

SCREEN AT ENTRANCE TO HALL, WITH MAP TO SHOW WHERE THE GROUPS WERE COLLECTED

## SOUTHERN ASIA IN THE AMERICAN MUSEUM

The New Vernay-Faunthorpe Hall of South Asiatic Mammals

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*Owing to the fact that this article had to go to press while finishing touches were still being added here and there in the new hall, it has not been possible to show in the illustrations all of the groups that were exhibited on the opening night. For the same reason no mention can be made at this time of the details of the official opening to the public on the evening of November 17. An account of the exercises attending the formal presentation of the hall, its acceptance, and the remarks of the speakers will be given in the next number of NATURAL HISTORY.—THE EDITORS.*

**I**N 1918 the late Lt. Col. J. C. Faunthorpe, a member of the British War Mission to the United States, visited the American Museum of Natural History where, to quote his own words, he said (NATURAL HISTORY, March-April, 1924):

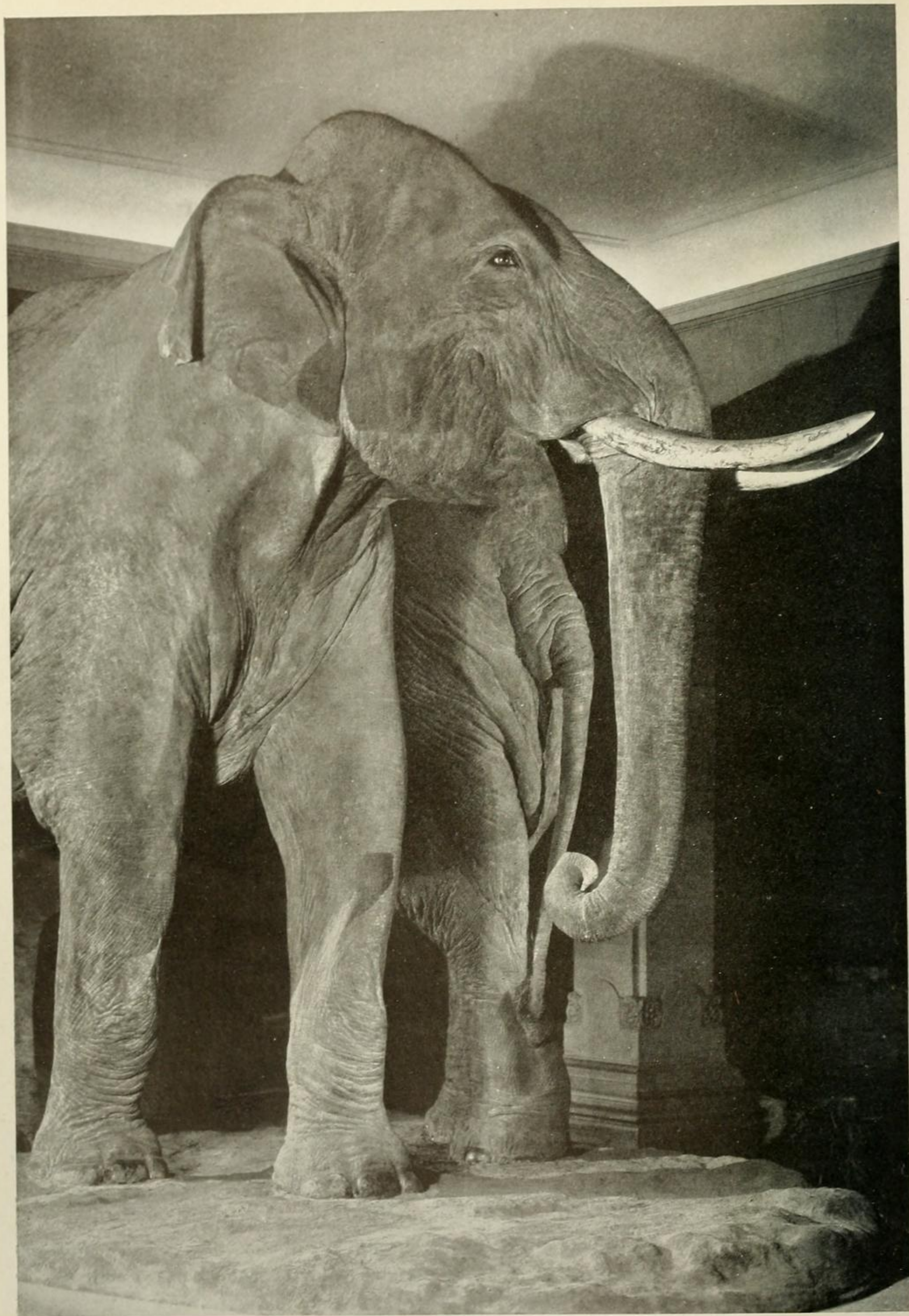
I was much impressed by the perfect system of taxidermy in use and by the artistic manner in which the animals were shown in groups in a reproduction of their natural surroundings, as well as being struck by the fact that the fauna of India were represented by very few specimens, and those of a very poor quality.

Later, on my return to India after a period of duty with the British Embassy at Washington, I wrote to Professor Osborn and offered to make a

collection of India animals, if he would provide me with a capable taxidermist. Vernay came to India on a shooting trip shortly after this, and we discussed the matter, with the result that when he returned to America, it was arranged that a collection should be made. The Museum promised us a taxidermist, and Vernay, who not only has ideas but the energy and the means to carry them out, undertook to finance the expedition.

The offer of Colonel Faunthorpe to collect Asiatic mammals for a hall in the projected Southeast Wing was welcomed by President Henry Fairfield Osborn. Early in 1922, when the ideas for the new hall of Asiatic mammals began to crystallize, one of the stumbling blocks in the

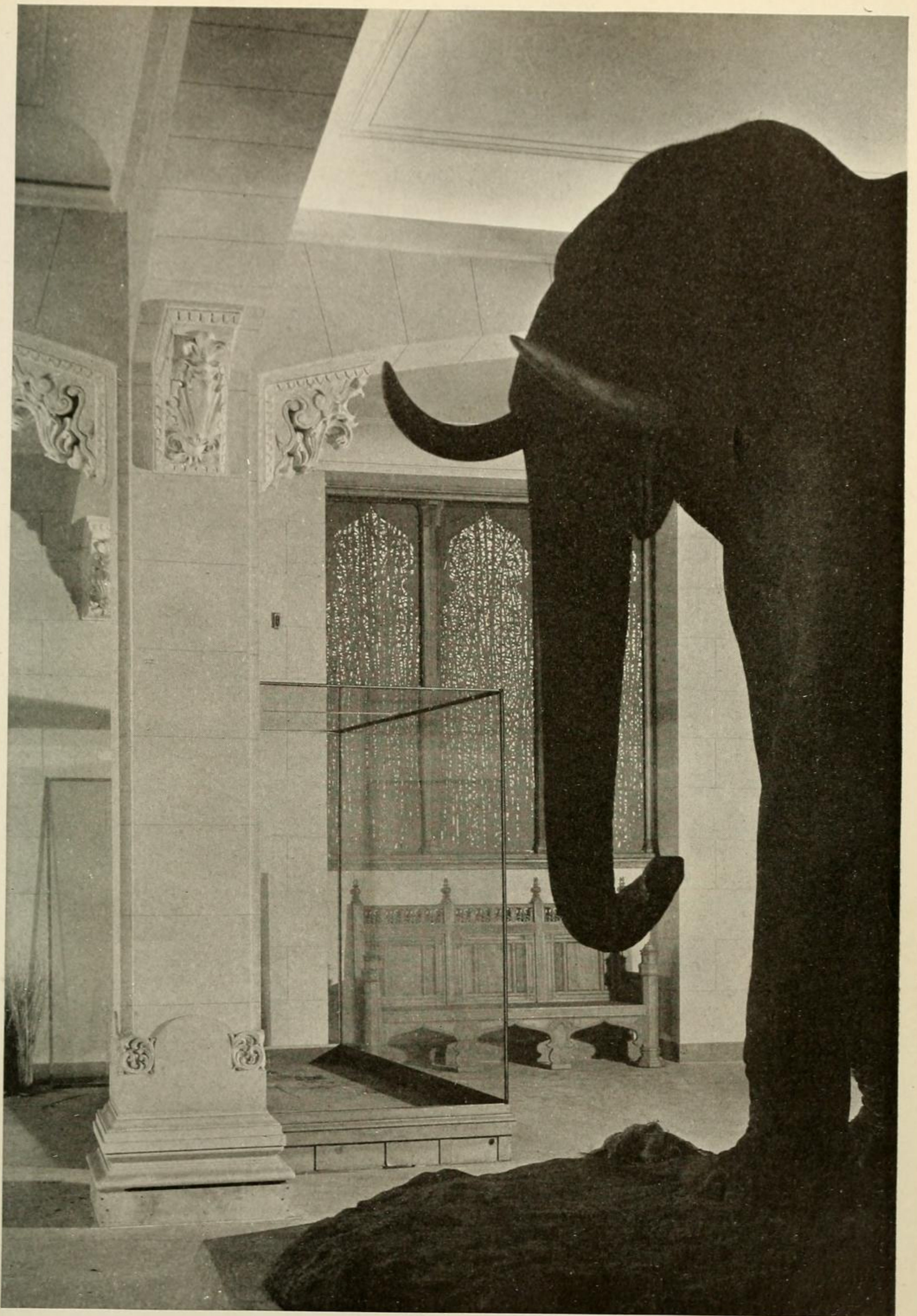




INDIAN ELEPHANTS IN THE CENTER OF THE HALL

Dominating the entire center of the hall is an open group composed of a male and a female Indian elephant. For permission to take these wild specimens in Southern Mysore, the Museum is indebted to His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore, G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., G.B.E.

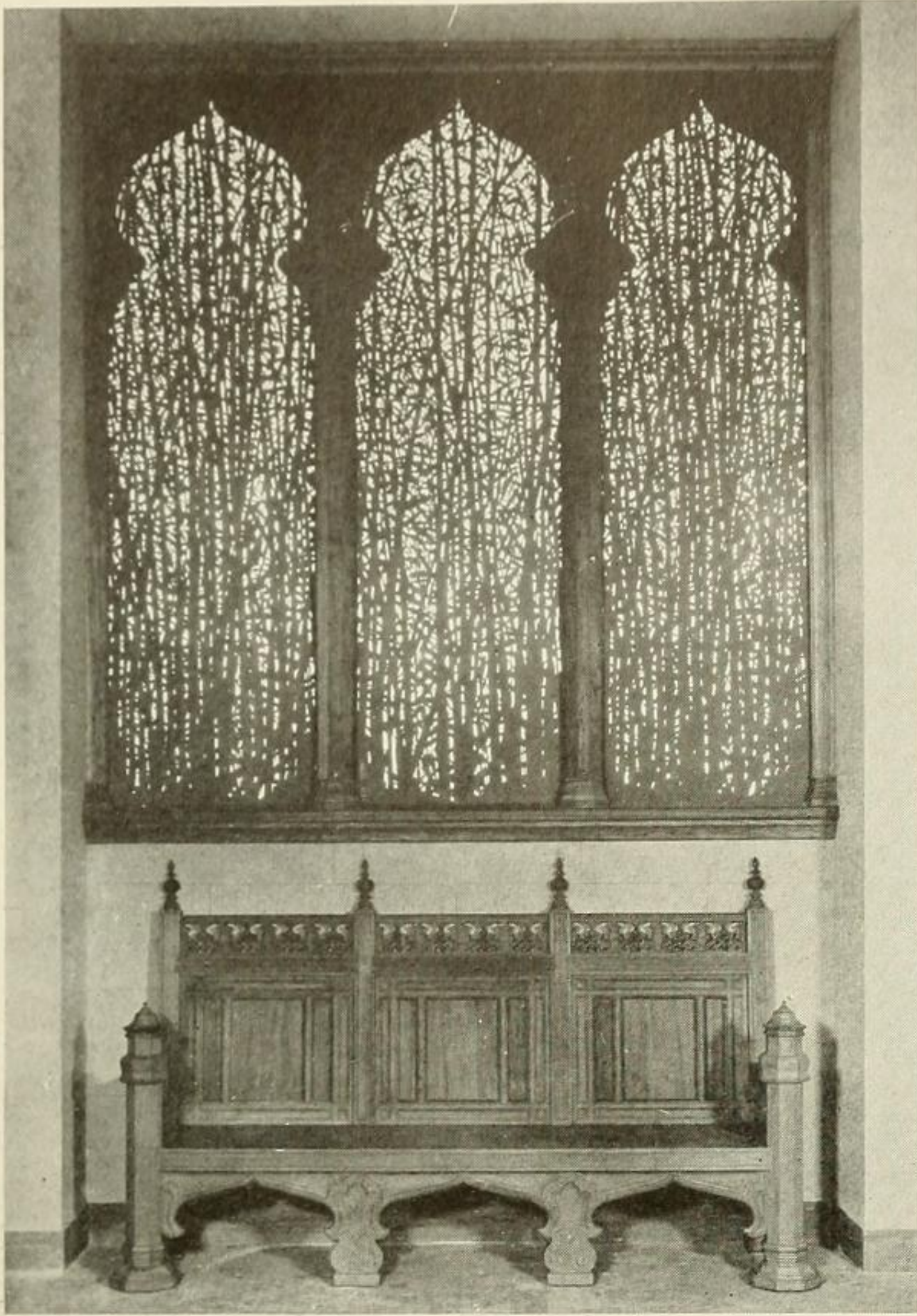




#### ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS ABOUT THE MAIN COLUMNS

The ornamentation in the hall is unobtrusive, but the designs have been very carefully selected and executed, and are faithful representations of the older Indian architecture. This photograph was taken before the hall was completed, and the empty case is now occupied by four-horned antelope





A DETAIL OF THE LATERAL ALCOVES

Showing an ornamental bench of teak, and the effective bamboo pattern of the window screens

path of the project was the raising of funds for the field work.

Colonel Faunthorpe had generously donated his services, but transportation and field expenses had to be met, and the outlay involved was considerable. The offer of Mr. Arthur S. Vernay to finance the undertaking removed the last obstacle to consummation of the plans. He not only assumed all of the costs of the collection of the mammals—like Colonel Faunthorpe devoting his personal efforts to the field work—but manifested great interest in every aspect of the plans and contributed substantially toward the expense of mounting specimens after they reached the Museum.

At first the new hall had been intended

to contain representative mammals from the entire continent of Asia. When the support of Vernay and Faunthorpe began to be felt, it was obvious that the mammals of southern Asia alone would suffice to fill the hall. In consequence, President Osborn determined to devote the second floor of the new Southeast Wing to the mammals of southern Asia, and on the plans withdrew the mammals of northern or boreal Asia to the adjacent hall of the old Museum wing.

The large mammals of Asia, like those of the other continents, are being rapidly reduced in numbers, and in the case of certain species are practically on the verge of extinction. Indeed, there are a few, such as Schomburgk's deer and the Sonda rhinoceros, which may have completely disappeared. The Indian lion has long been known only from a small number to be found in a very restricted area. If the American Museum was to possess a hall containing any very complete representation of the large mammals of southern Asia, there was no time to be lost.

It was an especially fortunate circumstance for the Museum that the men undertaking the collection of these specimens had such a wide knowledge of conditions in India and adjacent states and were *persona grata* to those individuals best able to aid in the enterprise. Through the influence of Colonel Faunthorpe and Mr. Vernay, the needs of the Museum were brought to the attention of the authorities entrusted with the conservation of the rapidly diminishing species, and exceptional privileges were extended to permit the taking of animals otherwise rigidly



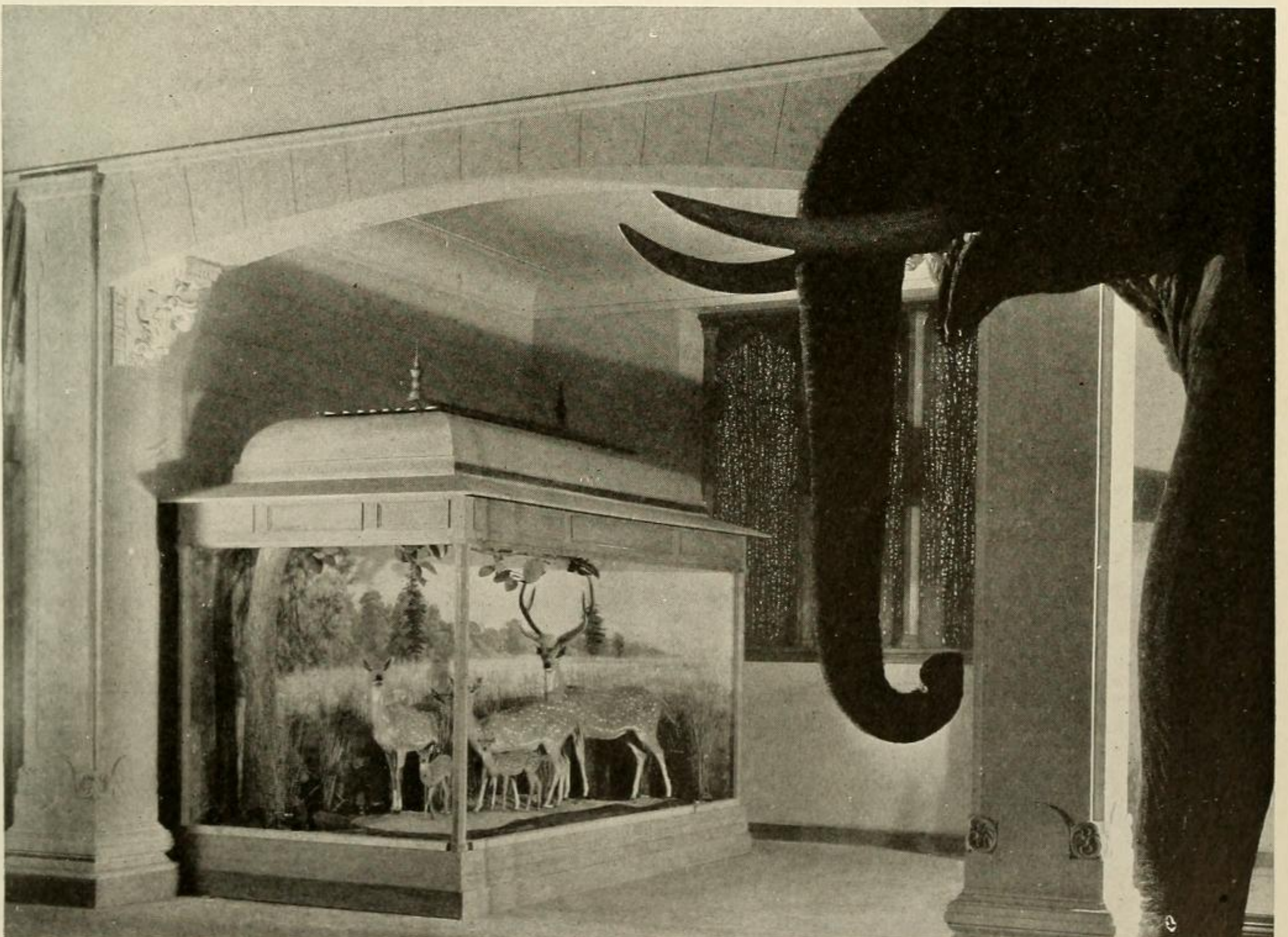
protected. In the years to come the American public will have the opportunity of viewing species which in a short time will have vanished from the face of the earth.

The coöperation which Faunthorpe and Vernay received in southern Asia was the one touch which could alone make or ruin the expeditions. Experienced hunters, and filled with an enthusiastic interest in their project, their efforts would have fallen far short of the success they achieved without the support received from such men as His Excellency the Viceroy Lord Reading, Sir Harcourt Butler, and the Indian Princes, particularly the Maharajah of Mysore, the Maharani of Khairigarh, the Kunwar Dillipat of Khairigarh, the Maharajah of Bikaner, and the Nawab of Junagadh. Apart from this, great assistance was given by the Indian Office, particularly by Sir Malcolm Seton.

The first of the Vernay-Faunthorpe Expeditions began late in the year of 1922 and continued until June, 1923. The field work was remarkably successful, and groups of all the larger mammals of the plains of India, except the buffalo, the Sumatran rhinoceros, and the lion, were obtained.<sup>1</sup> Work was begun on this material soon after it reached the Museum and a part, at least, of the Museum staff of preparators has been continuously engaged since that time upon the multitudinous details connected with the creation of a great hall.

This was the first of a series of expeditions for Asiatic mammals, and either Mr. Vernay or Colonel Faunthorpe, or both, have continued to make long trips into the field to secure groups not hitherto represented, or to replace earlier specimens with better material.

<sup>1</sup>See articles in *NATURAL HISTORY* March-April, 1924, by J. C. Faunthorpe and Arthur Vernay.



THE CHITAL DEER, ONE OF THE FOUR LESSER HABITAT GROUPS

In harmony with the architecture seen elsewhere in the hall, the cases for these groups have been designed to carry out the Indian motif





#### THE WATER BUFFALO

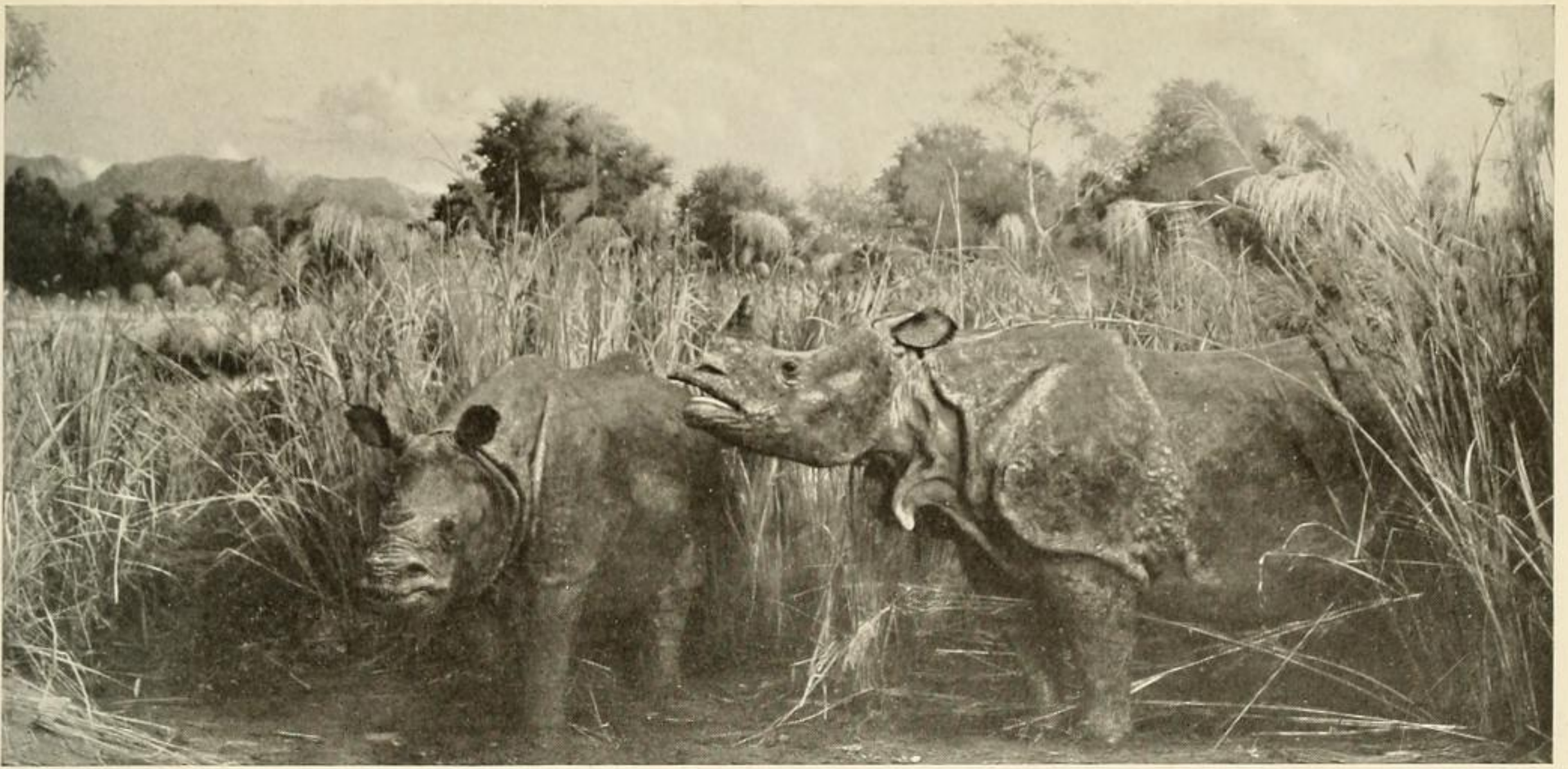
There are eight large habitat groups in the hall, and this one of the Indian or water buffalo shows a scene in the Central Provinces. These are the wild representatives of the ox which had been so widely domesticated throughout southern Asia. The water buffalo frequents the lowlands and prefers the vicinity of streams



#### A PAIR OF LEOPARDS IN SOUTHERN MYSORE

In a *shola* or wooded glen, a leopard has just captured a peacock and the two survivors of the flock are flying off through the trees. Pea fowls are a favorite prey of the leopard. Their presence in the group adds an effective color contrast to the rich markings of the leopards





#### THE GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS

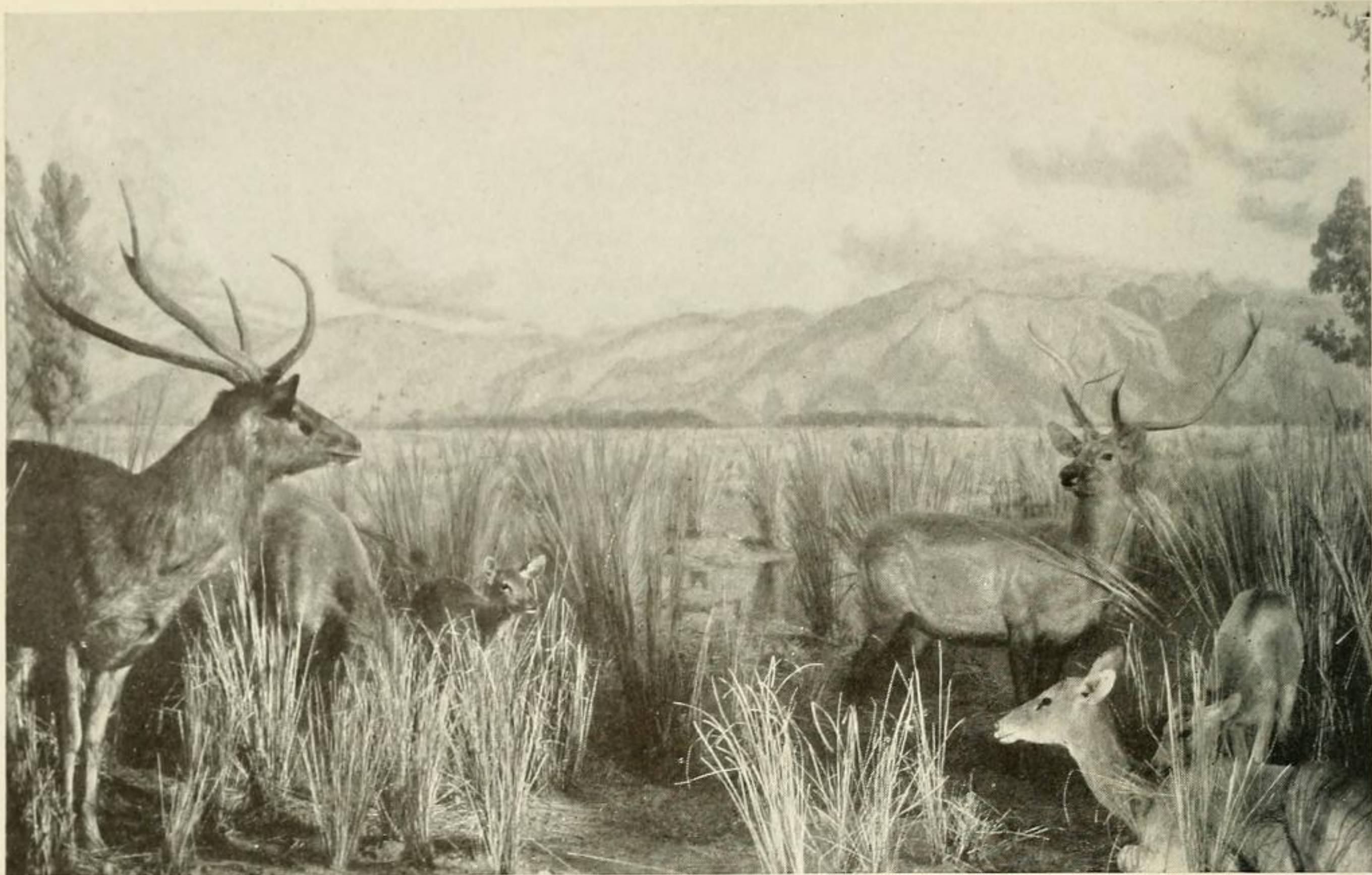
In a thicket of tall grasses near the border of Nepal, a pair of the great Indian one-horned rhinoceroses stand in all the impressiveness of their dermal armor-plate. For permission to take these specimens the Museum is greatly indebted to the late General His Highness Sir Chandra Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, G. C. B., G. C. S. I., G. C. M. G., G. C. V. O., D. C. L.



#### THE BANTING OR TSINE

These wild oxen were taken in Lower Burma, and the dense thicket of bamboo depicts a favorite haunt of this handsome game-mammal. For permission to take these specimens the Museum is greatly indebted to Sir Harcourt Butler, G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., D. C. L., I. C. S.





#### SAMBAR DEER AND SWAMP DEER

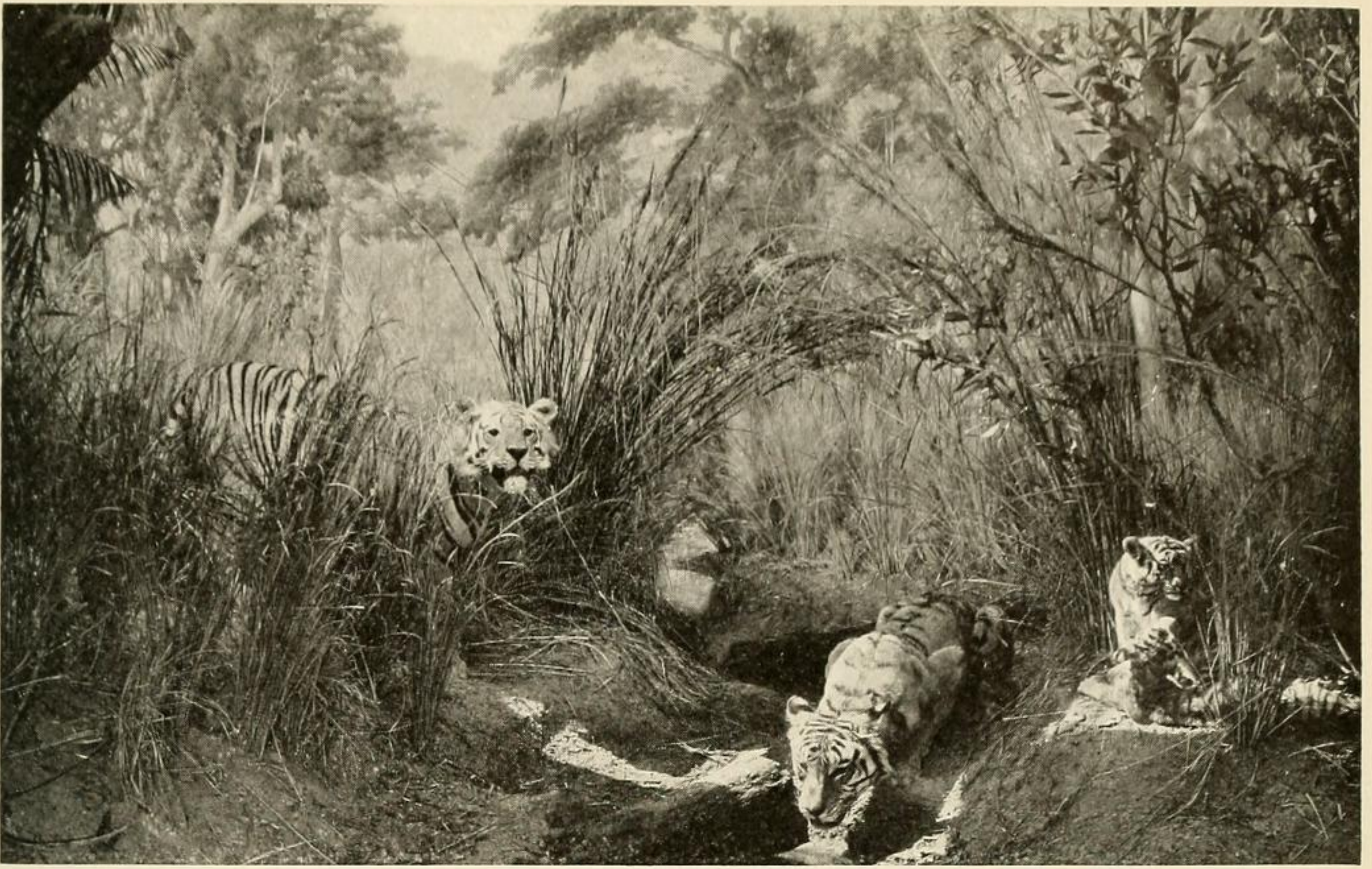
In a marshy tract in the Tarai, along the foothills of the Himalayas, the sambar deer (left) are grazing close to the swamp deer. For permission to collect these mammals the Museum is greatly indebted to the late Nawab Sultan Jahan, Begum of Bhopal, G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., C. I., G. B. E., for the sambar, and to Maharani Surat Kunwar, O. B. E., of Kharigarh, Oudh, for the swamp deer



#### THE STAG AT BAY

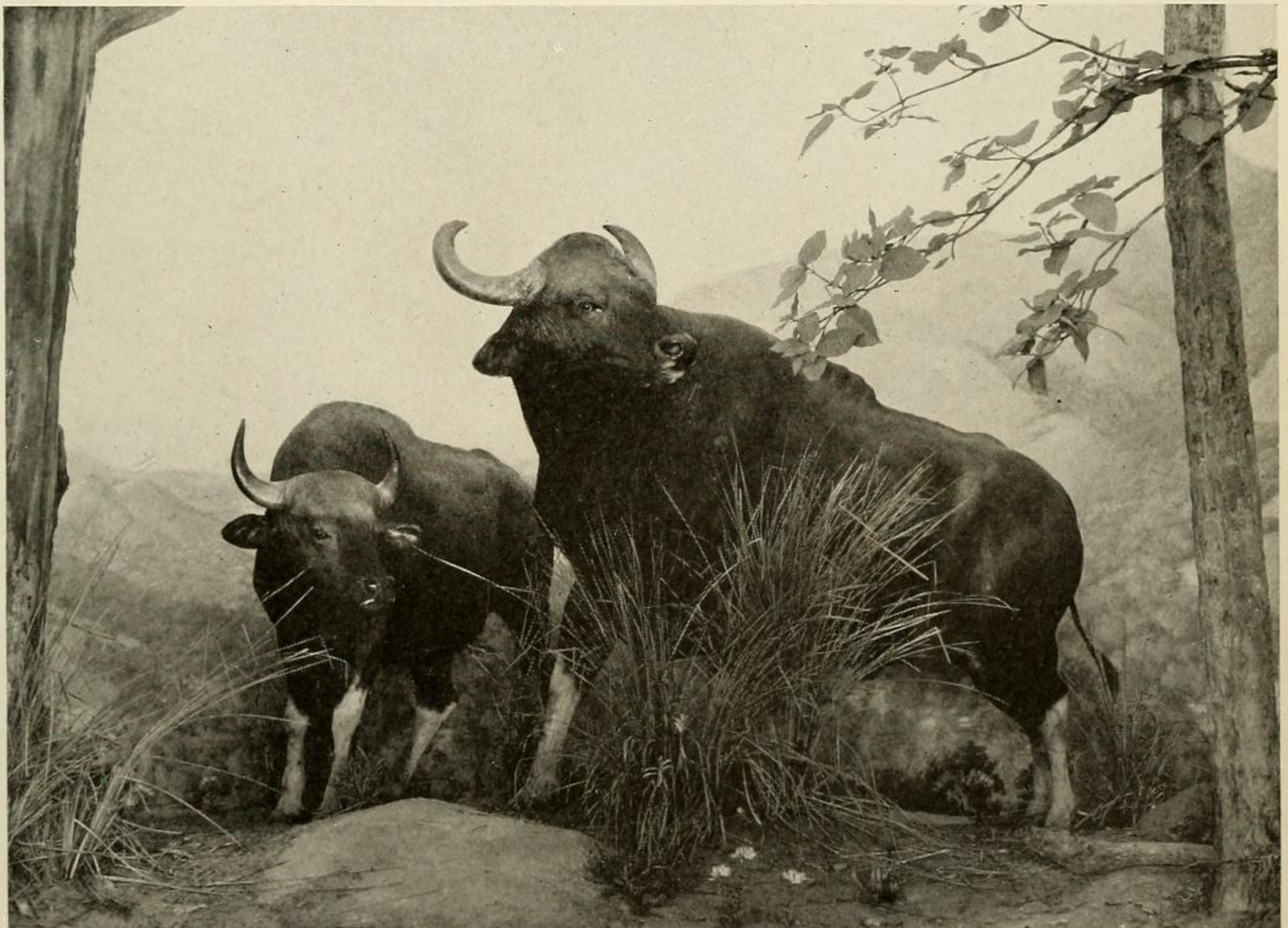
In the Billigirirangan Hills a band of wild dogs have bayed a sambar stag and are grouped about their prey in a dramatic pose





A GROUP OF BENGAL TIGERS

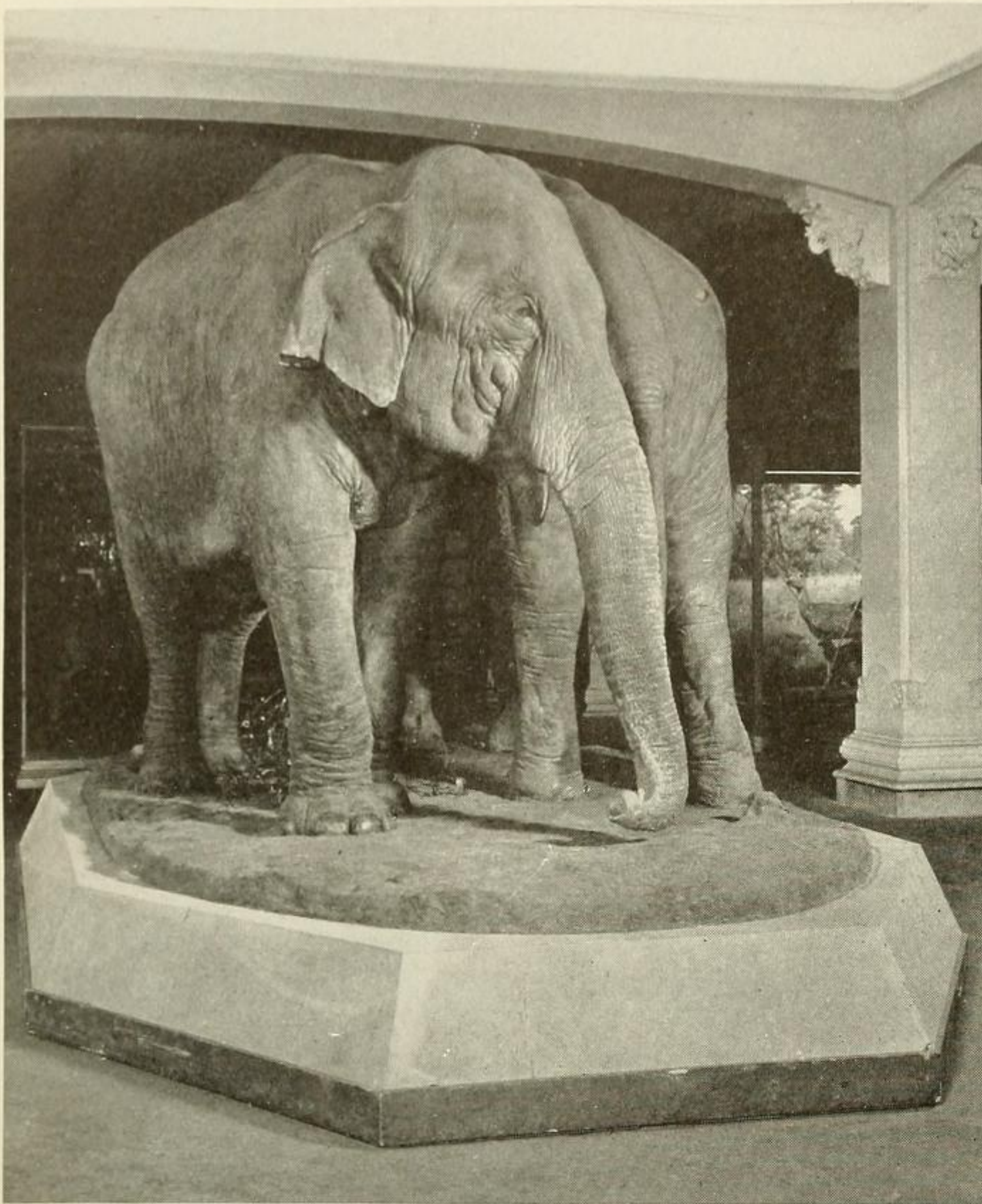
In the Kheri forest a female tiger has just brought her cubs to water at the same moment that a large male appears through the trees attracted to the same stream. For permission to collect these specimens the Museum is greatly indebted to The Most Honourable the Marquess of Reading, P. C., G. C. B., G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., G. C. V. O., D. C. L., LL.D.



MALE AND FEMALE GAUR

The gaur is one of the most impressive of all the wild oxen. This pair have just come up from a ravine in the Billigirangan Hills to graze along a grassy ridge





#### THE GROUP OF INDIAN ELEPHANTS

In this species the tusks of the females are frequently too small to project beyond the margin of the lip

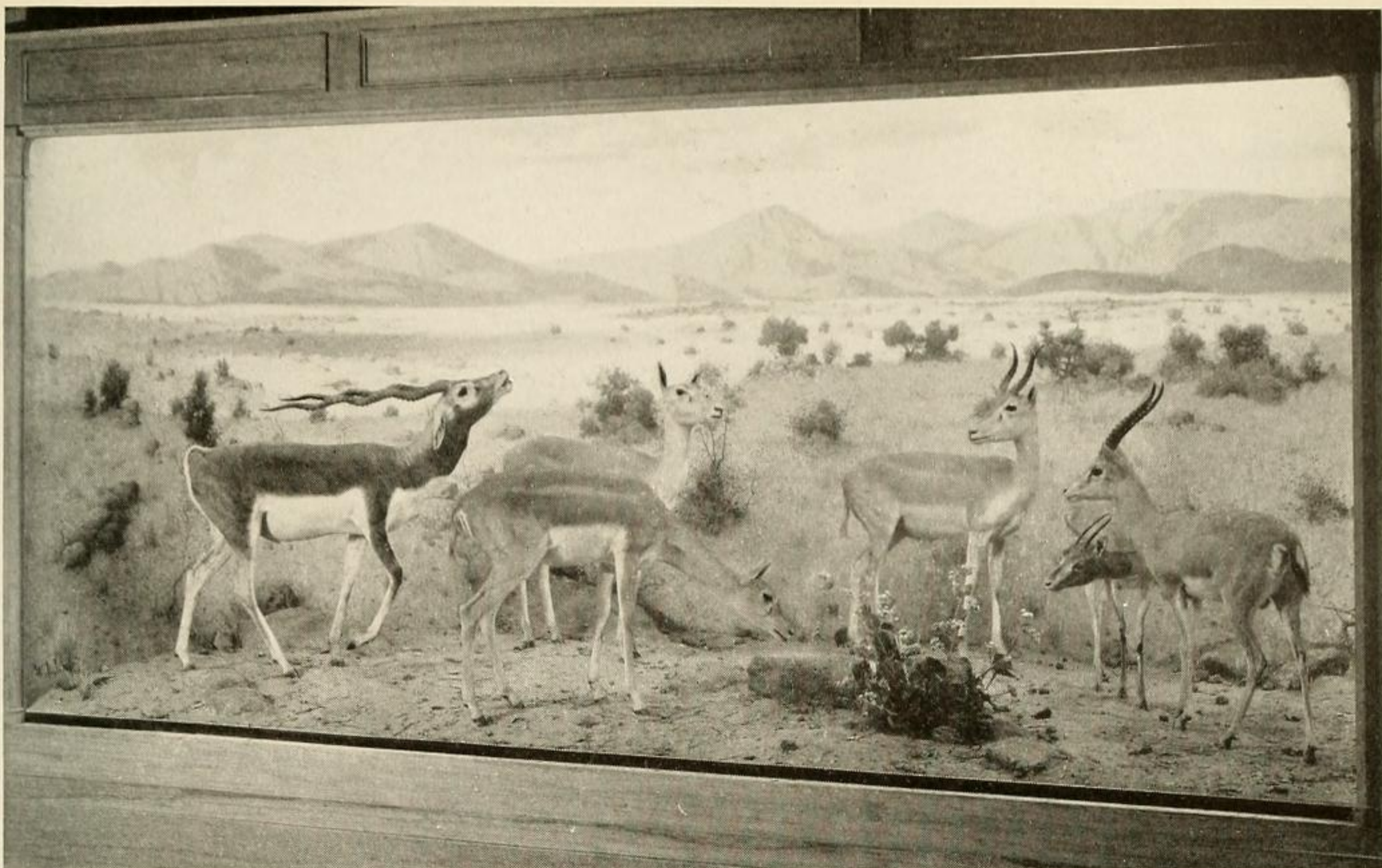
On December 1, 1929, Colonel Faunthorpe died of pneumonia, at Lucknow, India, without having seen the great progress made during that year upon the material he had been so earnestly gathering. His passing was a great loss to the Museum, and it was one of the ironies of fate that he should be taken just as the hall was entering upon the final stages of completion and assuming a grandeur of character and proportion which justified his early faith and vision.

The most productive expedition, in many respects, was that of 1927-28, when Mr. Vernay took two members of the Museum department of preparation, A. E. Butler, assistant chief of the department, who collected accessory material,

and Clarence C. Rosenkranz, an artist, to make background studies. This material, and the experience gained by the preparators, added greatly to the value of the specimens collected previously, for it now became possible to build background habitat groups in accordance with best modern practise. The major groups in this hall are now all based upon careful paintings of actual localities chosen, both because they were the natural habitats of the species to be exhibited, and because they illustrate an important type of topography or ecological area. The vegetation is the actual plant life collected on the spot or a facsimile copy in certain cases where preservation was impossible.

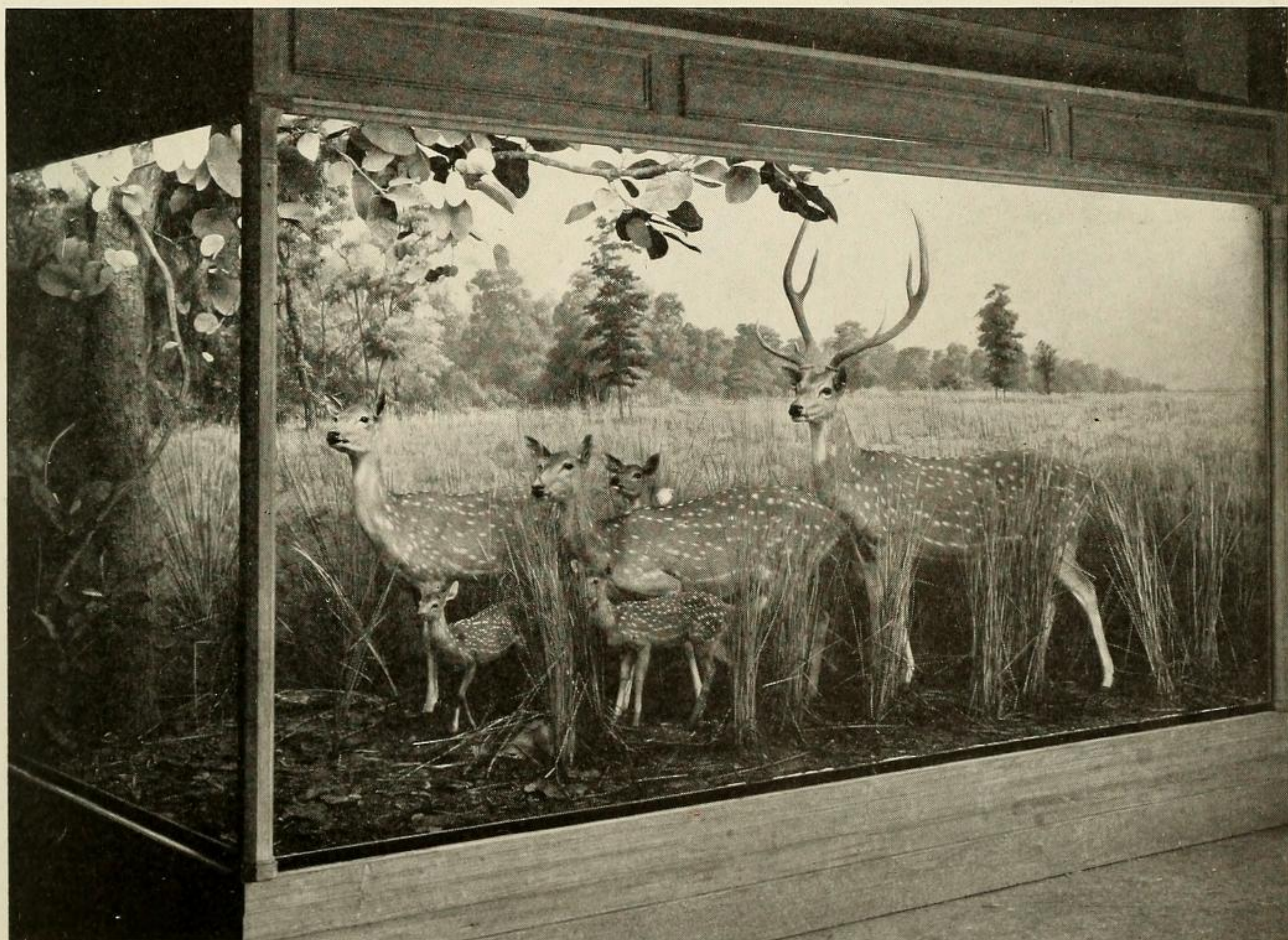
In all, some six expeditions have been necessary to assemble the field materials for the Vernay-Faunthorpe Hall of South Asiatic Mammals. The transformation of these, from hard hides, dried plants, and small canvases into lifelike animals, growing vegetation, and expansive vistas, has been an enormous task and one calling for all the artistry and ability of Mr. James L. Clark, assistant director, in charge of preparation, and of his staff. He has had as an ideal the exhibition of groups that are biologically sound, that show the mammals as they are best known to competent observers, and that will convince the visitor that he is looking upon a transported bit of Asia. Having taken into consideration every known





**BLACK BUCK AND INDIAN GAZELLE**

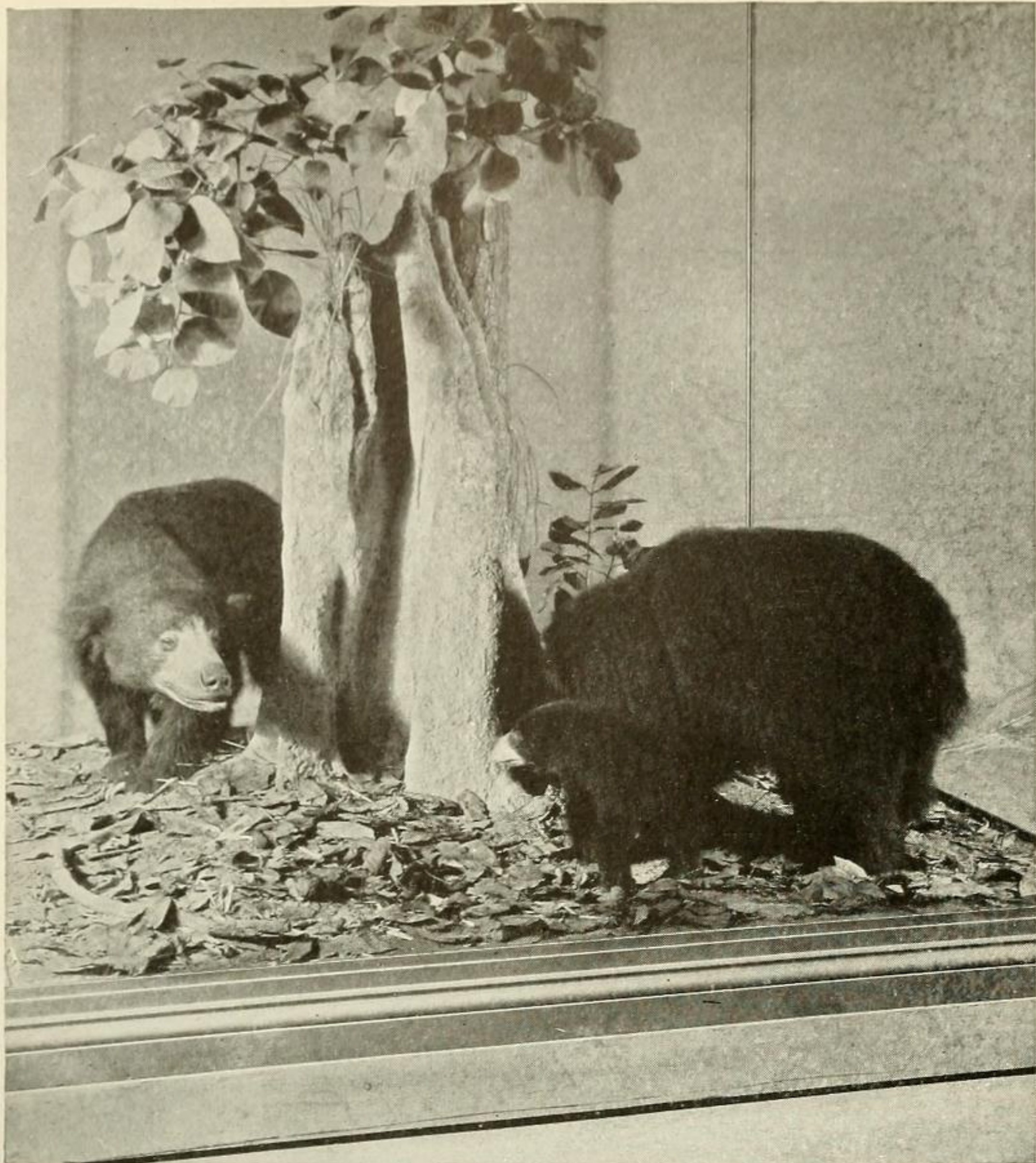
On the sunlit Nasik Plains a small group of black buck (left), escorted by a strutting male, encounter a small band of Indian gazelles. For permission to collect these specimens of Indian gazelles the Museum is greatly indebted to Major-General His Highness the Maharajah of Bikanir, G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., G. C. V. O., G. B. E., A. D. C., LL.D.



**THE CHITAL OR AXIS DEER**

In the Province of Khairigarh a beautiful group of this handsomely marked deer are crossing a park-like opening in the forest. For permission to collect these specimens the Museum is greatly indebted to Maharani Surat Kunwar, O. B. E., of Kharigarh, Oudh

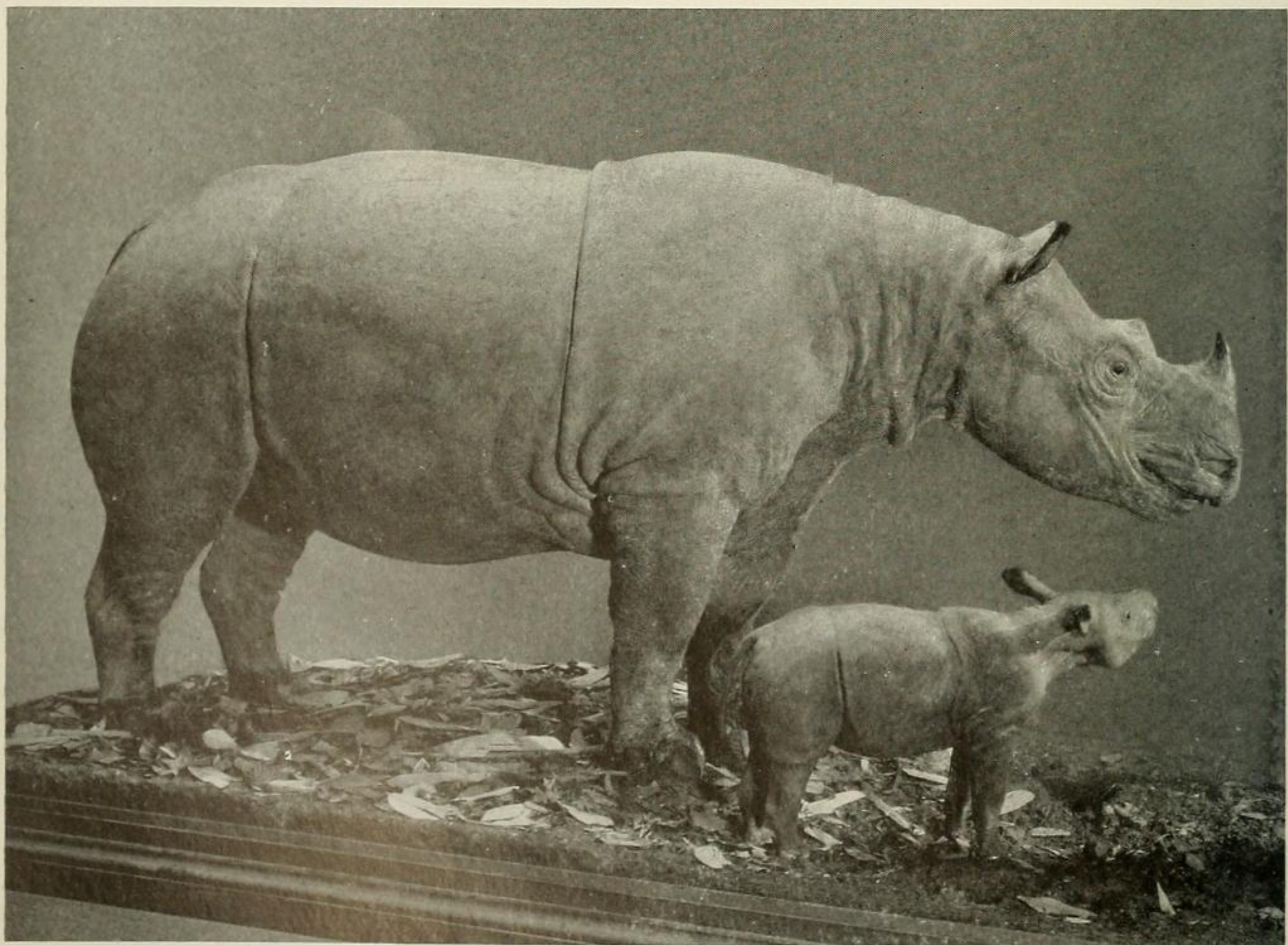




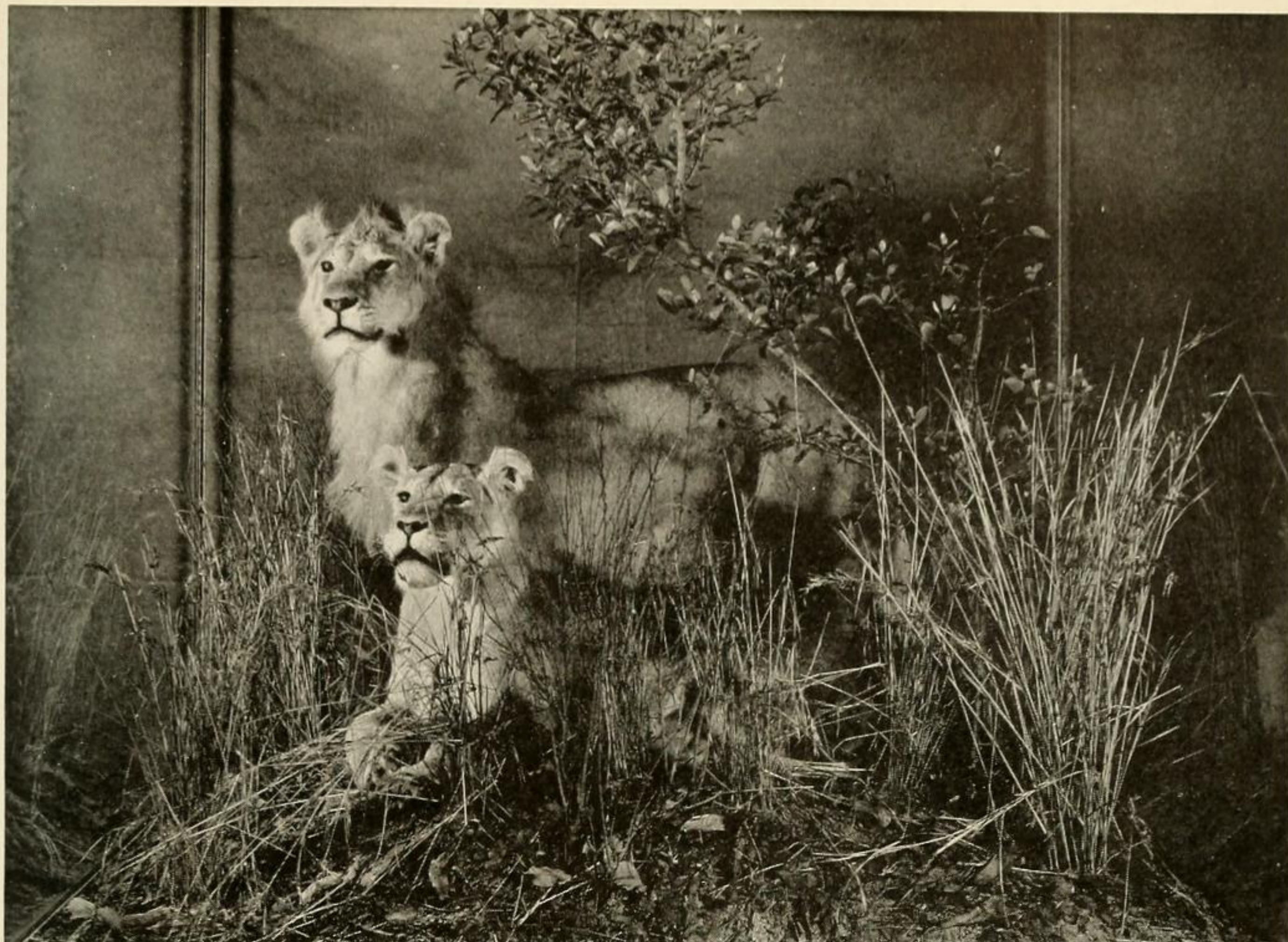
A FAMILY GROUP  
OF SLOTH BEARS  
The sloth bear is of  
surly and uncertain  
temperament, more  
aggressive than the  
other species of  
small bears. This  
group is prowling  
about a termite nest  
near the Nepal  
border

SUMATRAN  
RHINOCEROS  
WITH YOUNG

One of the open  
groups in the eastern  
alcove displays  
these smallest of  
the species of rhinoceroses  
which was collected  
in Lower Burma. For  
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Butler, G. C. S. I.,  
G. C. I. E.,  
D. C. L., I. C. S.







A PAIR OF THE  
RARE INDIAN  
LIONS

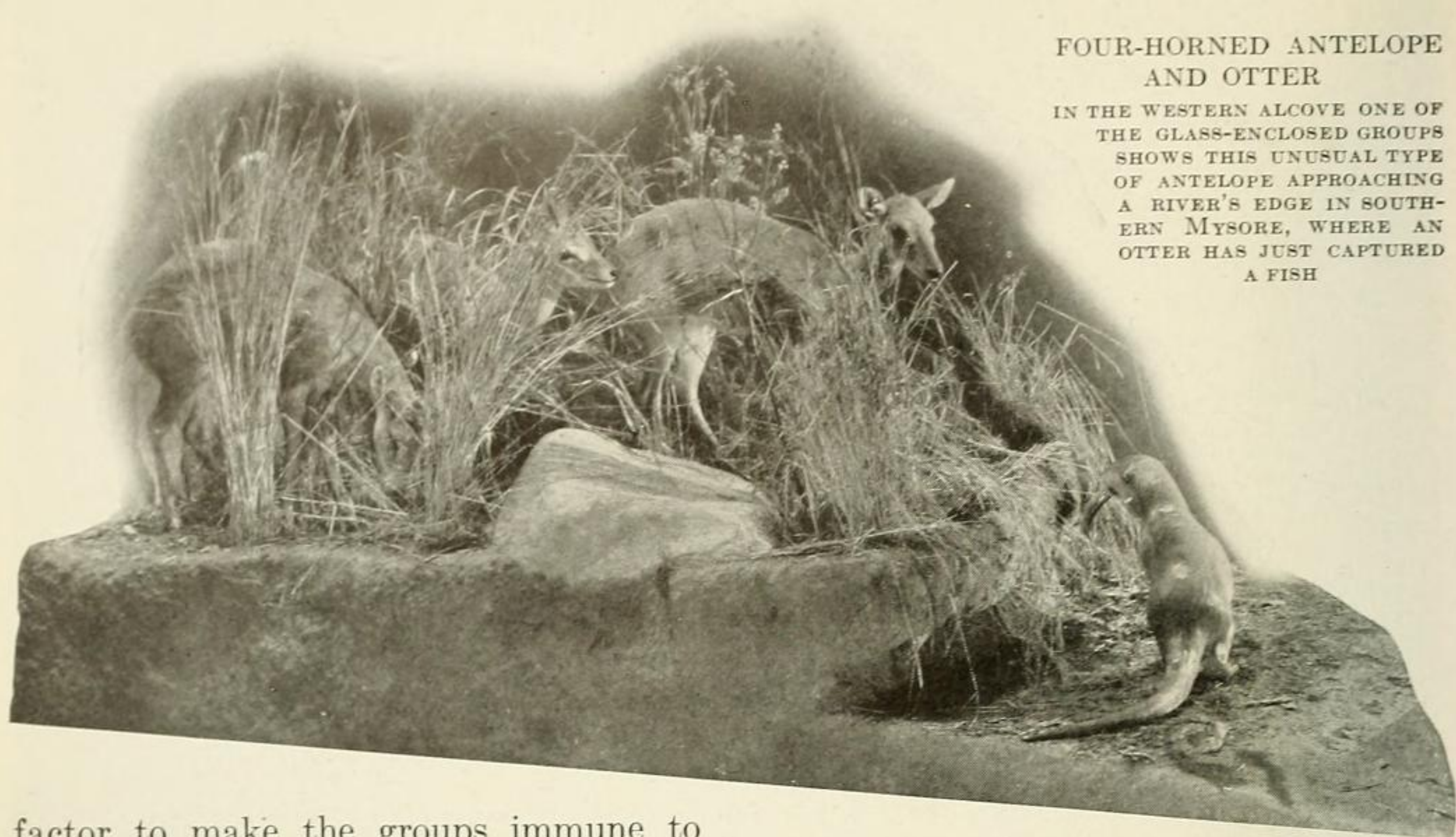
To many it will be news that the lion occurs in Asia, and as a matter of fact it is almost extinct there. These specimens were taken at Junagarh, Bombay Presidency, and for permission to collect this valuable pair of a fast disappearing species, the Museum is greatly indebted to His Highness Sir Mahabat Khan, K. C. S. I., Nawab of Jungadh

THE NILGAI OR  
BLUE BUCK

This is the largest of the Indian antelopes and stands in a glass-enclosed case in the center of the hall







FOUR-HORNED ANTELOPE  
AND OTTER

IN THE WESTERN ALCOVE ONE OF THE GLASS-ENCLOSED GROUPS SHOWS THIS UNUSUAL TYPE OF ANTELOPE APPROACHING A RIVER'S EDGE IN SOUTHERN MYSORE, WHERE AN OTTER HAS JUST CAPTURED A FISH

factor to make the groups immune to reasonable criticism, he has attempted to treat the hall as a whole in such a manner that the Indian motif will be carried out by architectural details and the decorations of case-fronts, pillars, benches, windows, etc.

The success of this idea is apparent the moment one enters the hall. The light from the windows filtering through thickets of bamboo, the employment of teak wherever wood is used throughout the hall, and the suggestive Indian designs, all help to create an atmosphere that is in harmony with the mammals the visitor expects to see. Two large teak screens and two benches, richly carved and figured, were designed and executed by Arthur S. Vernay, Inc., and donated to the hall by Mr. Vernay personally. They add greatly to the attractiveness of the hall.

The general plan of the new Vernay-Faunthorpe Hall of South Asiatic Mammals provides for an adequate display of all of the dominant mammal types to be found in the region lying between the Himalayas and the islands south of the Malay Peninsula. Even in a hall of this size it would be impossible properly to exhibit specimens of all the distinct

species—the South Asiatic fauna is far too large—but the selection includes the mammals which will be of the greatest interest to most visitors.

Long experience with the problems of daylight illumination has demonstrated the undesirability of sunlight in halls containing natural history material. Colors are soon faded, light values are continually varying, and illumination from outside the groups introduces troublesome reflections on the glass case-fronts. Therefore, the generally accepted ideal is a hall where groups are illuminated by electric lights from within and where the only sunlight admitted is a controlled minimum for certain limited areas. In the Vernay-Faunthorpe Hall of South Asiatic Mammals the large groups are handled as individual concepts entirely distinct from anything else in the hall. They have independent lighting, and no intrusive details are permitted to work against the creation of an illusion which will transport the visitor into the heart of India.

The biological data to be demonstrated by the group have naturally been given the first consideration, but other factors have been allowed to enter into the plans,

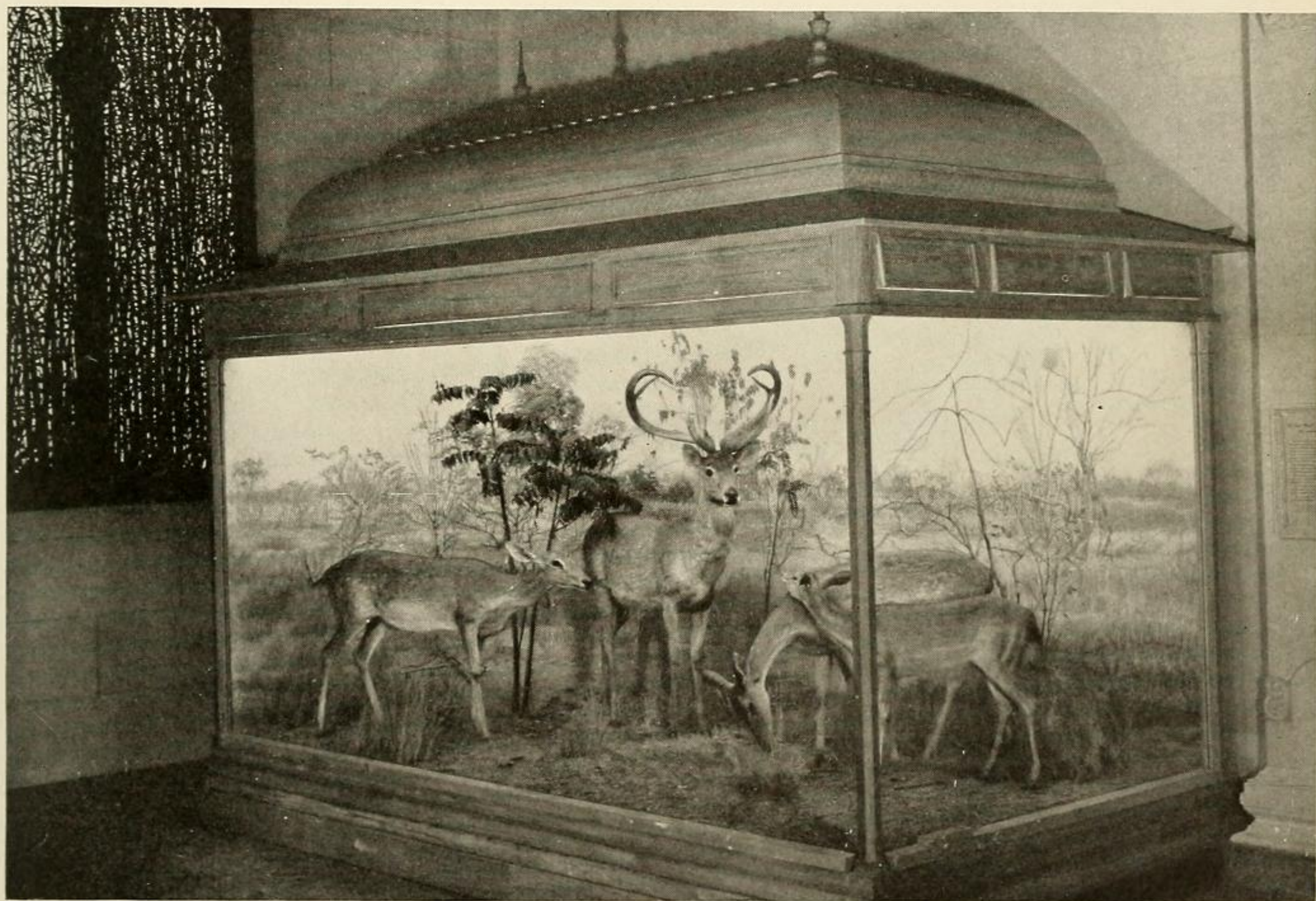


and it is hoped that the new hall may serve to give instruction in fields other than zoölogical. For example, the topographic and geological features shown are all based upon careful field studies; the same may be said of the botanical details, and the architectural designs are faithful to the older Indian culture. The labels accompanying each group have been written to point out the most salient habits or to satisfy the questions most likely to be asked about the species in question. Special discussion of topics which involve biological principles more or less common to mammals throughout the world is reserved for the labels in the Synoptic Hall of Mammals.

There are certain factors which govern the planning of life-history groups such as are exhibited in the new hall. The general public has shown that it is partial to a group which features male, female,

and young; the sportsman views a group with a critical eye and judges the animals first as to size, whether the specimen is as large as one he has killed (usually it is not!), and whether the action shows the species as he has found it in his personal experience; and a very limited number of visitors will weigh the exhibit in the light of what it shows to the specialist, what it tells or fails to tell of fundamental biological principles. Not all of these various visitors can be satisfied; no single group will meet all of these requirements.

Southern Asia has an extensive and interesting mammal fauna. A family group of any of the large species will prove eminently satisfying to the average visitor, for the specimens and habitat differ strikingly from his local associations. Such a group will answer graphically the greatest number of questions which might



THAMIN OR ELD'S DEER

Near Taungdwingyi, in Lower Burma, a handsome buck, with his harem, is shown in a region of open shrubbery. For permission to collect these specimens the Museum is greatly indebted to Sir Harcourt Butler, G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., D. C. L., I. C. S.

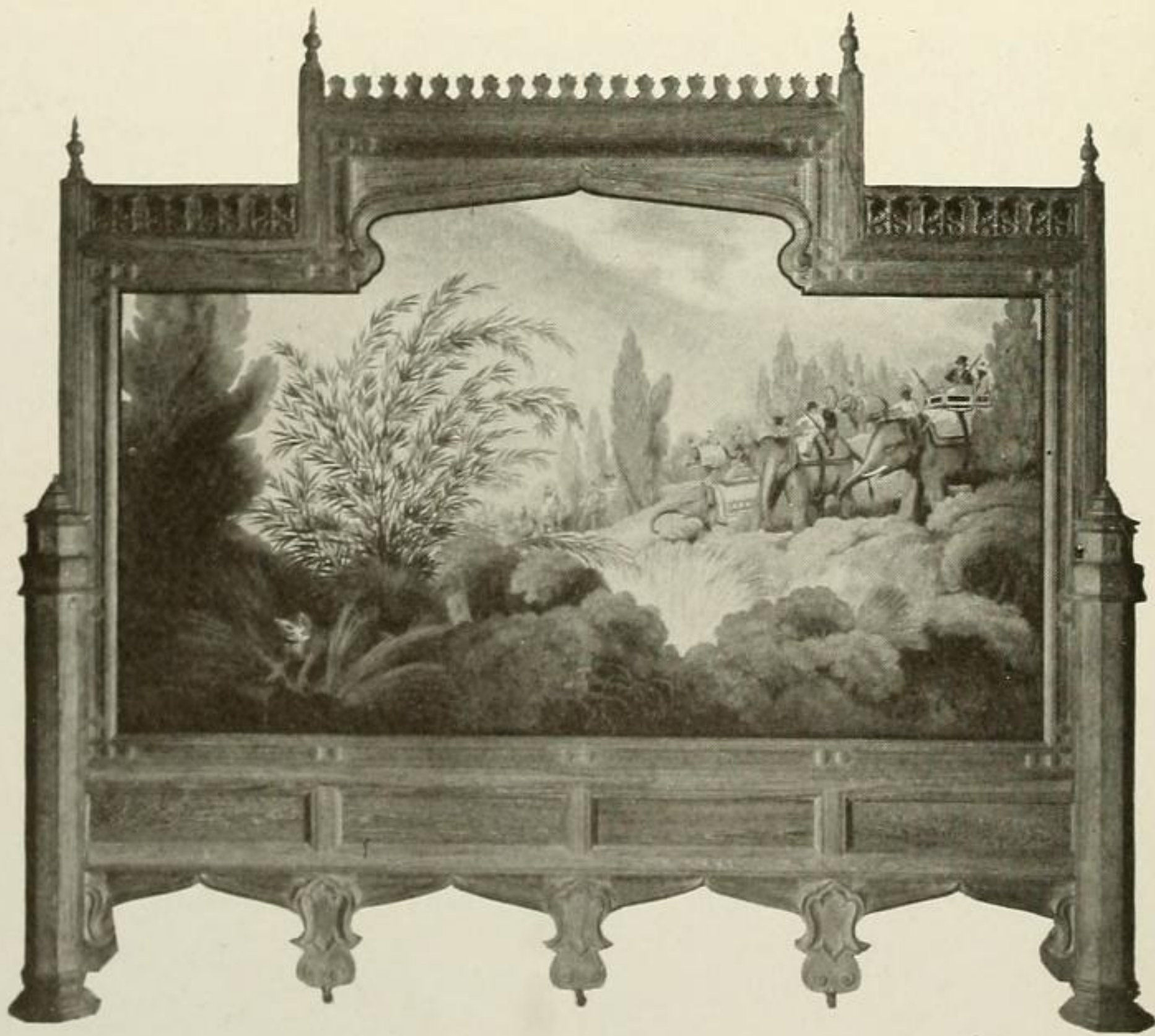


arise, and will direct attention to the most salient features, such as color or size differences between sexes, sex-linked characters like horns or antlers, and the many varied details which are centered about the most important season of mammalian existence. It is not always easy to collect the material for a group of this type, for sometimes young of the desired age are difficult to secure. The intimate details of the family life of many species are only imperfectly known, and in building the group nothing can be taken for granted.

As one enters the Vernay-Faunthorpe Hall of South Asiatic Mammals, through the J. A. Allen Hall of North American Mammals and the projected Hall of North Asiatic Mammals, the first bit of India

to meet the eye is a tiger-hunting scene copied upon a large screen. This illustration was taken from an old sporting print. From the entrance to the new hall the visitor notes a spacious passageway guarded near the southern end by a pair of lions and dominated throughout the central section by two Indian elephants upon which a subdued light pours from overhead. Flanking the wide passageway are four large case-fronts at either end, two on a side, and through the nearest of these windows one glimpses the environs of another world.

Beyond the threshold of the hall the spectator enters Southern Asia and he needs no great amount of imagination to be convinced of this fact.



SCREEN AT ENTRANCE TO HALL, WITH COPY OF OLD SPORTING PRINT OF TIGER HUNT



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