

THE PRINCE IN INDIA

A Record of the Indian Tour
of His Royal Highness
The Prince of Wales—
Nov. 1921 to March 1922

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CHAPTER VII.

A WEEK IN NEPAL—THRILLING DAYS OF SHIKAR—THE PRINCE'S FIRST TIGER—A CUNNING BEAST—BAGGING A RHINOCEROS—A HOSPITABLE NEPALESE CUSTOM—ANIMALS PRESENTED TO THE PRINCE—THE CAPITAL OF BEHAR AND ORISSA—TWO DAYS' VISIT TO PATNA.—(DEC. 14—23).



WHEN the visit of the Prince of Wales to India was first mooted in 1921, General H. H. Maharaja Sir Chandra Shum Shere Jung, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., asked the British Envoy to Nepal whether a visit there could be included in the programme of the Prince's tour. This being inconvenient, it was suggested that if the Maharaja so desired it he might see the Prince at Bankipore in the middle of February of the following year. The suggestion was acquiesced in by the Maharaja who expected to be at the time in the Nepal Terai close to Bankipore. The proposed meeting did not, however, come off owing to the postponement of the intended tour.

In July, 1921, the British Envoy received instructions from the Government of India to ascertain whether the Maharaja would like to have a visit to the Nepal Terai for an eight days' shoot included in the programme of the Prince's tour which was fixed for the coming winter. His Highness welcomed the idea and, in consultation with the British Envoy, took up the question of fixing the dates for the shoot. The end of January or the beginning of February was proposed, as being in every way most suitable. Unfortunately, these dates could not be squared with the other exigencies of the tour and the week from the 14th to the 21st December was finally fixed upon.

Having regard to the favourable climatic condition of the place at that time of the year, the Maharaja suggested that Patherghatta would be a suitable shooting ground. The news of game there was not, however, altogether reassuring. A shoot with one standing camp at Thori, two miles from the railway station of Bhikna Thori on the Nepal Border, was finally decided upon and arrangements—which had to be hurriedly made owing to the short notice: a year is usually not considered excessive for the preparations necessary to a big shoot in the Terai—were speedily carried through.

The road, reconstructed for motor traffic against the King's shoot in 1911, was still in existence. The necessary repairs were hurried through as soon as the season permitted. It thus became possible to bring within the scope of *shikar* a very large area of ground by the use of motor cars. Altogether 36 miles of road were repaired within the shooting ground area, which extended roughly 29 miles to the west and 7 miles to the east of the camp.

The Prince arrived on the morning of December 14. I was not a member of the party which accompanied His Royal Highness and have, therefore, no first-hand impressions of the week spent in Nepal. Through the courtesy of several of those who were on the spot, and particularly of Mr. B. G. Ellison, who have placed their note-books, published articles and so on at my disposal, I am in possession of very full information of all that took place during what appears to have been an excellent week of *shikar*.

The Prince was met at Bhikna Thori by the Maharaja and suite, and the British Envoy, Colonel O'Connor. Among the officers, who accompanied the Maharaja may be mentioned the Senior Commanding General Sir Judha Shum Shere Jung, K.C.I.E., General Sir Tej Shum Shere Jung, K.C.I.E., General Mohan Shum Shere Jung, General Sir Baber Shum Shere Jung, G.B.E., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., Lt.-General Singha Shum Shere Jung, Major-General Krishna Sum Shere Jung, Major-General Bishnu Shum Shere Jung, Major-General Shanker Shum Shere Jung, Lt.-Colonel Surya Shum Shere Jung, Mrigendra Shum Shere Jung, Bada Guraju Tarkraj, Major-General Hiranya Shum Shere Jung, Colonel Samar Shum Shere Jung, Colonel Dilli Shum Shere Thapa, Bada Kaji Marichi Man Singh, Lt.-Colonel Man Bahadur Ghaley, Lt.-Colonel Chandra Jung Thapa, and Mir Subha Anstaman. Lt.-General Kaiser Shum Shere Jung, who was at the time superintending the *shikar* operations, was introduced to the Prince later.

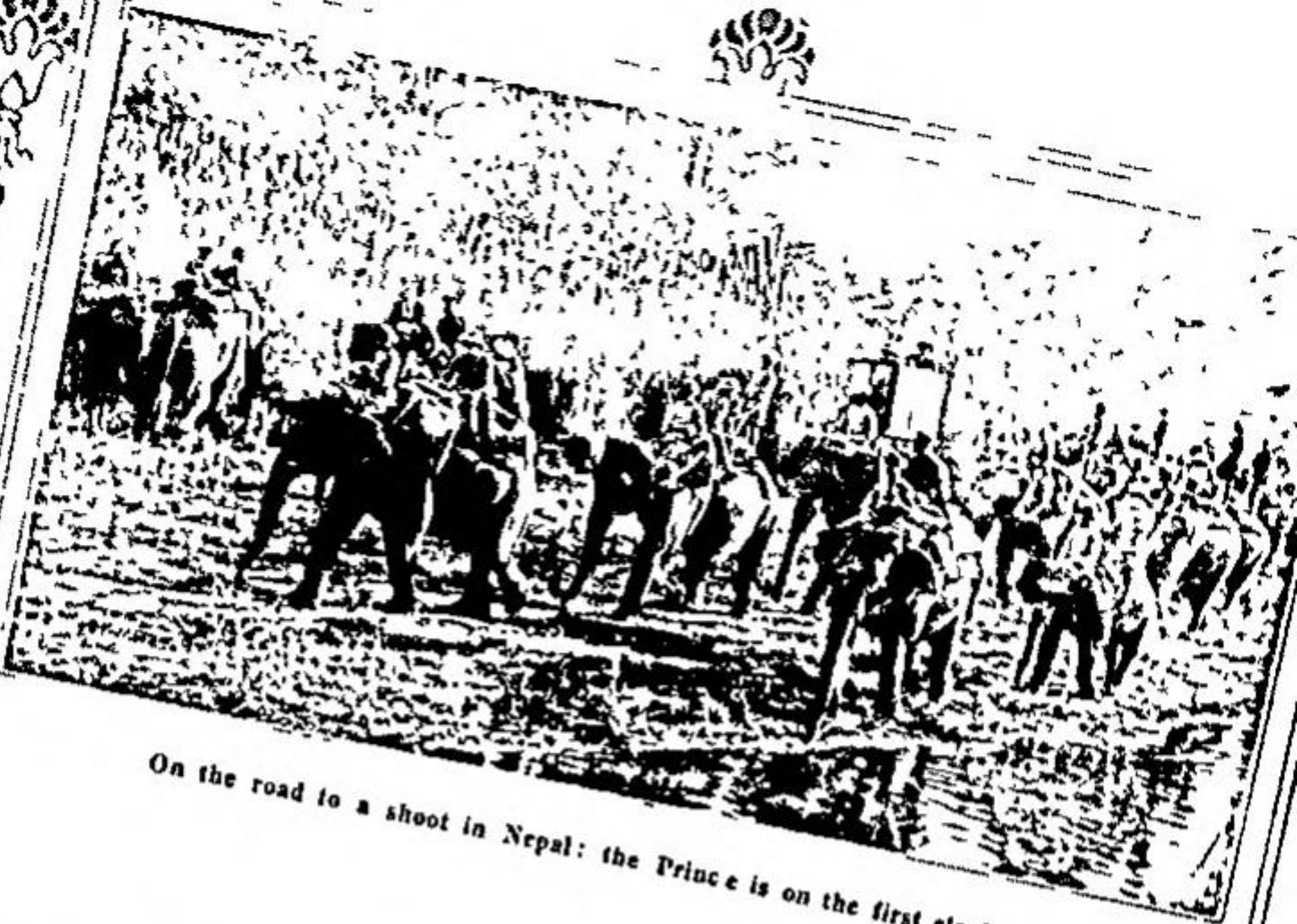
The Prince at once proceeded by car to the camp, stopping on the way to inspect a guard of honour composed of a company of the 1st Rifle Regiment with band and colours. After a few minutes' stay in the camp the Prince went out for *shikar*. According to Mr. Ellison, all the arrangements for the shoot were elaborate and exhaustive. In particular, he was impressed by the very efficient methods adopted for giving prompt and exact information about the movement of game and the kills. "This," he says, "was accomplished by a precise system of signalling, on a scale which I think has never been attempted before on a shoot of this description. The whole arrangement was under the direction of Lieut. Leonard, R.E., who had arrived in Nepal some weeks

previously to put up a system of telephonic communication between the Royal Camp and certain suitable spots, within the forest for a radius of 30 miles. Lieut. Leonard was assisted by a party of English Sappers who, during the period during which they were engaged in putting up the necessary wires and installation, spent a very thrilling fortnight alone in the jungles."

"Considering that these jungles in normal times abound with dangerous game of all description, and that particularly at this period when in preparation for the Royal Shoot there had been a close season for some time, it can be readily understood that Lieut. Leonard and his party had some exciting experiences to recount of the time spent in the Nepal Jungles. One of the receiving field stations was fixed to the trunk of a tree near by my tent and every morning on my visit to the skinning camp I would ring up for news and would be promptly informed as to the whereabouts of the last "Kill" or the location of a tiger 10 or 15 miles away. No rhino was untracked or tiger left to itself. The rhino no sooner began to doze off as the sun grew warm, as is his wont, than the tracker climbing up a neighbouring tree made signs to his mate on the ground who ran off to flash the news by the nearest telephone station"

On the first day the *shikaris* went after tiger. An admirable account of the first day's shoot is contained in Mr. Ellison's diary as follows:— At Biknathori to-day the camp is aglow with excitement from early morning. I was awakened by the trumpeting of elephants and the shouts of an army of Nepalese attendants. I watched the little Gurkhas passing to and fro near my tent. What a noise these stout little fellows with the Kukris make! Talk is of nothing but the arrival of the Prince and the prospects of the shooting. A very large tiger had been seen and it was hoped that it would fall to the Prince's rifle. Shortly after 9 a.m. a fanfare of bugles announces the arrival of the Prince. The Nepalese Guard present arms and the Royal Car sweeps into the camp followed by the cars of his suite. The Prince steps out, looking remarkably well and boyish in light khaki Jodhpur breeches, shooting coat, and Sambhar leather shoes. A few minutes were spent in introductions. Then off we all go in the cars to the shooting beat. This is quite near the camp, at a place called Sarasvati Khola.

We get out of the cars and mount the pad elephants which take us to the line of elephants, with howdahs, in position by the river bed. His Royal Highness mounts into his howdah which, by the way, is the same as was used by his father when he last shot in Nepal. The rest of the party are the Earl of Cromer, Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey, Col. Worgan, Lord Louis Mountbatten, Capt. the Hon'ble Piers Legh and the



On the road to a shoot in Nepal: the Prince is on the first elephant.



After the "kill."

Hon'ble Bruce Ogilvy and myself. Everybody is expectant though nothing happens for sometime. On the other side of the huge river bed, now reduced to a narrow stream, stretches the jungle for mile on mile. It is very hot, the elephants are impatient and every now and then one of them gives utterance to restless trumpeting. Suddenly there is a movement on the left hand side of the line and General Kaiser, the Master of Ceremonies, who had organised all the Shikar arrangements in connection with the shoots, rides in on a fast trotting pad elephant with news of a tiger and off we start.

The elephants move forward with their wierd lumbering gait. H. R. H. leads the procession: followed immediately by the party and then an army of pad elephants, and still more pad elephants to be used in case of accidents. Ponderously the line proceeds through the dense jungle, crossing many a placid stream, and emerging at times from the cool shade of the giant trees into some glade where the sun beat hot and fierce, only to plunge again into the cool depths of the evergreen jungle. One is instinctively impressed with the calm and twilit grandeur of these gigantic forests. Within their depths all is stillness and no movement is discernible. There is nothing to break the monotonous tread of the elephants save an occasional burst of drumming from cicadas whose shrill music subsides as quickly as it rises. Suddenly there is a stir in the line.

All the elephants begin to close up, shoulder to shoulder, and the great beasts stand to form the ring. All is expectancy: there is an outburst of shouting from the beaters; out rushes a deer and escapes terrified into the jungle shortly followed by another and another. Then the real thing happens and there is a cry 'Bagh, Bagh' from the beaters. The tiger at last! A glimpse of a yellowish form is seen in the long grass for the space of a few seconds and is at once lost to view. Once again it is seen behind a tree trunk. Closer advance the beaters, the tiger charges out, but he is a wary beast and seems to know intuitively where the guns are posted and gives them a wide berth. Again and again he is driven out only to seek cover in the long grass away from the guns. A Shikari climbs a tree and pelts him with stones. The manoeuvre succeeds, and once again we get a half length view of 'stripes' as he makes a spring at his tormentor in the tree top. The ring closes in upon him, but with a roar he dives into the long grass; another roar and he shows himself quite near the Royal howdah. A moment's suspense and H. R. H. fires and a second afterwards two more shots ring out. The Prince has hit.

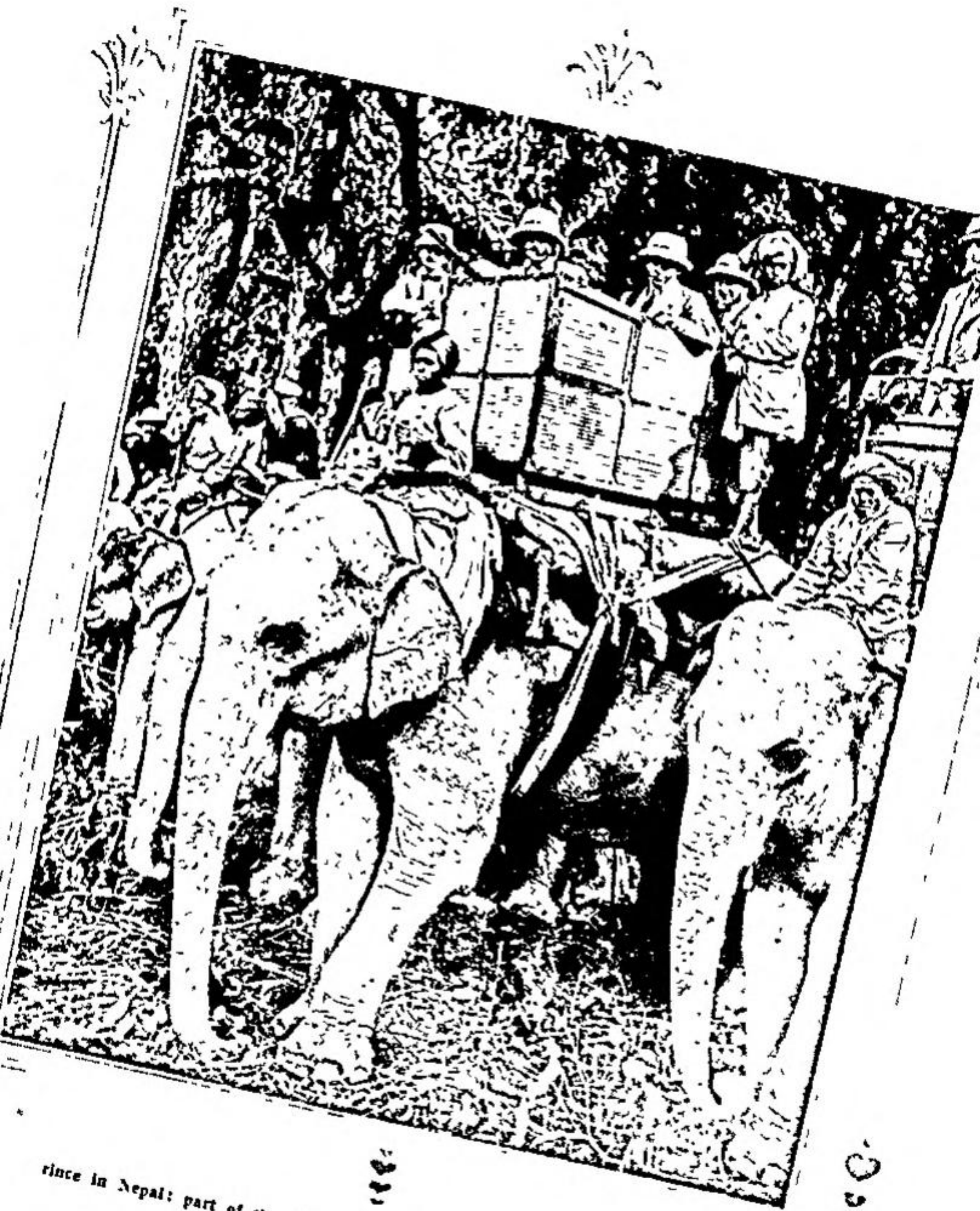
The tiger though mortally wounded has plenty of go in him and

charges to the opposite side and is buried once more in the heavy cover. The ring closes in: a shot rings out: and the tiger rolls over dead. I descend from my howdah and measure him. It was a striking scene this great circle of sportsmen, beaters, mahouts and elephants, waiting in silence while the measuring was done. The tiger taped 9 feet. He was a royal beast and looked splendid when I saw him later stretched out for the Prince's inspection near the great log fire in the Royal Camp. In the evening we had news of three more tigers having been shot by another party who had gone farther afield. There appears to have been much excitement, and no little risk, experienced on the occasion, as several of the party were filled more with zeal than with experience of tiger shooting, guns were pointed in all directions and the poor tigers eventually succumbed to a perfect fusillade of bullets. One of the members of the party contributes the following description of the exciting episode:

"The tigress came out straight towards my elephant, but turned very quickly to its own right, and I fired just as it turned back into the jungle. I hit it on the near quarter, and broke its hind leg with the first barrel. The second barrel I fired as it was disappearing in the jungle and from what we found afterwards apparently hit it on the tip of the tail! There was a great difficulty in stirring the tigress out again from the jungle, so we went in on our elephants when she suddenly came out and charged the elephant P. was on, which turned round so quickly that P. sat down on his topi and squashed it flat. The tigress was finished off, I think, by H. but I am not quite certain."

The second day was devoted to rhinoceros. It would be tedious to give a narration of the achievements of each day. I will content myself therefore with giving Mr. Ellison's account of the first rhino shoot. We did not, says Mr. Ellison, get off till 10 a.m. as there were several delays. Even after a start had been made there was a stoppage caused through a huge lorry breaking down on the very steep hill leading up to the entrance of the camp. None of the cars could get past the obstacle and there was nothing for it but to get out and push, and H. R. H. was the foremost of all in helping. At last we were all speeding along bumped over the forest road that had been specially constructed for the purpose of the shoots. The first part of the journey was through a dense piece of jungle. One realised how difficult a task a hunter would have in bringing his quarry to bag in a forest of this description. This is one of the main reasons why the 'ringing' method of hunting tigers is practised in Nepal.

The dense jungle found in the foot hills of the Terai must be seen to



since in Nepal; part of the ring of elephants after the first tiger had been shot.

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be appreciated. Massive elephant grass up to 20 feet in height, and so thick as to almost obscure the elephant from the view of the howdah occupants in his passage through it. Often it is not possible even to see the next elephant though it is only a few yards away. Our destination this morning is Thoba, a run of 20 miles by motor. The road led for the most part of the way through the cool depths of the forest till the vicinity of Thoba was reached. Here the country was open with fields of yellow mustard on either hand. The *machans* erected in their midst told of the eternal warfare waged by the ryot against the jungle denizens.

At the 22nd milestone we leave the cars to mount the pad elephants. Besides H. R. H. the party includes Lord Cromer, Admiral Halsey, Col. Worgan, Capt. Ogilvy, Lord Louis Mountbatten and myself. H. R. H. looked rather tired, as even after yesterday's long journey and long shoot, he had been playing polo at 6 a.m. Before arriving at the spot where the ring was formed it transpired that a tiger had broken back. Shortly afterwards the elephant on which the Prince was riding got bogged in crossing a stream and H. R. H. transferred to an ordinary pad elephant. The sight of a line of elephants crossing a stream is always impressive. I call to mind as I write, the stately array of elephants crossing the Thute river at sunset, the great grey beasts plunging through the swirling water, the red light of the setting sun, and the dark forest background, all combined to make an impressive and unforgettable picture.

One quickly gets accustomed to elephants as a means of transport. A pad elephant is generally the most comfortable and certainly the best as far as celerity goes, though possibly not the safest, as in the case of a charging tiger the man on the pad takes his chance of being mauled. All honour to the plucky mahouts who guide these great beasts, sticking gamely to their posts often in moments of extreme danger. Many have paid with their lives for their coolness and daring. In fact one of the brave fellows was killed on a pad elephant a few days after the Prince's departure. The occupant of a howdah is practically safe from the onslaught of a charging tiger, but there is one risk which is always present in shooting from an elephant in heavy forest and that is the possibility of the elephant taking fright, and bolting when mahout, howdah and occupants stand a very good chance of being swept away in the headlong rush of the beast through the jungle.

To return to what happened. The party arrived at the spot where the shooting was to take place at 1 p.m. and an adjournment for lunch was agreed to with general acclaim. Several rhinos had been seen in the swamp in close proximity and the chances of a good afternoon's sport seemed assured. After lunch we mounted our elephants and it was not

long before a rhino was discerned in thick grass cover. H. R. H. whose position was rather disadvantageous, since he could scarcely see the animal from where he was, fired. Lord Louis Mountbatten fired. Immediately afterwards the rhino made off. A prolonged search was made for the beast.

The blood-spattered leaves and grass showed clearly that the bullet had found its mark, but it was not till many days later that the beast was picked up dead. It was then too decomposed for preservation, but the skull and horn were recovered. It proved to be the best of all the rhino heads obtained in Nepal during the present shoot. . . A second rhino wounded on this day, by Capt. Dudley North, was picked up later under similar circumstances. As we blundered through the dense forest in search of the wounded rhino one could not help thinking of what would have been the effect on our ranks, if a rhino took it into his head to charge, bunched up as we were at the moment. The consequences would have been rather disconcerting as the resultant stampede would not exactly have been a pleasant experience.

Just before the search was abandoned a tiger was seen, a ring was immediately formed and the animal was soon accounted for. H. R. H. fired at the beast but missed. The tiger took cover, but immediately re-appeared giving Sir Godfrey Thomas a broadside shot at close range.

Shortly afterwards H. R. H. returned to camp, but certain enthusiasts remained till dark without any results beyond a rather exciting five minutes with a pig. In the fading light an animal was discovered moving in the bushes. Everybody thought it was a panther or a tiger and a ring was formed. Whatever it was, it took a great deal of dislodging, but at last with a protesting squeal out rushed a much harassed and disgruntled porker which promptly dodged through the lines of elephants and vanished into the jungle.

On all other days of the visit there were shoots, either of big game or of small game. There was no shooting on Sunday, but on the afternoon of that day a pleasant function took place in the distribution of gifts and mementoes from the Maharaja to his guests. Among these were a number of beautiful silver-mounted kukris which were presented to various members of the party, a fitting memento of their days in Nepal. According to time-honoured custom H. R. H. was the recipient of a number of live animals and birds. Among the animals was the famous 'unicorn' sheep of Nepal. These are normally two horned. When quite young, the horns are bound closely together so that they grow up in contact with one another giving them the desired "unicorn" effect. The birds included a very fine series of pheasants. After being inspected by

between the English and the Padishas of Delhi for the lordship of Northern India.

In common with other cities, it bore the full force of the Hun invasion of the sixth century, which effected its complete destruction. But it emerged from its obscurity and rose to something of its former brilliant splendour under the Mahomedan Emperor, Sher Shah, who made it his provincial capital, and finally attained the zenith of its magnificence under the grandson of Aurungzeb, who named the city Azimabad after himself. Time and again it heard the roll of the war drum and suffered constant attacks from the Mahrattas and the Afghans, whose pleasant habits in warfare are still subjects for local legend.

The city which is the modern outcome of these vicissitudes and the inheritor of these traditions, extended a goodly welcome to the Prince. We were met before arrival by the usual rumours; there was to be a *hartal*; there would be few people out on the streets to see H. R. H.; the welcome would be coldly official. It is true there was a *hartal*, or rather a *hartal* was proclaimed, but though the lie to its claims was not given with the same forceful vehemence as in Lucknow, yet the results which ensued on the proclamation of a *hartal* in Allahabad were entirely lacking. There were many people about. The route of the Royal procession was, indeed, almost bare, but that is not surprising when it is recalled that the main clustering of habitation is many miles from the chief theatres of the day's functions. What was surprising, in view of the rumours, and supremely gratifying as well, was the large number of people who had gathered on and round the maidan stadium prepared for the *darbar*, which was held in the morning.

Some five or six thousand of these, for the most part invited guests, and among them, be it noted, many of the university students, were accommodated beneath a semi-circular awning supported on a forest of venetian masts. But all round this awning, on spreading embankments of beaten earth, thronged many thousand more of lesser folk. Their raiment was humble, but the eager happiness of their faces and the spontaneity of their cheers comprised a welcome worth all the gorgeous trappings of the ceremonial put together.

They were not content with the glimpse they had of the Prince listening to, and replying to the formal address of welcome. At the earliest opportunity, as soon indeed as the procession had set forth from the maidan on its return journey to Government House, the crowd broke from the containing ranks of sepoy and rushed to the nearest vantage ground, whence they might get a last glimpse of the Prince on his departure. Some few indeed, youthful and fleet of foot, set forth in pursuit of the

procession, hoping to catch it up and get in a last extra round of cheering. I do not know whether they succeeded in their laudable object. My route lay elsewhither. But they were still plugging along, gaining slightly on the rear ranks of the cavalry, as my car turned a corner.

The ceremony, which was the occasion of this outburst of enthusiasm, differed little from those which characterised other arrivals. Certainly it yielded to none in the magnificence of the accompaniments, particularly in the architectural glories, in which regard, as one looked at the dazzling elegance of the pavilion which housed the Prince during the ceremony, one felt it a pity that a few days would see its cupola back in the timber yard and its staircases perhaps used to grill the matutinal bacon. Many another building has been given perpetuity in stone and mortar, which deserved it far less than this. One's greatest regret, to which the Prince himself gave fitting expression, was that Lord Sinha had been compelled by ill health to relinquish the post he had filled so admirably, and did not preside over the Patna welcome.

At night there was a reception at Government House. The Prince stood on the landing of the Grand Staircase with His Excellency the Governor and shook hands with about a thousand guests before supper. On the following morning the Prince was present at a review of police held on the polo ground, inspecting also a contingent of Indian officers and a parade of boy scouts. Later he received in audience the feudatory chiefs of Behar and Orissa who included the Chiefs of Vharaswan, Hindol, Talchar, Bonai, Gangpur, Rairakhol, Sonapur, Kalakandi and Patna. At night the Prince departed quietly for Calcutta.

