong reserve of good hounds in his kennels, there is no reason why he should not hunt the boar. He is a queer-tempered beast, and has undoubted courage. He will attack a human being with great fury, even when surrounded by a pack of baying hounds, dashing straight through them at his enemy, either holding the noisy pack in contempt, or realising that the human being who owns them is responsible for all his trouble and worry. Upon one occasion a hunted boar left a game path, on which he stood listening to the pack just topping the ridge more than half a mile off, and attacked me with great courage. I was in forest, with my seizer Zulu held 10 yards behind me by a cooly. The hunted boar trotted down a game path to one of those open patches to be found in every jungle, a place probably used as a midday bivouac by elephants; he stood on the far side of the small clearing, broadside on to me, listening to the faint cry of approaching hounds. His wicked little eyes glistened with excitement, and as a matter of precaution I took a slow and cautious step to one side, so as to place a pair of saplings, standing in the centre of the clearing and about 20 feet from where I stood, between the boar and myself. He saw the movement, and in a second was upon me. He



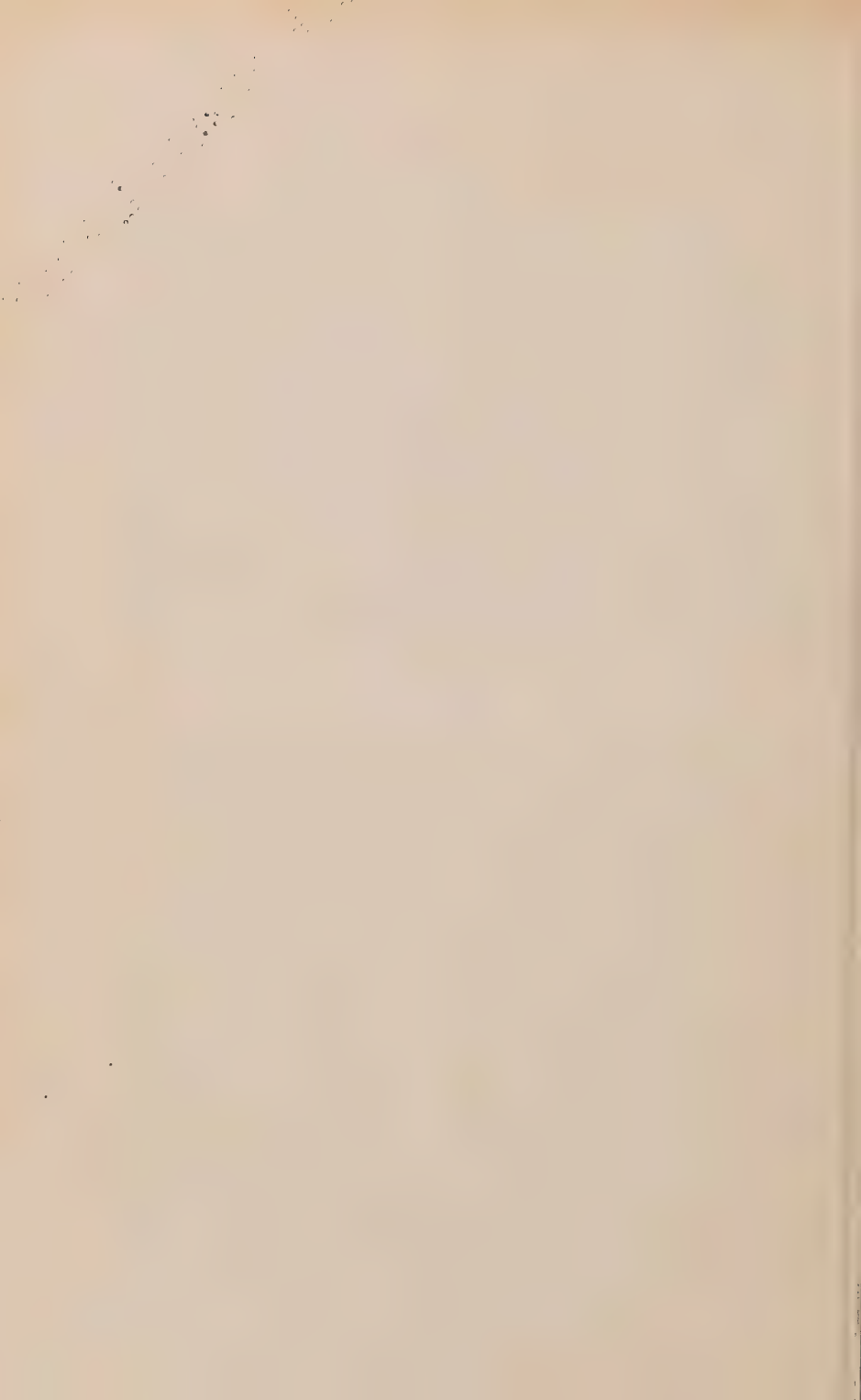
Photo by Thos. Farr, Esq.

A "LONG DOG"



Photo by Thos. Farr, Esq.

DEAD BOAR AND THE HOUNDS



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sprang like a tiger from the ground clean on top of me, his feet upon my shoulders, and as I felt his bristly chest against my nose, I fell and rolled for all I was worth to get away from him. Most fortunately for me he noticed Zulu at the same moment, and rushing straight at him, he sent him flying into the air, and as the dog fell with a thud in front of him, he scored him in four places with his tushes across the ribs. He then went on, but stood once more a few yards off, half hesitating whether he should not return to the attack. In the meantime the cry of the leading hounds could be heard close by, and as Zulu rushed forward to seize the boar, some of them were already dashing past me. The old dog seized him grandly, and my knife did the rest. The boar weighed 207 lbs., and stood 32 inches at the withers.

The above, however, is a digression, and we have yet to locate Lifter and Bountiful, whom we last heard high up on the ridge above Tiger's Pool, heading in the direction of Baker's Falls. Getting well away from the sound of water, and on the top of the highest ridge of patna we could find, we listened anxiously a few minutes for tongue. At last faintly the still morning air held the welcome sound, and a gentle breath of wind down Cheetah Gorge revealed more distinctly Lifter's deep bay. It was fully a mile or more off, and I located the sound in a big swamp lying at the foot of Kirigalpota Peak, and at the back of the Aldie Patina Range. We had at least 1200 feet to climb, and no time to spare in doing it, for although a couple of staunch hounds will often "hold up" an old and plucky stag for an hour or more, he may easily get impatient, and with a well-directed stroke of his hoofs he may disable one of them temporarily. In any case he will stand at bay, after he has got his wind, just so long as it pleases him to do so.

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Up the old short cut to Summit Level occupied some fifteen minutes or so, and it was "bellows to mend" by the time we reached the top. But here the aspect of affairs improved vastly, as hound after hound pricked his ears and listened to the now palpable, though distant, baying of both the missing hounds. It was still more than half a mile away, and some 500 feet higher than where we already stood. It would have been unwise to let the pack go as yet through forest teeming with game, and in a country so broken. In half the distance to the bay the hounds might lose, in some deep hollow, or by some noisy stream, the sound they were making for. Keeping the pack by whip and voice close at my heels, we made our best pace along a patna and up through a thick grassy ravine, down which tumbled a noisy mountain stream. Here no sound of bay or tongue could reach the pack, now pressing close behind me, eager to dash forward at a moment's notice. Reaching a small plateau, where the stream took a bend, we suddenly found ourselves right up to the bay. The stag had unconsciously moved down to meet us, and a noble spectacle he was as he stood in the middle of a shallow pool on a bit of rough patna. With his head low and his dark brown muzzle thrust forward, he presented the personification of fearless rage as he faced the two hounds. Every now and then, impatiently pounding the water with his fore-foot, he would charge right up to the bank to drive off some more venturesome hound, and occasionally he would dash out of the pool on to the bank, and actually chase a hound into the long grass.

By this time the rest of the pack were round him, and as one of the half-breds nipped his hock for a second, he broke his bay, catching the dog a resounding kick as he did so. Past us he rushed, heading down stream, along the



Photo by Thos. Farr, Esq.

### DOG BOY AND SEIZERS



Photo by Thos. Farr, Esq.

### HUNTING COUNTRY



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game path we had come up by, on his way nearly knocking over the dog boys who had been delayed by bringing up the seizers. It was now past 8 o'clock, and the stag had got his wind. He was going very strong, heading towards the Horton Plains! The jungle here was too dense with brambles and scrub for the seizers to have a fair chance of tackling him, so they were held up until the pack should once more bring him to bay. This took longer than was anticipated, and after a fast run of about twenty minutes, mostly downhill, the whole pack threw up their heads on a piece of dry rocky ground, where pigs had been working a few hours before. The check, however, was a very short one, and Comic's light note was heard about 200 yards away—an absolutely reliable hound, a virtue freely acknowledged by the whole pack as they all dashed forward to her cry.

The stag here had taken a turn left handed, and sunk the hollow of Onion Patina, now half a mile ahead. Taking advantage of a well-beaten elephant path, the field followed in single file close upon the heels of the pack, but before the heavy forest between Onion and Long Patinas had been reached, all sound of hounds was lost. However, a knowledge of the country and of the run of a hunted stag soon decided us as to our point. Slipping down a grassy gorge to the head of Baker's Falls, we climbed the opposite steep slope of a patna knoll. Hardly had we reached the summit when a grand stag was viewed stealing down a strip of grass leading from Long Patina. As he showed in the open, Smiler and Wallace viewed him and strained at their leashes to be slipped. Down the hill they flew to meet the stag, who made for a large pool below him at a lumbering gallop. He reached his point a second or two before the long-dogs, and with a mighty splash was soon in deep

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water. Here he had time to look around and take in the situation, a deafening chorus of hounds at his heels, and three baying long-dogs in front of him. A sorry plight indeed for a stag who had run so far and so fast, and who had given us such a good morning's sport. But the elk hunter's heart deals with no sentiment on such occasions as these, and knives flashed out of their sheaths as we stood panting on the bank of the cool pool. Tip, one of the lurchers who had run with the pack, and old Zulu soon joined the long-dogs now threatening the stag in the water. He stood in a sufficient depth to make it necessary for them all to swim, and he himself, whilst cooling his sides, could get back his strength and his wind. It was a fine picture, as he stood with his head raised high, gazing around him at his foes on the bank, and his noisy crew of four-footed enemies upon all sides of him. The polished points of his antlers flashed white in the sun, and his black heavy mane stood out bristling on his massive neck.

Zulu was the first to approach him, swimming boldly in towards the sandbank on which he had taken up his position in some 3 feet of water, and at once became the object of attack. With head lowered almost to the water's level, the noble beast faced his opponents, a wicked look of rage in his eyes and his whole body quivering with eagerness to strike. Suddenly like a flash he was on his hind legs, his body reared up clear of the water, and with a bound forward like the pig-jump of a horse, his fore-feet struck the water over Zulu's back. He had missed his mark by an inch or so, and the water had broken the force of the blow. The old dog sank out of sight in midst of a blinding splash, whilst the stag looked around him for further enemies. These were soon forthcoming as Tip, Smiler, and Wallace swam towards him. Another leap forward and a splash of

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rapid hoof strokes as the stag galloped over the sandy shallow, past the other seizers, and through the now scattered pack as they opened to let his majesty go by. Here along the right bank the patna falls in easy slopes to the river, making galloping easy to the hunted stag. Taking advantage of this, and knowing every pool and ford in the stream, he made his best pace for the Slab Rock Falls. These falls, divided transversely into two, form a broad ledge of rock right across the stream, studded with small pools and narrow runs, and a deep pool of some size and depth into which, from a height of about 20 feet, more than half the river falls. Here our grand old fighting stag took up his stand, destined to be his last one. With his back to the wall of rock, almost hidden, except for his noble antlered head, by the volume of water that fell over and around him, he again faced his pursuers.

It had been a sharp burst of nearly half a mile, all up hill, so that the field was somewhat demoralised by the time the bay was reached. But there we all were, with the stag holding his own gallantly in the face of a strong pack of hounds and 2½ couple of good seizers. From behind he was unassailable, though one or two cunning hounds, running round, tried from above the fall to reach him; but these, venturing too close to the edge, lost foothold on the slippery rock and were carried down into the pool beside the stag, who promptly pounded them for their interference. It was a splendid bay and a magnificent fight, but the odds were too many for our noble quarry. As he dashed forward to pound the seizers facing him, a quick thrust of a hunting-knife reached his side, and in a moment there was a mingled and struggling mass in the deep, cold pool of baying hounds, a dying stag, and a half-drowned hunter. It was soon over, and with the aid of a helping hand or two the active

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sportsman was in his natural posture once more, not a dry stitch on him, his hunting-knife lying at the bottom of the pool, and a gallant stag lying dead in the middle of the Slab Rock Falls. He carried a good head for a Ceylon sambhur, measuring  $27\frac{1}{2}$  inches, with a spread of 27, and his weight was 32 stone clean.

The casualties among the hounds were serious that day, —Warfare, Ranger, and Wallace wounded by the boar; Hecate, Tip, Zulu, and Gossamer more or less badly pounded by the stag. Hecate died a week after from internal injuries, and the rest recovered. The pack on this occasion consisted of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  couple of fast fox-hounds,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  couple of good English mongrels, 3 lurchers, and 5 seizers. It was now nearly 11 o'clock, and all hounds were soon in kennel. All wounds were attended to, and a stitch put in here and there where needed.

A well-entered hound that has been through a season or two is of great value to a pack, for it must be remembered that the elk hound is made, not born. He must be fast above all things, and he must drive. A few good steady line hunters are often a godsend on a bad scenting day, or when some unaccountable check has occurred. A flat swampy jungle after a heavy shower is sometimes partially under water, a succession of pools interfering terribly with scent; but the clever hound in thick cover depends more upon side scent, and will carry the line through at a good pace. Then, again, when the stag has soiled, a cast forward will often pick up the line with very little loss of time, and here an old hound who knows his work well will astonish the huntsman by owning the line half a mile ahead. I have seen a stag go to soil with four or five couple of good hounds at his heels. They have bayed him from the bank, and he has dashed right through them across a piece of long

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grass and galloped a bare patch of patna in full view of the whole field, and in spite of voice and horn not a hound would open on his line. It is pace that kills more than anything, and no elk can stand up against it. Hunt a stag or hind slowly, with a pottering lot of line-hunters, and they will run for three and a half hours. This I have generally found to be the limit of endurance, if not much pressed; and if he is not accounted for by then, he will oftener than not live to run another day. A fast pack that will drive is very killing, and if added thereto one has two or three couple of Norfolk lurchers or English half-breds to nip the heels of a stubborn fighting stag, so much the better, for he must be kept moving.

These half-breds should have a strong strain of English blood in them, chiefly collie, pointer, retriever, or setter crosses, with a little hound or terrier strain. The prick-eared, bob-tailed pariah of ruddy or ginger hue I have no use for. I have enjoyed excellent sport with the best of sportsmen who have employed such dogs as I name, but to my mind they are apt to spoil sport. When scent is bad they will often, after the first burst, sit up and howl "lost-dog," and so handicap your staunch hounds who are carefully working out the line; and when scent is good they are not wanted at all, for your finders and half-breds will drive the stag to bay.

Pariah packs pure and simple afford me no sport compared with hounds. To the hunter the great charm of all hunting is the "cry of his hounds," and what is there more thrilling than the opening burst of a pack of English hounds proclaiming a find amongst the forest-clad hills of the uplands of Ceylon! The master recognises the note of some favourite and the answering cry of another, and then the grand chorus of music, as the whole pack gathers on a burning scent, is something to live for.

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The owner of a pack of elk hounds has many difficulties to contend with, and many drawbacks to face, in keeping up the strength of his pack. There are diseases and epidemics in the kennels, of which dysentery and pneumonia are the most formidable. There are casualties in the field from boar and stag, and occasional fatalities in flooded rivers. And there are dead-fall traps, pits, nooses, and spring-guns set by poaching coolies and native villagers.

But all these dangers sink into insignificance beside the prowling, dog-eating leopard. He is the sworn enemy of the elk hound. Lurking in thick cover by the side of forest glade or road, woe to the unwary hound finding his solitary way home to his kennel. Or, crouched in a game path, he awaits the approach of hounds running in a line, and wipes them out one after another as they come along.

Some years ago I had a cruel experience of this, which I take from one of my hunting diaries. It was a cold windy morning in January, and a driving mist blew across the Horton Plains from the north-east. We left the rest-house a little after six o'clock, and I drew up the ridge running parallel with the Gallagamma bridle-path. The tracks of a big stag had been seen the evening before in the close-cropped grass at the back of the cairn of stones marking Trig. Station, Horton Plains, No. 1. Taking the Gallagamma road as one boundary, it is a narrow piece of jungle, having a long stretch of patna and swamp lying east of it, and running to the flat at the top of the Non Pareil precipices. The trailing bamboo which forms the chief undergrowth of this jungle was cold and wet, and hounds in drawing scattered far and wide, and it was fully twenty minutes before we heard a find. This seemed to be the best part of a mile ahead, and only a single hound. Waiting for further information, we heard hounds gather on the

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line, and what seemed a fair burst of music followed. Suddenly all sound ceased.

Getting down on to the new road to Non Pareil we met one of the dog boys, who said he had heard a hound struck by a leopard, and indicating the direction where we had last heard tongue. On the road itself were very fresh scratchings of a large leopard. I had two couple of new hounds out that morning, which I had secured to replace recent losses. They were Flatterer, Statesman, Wanderer, and Jolliment, and four grand young hounds they were as they played around me on my way to cover. Getting no further information from the dog boy, we made the best of our way to Chimney Hill, and thence along the World's End Road.

Here we met some of the field, who reported having seen Sandy and Mischief bolting in terror from some unseen foe, and that Mischief was wounded and bleeding. Noting the direction whence these hounds were reported to have come, I took an old game path leading from the road to the Tappa-Collum patna in search of the pack. Bountiful, Warfare, and Bashful had been picked up and sent home with Sandy and Mischief, but the rest of the pack were missing. An ominous silence pervaded the sodden jungles, and not a whimper of hound could be heard anywhere. The wind had dropped, but the mist lay thick in the flat swampy forest through which in single file we threaded our way. Suddenly, beyond a bush in front of me as I led with my gun in hand, I heard a buzzing of flies.

Stepping cautiously forward, I found at my feet poor Wanderer, one of the handsomest young hounds I ever possessed, stone dead, with his neck broken and hardly a scratch upon him. A few yards farther along the game track lay Flatterer, with a piece eaten out of his side, so

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that his heart was visible; and just beyond him Barmaid, also slightly eaten, and a few yards farther on Jolliment, with his neck broken, but no visible wounds.

That evening at 7 o'clock poor old Lifter crawled in, with twenty-four wounds on his chest and neck. He died on the following day, after four seasons of splendid work in the Horton Plains, Ambawella, Pattipola, and Bopatalawa forests, as well as ten days' hunting in the Island of Rodriguez, in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Mischief died of her wounds the same day, making a total of three couple of good hounds killed, during one run, by presumably one leopard. My previous trip to the Horton Plains had cost me three hounds killed by leopards, making  $4\frac{1}{2}$  couple in two successive trips to those happy hunting grounds. I have always regretted that I did not watch over the carcasses of my dead hounds, on the chance of a shot at the foul beast which had destroyed them; but it was low, stunted forest, and the undergrowth was so dense that not one of the carcasses, though lying so close together, was within sight of the next. Added to this a cold, drizzling rain was falling, and I have had some very chilling experiences of watching for leopards on the Horton Plains. I placed a few grains of strychnine in the bodies, but with the exception of Flatterer, not one had been touched when we visited the spot on the following morning. I have hopes, however, that as I inserted four grains of the poison in Flatterer's neck, and four more in his heart, the leopard ate sufficient in between the two places to render more flesh of any kind superfluous to him. The brute did not touch the poison itself; but strychnine placed in the heart of a freshly killed animal might charge the adjacent flesh sufficiently with poison to cause a leopard's death.

Three months after this I was the victim of another

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disaster of the same nature, which should be mentioned in this chapter. Some good friends of mine had presented me with four couple of hounds from the Madras pack to replace those I had lost in January. They were Petrel, Pilot, Fiery, Furious, Ringwood, Steadfast, and two others.

On April 12th I drew with a strong pack the north side of the Aldie Patnas, through dense nilloo forest. It was a perfect hunting morning, and not a breath of air stirred the highest tree tops. The earliest of all sounds in these upland forests—the hoots of Wanderoo monkeys—resounded from the precipitous rocks of the Aldie Patna range across to the slopes of the local “Abomination of Desolation” Hill and the Kondegalla range above Galle-gamma. We were full of anticipation of a most enjoyable morning’s sport as hounds dashed away to find.

They were working round me in a narrow strip of patna, and suddenly opened on a line. A glance under a rhododendron tree showed me the tracks of a fine stag, where he had been standing that very morning. It was a good find, as in the stillness of that early morning the whole valley re-echoed with the deep notes of eight couple of good trusty foxhounds.

The pack went away at a great pace, and at the head of the patna valley a heavy beast could be distinctly heard cracking through the undergrowth. An old elephant path soon took us out on to the Horton Plains road, and after a run of about twenty minutes we heard a glorious “bay” on our right. We had some tangled bamboo jungle to get through and a deep ravine to cross, and it was simply fighting our way through every inch of it. Bamboo trailers clung round our necks and our bodies and tripped us up at every step. To attempt to cut a path was absolutely

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futile, and there was the "bay" continuing a quarter of a mile away.

The dog boys held the seizers up and followed close at our heels. It was too soon to let them go for fear their combined attack, with such a strong pack of hounds, should pull our stag down before we reached him. It were better a stag should get away than this should happen. We struggled on, torn and bleeding from thorns, dust and sticks and leaves raining in clouds and showers down our necks and backs, as we perspired and fought with this awful entanglement of vegetation.

The "bay" shifted once before we got out into the open, but was immediately renewed with greater fury than ever. Suddenly, with expressions of relief, we burst through the thorny fringe of scrub on the patna edge. About 100 feet above us, and over the brow of a rough rocky patna hill, we could now hear the pack baying savagely.

Silently we scrambled up, blown and done to a turn as we were, and a fine sight met our gaze as we reached the top. On a bare rock in a small stream, on the very verge of a waterfall, stood a grand stag in "velvet."

With his back to the fall, up which no hound could climb, he faced his pursuers with magnificent courage. As Slavin and Rover dashed forward at him from the slips he seemed for a moment to totter on the very brink of the falls. The sudden onslaught of two powerful seizers had forced his two hind feet over the edge of the slippery rocks. With a grand effort he launched himself forward, and before the two dogs could obtain their hold he had attacked them furiously.

Slavin seemed to be the chief object of his attention, and was sent rolling over into a narrow pool of icy cold

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water; whilst Rover, realising the discomfiture of his companion, retired to a respectful distance, and contented himself, for the time being, with adding another voice to the deafening roar of the pack.

By this time however "Spring," a very powerful brindled kangaroo hound, had come up and the fight was soon over. He was a very handsome stag, carrying a head of great length of beam, with brow antlers 11½ inches to their tips.

All his points were hard, and the velvet was already peeling off, so that the trophy was an exceptionally fine one.

It was still quite early, and hounds being all in, I decided to draw again at once towards the Horton Plains by a path I had cut the season before.

Crossing the ridge dividing the Aldie Patna Valley from the Horton Plains, we came upon fresh tracks of a stag, but before the finders had time to spread out a three-quarter grown hind jumped up in the middle of them. We viewed her away through a bit of scrub and patna, heading straight for the Horton Plains, then not half a mile ahead of us.

She crossed the plains at a narrow point, as we ascertained by her galloping slots, down to a rough rocky crossing in the river, which from time immemorial has been the path for every species of game inhabiting the Horton Plains forests.

We had heard before we went down the hill Petrel's ringing note across the valley, and every now and then two or three couple of the others would go in, but it was not a good line, and only a find.

I would have gladly got them off, and had begun to try the effect of the horn upon them, when we heard a sudden and savage bay. This I could not understand, as

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I knew the hind had got a very good start of the pack when she crossed the open. The bay was in a deep hollow, whence sound could only reach us faintly; but even so, I began to fear the worst. The pack had run up against a leopard, and as new hounds will nearly always do, until they learn to dread them, they had bayed him.

I lost no time in crossing the river, and just as I was entering the forest on the other side I met Petrel, bleeding terribly, literally cut to pieces, and a little farther on Barman, looking very sick. I took these two hounds back to the river and washed their wounds, and had them carried straight home to the rest-house.

I then went back to the forest with my gun and searched high and low for hours as near as I could tell where the "bay" had occurred, but not another hound did I meet, nor a sign of the leopard did I see.

Upon reaching the rest-house I found Petrel had died on the way home.

Barman died two days afterwards, and Fiery, Pilot, Random, and Ginger were never seen again, bringing up the tale of slaughter by leopards in one season to  $8\frac{1}{2}$  couples—practically a whole pack wiped out.

It has been objected by some critics that in elk hunting hinds and fawns are killed indiscriminately. This is not a fair statement, and upon looking over my hunting diaries of some twenty years, I find invariably that the total of stags killed in a season has exceeded that of hinds very considerably, in some years being more than double the number.

Fawns, curiously enough, are seldom killed. I have saved a few when bayed by hounds in water, both by carrying the little beast out and turning it down near the jungle whilst hounds are being led away in an opposite direction, and by coupling up the pack.

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This latter method is simple enough when hounds are all up and you happen to have the couples handy.

A hind or a fawn is occasionally drowned in a deep pool, and in such a position it is impossible to save them. There are many reasons, too, why more stags than hinds should be killed by hounds. The master is naturally desirous of showing the best sport he can, and consequently draws for stag. He harbours to the best of his ability, and when he takes his pack into forest he is careful to draw on the tracks of a stag. It is well known to all who have hunted elk in Ceylon that the best stags lie on the ridges and hill tops, and unless the sportsman draws in on the fresh line of a stag, he keeps his pack together until he is well up the hill.

He also whips off hinds whenever he has the chance, unless he is greatly in need of meat for his hounds. The best opportunities for this occur when the hunted hind breaks cover. The field can then range themselves across the line, and with putties, belts, handkerchiefs, and even neckties, the pack can generally be secured. My orders to my dog boys were, when meat was not wanted, not to slip the long-dogs on a hind, and under no circumstances on a fawn.

In Atherton's Pool on the Horton Plains I have saved many a hind and one spike buck, or brocket, as he is called at home. The latter cost me a good hound, I regret to say, for one of the pack that could not be stopped went away on his line and was never seen again. He was probably picked up by a leopard, a not uncommon fate of a single hound in the large forests. I do not say for one moment that I have not killed many hinds. Hounds must have blood, and for the matter of that so must sportsmen, but no wanton slaughter of hinds has ever been perpetrated,

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to the best of my knowledge, by any owner of elk hounds.

And after all, why should not hinds be killed where the stock of deer is more than ample for futurity.

They often give a better run than a stag, who, in the courage of his staghood, has stood to fight when flight were wiser.

A hind at bay will use her feet in fighting with deadly activity and force, and as for cunning in eluding pursuit, she has as many dodges and devices as the stag. I have on several occasions seen a hunted hind break cover and run down towards a well-known pool, and then run a perfect loop of 30 or 40 yards diameter, cross her own line, and re-enter the forest. Hounds have flashed out on her line, and, as instinct and experience tell them, have wasted many valuable minutes in searching the pool along and under its banks. Nineteen out of twenty elks would have jumped straight into the pool. I have seen a hind sink herself in a narrow sluggish stream, with only her nostrils above water, whilst a pack of hounds and half-a-dozen men have walked up and down both banks without detecting her. Many a shrewd kick, too, have I had from a hind at bay both on land and in water.

A hunted stag is credited with a vast amount of cunning when running before hounds.

The number of hinds the rascal "kicks up" is beyond belief, and we have it on good authority that the Exmoor stag has no more morals in this respect than his Oriental relative.

There can be no doubt that an old stag will frequently change hounds on to a hind by cunning devices of his own. He will run into a portion of the forest where he knows his harem are wont to sleep off the effects of their



Photo by Thos. Farr, Esq.

### HUNTING COUNTRY



Photo by Thos. Farr, Esq.

### SLAB ROCK AND FALLS IN HUNTING COUNTRY



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nightly wandering in search of food. Without ceremony he moves them all roughly from their lairs, and often driving one or two in front of him, he makes for some well-known path that leaves the jungle to cross a valley of patna.

Here, at the very verge of the forest, he will turn and double back almost on his own line, whilst the victim of his cunning gallops out into the open patna.

Hounds come along merrily in full cry on a burning scent, and the leading hound flashes out on to the patna, the whole pack following suit. A grand burst of music follows, and before any one has had time to reach the open a hind has crossed into the opposite jungle or over some low ridge of patna. She has been found late, and is game for a long gallop, whilst the clever old stag, very nearly run out and done to a turn, is sneaking back towards the jungle whence he came, or lying in some thicket safe for to-day at any rate.

The whole pack, except possibly a laggard or two, have raced over the dewy grass of the patna in a flash. No one has seen the hind owing to some mistake of the dog boys with the seizers, and so far as we know we are running a very fine stag. The run continues for an hour or more through forest and swampy patna, but scent is good, and hounds are not to be denied. We had caught a momentary glimpse of the stag shortly after the find, and a dog boy had described him as having at least a thirty-six inch head. This had made the whole field specially keen as we all pressed on as near to the pack as we could keep. Across a deep valley, with precipitous sides, we catch sight of a couple of tail hounds just topping the opposite ridge. Down we race and tumble, dashing across the cold stream at the bottom, up to our necks if need be, but across we must go.

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Then up the steep face beyond, almost precipitous in places, strewn with loose stones, and a blazing sun overhead.

Panting and struggling on, hearts almost bursting, upward still we climb, for do we not know that a grand stag is at bay in a pool not half a mile beyond the ridge we are making for?

We reach the summit and for a moment pause to listen. Our own panting and heart-beating almost prevents our hearing anything else. But hark! there they are—yes—in the very pool they were expected to be in, and baying furiously, every hound of them, right away in that deep hollow in the Ohiya Valley.

An easy descent now, though it be through thick tangled forest and down boulder-strewn gorges.

Down we slide and slither, hanging on to moss and fern and tufts of grass. Nearer and nearer to the “bay” we get, and more and more we magnify in our minds and vision the wonderful head we are to see—a grand old fighting stag with a record head! Another fifty yards and we tear our way through the thick undergrowth and reach the pool, and there in the middle of it, with scut erect and impatient stamping of hoofs in the muddied water, stands a—hind! No one wants to kill her, and I fear the language hurled at her by panting and sweating sportsmen is none of the choicest. However, hounds have run well and deserve their reward.

They have no ancestral halls to decorate with trophies of the chase; a good feed of warm blood is all they ask for, and they must have it.

Dog boys have come up at last, and perhaps a flask or two. The run is run over again, with many marvellous tales of what each one saw of it, and where imaginary

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bays took place. Mostly wrong as to locality, for the pack is all in, and had not bayed their elk during the whole run. One thing, however, is quite certain, and which every one is agreed about, and that is, that the stag has beaten us.

I have known the reverse occur more than once when a hind has turned the tables on a stag, but I must confess the latter is far oftener the culprit in this respect.

There is no limit, too, to their cunning dodges in water as well as on land.

I take from my hunting diary of 1894 the following incident. We ran a fine stag from the Aldie Patnas to the Horton Plains.

We got through by an old elephant path I had opened out, at the top of the big Gallagamma Falls, and turning left-handed on reaching the Plains, we met the stag swimming down stream in a deep shady pool. Without stopping, for he was in 10 feet of water, he dived "all under" twice, and then stood under a steep bank in dense shadow. He stood exactly opposite to where we lay in long grass fully ten to fifteen minutes. The colour of his hide so exactly resembled the dark flood-swept sides of the pool that he was almost invisible—and he seemed to know it. Higher up stream we could hear hounds coming towards us, and as they got closer we could see the stag curl his upper lip, as I have often seen them do when at bay.

We had seizers with us, but not one of them had seen him, so motionless did he stand. At last he moved his head. Rip, one of the lurchers, saw him and immediately bayed him, but he stood perfectly still looking at us all, men and hounds, now standing 10 feet above him on the bank. Hounds came round the bend of the stream, swimming into the pool like a pack of otter

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hounds in full cry. It was a pretty sight as the whole pack, headed by Lifter, Columbine, and Gossamer, came streaming round the corner; many of them actually passed the stag until, headed by Rip, the seizers sprang in. He had but little fight in him though, and they soon had him and it was all over.

On another occasion I recollect seeing a stag walking down stream in about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet of water.

I was hidden by a tussock of long grass, and when just opposite me he deliberately lay down in fast water until only his antlers, his eyes, and his nostrils were above the surface.

I walked up to the edge of the bank some eight feet above him, and not more than ten feet from his head, but although he saw me he did not move. Hounds came down on his line in full cry, and flashed right past him on the bank, and two hounds actually in the stream itself.

Seizers were then taken close up, but it was not until I jumped from the bank right on top of him, knife in hand, that he moved.

Then the leap he made was magnificent. He rose from the gravelly bed of the stream in a flash, and in one movement was standing on the bank fully eight feet above where he had lain. He gave us a good run after that, and a pretty bay, fighting gamely to the last.

I have known a stag stand in a thicket very little more than his own length, and allow a whole pack of hounds and three or four men and dog boys to pass within three feet of him, without moving.

For the information of those who are not familiar with the terms "seizer" and "long-dog," I would mention that they are generally Kangaroo hounds from Australia, or used to be in the good old days when coursing the stag

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in the open was one of the prettiest incidents in elk hunting.

In these latter days many of the good hunting centres have been so harried by gangs of coolies with guns, that elk no longer face the open in the gallant manner they used to. They will dodge and turn back, and often allow themselves to be pulled down in a thicket or a mud wallow, rather than seek their safety by fighting the battle out in some pool in the open. So long, however, as the large forest-clad plateaux of the Ceylon Highlands are preserved from the devastating hand of man, and so long as the beautiful grassy downs, known as patnas, are not invaded by the deadly rifle, this finest of all manly sports may be carried on for all time. The miles upon miles of dense forests which surround the Horton Plains and Newera Eliya are now a perfect sanctuary for the noble sambhur, and if only the pursuit of them be confined to the hound and the hunting-knife, this will ever remain so.

*Note.*—Writing to Mr. Farr for some figures as to a year's bag, he has given me the following list of kills during the year 1895, which may be taken as a fair average :—

	Head.
Stags . . . . .	29
Hinds . . . . .	11
Fawns . . . . .	1
Boars . . . . .	2
	43

—EDITOR.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SPOTTED DEER

THE spotted deer (*Cervus axis*), the *cheetul* of India, is generally considered to be the most beautiful and most graceful, both in form and colour, of all the deer tribe, and it certainly would be difficult to find an animal more elegant, or one which gives a greater impression of gracefulness, lightness, and activity.

In height the Ceylon males stand from 34 to 38 inches or more at the shoulder. I have never weighed a buck, though I have more than once helped to carry one slung on a pole, and I know a good buck forms a very full load for two men. Sir Samuel Baker puts the weight at 250 lbs. live weight, and Mr. Alfred Clark says 20 stone—both may be right as far as I know. The females are somewhat smaller than the males.

The horns in Ceylon are generally much smaller than those of India, the Indian record being  $38\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and of Ceylon,  $34\frac{1}{4}$  inches (*vide* Alfred Clark's "Sport in the Low Country of Ceylon"), but any head over 30 inches is exceptionally good for Ceylon, where five out of six heads do not measure more than 14 to 18 inches. The horns are three-tined, and, in a good head, are set to a very graceful sweep and curve, being comparatively light and slender-looking. Antlers are, I believe, shed yearly, but at no regular season, for I have met with bucks in velvet in almost or quite every month in the year.

Colour in both sexes, at all ages and seasons, is a



SPOTTED BUCK (*Cervus axis*)  
A good head, not quite clear of "velvet"



SPOTTED BUCK (*Cervus axis*)  
Second Year's Horns



## SPOTTED DEER

lovely fawn, slightly darker in the old bucks, white spotted throughout. There is a black dorsal stripe from the neck to the end of the tail, bordered by two rows of smallish white spots. The chin, throat, belly, under parts of limbs and tail, white. Face brownish, unspotted; ears brown outside, white inside.<sup>1</sup> The tail is about 12 inches long and is erected, showing the white "scut" just as the deer bounds away when alarmed.

This species of deer is peculiar to India and Ceylon, and is by far the most common "game" to be met with in the latter country. They are not found in Ceylon above 1500 feet elevation, being confined almost entirely to the low country, though a few may be met with among the foot-hills bordering it, but their distinctive localities are the ancient village, tank, and paddy field sites, and all the "parks" of the low country of Ceylon. They are gregarious, and may be met with in herds of any number up to forty or fifty, where they have not been much molested. Occasionally solitary does and bucks are met with, but generally at least two animals will be found together. A herd will always contain one master buck, no matter how many other bucks are present.

Their natural habits are not nocturnal nor are they forest animals, but prefer open glades and parks in which they will remain, if undisturbed, practically all day, or until heat and flies drive them into the forest, into which, however, they never go very far. They drink daily, and in the dry season will come to the nearest water-hole about midday, where, as I have previously stated, they are mercilessly slaughtered by the natives. Their alarm call is a very shrill bark, whilst the buck's challenge is a fearful

<sup>1</sup> There are, I believe, some slight differences in colour and markings between Indian and Ceylon spotted deer.—AUTHOR.

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and wonderful kind of bellow quite indescribable. The breeding season is about the same in the different provinces, and the close seasons, as marked on the game licences (see chapter on Licences, &c.), may be taken as representing approximately the breeding seasons. Man and leopards are the only enemies these beautiful creatures have to fear in Ceylon, as we have no wild dogs or wolves, and I do not think jackals ever attempt an attack, being content with much smaller game such as hares, fowls, lizards, crabs, and carrion.

I have had many opportunities of observing that spotted deer have not a very keen sense of smell as compared to many other wild animals, but this is compensated for by their extraordinary powers of sight and hearing.

Curiously enough a herd of does may be fairly easily approached to within a very short distance with ordinary precautions, but if a buck be present in the herd the vigilance of the does is extreme, and if a stalk be necessary it must be conducted with the utmost care. I usually wear clothes of a dark-green cloth during my shooting excursions, and on one occasion, to test my invisibility with a background of forest, the wind being right, I actually got to within 40 yards of a herd of does absolutely in the open, taking no advantage of any cover in doing so. The animals were in a small "park" which I had just entered, and, by walking very quietly, stopping immovable when any one of them lifted its head, I managed to get to within the above-mentioned distance before I was discovered and the alarm given. If by chance you should come suddenly into view of a herd of deer, or indeed of almost any animal, absolute immobility will often enable you to escape detection, a prolonged scrutiny generally

## SPOTTED DEER

ending in a resumption of their grazing or browsing operations, enabling you to quietly "efface" yourself.

The best shooting times are, of course, early morning and late evening, but it is curious to note how the harrying interference of man has altered the natural habits of the deer in different parts of the country. In many places, though deer may be fairly plentiful, not one will be seen in the open before dusk or after daybreak, but in such places they often contract the habit of coming out to feed at midday for an hour or two. In very secluded "parks," only visited by sportsmen or natives at long intervals, the deer will remain out feeding, or lying down in the grass, up to a very late hour, nine or ten o'clock A.M., and will commence to return to the open at about four P.M. Where comparatively unmolested a deer will have a good look at you before bolting away, giving you plenty of time to shoot, and in bolting across an open space they will frequently stop for another look before disappearing into the jungle. The modern small-bore rifles have made stalking in Ceylon almost unnecessary, except at times to get into a good position, owing to the fact that our open spaces, parks or plains, are so limited in extent, or are so interspersed with trees and clumps of trees or bushes, as to render it almost impossible to see 200 yards in any direction, except in the case of open tanks. This at any rate is the case everywhere in the Northern Province or North-Central Province.

The distances at which shots are generally obtained vary from 40 yards to about 130 yards, the latter being quite far enough as, owing to the peculiar conditions of light and surroundings, a deer at 130 yards looks a very small object. As a matter of fact they have comparatively small bodies, and at 130 yards your fine bead foresight seems

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almost to obliterate the animal, needing a steady aim and a thorough knowledge of the shooting of your weapon.

In Ceylon, no matter what game you are pursuing, it is an absolute necessity to have a local native with you who knows the country, otherwise you are a lost man in ten minutes, such is the sameness of forest and park and want of landmarks, owing to the limitations of your field of vision. When your game is sighted by all means do your own stalking if you can, but don't start wandering about by yourself unless you know the country well and are a practised "jungle man."

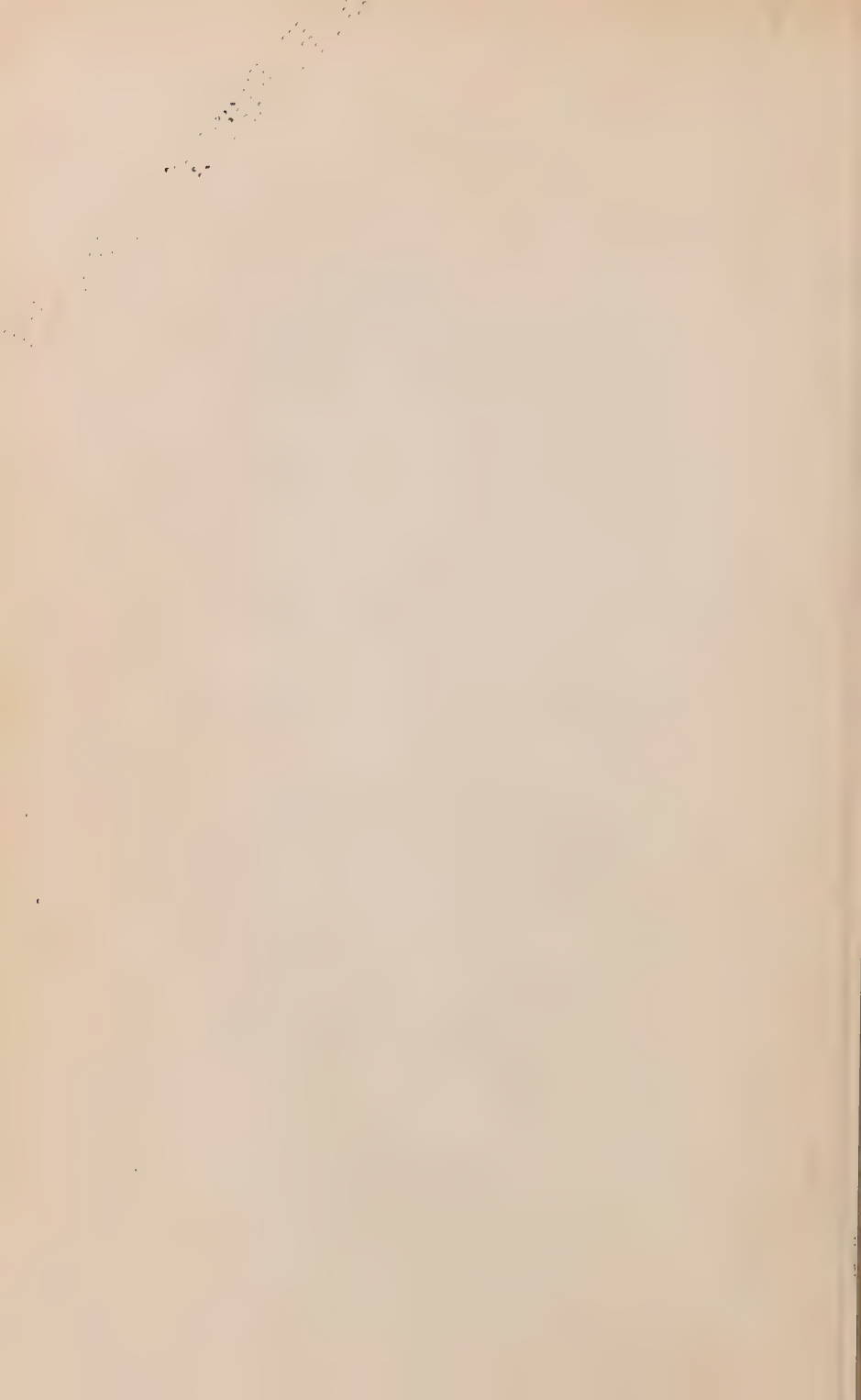
In big parks, or indeed any park fairly free of trees and bushes, it is best to walk through the middle slowly and quietly, allowing nothing to escape your eyes. In this way you can very generally spot your game before it sees you, and take measures, if necessary, for your approach accordingly. In scrubby overgrown places you must note the wind and sneak round the edge of the jungle as stealthily as a cat, for you will come on your game at close quarters, needing quick shooting unless you are lucky enough to remain unseen after spotting your quarry. In Ceylon, anywhere, you must shoot to kill, especially if you are armed with a .303 or other small-bore rifle, otherwise you may lose your game owing frequently to the want of a blood trail and the difficulties of tracking in the forest. The most deadly shots are behind the shoulder and at the junction of neck and shoulders. In the first case the lungs are pierced, and a deer will seldom run over 50 yards. In the second case the animal usually drops in its tracks, and, if the neck is broken, is of course done for, but if the neck is not broken it may need the knife to finish it. A broadside shot full into the shoulder is very good also, perhaps



SPOTTED DOE



SPOTTED FAWN



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the best for a fairly heavy rifle such as a .450, and often results in dropping your game in its tracks, but *may* result in only one broken leg or shoulder, with which an unfortunate animal can, and often does, get clean away. There are, of course, lots of other places your bullet may luckily find, such as the heart, spine, kidneys, &c., all immediately fatal, but the above-mentioned shots offer big marks not so easily missed. The lung shot also almost invariably leaves a blood track, and one there is no possibility of mistaking, owing to the bright scarlet colour and frothiness.

If following on a slight blood trail of dull-coloured blood, you may early make up your mind that you will never get your deer unless a limb is actually known to be broken or a bad body-wound suspected, in which case a very careful advance along the track, and frequent crouchings to scan the forest ahead of you under the undergrowth, may enable you to find your animal lying down and get in a finishing shot. This tracking will best be left to your native, you following some five or ten yards behind, as he will see the animal before you can and is well used to that little game.

In the case of knifing a deer to put it out of its misery, take care of its horns and sharp hoofs or you may be hurt. My plan is to pull the buck over on its left side, putting my left foot on the lower antler, pressing it to the ground and holding the upper one in my left hand, from behind the animal's back of course, and then leaning over and knifing through the heart in the white between and behind the forelegs. In this way you escape the frantic kicks of the legs, whilst the head properly held cannot be moved, and, more important, you do not spoil the skin. If you leave the knifing to a native, he will either saw its throat

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through or stab anywhere in the body, prolonging the animal's misery and spoiling the skin.

In deer country never fire a double shot if you can help it. A single rifle-shot hardly disturbs them at all; they hear the sharp crack, listen intently, and then often go on feeding as though convinced they were mistaken. At a double shot, however, off they will go. When I say the deer are not alarmed at a single shot, I do not mean the animal fired at or those with it—they get alarmed enough—but I mean deer in the comparatively near neighbourhood. Heavier guns than a .303 and black powder weapons soon alarm the country, and the deer stick to the cover.

What merciless creatures sportsmen are, after all! Imagine a peaceful herd of these beautiful deer feeding or lying here and there in a lovely grassy glade, does and fawns playing about, young bucks perhaps indulging in a playful set-to, and the lordly master buck stalking about, prodding away with his horns any deer, doe, or buck feeding on any particularly nice patch of grass his lordship may fancy—imagine the above, I say, and then picture to yourself the hunter sneaking towards them, slaughter in his heart, quivering with excitement, his eyes fixed on *the* buck whose horns he covets, full of anxiety until he gets into good position, brings the deadly rifle to his shoulder, and steadies his nerves for the shot. It may be slaughter and it may be merciless, but it is a glorious game, and I defy any man who has not entered into it, wanting the instinct, to understand or appreciate in the slightest degree the feelings which prompt and actuate the sportsman.

It is almost impossible to analyse the feelings of a sportsman. Everything connected with sport attracts him.

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He loves the danger of big game hunting; he equally loves the excitement of smaller game stalking; camp life appeals to him; solitude calls him, and the plain or the jungle form a never-ending attraction as long as health and strength endure.

It is the same with explorers. Look at the fearful hardships which most of them undergo—yet they return again and again, unable to resist “the call.”

By some dispensation of Providence the mind of man retains only the vivid memories of pleasure and excitement, the attendant pains and penalties being entirely forgotten. Hence a sportsman or explorer remembers only his pleasures and forgets his pains. In a very small way I have undergone out here, in pursuit of my favourite sport, every possible kind of discomfort, but my keenness is undiminished.

I have, time after time, been soaked, bag and baggage; food spoiled; been seedy, footsore, and weary; servants ill; cart bulls knocked up or dead; pack bulls bolted and lost in the jungle, and perhaps an utter failure to bag game of any sort, not to mention such minor details as plagues of ticks, leeches, ants, and innumerable other abominations; and yet within a week after getting back I have forgotten everything but the “call of the jungle,” the glory of the forest, and the green loveliness of the parks, longing for the time to come round again when I can once more take the road and leave civilisation behind for a spell.

As a case in point, here is a little reminiscence of one of the most uncomfortable nights I ever spent in the jungle.

The month was November, and it ought to have been wet, but was not wet—hence our undoing.

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Garrick was my companion on this trip, and, arriving at our point of departure for the jungle, we found our carriers insufficient for our needs. This forced us to consume two days in getting to our ground by travelling only such a distance as would enable the men to return for a second load after we had reached a camping place, thus getting all our things together by each carrier doing a double but short journey of not more than 5 or 6 miles each day.

To ease things a bit for our first day's journey, we took our cart 4 miles down our jungle track and camped on the bank of a lovely little forest river, in big forest, where we stopped the first night.

It was beautifully fine, so we did not put up our tent, merely setting up our camp beds under the grand trees on the bank of the river, and, after a stroll round in the evening (during which I bagged a red deer and Garrick got a spotted buck) and a good dinner, we slept peacefully with naught but the forest as our tent. Next day we tramped 6 miles through fine shooting country, in course of which I bagged a buck, and we saw pig, deer, elk, and heard leopards, eventually reaching a slab rock, in the midst of the forest, in which was a good pool of water, and pitching camp in the forest bordering the rock. We had, of course, taking the precaution to bring along our chairs, table, and food stuffs first, and retained our cook whilst sending back the rest of the men for the balance of the things, and by evening everything had safely arrived. We dined at dusk, and, as the weather seemed set for fine, we decided not to put up the tents, but went peacefully to bed under nature's canopy once more. About 9 o'clock I was awakened by an ominous patter on the forest leaves, and a distant roaring sound, which fetched me out of bed instanter yelling to Garrick and the men. Frantically

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we lit a lamp, unrolled one of our big sheet-tents and spread it over our beds, ourselves and coolies standing under it to hold it up.

The Singhalese had camped on the slab rock about 40 yards away, and we heard them shouting to each other in the pitch darkness, but could do nothing for them as the rain came down in torrents, though they gradually assembled round us squatting under umbrellas, leaves, empty sacks—anything. I ran over in my own mind the things on the table and decided the only spoilable article was a cake, which reposed on an aluminium plate covered by the inverted cake tin which had contained it. I shouted to Garrick to bring it under the tent, and he reached out, got it, as I thought, and placed it on my clothes-box by my bed. There we stood in silent misery, ankle deep in water and muddy earth, water trickling down our heads and arms from contact with the tent, water inches deep on our beds, water everywhere, and I cursing my stupidity in even trusting a November night after all my years of experience. After a while I wanted to lift my box on to the bed out of the water and mud, and so got hold of the cake to lift it first, and then—"Garrick" said I, in the most solemn and sepulchral tone I could command, "do you know what you took off the table just now?"

"Yes," said he, "the cake."

"No! only the tin which covered it!" was my crushing retort, which I naturally expected would produce a perfect explosion of language suited to the occasion.

Nothing of the sort—the unfeeling wretch laughed and laughed and roared again until I was fain to follow suit, and we laughed consumedly for full five minutes, which did us a lot of good, but our men must have thought we were mad. Then, remembering the matches, I and my

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faithful henchman Meyyan made a dash for the boxes of kitchen things, saved the precious "fire-boxes" and put them in my clothes-box; but I got so wet that my teeth chattered with cold, and Garrick got out a whisky flask, from which we both had a nip, which saved the situation. After about an hour and a half of misery it ceased, and we emerged from our apology for a tent, setting to work to "lock the stable door," &c., by putting up the tents, those for the men first, under which they soon had fires going and were chattering away like magpies.

We then roughly erected our own, doing it practically all ourselves to warm us up a bit, going into the jungle with candles to cut the necessary poles and pegs, after which we changed into dry clothes, spread a piece of the "fly" on the ground and dozed till daybreak.

Examining damages next morning, we found, of course, our beds, blankets, and everything wet through, my watch lying in a puddle under my pillow (luckily rubber air pillows) was spoilt, but nothing whatever lost or irretrievably ruined except the unfortunate cake, which caused us a fresh burst of laughter.

The men had sat on the bags of rice, and so that had not suffered much, and our tinned things could not spoil, whilst our tin boxes had kept our clothes dry. We wrung our blankets and things out, had "early tea," up-stick and away for our final camp, where there was a grand slab rock which in a few hours so dried everything up that the whole incident was forgotten, but it certainly formed one of the most miserable nights I ever spent in the jungle. On a pitch dark, wet night like that, elephants wander about a good deal, and our Singhalese were very nervous, though they were one and all jungle men, but I and Garrick at

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the time were past caring. So much for an incident which might happen to any one—so take warning, dear readers.

And now to return to our deer, and a few more useful hints.

In the case of a wounded animal it is often a good plan to leave the tracking of it for some little time—visit some other grounds and then come back. The reason for this is that a wounded animal if pretty badly hurt will soon lie down, not getting up for some time if undisturbed, and during that time getting so stiff and sore that it cannot run far or fast, enabling you to catch up and kill it. Remember this will be in thick forest or jungle, as the wounded animal always makes for cover, and you must not risk losing your game for want of a little care and precaution. There is a faint chance, of course, that a leopard might step in and take his share during your absence, for I fully believe in some places they have learnt what a gunshot generally means, and wait around in the neighbourhood on the look-out for pickings.

Another hint—if you get sight of a fine buck within 150 yards, and offering a clear shot, take it. Do not try and get nearer, unless it is almost a certainty that you *can* get nearer. Any trifling accident, an abrupt movement, the crack of a twig, a thorn catching your hat, may lose you a chance at a fine head. If not much of a trophy it does not so much matter, and you can try your hand at a really good stalk. I ought to say, “Leave a buck with a poor head alone,” but I don’t always practise what I preach, and it is hard to expect a man, after travelling 70 or 80 miles, incurring considerable expense in a trip he may be only able to take once a year, to let bucks go because they do not carry presentable trophies!

If a man is such a self-denying thorough sportsman as

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all that, I should think two rifle-shots will represent all the shooting he will get on his trip!

Personally I am not such a self-denying one, and I confess I feel almost as much pride, pleasure, and excitement in successfully stalking and bagging a buck with a poor head as ever I do over a really good one. My pleasure is in the hunt, and, though a good trophy is a thing of joy, I have nearly equal pride in a poorer one if it entailed a good stalk and a good shot.

The best time for shooting spotted deer is from November to the end of February. I think January and February the best months, because during November and December the deer are so worried and maddened by the attacks of an abominable grey-coloured fly that they stick to dense cover and do not come out much. This fly is the same, I believe, which worries the elephants and other animals. It is about the size of a horse-fly, wings included, but not so large in the body. The wings are dull grey and meet, when folded, along their inner edge, sloping thence to each side like a roof over the abominable insect's body, which they completely cover. It has a horribly painful bite, but luckily is very frail, I might say brittle, for a very slight blow breaks it all to pieces, which is some comfort.

Deer in the open are simply maddened by them, and after shaking themselves, scratching with their hind hoofs, and violently shaking their heads, they make hopeless little runs of a few yards to try and rid themselves of the pests, but in vain.

Every deer, or indeed any jungle animal you may slay, will be found simply infested with ticks of all sorts and sizes, and care should be taken not to have your skins too near camp until they are all off. Apart from these pests,

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the wonderful cleanliness of the fur and skin of most wild animals will strike the observer.

Coming to the actual shooting of spotted deer, there is not much of variety or incident in it. The charm lies in stalking a very vigilant animal, always on the alert, quick of sight and hearing, and moreover, on account of its small body and the nature of the surrounding country, needing very careful shooting to bring to bag. In some of the plains in the south and east you occasionally sight your game at long distances, necessitating careful détours and good stalking for your approach, but in the Northern and North Central Provinces you will usually sight your game within range, your only care being then to secure a favourable position for your shot.

By always traversing a "park" up-wind you will generally sight your game in a right position for a stalk as far as wind is concerned; if sighted to leeward they will by that time be on the run, having both heard and scented you. If you will observe your native guide or tracker you will see that he never takes the trouble to even glance to leeward, but keeps his gaze roaming ahead or to windward, knowing well that any down-wind animals will at once make themselves scarce.

As far as tracking is concerned, the Ceylon natives cannot be called good anywhere. This is due, I think, to the difficulty of tracking ordinary game during the dry greater part of the year, and the fact that there is usually game enough available to make a laborious stalk unnecessary. When the ground is damp a track shows up well, but in the dry weather a track just made is not to be distinguished from one a week old, except in the early morning when the dew shows up a recent track very well. Then, again, the ground on the outskirts of the

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jungles at that time is so scored with tracks, where the nature of the ground will take an impression, as to make the picking out of any particular one almost an impossibility, at any rate as regards deer. The harder ground, also, takes no impression, and you will only find tracks in sandy or dusty places. Of course a big animal like an elephant or buffalo can be followed fairly easily, but you may take it that the natives seldom attempt to bag any animal like deer or pigs by sheer tracking except in following a wounded one, though I have known here and there a case of an elk being tracked to its "form" and shot during the wet season.

Another strong reason militating against tracking is that in the jungle an animal will detect your approach long before you can sight it and be off at once, because it is impossible in the low-country jungles to see more than about 30 yards in any direction, and even then you do not get a clear view.

A difficulty in dealing with ordinary villagers as trackers and guides is that they seem to think an European can kill an animal at any range and from any position, so great is their faith in the rifle, and consequently, unless you know your men and can direct them accordingly, they will simply walk ahead of you, through park after park, taking no precautions whatever, alarming the deer so that you never get a shot at all, or pointing them out in impossible situations. Their own methods, of course, are the stealthy sneaking round the edges of parks and the approaching, if possible, to within 30 or 40 yards of their game before letting off their old "gas-pipes," but they can hardly be made to understand that a white man would also prefer that style where possible. Some of the professional trackers in Trincomalee and Hambantota are fairly good at stalking work,

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however; but in all my travels, making use as I do of local villagers only, I have not met more than two genuine hunters who can and do conduct a white man round the "parks" as well as if they were working for themselves, taking a real interest in it, and having some faint conception of the white man's desire for sport. The ordinary native's sole object is meat and profit—he simply cannot for a single moment grasp the idea that any sane man hunts for amusement—being firmly under the impression that "master" makes money out of the horns, skins, elephant's feet, &c., he so carefully carries away with him; and he seems to think, if he comes with you as a guide or carrier, that your duty is to shoot anything you see, buck or doe, to provide him and his with meat. Under the above circumstances it will readily be understood that to successfully make use of the local natives you must know the country you are hunting in, know the people, and above all know the language, or you will get very poor sport. That is where visiting sportsmen are so handicapped. If they elect to try other parts of the country than the Hambantota District (where very good Government-controlled trackers can be hired), unaccompanied by even a Colombo-hired professional tracker, they must depend entirely, for intercourse with the natives, on their native servant, also picked up in Colombo, who naturally knows nothing of the low country, and has neither desire nor intention to go into the jungle, and will therefore by every means in his power keep the party on the main roads. I have gone thus into particulars in this chapter on spotted deer, because it is the game a sportsman will meet with more than any other in Ceylon in the ordinary course of a hunting trip, and which will occupy his time and attention most unless he is going for some particular object, such as elephant or buffalo.

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Coming to my own experiences, I will endeavour to give instances of sport incurring a good stalk or a good shot, or any out-of-the-common incident, as much as possible.

I remember some years ago, during a trip with two planting friends and neighbours, Fred Brockman and Harry Cater, we had camped in a very remote "park," consisting of a few abandoned little tanks and village sites now getting rapidly overgrown with jungle, but still containing a fair amount of grass land interspersed with trees and bushes. Our tent was pitched in a tiny plot of grass, surrounded by jungle, just under the "bund" of a tank alongside the breach whence the water made its escape, and which contained our only water supply, a very pea-soupy looking puddle, about 20 yards long by 5 or 6 yards wide. The surrounding country beyond the, perhaps, 200 acres of fairly open land was forest for many miles, and too thick to traverse beyond the one and only pathway through it. In the evening of our arrival, after pitching camp, we set off for a stroll, I and Brockman and a tracker in one direction, Cater and another guide in another direction. Before I and Brockman had gone very far we sighted a nice little herd of deer, and soon made out a good buck which I made up my mind to bag if possible. With a little care, stooping, crawling, and taking advantage of every bit of cover, I got to a good position within about 60 yards, and as soon as I had steadied myself and got my breath (you will soon find how such an approach in a tropical country will take it out of you), I "drew a bead" on its shoulder with my good little "Savage" rifle and fired. It fell to the shot, but, getting up again almost immediately, made off at speed in spite of a broken shoulder. I reloaded, by my magazine action, like lightning, and as the deer was going straight away, using that most deadly of all sights,



SPOTTED BUCK WITH SPROUTING ANTLERS. SPOTTED DOE



A RED BUCK (*Cervulus muntjac*)



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the Lyman aperture with an ivory bead fore-sight, I put in a shot which, at over 100 yards, raked it and killed it almost at once. This was a good, seldom-offered chance of a running shot, and I was duly proud of it, especially as it secured for me a very fair head. I take this opportunity of saying that I do not think there is any sight for sporting rifles to compare with the combination of Lyman aperture back-sight and an ivory bead fore-sight, with a folding-down leaf-sight in the middle as a check and for shooting at dusk, when the aperture cannot be used.

My favourite fore-sight is a huge ivory bead known as a "jack" sight, fully twice the size of the ordinary fore-sight bead usually seen, and I find it admirable for Ceylon work, catching the eye instantly when the rifle is brought to the shoulder, and I know only too well that the spot that fatal bead *covers* when I pull trigger will be most surely hit. I even used this large ivory bead for shooting in British Central Africa in 1902 with great success, and my rifle has never any other sight on it than the 100 yards, which I find perfect for any distance up to 200 yards, beyond which I never attempt to shoot, otherwise what is the use of stalking!

With the Lyman there is no question of a fine or coarse sight, no aggravating V to centre your bead in—you simply cover with your bead the part of the animal you want to hit, if within, say, 150 yards, and merely aim proportionately above that part for greater distances. It is beyond a doubt the most deadly combination of sights ever invented, and personally I would never use a sporting rifle without them. My "Savage" is peculiarly well adapted to the fitting of these sights, not being of the awkward bolt-action class. The back aperture being adjustable,

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you can screw it up or down to admit of aiming under the mark you want to hit (equivalent to a fine sight), or, as I prefer it, of covering the spot with the fore-sight.

To return to our game: that evening was to be rather a memorable one to myself and Brockman.

After sending the buck back to camp we went on, and soon after Brockman, seeing something moving in some undergrowth, fired at it and was grieved to find it merely a spotted doe. The meat went to camp, however, and we again pushed on, meeting some time after with the adventure with two buffaloes recorded in my chapter on buffalo shooting. Thus between 4 o'clock and 6 o'clock P.M. we bagged a spotted buck, a spotted doe, and two buffaloes, a rather unusually large bag for Ceylon, even for a whole day's shooting.

The following account gives a fair idea of the stalking of a herd of deer, after sighting them, to get a good clear shot. I was out with two guides in some fine country in Tamankaduwa, consisting of groups of lovely little parks separated from each other by little, or big, as the case may be, belts of jungle, these parks being abandoned little tanks or ancient village sites as usual. In one of these glades we sighted a small herd of deer about 200 yards away, only their heads and occasionally the tops of their backs being visible above the grass and small bushes.

Leaving the two men I went for the stalk, first getting some small trees between me and the deer, to which I walked very quietly. Arrived at the trees, I peered round and found my game undisturbed but still not offering a clear shot, though I was enabled to locate a decent buck amongst them. Scanning the ground ahead, I marked some bushes and another small tree which offered a fair cover, and from which I judged I could get a clear view of the

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herd, so down I went on my hands and knees, and crawling, occasionally wriggling along at full length, I eventually reached the desired point. A peep at the herd satisfied me that they were undisturbed, and my view of them was clear, but I became ambitious, and ardently desired to reach a small bush thirty yards nearer, so out I went for a crawl once more.

Before I had advanced three yards, however, I was detected, and every animal was on the alert at once, those lying down springing to their feet, and all gazing hard in my direction. I instantly sat up, and, resting my elbows on my knees, took a quick but steady shot at the buck, which presented a lovely broadside chance, aiming behind the shoulder.

I heard a welcome thud, down went his head, and he tore away full speed, disappearing from my sight behind some bushes, the rest of the herd bolting in the opposite direction to that taken by the buck. I and my men hastened up, and soon found it lying dead under some bushes not more than thirty yards from where it was hit, and about thirty yards from the edge of the surrounding forest. I then paced the distance carefully, making it 110 yards, which is a very fair distance for this class of "park" shooting.

Let me say here that when I get the chance for a steady shot at a deer I take every possible opportunity of kneeling, sitting, or lying down for my shot, or resting the rifle-barrel over the fork of a tree branch or against the stem, never taking an off-hand shot unless unavoidable or when quickness is an object. Using, as I do, a .303, I shoot to kill, not to see what a "clever shot" I am at off-hand work, which might only result in a wounded animal. It is not sport to shoot and merely wound; therefore I say

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shoot to kill, and take every care to make your shot fatal. That is where the humane part of sport, if there is any such thing, comes in.

Off-hand shots, however, have often to be taken, so it is just as well to be able to bring them off, and nothing but practice will insure this.

This is a most important point; unless you are a competent and practised rifle shot, do not think of going a shooting trip without as much preliminary rifle practice as you can put in. You must know your rifle and your own ability to use it, or your "bag" will be a very poor one, for you will suffer from "nerves," and shrink at the shot or jerk the trigger, neither case tending to improve your shooting.

Speaking of nerves, can *any sportsman* say that his heart does not beat quicker, and his whole frame tingle with excitement, when his chance comes to take a shot at a fine buck, or indeed at game of any sort? I hope not—I hope not!

The confident shot and good sportsman can steady himself down when the times comes, but the incompetent novice cannot, and the result is a miss.

Practice and experience will, however, soon change all that, as I found out when I went in seriously for rifle-shooting; and I look back with sorrow and regret to the days when I used to go out merely armed with a "Paradox" 12-bore and no preliminary practice, expecting to make a decent bag—not that I used to come back empty-handed, but oh! what chances I missed that I could now make certain of with a rifle! My old "Paradox" is a deadly weapon, and I have used it, and still use it, with great effect for close-quarter shooting on big game, and especially for night work on bears; but I used to funk the recoil when

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it came to cold-blooded practice at a target. With a rifle like a .303 practising is a pleasure, as there is no recoil.

I am getting off the track again, I find, so let me get back to the death of some more good bucks. I got my record head not so very long ago, during a trip in company with my friend Wallace Westland, in my favourite district, Tamankaduwa.

We had made a forced march of some miles one morning from camp to visit some "parks" we had not shot over, and got there rather late in the morning. However we sighted a herd as soon as we emerged from the forest into the open, which I tried, but unsuccessfully, to stalk. Farther on I caught sight of more deer amongst some bushes and a long way off, which also vanished when we tried to get nearer.

Moving along very quietly, we had just come through a fringe of bush when I saw a lovely buck stalking sedately along, making for the forest, about 150 yards away, so crouching down I made a run for a tree about 40 yards nearer, which I reached without attracting his attention. He was still walking along, however, so, steadying my rifle against the tree-stem, I took careful aim, following him for a moment with the bead, drew trigger, and down he dropped. We ran up and I saw it had a big head, for the north country, which I at once measured with a pocket steel tape I always carry, and found to be: right,  $29\frac{5}{8}$  inches; left,  $30\frac{1}{4}$  inches, which pleased me much. Within half-an-hour after this we suddenly came on another fine buck which Westland dropped in its tracks, with a 12-bore rifle, at about 50 yards. The antlers measured 26 inches.

On another occasion in the same country, but this time camping more centrally, I, Westland, and two trackers had got into the parks before it was light enough to see our

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sights, and we had the mortification of seeing a large herd of spotted deer disappearing into the forest about 150 yards away, the rear being brought up by two fine buck elk.

What a disappointment this was ; but we could not get near them, and it was no use risking a chance shot. We then went on, crossed one park and entered a belt of forest between us and the next park. I was lagging behind somewhat, and just as I emerged from the forest into the next park I saw Westland and the trackers signalling to me, so looking about I perceived a nice herd streaming across the grass towards the forest on my right, a fair buck bringing up the rear. The distance was too far and the light too poor to risk a running shot, but as the last doe disappeared into the jungle the buck stopped some thirty yards behind to have another look in our direction.

This was too much for me after glancing at Westland and seeing he was not making for a shot, so, getting a tree in line as cover, I sprinted as hard as I could towards the buck for about 40 yards, dropped on one knee, edged sideways past my covering tree, and took the best aim at the deer my throbbing lungs would allow. There was the unmistakable thud of a hit when I fired ; but the deer darted into the forest and we followed up, Westland telling me he paced the distance of the shot to be 123 yards. He had not fired, as he could not see well enough at the time and preferred leaving the chance to me, for which I was duly grateful. We got on the track very soon and found it was hard hit, but not in the lungs, as the blood-track was dark and not frothy, so we left it and went on for a round in other parks, coming back to the place in about two hours and taking up the track again. It did not take long then to locate the animal, which was, as we expected, lying down, and which I finished with another shot. The first

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had hit fair in the middle of the body, too far back for the lungs, but had caused great internal bleeding, the cavity of the body being full of blood, so that the poor beast must have suffered great agony, and the idea made me wish we had followed it up and finished it off at the first. It had a nice, even little head of  $24\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

On this same trip I brought off a double shot which rather pleased me. We had tramped for 2 miles along a filthily muddy elephant track through the jungle to reach another set of parks, and, approaching the edge of the forest, I stole forward and peeped out, catching instant sight of a herd of deer peacefully feeding and lying about not 80 yards away, amongst them being two bucks, one showing a peculiar malformation in the horns, and the other having an ordinary little head.

I stooped down to get a clear view and steady shot, letting fly at the buck of the malformed head first, hitting him fair, whereupon the rest of the deer ran about bewildered, not seeing the author of the noise, the second buck presently coming to a stand exactly opposite, and facing me, offering only his chest as a mark at about 90 yards. I fired, however, and after running round in a half-circle for a few yards he staggered, swayed about, and fell. We all ran out and found the first buck lying dead, not having run over 30 yards; the second one we knifed, as it was still alive and kicking.

The malformed head had a fine perfect left antler  $29\frac{1}{2}$  inches, but the right was merely a brow tine, and instead of a main beam a sort of crumpled hook, sticking out behind, about 6 inches long, the pedicle also of the malformed horn growing out from the head at a curious angle almost horizontal, whilst between the two pedicles is a bump of bone sticking up like a knuckle-joint on top of

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the skull. This may all have been caused by an old wound on the head. We met a party of natives on the hunt a little after that, and one of them said he had had two shots at this same buck some days before.

I have of course missed, and badly missed, more than one buck, and good bucks too, during my hunting experiences, but an account of such misses would hardly interest my readers, so I naturally prefer to recount some of my successes. I remember in my earlier days, when I had only the "Paradox," how I used to toil, crawling, creeping, and wriggling through the grass or bush to get within the 100 yards distance if possible, though I have used it with success at more than that distance, notably during a trip with Wright some years ago. We had got a long way ahead of our men, on the travel, and were resting under the bund of a small tank, which, the weather being very dry, was empty but for a few puddles under the bund near where we sat. Presently we saw two native boys come over the bund with a gun, descend into the dry bed of the tank and walk well out into the middle, where they squatted down behind a small bush. They had been there some minutes before they perceived us, upon which they got up again and came across to our side, telling me, in answer to my question as to their object in hiding in the tank, that they were on the look-out for deer coming to drink. This was quite a likely occurrence, as it was very hot, getting on towards 11 A.M., and the tank was surrounded by forest, and remote from any village or other water.

The boys then told us there was a big crocodile in one of the pools, so off went Tom with them to look for it, whilst I remained comfortably reclining under a shady tree.

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Soon after this I was pleased to see two nice bucks stalk out of the forest on the far side of the tank, and come walking along across my left front. Hastily throwing up my 100-yard sight I sat up and fired at the leading buck, which dropped at once, the other bolting across the tank. I paced the distance to be 128 yards, and the bullet had taken it rather far back, probably through the kidneys. This was a good long shot for the "Paradox," and spoke well for its accuracy.

Tom did not get his crocodile. The success of the shot gave me a bit of a surprise, as I was not accustomed to finding the mark at that range in those days, for I have the most painful recollections of a trip by myself into deer country not very long before this occurrence, during which, with the "Paradox," I fired sixteen shots, and only had four deer to show for it! This was in my "transition" days, when I was gradually deserting elephant shooting for the more fascinating sport of deer stalking, and was beginning to think I had better take up rifle practice.

I bagged a very pretty buck not long ago by quite a "gallery" shot. It was during my visit with H. S. Cameron to the land I had taken up in Tamankaduwa for experimental planting, referred to in the chapter on buffaloes.

The land in question is an island of some 600 odd acres in extent in the Mahaweliganga, about 50 miles up river from Kottiyar Bay at Trincomalee. The river forms a channel about 150 yards wide on each side of it. Most of the land is forest or jungle, and we were making a tour of inspection, which was fairly full of incident, our party consisting of ourselves, the Mudaliyar, and a number of Moormen.

Arrived at the extreme lower end of the island, we

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emerged on the bank of the western branch of the river, and got down to the lovely white sand cast up under the bank, when two of the Moormen, who had preceded us and made their way down to the water's edge, suddenly stopped, looked up river, and then turned, beckoning to me. I hastened to them, and they pointed out, to my astonishment, a fine spotted buck all alone, feeding, on the opposite bank of the river, in a small open space between the river and the big forest bordering it. I hastily pulled the men out of sight, ran back, told Cameron and the Mudaliyar, and then nipped up the bank into the jungle again, making my way along as rapidly as possible under cover until I was just opposite the buck. The distance was a full 150 yards, and the quarry looked a very small object, so I lay down, rested the rifle over a root of a tree, took the most careful aim, and fired. At the shot the buck leaped high into the air, and then fled towards the forest, into which he disappeared just as I sent a parting but ineffectual shot after him. I was certain I had hit, so off went about a dozen Moormen, knives in hand, running, wading, and finally swimming across the river, which ran deep under the opposite bank, whilst we, the Mudaliyar, and the rest of the men, discussed the situation, the natives eyeing the "Savage" with great interest and curiosity. Soon we heard the welcome sound of wood chopping, and knew from that that the men were cutting a pole to carry the dead deer, with which they presently appeared, again crossing the river to our side. I noticed with some amusement, but made no remark, that its throat was carefully cut, though I'll lay odds it was as dead as a herring long before they reached it. The bullet had caught it low down in the shoulder, breaking the left fore-leg, and a splinter of nickel had



SPOTTED BUCK HEADS, FROM THE AUTHOR'S TROPHIES, SHOT IN THE  
NORTHERN LOW COUNTRY

Measurements vary from 30 inches down to 24 inches



A PAIR OF CURIOUS SPOTTED BUCK MALFORMATIONS,  
FROM THE AUTHOR'S TROPHIES



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probably torn the heart, whilst another portion of the bullet had actually gone out at the chest, which rather surprised me, as these bullets usually content themselves with very excellent "mushrooming," and remain inside. The head was a shapely one, and the steel tape gave the measurement as  $26\frac{5}{8}$  inches.

The men were loud in their expressions of surprise at the power of the .303.

After this occurrence I had more sport with some pigs before we got to camp, which I give an account of in the chapter on that subject.

Two remarkable slices of luck with deer fell to my share lately during a trip with H. D. Garrick.

The day before we broke camp we each went an extra long round to try and end up a fairly successful trip in good style, having with us my favourite local guides and trackers, two of whom were very good men. I had with me one of the trackers and one of my coolies, and went south, whilst Garrick with two local men went eastwards.

I tramped 5 blessed miles, seeing nothing but a few does, and at last, coming up to a sort of screen of bush dividing a "park," I saw a doe on the other side feeding unsuspectingly, which I watched, keeping an eye on the open space in which she was feeding. Presently a doe out of sight on my left began to bark, and shortly after the herd began to stream slowly across the grassy glade in which was the first doe, making for the jungle. Finally the buck came in sight, with a poor head, but still a buck, and I fired at him through the bush, distinctly hearing the bullet strike with a "plop."

Off they all went, however, and we started to track but could find no trace of blood, nor that the buck had separated from the herd, all having kept together in the forest.

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After some time we gave it up, and went on round the parks, coming back to the place about an hour afterwards, for I was determined not to give up as long as a chance remained. We began tracking again, but very soon down came a heavy plump of rain which did away with all hope of finding the deer, so, as soon as it was over, we began making our way through the forest to the next park on our way to the distant camp. We had not gone far when we heard a rush on our left, and stooping down to see better, perceived some deer darting away through the undergrowth. As I looked I saw that one remained standing, and on the impulse of the moment, though I could not see its head or determine the sex, fired at it through the intervening twigs, leaves, and branches. Somewhat to my surprise down it fell "baa-ing" like a sheep, and we found it to be a young spike buck shot through the pelvis. My cooly made stupid attempts to knife it, so I called him to give me the knife to do it myself; but at that moment I heard another rush in the jungle, and stooping instantly saw two deer bolting past not more than 20 yards away, one of which I saw by its darker colour was a buck. I had no sights up, but, jerking out my safety catch, took a lightning snap-shot at the buck, which, to my delight, dropped in its tracks. I ran up and saw, to my further delight, a fine head of horns which, later, the steel tape gave as 29 inches, with a grand spread. I turned the buck over to find the wound, and saw a slit about 4 inches long at the back of the head, into which I poked my finger right into a hole in the back of the skull. Just then the animal began to kick convulsively, and it struck me it might be only stunned, so I at once knifed it to make sure.

I then cast about to find an explanation for this strange

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wound, as the deer was full broadside to me when I fired, and I soon found, on the line of the shot, a small tree plant with a stem about as thick as my finger cut through at just about mid-body level, which had evidently deflected the bullet upwards and forward with the pleasing result recorded. But for that twig, as far as I could see, the deer would have been quite fairly shot in the body or shoulder. We went back to camp jubilant, and found Garrick had also got his buck, having made a good stalk and brought off the shot at 111 yards.

The second slice of luck occurred on our journey from camp to the main road, a distance of 13 miles, 10 miles being by wild jungle path, and the last three by an open jungle road called by apology a cart road, but which never sees a cart from one year's end to another, being merely a grass-grown open track meandering through the forest.

We did the journey without a halt, as we had started by 6 A.M., and had lots of carriers, so Garrick and I went along well ahead. We were just two miles from the main road, and, incidentally, a rest-house we meant to stop at, travelling along the open jungle road above mentioned, when five or six does and two bucks ran out of the forest about 50 yards ahead of us, probably frightened by a leopard, and cantering along the track in the direction we were going.

Garrick, who was a little ahead of me, fired at one of the bucks, but I think hit the ground under it, or perhaps grazed it, for it gave a jump but went on, and they all disappeared into the forest on our left.

It at once struck me that they would break back across the road, as there was a rocky river course which they were unlikely to cross not twenty yards inside that jungle parallel

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to the road, and I said so to Garrick, getting my rifle ready at the same time.

Very shortly after this two does darted across the road, and I put up my rifle, covering the line, my big ivory bead showing up fine and large through the Lyman aperture.

A moment later one of the bucks ran across, and I pulled trigger the instant the bead showed against his hide, hearing the unmistakable thud of impact. It and the rest, however, disappeared into the jungle on the right, and we proceeded to the point of entry, finding a bright scarlet frothy blood-track almost at once. This we followed into the jungle, and heard a scramble ahead of us by the time we had gone 50 yards.

We then proceeded very cautiously, and I soon sighted the buck lying down about done, but shot it again to make sure. My first shot had caught it in the base of the neck, and would have soon proved fatal, as the frothy blood was evidently being blown out of the wind-pipe. We cut off the head and carried it with us to the rest-house, marking the place and at once sending back our cartmen for the carcase.

The horns were ordinary small ones, but it made a very satisfactory ending to our trip, which had been a pleasant and successful one. Moreover, as we had travelled up in my latest acquisition, a motor car, we were enabled to take a fresh haunch apiece home with us next morning, a distance of 62 miles.

It may be argued that most of the foregoing instances are unusual, and so they are in a way. The first and second shooting instances recorded are about typical of the ordinary everyday occurrence, but the rest, except the island incident, are cases which might occur any day in a jungle country like Ceylon, where you never know what you may

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meet round the corner, or beyond a fringe of bush. They may be looked upon generally as "emergency" cases, and serve to show that prompt action is necessary to ensure success.

Here is an instance to show the value of dogged insistence in tracking an animal known to be wounded. I was camping at the time on the site of the old fort at Puliankulam, on the Alut Oya-Kauduluwewa road (site of the former residence of a Government Agent of Tamankaduwa in the 'thirties, and station on the old Trincomalee-Kandy post-track), and one evening I went out with two trackers for a stroll round. Not 200 yards from camp I suddenly saw a buck standing behind a bush on the edge of the jungle bordering the road, about 80 yards away, gazing at us intently. It was only the work of a moment to put in a quick shot, but the buck dashed away into the jungle; not before we had perceived, however, that the right fore-leg was broken between shoulder and knee.

We followed and tracked until it got late and we had to give up; but the next morning I went off with my trackers, and we followed up doggedly, the track being pretty plain, until at last we sighted the animal lying down in big forest. I fired at it, and it got up and ran on. We followed again, caught sight of it once more, and I put in another shot, but to my surprise it again ran on as well as ever.

It then occurred to me that I had better have a look at my cartridges, when I found I had inadvertently loaded up the magazine of my "Savage" with solids instead of soft-nose. I rectified this, and the next shot finished off the poor animal, when I found the solids had simply gone through it like going through a sheet of paper, one having actually entered just forward of the hind quarters and out

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at the chest! Make up your mind never to leave the track of a wounded animal as long as you can follow it, or as long as there is any hope of catching it up.

Some people will say there is not much sport in shooting an innocent, harmless deer, and perhaps they are right; but there is a fascination about all deer shooting hard to resist, and I confess I am very fond of it. There is more sport, of course, in going for dangerous game such as elephants, buffaloes, bears, and leopards; but the two former are not always available, and licences are costly, whilst the two latter are only met with by accident, except in the height of the dry season, when they can occasionally be shot at water-holes at night.

I bagged a buck once at an old camp site, as I was quietly approaching the place. I was ahead of my men, and, knowing I was approaching an open space, came very quietly and cautiously out of the forest on to a big slab rock, at one side of which I was going to camp, as I had often done before. Deer, and especially elk, are rather fond of coming out on to these sort of rocks, and in this case I caught sight of five or six spotted does and a buck standing within a few yards of my camping place. They began to move off at once, but the buck stayed a second too long, and I put in a quick shot, at which he darted across the rock after the does and disappeared down a slight slope, at the bottom of which I had the satisfaction of finding him dead. The head was a poor one, unfortunately.

In the afternoon of the same day I was out with two old trackers, and we sighted a few does in one of the parks. I stalked to within about 90 yards, and then discovered a buck amongst them, at which I took a shot from the sitting position, elbows on knees. The does bolted round a clump of bushes and streamed away across the park, but



Photo by M. L. Wilkins, Esq.

CAMP SCENE



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

CAMP SCENE



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I saw no buck amongst them, though the trackers said I had missed. I was positive about a hit, however, so we went forward to have a look, and sighted the buck almost immediately lying down about 100 yards away. I went to knife it, as I saw it was not dead, but the unfortunate creature got up and made a spurt towards the jungle, which it just reached, so I put in another shot which finished it off.

In jungle country like Ceylon you will often come upon game very unexpectedly and at close quarters, so it behoves you to keep your eyes and ears open, for you may now and then get a buck by a quick shot, if you are ready for emergencies, as the following incident shows.

During one of my trips with T. Y. Wright, coming back towards camp in the evening rather late, having been detained cutting up a buck shot by Wright, we suddenly came in sight of a nice buck standing in a small glade extending a few yards into the forest out of the larger "park" we were then traversing. I was slightly ahead of Tom, and "snapped" at it as quick as lightning, as it was not 40 yards away; but at the shot away it ran in that peculiar headlong frantic fashion which usually means a fatal hit, and disappeared in the forest. It was far too dark to search for it, so we pushed on for camp, not getting in until long after dark, and both of us appreciating the wonderful local knowledge of our guides unerringly making their way through some miles of "park" of never-ending sameness, in the growing darkness, bringing us to camp without a hitch. Next morning we went back to the place, and found the buck dead not more than 100 yards from where it had been shot at. It had a nice head, measuring, however, only  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Young deer will often stand whilst several shots are fired at them, and I remember once Wright and I, having

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had a long and fruitless tramp round together, eventually sighted a young buck a longish distance off in an open "park," which we determined to have a shot at rather than return to camp empty-handed. Tom tried a shot over the top of an ant-hill with a double-barrelled .577 but missed, and the deer never moved. Again he fired with the same result, the deer taking no notice whatever, but gazing fixedly in our direction. I then fired off-hand with a .303 and also missed—still no movement—so I quickly reloaded, knelt, taking careful aim, and dropped it dead. The distance was about 145 yards according to our pacing, and the deer looked a very small object indeed at that range.

I do not think there is any place in Ceylon where a really big bag of deer could be made by fair stalking, unless a man went in for slaughtering does, which no sportsman is likely to do. You will be very successful in your shooting if you average one buck per day, for though you may *see* plenty, you do not by any means manage to get shots at them all.

If you want fresh meat and can't get a buck, do not hesitate to shoot a doe, as their flesh is noticeably better and more tender than that of the buck; and there are plenty of them. Skins make very pretty trophies, if cured and mounted as mats, whilst a good buck's head properly set up looks exceedingly well. The biggest heads are to be found, I believe, in the Uva, or Southern, Province, those of the north country, or north-central, seldom reaching any record lengths. Now and again, if you are lucky, you may chance on a good one, but I have more than once failed to see a single good head during an extensive trip.

Talking of lucky chances, the following incident is well worth putting on record. My friend J. G. Napier, of Madulkele, whilst enjoying a trip in the Eastern Province,

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south of Batticaloa, in 1903, being out for a look round one day, armed with a double-barrelled .450 cordite express, saw a good buck standing among some rocks in broken ground about 100 yards away. He fired and it disappeared, so he walked towards the spot to have a look, but before he reached the place he saw, as he thought, the same buck some little way off looking at him from behind a rock—head, neck, and top of back only being visible. He fired and it disappeared again, when, going to the spot, what was his astonishment and delight to find two bucks lying dead within quite a short distance of each other, and, more pleasing still, they carried exceptionally fine heads, one being 30½ inches and the other 32 inches. This I can vouch for, as I put the steel tape over them myself at Napier's bungalow not long after his return. The extraordinary thing about the occurrence was that both were shot in the head!

A general shooting trip to Ceylon low country, in spite of its discomforts and drawbacks, will appeal very strongly to all lovers of nature. Can anything be more interesting—I might even say impressive—than an early morning walk through jungle country in the tropics?

In Ceylon vegetation is rampant, though curiously enough there is hardly any really big forest in the low country, the biggest tree growth being found among the foot-hills, where the mountains tail out into the low country. Feasting your eyes on the tropical luxuriance, your ears will be assailed by all kinds of novel sounds. In the open country and on the outskirts of the forest you will hear the pipe and twitter of birds innumerable, the "coo" of pigeons and doves, the melodious whistle of the Pompadour pigeon, or the shrill alarm call of the spotted deer.

From the forest come the insistent calls of many jungle cock, the curious cadenced whistle of the spur fowl, the

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deep "woo" of the great imperial pigeon, or the low sweet "coo-oo" of the bronze-wing, diversified by the guttural "boom" of the Wanderoo monkeys, or the harsh chatter of the little red monkeys. From the depth of the forest one hears occasionally the deep throaty alarm note of the elk, or the sharp dog-like bark of the little red deer, or one may be lucky enough to hear the quaint cries of a wandering bear, or the grunting roar of the leopard.

An occasional crash in the undergrowth may denote an elephant retiring leisurely to the welcome shade as soon as the sun makes its appearance, whilst the deer still loiter on the outskirts of the jungle.

Enter the forest, however, making your way into the depths, and you will soon find you are leaving all sounds of life behind you.

Nothing seems to exist in the sombre depths—not a bird or animal, and you will only occasionally see a track of a wandering elephant, or of a bear in search of honey.

The silence is profound and depressing, great relief being experienced on once more coming within sound of the animated life of the outskirts, and of the open country beyond.

The grassy "parks" afford a never-ending pleasure, with their lovely glades of greenest grass set off by the dark forest background, and in their turn setting off the herds of lovely spotted deer which seem above all to be the right animals in the right place, for it is peculiarly their country, and any other animal seems like an interloper. Those who have once experienced it will "hear the jungle a-calling" as long as health and strength endure.

Mr. Theodore S. Van Dyke, an American writer on sporting subjects, in his book "The Still Hunter," makes the following trenchant observations on deer or antelope

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shooting in America, which almost equally apply to Ceylon:—

“When we come to analyse rifle-shooting you will conclude that I tell the exact truth when I assert, as I do most positively, that the man who talks of placing a ball where he wishes to place it in a running deer or antelope at *any* distance, or at one standing beyond 150 yards, is either an ignoramus or a braggart, who takes his listener for a bigger fool than he is himself.

“I draw the following principles, not from my own experience only, but from that of the very best shots I have ever seen, men whom I believe it almost impossible to excel, and when we come to analyse shooting I will try to prove them from indisputable principles.

“1st. To hit a running deer in *any part* of the body at *any* distance is a first-class shot.

“2nd. To hit at 150 yards anywhere within 10 inches of the centre of the shoulder of a standing deer or antelope, or strike the body anywhere at 200 yards, is a first-class shot.

“3rd. To hit a deer at all at 100 yards, when you can only see part of it in bush or among trees, is a first-class shot.

“4th. To hit one in the vitals at only 60 yards, when it shows only a small spot of dull colour in dark heavy timber, is a first-class shot.”

I entirely agree with Mr. Van Dyke in every word of the foregoing observations, and they apply just as well to Ceylon as to the backwoods of America. It takes a first-class shot to hit a deer, in this country, at 150 yards, even in an open park, all the conditions of light, background, and surroundings being taken into consideration.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE RED DEER, MOUSE DEER, AND HOG DEER

THE little deer (*Cervulus muntjac*), known in India as the *muntjac* or jungle sheep, also rib-faced or barking deer, is always spoken of in Ceylon as the "red deer." Red it is, and the name has become so general in Ceylon that, again, I see no reason to change it any more than in the case of the elk.

Though very plentiful in Ceylon, at all elevations from the low country to probably 4000 feet above the sea, they can only be looked upon as special objects of pursuit where they may be hunted with dogs, owing to the fact that they are forest dwellers, and not gregarious, more than two being seldom seen together. They are not often seen out in the open, and therefore only occasionally met with by the low-country sportsman, though frequently heard barking in the forests.

A full-grown buck stands about 24 inches at the shoulder, more or less, the female being slightly smaller. A good buck will weigh between 40 and 50 lbs.

Colour is a lovely red-chestnut, darker along the back, becoming lighter on the under parts, finally merging into white on the chin, throat, belly, inside of the thighs, and under side of tail. The face is brownish. The bucks carry small horns set on very long pedicles. These pedicles continue down the frontlet of the buck in the shape of bony ridges, at a converging angle, almost meeting at the point where they taper out just above the nose. These ridges account for the name "rib-faced" deer. The horns

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are seldom over 5 inches in length on the curve measured from the burr, *not* including the pedicle, and have a tiny brow tine about an inch long pointing upwards at an angle, whilst the main tine ends, near the point, in a sharp curve inwards and slightly backwards. The horns are dropped, I believe, occasionally, but not at any regular season, and curiously enough I have seldom seen a head in velvet, and I once only shot a buck whose horns were not quite clean and not thoroughly rubbed down.

The buck has a pair of long, exceedingly sharp canine teeth in the upper jaw, which project beyond the lips on each side of the lower jaw when the mouth is closed, and with these it can inflict nasty wounds, so much so that a native on killing a deer will knock out these teeth at once, as they believe an accidental scratch or wound from them is very dangerous. When alarmed this deer runs with its head held very low, and often makes, no one knows how, a peculiar rattling noise when so running. When not alarmed it steps along very daintily, but with a jerky sort of action, poking its head about like a bird.

Its alarm call is a dog-like loud bark, from which it derives one of the names it is known by—barking deer—and, like most other deer, it often gives a stamp with a fore-foot when suspicious, alarmed, or before uttering its bark. This alarm call is often so like a dog's bark as to quite deceive an inexperienced sportsman, as I once had evidence of, much to my amusement. I was on a trip with a friend at the time, and we had just passed through a small village in the jungle and were about to enter the jungle again, when I heard a red deer barking just ahead of us. I got my rifle ready and began to move along very gingerly, when my friend said, "It is all right, it is only barking, not tonguing!"

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I laughed, asking him if he thought it was a dog, and going forward, just as I turned a corner of the jungle path there was the buck in the path itself, and I dropped it in its tracks with a bullet through the shoulders.

In the low country a sportsman will occasionally see one during a journey through forest, if he walks very quietly, and may then be able to bring it to bag. They are also pretty frequently to be seen coming out to feed in the evening or early morning on the edge of the forest bordering the parks, and are particularly fond of grass-grown jungle roads as feeding grounds.

I was most struck with the number of red deer I saw in the Northern Province during a trip there with Garrick in 1901.

We were staying at a Tamil village called Nedunkeni, on the southern approach road to Mullaitivu, putting up in the empty mud-built P.W.D. bungalow. Of sporting country, which we had come in search of, there was none, for the whole place was forest except where there happened to be a village, tank, or paddy fields, but for all that there were lots of game about, generally to be heard and not seen.

However we soon discovered, wandering about by jungle paths, that the place was literally alive with red deer. We met them at every turn of the paths, or heard them darting away in the forest as we passed, so decided to see what we could do in the way of bagging a few. I bagged the first one as I was trying to stalk some spotted deer which I had come across in a tank.

They cleared off and went into the forest, where I followed, and whilst sneaking about, trying to approach the spotted deer, I saw a red buck about 40 yards away standing stern on to me. I shot it with my "Savage,"

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knocking it over at once. The bullet had caught it fair in the stern, which it had burst like an exploded paper bag.

We had red deer collops for dinner that night, for the flesh of these little animals is really excellent.

The next day I bagged another buck as it was crossing a path, and the day after Garrick got two on the edge of a tank as they came out to feed on the green grass bordering the forest, whilst I got one in another part of the same tank.

The day after that, Garrick and I being together, I tried to stalk one in some scrubby jungle, but just as I caught sight of it it bolted off, came out into the open close to Garrick, whom it did not perceive, and walked past him within 20 yards, paying the penalty.

We were here four or five days, and in that time we knocked over six of these little animals, besides a small spotted buck and a pig, both of which Garrick bagged.

I must confess that, though I have seen hundreds of red deer, I very seldom fire at them during a trip unless in want of meat, preferring the nobler spotted buck, as, after all, the trophy carried by the little red animal is a very poor one, not worth the bagging.

With dogs, however, it gives grand runs, for it carries such a strong scent that the dogs never leave it, and it can be found in almost any bit of scrub or jungle near an estate.

Mr. Alfred Clark's book "Sport in the Low Country of Ceylon" mentions, in his list of records, a head of a deer, killed by Mr. North Davidson, measuring  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches right and  $6\frac{5}{8}$  inches left. I find my best head measures 6 inches right and  $6\frac{5}{16}$  inches left, but I think there are unrecorded bigger horns than either of these in Ceylon.

I remember a few years ago spending Christmas in the

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

jungle during a shooting trip with my cousins Roy Storey and G. W. Sharpe, and we each worked very hard to signalise Christmas Day by a bag of some sort, but I think I was the only successful one, though my bag was only a red buck which I came across in the forest whilst tracking a spotted buck I had hit and failed to bring to bag.

### THE MOUSE DEER

It is not quite known how this curious but interesting little animal comes to be called "mouse deer," for it is scientifically known not to be a deer at all, though I think the popular error is a very natural one, and the name may be taken, as Sir Emerson Tennent says, from the Dutch "muis" or "mouse" deer.

The little animal forms a class by itself and its correct name is *chevrotain*, whilst the scientific name is *Tragulus meminna*. It is found all over Ceylon, below about 2000 feet, and the same in the greater part of India, whilst another species is found in the Malay Peninsula and Islands. Lydekker, in his "Great and Small Game of India," says, "I have been unable to find the origin of the name *meminna*, which is the specific title of this animal, since it is not given as one of its native appellations." There is no possible doubt about the origin, as it is, and always has been, the true Singhalese name of the little creature. The "minna" part of the name I do not know the meaning of, but the "me" is almost undoubtedly the usual shortening of the Singhalese word *miya* when conjoined to another word, and meaning a rat—thus the animal is the rat "minna," from some fancied resemblance to a rat probably.

It is a tiny little creature not more than 10 or 12

## THE MOUSE DEER

inches high and weighing about 6 lbs., according to Blanford.

The general body-colour in Ceylon is a dark greenish grey-brown, minutely yellow speckled, and the sides are spotted yellowy brown, sometimes of a much darker shade, the spots about the middle of the sides merging into longitudinal stripes; the belly is white. The plump little body is supported on the very slenderest of legs with the tiniest imaginable hoofs, and the mouth is furnished with nasty sharp canine tusks in the upper jaw like the red deer. The flesh is excellent eating.

The little animal frequents forest anywhere in the low country and the lower mountain forests, and is seldom or never seen in the open, though I once shot one at the side of an open road in the low country. They are generally solitary, but occasionally two are seen together. They are easily killed with small shot, and also are eagerly hunted by dogs, but are with difficulty forced to break cover.

Walking along any forest track in the low country, you will often hear a sudden rustle in the dead leaves, under the undergrowth, followed by receding bounds which make a curious sort of "thump-thump" noise accompanied by an equally curious sort of twittering chirp—this is merely a chevrotain startled away. I have often come upon one quite close and it has merely chirped and bounded away a few yards, then stopping to have a look at me, not appearing in the least frightened.

I have occasionally hunted and shot them over dogs in the *lantana* bush around the estate, but they can hardly be classed as game, and are not included in close-season protection.

# HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

## THE HOG DEER

The true hog deer (*Cervus porcinus*) is found in Ceylon, but, as it is confined to a strip of country lying a little inland from the coast between Kalutara and Hambantota in the Southern Province, it is more than probable that it has been introduced into the country from India.

It is absolutely identical with the Indian species, and in appearance is a very small reddish-coloured elk with short legs and a clumsy body.

In actual size the buck is rather smaller than a spotted buck, and the antlers are three-tined, approximating in appearance to a very small elk head. I have had no personal experience of this deer, never even having seen one, and the information I am able to give my readers has been kindly supplied to me by gentlemen who have seen or shot the animal. It frequents swamps and swampy scrub, and is especially fond of lying up in the long grass. It has also a great partiality for paddy fields, and is often spoken of as the "paddy field deer." It is a nocturnal feeder and rather given to breaking into native gardens and helping itself to the contents.

As concerns the shooting of this animal, the only practicable way seems to be by driving. A deer having been ascertained to be in a block of scrub or swamp, the guns are posted in likely situations and natives employed to drive the animal out. If it has to cross a piece of open on its way to safety it will do so at a great speed, and will need a good shot to hit it. If any species of cover is available, however, on the line of retreat, it will sneak along with the utmost cunning and be very hard to detect. Cases have been known of these animals being practically kicked up and shot by snipe-shooters in the

## THE HOG DEER

swamps. The natives hunt and kill them eagerly, and I believe on that account their numbers are decreasing rather than increasing. The meat is dry and tasteless, though not quite so poor as elk meat. The young are spotted for some time after birth. As far as I know this species is not recognised as a Ceylon deer, and is not included in close-season protection.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE LEOPARD

As seems to be the custom in Ceylon, we find, in the case of the leopard, a misnomer in general use, it being almost always spoken of as the "cheetah," though it is, or ought to be, a well-known fact that there are no cheetahs in this island.

Our largest feline is the true leopard, *Felis pardus*, in no way different from the ordinary leopard found throughout the East. A full-grown animal will measure as much as 7 feet from nose to tip of the tail, and stand 22 to 28 inches high at the shoulder. Females are, as a rule, somewhat smaller than the males.

The low-country leopard is generally considered to be larger than the hill leopard.

The ground colour of the body is a yellowish brown, and the whole skin is thickly studded with black "rosettes" with pale centres. As in most other species of animals, cases of colour variation occur, and leopards are occasionally seen exceptionally light in colour, or so dark as to almost merit the name of "black leopard." The Ceylon animal is usually fairly heavily built and very powerful.

As far as distribution is concerned they are found literally everywhere in Ceylon, at all elevations from sea-level to Nuwara Eliya district, 6000 to 7000 feet above the sea.

They are not strictly nocturnal, and may be heard or seen on the prowl in the low country up to late in the morning and again very early in the evening. They are

## THE LEOPARD

not at all particular as to their food, and do not turn up their noses at carrion in a pretty "high" condition; whilst they will tackle any young or weak animal from an elk to a hare. Dogs are an almost irresistible attraction, for some reason or other, and cases have been known of dogs having been pounced upon and carried off when following at master's heel. Mudaliyar G. Jayawardene, the Revenue Officer of Tamankaduwa, told me that once when his wife, who had been away, was returning to Topawewa along the road from Habarane in a travelling cart, a leopard actually pounced on a favourite dog, which was trotting along just behind the cart, and carried it away.

◊The Mudaliyar also told me of a case in which one of his men came upon a battle-royal between a leopard and a pig. The man did not wait to see the result, but, with an eye to meat, shot the pig, whereupon the leopard, absolutely oblivious to all other sights or sounds, pounced upon the dead pig and worried it, enabling the man to reload and actually shoot the leopard as well.

I think it is a mistake to call a leopard cowardly—it is anything but a coward. Cautious and cunning it certainly is, but most sportsmen speak of it as a courageous and very dangerous animal, more determined than a tiger in its attack, and they respect it accordingly.

The leopards take a fairly heavy toll of cattle in the low country, and occasionally kill a young buffalo if it happens to stray from a herd or from its parent's protection—in fact they may be looked upon as general marauders, and would rob a hen-roost if nothing else was available.

There are also occasional instances of man-killing. A good many years ago, either in the Anuradhapura or Vavoniya district, a leopard actually broke into a house and severely mauled a man and a boy.

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

Not more than about three years ago a very extraordinary case occurred at a small village called Ratmale, just north of the road from Minneriya to Kauduluwewa, and about 5 miles from Minneriya village. A man sleeping in the small open verandah of his house one night in the hot weather was actually carried off by a leopard, killed, and partly eaten. The next morning a number of the villagers went to look for the body, and found it in some scrub just beyond the village, and they must have considered it a matter of great importance that the leopard should be slain, for they actually proposed to leave the body *in situ*, fence it round, and set a spring-gun over it.

Whilst discussing this matter, one man suddenly saw the leopard looking lazily at them over the weed growth not 50 yards away.

It was actually lying down, fully fed and at peace with all the world, and merely took a casual glance at the crowd, lying down again for a further snooze, probably annoyed at being so thoughtlessly disturbed.

A Tamil man of sporting proclivities, who happened to be present, went a bit nearer to the animal, shot at it with his old "gaspiper" and broke its shoulder, whereupon it attempted to get away but was followed up by the crowd, again shot, and killed.

The tale of the occurrence was told me by one of my old shikaries who lived in a village not far from Ratmale, and it is certainly a remarkable case, as the country round about is very gamey, and this village also possesses lots of cattle easily available, so that the leopard could hardly have been driven to desperation through hunger.

One never knows when a wild animal will break through its ordinary habits and perform some extraordinary deed,

## THE LEOPARD

so that it is never safe to say of any animal, "It always does so-and-so"—the unforeseen often happens.

Referring to the leopard incident related in my chapter on snipe shooting, about two weeks after that visit to Haburane an unfortunate man, of the village near where we had seen the animal, returning home from an outlying garden one day, met it face to face and was promptly attacked and slain.

This attack was entirely unprovoked, as the poor man was unarmed, and I can only suppose it was a case of impulse owing to the sudden meeting. I am not aware of any case of a leopard having become a confirmed man-eater.

The leopard in Ceylon is not an animal which can be pursued and shot in the ordinary way like deer, buffalo, or elephants, as it has no regular haunts or feeding grounds, and is not the sort of animal that can be tracked to its lair, because the chances are it has not got one, except perhaps during the wet season.

The only ways in which they are or can be shot are by accidental meetings when quietly traversing jungle or park; by waiting near a "kill," or by tying up a dog or other bait in the neighbourhood of any place they have begun to make raids upon; or by night watching at water-holes.

Most of them are shot by the last-mentioned method, for even a native will sometimes expend lead on a leopard, as he can sell the skin and claws.

There is a Government reward in some districts, I believe, of Rs. 5 per head for their destruction; but few natives apply for it, as it entails the delivering up of the skin before the reward is paid, and they can probably sell a skin to a travelling pedlar for that amount, or more.

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I have never watched over a "kill" or a live bait; for one thing, "kills" in the jungle are few and far between—at least they are not often come across by the sportsman fresh enough to be watched over, though "Spots" is a pretty foul feeder; and again, if a kill of a cow or bullock is reported on a main road as I pass along, I have usually no time or inclination to lose a day and night for the off-chance of a shot. When camping in the jungle it is often advisable to visit the remains of an animal you may have shot for at least two following days after the event. You may by chance catch a leopard at it; but, again, more often than not you will find the remains untouched. I have never caught a leopard on the feed, though I have been too late or too early more than once by a few moments, and I have known remains of deer, pigs, and bears carried away altogether by leopards during the night. We have few isolated patches of jungle which could or can be beaten out, as is done in some parts of India, and I doubt if our natives would beat for a leopard. The whole jungle country is so hopelessly "jungle" that a shot, as I said before, can only be got by accidental meeting, by watching a kill or a live bait, or by watching at a water-hole. The range of these animals in Ceylon is so wide that no amount of certainty can be attached to any one of these methods except the water-hole, and even that is by no means to be relied on. Though I have watched at very many water-holes, and been fairly successful with bears at that game, I have only thrice seen leopards come to holes I have been watching over, though they seemed to have visited every other hole but the one I happened to be at. This was sheer ill-luck and not caution on the part of the leopard, for he stalks up to a water-hole as though the whole jungle belonged to him.

## THE LEOPARD

The first time I ever saw one was when watching a water-hole in the Alut-Oya at Kauduluwewa. My stage was built overhanging the river bank, and perhaps 15 feet above the dried-up bed of the river, which here passes through pretty dense forest. There was no water visible, the place being merely a depression in the sandy river bed, and each animal as it came dug for water for itself, or deepened a hole already dug by a former visitant. Thus there were several holes dug here and there, some with water lying at the bottom, and none of them more than about 18 inches to 2 feet deep by 2 to 3 feet wide. I well remember at one time, just before it became dusk, seeing no less than eighteen bronze-wing pigeons down in one of these holes, all drinking at the tiny puddle of water, so bunched together that a single discharge of a shot-gun would probably have killed the lot. About 8 P.M., after I had killed

couple of bears, I was listening intently to a slight rustling going on in the jungle on the opposite bank of the stream, here about 40 or 50 feet wide, when something made me lean forward and look down into the river bed, where, to my surprise, I saw a fine leopard about twenty yards away up stream standing on a patch of white sand in clear moonlight, offering a magnificent chance of a shot. Leaning forward, having to shoot somewhat round the corner, I fired at him with my "Paradox," and missed him clean! The leopard at the shot bounded up the bank on my left, and went crashing through the jungle like a buffalo, properly frightened but unhurt, as we found the bullet next morning embedded in the sand, having, as we could see by the footprints, evidently passed under his body.

On another occasion I was watching at a rock-hole in the jungle, my stage being in a tree above the rock at one end of a long pool of water. About 9 P.M. I

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heard deer barking in the distance; a little while after more deer barked nearer, and then nearer still monkeys chimed in with their deep guttural barks and grunts. This went on ("passing the word forward," so to speak) for quite twenty minutes, and at last I heard the firm, soft tread of the leopard on the dry, dead leaves of the undergrowth making to pass just in front of my tree. Suddenly he stopped, however, before coming into sight, turned from his track and came straight to my tree, still hidden by the small undergrowth, and had a look and a sniff at a box of tinned things we had left at the foot of the tree. I could just make out bits of him, and tried to get my gun down between the sticks of the "messa" for a shot, but, unfortunately, my movement caused a tiny "creak" of the stage and away he went on the instant, not coming to this water-hole again that night.

The last occasion occurred recently during a bear-shooting trip with a friend. We were watching at a rock-hole from a tree stage at one side of the rock, which was a huge mass of rounded gneiss some 40 or 50 feet high with a peculiar deep-water pool like a bath at one side of it, and our stage commanded a grand view of the rock and all approaches to the pool. Moonlight was brilliant, but nothing came until 9 P.M., when a leopard walked quietly across the rock from our left and lay down like a dog just in front of us. My friend was rather a novice at the game, so I gave him the shot, and—he made a clean miss. The leopard sprang up, ran about 10 yards up the rock and stood, back to us, looking at us over his shoulder, so then I took a quick shot at him but missed just as badly as did my companion, upon which the leopard cantered quietly down the rock and disappeared.

I had an interesting experience once when watching

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at a long, narrow, canal-like pool in forest not far from Topawewa. I was in a tree stage as usual, and waiting for bear, when suddenly, from a point out of my sight, about thirty or more yards to my left, I heard a fearful and agonising shriek, followed by the "pad-pad" of a leopard bounding away, each bound accentuated by more dreadful shrieks and cries, gradually dwindling away into distance as the leopard cleared off with its prey. I never knew what the animal thus pounced on was, as we could not find the track of it next morning, and my natives could not put a name to it. All I know is that the cries sounded dreadfully human, and the effect in that dark jungle was most weird.

A leopard is fond of taking up a position in a tree overhanging a game path, especially one which connects one small "park" with another, and I remember once when Wright and I were out together, he and his tracker were entering the jungle just ahead of me, when I heard a heavy thump and crash in the undergrowth just ahead of them, and, running up, was told that a leopard had sprung down from a tree just as they were passing under it, bolting away through the undergrowth.

Still another rather peculiar experience once happened to me when on a camping trip in deer country.

Towards evening, on one occasion, accompanied by a friend, but having no tracker with us, we were returning towards camp after a stroll round when we heard a leopard roaring some distance ahead, and almost at once we heard also the alarm calls of a lot of deer from the same direction.

I told my friend we should probably be able to get a shot at the deer, as they would be so fully occupied by the leopard alarm as to hardly notice us, and that is just what did happen.

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On our way towards the deer we passed through a tiny glade of grass not more than 30 yards in diameter, and just as we entered it we heard the "wuff" of a startled leopard in the undergrowth on our right, but, as the deer were still barking in a "park" farther ahead and out of sight, we went quietly on, and I crawled through a belt of bush into the open park just beyond the glade. There I saw a small herd of ten or fifteen deer and one buck standing about 100 yards away, all looking intently in one direction, and barking at intervals. I sat down and fired at the buck, but as it was getting dusk I missed him clean, when, to my surprise, a leopard bounded out of a clump of bushes about 20 yards on my right, and, darting across my front into the main jungle, disappeared before I could move.

Quite evidently there had been two leopards at work, one doing the roaring, to keep the deer occupied, and the other doing the stalking.

In such country leopards undoubtedly roar to locate deer by their barking, for they do not appear to possess much power of scent; at least they never seem to use it for the purpose of finding game, except perhaps in the case of a "high" corpse.

I had a rather unpleasant adventure with a leopard in 1900, which I should not care to repeat. It occurred during one of my regular trips to the Tamankaduwa district, and luckily for me I was accompanied by my cousin Roy Storey, who had just come out from home on a visit to Ceylon. We had been in camp about a week, and had enjoyed very pleasant sport with buffalo, deer, and pig, intending presently to move on after elephants, but as events turned out we moved for home instead.

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We had gone out as usual one evening in different directions. I was only accompanied by one old Singhalese tracker, whom I had often employed before, and he and I made our way to a small remote park about 2 miles from camp, where, nothing being in sight, we sat down to wait for deer to come out.

We heard a lot of deer barking in the jungle round about, and the monkeys were grunting pretty loudly; but we attached no importance to the noise, as both deer and monkeys often bark and grunt at the sight or sound of man.

I was sitting on a small ant-hill a little way out in the open in an angle of the park with jungle on either hand and behind me, the open park surrounded by jungle stretching for about 300 yards in front of me, and I presently saw a small animal walking through the grass, about 50 yards ahead, across my front from left to right. I saw it was a feline of some sort, but could only see its head and top of its back above the grass, which was here about 18 inches high. It struck me at once that it might be that seldom-seen animal *Felis viverrina*, the fishing cat, so I cocked my rifle, a single-barrelled breech-loading .303 as it noted, and fired at it when it was just opposite me. I missed, the bullet striking the ground just under its nose, and the little animal turned and bounded back to the jungle, whereupon the old Kapurala came up to me (he had been squatting down about 20 yards behind me) and asked what I had shot at. I said I thought it was one of the big wild cats, but he said it looked suspiciously like a leopard cub, though he acknowledged he might have been mistaken, as it was already drawing towards sundown and light was none too good.

However we walked towards the jungle into which it

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had disappeared, and I halted about 15 yards from it whilst the old man began to look for "sign." I was standing at my ease with my rifle, uncocked, thrown across my left arm, thinking of nothing in particular, when suddenly the old man without a word turned and ran like a madman past me towards the open park, his eyes bulging out with terror. I gazed at him, uncomprehending, in surprise, when something caught my eye, and, glancing towards the forest, I saw a full-grown but small and thickset leopard emerge from the jungle like a flash. It passed me at about 5 yards, perfectly silent, going not in leaps and bounds, but belly to the ground like a greyhound, and, catching up to the old man, sprang on to his back, the impetus knocking the man down, so that they both rolled head over heels.

Just before the leopard reached him he *felt* it coming evidently, for he suddenly cringed a bit as he ran, which, I verily believe, saved his life, otherwise the leopard, landing on his back, would undoubtedly have put its teeth into the back of his neck.

The result was, however, that the leopard landed fair on the man's back and shoulders, its fore-paws catching him *round* the neck, and its head, with its murderous jaws wide open, thus overshooting its mark, actually lay on top of the man's head like a hideous cap—I have the whole scene vividly before me as I write, and can never forget the extraordinary picture thus presented, though it only occupied a few seconds of time. As I said before, the shock knocked the old man down, and he rolled head over heels, the leopard being shot off him by the fall, also rolling head over heels beyond him. By this time, of course, I had my rifle ready and was perfectly cool, as I expected the brute on rising would go for the old man and thus give me a chance of

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a shot. However it did nothing of the sort. It recovered its feet in an instant and launched itself at me, all in one movement, so to speak, without any pause, and with such fearful rapidity that, prepared as I was, I had only just time to throw the rifle to my shoulder and pull trigger without seeing a sight or anything—a regular snap-shot. If I never saw “battle, murder, and sudden death” before, I saw it coming towards me then, in awful silence, mouth wide open showing some very unpleasantly powerful teeth, ears laid back, and eyes fixed on me with baneful glare; but at my shot the flying figure collapsed and came rolling over and over to my very feet. I saw at once it was not dead, and I did not know where I had hit it; but the thought that my rifle was only a single-barrelled one struck me instantly, together with the reflection as to what would happen if the leopard got up when I had the breech open and was extracting the cartridge. As quick as the thought I dropped my rifle, and pulling out my hunting-knife, a big heavy one with a double-edged blade, which I happened to be carrying at the time, plunged it into the brute behind the shoulder, as it lay, back towards me, doubled up on the ground. Well and good if I had stabbed and withdrawn the knife very quickly; but I did not. Like an ass I wrenched it about in the wound a bit, with the result of galvanising the leopard into comparatively active life, for it turned suddenly over, knocked the knife flying out of my hand, grabbed me by the left leg with its fore-paws, and pulled me down on top of it. I rolled over to one side at once, desperately pulled at its paws with my right hand and kicked as desperately at it with my right foot, whilst my left hand was occupied fending its horrible head away from my face as we lay side by side, for it was struggling hard to get its teeth into me. Trying to get it by the throat, my left hand

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unfortunately got into its mouth, and it promptly took hold hot and strong, so I had to leave it at that, but thrust its head away to the full stretch of my arm, and then got to work pulling its claws out of me.

This I succeeded in doing after a while, and by a desperate wrench getting my left hand free, rolled rapidly over; but I was not quick enough, for out came a paw, got me by the thigh, and hauled me back again. More kicking and struggling and again I got free, but again that awful paw hauled me back like a bundle of old clothes. Another desperate effort and I managed to roll out of reach, got up, staggered to my rifle, reloaded and shot the brute dead; and then, as the whole universe seemed to be going round and round in a variety of colours, I dropped to the ground to consider matters a bit, feeling deathly sick. However it was getting late, so I soon arose and began to inspect damages. I perceived my left trousers leg to be dyed a brilliant scarlet, as was my shoe, and, on pulling up the trousers, two of the various tears and holes in my leg spouted blood out about a foot, which sight fairly startled me. I yelled to the old man, who had all this time remained standing a silent spectator, to get me a stick, but he seemed too dazed, so I twisted my handkerchief round my leg as tight as I could without the help of a stick, and then got up to have a look at the man. He was torn a bit down the back, round the neck, and one claw had penetrated, if not into, at any rate very close to the throat, and he assured me in a hoarse whisper that it actually had penetrated the throat. I wrapped one of his cloths round his neck to stop the streaming blood, and then collecting my rifle, hat, and knife, we turned towards camp, a terrible two miles away. My wounds got very painful and stiff, and my left hand was about useless; but

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we struggled on, getting to camp whilst there was still light enough to see our way.

My own coolies kicked up "Bob's a-dying" at the sight of me, and my cousin was naturally a bit upset; but he went gamely to work, got out our bandages, carbolic ointment and Condy's fluid, and soon had us both fairly patched up. Such a job would have been nothing to a planter like myself, after many years of home doctoring amongst coolies; but to him, fresh from home, it was anything but a pleasant task, and I am pleased to be able to record my grateful appreciation of his good offices. I had a dreadful night, the stiffening muscles giving me agony, causing horrible dreams when I dozed off, whilst every leopard in the country-side seemed to hover round camp that night, for I heard their roaring every time I woke. Next day I sent off our only other tracker, nephew of the wounded man, to his village 10 miles away for bearers, and they, arriving in the afternoon, made a sort of stretcher for me out of jungle sticks, on which the next day they carried me 15 miles to Kantalay Rest-House, the other wounded man being conducted to his village by some of the men, his relatives.

We got back to my bungalow, after a tedious journey of six days in a cart, and I had about a month in bed but eventually recovered all right with no ill effects, as my wounds were really very slight, and I am glad to be able to say the old man also recovered, and has often been out with me since.

He told me afterwards that when peering into the jungle he suddenly saw the leopard crouched ready for a spring within a few feet of him, and so turned and ran. Without a doubt I had shot at "baby," and it had gone back to "mama," telling her of its adventure, and she

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meant to investigate matters. I thought since that the cub was on its way to a pool of water, about 50 yards to my right, for a drink ; but it seemed such an odd occurrence, a small cub like that wandering about alone, that I never thought for a moment it was a leopard cub.

Since the above experience, with the exception of the water-hole incident previously related, where I and my companion each missed our shot, I have only had one close interview with a leopard, and a very unexpected one it was, too.

Fred Brockman and I were out on a trip together, and we were staying for the time in Diwulankadawela village in Tamankaduwa, a fairly good centre for a trip. One morning, as we were returning from an unsuccessful round, traversing pleasant "park" country, we saw on our left some does and a sizable buck about 150 yards away.

Having each only a "Paradox" with us at the time, I made a sprint towards the deer as they were trotting away, and reaching a tree leant against it and took a hurried shot at the buck, which was going end on. I do not think I hit it, but we all followed up on the chance, as the deer disappeared in some small jungle. I was quietly walking along some distance from the others, in some thickish scrub, keeping my eyes and ears open, when something made me glance at a small ant-hill just visible in the bush about 6 feet from me, and there, to my surprise, I saw a leopard crouched, dozing at the foot of it, so close I could almost have touched him with my gun muzzle.

There were bushes, twigs, and branches everywhere, and in throwing my gun to the shoulder the barrel caught a twig, which, with the movement, was quite sufficient to attract the leopard's attention, and it disappeared round the ant-hill like a shadow, my snap-shot missing it clean. I

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nipped on to the ant-hill at once, but as, owing to the undergrowth, I could not see more than 10 yards in any direction, and that not clearly, I saw nothing of the leopard, but was much surprised to see at the foot of the ant-hill, at the other side, a pengolin (scaly ant-eater) curled up tight.

A look at the place where the leopard had been lying showed me that he had been comfortably reposing on the new earth dug out of the pengolin's burrow, and that, no doubt, the pengolin, a strictly nocturnal animal, coming home perhaps a bit late, found its "front door" occupied by the leopard, and was waiting for him to depart. Calling to the men and Brockman, I kept the pengolin coiled up by giving it an occasional kick, but when the men arrived the fools let it get away into its burrow whilst wondering how to kill it, though they had an axe with them all the time. The curious part of the whole matter was that all this occurred within 200 yards of where I had shot at the buck, so that the noise had evidently not disturbed the leopard or else he had taken no notice of it.

The ferocity and determination of leopards when attacking, or when wounded, is amply illustrated by an adventure concerning which the following account has been kindly given me by Mr. S. Payne Gallwey, who says: "I send you an account of what I remember of the accident to C. de Winton. He and I started on a three weeks' shooting trip, some time in January 1892, from Haputale, going down by Wellawaya and Tellula, meaning to make for Tissamaharama tank as the end of our trip.

"We had good sport at Tellula, bagging two spotted deer, a bear, and other game, though we missed getting an elephant after a long track. We then moved on to Kudoya, and, the morning after our arrival, de Winton and I tossed for choice of side of the road, each going our

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

own way. I had a long morning, but made no bag of any sort, and on my return to camp was horrified to find de Winton there, lying down, badly mauled about the arm and shoulder by a leopard. It seems that he and his tracker (a first-rate and well-known man named Sinno Appoo) had suddenly met with a leopard in the jungle, and de Winton fired at it with a .500 express, hitting it hard but failing to stop it, and it disappeared in the cover.

“De Winton started to follow it up, but the tracker refused to come, saying that the jungle was too thick, so de Winton told him to stay where he was, and went on alone. He had only proceeded a short distance when he heard terrified yells from the tracker, and, hurrying back, found poor Sinno Appoo on the ground in the clutches of the leopard, which had evidently made a bit of *détour* and attacked the man at once. The jungle was so thick that de Winton had to get close up before he dare think of firing at the leopard, but the moment it saw him it sprang straight at him. He managed to give it both barrels as it came, mortally wounding it as it turned out, but failing to stop it at the time. De Winton fended it off with his arm, which it tore and bit from hand to shoulder, whilst a plucky cooly who was with them was all the while belabouring it with a small axe.

“Luckily for both, the animal was so badly wounded that it very soon collapsed and died, and the wounded men managed to make their way back to camp. The tracker did not appear to be particularly badly hurt, having been bitten through the thigh and not losing much blood. I at once grasped that it might be a matter of life and death to get de Winton into a doctor's hands, as we were 30 miles from Koslande, the nearest dispensary. The time

## THE LEOPARD

was then twelve noon, and we had with us a soft-hearted jibbing horse and a light cart, so I at once harnessed the horse, snatched a bite of food, put some champagne and a bottle of brandy in the cart, and, taking out the seat, laid de Winton along the bottom as comfortably as I could. The horse went all right along the flat of the low country road, but gave in at the hill going up from Wellawaya, and without that bottle of brandy I would never have made Koslande that night. The horse got it all, but even then I had to lead and coax it along for the last 10 miles.

“We got to Koslande at last at about 10 o'clock at night, and, as luck would have it, Dr. Griffin was in a bungalow some little way off, so I sent an urgent message to him, and down he came at once and did all he could for the sufferer.

“Poor de Winton had a bad time of it, but eventually pulled through all right, though he will bear the marks of the encounter for life. It was just ‘touch and go’ about getting to Koslande that night, and it might have been a very bad job for him if we had not been able to do it. I left Sinno Appoo in charge of my servant, a good man, Singhalese, and well accustomed to the low country, with instructions to bring him along, but the poor fellow died that night, mainly from the shock, I think, as the bite was not in a vital part and he had lost very little blood. Native-like, however, he gave himself up for lost at once, saying he always knew he was fated to be killed by a leopard, and he just wanted to die quietly.

“In the middle of the night he gave one shout of ‘The leopard has got me!’ and died.

“So ended our trip, and, as I had left everything lying about in camp at Kudoya, we lost practically all but our guns and a few odd things.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### BEARS AND WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

OUR Ceylon bear is *Melursus ursinus*, otherwise the sloth-bear or Indian bear, though why "sloth" I cannot conceive, as there is not much of the sloth about its movements.

It is rather an ugly, comical-looking little beast, about 2 feet 3 inches, more or less, in height, 4 feet 6 inches or so from nose to stern, and will weigh up to and over 200 lb.

The fur is very coarse and shaggy, black in colour, thickest and longest on the back of the neck to between the shoulders, thinning off to almost bare skin on the belly and under parts of the legs. The ears are moderately large and tufted with hair; the muzzle is a dirty whitey-grey, and there is a dirty white "horse-shoe" on the chest just where the neck joins.

The lips are very thick and long, capable of being protruded considerably, and are used to "mouth" things before taking into the mouth, also to form the "suction" tube when sucking out the combs of the white ants or other grubs and insects which form a part of their food. The fore-legs are very powerful, being armed with formidable claws which can be moved separately like fingers, and are used for digging purposes when attacking white-ant hills or grubbing for other insects. They can also strike with their fore-paws just like a human being can with his hands. The back legs are not so powerful, but

## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

are knee-jointed, so that a bear can put itself in almost any position possible, or impossible, to a human being.

The body is plump and podgy, but the fur makes it look much larger than it really is.

The males have a peculiar bone in the generative organ, which is highly prized by natives, especially the Tamils, as a charm against barrenness.

The females are somewhat smaller than the males, but have usually much thicker fur, especially between the shoulders, where it thickens into a dense tuft.

These bears are found over the greater portion of the Ceylon low country, and are especially common in the wilder portions of the North, North Central, East, and Southern Provinces.

They have no regular place of abode in the dry season, as they then have to wander far and wide in search of food, though they must remain within reach of water, as they drink daily. In the wet season, however, they take refuge under hollow trees, overhanging rocks, and in caves or ancient ruins, as they like shelter at that time.

In the wet season, therefore, they very much frequent the ridges of piled-up rocks, to be met with in the forest, known as *hinna*, and I have often seen bears whose long fur of the neck and shoulders has been worn down very short through having a lair under very low rocks or in a hollow tree with a very low entrance necessitating a squeeze to get in.

In the wet season their favourite food is the larvæ of white ants, which they can then dig out, the rain having somewhat softened the earth, grubs and beetles of all sorts, and tree honey, in the finding of which their scenting power is marvellous, whilst their powers of suction for extracting their grub or larvæ food—in fact all food—is a thing wonderful to hear and behold.

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

The noise they make when inhaling can be heard a great distance, and sounds almost like an elephant snorting, grunting, and blowing through its trunk.

In the dry season they still have honey, which seems to exist at all seasons of the year ; but in addition to that there is also a considerable variety of fruit then available, as many of the jungle trees are in fruit at that time. The principal fruits thus met with are *valu*, *mora*, *kon*, *weera*, *timberi*, *diwul*, and *damba*, and at times the strong-smelling flower of the *mee* tree. The above fruits and the *mee* flower attract not only the bears but almost all other animals in Ceylon, the *palu*, *weera*, and *damba* being the most attractive as they are very sweet ; but the *mee* flower is probably the most attractive of them all.

Bears go about usually singly, but occasionally in pairs, especially during the mating season, whilst females allow their cubs to run with them until nearly full grown.

The cub when small is often carried on its mother's back between the shoulders, and is supposed to hold on by the long hair which forms a regular thick tuft there.

The peculiar form of these bears' legs enables them to get into the most extraordinary positions and attitudes when sucking their food out of ant-hills, grub-holes, cracks in trees or rocks, and such-like, their limbs seeming to be, in a clumsy way, as flexible as a monkey's. They are good but somewhat slow, clumsy climbers, and their gait on the ground is a sprawling walk, which they can quicken into a very lollipy, head-over-heels sort of gallop, but which gets them over the ground at a fair pace. Their sight is poor, and hearing none too good either ; but this is compensated for by their keen sense of smell, and they like to investigate everything they come across with their mobile lips and noses. When caught young they are easily tamed,

## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

but are filthily dirty in their habits and somewhat short in their temper.

During the wet season they wander about in search of food in the daytime as well as at night. In the dry season, in uninhabited country, they come to water from midday to midnight or later, and go in search of food at night only.

In fairly populous country they will not be on the move before dark, and then come to water from 8 P.M. until the "wee small hours."

They can move along silently if they like, but usually their strong breathing may be heard long before the animal is seen, their powerful inhalations and exhalations giving one the idea of a very cavernous chest, and indeed they are well provided with lungs. When undisturbed they occasionally emit a single cry, but only at long intervals, and this is, I think, only in the case of two being together or mother and cub.

When wounded or alarmed, however, never was heard such a row! It can only adequately be described by likening it to a mixture of the bellowing of a bull, trumpeting of an elephant, and yelpings of a pack of hounds anxious to be let out of the kennel, and is calculated to disturb the nerves of a novice very considerably at first.

Naturally very timid and retiring animals, they are, however, liable to attack with disconcerting suddenness when accidentally met with at close quarters, and this attack is usually very effective in its results.

There is hardly a village in the jungle country in which cannot be found one or more men showing the effects of such an encounter, as the silent walking native, if alone, is more liable to surprise a bear than the heavier-footed European.

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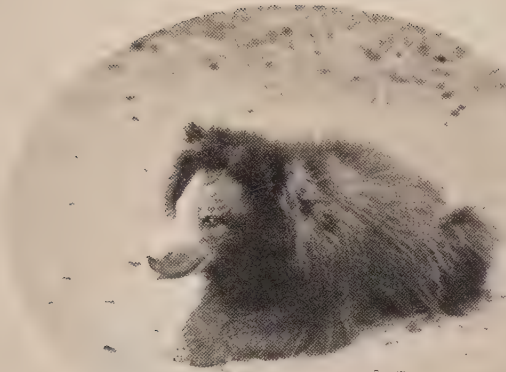
The method of attack is not, as is generally and popularly imagined, for the bear to come to close quarters and then rise up for a hug, but, on the contrary, the animal rushes right in and sweeps a man off his legs by fearful *round-arm* blows of its strong *fore-legs*, which it can use to strike with almost as well as a man can use his arms; or it hurls itself on a man, legs and teeth all in use at once. If it gets a man down, its most common proceeding is then to administer one or two fearful bites to his head or face, and then bolt away with roars and yells, apparently panic-stricken at its own boldness. Occasionally it does stand up and strike at a man; but this probably occurs when the first attack has failed to knock him down. Given presence of mind and a good stick, and I believe a man would be safe from any attacking bear, as the least touch on its sensitive nose would give it "fits" and take all the fight out of it.

This is their one touchy point, and their first instinct is to protect it. You can easily find that out by experimenting with a tame bear if you get a chance.

Give it a tap on the nose and it will instantly bury it in its breast, and even protect it with its fore-paws, soon becoming as skilled in dodging a blow as any pugilist.

Natives during the dry season will never traverse a jungle path alone or unarmed on account of these animals, which I think they fear more than any other animal in the jungle except perhaps elephants.

In the wet season, or when much fruit is falling (the *damba* falls in October and November), the sportsman in the low country will occasionally be lucky enough to meet a bear on the prowl in forest or park in broad daylight, or, if he be in *hinna* country, it will pay him to visit the rocks in the morning to see if a bear or bears are "at home." In the dry season, however, the only chance of a bear is at a



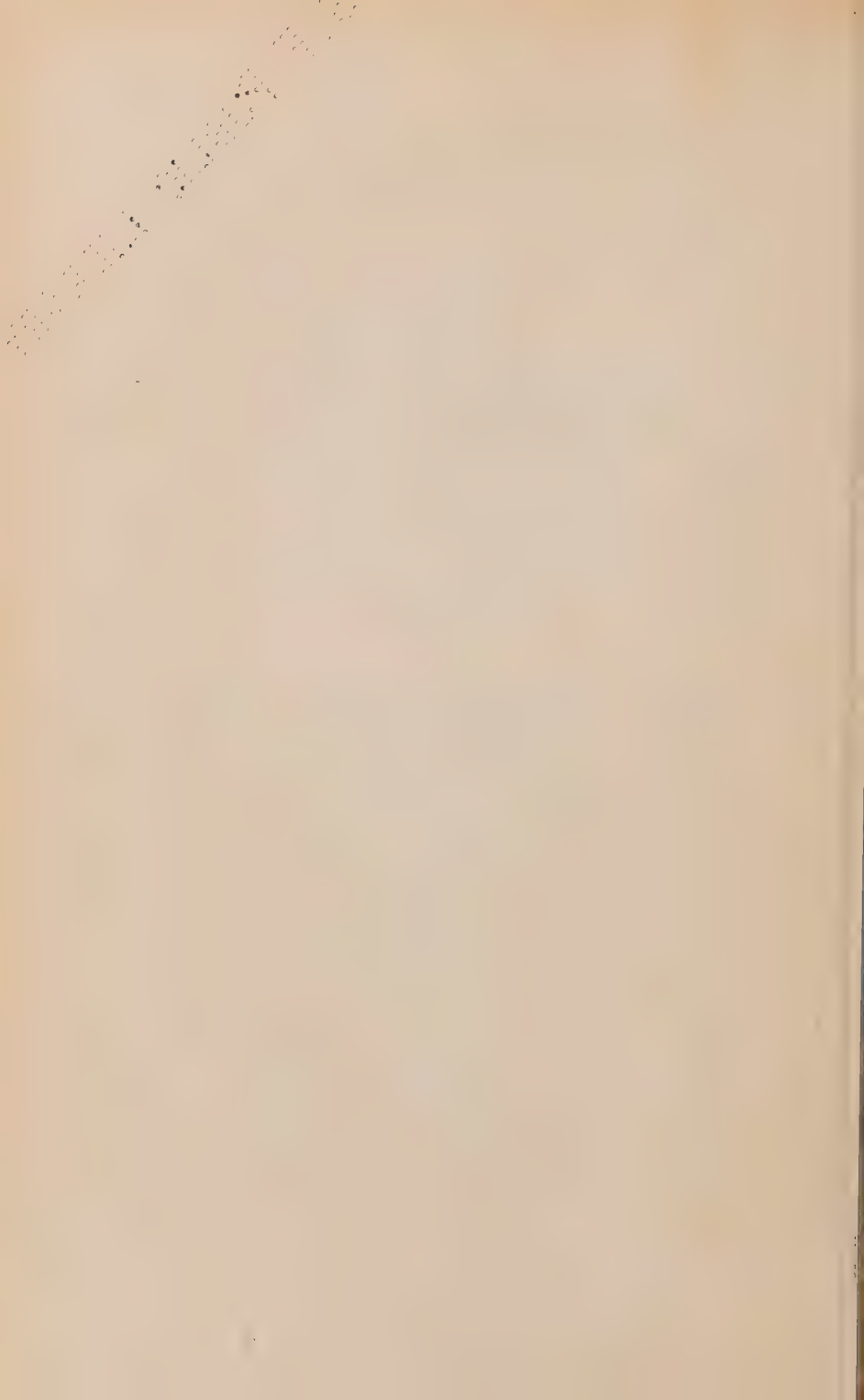
A YOUNG BEAR (*Melursus ursinus*)



Photo by Lieut.-Col. E. Gordon Reeves.

#### TWO TRACKERS

The old man on the left was with the author in 1900, when a leopard attacked and mauled both of them



## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

water-hole, and whatever may be said or thought of such sport, water-hole shooting, or at any rate watching, is to my mind one of the most fascinating experiences a man can enjoy.

Reverting to natives suffering from injuries inflicted by bears, I once had a startling example brought to my notice. I was halting for my 11 o'clock breakfast at the village of Dematawewa on the Horowapotana-Alut Oya road some years ago, and some of the villagers had come up for a talk, when one of them, a fairly good-looking man, who was at the time speaking to me, happening to turn his face a bit to the right, I saw to my horror that he only possessed half a face.

The whole of the left side was gone; eye, part of the forehead, cheek, ear, and flesh of the jaw, leaving a smooth hollow, beautifully healed up and covered with skin, evidently an old injury.

In reply to my inquiry, he told me it occurred one day when he had just gone outside the village to drive in two buffaloes—a bear rushed out of a bush, knocked him down, did this awful damage with one bite, and then fled.

Another native of my acquaintance had the whole top of his head and skin of the forehead torn off by a very similar attack some years ago, and he also made a good recovery but is marked by a tremendous cicatrice across the forehead and partly round his head.

I know of many other cases all very similar in incident, and all caused by coming on a bear suddenly, thus startling it into frightened attack.

My own first experience of bear-shooting occurred in 1891 in the month of August, the very height of the dry season in the low country. I tramped from my bungalow to Topawewa, a distance of between 50 and 60 miles,

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

by the "tavalam" track from Kaikawela, on the Matale-Rattota road, *via* Ambane, Elahera, and Angamedilla, my baggage being carried by eight pack-bullocks and eight men, including the cattle men. This was in my young days, when I scorned any attempt at comfort or luxury, and so I had no bed, no chair, no tent, and very little in the way of food. I carried a mat, blanket, pillow, and mosquito curtain, however, so, as it seldom rains at that time, I was all right—still I travel a bit differently nowadays.

Arrived at Topawewa, I put up with my friend M'Donnell of the Irrigation Department, and next day we set off together for Minneriya, he being on his way to Haburane on business. Stayed the night at Minneriya, and next morning I left M'Donnell and tramped to Kauduluwewa *via* the Yodi Ela (overflow channel from Minneriya) and Rotawewe village, where I picked up some men as guides and shikaries. This is a Veddah village, long settled, and had been visited in his day by Sir Emerson Tennent.

At Kauduluwewa we camped by a beautiful gorge, through which the Gal Oya forces its way over masses of quartz, and which, even when the river is dried up, always contains water in deep pools, alive with fish and crocodiles. It moreover is one of the breaches in the *bund* of the great Kaudulu tank, as here the river was dammed up to form the reservoir, as was also the Alut Oya, 2 miles farther north.

Having pitched camp—not a lengthy operation—I set off about 3 P.M. with two men and walked along the foot of the *bund* to the Alut Oya which forms the second great breach in the *bund*, passing on the way the remaining open part of the tank which still forms an open space of about 1000 acres in extent, now dried up, but a swamp of reeds and rushes in the wet weather, alive with water-fowl, buffaloes, and pigs.

## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

Arrived at the Alut Oya, we went down stream about 100 yards from the road, and my men showed me the drinking place, a sandy hollow (described in my chapter on leopards), ploughed up with animal tracks of all sorts and exhibiting many unmistakable bear tracks, which resemble the footprint of a very flat-footed child or small man. We then built a stage on the right bank, supported on some trees, fully commanding the hollow, and after a feed at about 5 P.M. took our places for the watch. These stages are formed of some main supports consisting of jungle sticks about 1½ inches to 2 inches thick, lashed in convenient positions from branch to branch or fork to fork of a tree or trees at any convenient height from the ground, depending entirely on circumstances or position.

Across these are lashed, with any handy jungle creeper, a number of sticks as thick as a walking-stick or less, about 2 or 3 inches apart, and across the front of the stage are tied two or three sticks to the height of about a foot; green twigs, with leaves on, are spread over the stage and hung on the front cross-pieces to form a screen, and your stage is complete. The jungle village men are most expert at this work, and it is a treat to watch them. You take your place on it with a good blanket to sit on, an air pillow, some food to your taste, and lots of drink in the shape of cold tea or lime-juice, or even cold coffee. You settle yourself comfortably in good position for the shot, place your gun conveniently to hand, and then—silence, with eyes and ears ever on the alert. Before proceeding to an account of a night-watch, it is advisable for me to say something about the time for watching, weapons, and night-sights. The months in which night-watching may be indulged in are June, July, August, and September, and occasionally even October—all depending on the weather.

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June is usually too early and September is sometimes too late. Artificial lights are not a success, so you must depend on the moon, and should begin your trip when the moon is about in its first quarter, continuing, if time permits you, to watch, using the moon until about two days after the full.

As a weapon there is nothing to beat a 12-bore, preferably a gun of the "Paradox" type, but any 12-bore that will take ball is good enough, as it is all close-quarter shooting. As a night-sight I have found nothing to beat a sleeve of white cloth about a foot long slipped tight over the muzzle-end of the gun by being sewn to fit, or better still a strip of cloth the full width of the barrels fastened by elastic bands at the back. This is especially good for a jungle country like Ceylon, where the shadows are so pronounced.

And now being comfortably settled, having everything in order, let us take note of what we see. The Alut Oya is a "jungle drain," a small river running over a sandy or rocky bed, entirely dependent on rainfall, and dry, or reduced to a few pools, throughout the dry season. Its course lies entirely through forest, and so is overhung by trees all along. About an eighth of a mile or less from my stage farther down stream there is a huge pool of water in a rocky gorge; but the curious thing is that animals will never go to a big pool if there is a small one available. Given a large pool of good clean water, and 50 yards away a filthy puddle of liquid mud, animals will come to the latter in preference—whether they like the mud or it accords more with their ideas of caution I cannot say.

In the present case there is no pool at my watching-place, only a sandy hollow in the river-bed in which animals

## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

have dug little holes, finding water at about 2 feet deep. In other places I have at times actually seen holes dug to a depth of 5 or 6 feet by animals in search of water, the bears being the best and most indefatigable workers.

Shortly after taking our places on the stage I saw some spotted deer cross the river-bed a little below us, but they did not come to drink.

Towards sundown the place was simply alive with birds, twittering and flying about here, there, and everywhere, descending in batches to drink at the tiny puddles at the bottom of the holes. Later the pigeons began to arrive in great numbers, principally bronze-wings, a few imperial green pigeons, and common spotted doves.

A mongoose came along in a very business-like manner, and, after a glance round, dropped into a hole and dug for water for himself with great energy, neglecting a hole near him which already contained water. After his departure I saw a huge boar on the opposite bank amongst the trees, but it did not come to the water and I did not try a shot at it.

Before dusk finally settled down we heard a cracking of sticks and a rustling in the jungle on the opposite bank, and out came a she-bear carrying a young cub on her back—my first sight of a bear. She began to descend the bank, and when half-way down I fired at her shoulder just in front of the young one, and at the shot she merely gave a grunt, turned round, and disappeared up the bank again, the cub apparently unmoved by the event, but as later on we heard the young one crying at intervals, we knew the old one was done for. After this there was an interval of about twenty minutes, during which night set in and I fixed my night-sight in the shape of a white sleeve on the muzzle-end of my double-barrelled "Paradox," and this formed an

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excellent sight even when it got very dark. Very soon we heard heavy breathing from the up-river direction, and a bear came walking down the river-bed, but instead of drinking at a hole in which water already stood, it dropped into a dry hole and began vigorously digging with its powerful forearms and huge claws.

In this position, head down in the hole and stern in the air, it offered me a splendid shot between the shoulders, which I took advantage of, dropping it stone-dead on the spot. I and my men got down from the stage, hauled it out, finding that the bullet had gone right through it, and hid the body behind a heap of sand in our side of the river-bed, blinding our tracks by sprinkling them with water from the holes, and covering up with sand the pool of blood left in the hole the "deceased" had dug.

Within *five minutes* after getting back on to the stage we heard fearful howls, yells, and grunts from up-river direction, and down came two bears running like mad. I fired at the first one and knocked him over, but he got up again and started to bolt after the other one, which was already "making tracks," whereupon I fired again and once more he fell, but recovered and disappeared up-bank uttering fearful yells and grunts. After a long interval another bear appeared from up-stream, but, apparently scenting something wrong, turned and bolted, I sending an ineffectual shot after him. A long wait of two hours ensued, and then a leopard came quietly down-river, but it was pitch dark and I could not see anything, so I let him lap undisturbed and go away. After this, for a long time nothing came but porcupines, which we could recognise by the peculiar occasional rustle of their "hind" quills, but eventually another bear did turn up, bolting hurriedly, however, before I could get in a shot. Nothing then

## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

occurred during the rest of the night, and I did a bit of sleeping until daybreak, when, as soon as it was light enough, I got down from the stage and went to look for the wounded female first shot at. A short search in the forest soon found her lying under a hollow tree breathing heavily, so I went up close and fired into her, and at my shot she got up, ran violently about 30 yards and fell dead. Examination revealed that my first shot, fired from above, had entered behind the right shoulder, traversed the chest, gone down the whole length of the left fore-leg under the skin, and out at the wrist or ankle—a most extraordinary course for a 12-bore ball to take, and how the poor animal lived so long with such a wound seems incredible. When skinning this bear the youngster appeared, and we tried to catch him; but he was too big for us to tackle, so we let him go. We looked for traces of the other wounded bear, but could find none, as they don't bleed much, so we returned to the hollow, skinned the other dead bear, and went back to camp.

Two nights later I watched at this hole again, killed two more bears, one of them the wounded one of the previous occasion, and missed a leopard.

The fact of the wounded bear having to return to the same water-hole shows how curiously conservative and stupid animals are, for there were several other pools of water available within no very great distance. The presence of the stinking carcase of the dead bear also seemed to be no deterrent as far as other animals were concerned, but for our own sakes we partly buried it under the sand before we began our second watch.

Once, on another occasion when watching for bears, I had not been long on my stage when I heard a most fearful hullabaloo, and presently a bear came rushing down the

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

river-bed (I was watching at the same old place) panting and blowing, ran to the nearest water-hole, but only had time for a few hurried sips when another vociferous bear appeared making record time after it. Away the first one went with startled "wuffs," and away went the other in hot pursuit, with evidently fearful threats of vengeance if No. 1 did not stop, for so I interpreted the blood-curdling yells uttered by No. 2, and I was far too interested to think of shooting. Farther down stream, but out of my sight, pursuer caught the pursued, and then ensued such a pandemonium as I have never heard before or since—absolutely beyond description. After a while one broke away and rushed off into the jungle with plaintive little moans, whilst the other, panting fit to burst, returned to the water for a drink, where, I am rather ashamed to say, I shot it. Bears, like every other jungle animal in Ceylon, are infested with ticks, usually those of a large size, so the skins should be left some distance away from camp until the abominable creatures have removed themselves. We were always taught in our youthful days that every creature on God's earth has its use, but I confess I fail to understand the usefulness of such beasts as ticks, fleas, mosquitoes, or snakes; we could very well dispense with them, I think.

It will probably be thought that the sound of a gunshot at a water-hole would alarm the country for miles round, but in Ceylon that is not the case, as the sound is deadened and swallowed up by the forest, only audible at a distance as a dull sort of boom which animals seem to take no notice of. As in the case of leopards, except for the chance of an accidental meeting, the water-hole business is the only certain way of getting a bear, and that fact, in my opinion, makes the sport perfectly legitimate, not to men-



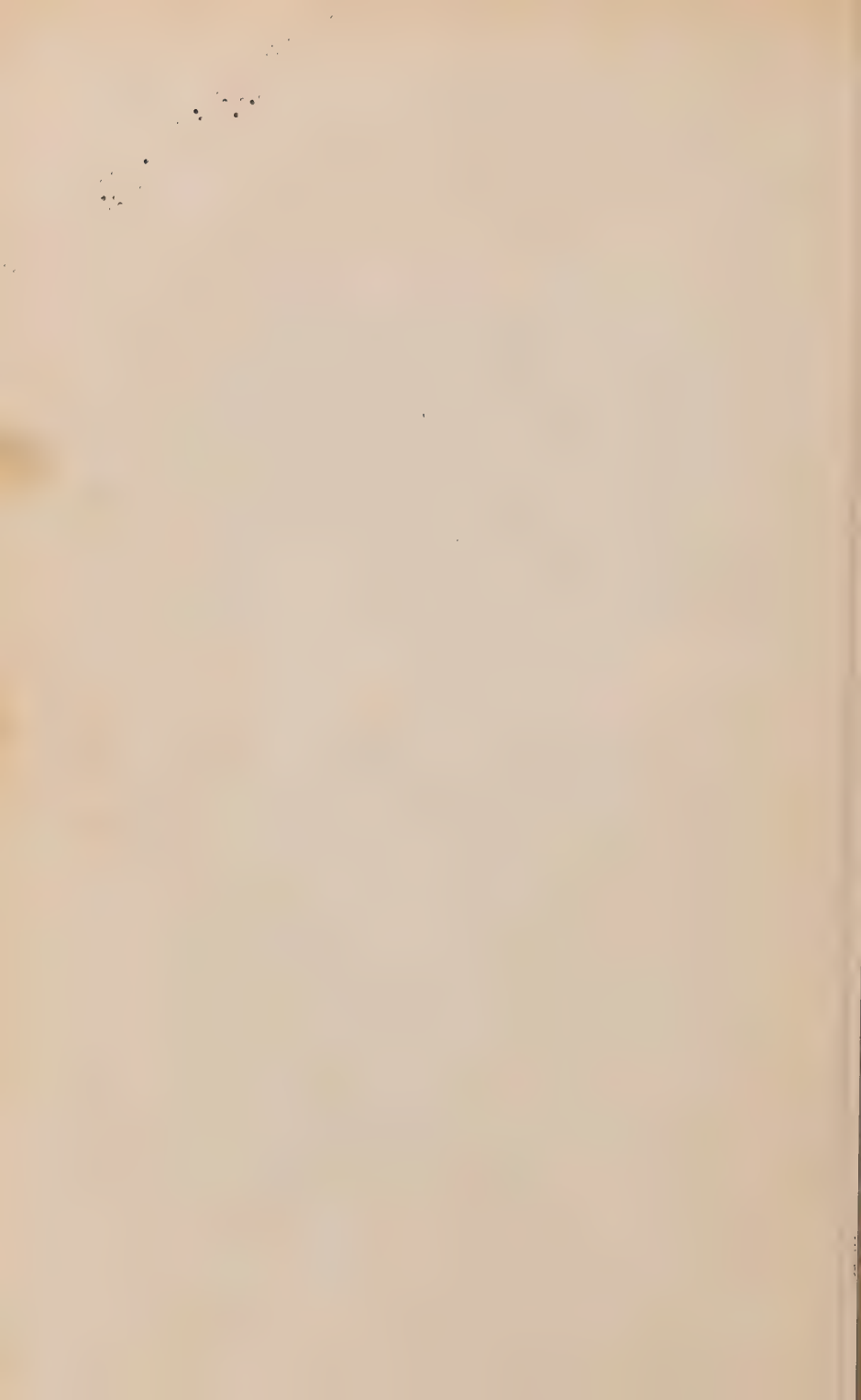
Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

THE HAUNT OF THE BEAR



Photo by Lieut.-Col. E. Gordon Reeves.

DEAD BEAR



## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

tion the unrivalled opportunities of studying the habits of all sorts of wild creatures, yourself unseen.

I remember, some years ago, during a trip with Tom Wright, I had tramped with three men to a remote water-hole 6 miles from camp, away in the forest, a deep little pool of water in a dry river-bed, whilst Tom had gone to a tank in another direction fairly near our camp.

I and my men got to our scene of operations before midday, and, after a look at the water-hole, whence a pig scooted as we came up, the men retired to a bigger pool about 100 yards away to cook some food for themselves. The whole place was big forest, solemn in its twilight and stillness, and when the men had gone I sat down on a tree-root about 30 yards from the pool, down wind, of course, just to be alone with Nature for a while. I was not permitted to be alone for long; in less than a quarter of an hour—and this was midday, mind you—I saw a bear strolling down the river-bed to the pool. He never saw me, but stopped conveniently about 5 yards from the water to sniff at something, falling in his tracks to my shot, but uttering such fearful yells that I gave him a second shot to finish him. The men came running up at the sound, and to avoid making tracks they waded through the pool and dragged the bear through the water to my side, after blinding the tracks with wet sand. We deposited the corpse amongst the tree-roots at our end, and when the men had fed we built our *messa*, or shooting stage, in a tree at a height of fully 30 feet from the ground, as the trees round about were devoid of convenient lower branches.

We got on the stage at about 1 P.M., and then ensued one of the most interesting afternoons I ever spent in the jungle. Birds came in vast numbers, and it was intensely interesting to watch their antics, hear their chatter and little alarms,

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

generally imaginary, but once very real by reason of the swoop of a hawk amongst them.

Many beautiful varieties of kingfishers came and perched on snags in the water, or on overhanging branches above it; pigeons of every variety pattered about on the sand, or came swooping through the trees with silent lightning flight, and the whole forest was alive with song and twitter. One huge kingfisher amused me very much by his stolid behaviour, as he sat on a creeper above the pool, gorgeous in his black cap, yellow neck and breast, wonderful metallic peacock-blue back and wings, and bright red beak and legs. Nothing disturbed or alarmed him; the other birds could shriek, twitter, fly about and frighten each other; but it mattered not one jot to his lordship, nor did the sudden advent of the hawk disturb him in the least. There he sat intent on business in the shape of a meal, dropping every now and then like a stone into the water, regaining his perch to dry, sometimes with a prize in the shape of a small fish, sometimes without one. This game he kept up for quite half-an-hour before departing, and I was sorry to lose him.

At about 3 P.M., from the south side of the river, out of the forest came, with the utmost caution, a small herd of spotted deer, consisting of four good bucks, one very young buck and two does, joined soon after by another doe from the opposite side, which was at once taken possession of by the master buck, not one of the others daring to even look at her. They all drank with infinite caution and many alarms, never seeing us in our high tree; but I was most interested to observe a buck now and then turn his head clean round, until the horns hung downwards, to stare up into the trees above him, evidently on the look-out for a leopard.

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One by one they departed into the forest, the master buck remaining till the last for a look round, and with him I experimented a bit. I first whistled, and then waved my hand to him; and, though he seemed to think there was something wrong, he took no particular notice, apparently not being able to look up as a dog can. Then I took up my white "topee" and waved that, but for some moments even that did not attract his attention, though finally he seemed to think all was not as it should be, and departed at speed.

After this a tiny red doe came along, but did not drink—merely wandered about on the sand, stopping every now and then to listen intently, and stamp its foot in a funny little way.

About 5 P.M. down came, cautiously, a buck elk with very poor horns, but a fine-bodied animal fully maned, and of a grand dark brown colour. He was accompanied by four does, ungainly-looking animals with their small heads, huge ears, and big bodies, and they were shortly joined by a spotted doe which seemed to be in perfect amity with them.

After a good drink, varied by the usual false alarms, they all left, and nothing more occurred until just at dusk, when, a few minutes after I had fixed my night-sight, down came a bear from the south side. As he passed over the spot where the other bear had fallen, he stopped instantly and began to sniff around, so I let him have it at once, and down he fell huddled up in a heap, gasping and choking, shot through the lungs and right shoulder, dying in about two minutes.

Him also we trailed through the water and deposited with the first one under our tree, and after that, as nothing came for some hours, I lay down to sleep, leaving the men

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on the watch. Nothing seemed to come during the night, however, as is often the case at these very remote unvisited holes, the animals having all come and gone between mid-day and dusk; but even if they had come, the shadows thrown by the forest were so dense that, in spite of the bright moonlight, I could not have seen anything. Our daybreak visitors proved so interesting that I remained on the stage until quite 6.30.

First a grand buck elk came to the edge of the forest, accompanied by a young spotted buck. The latter, with many starts and quick glances here and there, tripped down to the water, but the elk remained for some minutes like a dark statue, listening intently, immovable but for the twitching of his big ears, gradually, however, approaching the water step by step, until, being satisfied all was right, he had his drink.

Within a few minutes after their arrival out came, with proud dainty steps, a lovely spotted buck, with a head which fairly made me gasp, and I'll swear my gun jumped in my hands; but shoot I did not, in spite of agitated whispers from my men and my own longings. I never saw such antlers in Ceylon before or since, and would have given much for the open season and a fair shot. Had I met the buck in the open park I would have shot him then and there without any hesitation, but I could not bring myself to slaughter him at a water-hole. It was wonderful to watch them—how every sound would cause a start and a period of intent listening; down would go each head to drink, but would be up again, anxious and alert, even before taking a sip of water, the spotted bucks glancing nervously in every direction, the elk confining himself more to intent listening. After a while these elegant creatures departed as cautiously as they came, and a short time after dawn came two doe

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elk and a spotted doe, exhibiting nothing like as much caution as the bucks, going to water with very little hesitation. At their departure we descended, skinned our bears, and tramped back to camp. Tom had drawn a blank, and seen nothing at his watching-place.

The above experience must not be taken as typical of all water-holes: this one was exceptionally remote and unvisited even by the natives, hence the early arrival of all the animals; but in any case the spotted deer will always drink in the daytime and not at night, whereas the elk are more in the habit of drinking in the small hours of the morning, or just before daybreak. Spotted deer also prefer if possible an open pool to drink at, and will not come to a forest pool if an open tank is available near their haunts, whilst the elk seem actually to prefer to drink at these remote forest pools, or rock-holes.

I remember many years ago, during one of my "pack-bullock" trips, having to stay the night in the great stretch of forest between Elaheera and Kukuruwampotawe. We camped on the Attanakada-ela, a jungle river dry at the time, and our only water was a filthy little puddle at the roots of a big kumbuk tree. I was hot, tired, and dirty, and determined to have a bath somehow, so set off and actually tramped two miles through the forest, down the sandy river-bed to the Ambanganga, a fine perennial river, for that purpose. Round a corner, just where the Attanakada-ela joins the "ganga," I found, to my surprise, a native camp consisting of four men, who, in answer to my inquiries, told me they were there to shoot elk; and on my asking where they did the shooting, they showed me a foul muddy puddle just inside the *embouchure* of the Attanakada-ela, within 20 feet of the clean water of the ganga, and not more than 20 yards from their camp.

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In a tree over this puddle they had built a "messa," and had already shot two elk in the two nights they had been there.

It seems incredible that wild animals can be such fools, first to drink at such a puddle with a fine clear river available close by; and, secondly, to do so regularly night after night as they do. Instinct does not seem to amount to much under those circumstances. However, I am digressing very seriously, for I am supposed to be discoursing of bear-shooting, so let us go back to them.

Tom was much interested in my experiences in the foregoing account, and so we decided to tramp to another water-hole beyond the one I had watched at, and perhaps put in a night at my watch-hole on our return. We had an early breakfast, packed up some tins of meat, tea, biscuits, &c., and off we set with men and guides. We visited the place I had watched as we passed, and found one of my bear carcasses had been taken away by a leopard. Leaving this place, we crossed an abandoned tank, and tramped about 2 miles through the jungle, finally reaching our objective in the shape of a huge whale-back of slab rock surrounded by the forest. In the centre of it was a small pool of water about 10 feet long by 6 feet wide, showing tracks of two bears in some sand on its edge.

Away on the right side of the rock, about 40 yards from this small pool, was another large long pool about 30 yards long by 10 yards wide, bordered by the rock on three sides and jungle on the fourth. The brink of this hole was rock all round, and we saw no signs of visitors, whilst our men knew nothing of them either; so I gave Tom his choice of pools, and he decided to try the small one. We fixed on a good tree on the jungle edge commanding Tom's pool for a "messa," and a similar tree

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at one end of my pool for mine, sending off some men to cut sticks, whilst the others cooked some food. In the meantime we went for a stroll and discovered a ruined dagoba at one end of the rock, whilst a little farther on was a "pokuna" or small square tank, now dry, probably formed by taking out earth for making bricks for the dagoba. On our return one of our Tamils said a bear had come to the big pool, but had bolted at the sight of the men. We did not believe him, as he was a bit of an ass, and his statement was unsupported by the others, though after events proved that he was probably quite right. My stage was then built, and Tom and I both sat on it for a bit whilst his was being constructed, but he left me very soon to superintend the job himself. Shortly after he left me, time being about 3 P.M., a small female bear and a cub came walking out of the forest at the far end of the rock opposite my stage, unnoticed by Tom and his men, who were still building.

They were coming down to drink at my pool, when the old one seemed to suspect something wrong, sheering away from the water out of my sight behind some jungle; but "baby" wanted a drink, and was fractious, making little runs towards the water, recalled each time by an insistent grunt from "mama." They then disappeared in the jungle, and I called to Tom to tell him what I had seen, which rather surprised him.

Almost as soon as they disappeared a doe elk came out between my pool and Tom's, but soon took alarm and bolted.

I should have stated that my stage and Tom's occupied opposite sides of the main rock, and were about 40 yards apart, each stage being visible to the other party.

Just as Tom completed his stage and got settled on it,

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a fine buffalo came out on to the rock near him, and just opposite me, but we scared it away, not wishing to shoot. At about 5 P.M. a bear came out at the ruined dagoba end of the rock, which was the furthest point from either stage, being some 40 yards from mine, and fully 60 yards from Tom's. As it seemed undecided whether to come to water or not, and wandered about in an aimless sort of way, I fired at it but missed it clean, both barrels, to my great disgust, and away it bolted with little yells and grunts of alarm.

A little while after this, and just before dusk, I put on my night-sight, when, happening to glance over my shoulder towards Tom, I saw that he and his men were staring intently past me towards the dagoba end of the rock, so, guessing something was coming, I held myself ready.

In a few moments a bear appeared, came towards the water, but at about 20 yards from it sat down on its haunches like a dog, sniffed the air for a bit, and then got up, turning as though to depart.

I fired at once, but it bolted out of my sight without uttering a sound, though I felt sure I had hit it and called out to that effect to Tom, who cheered me by saying, "It's all right; it is down." I scrambled down from my stage, with two of my men, and cautiously made my way towards the bear, which was lying on the slope of the ruined dagoba, trying its condition as I came near by heaving a few rocks at it, but it was as dead as a door-nail, so we tailed on and dragged it over towards my tree, depositing it in a hollow. The bullet had entered the stomach far back, raked through the chest, and lodged, as we afterwards found, in the throat, so no wonder it was voiceless. I asked Tom to join me on my stage now, as it was evidently the "gamey" one, but he preferred to stay where he was. We had a bit of a wait after this, and then a leopard came along, an account of



A PAIR OF GOOD RED DEER HEADS AND A SMALL SPOTTED BUCK HEAD,  
FROM THE AUTHOR'S TROPHIES



SKULL OF BEAR (*Melarsus ursinus*)



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which I have already given in my chapter on leopards. It was now very dark, the moon being far down, but soon after this out came another bear at the dagoba end, but, getting on the track of the dead bear, went along it and disappeared, unshot at. A moment after, however, we heard a "wuff" at Tom's side of the forest, and a small black object appeared running towards my pool, straight across the rock. I fired, and it dropped with a yell, which was answered by such a chorus of yells and grunts from the jungle that I knew I had slaughtered a young bear and "mama" was aroused.

Out she came, yelling "blue murder," and both Tom and I let fly at her, which forced her to retreat, though we missed clean, both of us. Out she came once more, however, and again we banged at her, missing clean as before, and this time she bolted with grievous yells, grunts, and snorts, whilst "baby" incontinently died. I was rather sick at shooting the poor little beast, but the light was dim, and I was not certain at first what it was. This was our last visitant that night, except a porcupine, which Tom shot, and the next day we returned to my forest hole, where Tom watched one night, whilst I watched at a mud puddle about half a mile away. A bear came to my puddle just after nightfall and kicked up the most ridiculous antics, capering about, yelling and howling, but fell at once to my shot. I felt rather pleased with myself at this, but suddenly the apparently dead bear scrambled to its feet and bolted at speed, in spite of a hasty shot sent after it which merely elicited a few extra yells. An hour afterwards exactly the same thing occurred—a bear came along, I shot and dropped it, neglecting to give it my second barrel until too late, for it also got up and departed at speed. I was by this time rather sorry for myself. Nothing further happened that

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night, except that I went to sleep, as did my old shikari evidently, for he suddenly roused me and whispered that a leopard had come. I sat up and stared into the dim shadows, seeing what looked like an animal of sorts, though I was not satisfied that it was an animal, but urged by old K. I fired, and—kicked up a fountain of mud at the foot of a snag. So much for old K.'s leopard, and he waxed quite indignant when I hinted that he had been asleep. In the morning I found that Tom had seen no bears, but had killed a huge boar with fine tusks, and the men took a grand side of bacon off him. I should say we tried to track down my wounded bears, but found it hopeless, the ground brick dry, and no blood trail, though there was a little blood on the ground where they fell. We then got back to our main camp, and had no more bear shooting that trip, returning home soon after.

A somewhat curious experience occurred once to myself and my friend M. L. Wilkins, when bear shooting together. We were watching a puddle in the breached *bund* of a small abandoned tank, remote from any village, all surrounded by forest, and had built a stage in a small tree about 6 feet above the ground, commanding the water, which was about 15 yards to our front, whilst the dry watercourse from the pool ran close past our stage, disappearing in the jungle on our right. On our left, as we faced the pool, was a tiny circular glade of grass, about 20 yards in diameter, just touching the dry watercourse at our side, and of course surrounded by forest. To more particularise the situation, the tank, long breached and abandoned, was a little open grassy park on its inside, surrounded by the usual forest; the *bund* was only about 6 or 8 feet high, and was clothed in trees, whilst, with the exception of our tiny glade, the forest came right up to and overlapped the outside of the

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*bund* right along. This little glade had often been used as a camping place by me, and is also a good deal used by natives, having been quite evidently recently occupied by them, as we found a meat-drying "grid" (a sort of long frame of small sticks placed close together across a main frame, the whole raised on forked sticks about 2 feet above the ground, whilst underneath a slow fire is lighted, and deer meat is dried over it by being spread in strips on the "grid" frame) in the middle of it, and, quite close by, a tiny single-sloped roof of grass as a sort of shelter shed.

Before we got on the stage, having sent our men back to camp 3 miles away, I collected all the dry firewood lying around and put it under the little shed, as the weather looked threatening and dull. About 5 P.M. we got on the stage, but the only thing that came to water before dark was a big mongoose, which, after a drink, went sniffing around on the half-dry mud, every now and then grubbing about, excavating and eating something. I investigated this next morning, and found it had been digging out and eating small fish buried in the drying mud. The filthy puddle was full of fish, principally that known as *hunga*, a slimy-looking beast with long feelers pendent from its mouth, and this fish can sting very painfully. I saw some in the puddle 9 inches to a foot long.

These drying puddles often contain quite big fish, such as the *lula* or *walleya*, both of which grow to several pounds in weight, and I am not romancing when I say I have repeatedly seen these bigger fish jumping at the pigeons whilst drinking at the edge of a puddle in the evening. The pigeons seemed quite to expect it, and merely jumped or fluttered out of the way, and went on drinking at another spot until again disturbed. I once also saw a crocodile make a dart at an imperial green pigeon drinking at a pool in the

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Gal Oya gorge at Kauduluwewa, but I am glad to say it did not succeed in catching it.

To return to our shoot: nothing more occurred, after the departure of the mongoose, until perhaps 8 P.M., at which time the moonlight was very dim, and the weather looked like rain, when we heard a bear "snuffing" in the forest on our right.

For some moments we heard the sound of its hard breathing only, but soon the "pad-pad" of its flat feet became audible on the dead leaves which strewed the ground, and it came in sight shuffling along the watercourse at our very feet. As soon as it was in a favourable position between us and the pool, Wilkins fired at it with a buckshot charge, of which I had expressed considerable mistrust. He hit it all right, and it gave vent to the usual unearthly cries, but scrambled up the bank and disappeared, yelling at intervals as it went. Wilkins was very sick about this, and promptly loaded up with ball. Shortly after it began to rain, not heavy, but persistent and penetrating. We stood it as long as we could under our blankets, and then got down and retired to the little shed, where we soon had a roaring fire going, in front of which we lay stretched and comfortable on our blankets, talking and yarning. All thoughts of bears or any other visitants had vanished, when suddenly we heard the well-known grunt and "wuff" of a bear. We sat up and grabbed our guns, ready to hand and loaded of course, when a second grunt gave me the clue as to the direction from which the animal was approaching, which was from the *inside* of the tank, and he was evidently coming over the *bund* just behind us. I jumped up, ran straight to the watercourse at the side of the puddle, hearing the bear in the undergrowth on my left, and, stooping down, peered through the darkness towards the pool, which



Photo by M. L. Wilkins, Esq.

THE AUTHOR AND THE BEAR OF THE "SURPRISE" INCIDENT



BEAR SHOT BY M. L. WILKINS

Old Kapurala, of Diwulankadawela, a good shikari, holding the gun



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I could just faintly see. In a moment the bear scrambled down the bank about 10 yards away, and as soon as I could make him out in the darkness I fired, and down he dropped without sound or movement. The smoke of my shot hung around me like a fog cloud, and I waited, finger on second trigger, in some suspense for a little while. However, when it cleared off I made out a black mass on the ground, and Wilkins called out, "*What* has happened?" I told him I had slain the bear. "By ——" said Wilkins, with emphasis, and came along to look at it, and a fine beast it was, fat and in good condition.

I knew the place well and Wilkins did not, hence I was enabled in a moment to judge the course the bear was taking and act accordingly, whilst Wilkins had made his way towards the direction of the first sound.

The amazing thing was that it never perceived the huge glow of our fire, which lit up the whole hollow, nor heard our by no means low-voiced talking. The wind was, however, right, so he could hardly have scented us, and as he never came out of the undergrowth, he failed to notice the fire, though he passed within 5 yards of the edge of the little glade. It was a curious experience, and we talked over it for a long time before finally going to sleep in our remote, impromptu little camp. The opposite illustration is a photo of the bear and myself, taken by Wilkins next morning. The animal was a good big one, but its fame has spread, and so has its size, for since then I have more than once heard my men say, if bears were the subject of conversation, "Ah, but you should have seen the bear master shot at Rela Panawa—it was, &c. &c.!" I think its size now approaches that of a large buffalo, and its footprint has grown until it is measured by the length from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow!

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Wilkins watched at this hole again next night, and bagged a good bear neatly by a raking shot, whilst I discovered another hole—rock-hole this time—about a mile from our camp, at which I watched and also bagged a bear, the only one which came. When my bear arrived he evidently spotted me, because he had to come up a sloping ledge of rock to the water-hole and could hardly help glancing aloft. He turned to go, but too late, for my shot tumbled him head over heels down the rock as dead as a herring. I also knocked over a porcupine which was scooting about all over the big rock at which I was watching, being posted on a stage in a biggish tree high overhead.

My readers must not think such a number of bears as those enumerated in some of my experiences visit every water-hole. At many you may draw a blank, and at others perhaps only one or two may turn up; but there is usually a chance of something—leopard or pig at least, not counting elk or small fry like porcupines, cats, &c.—whilst every living thing seen will prove a source of interest to a keen sportsman and observer.

However, one cannot always be certain even of "something," for I distinctly remember an August trip undertaken by Brockman and myself some years ago, during which we visited many water-holes well known to me, but not a single thing did we see to shoot at any one of them.

The season had been too wet, and there was water enough in odd pools here and there in the jungle to preclude the necessity of animals coming to any particular hole or pool to drink.

Again, in 1904, we went a trip together during August and visited some of the most remote and celebrated holes and pools in Tamankaduwa, but were once more disap-

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pointed, but not so completely as on the above-mentioned trip. There had been heavy rain three weeks previously, and though the whole country looked parched, there was a little too much water out. Our first watch was at a rock-hole not far from Minneriya, close to a jungle road, on a big, comparatively flat slab rock having one or two hollows in it containing water. We were ensconced behind a low half-circle of stones built up roughly about 2 feet high, some 40 feet from one of the water-holes, and had a long wait before anything came.

About 9 P.M. I saw a bear silently emerge from the jungle at the bottom of a slope of the rock on my side, so I at once notified Brockman, whose first shot it was. The animal came snuffing and shuffling along to the water, passing across our front, and Brockman fired at it with his "Paradox" as soon as it stooped to drink, bowling it over head-first into the water-hole, out of which we presently hauled it. Nothing more came that night but a big pig, which I shot at and missed badly. After this, for some days, we visited several grand pools and rock-holes in most remote spots, not finding even a track to induce us to watch; but we finally settled at a famous, very remote rock-hole, and built a "fort" above the pool—this time a large, deep hole, at the base of a steepish slab rock. The pool was approachable from one side only, and the rock at the back rose perpendicularly for about 12 or 15 feet, meeting the slope of the slab rock above. We built our "fort" at the top of this drop, a little way back from the edge, and watched in great expectation; but nothing came until about 11 P.M., when a bear appeared coming over another big rock some 50 yards away on our front.

It came up to our pool in a very business-like way, but I saluted it with a "Paradox" ball which sent it howling

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and rolling into the jungle edge near by, where it soon died. Not another living thing came near us that night, and so on the whole of that trip we only saw those two bears, and were lucky enough to bag both.

During a trip in December a couple of years ago with my cousins Roy Storey and Gerald Sharpe, which we had undertaken at that time of the year as *the* best time for general shooting, we had an unexpected bit of luck with bears.

We were not far from camp one morning, making our way all together through some forest in pouring rain, when we suddenly heard that extraordinary noise which bears make when sucking the combs out of an ant-hill. The wet weather softens the ant-hills a little, and enables the bears then to dig into them more easily with their immensely powerful fore-legs and great claws. Having reached the combs, they then suck out the larvæ by tremendous inhalations, alternating with equally powerful snorting puffs to blow away the dust and earth, the operation making a fearful and wonderful noise almost impossible to describe.

Our men were not at all keen on looking for the bears, but in we went, stooping, peering, and listening, making our way through the dripping undergrowth, very uncertain as to the direction, as the bear ceased its "suction" work and only gave a low grunt at long intervals. I believe our men at first purposely misled us, for I quickly perceived that we were not getting any nearer our quarry, so I took the lead myself and struck out in what I considered to be the true direction. After crawling along for some time, happening to look round, I could not see either my cousins or my men, so grunted, jungle fashion (the native hunters' method of communicating with each other), to let

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them know my whereabouts, being immediately answered, to my surprise and amusement, by the bear, evidently from a point a little ahead of me. Looking round again I saw my old shikari, K., just arrived, on the broad grin, having heard and understood, and immediately after my cousins came along, so we went forward once more, coming very shortly in sight of an ant-hill, from behind which we soon heard heavy breathing and the sound of vigorous grubbing. A moment after a bear appeared on the top of the ant-hill, and my cousin Roy knocked it over at once with a shot from his .303, when, to our surprise, another bear rushed out from behind the ant-hill and fled through the forest uttering wild yells, Gery Sharpe and Roy each sending an ineffectual shot after it.

Tom Wright and I once caught a young bear in the forest, a good many years ago. We were on the track of an elephant at the time, some 3 or 4 miles from Topawewa, on the Hatamune side, and when making our way through some forest we suddenly came upon a bear squatting on a sloping fallen tree-trunk.

Tom was dodging about to get a clear shot, when I, very stupidly thinking the bear was on the point of bolting, fired hurriedly at it and missed it clean. It promptly bolted, but as we soon heard awful yells from the forest in the direction in which it had gone we thought it was hit, and on making our way cautiously towards the noise we found, to our surprise, a cub on the ground crying piteously for "mama." It was quite a young one, about 18 inches long or so, and we conjectured it had been on its mother's back all the time, but had got knocked off against an overhanging branch as she bolted through the jungle. We should have left it alone and waited for the mother to return, but Tom was keen to keep the youngster, so we

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collared it after some trouble, as it fought like a cat, and rolling it up in a cloth belonging to one of our men, sent it to camp. Tom kept it for some years, but it was always an uncertain-tempered animal, and became rather dangerous when full grown, so had to be got rid of.

I kept a young cub, given me by Mudaliyar Jayewardene, for some time and got quite fond of it, but eventually had to shoot it as it contracted some awful sores which I could not cure.

It was extremely fond of company, and simply loved my dogs; but they did not love it, as its methods of play were a bit too rough, and they strongly resented being stroked down the back by its huge, great claws, nor did they appreciate their tails being playfully, but very painfully, bitten. When a dog lost its temper and went for the cub it simply ducked its head until its nose was buried in its hairy chest for protection, and let the dog bite and worry as much as it liked at its leathery hide, where no impression could be made. The little animal was immensely strong, and quite a good climber. It would usually "go for" any stranger, and be quite bold if the person "gone for" showed fear, but curled up at once if boldly faced and attacked in turn. I was sorry to have to destroy it, as it had become quite attached to me and would follow me about like a dog.

Garrick and I once had an unexpected and rather exciting experience with a bear. We had bicycled 60 miles to Alut Oya for a "Saturday to Monday" shoot, in the hope of getting a deer or two (time of the year being November, and very wet), and put up at the rest-house there, having sent our guns and boxes by the mail coach the day before.

We had tramped on the Saturday 7 miles in pouring



Photo by H. C. P. Bell, Esq., C.C.S., Archl. Commr.

### JUNGLE WATER-HOLE



BEAR SHOT BY MR. H. C. P. BELL



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rain to some parks for a shot at deer, and Garrick had bagged a small buck there, some of the meat of which two men who were with us were carrying back for food. We were returning in the afternoon, soaked but satisfied, along the Kauduluwewa-Alut Oya road, when I, being a little in front, caught sight of a black object in the road ahead of us where the ground was a bit uneven.

I ran forward for a look, and at once saw it was a bear, so turned round and beckoned to Garrick, who, with the men, was wondering what the —— I was after! He came along and simply gasped with joy and surprise when he saw the animal, being his first sight of a bear, so down we squatted out of sight, and waited for it to arrive. It never saw us, but just as it appeared in our full sight it made to turn into the forest on our left, so Garrick fired at it, hitting it in the left hind-quarter, whereupon, as they sometimes do when wounded, with an angry snort it bit savagely at the place, and I fired at the same time, catching it, as we afterwards found, fair in the chest and damaging the lungs, which accounted for its absolute silence in after events.

It then disappeared in the forest, and we stood waiting, knowing well that the Alut Oya in flood ran parallel to us on that side not more than 30 yards from the road we were on. A few minutes' waiting in dead silence, there being no sound from the bear, was broken by a shout of "Here it comes!" from our two men, who were about 20 yards behind us, and sure enough the bear made its appearance at the edge of the forest close to them, only to be saluted by another shot from each of us, which drove it back again. A long silence ensued, so I went into the jungle, which was there pretty clear of undergrowth, but could neither see nor hear anything, which made me guess the bear was

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in the river, and on making my way to the edge of the steep bank, there I saw the bear, hurt to death, trying to scramble across over rocks and trees more or less covered by the pretty swift current. A shout brought Garrick and the men to me, and we soon knocked out what little life it had left, but we had a hard job dragging it out of the torrent and up the steep bank. We left it by the side of the road and made our way to the rest-house, only 3 miles away, I, incidentally, being nearly carried away by a flood when crossing one of the small streams flowing across the road—it had been a trickle in the morning, and was now a torrent like a mill-race. We went back for the skin next day, but the weather continued so wet we could not attempt to dry it, so had to let it go after saving the claws and skull.

Curiously enough we had seen the tracks of two bears that morning, they having crossed the road, and I had remarked to Garrick that there was a chance we might meet one on the way back if the rain kept on.

Such chance meetings are distinctly few and far between, and to be prized accordingly. As I said before, the wet season is the time when such meetings are possible, but the discomforts of travel and camp during the rains deter most men from trying a trip, though it is out and away the best time of the year for all kinds of shooting.

I once beguiled a bear with a seductive trail of honey, which at least made sure of its visiting the water-hole I was watching at. The scene was a huge mound of rock rising above the plain of forest, and I was watching at a water-hole at one side of it. There were several other small water-holes scattered over this rock, and these my men had laboriously filled with stones, leaving only our hole available.

## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

As bears were in the habit of drinking at some of these holes, previous to the blocking of them, which were on the opposite side of the rock to ours, I had taken with me a tin of honey, with which I laid a trail from the filled-up holes over to ours, as a bait, in case a bear arriving at them should scent danger and flee, instead of coming over to drink at our place. My friend Westland was with me at the time, and we got on our stage about 5 P.M., having sent our men back to camp. At dusk a bear came along in the jungle behind us, but scented danger and did not show himself. About 8 P.M. a bear came shuffling and snuffing over the big rock from our left, not on my honey trail, which was over the right side of the mound, and came towards the water-hole we were sitting over. It stopped, in lovely position, to sniff at something before reaching the water, and I fired at once, with the result that the bear fled with hoarse yells and grunts of alarm, my shot being a clean miss, and a most inexcusable one, for I had, as far as I could see next morning, miscalculated the amount of shadow thrown by his body and aimed too low.

Nothing more occurred until about 10 o'clock, and Westland was having a snooze, when I heard the hoarse breathing and snuffing of a bear over the other side of the rock on my honey trail. I woke Westland, and we both eagerly watched the summit of the rock, distant about 80 yards from our stage. The snuffing got plainer, and presently the bear appeared on the summit, looking enormous against the sky in the bright moonlight, and, to my huge delight, he was industriously licking his way along my carefully laid honey trail. Down the sloping rock he came, licking up every drop of honey, finally arriving at the water-hole near which I had laid a large

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“dollop” as a finisher in such a position as afforded a good clear shot. Westland should have fired, but could not see the bear clearly enough from his side of the stage and whispered to me to take the shot, which I did as soon as he was in good position, bowling him over at once, but he scrambled out of my sight into the jungle close by, with many groans, and lay there for a long time before dying.

We did not get another shot that night, though another bear arrived later but would not come to water.

On that same trip Westland and I were properly surprised at another rock-hole. It was about 5 P.M., and we and our two men were busily engaged in building a low stone wall on the rock itself, to hide behind, commanding a view of the water-hole, as there were no convenient trees available to build a stage in, when suddenly one of our men gave a shout, and looking round we saw a bear standing at one end of the rock, about 30 yards away, looking at us. Westland jumped for his gun and fired at the animal, but unfortunately made a clean miss and away it went, with many exclamations of surprise at such a rough reception, whilst we had a good laugh over the incident. We fired at another bear apiece that night but missed each time, which was excusable, as the night was darkish, the moonlight being very dim, and our position on the rock gave a black forest background, which did not show up the bears at all well.

Of accidents to Europeans I do not know of many. I call to mind the case of an officer stationed at Trincomalee some years ago, who was bear shooting in Tamankaduwa, and was watching at a water-hole amongst the hills at Giritella Tank. This was a very deep hole excavated in a watercourse by the animals, and an awkward place to

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watch, so the officer elected to remain on the ground instead of up a tree, much to the disapproval of his tracker. I think the gentleman had on an overcoat, which was rather lucky, and, also, he must have been anything but wide awake, for a bear came out behind him and went for him properly, knocking him about a good deal, but the coat saved him any serious damage. The bear, I think, eventually ran off and left him.

A much more serious case happened to a plucky sports-woman, wife of a well-known and popular sporting Government official.

This lady was as keen on sport as her husband, and an excellent shot, but the incident I am about to relate would have shaken the nerve of many a man, and no one could have shown greater courage under the circumstances than she did.

The official was on circuit at the time, accompanied by his wife, and they were in camp inspecting some tank-repairing work, which was being done by the Irrigation Department. News was brought of bears amongst some rocks near a tank about 3 miles away, and the lady went off very early one morning, I think, to have a look for them, accompanied by a police orderly, one Singhalese headman and one Tamil headman, her husband being too busy to come with them. Arrived at the rocks, they took up their position on a flat slab between two big rocks commanding a view of a cave or hollow among a medley of rocks below them, and had not been there long when they saw a bear walk past their front and disappear among the boulders. They then waited for the bear to return to the cave, and the lady was sitting well back on her slab of rock, when suddenly, without any warning, a bear rushed up from behind, knocked her over on her face at

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once, and began biting at her head and neck, clawing away at her back all the time.

She put up her left hand to protect her neck, and the bear bit that savagely, whilst, with her right hand, she shoved her gun down between her feet and pulled the trigger, shooting the bear through one foot, as was afterwards found.

In the meantime the two headmen were wildly firing off their guns, in all directions apparently, for not one shot hit the bear (luckily, perhaps, for our heroine, for it is a wonder she was not shot too), until the Tamil, with the last cartridge he had, hit the animal in the head, I think, and killed it.

Dreadful to relate, it was then found that the police orderly, a smart young fellow, had been shot dead in the *mêlée*, but how or by whom it was impossible to say; and it is a great marvel that more damage was not done, as the two headmen lost their heads entirely for the time, and blazed off their guns as fast as they could load them.

The injured lady actually walked the 3 miles back to camp, where no doubt her husband would be terribly upset at the time. I met them both a few weeks afterwards at a rest-house on their way to Colombo to see a doctor about the lady's left wrist, which was stiff and un-useable after the mauling, and she then told me all about the incident, only regretting that her injuries would cause her to lose the season for further shooting that year!

And now a few words about the rock-holes I have been so industriously shooting at. All over Ceylon low country are found outcrops of bare rock in the shape of flat slabs, regular whale-backs, ridges, mounds, and quite high hillocks, and on almost every outcrop will be found at least one hollow containing water, some shallow and liable to

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dry up in a long drought, others holding water all the year round. Most of them *seem* to be natural, but some are certainly artificial, showing tool-marks on the inside, whilst some even have inscriptions cut in the rock above or near them. How the natural ones were formed I cannot say, though the rock in which they lie is often flaky, cracking off in great slabs; and in many cases this may have been the process of forming them, whilst the ancient natives may have helped the process by lighting fires on the rock and dousing with water when very hot. It is more than probable that these water-holes have from time immemorial afforded an easy and certain way of killing game during three or four months of the year, even in the days of bows and arrows.

On some of these rocks, not connected in the remotest way with rivers or streams, I have found regular pot-holes, such as are found in the rocks of river beds, many being several feet deep, but not more than 2 feet or so wide, and some of them penetrate the rock at an angle instead of straight down.

In the ancient days these rocks were often made the sites of temples, and then the natural water-holes came in handy for the use of the priests, and it is in these places where holes have been artificially made, or at least enlarged, to add to their storage capacity. Every water-hole, no matter how remote, is known to the local natives, and the knowledge has been handed down from father to son for generations.

Regular animal tracks lead to them from the surrounding forest, in some cases for miles, but usually dying away in the jungle a few hundred yards from the pool, and the wonder is, considering the unlimited possession and use of firearms by natives, that all the game in Ceylon has not

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long ago been exterminated in the drought-smitten low country. It is only a question of time, however.

The animals must have water, and their instinct seems quite powerless to teach them to migrate into the country of perennial rivers when the drought sets in, nor does it teach them to avoid a pool at which they have been previously shot at. The same animals will return to the same pool day after day, or night after night, merely coming later than usual after a disturbance.

On the whole, watching at a water-pool, if not very sportsmanlike, is intensely interesting to an observer of nature, and I recommend any one, getting the chance of a watch at an undisturbed remote pool, to be in his place not later than 2 P.M. if he wishes to see all that is to be seen.

There is also a very appreciable spice of danger in rock-hole watching, where the watcher has to take his place on the rock itself, protected or hidden only by a semicircular wall of loose stones about 2 feet high behind which he sits; and moreover, if the position is such that a rock background cannot be got for the shot, it will be rendered ten times more difficult and uncertain by the black background of forest. The grey rock shows up most animals well, so that in Ceylon it makes easier shooting if the watcher can watch from a tree, and thus shoot downwards at an angle.

The danger of the ground watching lies in the chance of any animal like a bear, leopard, buffalo, or elephant of a wicked disposition coming to the water up wind, scenting the watchers and going for them, which might very easily happen, though luckily the animals usually come down wind, making if necessary a *détour* to enable them so to approach the water. The unexpected, however, may occa-

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INCIDENT OF A BEAR ATTACKING A "STALKING BUFFALO" PARTY



Photo by F. J. Reeves, Esq.

A DEAD BEAR

## BEARS & WATER-HOLE SHOOTING

sionally happen, and it is as well to be prepared for all contingencies.

Just as I was finishing this chapter I received, from a well-known resident, a very interesting photograph, here reproduced, of a bear-shooting incident. The gentleman was out one night, some years ago, trying the (to an European) novel experience of hunting deer with a stalking buffalo, and the party was deliberately attacked by a small female bear, which came running out at them from the jungle. My informant shot the bear, and photographed the scene next morning.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### P I G S

THE pig is, I suppose, one of the most ubiquitous animals in the world, being found in some form or other in almost every country, and Ceylon is no exception to the rule. The particular species found here is *Sus cristatus*, the Indian wild boar, and it has been so thoroughly written about and described in books on Indian sport, that its appearance must be fairly familiar to all readers of sporting works. Suffice it to say, it has a short but massive body; big head, provided with fighting tusks; is rather long in the leg, and scant of bristles as regards pigs of the plain; shorter in the leg and much more bristly in the case of the mountain pigs, both being of a dark slaty-grey body colour, and both being more or less maned from neck to shoulders. In weight a big boar will turn the scale at over 200 lbs., and will stand over 30 inches in height.

Pigs are found everywhere in Ceylon, at all elevations from sea-level to the tops of the highest hills, in every sort of country, jungle or scrub, inhabited or uninhabited, usually in small herds, but often solitary, especially in the case of the old boars, which never seem to run with the herds.

They are not strictly nocturnal in their habits, and in wild jungle country may be met with at almost any hour of the day. Near the Moorish villages of Tamankaduwa and the Eastern Province, where the Mohammedan inhabitants never interfere with them, they can be found in great numbers in the swamps and paddy fields. In the plains

## PIGS

and *wilas*, bordering the Tamankaduwa portion of the Mahaweliganga, they may be seen out on the feed almost all day long; but these swamp pigs are never very big ones, and hardly worth a shot.

The old boars seem to prefer wandering about in jungle country, and if by chance you should catch sight of a solitary pig in such country, by all means go for him, as he will probably have a pair of tusks worth securing.

It is no "sporting crime" in Ceylon to shoot a pig—the glorious sport of pig-sticking being an impossibility—though they can be hunted on foot with dogs, and speared, as is often done in the hill forests. It is not worth while, however, to take hounds down to the low country, as you would inevitably lose at least one dog for every pig you bagged, not necessarily killed by the pigs themselves but more likely by leopards, not to mention the chance of the dogs getting hopelessly lost in the interminable forests.

Pigs are naturally vegetable feeders, but are not at all particular as to what they eat. They grub up roots and bulbs, eat lotus stems and seeds in the swamps, make raids on native gardens and "chenas," and are by no means averse to a meal of carrion, though I must say I have only once, in all my wanderings, caught a pig actually at it, and that was on the body of a brother pig killed by me the previous day.

I may here state that I have always been surprised at the number of times I have seen remains of animals shot by me in "gamey" jungle country left absolutely untouched, except by the usual insects. Unless a leopard finds and eats the remains, the chances are they will simply lie there and rot. Not counting leopards, the only creatures I have ever actually seen feeding on carrion were, a pig once, several times the mongoose, and once a small

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eagle, which was so gorged it could not move. We have no vultures or scavenger birds in Ceylon except the crows, but even they are scarce in the jungle country, finding a much easier living near towns and villages. I have never seen a jackal feeding on any remains, though I am well aware that they do so feed, nor have I seen any signs of bears doing likewise.

To return to *Sus cristatus*; my own experience has been entirely confined to shooting them in the low country, not by going for them particularly, but simply chance meetings when in pursuit of other game, and, as a good pair of tusks form a very excellent trophy, I never refuse a chance of a shot at a good boar.

They are not particularly wide-awake animals, and are fairly easily approached, if the wind is properly allowed for, as their power of scent at least is pretty good, so that there is no great sport in the shooting of them, excitement, difficulty, and danger being usually wanting.

The trophy, of course, consists of the tusks, and these usually average from 6 inches to 8 inches measured round the outside curve, any pair over 8 inches being very good. The tusks project about a third of their length beyond the lips, the larger portion lying within the lower jaw bone in a curve under the teeth.

The longest pair I ever heard of from the low country measured 9 inches, and were secured by Surgeon-Major Hayman, when stationed at Trincomalee some years ago, from a big boar he shot near Kantalay, but Mr. Clark in his "Sport in the Low Country of Ceylon" records a  $9\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pair from a boar knifed by Mr. Thomas Farr, the veteran Bogawantalawa planter and sportsman, at Ambawella.

The biggest pair I ever secured measured  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches, but I once got one 10-inch tusk.

## PIGS

I was at the time quietly making my way round a somewhat jungly "park," on the look-out for deer or any other game, when I suddenly caught sight of a grey object moving in the undergrowth on the edge of the surrounding forest. Keeping my eye on it I soon saw it was a huge pig, and as soon as it gave me a chance in an open space I fired at it with my .303. On receipt of the shot it rushed out of the jungle across the corner of the little "park" where I stood, giving me a view of a huge splash of blood behind the right shoulder, tore and crashed through some bushes, and finally fell at the foot of a fair-sized tree, from which, in its death agony, it ripped a huge piece of bark with its tusks. Coming up I saw that it was a very large beast, and, examining the head, I found, on the left side, a broken lower tusk, which, as it did not rub against the upper tusk, had caused an abnormal development of that member, so that on that side I found the afore-mentioned broken lower tusk, and an enormous unworn upper tusk. Turning it over to the other side, I was astonished to find that an exactly opposite condition obtained—the upper tusk was entirely missing, and the lower one had gone on growing, unworn and unsharpened, into about two-thirds of a circle. I took out the whole lot, and am now sorry I did not take the whole skull as a complete trophy. The broken tusk, short and very thick, only measured  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches, whilst the abnormal one measured exactly 10 inches on the outside curve. I got it made into an umbrella handle, later on, for one of my sisters, Messrs. Orr of Madras doing the job very neatly by fixing a silver fillet round the tusk at the centre of the curve, and attaching it half-moon fashion, points upwards, to the umbrella stick.

I wish I had taken body measurements of this boar, as it was by far the largest I had ever seen in the low country,

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

and must have been very old. I got another good boar once when out with Tom Wright some years ago. We were walking through a nice "park," when our old shikari spotted something ahead, and on my asking what it was, said, "Only a pig."

Guessing it was a solitary boar, I went for it at once, stooping down out of sight and running forward about 50 yards to an ant-hill which afforded convenient cover. Peeping over the top of the mound I perceived a fine old boar rooting leisurely towards me, and dropped him in his tracks at about 80 yards, by a shot from my .303. I secured a nice pair of 8-inch tusks.

On this same trip Wright and I between us accounted for seven or eight pigs as we were travelling through a series of Mohammedan villages where they were plentiful.

Wright was charged by one, through which he had put a bullet.

It fell to the shot, and Wright went up to look at it, as a portion of gut had blown out of the hole of exit of the bullet exactly to the shape and size of a child's toy balloon. The animal was far from dead, however, for it struggled to its feet, and went for Tom straightway, so he had to give it another shot as a finisher. I have more than once, in shooting deer, seen gut thus blown out of the bullet exit hole when the ball has chanced to go right through.

A shot at a pig, made by Garrick when he and I were together on a trip in the Northern Province, had a curious result. We were walking along a jungle road early one morning when we saw five or six pigs in the road walking towards us, so we stopped where we were to let them get as close as possible, Garrick kneeling so as to be ready to take the shot when the time came. He fired at the leading animal and they at once scattered in all directions, the one

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fired at going into the jungle on our left. After a bit of a search we found it, and Garrick had to finish it off with his "Paradox," as it was still full of fight. Examination revealed that the first shot, from a Lee-Speed .303, had actually broken both the fore-legs and one hind leg low down between the knee and the foot. The animal must have been standing so that all three were in line, or the bullet had "cannoned" from one to the other, and yet with three broken legs the unfortunate creature had run over 100 yards.

I remember once, having made a very early start from camp, coming out into an open "park" before it was fully daylight. I spotted a big boar lying down in the middle of it, and the animal never saw me until I was within less than 100 yards of it, when it got up and made for the jungle at speed. I fired at once, and heard my bullet tell with a good "clap," but the boar ran on without a falter, and disappeared in the jungle. I followed up, and was properly pleased to find it lying dead not 10 yards inside the undergrowth, my bullet having found the lungs.

The liveliest bit of sport I ever had with pig occurred during a visit to an island in the Mahaweliganga, where I was carrying out some experimental planting work, referred to in my chapter on spotted deer.

During a tour of inspection through the forest I suddenly saw a pig in a swampy puddle to my right, and saluted him with a shot fair behind the shoulder. He got away into a dense thorny thicket, where he was found dead next morning.

Farther on I fired at and missed another pig in big forest, where the light was bad, making an off-hand miss quite excusable.

Shortly after this we came on a biggish swampy pool in

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an open space, and in the middle of this was a pig feeding on lotus stems, so busily engaged that I was easily enabled to get to a tree on the very edge of the water, from cover of which I gave him a tickler through the ribs. He fell floundering, but got up and struggled towards the far bank, only falling dead to two more shots just before he reached dry land. Whilst we were looking at the corpse another pig started out from a farther part of the swamp, and went tearing full speed across an open plain of grass bordering the swamp, passing across our front at a distance of about 60 yards. I slipped up my Lyman aperture back-sight, and "drawing the bead" of my "Savage" on the fleeing piggy, bowled him over like a rabbit. These were swamp pigs, of no particular size, and their small but sharp tusks were stained jet black, no doubt from constant grubbing in black mud. During a later visit to the island I bagged another pig, this time with the "Paradox."

I was sitting on a stump, under a shady tree, about 5 P.M., on the edge of the open grass plain where I shot the pig mentioned above, waiting for anything which might appear, and had not been there long when a pig came out of the opposite jungle and began grubbing in the grass near the jungle edge. The distance was well over 100 yards, and the grass there hid about half his body, so I went for a stalk, lying down, squirming, and sometimes crawling across the bare open space which here was very sparsely grass-covered, until I reached the cover of a tiny depression, about 60 yards from the pig, where I was able to sit up a bit. Waiting until "piggy" offered me a good broadside view, I fired at his shoulder with the 50-yards sight up, and knocked him over as dead as mutton—nothing to be particularly proud of certainly, but I had enjoyed a stalk across a piece of quite open ground, ending in a "dead in

## PIGS

its tracks" shot at an animal which was at the time well on the alert—always a satisfactory conclusion.

There is, however, little sport in pig shooting in the low country.

It is a tame proceeding, seeing it usually involves no skill in stalking, there seldom being any difficulty in getting within easy shot distance, and there is practically no risk or danger about it. The tusks, however, form an interesting trophy, and, if you care for such things, a good boar's head properly set up looks very well among other trophies of your rifle.

Nobody as a rule would think of shooting a pig at a water-hole at night, but I have done so once or twice when nothing else offered.

I was once watching in a "rifle pit" in the bed of a nearly dry tank, between the one remaining pool of water and the jungle edge, distant about 100 yards from each, and nothing had come along except some deer, which I would not fire at, so I was waxing impatient. At a rather late hour I suddenly saw a long string of smallish animals coming towards me from the jungle, and the dim moonlight soon showed them to be pigs, moving along, as they usually do at night when not disturbed, at a quick trot in a long drawn-out line in single file. My companion was an old Moorman, a faithful follower of the Prophet, and he became so ludicrously agitated at the sight of the advancing line, wanting to drive them away by a shout, that I shoved him down in the bottom of the hole we were sitting in, and put my knee on top of him to keep him there, threatening all sorts of violence if he moved or uttered a sound. I then turned my attention to the pigs, and as they filed past at about 30 yards I selected the biggest one I could see, and bowled it over in its tracks. The other pigs scattered

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

at once with marvellous celerity, and made for the jungle as hard as they could leg it. I found my victim to be only a sow, and no great size either, so my "bag" was worth nothing but the meat. However, sport or no sport, a shot at a pig is not always to be despised, and may now and then save you a blank day when nobler game has failed to put in an appearance.

In the neighbourhood of the big *wilas* (swamps) pig can always be seen by 5 P.M., as about that time they begin to stream out from the jungle into their beloved reed brakes and lotus ponds.

They are always to be found in the neighbourhood of Moorish villages, immunity from interference rendering them very bold, and I once saw no less than eighteen pigs out, in a paddy field belonging to such a village, as early as 3 P.M.

Mr. J. J. Robinson tells me he was charged and bowled over by a big wounded boar quite lately (in Uva), and both he and "piggy" rolled down a nasty steep place together. When they ceased rolling the boar was uppermost, and made determined efforts to get his tusks into Mr. Robinson somewhere, but a lucky kick on the nose sent him farther down the slope, up which he could not struggle again, being too badly wounded, and dying soon after.

Of the really fine sport of hill hunting with dogs and gun, or spear and knife, I have no experience, and for the following article dealing with the subject I am deeply indebted to my friend E. Gordon Reeves, one of our best-known veteran sporting planters, a keen volunteer, and Colonel of the Ceylon Mounted Infantry.

# PIGS

## HUNTING THE HILL PIG

BY E. GORDON REEVES

Those who have hunted the hill forests of Ceylon for a succession of years will know that pig is a very variable quantity. In the lower lands and plains of the low country proper the quantity is more or less fixed, except when the occasional scourge of murrain falls and almost wipes them out, but I have never known murrain to touch the hills.

Variation in quantity is due to another cause in these hills—I speak particularly of the hills of Matale East—and that is migration, for, just as the elk migrate more or less annually, so do the pigs, but *the* great migratory event is the *immigration* of, not only pigs, but many other species of both birds and animals in Ceylon, to the hills when that peculiar plant the *nilloo* is in flower, which occurs about once in seven to ten years.

There are always pig, more or less, in the hill forests, but when the *nilloo* blooms the hog hunters have a “bumper” time indeed, for no doubt at that time recruits arrive from the lowlands to swell the numbers.

I have certainly killed, at such a time, many pig which could be no other than lowland folk, long legged, lean shanked, hairless creatures, very different to the real thick-set, broad, bristly pig of the mountains, and of a much less truculent nature.

Hog hunting has been my particular diversion for the last thirty years, and I must confess it still retains first place, for the hog is a most gallant foeman, and my admiration, not to say fear, of him is of no diminishing quantity.

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

I well remember the first time my hounds raised pig. The meet was that day in Matale East, at Dromoland estate, where we drew the ridge between it and Galboda village. A stout gentleman lately out from home insisted on joining the hunt that day, and, being provided with a cooly to help him on the hills, was toiling up about 200 yards behind me, when the hounds ahead roused a big boar on the ridge, which, after an interview with the dogs, dashed past me and down the hill on the very track by which our stout friend was laboriously climbing.

With an angry "whoof, whoof" the boar charged right at him, and a tremendous yell and clatter announced the collision, which deposited our friend a good many yards down the hill in a very disjointed and breathless condition. Needless to say his nerves were a bit upset, and he at once lost all interest in "the sound of the horn in the morning," departing forthwith for the bungalow.

Curiously enough the very next pig I had any dealings with, and which I found on the fine patna knoll over against Hingruwatte estate, treated me in almost exactly the same way. I was going down the hill, and the pig, roused above, came down the track, catching me low down on the legs, landing me neatly and unhurt on the broad of my back.

There is probably no finer country in the island, for hunting with a hardy, country-bred lot of hounds, than the outlying opens of the Matale East range of hills—they literally swarm with elk, spotted deer, red deer, pig, and hares.

A fortnight's camp, with a pack of four or five couple of good dogs, in the fine weather from February to May, would surely yield a grand bag, and enjoyment of such a nature as to remain a glad memory for all time.



GORDON REEVES



GORDON REEVES ON THE WATTEKELE PATANAS



## PIGS

Harking back to the subject of *immigration*, the *nilloo* blossom of 1894 brought an extraordinary number of elk and pig to the hills, and, over and above the usual tally of elk and an occasional red deer, the hog score totalled over eighty head during the blossom and the following year. There was no need to mark down a pig or elk ; it was merely a case of letting slip the hounds when you chanced to be working in the neighbourhood of the jungle edge and a find was a certainty, expectancy rising keen as to whether it would be an elk or good old mountain boar, for, though you can if you like hunt pig from Point Pedro to Dondra Head, there is no boar to compare with the game old mountain breed. The boar of the plains will stand a bit, and run much, and is at times a nasty customer to tackle or shift in thick scrub, but the boar of the mountains, a real "Sangler," will most often stand where he is roused, and take his chance against all comers.

Listen to that! A nervous, disconnected challenge by a single hound, to which another opens, and still another, until the quiet of the forest is fairly broken by the short, erky chorus of the baying hounds and the savage war-cry of the great boar!

The dry bamboo wands rattle and creak, the Wanderoo and red monkeys hoot, chatter, and swear, and the buck elk, startled from his lair in the undergrowth, coughs out his hoarse alarm as he moves away up the hill in search of a more secure retreat. All the forest folk are awake and agitated, adding each its mite to swell the clamour of the noiseful strife, and oh! the excitement of approaching a "bay" such as this—none but those who have had the experience can possibly realise it!

First the dash forward, heedless of bush, trees, thorns, or other impediments—then, as one gets nearer, the slow,

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

cautious approach, which may even need to be a crawl on hands and knees, every sense on the alert to grasp the true position of the "bay"; but "I can't see five yards ahead, though, thank goodness, I am above the 'bay,' yet whether the hounds are between me and the boar, or he is between me and them, it is impossible to say."

'Any mistake on my part, if the boar is nearest to me, will disclose my presence, and an old hand will know what that means, though the silent waiting is a bit of a strain. It is useless, however, to make any decided move until some clue is grasped as to the actual position of affairs, which may be given by a charge of the pig at the dogs, or by a hound circling out. It is impossible to overlook the thick *nilloo*, and the tree growth is too impenetrable to afford a view from above, so the only means of gaining information will be as experience advises; or perhaps the old boar is on my side after all, and will be the first to move, and then—look out!

Crouching in the undergrowth, listening and watching, with rifle ready for emergencies, I catch sight of a dark but immovable object which I intently watch, but I soon perceive that the "bay" is beyond it, and tumble to the fact that it is a rock, and that the boar is probably at bay beyond with his back to it. A sign to my dog boy, who is near me, and he approaches to hand me the short stabbing spear in exchange for the rifle; but suddenly the clamour of the hounds ceases for a moment, a few seconds of dead silence, and with a hoarse "whoof! whoof!" the boar is upon us.

Where the deuce am I, the boy, dogs, pig, rifle, spear, anybody or anything? Recovering myself, however, looking around, I discover the boy flattened out, a few yards away, knocked out of time, but merely breathless, and a bit

## PIGS

bruised, the haft of the spear still in his hand, but the blade is gone.

I look around for the rifle, and, when picking it up, feeling a sharp pain in my hand, I discover a broken finger unfelt in the excitement of the late incident; but sincerely do I regret the loss of that good old Deccan blade, with which my father used to ride in the old days before the Mutiny.

We hunted for yards around for days, but never found it, though a year later we killed a boar not far from the same place, showing an old wound in his flank, and it is probable *he* knew where that blade was dropped.

This was an unlucky day, though we should have counted it still more unlucky had a good hound been cut up; but the countrybreds are undoubtedly wary, and seem to take the correct measure of their opponent at first sight.

Wounds are usually the result of the hounds "packing" at a "bay," and if you are at hand when a hound gets really caught by a pig, you must go in at once if you want to save it.

Unlike an elk, which fences and points like a swordsman, or lashes out with its fore-feet, a pig will often seize a hound and deliberately worry him with both tusks and teeth.

On one occasion, having bayed a very game boar under a rock in thick scrub, I managed to crawl down to the overhanging ledge, and having no spear, poked piggy with a stick, with the result of causing him to charge out and attack the hounds ferociously.

Hearing a favourite dachshund in serious trouble, but being only able to see furious agitation of the undergrowth, I made a jump, which luckily landed me on the near flank of the boar, who was busily engaged in "doing for" my

## HUNTING & SHOOTING IN CEYLON

little dog. A quick lunge of my 11-inch blade probably saved the dog's life, but, alas, for only about a year more, as he perished when gallantly swimming out in a weedy pool to attack an elk at bay, which struck him down with his fore-feet.

Let no one fare forth to hunt pig otherwise than properly armed with a serviceable knife—my own has been my constant companion for thirty years, and is a heavy blade measuring 11 inches long by  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch wide, equally useful for cut or thrust. The upper 3 inches is finished off sword-fashion, and the point and edge are kept as keen as possible, ready for any use it may be put to.

Natives, who seldom or never carry a serviceable knife, occasionally get severely wounded, or even killed, by pig, and I could mention two deaths and several minor casualties in my neighbourhood during the last seven or eight years, some of which could have certainly been avoided by the possession of a good knife and the knowledge of using it.

A short-hafted and heavy-bladed spear or assegai is also a very useful weapon, but if any mishap occurs by which one gets inextricably entangled in a hand-to-hand encounter, there is nothing like a companionable knife—I say companionable because constant carrying and use will make the knife “come” to the hand much more readily than if only occasionally handled, and enable it to be much more effectively used.

One may be suddenly landed in a very awkward situation, as witness a case which once happened to myself. We were approaching a “bay,” the dog boy, a big, hefty Tamil, behind me, almost treading on my heels, when, just as we came close up to the scene of action, he stumbled, fell against me and threw me right on top of the boar.

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Luckily it was turned away, closely occupied with the dogs at the time, and the broad-bladed spear I carried was forced, quite accidentally, by my fall, through the loose web of skin behind its near shoulder.

I gripped the haft low down with my left hand and held on, as it was the only thing which saved me from being thrown over within reach of his tusks, fumbling, in the meanwhile, for my knife.

Eventually I managed to draw it, and sent it home with a will into his right flank—one more instance of the good old blade's many and kindly services to its master.

One cannot, unfortunately, "ride" pig in Ceylon otherwise than in the inconvenient manner above mentioned; but, with experience of all the game in the island, the author of this small sketch humbly submits that the boar of the hills has no superior in showing sport, even though limited as it is to mere plebeian foot-work.

## CHAPTER XIX

### FISHING

THIS work would be very incomplete without some reference to the sport awaiting the would-be angler, though I am bound to say a country better provided with fish, and *less fished* by sportsmen, than Ceylon, would be hard to find.

Most of the rivers, and all the tanks, swamps, and lagoons simply teem with fish; yet, whilst great attention has been turned towards stocking the Nuwara Eliya district streams with trout, the low-country or native fish possibilities have been neglected.

As regards the low country, I think very few people indeed have gone in for systematic fishing in rivers or tanks. In some of the rivers I believe fly will be taken, and I know that spoon bait, artificial spinning bait, and live bait proper are all taken readily enough.

The rivers, however, are not easy to fish on account of the luxurious vegetation along the banks, so that trolling or casting of any sort would not be easy unless done from a rock or sandbank well out in the stream. Bottom-fishing can, of course, be done under favourable circumstances. A drawback to fly-fishing is that all waters swarm with tiny fish of various kinds constantly on the look-out for anything which may come floating along or drop into the water, so that the moment a fly is cast it is literally pounced on by these voracious little pests and swallowed at once—the bigger fish never having a look in. These abominable little beasts actually come and bite and nibble

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at you when bathing, and can give quite painful nips. I remember some years ago Brockman and I tried fly in the Gal Oya at Kauduluwewa, and we caught the tiny nuisances by the score, until I got tired of it. I then substituted a smallish ordinary hook, cut up one of my "catch," baited with a small piece of same, and, weighting the line with a silver shirt-stud for want of something better, I dropped it into the water in a spot clear, for the moment, of the little pirates.

Long before the bait reached bottom it was seized, and after a bit of fun I landed a quite nice fish, not unlike a dace, of nearly a pound in weight; but I failed to attract another after that.

I have it from my friend E. R. M'Donnell (Irrigation Department) that he and the late Mr. R. W. Ievers (then G.A. of the N.P.) used to enjoy splendid fishing in the lagoon at Elephant Pass, on the Jaffna road. The bait used was always spoon, or other spinner of sorts, and was very successful.

A strong trout rod was usually employed, and a reel to hold 200 yards of very strong line. M'Donnell tells me they used to make some big hauls, and the largest fish caught (by the late Mr. Ievers) weighed 32 lbs. The fish usually caught were of a kind known as *kodavei* (Tamil), a very game fish, and M'Donnell thinks it is that which, in Thomas's book on "Indian Fishing," is called *bar meen*.

Referring apparently to this fish (see also Mr. Festing's letter at the end of this chapter), a well-known local authority, in a letter to me on the subject of fishing, says: "Low-country fishing deserves more attention than it receives. There is a most excellent fish for the table, called *moda* in Singhalese, which seems to be about the same as Thomas's *lates calcarifer*; but he describes it as an estuary

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fish, whereas I have always met with it high up in rivers beyond the influence of tides. It may not be the same fish, but the illustration and description are very like it."

Mr. M'Donnell says he used to catch the *kodavei* from the bridge at Elephant Pass, whence the Kanakarayankulam river issues in flood time to the lagoon, and thence to the sea, half a mile away. If the *moda* is a good table fish, it must be different to the *kodavei*, if Mr. Festing's description of the latter in that respect is correct. There is room for any amount of inquiry and experiment in exploiting the low-country fishing; but I am afraid very few men are likely to go in for it, as the low country principally attracts the shooter, not the fisherman.

As regards tank-fishing, there are many difficulties in the way of doing it in European fashion. For one thing, though some of the fish do, I believe, take artificial fly, most of the tanks are so littered up with lotus and other weed growth as to render it almost impossible to cast a bait of any sort without being hung up at once. A little bottom-fishing may be indulged in, but I don't think many of the *big* fish are caught that way, as they, one and all, seem to live in and amongst the tangled weed and lotus growth. If, however, you are camping near such a weedy tank, you can always try native fishing methods, and many's the time I have enjoyed an evening at that game on the Topawewa, with M'Donnell or the Mudaliyar Jayawardene, fishing out of a big dug-out canoe.

Years ago, when the water was fairly clear, the method followed was to use very strong casting-lines having a huge hook at the end, with a chunk of wood as float about 15 inches above it—no pretence at gut or gimp, and, above all, no deception! Before starting we used to put about 3 inches of water in the bottom of our canoe, and, using

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light rods made of the mid-rib of a kitool or coconut palm leaf, with a light line and tiny hook baited with *anything*, caught as many of the aforementioned tiny fish as we required for bait, depositing them, all alive, in the water in the bottom of the canoe. We could also replenish our stock the same way out at the fishing ground whilst waiting for bites at our bigger lines.

Arrived at the desired spot, we used to stick a couple of poles in the mud (water and mud here perhaps a combined 6-8 feet in depth), and fasten our canoe to them, bait our big hooks by impaling one of our small live baits through the back, coil the line, seize it about 4 or 5 feet above the big float, whirl it deftly around one's head and let go with equal deftness in the direction required, after which we used to sit smoking, talking, or fishing for more bait, until a bite would make itself evident at one of our big lines by the violent agitation of the float. The fish we go for in particular is that known in Singhalese as the *loola*, by far the best fresh-water fish we have. Its scientific name is, I believe, *Ophiocephalus striatus*, and it is anything but a beauty. It has an enormous head, broad and flat, and a mouth wide enough to put any frog to utter shame. Its body narrows away from the broad, flat head, but is fairly deep. The back is blacky-grey in colour, becoming more or less mottled on a dirty-white background towards the belly, which is dirty-white in colour.

They run from 3 lbs. to perhaps 10 lbs. in weight, and those we used to catch weighed from 3 lbs. to 7 lbs.

Seeing the miserable live-bait swimming frantically round in circles, one of these ugly monsters comes slimily through the weeds, and very deliberately sucks his victim into his vast mouth; a few moments being allowed for absorption, a violent tug is given to the line, when, after

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one or two floundering struggles, the ugly beast is ignominiously hauled to the canoe, hand-over-hand, and knocked on the head.

On one occasion, a good many years ago, at Topawewa, Brockman, I, the Mudaliyar and an old servant of his, went out in the canoe for an evening's fishing. Brockman was new to our style, so the Mudaliyar advised him to watch the old man, who was an "expert." Arrived at the ground, we duly anchored, and then the old fellow proceeded to impale one of the small fish on his big hook in the most approved fashion. "Now then," said the Mudaliyar, "watch how he throws out his line," and Brockman did watch. The old man glanced leisurely round, selected a particularly clear spot among the weeds about 15 or 20 yards away, whirled his line round his head, and, with a final extra strong swing, let it go. Naturally he and we expected to see the line sail neatly out to the selected spot; but it did nothing of the kind.

The last strong swing was a bit too vehement—the poor little bait-fish came against the inside of the canoe with a resounding "whack," dropped off the hook, and the line, all in a jumble, incontinently flew overboard, every atom of it falling "higgledy-piggledy" in the water 20 yards away. The look of solemn surprise on the old man's face was most ludicrous, proving too much for Brockman and myself, and in a moment we were simply convulsed with laughter, soon joined, in spite of his efforts at gravity, by the Mudaliyar, and the canoe fairly trembled with our mirth. Utterly regardless of our laughter, the old man gravely unmoored the canoe, and, poling along, recovered his lost line, having, I hope, some satisfaction eventually in catching more fish than any of the rest of us.

Involuntary little bursts of laughter came from us every

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time he stood up to cast, the original incident always presenting itself vividly to our minds. M'Donnell, when in residence at Topawewa, was a mighty fisherman, and many records of his and the Mudaliyar's catches are, or were, pencilled up on the door of the Tank Bungalow. They used to go out about 5 P.M., and, more or less, lived on their "catch," as fresh meat was scarce, and one tires of fowl.

As years went on this lovely tank became more and more weed-choked, until at the present day scarcely any open water is visible at all. This precluded the use of lines altogether, and drove us to use a most ingenious native dodge for overcoming the weed difficulty. Rattans slightly thicker than a pencil are spliced neatly together until a length of 40 or 50 feet is reached; the hook is attached to one end of this by its 15-inch bit of line, and half-a-dozen of these rattans so fitted are tied, hook end in-board, the rest of the rattan trailing on the water, at the stern or side of the canoe whilst you pole out to your fishing ground. There you bait the hook in the usual way, lay it and the rattan on top of the water, where the latter of course floats, and push it out gradually bit by bit towards the small open spot you want to fish in.

The rattan floats on the water and catches in nothing, whilst, in shoving it out, you can guide it in any desired direction.

You eventually leave a few feet of the rattan end lying across your canoe and put out as many of them as you require, in all directions. A bite will agitate and depress the hook end of your rattan; a violent tug does the striking, and you then simply haul in, hand-over-hand, the free end sliding past you on to the water behind you as you pull the rattan in. I once had one of my rattans pulled clean away

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from the canoe, but I recovered it, and the fish as well, easily enough. There is not much sport in it, but, from what I have seen of the majority of tanks, it is the only way in which they can be fished.

The natives do a little line-fishing, but their favourite dodge is *karak gahanawa*. The *karak* is a half egg-shaped basket, no bottom to it, and with a circular hole about 6 inches diameter at the apex. The performer wades about in the shallows among the weeds, and at intervals violently dumps this basket, big end down, into the water.

Occasionally he dumps it on to a fish right enough, which he then extracts through the hole at the top by inserting his hand and arm.

They have other dodges of catching fish by means of basket-traps like eel-traps, inserted in water-courses and such-like, and there is always a big haul of fish to be got out of tanks when they are dried up by drought into small puddles, the whole local village turning out to take part in the sport, which is more or less a ceremonial custom.

The first time I ever visited Minneriya I had a curious experience.

The day I arrived (I was putting up in the old mud-built *gansabhawa* bungalow, some miles from the tank, which was there even before Sir Samuel Baker's day) it came on to rain heavily, bringing down jungle drains in a bit of a "spate." I went out snipe shooting in the tank next day—it had been very dry for some time previously, and the tank was empty but for two big pools, each perhaps 200 acres in extent, and some minor pools which I found had been caused by the rise and subsidence of the water during the night. Approaching one of these, I was surprised to observe the water in violent commotion, and going close, I saw to my amazement that the pool, which



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

CAST-NET FISHING NEAR BATTICALOA, EASTERN PROVINCE



Photo by H. F. Tomalin, Esq., P.W.D., Ceylon.

COAST VEDDAHS SPEARING FISH NEAR KALKUDAH, EASTERN PROVINCE



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was about 20 yards in diameter, was so full of fish that they simply could not swim about. The reason was obvious—the small flood had come down, raised and spread the waters, and the fish had followed the water in search of plenty of fresh insect food from the newly covered ground, and “got left” by the subsidence.

The sight was amazing—I saw fish of all sizes, from 6 inches to 3 feet in length, just simply flopping about and squirming over each other. I walked in with my boots on and literally *kicked them out* on to the dry ground. My men waded in and hauled them out in arms-full, but finding that too slow, they took off their cloths, and, two by two, holding the four corners, ladled them out by barrow-loads. Some of the very big ones I shot, especially the slimy eel-like *waleya*, which is one of the biggest of our fresh-water fish. I never saw such a sight before or since, and my camp stunk aloud of drying fish for days after, whilst the whole local population seemed to gather for the harvest at the tank.

So much for tank fishing and its methods, which equally apply to fishing the great swamps or *wilas*. I believe there are good fish to be caught in the Mahaweliganga, for the late Mr. Ievers, in his very interesting “Manual of the North Central Province,” says that the *lela* is found only in the Mahaweliganga, and grows to an enormous size, and has, moreover, been identified with the *mahseer* of India—so there is a chance for sportsmen yet. I have in my possession the saw of a saw-fish which was caught on a line in the Mahaweliganga not far below Magamtota (the main ferry in Tamankaduwa).

Altogether, in both river and tank there is ample scope for any man who likes to give his attention to them—the fish are there in vast numbers, and it only

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remains to find out the best sporting method of catching them.

The late Mr. Ievers gives the following list of local fish in his "Manual of the North Central Province":—

Tamil.	Singhalese.	Scientific.	Size.
Vahlei	Waleya	.....	3' 6" to 4' 0"
Pu Virahl	Ara	.....	2' 9" to 3' 0"
Mayari	Magura	Saccobranchus microps	12" to 18"
Virahl	Lula	Ophiocephalus striatus	1' 6" to 2' 0"
Vilahngu	Anda	.....	1' 6" to 2' 0"
Kendei	Petiya	.....	4" to 9"
Kokkachahn	Kokassa	Callichrous bimaculatus	4" to 9"
Teli	Hungah	.....	6" to 9"
Katarar	Teliya	.....	6" to 12"
Keletti	Ankutta	.....	3" to 6"
Kodavei	Madara	Ophiocephalus gachus	2" to 4"
Oolahvei	Weligoyiya	.....	Small fish 1" to 3" in length
Pane-eri	Kawiyya	Anabas scandens	
Para Kodavei	Kanaya	.....	} Sizes not given
Pulella Kendei	Tittaya	.....	
Sella Kar	Talpedda	.....	
Ayirei	Polkura	Lepidocephalichthys thermalis	
Kanayan	Hirakanaya	Labeo porcellus	
Paneyan	Koraliya	.....	
Mangan	Dandiya	Rasbora danicornis	
Salle meen	Pulunna	.....	

Of the above the *waleya* (I use the Singhalese names as the ones I know best) is a slimy, dull-coloured, eel-like fish with a big head, and mouth with feelers and sharp teeth. It is, I think, a bottom feeder, and is popularly supposed to have no bones.

Its flesh is excellent until the tanks get low, when it acquires a very muddy taste, as do most of the other fish.

The *ara* is own sister to the *lula*, except that the belly colour of the former is dirty whitey-yellow instead of dirty white as in the latter. Flesh good.

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The *magura* I don't recognise.

The *lula* I have already given a description of.

The *anda* is an eel.

The *Petiya* are small roach-like fish, not bad eating but bony.

The *kokassa* is not unlike a miniature *waleya* in appearance, and is good eating.

The *hungah* is a repulsive-looking beast, slimy bodied, something like the *waleya*; has long feelers pendent from the mouth, and stings like "blazes."

The *ankutta* is another, but smaller "stinger."

The *tittaya*, also called in places *kudamesso*, form the usual live-bait for catching the bigger fish.

Of the fish of which no dimensions are given I know only the *hirakanaya* (or *kirikana*). It is a fish of fair size, not unlike a roach, up to a pound or more in weight—good eating but bony.

Many of the fish can, I believe, lie dormant in the dried mud when all water has evaporated from a pool in the dry season, otherwise how can the fact be accounted for that, after months and months of drought, a shower of rain bringing water to the dried-up pools and hollows causes an almost instantaneous renewal of fish life.

There is a drainage hollow in the estate I reside on which receives the discharge of a few surface drains from the tea fields only; yet, during the north-east monsoon, the heavy rains cause the water to stand in this hollow for a few days, or perhaps a couple of weeks, and within *three days* after a pool is formed small fish are to be seen in it, and my coolies always have a "catch" after the water subsides.

The same thing may be seen in all streams, pools, tanks, or hollows in the low country which hold water

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during the rains, but stand dead-dry for six months in the drought.

I have seen nice fish in the lower reaches of mountain streams, and the natives catch them, principally by basket-traps; but one seldom hears of Europeans rod-fishing, though, as far as I can see, there is nothing to prevent it being successfully accomplished with a little care—as I said before, the trees and jungle growth along the course are the chief difficulty. Buck up! disciples of the immortal Walton.

Mr. R. A. G. Festing, of the Ceylon Civil Service, has kindly permitted me to reproduce the following excellent letter on Ceylon fishing, which he originally communicated to the *Fishing Gazette* :—

### TROUT AND OTHER FISHING IN CEYLON

BY R. A. G. FESTING

The first experiments in trout breeding were made in 1880 by the late Mr. H. L. Hubbard. In 1882 a few fish were turned into the stream at Nuwara Eliya, and ova have been more or less regularly imported since 1886. When the Ceylon Fishing Club was started I do not know. At first the ova of brown trout and Loch Levens only were imported; but in 1889 the ova of rainbow trout were introduced.<sup>1</sup> The experiment proved successful, the rainbows taking kindly to the Ceylon streams, and they are now far more popular than the brown trout on account of their superior sporting and edible qualities.

The fish imported have thrived well, and now run to a large size. I do not know what the record size is, but

<sup>1</sup> I am informed on good authority that the Club was started in 1895, and that rainbows were not imported until 1895, except one small lot in 1889 or 1890, which were failures.—EDITOR.

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Mr. Plate's big rainbow trout mentioned in your paper about a year ago (I could not find the reference) is probably one of the biggest. Fish up to 2 lbs. are fairly common. The average of takable fish is a little over a pound—at least that is my experience, but more expert anglers may have a much better average.

Spasmodic attempts have been made in the past to breed fish artificially from the imported stock; but the difficulty has been to find males in milt when the females are ripe. No attempt, I believe, to breed fish artificially has so far been a success. A few years ago the trout started breeding naturally. Whether these naturally-bred fish are pure rainbows or hybrids I do not know. But with the fish now breeding naturally, there should be no difficulty in stocking all the likely up-country streams, and it is possible that the Ceylon Fishing Club may in a few years be in a position to supply India with ova or fry. With this end in view, the Club has lately been considering the question of getting out an expert from home to build hatcheries, and instruct them how to breed trout.

As to the streams, they are all fine trout streams, with plenty of natural food and plenty of good running water. There is no danger of the carp fouling the water, as suggested by you. The carp keep to the lakes and lower portions of the Nuwara Eliya streams. They do not wander far from the slack water.

The Horton Plains stream, which is the finest bit of stocked water here, is an ideal trout stream, combining all the best qualities of English trout streams, except a regular rise of fly. At its head it is a very small stream, with deep holes and good "elbows," thickly fringed with rhododendron bushes. One has to throw a fly very accurately to drop it into these pools. There are good, gravelly shallows

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in the tributary streams which should make excellent spawning beds. As the stream increases in volume there are deep rocky pools, big enough to hold salmon, long stretches of slack deep water, enticing stickles, and some fine waterfalls; in fact every sort of water to tempt the trout. And in addition to this, the stream flows through glorious country. No description that I can write would ever do justice to it. To give a rough general idea—imagine Exmoor from six to seven thousand feet above sea-level with “patna” grass instead of heather.

The two small streams at Nuwara Eliya flow into lakes, the outlets from which are practically blocked against fish attempting to descend. The Horton Plains and Ambawella streams end, so far as trout fishing is concerned, abruptly as huge waterfalls, down which no fish is likely to descend voluntarily. This, I think, accounts for the fact that rainbow trout have been so successful in these streams. They cannot escape, as they have done from so many English waters in which they have been tried.

In the streams fly only is allowed, a No. 6 hook, Redditch scale, being the largest size permissible. A No. 6 hook is a large one, and permits small salmon flies being used. This may seem like “poaching” to some people, and perhaps the size might with advantage be reduced. But it must be remembered that the fish are not free risers. There is too much bottom food, and not enough surface food. And in the big pools a small fly passes unnoticed a long way above the fishes’ heads. For brown trout I have found a good-sized March Brown do as well as anything. The rainbows undoubtedly prefer something brighter, and few flies are better than a very small Silver Doctor; and though other fishermen may prefer other flies, I would always take these two with me, whatever

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the condition of the water. In the lakes artificial spinning bait is allowed, but the weeds are a nuisance, and I have not often attempted spinning, and have only once succeeded in landing a fish on a Devon minnow in Lake Gregory.

As to rods, every one naturally suits his own fancy; but a small rod is, in my opinion, essential for the small streams. I have an  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ounces cane rod, by Foster, which is an ideal weapon. It will throw a very accurate fly, and I have landed fish of about  $2\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. on it. A larger rod is wanted for the bigger waters, where a long cast is necessary.

The chief enemies with which the fish have to contend are otters, kingfishers, big cannibal trout, and poachers. Of otters I have seen any number while fishing. It is contended by some that the otter really does no harm, that he captures only the big sluggish cannibal, who well deserves his fate. This may or may not be true, but otters do undoubtedly disturb the water, even if they do not catch the smaller and livelier fish. I have seen rising trout most effectually "put down" by an otter swimming through the pool, and nothing would persuade them to rise for the rest of the day. In waters such as these, where the fish are not free risers, anything that discourages them from rising should be eliminated.

In concluding these notes on Ceylon trout, I wish to remark that my experience of them is very small compared with that of those favoured beings who live near the streams. A week or ten days' holiday snatched once and again from a reluctant Government, and a three-months' sojourn at Nuwara Eliya, is all the time that I have had to become acquainted with these fish.

But besides trout, which are restricted to a certain altitude in the hill country, there is good fishing to be had

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in the low country of Ceylon, in river, lagoon, sea, and tank ; and it may not be out of place to offer a few remarks on some of the fish that the writer has caught.

Very little is known, from an angler's point of view, about lagoon and tank fishing in Ceylon. There are a few enthusiasts to be met occasionally who will speak of great captures ; but we badly want a second Thomas, not only to show us how to catch the fish, but to tell us what fish there are worth catching. Until I came to this district,<sup>1</sup> about two years ago, I was quite unaware of the splendid opportunities for sport with rod and line in the low country, and I believe many other keen anglers here are similarly ignorant. I therefore offer these remarks with less diffidence than they otherwise deserve, only hoping that brother anglers may come forward and contribute their quota of experience to the pages of the *Fishing Gazette*.

The most common of low country fish is the Singhalese "lula," the Indian "mural." The Tamils call him "viral." His classical name is *Ophiocephalus striatus*. He is to be found in nearly all tanks and rivers that do not run dry ; but he will live a long time without water apparently. A tank near here was completely dry for a month or six weeks last year. When the rain came and the fields were being irrigated I was shooting snipe, and picked up several fair-sized "lula" in the paddy field below the tank. They had evidently been washed through the sluice of the tank ; but where they came from is a mystery, for the tank in question is not fed by any river. They must have been lying up under the grass and mud along the edge of the tank "bund."

Thomas, in his "Rod in India" (second edition), treats the lula, or mural, with scant ceremony. He regards him

<sup>1</sup> Mullaitivu, on north-east coast.—EDITOR.

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as a poor sort of pike, to be captured with frogs and similar bait. But the lula is a real gentleman, to be regarded with respect, for he rises to the fly freely, and is a good table-fish in spite of his bones—two supreme qualities. He does not fight very hard—about as well as a chub perhaps—but he often leaps clear of the water as soon as he feels the hook. A clear, calm day, with water low, is the best time for taking him with a fly. He is just the opposite of the trout in this respect. I have seldom caught them when there has been any wind, or when the water was high. He will take a dry fly—if you are a dry fly purist—but the best ones I have caught have been taken with a large Red Palmer fished wet. There is a small red Dragon Fly on which the lula feeds in the evenings, and then the Red Palmer or Foster's "Caterpillar" will do great execution.

The lula is said to run 3 feet in length. The largest I ever saw was about 5 lbs. or 6 lbs., which was taken by a native in a wicker-basket trap. The natives here also catch good ones with a live bait and float on a hand-line. Or when the water is low they "drive" them into nets staked across a narrow opening in tank or river. The largest I have caught with a fly was just 3 lbs. I got three fish one evening weighing  $8\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. Doubtless larger ones might be caught with a frog, but who would use bait so long as fish were to be caught with the fly? Strong tackle is necessary, as one drops one's fly into a hole between the weeds, and if Mr. Lula takes it, it is a case of "Pull devil, pull baker," to haul him safe into a more open spot.

There are many other tank fish, but I have not caught any that rose so freely to fly or were such good eating as the lula; and these notes are already becoming too long. I will just mention a species of carp which I have caught with fly in tanks here up to nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. I think this fish

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is the olive carp, or *Barbus chrysopoma*. He corresponds as nearly as possible with Thomas's picture and description of this fish.

Of lagoon fish in this district the most common is the "koduva" (Tamil). His classical name is *Lates calcarifer*. A right handsome fish he is, with his deep shoulder, prominent back fin, sheeny body, and brilliant eye. But he is not so good as he looks. I have heard his flesh described as a mixture of cotton-wool, mud, and needles—not exactly a "table" fish!—but the natives dry him and eat him. He runs to a huge size—how large I am afraid to say. I have seen him caught with a live bait on hand-line well over 30 lbs., and I have caught them myself with spoon and spinning bait over 20 lbs., and hooked one monster that—but that is another story.

He cannot be said to be lively in his play. He is a sulky, dogged brute, but very strong. He takes out line slowly but surely, and woe betide your tackle if you try to stop a big one too quickly! I hooked a good one once on a brand-new line that was absolutely sound. He "towed" away about 100 yards, when I thought he had gone far enough, and put the pressure on. The fish thought differently, and we parted company, the running-line breaking. I tested the line when I got home, and found it would stand a dead strain of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. This will give you some notion of their power.

The koduva takes the bait very quietly. Often you feel nothing at all, and find your line being slowly taken out as you try to reel in. In my experience, the only way is to let the fish go and follow him as best you can—in a boat, if one is available. Disaster has always been the result of my trying to check them. How far they will go with their slow "towing" pull, I don't know. A writer in

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Thomas's book mentions having followed a huge one for 400 yards, but I doubt if this was all in one stretch without any occasional pause.

Many are the stories the writer could tell of brave fights with this and other lagoon monsters—how, for example, an enthusiastic brother angler hooked a “big 'un” at dusk which kept him busy all night; and how, in the small hours of the morning, the haggard, wearied angler was still holding on to his giant fish, and was shouting for the gaff, as the fish at last showed signs of yielding. I draw a veil over the closing scene. The fish turned out to be a young crocodile.

Another fine lagoon fish is the “kalaj.” I have not been able to identify him. I thought at first he was the same as the Bamin or Paumben salmon, but on referring to Thomas I find he is not. He does not run so large as the koduva, but he is a far finer fighter. Weight for weight, he will play as well as a salmon. He is to be caught in the same way as a koduva, with live bait, natural spinning bait, or spoon. But the strongest tackle and hooks are necessary.

Lastly, I would mention the “seer.” He is properly a sea fish, but comes into creeks and estuaries occasionally. He will take a fly or spoon, is excellent eating, and fights to the last ounce of his strength. But my experience of rod-fishing for these fish is very small. I have only caught two or three on a fly in Galle Harbour.

I have caught several other kinds of fish, and there are probably many others unknown to me which are well worth catching, but these remarks will show, I hope, that good fishing is to be got in the low country of Ceylon, and I would advise any keen angler about to visit the country to bring a fly and spinning-rod and suitable tackle.



## APPENDIX I

### CLOSE SEASONS AND LICENCES—THE SANCTUARIES

THE close seasons for elk, spotted deer, and red deer, which constitute “game” in Ceylon, are as follows :—

Northern Province . . . .	1st May to 30th September.
North Central Province . . . .	1st June to 31st October.
North-Western Province . . . .	1st July to 31st October.
Central Province . . . .	1st June to 31st October.
Eastern Province . . . .	1st June to 30th September.
Western Province . . . .	1st June to 31st October.
Uva Province . . . .	1st June to 31st October.
Sabaragamuwa Province . . . .	1st July to 31st October.
The Magam Pattu of the Southern Province . . . .	1st June to 31st October.

Leaving the breeding season entirely out of the question, there is one, and only one, season in Ceylon when all animals are practically at any man’s mercy, and that is the dry season, which, all over the low country, becomes oppressive about June or July, and continues until the end of September.

At the beginning of July water-holes are rapidly decreasing in number by the natural process of evaporation, and by September the available drinking pools are so few that animals come in numbers to each one, day and night, during which they are ruthlessly slaughtered by the natives, regardless of genus or sex.

The close season throughout Ceylon is during the time of this dry season, and would, if the Game Ordinance was properly enforced, afford proper protection to all “game” animals. However, there is practically no attempt made to enforce the Ordinance, and we are given “sops” in the shape of sanctuaries, while the rest of the country is allowed to be shot out in the way which has obtained for the past fifty years or more. For some years the open season of the Northern Province extended from 1st March to 30th September—a scandalous state of things, which thus permitted shooting throughout the season of drought, and has resulted in almost depleting that province of game. The close season has been altered to its proper

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time (May to September) since I wrote these notes originally, necessitating their re-writing.

A curious state of things exists in the Southern Province. For some unknown reason the Game Ordinance has never been proclaimed in the Giruwa Pattu of that province, and only applies to the Magam Pattu. Without going into particulars as to boundaries, it may be roughly said that no Game Ordinance, except as regards pea fowl, is in force west of the Walaweganga, but is in force in the country east of that river. The ways of our Government are often mysterious.

The only other creatures honoured with a close season are pea fowl, and the dates run as follows:—

Northern Province . . . . .	1st November to 31st March.
North Central Province . . . . .	1st June to 31st October.
North-Western Province . . . . .	1st July to 31st October.
Eastern Province . . . . .	1st June to 31st October.
Western Province . . . . .	1st November to 31st March.
Uva Province . . . . .	1st June to 31st October.
Sabaragamuwa Province . . . . .	1st July to 31st October.
Southern Province . . . . .	1st November to 31st March.

The Central Province probably does not contain a single pea fowl, and so seems to have no close season for them.

The same arrangement about the seasons as regards animals exactly applies to these grand birds. They must drink, and can be slaughtered at water-holes as easily as any other creature. Thus the seasons of the Northern Province and Southern Province are useless for protection for the pea fowl, being open during the drought. The Western Province has no real dry season, as it gets both monsoons, and, besides, probably contains none of these birds.

The licence to kill game, including pea fowl, costs Rs. 3.50 annually, and forbids all shooting *between sunset and sunrise*, the snaring of game by traps or nets, and the hunting out of game by dog or beaters (this does not apply to registered packs of hounds).

I do not think anything would be gained by raising the licence to a higher figure to render it more or less prohibitive. Natives of a village would then club together to get *one* licence, and shoot all the more to reimburse themselves for the extra cost.

The licence to possess a gun costs Rs. 1.25, and lasts until transfer of the gun, when the new possessor must take out, for a fee of 25 cents, a transfer of the licence. This licence, as far as I can make out, holds good in all country districts, but I believe in Colombo and other towns a gun licence costs Rs. 2, and has to be renewed

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annually. I think the cost of gun licences could be very much increased, with advantage.

Reverting to game licences, a sportsman or shooter is supposed to take out a licence for that particular province he intends to shoot in, but I do not think there is anything in the Ordinance to that effect, so that a Government Agent could, if he liked, issue a "general" licence to shoot game. Licences are procurable at any Kachcheri.

Coming to special licences, it will cost you Rs. 100 for permission to shoot an elephant. (Until a few years ago this licence cost only Rs. 10.) The shooting of a tusker is forbidden under severe penalties, as they are exceedingly rare in Ceylon. Proclaimed "rogues" may be shot without a licence—indeed in some cases a reward is offered for their destruction.

A licence to shoot a buffalo costs Rs. 25, and it is, of course, in the power of the Government Agent to refuse to issue licences in the case of both elephants and buffaloes at his own discretion.

In my opinion the above special licences should be issued conditionally, that is to say, a man should receive *permission* to kill an elephant, or a buffalo, *on condition that he pays* the cost of a licence if he *shoots* at one, and not otherwise.

My reason for the above opinion is, that if a man pays Rs. 100 cash in advance for permission to shoot an elephant, he will simply shoot away until he does kill one, and probably wound half-a-dozen in the attempt. If, on the other hand, he has to pay if he *shoots* at an elephant, he will use some discrimination, choose an animal worth Rs. 100 by reason of its size or other recommendation, and shoot to kill. There will be no blazing away at all and sundry, and he will refrain from shooting altogether rather than waste Rs. 100 on an undersized animal. The above arguments would certainly apply to any Ceylon man who might go to the expense of an elephant shooting licence. Exactly the same argument applies to the licence for buffalo shooting.

No doubt a visiting sportsman would be above such comparatively petty considerations, but to a resident man money is usually an important object, and if he decides to risk Rs. 100 or Rs. 25 on a licence, he will like to get his money's worth. Under the conditions I have named he would avoid shooting altogether rather than pay his money for an animal giving no decent trophy, but if he has to pay *beforehand*, he will shoot anything rather than return empty-handed.

"Them's my sentiments," anyhow, under present conditions, and I have heard of more than one case to prove my argument.

Information concerning the game sanctuaries seems fit and meet

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for this Appendix, also, as the matter is somewhat akin to close seasons and licences.

These sanctuaries are clearly and accurately shown on the map attached to this book. The oldest one is that of the Southern Province, and is commonly known as the Yala Sanctuary from one of the names of the river forming its western boundary.

The gazetted boundaries are as follows :—

*North* : the boundary between the Southern Province and Province of Uva.

*East* : the Kumbukkan River.

*South* : the sea coast.

*West* : the Yala (or Menik) River.

As the country northward of this sanctuary is, for a great distance, uninhabited, the sanctuary may be said to extend far beyond the fixed boundary in that direction.

The next sanctuary is that situated partly in the North Central Province and partly in the North-West Province, north of Puttalam. This has only been gazetted quite lately, and the boundaries are as follows :—

*North* : the Moderagam aru (or Talawa Ela), from the point where the Puttalam-Marichchikadde road crosses it eastward to the point where the stream from Kuda Wilachiya Tank joins the river.

*East* : from the point where the stream which runs from Mahawewa into Kuda Wilachiya Tank turns to the east ; then south along this stream, through Mahawewa, to its source ; thence a cut line south-westward across the watershed to the Andaragollewe Ela ; thence westward from the Andaragollewe Ela to its junction with the Pan Ela ; thence south-westward up the Pan Ela to its source ; thence a cut line across the watershed to the source of the Telbipu Ela ; thence south-westward down the Telbipu Ela to its junction with the Kala Oya.

*South* : the Kala Oya from last-mentioned point westward to the province boundary, and thence a line due west to the north end of Kalaivilla, and thence a line due west to the Puttalam-Marichchikadde road.

*West* : the road from Puttalam to Marichchikadde (see map).

The third sanctuary, also in the North Central Province, is not yet gazetted, but I expect soon will be. It is situated in the extreme south-east corner of Tamankaduwa, and is likely to be known as the Wasgomuwa Sanctuary.

The boundaries will be :—

*North* : the Ambanganga, from the point where the Sudukanda range of hills crosses it, to its junction with the Mahaweliganga.

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*East* : the Mahaweliganga.

*South* : the Wasgomuwa Oya from its source in the Sudukanda range of hills to where it joins the Mahaweliganga.

*West* : the Sudukanda range of hills from the source of the Wasgomuwa Oya (which Oya also forms part of the boundary between Tamankaduwa and the Central Province) to where the range crosses the Ambanganga. (This range of hills also forms part of the province boundary.)

All these sanctuaries are fairly well watered, and contain "park and forest," or "plain and scrub," which afford ample grazing ground and shelter.

All shooting is forbidden inside the sanctuaries, but I fear it won't be long before the cunning natives will learn to camp along the boundaries and reap a rich harvest of meat, hides, and horns—in the open season by means of the "one licence per party of five or six" system, and in the close season, of course, "We are merely out to shoot bears, leopards, and pigs, and all this dried meat is pigs' meat only!"

On the game licence issued for the Southern Province will be found, amongst other notes written on the back thereof, the following:—

(5) "The country between Palatupana-Katagamuwa road and the Yala River is closed to non-resident sportsmen."

This sounds nice for resident sportsmen, but I have reason to believe that foreign visitors are almost always taken into this part, to shoot, by their guides.

## APPENDIX II

### THE BATTERY FOR CEYLON

IN my humble opinion, the only weapons necessary for a Ceylon shooting trip are a modern small-bore rifle and a ball-and-shot gun of the "Paradox" type.

Thus armed, a man can with confidence attack any animal in Ceylon (provided he *can* shoot and knows his guns), for there is neither quantity nor variety enough of game to necessitate the carrying of a larger battery, and, moreover, guns are not easy to keep clean in the low country, so the fewer you have the better.

As regards the rifle, there is a fairly large range of makes to choose from, varying from, say, .256 to .450—every man to his taste—but, for the very short ranges at which the majority of shots are taken in Ceylon, I am inclined to think any rifle with a projectile velocity of over 2000 feet per second is unnecessarily powerful.

Power also means weight, which is an important consideration in a tropical country like Ceylon, where, in the jungle, it is very advisable for the sportsman always to carry a gun of some sort himself, on chance of the "unexpected," which not infrequently happens.

Coming now to the type of rifle, again it becomes a case of "every man to his taste," but I very strongly deprecate the use of single-barrelled non-repeating rifles.

The choice, then, rests between double-barrelled rifles and repeaters, and of the two I much prefer the latter, on account of the saving in weight, the convenience of the magazine for carrying cartridges, and the instant availability, if required, of a *third barrel*.

Do not let off that old "tag" about "pumping lead"—the repeater, like the motor car, has "come to stay," and a man who would be likely to "pump lead" if he had a repeater can make just as big an ass of himself with a modern double-barrelled breech-loading rifle.

After trying a variety of rifles, I finally, some five years ago, fixed my affections on a .303 "Savage" repeater, and have stuck to it ever since.

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It took my fancy on account of its lightness, very neat appearance, having no projections anywhere to make it awkward to carry like an ordinary bolt-action repeater, its neat magazine and action for same, and several other good points.

It has done me yeomen service in Ceylon and during a short shooting trip in British Central Africa in 1902, and I want no better weapon.

It has a velocity somewhat lower than that of the English .303, and the bullet is somewhat lighter, these conditions rendering it much less likely to go right through an animal. The bullets usually remain inside, under the opposite skin, and "mush-room" better than most other bullets I have seen, doing deadly injury.

It will probably be argued that a .303 is too light a weapon for all-round shooting, and so it is unless backed up by a heavier weapon, such as a 12-bore "Paradox."

It will probably also be argued that a small rifle like a .303 will wound more than it will kill, and this is perfectly true if the man behind the gun is a "duffer."

There can be not the slightest shadow of doubt that a suitable .303 bullet, properly placed, will kill just as quickly and surely as that of a .450 modern cordite express, *but* it is necessary to be much more careful where you place your .303 bullet. A .450 bullet might be able to smash its way through to the vitals where a .303 could only get half-way. *Therefore*, I say, a .303 *teaches* a man to shoot, and to shoot carefully—at least that is my own experience—and this last necessity, in my opinion, adds vastly to the interest of the sport.

A solid *nickel-covered* bullet through the brain will account for any elephant or buffalo, and as the former are shot at close quarters in forest as a rule in Ceylon, there is little risk in using such a small weapon as a .303, as its penetration is so enormous. A *soft lead-nosed* expanding bullet, properly placed, will also account for a buffalo, and if that fails or if you mistrust it, you have your "Paradox" to fall back upon. As, I should say, nineteen shots out of twenty in Ceylon can be taken, with ordinary precautions, as "pot-shots" with little or no risk to the shooter, you will have plenty of time for your aim, and, given a favourable position, the fault will be mainly your own if you fail to kill. It stands to reason that any animal which gets clean away, though hit, has not been hit in an immediately vital part, but do not, in that case, blame the gun if your aim was bad or your position unfavourable. It is no use saying, "If I had had a rifle of such-and-such a bore it would

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have smashed through," &c. &c. You must take your shot according to the rifle you are using—that is to say, if a light rifle, you must if possible gain a position from which you can make, or ought to be able to make, a fatal shot. With a heavier gun you need not take so much precaution, but I prefer the lighter gun and a careful stalk—more sport in it.

Give me my .303 and a careful stalk, and the fault will be mine if I don't kill as clean as my friend with the big .450! I was originally prejudiced, I admit, but being a smallish, light man I found I could not, with comfort, carry and use a heavy rifle, and so was practically driven to a .303; but since then I have become so enamoured of it, that I would not willingly change.

Referring to sights, I have already, in my chapter on spotted deer shooting, fully recorded my opinion that nothing can beat the Lyman combination of ivory-bead foresight and open-aperture back-sight, with a folding-leaf sight in the middle as a check or for shooting in the dusk.

Considering the short ranges at which shots are taken out here, there is no necessity for other than a 100 yards sight to be fitted. This will give an effective range of fully 300 yards with any ordinary .303, and about 220 yards with a "Savage." My practice is to adjust my Lyman back-aperture sight until, at about 120 yards, the ivory-bead foresight must *cover* the object to be hit. There is no mark on an animal, as a rule, against the bottom edge of which, so to speak, you can align the top of your bead target fashion, so I find it much the best to have my sights arranged to necessitate covering with the bead the spot you wish to hit.

Coming now to your ball-and-shot gun, this is useful as a stand-by, or for shooting at close quarters, for shooting in forest or undergrowth, for water-hole night shooting, and, finally, for off-day shot-gun work.

My own gun is a 12-bore "Paradox" double-barrelled breech-loading hammer gun, and has been my faithful companion for fifteen years, but is still as good as ever.

With it I have shot, in former years, everything from a snipe to an elephant, and nowadays it is always my stand-by, jungle trip shot-gun, and, above all, my "water-hole" gun.

Its only fault is too great a tendency to send its hollow-pointed (supposed) expanding ball clean through an animal, and this, I venture to think, might be rectified if no hardening tin were put into the lead for this class of ball, having them of pure lead only, and therefore softer than those made of the mixture.

The hardened lead is perfect for the solid ball for use on hard-

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skinned game, like elephants or buffaloes ; though I have seen that a hollow-pointed ball has gone clean through one of the latter animals.

For ordinary shot-gun work pure and simple, all a man needs is his own favourite weapon, which he will be well used to and can handle most comfortably. A "Paradox" will meet all requirements, however.

Coming now to care of weapons at home, I find guns and rifles keep clean best and longest if kept in upright gun-cabinets. They soon get rusty if laid down on their sides, or put away in a gun-case.

With both rifle and shot-gun the tip is, when packing up for a return from a trip, or after a lot of use, to put the barrels out in the sun, after cleaning but before oiling, until they get quite hot. If oiled when still warm they will keep clean for days and weeks, as all moisture will have been driven out. Don't expose the wood-work of gun or rifle to the sun too much when thus warming the barrels or it will warp or crack—keep it covered with a cloth, or a coat, or anything, if it happens to be undetachable.

Rifles need a lot of care, and should be cleaned with wire brush and any "nitroclene" liquid, carefully wiped out, and as carefully oiled.

By passing the oil mop through daily for about a week your rifle will not gather any rust, and will, after that, keep clean untouched for weeks. This also applies to your shot-gun.

I don't recommend leaving the cleaning of guns or rifles to native servants, and, personally, always clean my weapons myself, both at home and in the jungle. A friend of mine once handed an old favourite brown damascus-barrelled shot-gun to a bungalow cooly to clean, and this bright genius, thinking to please "master," got some sand, or other rubbing material, and diligently rubbed away the "brown" until he had the barrels polished bright. Imagine "master's" delight, but what could he say—the fault was his own !

Leave nothing to chance, but see personally to all your weapons and ammunition if you are going on a trip. Have a rifle you know and can use, and don't go to your next-door neighbour to borrow one, on the plea that "anything will do"—you are likely to "get left" under those circumstances.

## APPENDIX III

### CAMP EQUIPMENT AND COST OF TRIPS

THE following is a fairly complete list of the articles which years of experience have taught me to consider advisable or necessary for a shooting trip in Ceylon :—

“ Travellers’ ” tent.

Two waterproof sheets, about 15 feet by 10 feet, as ridge tents for men and kitchen.

Folding camp beds.

Folding chairs.

Folding table.

Air-tight tin box for clothes.

Boots—cheap hemp-soled canvas.

Blankets.

Air pillow.

Mosquito curtain for bed.

Towels.

Folding canvas or rubber bath.

Bandages.

Lint.

Chlorodyne.

Quinine pills of 5 grains each.

Arsenious acid pills,  $\frac{1}{8}$  grain.

Phenacetin tabloids.

Corrosive sublimate tabloids.

Carbolic ointment.

A bottle of brandy.

Lancet.

Needles.

Tweezers (for thorns).

Proper cleaning tackle for guns and rifles.

Cartridge belts and bags.

Hunting knife.

Skinning knives.

“ Burnt alum and saltpetre ” preservative.

Oil stone.

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Sacking needle.  
Twine.  
Pocket steel tape, about 6 feet.  
Pocket compass.  
Pocket pedometer.  
Binocular.  
Map of the district.  
Nesting aluminium saucepans.  
Lids of same as frying pans.  
Kettle.  
Teapot.  
Plates, cups, &c. (aluminium).  
Knives, forks, and spoons.  
Buckets—one large, one small.  
Hatchets and billhooks.  
A "mamoty" (hoe-shaped spade).  
Small rope (coir).  
Matches (wooden).  
"Berkefeld" traveller's pump filter.  
Candles and candlesticks.  
Grass sleeping mats.  
Dubbin for boots, straps, &c.  
Water bottles.

### FOODSTUFFS

Rice, for self and men.  
Curry stuffs for men, ready ground.  
Common salt for men.  
Bottle of table salt.  
Potatoes.  
Sauces to taste.  
Flour, if your "boy" can make scones.  
Biscuits — such as Black's "Saltcoats" or unsweetened  
"Plasmon," or ordinary "Cracknels."  
An "Edam" cheese.  
A ham.  
Bologna sausages.  
Ordinary sausages.  
Lazenby's soup squares.  
Tinned meats (a few) to taste.  
Tinned vegetables.  
Tinned fruit, or dried chips.

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Tinned cakes.

Tinned dripping for cooking.

Lime juice cordial.

Sparklets and bottle.

Tinned milk, sweet or otherwise, or dried milk.

Chocolate-and-milk in tins.

Tea in half-pound lead packets.

Sugar in air-tight tin, or "saccharine."

Chocolate sticks.

Anything else you may fancy, with due regard to transport difficulties.

A 9 by 7 fly tent of Willesden canvas, having the fly extended to form a verandah, will prove quite big enough and very comfortable for two people. Without a verandah, under which to place your table and chairs, it will be a squeeze for two but ample for one. Such a tent, including the poles, will form a full load for three men, as it will weigh about 120 lbs. all in, not counting holding-down pegs, which there is no need to carry in Ceylon, as any amount of pegs can be cut in the jungle when wanted. I think, however, given a good waterproof fly, the whole inner tent could be made of cotton drill, which would lighten it very considerably. There is no need in Ceylon for the side-walls, for instance, being made of strong, heavy, waterproof material.

As regards the poles, I only carry the ridge pole, having been able to dispense with the uprights by adopting an ingenious dodge of my friend Wallace Westland's.

Each ordinary tent pole is fitted with a metal spike at the top end, to carry the ridge pole and guy-rope knob. To do away with the pole, Westland got his estate blacksmith to make a spike, same size as that on the poles, attached to a taper iron socket about 7 or 8 inches in length, and about the same diameter as a tent pole at the lower open end.

The idea is, arrived at your camping ground, to cut poles in the jungle the same length as your tent poles, taper one end, slip the taper end into one of these sockets, and there is your upright complete, pole and spike.

The advantage is that the poles so cut need not necessarily be perfectly straight, so that any pole long enough will do, whilst, in the case of my tent, the saving in weight effected was 17 lbs.

The two waterproof sheets have brass eyes and guy-ropes along the narrow ends, and are used as tents for the men and kitchen by fixing them up as ridge tents over a jungle stick ridge pole, tied to two trees or "scissors" legs—the latter being two long jungle poles

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tied together near one end, and opened out, "scissors" fashion, the ridge pole resting in the small V at the top, and the poles below the tie forming the supports.

For camp bed, the best I have yet experienced is the "Compactum" or X patent. It is strong, fairly light and very portable, and has a very neat dodge for mosquito curtains in the shape of upright brass rods fitting into sockets, one at each corner of the bed, having a blind cord strung round through an eye at the top of each, thus forming a light and efficient frame over which to place the net.

The only drawback to this, as to most other camp beds, is the inability to place articles of any size underneath it, owing to the crossed supports.

The ideal bed has yet to be designed.

The X patent table is as good as the beds, and is strong, light, and portable.

For a chair, I find nothing to beat the Indian "Rhooke" chair. It is very strong, takes all to pieces, packs away in a handy bag for transport, and is the acme of comfort.

Your tin clothes box had best be a small uniform case. You want very little clothing with you in Ceylon jungles, except for a wet weather trip, as an hour in the sun will dry the wettest article that ever existed—almost.

You will not, of course, forget a small dressing-case inside your box, properly fitted with soap, shaving and tooth tackle.

For clothing I always use dark-green cloth, of thin but strong texture, having found an excellent article in "No. 525," made by the Basel Mission at Bangalore, S. India.

Coat and trousers only are needed in our hot climate—I say "coat" advisedly, as it does not pay out here to try and do without one.

In the low country your arms would be scorched and blistered by the sun, and insect bites and poisonous thorn pricks would soon drive you to put on a coat again. It is "the thing" to go coatless, with shirt sleeves rolled up, in some parts of Africa, and very pleasant it is too; but there jungle such as ours is scarce or wanting, and insect pests are conspicuous by their absence. I also wear, with advantage, green flannel shirts, as they enable me to keep my coat open for coolness, where a coloured shirt would render me a conspicuous object. Personally I cannot bear *puttees* or leggings, as being too hot and uncomfortable; but, as I wear a belt, I nowadays tie my trousers round below the knee, "navvy" fashion, with a bit of tape, to prevent drag on the belt when running or walking, a tip I learnt in British Central Africa in 1902.

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In jungly "park" country, where one need not be exposed very much to the sun, I use a dark-green Terai hat, which, with a handkerchief stuffed into the crown, I find protection enough, whilst it is light and *noiseless* in the jungle. For ordinary travelling a "topee" is indispensable. Cheaply-made canvas hemp-soled boots can be got in Colombo for Rs.2 per pair, and are excellent for jungle wear; but you must use a cork sole, or something of that sort, with them, else the rough hemp soles will make you footsore very soon. A pair will last, even if wet through day after day, about a week, and they are comfortable, and fairly silent for stalking.

Keeping one fairly respectable suit and shirt for travel on the main roads, you will find two hunting suits and shirts, and two spare pair socks, ample for your jungle requirements.

Change when you come in in the morning, your cast-off clothes being immediately immersed in a bucket of boiling water to kill ticks, &c. They will be dry before evening, when you can repeat the performance with the clothes put on in the afternoon. Blankets (two each) are advisable, as it gets chilly towards morning at times. One is laid on the bed to lie on, and the other is used as a coverlet.

Air pillows are portable and very comfortable, if not too small or too tightly blown-up. The ones I use, and find good, are 18 inches by 24 inches.

Mattresses are not needed on a canvas bed.

Have with you a table and chairs, by all means, as they make for comfort, which you will appreciate.

It is all very well to talk of "roughing it"—I used to, in my early days, when I could not afford to do otherwise, and rather liked it—but my advice is to make yourself as comfortable as you can, with due regard to portorage.

Mosquito curtains are a *necessity*, though for a considerable portion of the year the low country jungles are free of the pest, unless you are camping near a big tank or swamp. A travelling bath is a bit of a luxury, but is useful if no good bathing-place is available.

Do not forget medicines and bandages.

Nothing more needs remark until we come to "hunting knife." A good heavy knife is always useful—for killing a wounded animal, cutting down a pole to carry it by, clearing camp site before your "boys" arrive, and so on. You need not necessarily carry it yourself—your guide can do that for you.

For skinning knives I use 6-inch-bladed clasp knives, and find

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them good enough. I also use a combined lancet and scalpel for finer work on small animals, or about the eyes, nose, and ears.

For a preservative, nothing will beat Montagu Browne's "burnt alum and saltpetre" mixture (see his "Practical Taxidermy"), and I get mine made by Miller & Co. in Kandy.

A compass is useful if you are not an expert "jungle man."

A pedometer comes in very handy if you want to keep an account of the distance tramped day by day.

A glass is not much use in Ceylon low country, but might come in handy at times. I usually carry a 6-power "Göerz" prismatic monocular—small, portable, and powerful enough. Splendid maps, on the "1-inch to the mile" scale, can be got at the Survey Office in Colombo, and I strongly advise anybody going on a trip to get the sheets of the district he is going to travel in. Nesting saucepans save bulk and weight, and allow of a good number being carried. For kettle and teapot I use a couple of lidded tins, like deep narrow saucepans, one fitting inside the other, the outer one being the kettle, and the inner one the teapot. Hanging by a hook to the inside of the lid of the teapot is a small wire cage to contain the leaf, which can be removed when infusion is complete, leaving about half-a-gallon of excellent tea of uniform strength.

The "Pump" filter is a grand thing, though it won't tackle very dirty water, which at once clogs the "candle." However, in the jungle, the dirtiest water can be fairly well cleared by using that curious seed known to the Singhalese as *inginnee gedee*, and to the Tamils as *teyttan kottay*.

You rub the seed down on a stone, or inside of a "chatty," with a little water, putting the rubbings into the dirty water, in which, when stirred up, all the solid dirt precipitates to the bottom, enabling the clear water to be poured off and filtered. Most low country Singhalese carry some of this seed with them always. I never particularly mind, however, the cleanness or otherwise of the water when making tea.

Candles I find more handy than oil lamps, but I do not use much light of any sort, generally trying to have my dinner by daylight if I get in early enough from my evening round. A small alarm clock will be an advantage to a man who cannot wake automatically at the time he wishes, for you may be perfectly certain your servants won't wake you as they sleep like corpses when in the jungle, and are lost for want of "cock-crow" and the "muster tom-tom."

Don't forget a packet of a dozen boxes of wooden matches, to be carefully kept dry.

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Grass sleeping mats are good for the men, and for use as ground mats inside your tent.

Coming to foodstuffs, you must bear in mind the fact that you can get very little in the jungle villages beyond an occasional fowl, eggs, and perhaps a pumpkin.

Rice, even, is frequently unprocurable, so you must take all you require with you. Rice is an infernal nuisance, but without rice natives here are hopelessly lost—will not, and simply cannot, accommodate themselves to anything else. Moreover, a Tamil becomes *ill* at once if he is fed on any rice other than the particular kind he has been accustomed to.

If your men are Tamils, you can allow a quarter of a bushel per man per week. They won't eat all that if you shoot plenty of game, but the extra will come in to feed yourself, your carriers for a day or two, and your trackers whilst they are with you.

I also usually take about 10 lbs. of ready-ground curry stuffs for the men, or, in the case of my own regular men, give them about Rs.2 each at starting to buy their own, as they pass through Matala on their way north.

Your coolies, if you are a stranger, will sell, waste, over-eat, or throw away their foodstuffs as soon as they have "had enough" of the jungle, to try and force you to break camp and go home.

Soups are my great stand-by, and I thoroughly appreciate Lazenby's soup squares for their excellence and portability.

Tinned meats all taste alike, and are most cloying to the palate, so live on your gun as much as you can. Red deer meat is the best, spotted deer fair, but elk is tough and tasteless.

Young pig is good, so is porcupine, whilst pigeons and jungle fowl, always available, are excellent; but I don't recommend too much shot-gun work in deer country on account of the noise.

"Plasmon" biscuits are very good, and a few in your pocket will carry you a long day without a full meal.

A ham is excellent for "early tea." Tea is my principal drink, or, occasionally, when coming in very tired, chocolate-and-milk.

Lime juice cordial comes in very handy for use with filtered water and to charge your water-bottle for a long day's march.

For the latter I use a big half-gallon aluminium felt-covered bottle, which I find most excellent—can't have too big a bottle or flask. Chocolate-sticks are also a fine stand-by for a long day without food—a couple of sticks of chocolate and half-a-dozen biscuits will enable a man to go on all day without inconvenience.

The less transport you have the better, as a camp full of men is an abomination and leads to rows, thieving, and food difficulties.

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I have not mentioned soda-water, as the average Ceylon sportsman will not think of attempting to take such bulky stuff into the jungle with him, owing to transport difficulties.

"Sparklets" and soda tabloids could, however, be used instead with advantage.

Coming now to the question of cost, a Ceylon man like myself, having coolies and carts available, and knowing "the ropes," can get things done for a fraction of what it will cost a stranger.

I pay for a cart Rs.2 per day, which includes a pair of bulls, their food, and two men and their food, but not including tolls on the road, if any, which I pay.

In the Hambantota district (Southern Province), with Government-supervised trackers, a stranger could get a cart at the above rates, or even cheaper, but anywhere else he would probably be charged Rs.5 per day, plus every extra which could be crammed in.

My own coolies get their "names" in the estate check-roll charged to me as "lent labour," and I also feed them on the journey, which brings the cost per cooly to about 45 to 50 cents per day. I usually have three or four of my own men only.

Trackers get R.1 per day, plus perhaps a little extra at the end of a good trip.

Carriers in *parts* of the North Central Province have lately put their price up to R.1 per day, owing to rumours of high payments to others by injudicious strangers; but, as they only need to be used for a couple of days or so, that is not a great matter.

My regular rate was 50 cents per day and food, and quite enough too.

Here is the actual cost of a trip taken by myself and a friend, which may be accepted as a fair average of such excursions:—

	Rupees.
Three coolies for nineteen days . . . . .	21.60
Feeding, and a little extra . . . . .	11.05
Cart, nineteen days at Rs.2 . . . . .	38.00
Tolls (six) . . . . .	3.00
Our rest-house expenses . . . . .	27.55
Carriers, trackers, &c. . . . .	71.25
All provisions (not necessarily all consumed) . . . . .	81.78
Total . . . . .	Rs. 254.23

The above would mean ten days' travelling and shooting for myself and friend, and nineteen or twenty days for the coolies, as they leave days before, and return days after, us. It thus works out

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at a cost of Rs.12.71 each, or about 17 shillings each per day for those ten days.

This would be for a perfectly comfortable, but fairly economical trip. To do the thing really luxuriously in our style we would probably incur an expense of Rs.15 or £1 per day each.

A visitor on economy bent could hardly do a similar trip on less than twice what we spend, and the ordinary wealthy "globe-trotter" would spend ten times as much.

Professional "shikaries," such as can be engaged in Colombo, usually name a sum of so much per day, for which they supply everything, from guns to carriers, and so save the ordinary visitor a lot of trouble. A trip in the style in which I travel could only be done by a visitor in company with a Ceylon friend, and an experienced man at that.

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## APPENDIX IV

### VERNACULAR TERMS FOR BIRDS, BEASTS, CAMP FURNITURE, &c.

If a visitor wishes to be able to converse a little, or make himself understood, he must go in for a proper handbook on the language, Tamil or Singhalese, whichever is most used in the district he wishes to visit ; but, as vocabularies do not as a rule contain all one wants, I have thought it advisable to include the following lists of native names of animals, birds, and all ordinary camp equipments.

The spelling I have endeavoured to make as phonetical as our miserable alphabet will permit, because tonal or "accent" marks and instructions for using them are usually disregarded by the ordinary casual reader. Hyphens are introduced merely to divide syllables, and thus aid pronunciation.

	<i>Singhalese</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
Elephant (general term)	al-eeyah	ahney
„ (female)	al-eedenna	pon-ahney
„ (male tusker)	ettah	kombahney
„ (female tusker)	ettinnee	pon-kombahney
„ (rogue)	horrah al-eeyah	pollahtha tannee ahney
Wild buffalo (bull or general term)	wal meewah	kahtoo mahdoo
„ „ „	wal mee-harrak	kahtoo erroomey
„ „ „	wal harrak	kooloo mahdoo
„ „ „	kooloo meewah	kooloo erroomey
„ „ „	kooloo mee-harrak	kiddah
„ „ „	kooloo harrak	
Wild buffalo (female)	wal mee-dennah	kahtoo pon-mahdoo
„ „	kooloo mee-dennah	kahtoo passoo mahdoo
„ „	wal ella-denna	kooloo pon-mahdoo
„ „	kooloo ella-denna	„ passoo-mahdoo or "errumey" in- stead of "mahdoo"
Village buffaloes	gam mee-harrak, &c.	nahdoo - mahdoo, er- rumey, &c.
Elk (buck)	gohnah ( <i>plur.</i> gohnoo)	marrey, ahn-marrey, or komboo-marrey, or kalley

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	<i>Singhalese</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
Elk (doe) <sup>1</sup>	gohnettee	pon-marrey
Deer (general term)	moowah ( <i>plur.</i> moowo)	mahn
Spotted deer (general term)	pit-moowah	pullee-mahn
Spotted buck	ang-moowah	komboo-mahn
"    "		kalley-mahn
"    doe	moowah-denna	pon-mahn
Red deer	wellee-moowah	sahrey-mahn
"    "		pooloothee-mahn
Mouse deer (chevrotain)	meeminna	sarrogoo-mahn
Bear (male)	wallahah	karradee
"    (female)	wellahinnee	pon-karradee
"    (plural)	wallassoo	karradeegal
Leopard (male)	koteeyah ( <i>plur.</i> koteeyo)	pillee
"    "	diweeyah (i like i in "did")	
"    (female)	kottee-denna	pon-pillee
"    "	diwee-denna	
Pig (male)	oorah ( <i>plur.</i> ooro)	pandee ( <i>plur.</i> pandegal)
"    (female)	eeree	pon-pandee
Young animal (general)	petteeyah ( <i>plur.</i> pettou)	kootee
"    calf	wassah	kandoo kootee
Jackal	{ narreeyah } { seewallah }	narree
Hare	hahwah	moosal
Civet cat	oorooleywah	pulloogoo-pooney
Mongoose	moogiteeyah	keeree-pulley
Porcupine	itteywah	moollahm-pandee
Pengolin (scaly ant-eater)	kabbaleywah	ooloonkoo
Black or grey monkey	wandoorah	mandee
Red monkey	rilloowah	korran-goo
Crocodile	kimboolah	mothalley
Cobra	nahyah	nallah pahmboo
Tic polanga	polangah	virreeyan-pahmboo
Rat snake	gerrin-deeyah (hard "g")	sahrey-pahmboo
Rock snake	pimburah	ven-ganatee-pahmboo
Snake (general)	sarpayah	pahmboo
Peacock	monnarah	my-ill
Jungle cock	wellee kookoolah	kahtoo sahval
"    hen	"    kikkilee	"    kohlee
Snipe	kess-wattoowah	kottan-kooroovee

<sup>1</sup> A Singhalese, as often as not, particularises the sex of any animal as "gehnoo satek" (lit. a "female animal") or "pirmee satek" (lit. a "male animal"), and in the same way a Tamil may merely prefix "ahn" (male) or "pon" (female) to the name of the animal.—AUTHOR.

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	<i>Singhalese</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
Snipe		oollahn-kooroovee
"		keechan-kooroovee
Quail	goddah-wattoowah	kahdey
Spotted dove	alloo-kobeeyah	peerah
Bronze-wing pigeon	neelah-kobeeyah	neelah-peerah
Orange breast "	batoo goyah	pachey-peerah
Pompadour "	" "	" "
Imperial "	mylee boah	maratham-peerah
Pelican	pessborah	koolookeddah
Cranes (general)	kokkoo	kokkoo
Lapwing	keeralah	ahl kahtan kooroovee
Eagles (general)	rajahleeyah	rahsahlee
Hawks "	oossah	prahndoo
Teal "	sehroo	tahrah
Ducks "	"	"
Snake-neck darter	hahnseyah	pahmboo tahrah
Smaller black divers	deeyah-kahwah	neer-kahka
Sand-pipers (general)	silleebillee	oollahn kooroovee
Horn-bill	porrowah kehndettah	rettey - choondoo koo-roovee
Bird (general)	kooroolah	koorovee
Crow	kapootah	kahkah
Black ants (biters)	kodeeyo	kadeeyan
Red ants "	dimeeyo	moosooroo
White ants "	weyo	karreyahn
Mosquitoes	madooroo	kossoo
Shooting stage in tree	messah	srahmpey
Stone - built screen for rock-hole shooting	kotoowah	kohtey
Rock-hole	galpotahah	kalloo koolee]
Jungle water-hole	wallah	tannee koolee
Spring (water)	oolpottah	ootoo
Large river	ganga	keng-gey
Small "	oya	ahroo
Irrigation channel	ellah	kahn
Tank	wewah ( <i>e</i> as in "wet")	kollam
" embankment	wey-kanda	anney-kattoo, karrey
Mountain	kanda	malley
Small hill	goddah	merdoo
Rock	gallah	kal-pahrey
Big forest	mookalahna	sholey-kahdoo
Ordinary jungle	landa	kahdoo
Scrubby "	kanatta	cheddy
Yes!	owu! or eyhey!	ahmah!
No!	ney! or neyhey!	illey!

# APPENDIX

## CAMPING EQUIPMENTS

	<i>Singhalese</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
Camp	wahdeeya	pahleyam
„	wahdee-tenna	
Tent	koodahramma	koodahram
Bed	enda	kattill
Chair	puttoowa	nahkahlee
Table	meyseey	meyseey
Box	pettee	poottee
Clothes	endum	oodoopoo
Boots or shoes	sappahtoo	sappahtoo
Slippers	serrupoo	serrupoo
Blanket	kambillee	kambillee
Pillow	kotteya	tallagahnee
Mosquito curtain	madooroo della	kossoo valley
Towel	toowayah	toowahley
Soap	sabbang	savvookahram
Water	wattoorah	tannee
„ cold	ell-wattoorah	pachey tannee
„ hot	oonoo-wattoorah	soodoo tannee
Medicine (general)	beyt	maroondoo
Illness	assaneepa	seekoo or shokam illey
Gun	toowakkuwa	tohkoo
Rifle	rifle-toowakkoowa	rife-tohkoo
Cartridge	patros	cartris or tohtah
„ bag	pokett	„ -py
Gunpowder	wedeebeyt	veddee maroondoo
Small shot	moonissang	ravvey
Bullet	oondey	koondoo
Knife	peeheeyey	kattee
Big hunting knife	kadoowa	perreea kattee
Chopper or billhook	wap-peeheeyey	vettee kattee
Axe	porrowa	kohdahlee
Oil stone	karragalla	sahney kal
Mamoty	oodella	mamoty
Belt	pateeya	vahr
Binocular or telescope	cheena kannadee	cheena kannadee
Food (meals)	keyma	teenee
Plate	peengahn	peengahn
Saucepan	sahss-pan	sahsspan or pahnee
Table knife	meyseey peeheeyey	meyseey kattee
„ fork	gerpoowa	mulloo
„ spoon	henda	karrandee
„ cup	cohpey	cohpey
Water bottle	bohtal	bohtal

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	<i>Singhalese</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
Tin opener	bellek - kappanna-peeheeeyey	taggaram arrookera ka-tee
Match box	ginnee pettee (hard "g")	nerroopoo poottee
String	lannoo	saddambo
Candle	ittee pandamma	melloogoo tirree
Skin preservative	hamma beyt	tohl maroondoo
Bucket	bahldee	vahlee

### FOODSTUFFS

	<i>Singhalese</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
Rice (uncooked)	hahl	arisee
„ (boiled)	bat	sohroo
Curry	pollkirree mahloo	kahree
Potatoes	batalla	kellangoo
Salt	loonoo	oopoo
Bread	pahn or rohtee	rohtee
Biscuit	isskotoowa	isskottoo
Meat	mass or mahloo	errichee
„ beef	harrak mass	mahd errichee
„ mutton	betaloo mass	ahdoo „
„ pork	ooroo mass	pandee „
„ deer	moowa mass	mahn „
Fowl (hen)	kikkilee	kohlee
Cock	kookkoolah	sahval
Vegetables	ellawalloo	kahgirree
Lime juice	dehee wattoorah	tehsee-kai-tanee
Milk	kirree	pahl
Chocolate	kokkolattee	kohkolattee
Tea leaf	tey kolla	tey-illey
„ water	tey wattoorah	tey-tanee

## APPENDIX V

### THE MAP

THE map is referred to in my chapter on the physical features of the country, and is appended to enable the reader to see at a glance where the hunting parts of the country are situated.

The sanctuaries are accurately defined, but in the case of the green coloured "park, plain, and forest" country the coloration only shows the general position, for, without a detailed survey, the boundaries of such country cannot be defined. Again, it must not be supposed that such country is one vast open plain. There are plains, some of great extent, others quite small; there are also parks full of scattered trees or clumps of jungle, and all are divided from each other by greater or smaller masses of forest. In some places, particularly in the Southern and Eastern Provinces and the western portion of the North Central Province, and the coast line, the open country is sandy plain and more or less thorny scrub. The map is merely meant to show the general position of the districts, and lays down no accurate boundaries except in the case of the sanctuaries.

Also, it must not be supposed that game is only to be found in the particular parts of the country defined in the map. Outside of the planting districts in all parts of the low country, excepting the very populous parts of the Western Province, game of all kinds exists in greater or lesser numbers, such as pig, deer, leopards, bears, elephants, and buffaloes; but, apart from the districts defined on the map, such country is mainly scrub and jungle, affording little in the shape of open stalking country, and systematic shooting can be indulged in with difficulty, though in the season bird life abounds.