

A SPORTING TRIP  
THROUGH INDIA;  
HOME BY JAPAN AND AMERICA.

Th.



BY

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## CHAPTER XIV.

Hyderabad—Kuch Behar Palace—Reach Camp—  
Beating for “Rhino.”

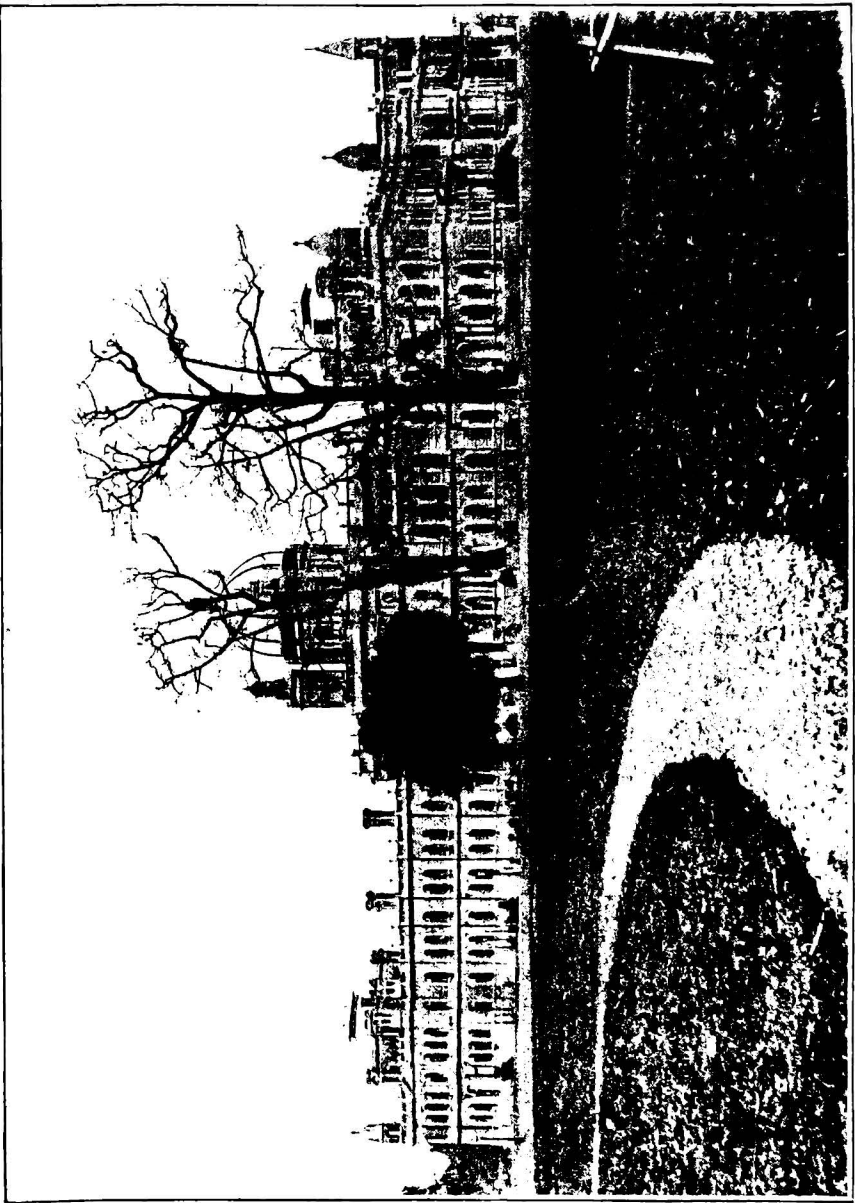
Embarking in one of the small coasting steamers carrying the mail to Tuticorin, I next had 30 hours by train to Madras, where I again stayed at Government House, this time, however, at the one situated in the town itself, Guindy being some five miles out. From here I went to Bangalore, to stay a day with Captain Brooksbank, of the 19th Hussars, though 230 miles out of the way (one thought it no distance out there). I found it agreeably cool and very picturesque, but beginning to suffer from water famine. It was sad all down there to see the natives selling their cattle for two and three annas each (about 2d. in English money), and it seemed the worst was yet to come. From Bangalore I again visited my kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Plowden, at Hyderabad, to join them in a big tiger hunt. I arrived on February 19th, in time to shoot the following day, but found it had been postponed three days. However, we had plenty to do—lots of lawn tennis, riding and driving; besides, the ladies were busy practising with their rifles. Each day we heard the welcome

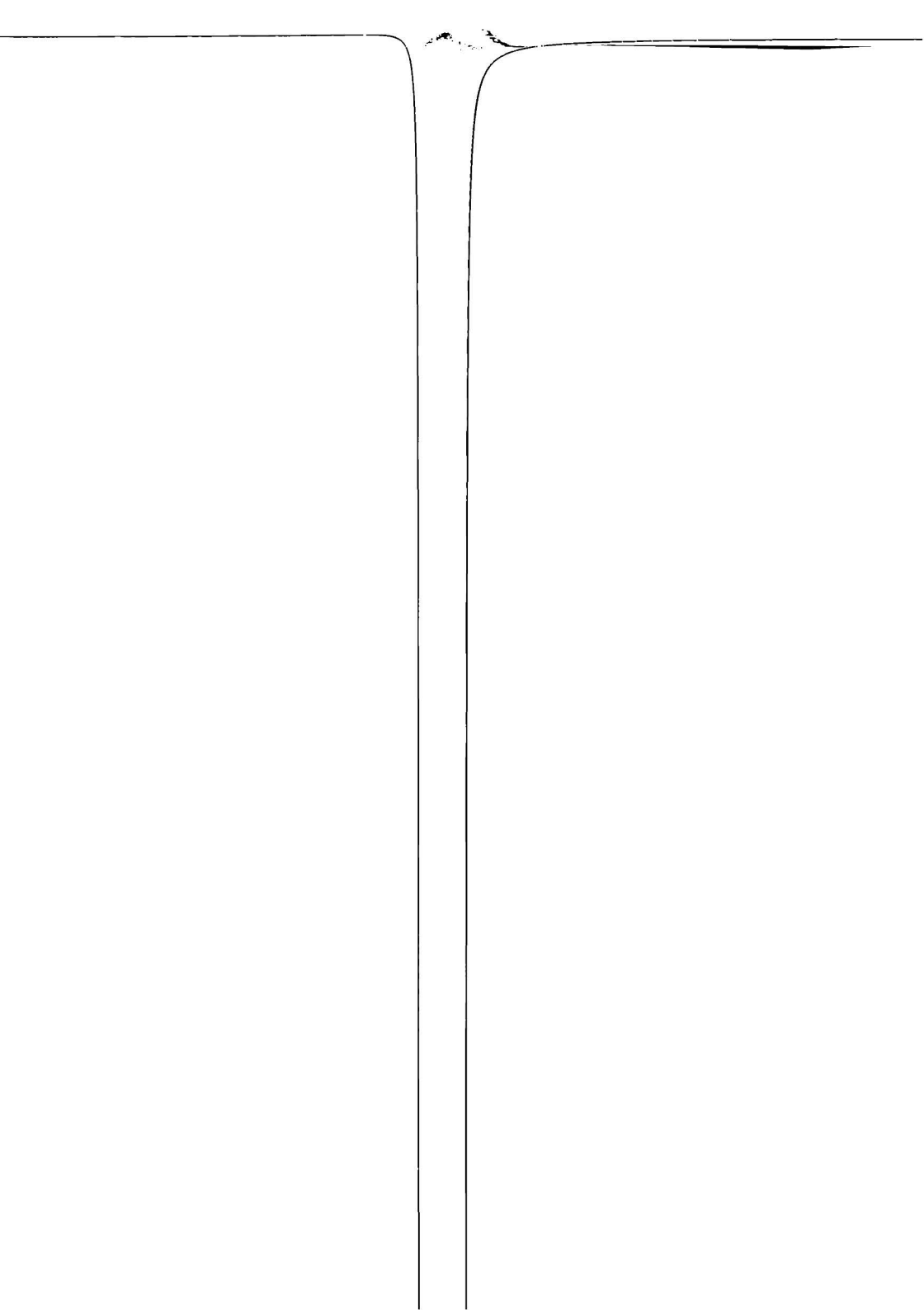
news of tiger being tracked down (three in all). At last the day for starting had arrived, February 23rd. Guns, servants, and heavy luggage were all sent off by early train, while we were to follow after dinner, sleeping in the carriages. Imagine, if you can, our feelings, when, during the early afternoon, the news came that the mother of the minister, Sis Asman Jahr had died, and that therefore the shoot must be put off. It was no use sitting still, so Mrs. Plowden suggested sending round for the Nizam's coach, and driving through the city, which I had not yet seen. At 5 o'clock Yewlett, his coachman, arrived with a brake and pair, in which we drove up to the stables, and while the team was being brought out we inspected the horses and carriages. Of the latter he has 146, of every size and description. They also keep a number of fine fighting rams at the stables, specially trained. It is a rare sight to see two of these animals led out, secured by strong cords, each held by a man, to positions about 20 yards apart, where they are slipped, and, with a terrific rush, charge, catching each other fair on the horns. You see both animals thrown back several feet by the crash, but they keep at it till the men rush in after a few rounds, and separate them. By the time we had enjoyed this spectacle and inspected a few score of horses, the team was ready. I

remarked to the coachman what a nice looking lot they were. He said, "Yes, I brought them over last year from England—bought them in Yorkshire, near Hull." I found they were one of Sir Talbot Constable's teams. We kept them out long after dusk, Mrs. Plowden taking us along in fine style. Yewlett was most anxious I should stay a few days and have some driving. It does seem a shame how some of these Princes keep up hundreds of horses and carriages and, perhaps, often do not see them for months. The tiger shoot being postponed, I could not wait, as I was due to join another shooting party with the Rajah of Kuch Behar, so I left early on the 24th, and after 24 hours' journey reached Bombay. The morning I spent on board the "Pekin," seeing some friends off to Colombo, and then drove out to Government House, and called on Lord Harris. I was very sorry to be unable to accept a most kind invitation to stay, but I was bound to press on to join my next shooting party; so the 10 p.m. mail saw me again *en route* for Calcutta. Luckily we had  $2\frac{1}{2}$  days fairly cool, which was a comfort. I again stayed at the Fort, making the most of my 24 hours' stay, lunching and dining with various friends.

On February 29th I arrived at the station, where I met Lord Frankfort, Lord Borthwick,

and Captain Dundas, all bound, as I was, for the Maharajah Kuch Behar's shooting camp. We slept in the train, and at daylight crossed a couple of rivers, the route between which was covered by several short lengths of tram line on which ran small trollies. Reaching Moghal Hat at 11 o'clock, we found two carriages waiting to take us the charming drive of 24 miles to the Palace, through a well-cultivated country, in which the native dwellings all looked most beautifully clean and well cared for, so different from most Indian villages. The bamboos grow all over in large quantities, and from these, split up, the natives seem to make everything, building their houses of it entirely, plating it in and out with what looks like a coarse matting. Having a fairly good road, with fresh horses every six miles, we only took three hours to reach the Palace, which is a huge building richly ornamented with stone, the main portion being red brick. It looks very imposing as you drive up, the front being some 250 feet long, with the entrance hall in the centre surmounted by a lofty dome. On the left, opening on to a wide verandah, are a series of fine bedrooms, while on the right are the dining and billiard rooms, library, &c. One of the halls is filled with trophies, some of them being immense—all, in fact, "record" heads; there are tiger, bear, leopard, elephant, buffalo, and





rhinoceros besides, no end of smaller heads and horns. The dining room is a beautiful room some 60 feet long, containing a huge collection of silver cups and prizes won by the Rajah's different horses. Altogether, the house and grounds (in which is built a fine tennis court) are delightful, and made one think one was back in England. Finding the camp was still 34 miles off, we decided to sleep at the Palace and start away at 4 a.m., so as to reach camp in time to join that day's shoot.

It was quite dark when we turned out next morning, wakened by the cheery voice of Hewlitt, the Rajah's coachman. Enveloped in thick coats and rugs, we managed to keep fairly warm as we tore along at a hand gallop. We did a good performance, changing horses four times, each change taking up some ten minutes, and twice we had to take the horses out and ferry the carriage and all over a river. Still, we covered 24 miles in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The roads certainly were very good, and as the horses were standing every six miles in small stables erected for the occasion, we got over the ground at a fair pace. Six miles more on ponies, with elephants for luggage, brought us to camp with lots of time to spare. The camp had just moved to this place, having been five or six days at another about five miles distant. Before we joined they had killed



two tigers—one a tigress, shot by the Viceroy, 8 ft. 6 in. long, the other a young tiger 9 ft. 1 in., killed by Lord Valletort—three rhinoceros, four leopards, a bear, and many small deer. We were a large party in camp, the place looking like a small town, prettily situated on the banks of a wide and swift-running river, the tents covering about a quarter of a mile square; while, all round these, numerous encampments stretched, the elephants being picketed along the bank for more than a mile. At different times during the month's shoot the following guests stayed at the camp:—His Excellency the Viceroy and Lady Lansdowne, Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell, Mr. and Mrs. Bignell, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Powis, Prince Christian Victor, Lord de Vesci, Lord Valletort, General Lord Frankfort, Lord William Beresford, Chevalier Scheibler, Sir Benjamin Simpson, Lord Borthwick, Captain Powney, Captain Dundas, the Honourable Charles Harbord, Colonel Boileau, and several others.

About 7 o'clock in the morning the camp begins to show signs of life, the bearers flitting here and there, each carrying his master's early breakfast, consisting of a cup of tea with bread and butter. Another half-hour, and the early risers begin to turn out—one a keen photographer, anxious to get a picture of the elephants having

their usual morning tub in the river; another, half-clad, is wending his way for an early swim in the swift-running stream; while a third, the keenest of all, has shouldered his fishing-rod in hopes of a bite before breakfast. From the land side of the camp you see just returning two others who have already been up some hours in search of that most shy and difficult bird to see—the jungle cock. Slowly the sun rises, gradually lighting up the white canvas tents, and with its rays the whole camp seems to be on the move. Elephants are passing backwards and forwards to their bathing places, a slight hollow in the banks making the water easy of access. Natives are starting off with pad elephants and oxen to fetch in the daily loads of food for the huge animals—chiefly young bamboo cut into short lengths. The mahouts are all busy cleaning the howdahs and getting their masters' rifles ready, while scores of other men flit about from tent to tent doing different errands. About 9 o'clock sees most of the party busy with breakfast, and about this time the direction of the day's hunt is settled. If the shikarees bring in news of tiger, a move is made at once for the place, otherwise some other jungle is beaten for buffalo or rhinoceros.

No news of tiger coming in, we started out to beat some heavy jungle about four miles over

the river. It was a splendid sight to see so many fine elephants collected together; having about 60 working. Each man who was shooting had his own elephant with howdah on, the ladies sitting on a seat behind. Small racks are fitted to hold some half-dozen rifles of all sizes. Most of the elephants have merely a pad on, and are only used for beating the jungle.

Arriving at our first beat, a big patch of thick jungle some half-mile square, we were soon put in our places by the Maharajah, who took charge of the howdah elephants, while Mr. Bignell looked after the line. We (to the number of ten) were stationed in a long line, about 80 yards apart, and about 30 yards from the edge of the jungle, so as to give one time to fire at a beast on breaking covert. The remainder of the pad elephants formed line at the other side of the jungle, having a few howdah elephants at intervals, as many animals, rhinoceros especially, often break back. My mount was a lovely animal, about the largest out, and brave as a lion, by name "Suliman."

Unfortunately, our two first beats before lunch were blank. The next one, however, was more lively. The elephants trumpeting as they crashed through the high null grass told us game was on foot. They had beaten the place into a very small corner, when, with a sudden rush, appeared a

rhinoceros, about 15 yards off. Simultaneously, Bignell and I fired, rolling him over, shot through the neck. His rush caused great havoc with the line; several of the pad elephants swerving, got mixed up in a heap. My good "Suliman" stood firm as a rock—rather lucky for me, never having had a shot at a "rhino" before!

Needless to say, I took some photos, having first of all got the huge grass trodden down flat by the elephants; then I got the animal in a proper position by the help of an elephant who used his tusks like a fork to roll him about.

After this, word was given for camp, so the whole line spread out, covering over a mile wide, and sweeping the whole country before us, we were allowed to fire at anything. The result was a varied collection of game birds and smaller deer. Reaching camp about 6, we made straight for the tea, after which we all made a move to the skinning tent to see the game weighed. A bell announced it was time for dinner, after which whist and developing photographs occupied us till the small hours of the morning. We had eight amateur cameras, besides a professional who was in camp for a few days; so we were never safe from being taken.

## CHAPTER XV.

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Buffalo Shooting—"Nul Grass"—Ten ft. Tiger—Leave Camp  
for Calcutta.

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The next day the Rajah determined to try a beat in the Government forests, but, owing to the dense jungle, we wasted a morning in unsuccessful attempts to find game; though evidently plentiful, we found it hopeless to get a sight of it. Leaving this, we crossed a couple of rivers and came to a long narrow patch, a well-known haunt of "rhino." Having all taken up our stations, we anxiously waited for whatever might come out. Suddenly a tremendous crashing, followed by the shrill trumpeting of the elephants, made us all come to attention; but quickly two rifle shots rang out, and then loud shouts warned us that the animal, whatever it might be, had gone back. For some minutes all was still, when another two or three shots right behind told us the animal had broken out. When we got up we found the Rajah had killed a very fine buffalo bull. His first shot wounded him badly, on which he turned and charged the elephant, cutting him slightly; but two more shots settled him in the water as he was trying to cross the river.

After he was killed, we had some fun watching the different elephants trying to get him to land. One big chap, getting his tusks under, would try and roll him over, while the next would get hold of his horns and pull. At last my mahout had a try. Putting a rope round the buffalo's horns, he gave it to my old friend, "Suliman," who first of all wound his trunk round it and pulled, but it would slip, so the sagacious animal took the rope in his mouth as well, when, with a steady haul, carefully backing, he landed him high and dry on the stony bank. We soon had the tape on him—horns, 8 feet 6 inches; length, 13 feet; height, 17 hands 2 inches. The head, when afterwards cut off weighed 198 lbs.

March 5th we got two buffaloes. One Bignell wounded badly I finished off, dropping him with my Paradox, rather a long shot. The other Lord Borthwick killed. The horns of both were only small. Next day being Sunday, we gave the elephants a rest, having had some very hard days.

Anyone not having seen the huge and dense jungle of India, would hardly believe it possible that the "nul grass" could grow to the height of 48 feet, but so it does, and makes one feel like a fly walking among it, and yet the noble beasts go through it, keeping a good line, feeling every step and inch of ground with their trunk.

One gets quite devoted to the clever animals after a few days, for it is wonderful to see them work, the mahouts making them do anything. Drop a cartridge, by accident, in the thickest of jungle, and it will be handed up directly. See a flower or orchid among the lighter grass, and he will carefully put his trunk round the stalk, pull and hand it up. They hate the wild pig more than any other animal, and I have seen one charge and stampede the whole line. When you kill a pig, however, it is great fun to see your mahout drive his elephant, most unwillingly, up to the corpse, and make him turn it over. At first he just kneels on it, or pokes it with his trunk; presently, he seems to get rather pleased at being able to treat ignominiously the body he loathes, so he starts playing football with it between his fore feet; and finally, with a sharp kick back, he catches the body with his hind leg, punting it some yards away. Certainly the pig is quite the pluckiest animal living. Next day, we got three buffaloes out of a thick patch. The Rajah wounded one, which Borthwick finished off, while I shortly after brought down another, with a fine head, which charged out straight in front of my elephant. The horns measured 8 feet  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches, being the longest pair shot so far. I was very pleased at such luck, as many of those out had not yet even had







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a shot. Later on Bignell wounded a bear, which got away owing to the long grass.

Next day I again had the good luck to bag another fair good buffalo. I wounded him badly, a long shot, but he went away. I knew he must stop sooner or later, so the Rajah kindly told me to take four pads and go after him. I followed his trail four miles, when I came up with him in a thick but small clump of grass. He broke cover at the opposite side, when I got a good shot into the shoulder, which quite crippled him. It is wonderful what a lot of shots it often takes to kill them, even when down. This one was such a beast, and took about eight shots before he gave up, pawing the ground and trying to get up on its feet, all the time, while I walked round him trying to get a settling shot into him. I was pleased to bag him, hating to lose a wounded animal. Returning home that night, I nearly got washed away in the river trying to cross on a small pad elephant. The water came up to his back, and, getting frightened, he began turning round and round, the water rushing over him when broadside on. Luckily my faithful Suliman was close behind, and, getting him alongside, I clambered up his side, glad to leave the sinking ship and save getting a cold bath. Every day was much the same thing, always ending up in line, slaying what deer we came across on our

way back to camp. A very pretty sight was watching all the elephants fording the river, seeing them play with the water, while some of the pads were made to lie down, disappearing altogether, their drivers standing up on their backs. I often used to get up early and watch the elephants having their morning tub, which they revel in. The men make them lie down in the water, and then start and scrub them over with a brick. When well scrubbed all over they make them go under water, and then stand up to syringe themselves down.

The last day resulted in a splendid bull buffalo with a record head, and a 10 feet tiger being added to the bag. After 17 actual day's shooting, the total bag was three tigers, four leopards, four rhinoceros, one bear, eleven buffaloes, one sambhar, sixteen barasinghs, three hog deer, seven pigs, seven floricans, six pea fowl, two porcupines, ten jungle fowl, besides numerous partridges, hares, and various other things.

On March 11th, Lord Frankfort, Lord Borthwick, Captain Powney and I started from camp at 6-30, I doing coachman all the way down, changing horses, as usual, every six miles. We covered 45 miles in five hours. Not calling at the Palace saved us some 15 miles. After a slow and tedious journey, and a night on the train, we reached Calcutta on Saturday, at 12-30. I again

stayed at the Fort, and was busy getting all my trophies and luggage ready for sending home. In the afternoon we went to watch the polo, and also saw Miss Van Tassel going up in her balloon and come down with a parachute, which she safely accomplished, though she fell into a muddy pond and had to be pulled out by natives. She repeated the experiment a few days after, and, owing to falling into a tree, was thrown out, dying the same night. The Colonel asked a few of my friends to meet me at mess, being my last dinner in India. I had a hard day's work sorting out all my things to send direct home—having to carefully pack all one's skins and heads in tin-lined cases.