

RECORDS  
OF  
SPORT IN SOUTHERN INDIA

CHIEFLY ON THE  
ANNAMULLAY, NIELGHERRY AND PULNEY MOUNTAINS

Also including Notes on  
SINGAPORE, JAVA AND LABUAN

FROM JOURNALS WRITTEN BETWEEN 1844 AND 1870

BY THE LATE  
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*MADRAS ARMY.*

WITH PORTRAIT AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HIS ORIGINAL SKETCHES

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SINGAPORE—JAVA—LABUAN.

SINGAPORE—POORNESS OF SPORT—SHOOT THE ONLY STAG—CHINESE AND TIGERS—AFTER RHINOCEROS—NO SUCCESS—CURIOUS MISTAKE—THE ARGUS PHEASANT—PADDLING MY OWN CANOE—NATIVES SPEARING THE SEER FISH—OBTAIN THREE MONTHS' LEAVE TO VISIT JAVA—TAKEN FOR A SPY—KINDNESS OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL—TOO MUCH CARE TAKEN OF ME—OFFICIALS' FEAR OF MY BEING KILLED BY TIGERS AND LITTLE SPORT IN CONSEQUENCE—GREAT QUANTITIES OF GAME OF ALL SORTS—TWO KINDS OF WILD HOG—EXCURSION TO THE EASTERN PART OF THE ISLAND—VISIT THE VOLCANOES, SMEROE AND BROMO—A CHANCE OF A TIGER—SECURE A PEACOCK'S TAIL—MISS A CHANCE AT A LEOPARD—THE BROMO, MARVELLOUS VIEW—THE CRATER AND THE SANDY SEA—THE TENGGER RANGE—THE HILL PONIES—ERUPTION OF THE KLUTI—TEMPLES OF BLEETA AND SOOKOO—CITY OF SOERAKATA—AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR—TIGER FIGHT—TEMPLE OF BOROBODOO—ADVENTURE WITH A PYTHON—AFTER A RHINOCEROS BY MOONLIGHT—NATIVE MODE OF TAKING GAME—OUT AFTER DEER—MY LAST STAG AND THE QUAGMIRE—THE AXIS DEER—STORY OF A TIGER—LABUAN—AT FIRST SIGHT NOT CHEERFUL—THE PIRATE AND HIS SEVEN HUNDRED MEN—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE BARRACKS FROM FIRE—DENSITY OF THE FOREST—DIFFICULTY OF FINDING ONE'S WAY—ANECDOTE OF THE SEA CAPTAIN—THE BIG BOAR OF LABUAN—CURIOUS BEES' NESTS.



SINGAPORE with its valleys, plains, grand trees and undulating hills, is very beautiful. In 1846 a great portion of the settlement was covered with jungle so dense that it was almost impenetrable and sport was hopeless. There were some deer, muntjack or barking deer, and wild hog on the island, and we managed after many a blank day, to kill a few of these. I was fortunate in shooting the only stag of any size that



had been killed on the island for a long time, and the advantage of not wearing any conspicuous color when out after game was very manifest on this occasion. We were posted by the side of the high road where the forest had been cleared and a scrub jungle had grown up. I saw the stag suddenly appear on some rising ground above the road and deliberately take his bearings. Now as all my companions had something white about them which made them very conspicuous, and I had nothing of the kind visible, he came straight down to where I was standing, and on his coming within shot got the contents of both my barrels which turned him back severely wounded, and he fell dead after proceeding a short distance; a fine beast, 13 hands at the shoulder with small but very thick antlers. They tell me that the deer on the island never have very large antlers. My sporting friends after this event, took great pains to hide every scrap of white in their dress, but no more stags came to be shot. There was said to be a great number of tigers on the island and some hundreds of Chinamen were reported to be killed each year by them, but as the Chinamen belonged to secret societies who were in perpetual feud and always ready to kill each other, I am afraid many a murder has been falsely attributed to the "gentleman in stripes." In respect to this, I was told rather an amusing story of a very knowing Chinaman. The stems of the large cable-like creepers that twine about the forest trees like huge snakes, are valuable on account of their variety of colour and beauty of grain, for wood veneering; the above mentioned individual having found a spot where these valuable creepers abounded and fearing that others might reap the harvest, adopted an

ingenious plan to keep them away; he carefully carved a tiger's foot in wood and stamped the impression in every direction leading to this piece of jungle; after a time news was brought in by another wood cutter of these numerous tracks; on first visiting the ground there appeared to be little doubt as to its being much frequented by a tiger, but on carefully inspecting the foot prints, it was discovered that they were *all made by one foot*.

I offered large rewards to get a shot at a tiger, but though I often sat up for one I never once had a chance. There was however some very fair snipe shooting to be got in the cultivated grounds.

I made a short expedition to some high ground on to the main land beyond Jahore; it was all through forest, and we more than once came across fresh tracks of rhinoceros. I was most anxious to shoot one of these beasts and kept an eager look out, but though on our return we saw their fresh tracks obliterating our footmarks, fortune did not favour us. On this occasion shortly after passing these tracks, I thought I was going to have a bit of good luck; I was advancing some distance in front of the rest of the party, when I spied up a vista in the forest, what I thought was a rhinoceros standing by a tree; I could only see its head and ear, the tree hiding the rest of the body. I could see the ear distinctly moving backwards and forwards. Making signs to the people to stop, with beating heart I crept from tree to tree, and when I at last came within range, imagine my disappointment on finding that the ear was a solitary dead leaf and that the head was a combination of a dead branch and a bush; the leaf being moved by the wind gave it such a life like appearance that I was very nearly firing at it, and it



thoroughly deceived me as well as the natives with me. The lights and shades in the forest, combined with dead branches, bushes, &c., take at times such curious shapes that the wonder is mistakes are not oftener made. I once mistook a bush for a pea fowl and actually did fire a charge of shot into it. From the numerous calls I heard around me there appeared to be a great many of that rare and beautiful bird the argus pheasant, and being most anxious to secure a specimen, I stalked to the sound most cautiously, but I never even got a glimpse of these wary birds. We were much tormented by the little forest leeches which, although not bigger than a rose caterpillar, appeared to cover the ground and hang on every leaf ready to fix themselves on us; at one place we had continually to move on, being afraid to make a halt on account of them; we were duly protected with leech gaiters but they got down the back of our necks and up our sleeves; how the natives, who had no protection, escaped being absolutely sucked dry is a puzzle to me.

One of my chief amusements at Singapore was "paddling my own canoe" amongst the lovely islands and looking down into the coral covered depths below, which on a calm day seemed like a fairy forest, the coral having a most tree-like appearance and of every variety of tint from deep red to the most delicate green. Fish of all sizes and colors were swimming about in every direction far down in these charming water woods. So clear is the sea that the Malays in their sanpans, a very light kind of canoe, chase and spear the seer fish, which here takes the place of salmon, only the flesh is white instead of pink. It is a fast swimmer, quite as large as the salmon and excellent eating. Two Malays, one in the bow and the other in the stern of the canoe,

paddle out in search of the fish and on finding a shoal give chase; the man at the bow, besides his paddle, has a long three pronged bamboo spear, like an eel spear, and wears a large shade over his eyes to assist him in seeing into the depths below. The pace they go and the turns and doubles they make is very exciting, and the excitement increases when the man at the bow stands up and with the spear balancing above his head prepares to strike—now he is going to throw! No! he calmly puts the spear down and paddles with all his might at one time passing close to you, then dashing off far away, suddenly doubling back again—now he is up once more, and the spear quivers in his hand. Now! Now! No, he calmly lays down the spear again and is paddling away as hard as ever. This sometimes is repeated over and over again and my patience has been sorely tried when looking on, the calm unexcited bearing of the spearman making it still more provoking. At last the spear is thrown and with such unerring aim that I have never to my recollection seen a failure. The spear is heavily weighted at the base so that it throws up the fish, and being made fast to the boat by a line is easily hauled in. I have seen fish of between 20 and 30 lbs. captured in this way. It is also interesting to watch the ospreys or fishing eagles, of which there were numbers, soaring high above and dropping like a bullet into the sea, rising again with a good sized fish in their talons.

I became very tired of the life at Singapore; the monotonous climate, a kind of perpetual hot house summer, and the lack of sport, made me apply for three months' leave to Java, and great was my joy on obtaining it. It was on the 10th May, 1848 that I embarked on board the Dutch steamer for Batavia. Soon after my arrival I found that sport must



be a secondary consideration if I wished to visit the most interesting portions of one of the most lovely islands in the world, as I could not afford the time to remain stationary. I happened to arrive in Java at a most exciting period; the great European revolutions had just burst into flame, and the Dutch had made up their minds that the English Government if driven to war with France would take it from them; my arrival, therefore, created quite a sensation; there was a very strong suspicion amongst the good people of Batavia that I was an English spy, and they could not understand why the Governor General was so civil to me, granting me permission to travel all over the island; moreover issuing an order that Captain Hamilton was to be treated with every attention.

I met with great kindness at Government House. Colonel Butterworth, the Governor of Singapore, by having the Java mails made up separately saved the Batavian Government the trouble and expense of sending all the way to Hong Kong for their letters, for which act of consideration the Governor General was very grateful, and my arrival in the island shortly afterwards with a letter of introduction from the Colonel, enabled his Excellency to show through me his appreciation of the kind act of our Governor; hence the mystery of my reception which so puzzled the public at large. At various places I reviewed troops, made speeches, and was driven about escorted by cavalry, and I gratefully acknowledge the kindness and civility I received from all the Government Officials during my sojourn in the Island. Unfortunately in the circular order issued, it was mentioned that I was to be shown sport; in some places whole districts were turned out to beat the jungles for me, but as a rule the

Dutch civilian of those days was not a sportsman and had no idea of the necessity of keeping perfectly quiet when a beat was taking place; the consequence was that though game abounded, I got but very few shots. They generally posted me with a couple of belted officials to look after me, who when they heard anything approaching would insist upon calling to me to look out, thereby turning the animal back. I used to steal away from them and by dodging about in the jungle, hoped to shake them off, but no, perhaps just as some animal was approaching, these noisy officials would come upon me! My fury would be great, but it had not the slightest effect upon them. They were ordered to keep me in sight and did so. So fearful were they that I should be killed by a tiger or a rhinoceros that they would not let me go anywhere alone; not that they cared so much about me individually, but if anything happened they would have to report it to the Governor General; indeed one official on hearing that I had gone out alone with my rifle said to the English planter with whom I was staying, "Oh dear, oh dear! he will be killed by a tiger and I shall have to report it to the Governor General!" and his delight on seeing me walk in with a whole skin was really sincere and genuine. Many parts of the island swarmed with wild hog, and some of the old boars were very savage. They were of a species of wart hog,<sup>1</sup> though differing considerably from the African species, and when facing you their body is completely hidden by their huge ugly heads. I killed a good many of them, besides muntjack, pea fowl, jungle fowl and a few deer<sup>2</sup> of the larger kind but smaller than our Indian sambur.

<sup>1</sup> There are two species of wild hog in Java, *Sus verrucosus* or wart hog and *Sus vittatus*.

<sup>2</sup> *Cervus rusa*.



I often got shots at all the above from the high road by stopping the carriage and jumping out.

After remaining a short time in Batavia and its neighbourhood, and being very anxious to see as much as I could, the Governor General offered me a passage to Soerabaya on



WART HOG OF JAVA (*Sus verrucosus*).

the eastern coast of the island, near which town a friend of mine had a sugar mill. With him I remained some time making most interesting excursions to the Tengger mountains and to the volcanoes of the Bromo and the Smeroe. I was fortunate to be accompanied by a very pleasant travelling

companion who knew the language and the district. The scenery was very fine, the mountains, nearly all of them volcanic, rise directly from the sea level and have a very grand and imposing effect. At one place, the muddy path along which we travelled, with high grass on each side and occasional patches of forest, was so beaten down with tiger tracks that it looked as if some one had been driving them like a flock of sheep to the market, and as I was most anxious to bag a Javanese tiger, we had a machan (platform) built commanding the most frequented of these tracks, and I sat up all one beautiful moonshiny night, but nothing came of it, and the only tiger I saw in these parts was lying out on rather a bare spot surrounded with high grass and well situated for a stalk; my guide made signs as if asking me whether I would shoot it; I replied "why certainly" as plain as I could by signs, so he beckoned me to dismount and follow him; we crept away through the grass, I all the time fancying he was bringing me round for a shot, at last I saw that he was taking me right away in a contrary direction. I then seized him by the scruff of his neck and made signs that we must go back and shoot the tiger; but the tiger settled the question by quietly walking into the jungle close at hand.

When I returned to the bungalow I had the man questioned as to whether he intended to take me up to the tiger. "What!" said he, "do you suppose I was going to let the gentleman shoot at the tiger? Why, if the tiger had killed him, what would have become of me?" One evening I made a very good stalk and shot a doe muntjack; I sent my guide with it to where the ponies were posted, and while waiting for his return I saw a peacock in grand plumage fly



again he sent another in, who, catching hold of the first man's leg hauled him out. He was quite insensible, and when he recovered he declared that the devil lived inside for he had seen him. Torches were brought, the hole was enlarged and in went Mr. Hartman, when to his delight, he discovered a splendid statue of a Buddhist Priest praying in a sitting posture, thirteen feet in height, of exquisite workmanship and proportions, and quite perfect. Eventually he had the earth cleared away and this beautiful temple brought to light. The temples of Borobodoo, four miles further on, are of great size and filled with exquisite carvings and statues. The natives say these temples were never finished, but were destroyed by an earthquake. The Dutch Government is about to have drawings made of the chief figures and carvings which are in the great temple, which will require at least three years' hard work to accomplish. I had heard a great deal from Mr. Hartman of the Valley of the Kadu, but I never anticipated such a treat as the view from the temple gave me: mountain scenery of the wildest description varied with tracts of cultivated patches of every shade and colour, all blended together, making a scene so enthralling that it was late in the afternoon before I could tear myself away.

On one of these excursions I had rather an exciting adventure. I was looking in some high grass, for the track of a deer I had fired at, when I almost trod upon a huge python; the part of the body that I saw was as thick as my thigh, and it appeared to extend some length either way; I at once beat a retreat, but I had not gone far when I heard a rustle in the grass behind me; the creepy creepy feeling already described came over me, for I thought the

snake had awoke, and like the giant in the fairy story of my boyhood with a "fee-fie-fo-fum," was coming after me ; but the tips of a deer's antlers as it rushed through the high grass relieved my nerves. I do not know what one would do if a big python made up his mind to dine off you, but from the lightning quickness with which I have seen one seize a squirrel, one would not have much time to think about it.

When on this excursion, I had fired at and badly wounded a large boar, and thinking I could easily finish him with a spear, a sort of halbert, which the lopas who accompany the carriage are armed with, I took one and went in at the boar, who kept making half charges at me from a thick bush in which he had taken shelter. On receiving him on the point of the spear in one of these charges the wretched weapon crumpled up altogether. I dropped it and turned round for the gun, but the bearer had bolted, and there was nothing for it but to try to catch him. I heard the champing of the angry boar's tusks behind me, so I put on a spurt and soon overtook the runaway, and seizing the rifle stopped the boar.

I was much disappointed in not even seeing a single banting (wild bull). I have been close to them and their fresh footprints have often raised my hopes, only to be frustrated by some blundering attendants frightening them or by some other contretemps quite as annoying. I was also most anxious to shoot a rhinoceros ; but again I was out of luck. One of these beasts had committed much havoc amongst the gardens of the neighbourhood where I was staying and one moonlight night we drove out to try and intercept him in a garden he frequented. It was a full moon, and we were full of hope. The watchers came to say the



beast was in the garden, so out we sallied; it was as clear as day when we started, but we had to walk some distance and before we got to our destination a dark cloud came up and all was as black as Erebus; on entering the garden we heard something moving ahead of us, but it was so dark we could see nothing. We waited for it to clear, but as there was no sign of it doing so, we got into the carriage and drove away. We had not gone far when the moon burst forth again in all her glory, and we afterwards heard that the rhinoceros was seen standing in the road in full moonlight. My last hope now was on the Preanger Mountains, and in the swampy plain of Bandoeng. My leave was rapidly coming to an end so I hastened on my way.

The plain of Bandoeng is an elevated plateau some thirty miles in length, and varying between six and ten miles in breadth. It consists of a swampy black soil, the finest in Java they say, and covered with high reeds, called *glagga*, which are from thirteen to fifteen feet high, with here and there open plains of low *allony-allony* (a broad-bladed grass) up to a man's waist, with pools of stagnant water, some of these covering dangerous bogs. The plain abounds with deer, rhinoceros, tigers and hog. A hunting party a month ago, in one of their grand beats killed one hundred and twenty deer and a rhinoceros, but the poor brutes were hemmed in on every side and slaughtered like sheep, in a fold. On these occasions they collect a great number of beaters and surround a portion of the plain, gradually decreasing the circle; the sportsmen are mounted on the bare backs of ponies, as no saddles would stand the rush and scramble through these tough high reeds. The only weapon they use is a short heavy kind of sword, with

which they cut down both the deer and the rhinoceros, the latter occasionally showing fight and doing considerable damage to horses and riders.

On my first day we entered the deer ground soon after daylight, and after a short time came on a large open plain some miles in extent, covered with grass, interspersed with forests of reeds and trees; on this plain several herds of deer were feeding, a beautiful sight, the stags keeping far out of shot, and on catching sight of us, trotted out to reconnoitre. Every now and then one would stop, shake his antlered head, and dash back to the herd as if to warn them of approaching danger, when the whole clustering together and showing quite a forest of heads and horns, would dash into the reeds, and disappear long before we could get within shot. It was only by skirting the little bays and inlets of grass at the side of the reeds that we had any chance, and even then it was difficult to approach within two hundred yards. I shot badly, firing at too great distances and at snap running shots; in fact the rush of deer in all directions kept me in such a perpetual state of excitement that I could not be cool. As soon as the sun had got well up the deer entered the high reeds, and we could hear them bellowing like a lot of bulls. I never heard anything like it. In the course of the day some five or six deer were wounded, but owing to the denseness of the reeds it was impossible to follow them for any distance. While endeavouring to track a stag I had hit I heard some big animal rush away and struggling forward as rapidly as I could, I came upon the still warm couch of a rhinoceros; perhaps it was as well I had not encountered him in such a place. We came home pretty well knocked up, and I was



glad enough, the next day being Sunday, to take a rest. On the Monday, with one of my Dutch friends, we started at four a.m. for the same ground, and were more fortunate. I bowled over a good stag at a hundred and fifty yards, and dropped another on his tracks at a hundred and eighty yards, my companion also killing a fine young stag. Just before giving up for the day I saw a stag moving away in the high grass; he stood for a moment and I took a steady aim; on the ball striking him he sprung up in the air and fell over on his back, but when I got to the place to my astonishment he was gone; we followed on his tracks, and we could see by the footmarks that he had dashed into a deep quagmire where, from the bubbles which were rising, it was evident that he had been completely swallowed up.

So ended my sport in Java, often carried on under great difficulties, principally from the fear constantly present amongst the natives and those conducting the beats that I might come to some kind of grief either by being bagged by a tiger or from some other cause, for which they would be made responsible.

Game exists in abundance, particularly deer and hogs. The deer are smaller than the Indian sambur, more like our Red deer in colour, but with the same number of tines on the antlers as the sambur. The stags have a habit of collecting masses of reeds and swamp grass on their antlers which gives them a fierce look as well as a very remarkable appearance when a number of them are moving together. There is only one locality in the neighbourhood of Cheribon, where the Axis or spotted deer is found in a wild state, but they are often kept in enclosures in the same manner as our fallow deer. If the grass had been burnt

I should probably have had much better sport, for when this is done the native sportsmen kill vast quantities of all kinds of game. Their mode of proceeding is as follows: They surround with ropes a large portion of ground including several clumps of forest trees and jungle. The deer and banting take shelter in these and are beaten out. The deer will not face the rope and numbers are cut down by



the horsemen. They never attempt to attack a bull banting, but the cows are sometimes killed in the *melée*.

The Banting (*Bos sondaicus*), somewhat like our Indian bison only not so large and with smaller horns, is plentiful; the bulls are particularly fierce and dangerous. I had not a chance of coming across one, but have heard them close by



me. The Muntjac Deer (*Cervulus muntjac*) is also plentiful; the native name for it is Kedang, and I managed to kill some of them amongst the high grass, but it was most difficult to take a correct aim.

Tigers and leopards are very numerous, but owing to the circumstances mentioned above I never saw but one tiger in a wild state. Those kept in confinement were fine large fellows but lean and ragged in appearance. A very extraordinary story of a tiger was told me which I believe to be perfectly true; it took place a few months since and is well authenticated. At a village where we stopped it is the custom to put the buffaloes under the charge of the native boys who take them out to their grazing ground in the morning and bring them back again in the evening. The boys generally choose one of the herd to ride upon, and the boy and the buffalo get much attached to each other. One morning a boy, whilst leading the herd was seized and carried off by a tiger. The pet buffalo and another immediately gave chase and made the tiger drop the boy, and as soon as he did so the pet buffalo ran up and stood over the boy remaining in this position till the other buffalo had driven the tiger well into the jungle. The poor boy was severely bitten in the shoulder but eventually recovered. The tiger was pursued and killed by the natives. Although they rather object to injure a tiger that has done no harm, the moment one attacks a human being or one of their cattle, they turn out *en masse*, shew most determined and persevering courage and rarely return without their victim.

Peacock and jungle fowl are extremely plentiful the peacocks giving us capital practice with the rifle. We succeeded in bagging a good many.