



PLATE 1.



HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA ON HORSEBACK.

(Frontispiece.)

# BIG GAME SHOOTING IN NEPAL

(With leaves from the Maharaja's  
Sporting Diary)

*by*

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(Forest Adviser to the Nepal Government  
and late Chief Conservator of Forests, U. P.)

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## DEDICATION

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This book is dedicated with profound respect to him who alone  
made its production possible,

HIS HIGHNESS OJASWI RAJANYA PROJJWALA NEPALATARA  
ATULAJYOTIRMAYA TRISAKTIPATTA ATIPRABALA  
GURKHADAKSHINABAHU PRITHULADHISA  
MAHARAJA JOODHA SHUMSHERE JUNG  
BAHADUR RANA, G.C.B., G.C.L.H.,  
G.C.L.G., G.S.C.I., G.C.N.L., G.C.S.S.,  
M.L., G.C.I.E., G.K.R.K.,

*Eting Paoting Soon Chian Luchuan Syang Chyang, Honorary  
Lieutenant-General British Army, Honorary Colonel of  
all the Gurkha Rifle Regiments (Indian  
Army), Prime Minister and Supreme  
Commander-in-Chief, Nepal.*

## PREFACE.

DURING the last decade of my service in the forests of the United Provinces, India, which adjoin the Nepal Terai forests on the west and south-west, I used to hear wonderful accounts of the Maharaja of Nepal, his shikar exploits and his phenomenal bags of tiger and other big game. Being a shikari myself (as all Indian forest officers are) I was always anxious to hear further details, and when I came as Forest Adviser to Nepal I fortunately had an opportunity to see and read the very interesting shikar diaries of the Maharaja, translated into English, and illustrated with many wonderful photographs and pictures. As I read through the pages, I soon realised what wonderful material there was for a shikar book, if only justice could be done to it. I ventured to suggest this, adding that such a book could only be written by one having an intimate knowledge of jungle life, and if His Highness so desired, I should be delighted to do anything I could to help. In due course His Highness approved of this suggestion, and I was given the honour and responsibility of the task. My chief fear is that I have not done full justice to His Highness's unique shikar experiences. During my 30 years of service in the Indian Forest Department I have been in close contact with plenty of shikar (which in India is controlled by the Forest Department) and have had plenty of thrills of my own ; I have met and exchanged yarns with most of the famous big game sportsmen of northern India, but never have I seen or heard of anything like the Maharaja's shikar in Nepal.

Some big game shikaris—and I include myself in this category—prefer to kill their tigers neatly and quickly, without undue fuss or danger. There are others—like Sir William Stampe—who positively prefer to have wounded and fighting tigers trying to maul them and their elephants. His Highness is evidently in the latter category ! That his shoots should have produced a high proportion of such incidents is not surprising, because the Nepal ring method of tiger shooting, although supremely efficient, emphatically encourages nerve-racking episodes. A slightly wounded and *cornered* tiger is about the most dangerous animal on earth. With his pluck, ferocity, agility and tremendous strength he is bound to attack somebody or something. And in the Nepal ring, wounded and cornered tigers are the rule rather than the exception, the ring corners the tiger, and in the tremendous Terai grass and undergrowth to wait for or pick out an immediately

fatal spot—such as the heart, neck or head—is practically impossible. This explains why in this book so many shoots occur with fighting tigers charging and mauling the elephants, putting them to flight or alternately the elephants trying to kill the tigers by their tusks or weight, mahouts being thrown and other hair-raising escapes. Everyone who has seen the *Maharaja* in action, following wounded tigers into their lair in thick undergrowth, bears witness to the fact that the greater the danger, the more he enjoys it !

Having been privileged to tour extensively in the great Terai forests, in the areas where these shoots take place, I have tried to give some idea of the atmosphere that surrounds these shoots, the appeal of these wild jungles to some atavistic trait in modern man, the lure of trackless forests far from civilisation, the calls of wild animals often heard, the glorious scenery of plains and wooded hills, with the cold glitter of the everlasting snows ever visible on the far horizon.

I have also tried to give some idea of this only independent Hindu kingdom, Nepal, of which the *Maharaja* is the sole and absolute ruler, of her tribes and peoples, and temples, her flora and fauna, and her geography. In this I have drawn freely from previous books about Nepal—Percy Brown's “ Picturesque Nepal ”, Northeys's “ The Gurkhas ” and “ The Land of Gurkhas ”.

But the bulk of the book is based directly on the illustrated volumes of the *Maharaja*'s shooting diary. The photographs and illustrations were taken and made chiefly by the artist-photographers, Major General Samar Shumshere and his son Major Balkrishna Shumshere. The coloured photographs, excepting the one of His Highness in Durbar dress, are all made by photographer Suba B. D. Joshi. To Brigadier-Colonel S. P. Thapa, B.Sc., I must express my special indebtedness, for his continuous assistance and advice in the preparation and publication of this book within such a short time and in arranging, under his personal supervision, the English translations of the 8 years' voluminous diaries, done by Pandit Lakshmi Prasad Devakota, B.A., LL.B., which I have often quoted verbatim. Commanding General Kaiser Shumshere, whose knowledge of big game shikar in Nepal is very wide, has very kindly supplied much information and gone through the draft of the various chapters, making corrections where necessary. Commanding General Bahadur, during a short stay in Nepal, very kindly went through some portions of the writings and made valuable suggestions and corrections. This has ensured that the descriptions of the many exciting episodes, and the information regarding the measurements and numbers of animals shot, are really accurate and correct. Inaccuracies, exaggerations, and insincere flattery have been scrupulously avoided ; this assurance seems advisable, as many of the shikar incidents are so

extraordinary, and some of the tiger and leopard measurements so huge, that a degree of scepticism might otherwise creep in. Lastly, I am thankful to Brigadier-Colonel Indra Bahadur Karki, A.D.C. to His Highness, for kindly verifying my writings with the original diaries.

His Highness entrusted me with a task which I have found of absorbing interest, and which has given me months of pleasure. My knowledge (and love) of Indian jungles and jungle life helped me to describe the scenes, although the limitations of my literary skill have, I fear, prevented full justice being done to the subject. But, if I have, as I hope, at least succeeded in giving a picture of a thorough sportsman, as well as a great ruler and a charming personality, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that in the task I set out to do I have not altogether failed.

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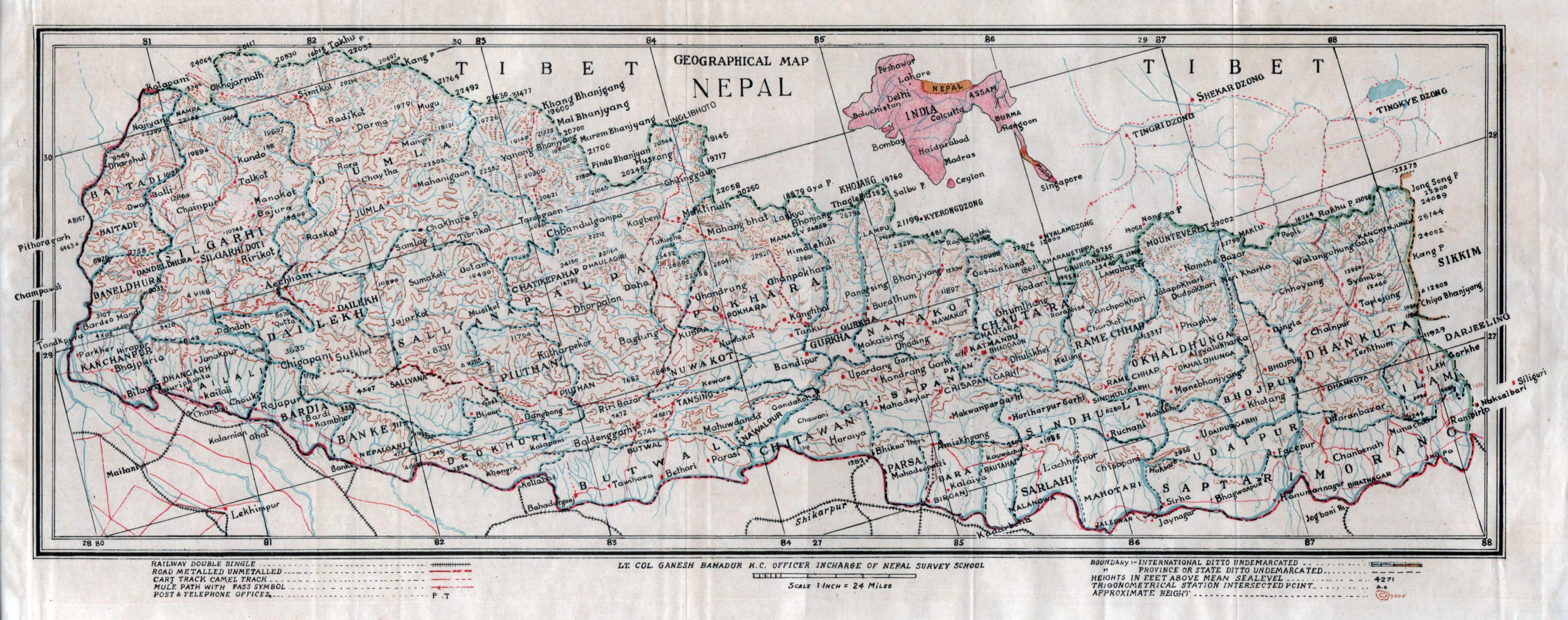
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## CHAPTER I.

### THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL.

#### A PICTURESQUE LAND.

THE traveller's first glimpse of the beautiful valley of Nepal where beats the real pulse of the Nepalese nation, and in which is situated Kathmandu, the principal seat of the Nepal Government, is gained from the top of Chandragiri, a hill that serves as the southern rampart. The beautiful panorama of golden pagodas, brown temples, white edifices, and red hamlets seen in a romantic setting of hill and dale remains an ineffaceable memory. Far away on the northern horizon, dominating the whole scene, rise the snow-clad peaks of Dhaulagiri and Gosainthan, and in front of them a majestic series of smaller mountains, tier upon tier, in bold relief against the clear blue sky, sloping down to the very edge of the valley. Kathmandu, the capital, lies in the heart of this valley. Here and in the two neighbouring cities, Patan and Bhatgaon, one finds magnificent modern palaces side by side with ancient picturesque temples and pagodas, the like of which cannot be seen anywhere else in the world.

The valley of Nepal is 15 miles in length and 13 in breadth and is said to have been originally a lake. Within this small area stand practically all the principal temples of Nepal, and the temples are the chief glories of the country. On their walls are to be found some of the most wonderful handiwork of by-gone ages—with sermons in stones—carved by pious monarchs whose chief ambition seems to have been to leave behind them undying testimony to the burning devotion in their hearts.

#### TEMPLES AND FESTIVALS OF NEPAL.

Of all the Buddhist temples, the oldest, finest, and most perfect specimen is Swayambhunath, on top of a small hill near Kathmandu. Its origin is lost in the mists of antiquity—one legend (recorded by Oldfield) suggests it was pre-Buddha. The *chaitya*, which forms the main structure of the temple, is composed of a solid hemisphere of brick and earth, supporting a lofty conical spine, the top of which is capped by a pinnacle of copper-gilt, and on the four sides of the base are painted,

very realistically, the two eyes of Buddha. According to the belief of Newars, as far as these eyes can see the land may never be ploughed with oxen, but may only be dug by hand. As an instance of the curious blending of Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal, Northey has noted the interesting fact that situated in the very cloisters of Swayambhunath there is a purely Hindu temple, dedicated to the goddess Devi Sitla (the goddess of smallpox), which was built by the Buddhists, and a visit to it is part of the ceremonial attendant upon a visit to this famous place of Buddhist pilgrimage.

Other Buddhist temples and relics include the very similar temple of Bodhnath, and the five stupas of Asoka erected in and around the city of Patan.

There are other examples in Nepal where Hindu shrines have been erected within the precincts of Buddhist temples, which are decorated with Hindu gods and Hindu symbols. While the national religion of the Newars was originally Buddhism, about half are now followers of Hinduism, and the influence and spread of Hinduism is steadily and surely pushing back Buddhism to the higher mountain ranges adjoining Tibet. This trend is naturally influenced by the fact that the rulers of Nepal are strict followers of the Hindu faith in all its details, whose example influences the majority of their people towards the same religion.

Of the sacred Hindu temples and places of pilgrimage in Nepal, which are legion, only the most important can be mentioned here. They can be classified as belonging or dedicated to Shiva, or Vishnu, or Shakti (the goddess of power and procreation). The most sacred of all the Hindu temples to the followers of Shiva is Shree Pashupatinath, where annually pilgrims from all over India assemble in thousands during a particular fortnight.

Brown in " Picturesque Nepal " has described it as follows :-

" Pashupati is a picturesque collection of temples and shrines, about three miles north-east of Kathmandu, on the banks of the Bagmati river. Here this stream passes through a narrow gorge, which may be appropriately called ' the valley of shadow ', for Pashupati is truly the doorway of death. So holy is this place that the one great desire of the Hindu is to gasp out his last breath on the steps of the *ghat*, with his feet lapped by the swirls and eddies of the sacred stream. And so, lying about in corners and recesses are people in the last stage of life, tortured perhaps in body but happy in mind, because they have been spared to die within the holy precincts of Pashupati. And in the gloaming one may see the turrets and gilded roofs lit up by the glow of the funeral pyres of the dead."

PLATE 2.



THE SACRED TEMPLE OF PASHUPATINATH.



Pashupatinath is one of the twelve most sacred Lingams of India, and ranks with Rameswaram of Madras, Kedarnath of the United Provinces, Visweswarnath of Benares and the others.

North of the Nepal valley, where the encircling snows hang highest in ethereal space, towers the great mountain of Gosainthan, and at its foot, at an altitude of nearly 15,000 feet, is the sacred lake of Gosainthan. Here every year the pious devotees of Shiva Mahadev come to worship the divinely carved representation of their god, sunk in the water of the ice-cold lake. This is another of the amazing pilgrimages to Hindu shrines which lie concealed in the ice-bound fastnesses of the Himalaya, like the pillar of ice at Amarnath in Kashmir, and the Cow's Mouth (the source of the sacred Ganges) at Badrinath in Kumaon, but the sacred lake of Gosainthan in Nepal is the severest and greatest penance of them all. To anyone who has seen (as the writer has) old men and women attempting to scale the heights, gasping and palpitating from the rarified atmosphere, shivering from the intense cold, it appears a miracle of surpassing faith—faith that can move mountains—that the goal is ever reached and the pilgrimage successfully accomplished.

Other famous temples dedicated to Shiva, outside the Nepal valley, are Jaleswar in Mahottri district and Pindeswar in Morang.

Four sacred temples dedicated to Vishnu, guard the valley of Nepal—Changu Narayan on the east, Ichangu Narayan on the west, Bishainkhu Narayan on the south, and Narayan or more commonly Burha Nilkanth on the north. This latter has a colossal figure of Vishnu reclining on serpents, carved from a great block of stone. The beautiful Krishna temple in the main square at Patan has superb decoration and architecture. Janakpur (in Mahottri district) marks the birthplace of Janaki or Sita (wife of Rama), where two great fairs are held annually.

In Nepal, there are also two of the five most sacred places in all India of the followers of Vishnu, which rank with Pushkar in Ajmer, and Kurukshetra near Delhi. These are Varahkshetra in the Kosi gorge in Morang (the birthplace of the third incarnation of Vishnu) and Muktikshetra, in the high Himalayas, the source of the sacred river Gandak.

To the goddess Shakti are dedicated a very large number of temples and shrines. In one of these—Taleju Bhawani in Kathmandu—the last of the Newar kings concealed himself when the victorious Gurkhas besieged the town in 1768. Another is Bhadra Kali on Tundikbel (the big parade ground of Kathmandu) near the Maharaja's official residence Singha Durbar. But the most famous is Shree Guhyeswari, the consort of Shree Pashupati, and situated near his temple, on the opposite bank of the river.

In this brief survey of the sacred temples, shrines, and pilgrimages of Nepal, it has only been possible to mention a few of the more famous. But to appreciate the religious atmosphere of Nepal, and of the valley in particular, one must realise that there are scores and hundreds of temples and shrines, tucked away down alleyways in the towns, or on the wayside in villages, by river banks, on hill-tops, or buried away in the forests. Over the country there hangs, as it were, a pall of fervent religion, which is intensified by the enthusiasm of the people in observing the endless succession of religious festivals, and strengthened by the deeply religious attitude of the Maharaja himself.

Just as almost every situation is sanctified by its altar or shrine, so almost every day of the year is marked by its religious ceremony or festival. Many are mere local observances associated with a village saint or a minor divinity. The Nepalis love displays of dancing, music, and general hilarity, which are considered an indispensable ingredient of Hindu festivals, and so are indulged in with the greatest enthusiasm.

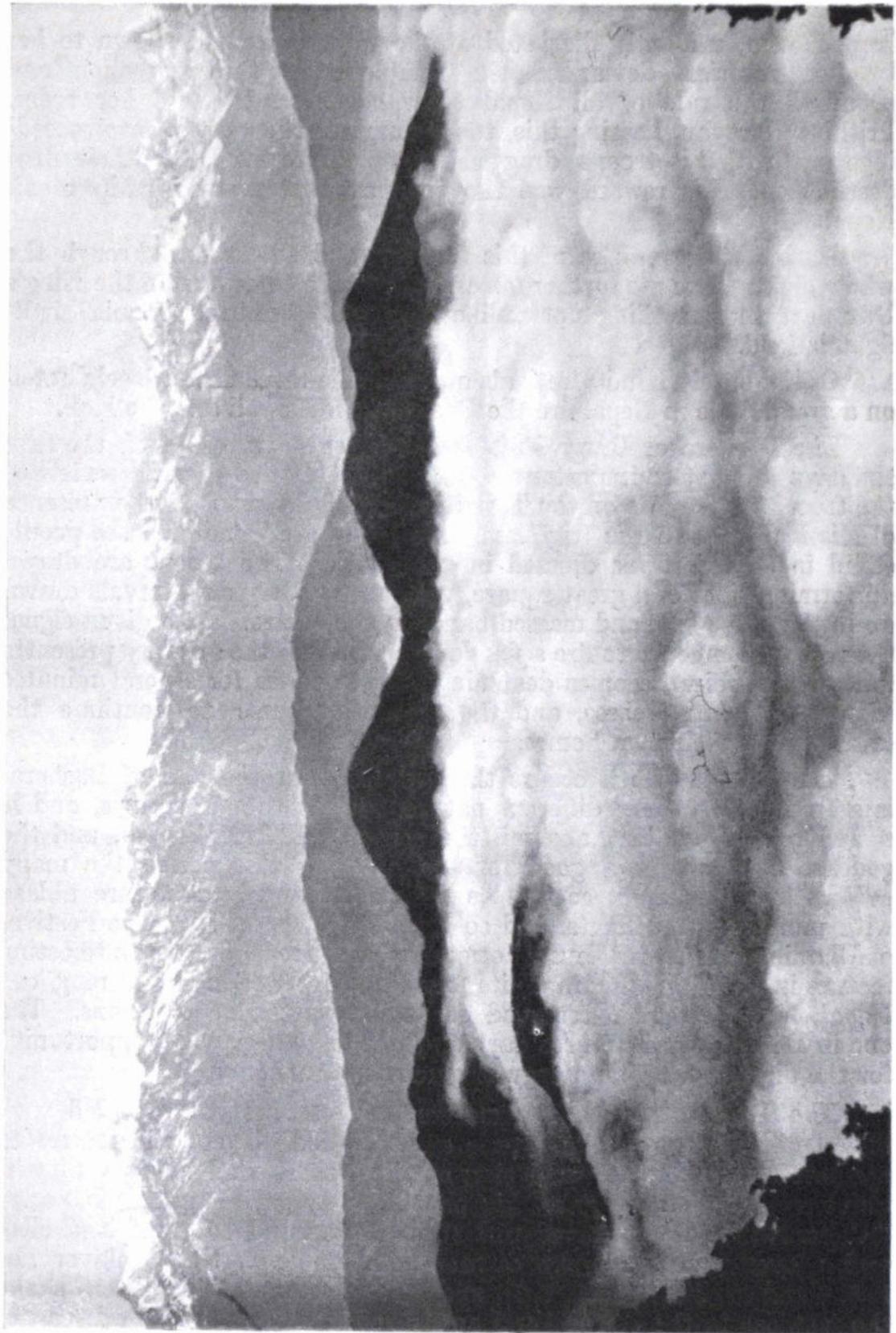
There are a number of great national festivals peculiar to Nepal, besides several others which differ little from those practised in India. Of the purely indigenous festivals, the most important is that in honour of Machhendranath, the patron saint of Nepal. The ceremony of annually presenting his present-day embodiment (in the form of an image) is one of the most fascinating events of the valley, which has been maintained for centuries.

Of the more than twenty other indigenous festivals the most interesting or important are the following :—

The Indrajatra, which takes place early in September, and lasts eight days. On the third day there is a grand procession, when elephants, gaily painted and caparisoned, bear in their gilt and silver howdahs the rulers of the State; when through the crowded streets of Kathmandu three great wooden chariots are dragged in which, with their attendants, sit two little boys, representing Ganesh and Bhairab, and a little girl representing the goddess Kumari, in whose honour the Indrajatra is held. In front, between, and behind these rocking chariots the regiments of the Nepalese Army with their bands march on, interspersed with groups of Newars with torches, incense, and men with huge masks dressed as women dancing along—a saturnalia of noise and revelry.

The story goes that the Gurkha conqueror of Nepal, Prithivi Narayan Shah, arrived in Kathmandu with his troops in the middle of this festival, and the Newars— or such of them as were still capable of running— fled, leaving the goddess and the chariots deserted. Suddenly a voice was heard, the voice of no other than the goddess

PLATE 3.



VIEW OF SNOWS.

herself, who, evidently disgusted at the want of regard shown to her by her votaries, demanded the completion of the procession and promised the rule of all Nepal to whoever would fulfil her order. Prithiwi Narayan, hearing this, took charge of the subsequent proceedings and with his troops dragged the chariots round to their final destination. His reward was the conquest and first kingship of all Nepal.

During the evenings of this festival, and sometimes through the whole night, there are further *tamashas*. In the courtyard of the King's Durbar Hall something not unlike a sort of primitive Spanish bull-fight is held.

Of the purely Hindu festivals of India, the three that are celebrated on a grand scale in Nepal are the Dashera, the Dewali and the Holi.

The Dashera or Durga Puja lasts for ten days, of which the first six days are not so important. On the seventh day a grand review of the troops takes place on the Tundikhel parade ground, in the presence of His Majesty and His Highness. All round the Tundikhel the people stand in dense crowds dressed in gala attire. The troops are drawn up forming sides of a great square, with the artillery at intervals drawn up in the space left, and massed bands in the centre. At a given signal the troops commence to fire a *feu de joie*, in which the artillery presently joins. The noise becomes deafening and continues for several minutes when it suddenly ceases, and the crowds disperse to continue the festivities in their own homes.

The Dewali, which occurs three weeks after the end of Dashera, is a festival of a very different nature. It lasts for five days, and is sacred to the goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Shree Vishnu, and the goddess of wealth and good fortune. During this period the many palaces of Kathmandu as well as the streets and bazaars are ablaze with multi-coloured lights, and so this festival is called "The Festival of Illumination". In Nepal, however, there is an additional interesting feature in it. Gambling in all its forms is strictly forbidden throughout Nepal, but the ban is removed for three particular occasions. The one in Dewali lasts for three days and nights, and gives an opportunity for the display of a grand orgy of games of chance.

The Durbar square, the streets and bazaars are crowded with little booths each with its coterie of enthralled players and interested spectators, while in the seclusion of the houses and palaces play is universal and stakes run higher. The favourite game is called "Chharuwa" and is played with four players and 16 cowries (shells), each player having a group of four numbers (e.g., No. 1 player has 1, 5, 9 and 13, No. 2 has 2, 6, 10 and 14 and so on). The players shake the cowries in the closed hand and throw them on the board (carpet

around which they squat), and if, for example, 9 cowries fall with the curved side upwards, No. 1 player scoops the pool. It is a fascinating sight to see the swarming happy crowds eddying around the tense-faced players (sometimes even boys playing for farthings) under the eaves of elaborately carved houses and gilded temples, the whole scene lit up with electricity or petromax and thousands of flickering Diwali lights.

The Holi, which is the great Spring festival, is celebrated all over Nepal in the same way as in India, and lasts for eight days. During these eight days it is the fashion for all and sundry who choose to regale themselves thus, to go about with bags of bright vermilion powder and vessels of coloured water, with which the passers-by are plentifully bombarded. Towards the end of the festival the whole population exhibit conspicuous traces on their clothes and on their faces of active participation in it.

Besides these religious festivals, there are also many civil festivals and holidays which are usually attended by some sort of *tamasha* or entertainments, such as the birthday of the Maharaja or the anniversary of his accession. In fact, amongst this gay and care-free people a carnival spirit seems to predominate on most days of the year, and there is no lack of holidays to give free scope for the peoples' love of ceremonial and martial displays of bands and music and song, and of religious ritual and observance.

## THE PEOPLE OF NEPAL.

All writers about Nepal have been struck with the extraordinary variety of races, tribes and languages in Nepal. Professor Turner has written this about it:—

“ To the western European nothing could be more astonishing than the diversity of races and languages which he would find in Nepal. In a population of about six millions in all, there are spoken at least a score, if not indeed a still greater number, of languages all mutually unintelligible, and some broken up again into numerous and often very different dialects. Even within the limits of a single valley there may be, and often is, a village the inhabitants of which speak a language completely unintelligible to their neighbours in the next village a mile away.”

The origin of this diversity is to be found in the various migrations which have brought the present population into the country.

These multifarious languages belong to at least three different families of speech: (a) Munda, a division of Austro-Asiatic, (b) Tibeto-Burman and (c) Indo-Aryan.

PLATE 4.



JUNGLE CAMP.

The earliest or aboriginal inhabitants of the country were Dravidian or Austro-Asiatic, whose dialect is still surviving in the plateau of Chota Nagpur and amongst races on the southern slopes of the Himalayas and the Terai, including Nepal. But these primitive races have been overlaid and enslaved by two waves of invasion, by Mongolians from the north and by the Aryans from the south and west, and have largely disappeared now. The two main branches of the population of Nepal are thus: (1) Mongolian or Tibeto-Burman and (2) Indo-Aryan. While the Aryan invaders of India were pouring into India from Iran through the north-western passes somewhere in the second millennium B.C. the Mongolian emigrants were pouring in from Tibet through the northern passes, and, roughly speaking, the latter occupied the northern, central and eastern tracts of Nepal, while the former found themselves in the western and southern tracts.

At a much later date, there was a further invasion, which has had a predominant influence on present-day Nepal. As a result of the Moghul invasions, a number of high-caste Thakurs and Rajputs, driven out of Rajputana and Central India, took refuge in the Himalayas, and from these immigrants have descended the present rulers and nobility of Nepal. Thus the family of the Maharaja traces descent back to the Rana family of Udaipur.

This invasion, if tradition can be believed, had another and more humble influence on the population of Nepal. The malarious and deadly Terai is inhabited by a race called the Tharus, who are practically immune to malaria. Northey has quoted the following story of their origin:—

“The Terai was originally inhabited by a race of wild men (aboriginals) who knew not the meaning of law and order. Sometime during the twelfth century, when the Rajputs were about to be besieged in Chitor, they sent their womenfolk to take refuge in the lower hills of Nepal. Later on, when Chitor had fallen and most of its garrison had been slaughtered, the Rajput women, who until then had held aloof from the local inhabitants, began to take husbands from amongst the inhabitants of the Terai, and their offspring were the original Tharus.”

It is interesting to note that even to-day the Tharu women, who are known as *Ranis* (queens), are considered to be the leaders of the race.

Tharus figure largely in the shikar incidents recorded in this book, as they occupy the key-position of *mahouts* and attendants of the elephants of Nepal, and their pluck and skill is a predominant factor in the success of all big game shooting in the Terai.

In addition to the semi-aboriginal Tharus, there are (more particularly in the east) other and altogether aboriginal tribes found in the Terai, such as the Dhimals of the Terai and the Satars or Santhals (a recent emigration), skilled hunters with bow and spear. The language of these tribes is quite unintelligible to the ordinary inhabitants of Nepal. The Dotials of Western Nepal are another primitive race, which is possibly a mixture of Aryan and aboriginal, but not Mongolian. They are the weight-carrying coolies of many hill stations.

Turning to the inhabitants of Mongolian origin, which supply all the recruits for the Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army, the principal tribes or races are the Gurungs and Magars of Central Nepal, and the Rais and Limbus (Kirantis) of Eastern Nepal. (From time immemorial, i.e., in the Mahabharat and Ramayana, the name Kiranti is associated with hill tribes outside the boundaries of the Aryan invasion, but has a more limited application now.)

Although these four tribes supply the bulk of the recruits for the 20 battalions of Gurkha regiments now increased to 40 owing to exigencies of war, historically and geographically only the Gurungs and Magars can claim to be the original Gorkhali or Gurkhas. Two centuries ago Gurkha was a petty kingdom in the Gurung country with a small hill village called Gurkha as capital. In 1742 Prithivi Narayan Shah became king of this village and surrounding territory, but before he died in 1775 he had conquered the valley of Nepal itself and consolidated his power and expanded his kingdom over the Kirantis in the east, to the passes of Tibet on the north, to the Terai in the south and far to the west, thus becoming the first king of Nepal.

The Rais and the Limbus, the aboriginal Mongolian tribes of Eastern Nepal, were amongst his conquests.

Other Mongolian races of Nepal include Tibetans, Lepchas, and Sherpas—the latter now world famous as the high-level porters for Everest expeditions—of the higher mountain, and Sunwaris, Bhotes, and others of the outer hills.

There is one important race left to describe, the Newars of the valley of Nepal. Their origin has been a matter of considerable speculation. Some authorities consider that the Newars originally migrated from Southern India, being the Nair soldiery who formed a part of an army which invaded Nepal in the ninth century A.D. But it seems more probable that they have been the inhabitants of the Nepal valley for a much longer period, and probably migrated from the north before the spread of Buddhism.

Dr. Oldfield, writing many years ago about Buddhism in Nepal, records a legend which, if true, suggests a possible origin of the Newars.

"Having travelled through the greater part of north-western India, Buddha made a pilgrimage to Nepal, accompanied by one thousand three hundred and fifty mendicant ascetics, and having with him the Raja of Benares with his Minister of State and an immense crowd of all sorts and conditions. In Nepal he found that the doctrines of which he was the apostle had already taken firm root. They had been introduced into the country by a distinguished teacher from Tibet named Manjusri, who had led the first colony from China into Nepal and built a temple to the eternal self-existent spirit Swayambhu \_\_\_\_\_. When Sakya (Buddha) returned to Hindusthan, most of the followers who had accompanied him--being charmed with the beauties of the sacred valley--settled in Nepal and became gradually blended by intermarriage with the earlier inhabitants of the country."

The style of buildings and the most characteristic types of Nepalese temples are in the so-called pagoda style. Professor Levi thinks it not improbable that the pagoda style was in existence in Nepal long before it made its appearance further east, and suggests that the pagodas of China and elsewhere are due to the influence of the Newars, who were employed as skilled workmen (up to quite modern times) in Tibet, Tartary and many parts of China.

Recruitment for the Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army is not allowed in the Nepal valley and adjoining hill districts, as this is the main centre of recruitment of the Nepalese Army. The Nepalese Army is recruited chiefly from the castes of Chetri, Gurung, Magar, and Limbus.

## CHAPTER II.

### PHYSIOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY OF NEPAL.

#### PHYSIOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHY.

THE numerous expeditions which have struggled in vain to ascend Everest and Kanchenjunga, the Himalayan giants on the borders of Nepal, have brought into world-wide prominence the physiography of this Himalayan kingdom, so a brief description will be of general interest.

The geography and physiography are much better known than formerly, thanks to the survey carried out about 15 years ago and the excellent maps resulting therefrom, published by the Map Office of the Survey of India.

The total area is about 54,000 square miles and it stretches about 540 miles in length parallel to the Himalayan axis, and averages about 100 miles in breadth, lying between  $80^{\circ}$  and  $88^{\circ}$ E. longitude and between  $26^{\circ}$  and  $30^{\circ}$ N. latitude. The eastern boundary with Sikkim is the great transverse Singalila range, which runs through the beautiful but terrible mountain Kanchenjunga (28,146 feet) and divides the waters of Sikkim and the great Ranjit river from the waters of Eastern Nepal and the Timur river. This range and valley of the Timur was explored nearly a century ago, by special permission of Maharaja Jung Bahadur, by the great naturalist, Sir Joseph Hooker, and described in his classic book "Himalayan Journal". This is the only occasion in all Nepalese history that a European has been permitted to explore extensively the hill portions of the country above the Terai and submontane belt!

Where the Singalila range fades out near the plains, the Mechi river continues the boundary, dividing the Morang district of Nepal from the Siliguri district of Bengal. The southern boundary is over 500 miles of artificial demarcation, separating the Terai of Nepal from the adjoining districts of Bihar and the United Provinces, and patrolled and guarded throughout by Nepalese troops.

The western boundary is the Sarda or Mahakali river, from Banbassa where the headworks of the great Sarda canal are situated, to its source

at the Lipulekh pass, where Nepal, British India and Tibet meet. From here the northern boundary runs south-east for over 500 miles back to near Kanchenjunga, along the roof of the world in a great maze of Himalayan snowy ranges, over great peaks and watersheds where no human being has ever been. In the eastern half, the Tibet-Nepal boundary follows the main crystalline axis of the Himalaya and includes such giants among mountains as Kanchenjunga, Makalu, Everest, Gaurisanker and a dozen peaks of over 24,000 feet altitude. Here the Kosi river and its great tributary the Arun break through the boundary and drain vast areas in Tibet before entering Nepalese territory.

But in the western half, the Tibet-Nepal boundary swings north of the main Himalayan axis and follows instead the watershed of the Gandak and Karnali rivers and their tributaries. Here the great peaks of Himalaya, Manaslu, Himalchule, Annanpura, Dhaulagiri, a dozen peaks in all over 24,000 feet, lie wholly within Nepal territory, behind which lie Mustang and many other districts of Nepal which are practically unknown. It is interesting to note that Nepal has within or on its boundaries 26 peaks of over 24,000 feet, which include 12 of over 25,000, eight of over 26,000, three of over 27,000, and the one and only mountain in the world over 29,000 feet. Such an agglomeration of high peaks makes Nepal unique amongst all the countries of the world.

This brief description of the boundaries of Nepal will suffice to explain how natural features and geography have rendered possible a policy of isolation from the rest of the world. Only on the southern frontier is the country at all accessible, and this frontier is backed by a great belt of dense tropical forest, which runs its whole length, and is intensely malarious for seven or eight months of the year. Behind this Terai belt lies the trackless and equally unhealthy Churia or Siwalik ranges of foothills, behind which, again, is the long range of Mahabharat that forms a further barrier to the hill districts of Nepal. To a wonderful extent, therefore, physiography has simplified the policy of isolation.

The whole kingdom is divided into two main zones: (1) the plains or "Mades" (which includes the submontane Siwaliks and "Duns") and (2) the hill districts or "Pahar". The hill districts greatly exceed the plains in area and are exclusively the source of recruitment for the Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army. They fall naturally into four basins.

On the east is the basin of the seven Kosis—that is, the country drained by the Kosi and its great tributaries—the home of the Sunwars, Rais, Limbus, and Lepchas. In the centre is the great tract drained by the seven Gandaks, e.g., the Narayani or Gandak and its great

tributaries. Here we find the Gurungs and Magars, and it includes Gurkha, the ancestral home of the Gurkha Raj. To the west lie the basins of the Karnali and Mahakali rivers (called Gogra and Sarda in India), inhabited by Magars (to a limited extent), Bhotes, Dhotials, and tribes of Tibetan origin behind the great ranges.

The fourth basin, although much the smallest, is also the most important. A great ridge coming from the sacred mountain of Gosainthan in Tibet (over 26,000 feet), which divides the Kosi and Gandak basins, suddenly and unexpectedly bifurcates to enclose the Bagmati basin and the valley of Nepal proper. This lovely and fertile elevated plain was once a vast lake, and remains of fossil elephants have been found in the deposits. To Manjusri by the Buddhists, and to Vishnu by the Hindus, is given the credit of transforming this lake into a fertile plain, by cutting a pass through the mountains with his sword. Science suggests a more prosaic agency in (geologically) comparatively recent times. The plain is now covered by a thick deposit of rich dark silt which ensures its wonderful and perennial fertility.

It lies at an altitude of 4,500 feet and is surrounded by a ring of forested mountains reaching to over 9,000 feet altitude, composed of the limestones, slates, and quartzites, typical of the Mahabharat. Descending from the Chandragiri pass on the road from the plains, one of the most glorious views in all the Himalaya becomes visible. Imagine a great amphitheatre of well-wooded mountains, 15 miles in diameter, rising 2,000 to 4,000 feet above an emerald plain of intense cultivation, which is threaded by a broad river and dotted with many villages. In the centre of the plain, every detail clearly visible in the diamond air, lies Kathmandu, the city of palaces, and nearby is Patan, the sacred city of temples. Beyond and behind the ring of encircling mountains, there rise the great snowy ranges, with Gosainthan and Ganesh Himal, giants of this wilderness of snow and ice, towering above a host of less known peaks and ridges; and far to the east, a distant view of Everest the unconquered.

This land-locked basin to the Nepalese is Nepal, the rest is Mades or Pahar. It contains the seat of administration and Government, as well as the signs and records of the oldest civilisation, ancient buildings, temples, carvings of the last two thousand years (as are described elsewhere). The population of the valley exceeds 330,000. Thus its importance bears no relation to its comparatively small size. The bulk of the population is Newar, but this race is practically not recruited at all for the Nepalese Army which is recruited chiefly from the Chetris of the valley.

There remains for consideration the "Mades", a continuous belt along the southern boundaries consisting of three distinct sub-zones,

(1) the Terai proper, (2) the Bhabar, and (3) the Churia and "Bhitri Mades". It is these three zones which chiefly concern this book, as it is in them that the tigers and leopards and rhino live, and in them therefore all the big game shikar occurs.

The Terai is a fertile well-watered alluvial plain, about 250 to 600 feet above sea-level. Originally the Terai was covered with dense forest and was notorious for its unhealthy and malarious climate. But now a large proportion of the whole has been disforested and cleared for cultivation, and the process is still continuing, although there are still islands and pockets of forest of varying extent in some districts. This Terai cultivation is far more valuable and pays far higher land revenue than hill cultivation, and in fact the land revenue from the Terai is more than half the total revenue of the whole kingdom from all sources.

North of the Terai belt and south of the foot of the hills, approximately from 600 to 1,000 feet above sea-level, lies the Bhabar or, in Nepali, the *Charkosya jhari* (eight-mile wide forest). Here the Terai alluvium has been overlaid by sand, pebbles and boulders, which during the course of ages have been washed down from the hills by the streams and rivers. The soil is dry, infertile for cultivation, and so porous that even drinking water is usually unobtainable during most periods of the year. It is therefore quite unfit for colonisation, and efforts to create village settlements are foredoomed to failure. An example of such a failure is Amlekhgunj (the terminus of the Nepal Government Railway leading to Kathmandu), which means the place of the free, where emancipated slaves were given land and huts, but little or no cultivation survives to-day. The Bhabar is almost as malarious as the Terai, despite its dry nature.

Although this eight-mile wide belt is unfit for cultivation, it is ideal for growth of forest trees, and the Bhabar still is, and always will be, forest. The different types of forest are described in a later section. This is *par excellence* the belt of forest where the Maharaja indulges in his great sport of big game shooting.

North of the Bhabar come the foothills, the Churia Range. This last rampart of the Himalayas rises abruptly from the gently sloping plains to a height of 2,000 to 4,000 feet, tier on tier of wild, broken and uninhabited country, intersected by ravines and streams where tigers and sambhar roam. Near the mouths of the great Himalayan rivers, the Kosi, the Narayani and the Karnali, this range of foothills is composed of enormous river deposits of boulders, pebbles and sand. These, as described elsewhere, were caught up in the last spasms of Himalayan uplift a few million years ago, to form these unstable hills liable to

swift erosion, but in Nepal protected for the most part from such erosion by virgin forest.

Where these old river deposits do not exist, and behind them on the north where they do exist, is found a range of sandstone hills (the geological name is Nahan sandstone) more stable, more fertile, with still more luxuriant forest vegetation. Between these two ranges are found the "Duns", the largest and most famous of which is the Chitawan big game preserve in the Rapti valley, a description of which is given in Chapter VI.

### FLORA AND FAUNA OF NEPAL.

Since this is primarily a book on shikar, a short description of the natural history of Nepal is clearly indicated, the animals and birds of the forest and the forests in which they live. It is an axiom to say that the fauna of a country depends on the flora, while the flora depends primarily on altitude, soil and rainfall. As might be expected, therefore, Nepal, with its unique range of altitude (from 200 feet to 29,000 feet above sea-level), its soil varying from rich alluvial plains to bare crystalline rocks, and its rainfall from 150 inches on the outer ranges to perhaps a tenth of that amount behind the great mountains, has an amazing range and variety of both flora and fauna. The central position of Nepal in the great Himalayan chain makes it the meeting ground of east and west Himalayan vegetation and races; it provides the connecting link between the dripping broad-leaved evergreen forests of Sikkim and the drier pine and coniferous forests of the United Provinces and the Punjab. As will be explained later, there is a gradual and progressive change in the forest type at any particular altitude as one proceeds from east to west of Nepal. This is due to the climatic factor.

The altitude factor requires a division of the country into three zones or regions:—

1. The lower region which includes the plains, Terai and Churia (Siwalik) foothills up to about 4,000 feet.
2. The central region, comprising the Mahabharat and central hill ranges and valleys from 4,000 to 9,000 or 10,000 feet.
3. The alpine region, which includes the main Himalayan chain and peaks above 10,000 feet.

These three zones, although overlapping to some extent, support in general a fauna and flora which are characteristic of three distinct geographical regions, the Cis-gangetic or Indian, the Trans-gangetic or Himalayan, and the Palae-arctic. It is necessary to repeat again

that the flora and therefore, indirectly, the fauna are influenced by the altitude factor working from south to north, and simultaneously but to a less extent by the climatic factor working from east to west.

The lower Terai zone is characterised by immense expansion of tropical forest. Here the valuable *Shorea robusta*\* attains its optimum conditions of growth, and with it are mixed many other species too numerous to mention, columnar stems rising 150 feet or more in close array. Poorly drained areas are savannahs of gigantic grasses, often twice the height of an elephant. The turbulent stream beds are bordered with *Dalbergia sisso* and *Acacia catechu*, important for furniture timber and production of katha and catechu respectively. The dry Churia hills produce baib grass (the basis of paper manufacture in India) and tall *Pinus longifolia*. Orchids clothe the stems of trees and gigantic climbers smother their crowns. As descriptions of these forests accompany the descriptions of shikar in different districts, it is unnecessary to add more here.

In the middle or Himalayan zone, genera that occur in Europe are more abundant. This and the Alpine zone together have four species of willows, eight species of evergreen oaks, eleven rhododendrons and a dozen conifers, besides birch, alder, hornbeam, elm, poplar and the valuable walnut. Other common species include *Castanopsis*, *Magnolia*, *Myrica nagi*, *Celtis australis*, *Pieris ovalifolia*, *Michelia champaca*, *Boehmeria rugulosa* and many others.

As already indicated, the character of the forest varies progressively. In the east, rhododendrons, oaks and magnolias predominate, the conifers being chiefly *Tsuga brunoniensis* and larch. In the west, the evergreen forest and *Tsuga* are largely replaced by the conifers of the north-west Himalayas, *Pinus longifolia* and *excelsa*, and the sacred deodar, all of which are commercially exploited.

In the high Himalaya, dwarf rhododendron, juniper and birch struggle to live in a smother of snow, and with increasing altitude the last vestiges of vegetation finally peter out to give place to naked rock and perpetual ice and snow.

From time to time several distinguished botanists, including Sir Joseph Hooker, F.R.S., had made botanical surveys and collections of Nepal flora, and this work was greatly advanced by the appointment, in 1932, of Professor K. N. Sharma, to carry on the botanical survey of Nepal. In the course of his work he found many new species and varieties of interesting plants and out of his large collection, about

\* A list compiled by the writer of 75 commonest trees, climbers and shrubs of the Terai forests, with botanical, Hindustani and Nepali names, is given in the Appendix.

700 plants were sent by His Highness Maharaja Joodha Shumshere to His Majesty King George V, which were acknowledged by Sir Clive Wigram as follows :—

“ The specimens have arrived safely and have been unpacked and sorted. They are a glorious lot, and I need hardly say how grateful Their Majesties are to Your Highness for all the trouble you have taken. They are certain to create great excitement among the botanists, as there must be quite a number they have never had the pleasure of examining before, and never would have but for Your Highness’s kindness in having them collected.” Later, Professor Sharma was presented with the Royal Horticultural Society’s gold medal.

T. Hay in “ Plants for the Connoisseurs ” and “ Plants of Nepal ” (*Jour. Roy. Hort.*, Sec. LIX, iv, 459–462) speaks very highly of *Meconopsis*, Gentian, *Potentilla*, *Primula*, *Anemone*, *Cyananthus* and other beautiful plants collected by the Botanical Department, Nepal, which was instituted by His Highness. Within a short period of two years Professor Sharma had collected sufficient material for the development of minor forest produce. Now the department supplies several thousand rupees worth of crude drugs to the world market. The success achieved by this department is mainly due to the keen interest taken by His Highness Maharaja Joodha Shumshere J. B. R.

The variety and abundance of the fauna increase progressively with decreasing altitude and increasing luxuriance of the vegetation.

In the high Alpine zone, species and animals are relatively few, and include the snow leopard and marmot; bharal, ibex, and tahr represent the sheep and goats, yak the bovines, possibly the rare Tibetan stag exists in the unexplored districts north of the great axis. In this zone also are found some glorious pheasants, the rare blood pheasant, the handsome tragopan and the superb monal.

The middle Himalayan zone has a richer fauna. The cat tribe includes the leopard, the beautiful clouded leopard, and the rare golden cat, while the civets include the tiger civet, Himalayan civet and *paradoxurus*. Jackals, wild dog and two species of fox occur in this and the Terai zone, as does also the black Himalayan bear and ratel (badger). The beautiful shy flying squirrels are represented by four species, the goats by the serow and gural, the cervidae by the musk deer, and the red barking deer, which, like the porcupine and mongoose, the red monkey and the grey ape (langur), is equally abundant in the Terai.

Amongst the game birds of the Himalayan zone may be mentioned the chir and kalij pheasants, the chikor, black partridge and wood

partridge, while various sorts of pigeon, snipe and occasional duck are seen in the valley of Nepal.

The Terai zone has a still more abundant and varied fauna. The great Terai forests are the home of the tiger and leopard, the sloth bear, the wild elephant, the great Indian rhinoceros and the wild buffalo. The deer tribe includes the sambhar, gond or swamp deer, chital, parha or hog deer and the little mouse deer, while the antelopes are represented by the black buck and four-horned antelope, and wild pig, which are too appreciated by the Nepalese to be abundant.

Amongst the smaller animals may be mentioned the fishing cat, leopard cat and common jungle cat. The large and small civet, the beautiful black and yellow giant squirrel with three other species of squirrels, and that weird scaly animal, the pangolin, add further variety.

The principal game birds are the peacock, jungle fowl and black partridge, while migratory duck and geese swarm on the *jhils* and great rivers of the Terai.

It is scarcely surprising that the Terai has always been regarded as a sportsman's paradise.

When King George V came in 1911 to shoot in the Nepal Terai, and again when the Prince of Wales came ten years later, wonderful collections of live animals of Nepal were presented by the Maharaja to His Majesty and H. R. H., to enrich the zoological gardens of the Empire. These included—

(1) In 1911, a young elephant, a young rhinoceros, snow leopards, panthers, bears, Tibetan jackals, Tibetan mastiffs, barasingh, sambhar, hog deer, chital, jackals, mongooses, with other small mammals together with peacocks, jungle fowl, several sorts of pheasants and partridges.

(2) In 1921, 1 baby elephant, 1 rhino calf, 2 leopard cats, 1 Himalayan black bear, 1 black leopard, 1 clouded leopard, 1 tiger, 1 Tibetan fox, 1 mountain fox, 2 sambhars, 1 tahr, 3 musk deer, 1 unicorn sheep, 1 four-horned sheep, 1 one-horned Tibetan shawl goat, 2 Tibetan mastiffs and 4 pups, 1 monitor and 1 python. The birds included Nepal kalij, white-crested kalij, monal, chir, and koklas pheasant, chikor and swamp partridges, green pigeon, bronze-winged doves, adjutant birds, hawks and peafowl. Wonderful collections indeed !

Of the wonderful avifauna of Nepal, no detailed account can be given here. It will suffice to mention that Brian Hodgson, who resided

in Nepal from 1826 to 1843, and to whose labours we are indebted for almost all our knowledge of the natural history of this wonderful country, recorded over 560 species of birds\*, and the vast collection which he presented to the British Museum included over 9,500 specimens of birds, 900 of mammals, and 80 of reptiles.

This sketch of Nepalese flora and fauna must suffice to indicate what a paradise this marvellous country is to the lover of wild animal and bird life, to the naturalist and to the forester.

### HABITS OF SOME WILD ANIMALS.

As this book deals chiefly with tigers and leopards and other animals of the Terai forests below the Himalayas, some notes on their habits and customs may be of interest to those readers who have not had the opportunity of studying them as the author has had during the last 30 years.

There are several widespread misconceptions about wild animals in the jungles. The average stranger appears to believe, (1) that tigers and bears will growl at him round every bush; (2) that it is essential to go armed to the teeth with rifles and revolvers; (3) that he will be besieged by snakes, and (4) that in fact he takes his life in his hand by entering the jungles at all! How different it is in reality every forest officer knows. A man may consider himself lucky or unlucky, according to the point of view, if a tiger growls at him once a year and a bear once in five years, and even if he sees them so often. As regards arms, the sportsman naturally takes weapons because he hopes to shoot something, while the forest officer may take a gun if he wishes to supplement the larder, very seldom a rifle, and never a revolver. Snakes, again, are conspicuously absent in the Terai forest except during the late hot weather and rains, when the forests are closed. It is emphatically true, as Champion has pointed out, that one is infinitely safer walking in the Terai jungles than in the streets of London. There are dangers, very considerable dangers, but not the sort the average stranger recognises, and against which arms and munitions are useless; for example, wild bees and the anopheles mosquito and unboiled drinking water. These are the dangers the experienced jungle-dweller worries about, not the carnivora, pachyderms and snakes.

Having removed some common misconceptions, let us consider first the tiger. This magnificent animal is popularly regarded as the

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\* The majority are described and many illustrated in Smythies' "Birds of Burma".

PLATE 5.



THE TIGER, ALERT, PREPARES TO CHARGE.

epitome of brutality, cruelty and savagery, the type (in popular literature) of all that is loathed in ordinary human intercourse. It is a gross and wicked libel. The *average* tiger, lord of the jungle, is neither cruel nor savage ; like man, he kills for food, but, unlike man, he does not kill wantonly for sport. When he kills, he kills efficiently and almost instantaneously, and does not gloat over the agony of his victims. Having nothing to fear in the forest, he is completely fearless, but he does recognise a man as an overlord, and when met by chance on a jungle path he politely turns aside and gives the right-of-way. This makes a chance encounter with a tiger a positive *pleasure*, one of the chief pleasures of a jungle life. (It is very different with the stupid quarrelsome bear, who, very often, does not politely turn aside and give the right-of-way.)

There are, of course, exceptions. An old and mangy tiger with decayed teeth or some physical defects, which cannot kill jungle animals, may turn cattle-killer, and then man-killer, and become a terror to a dozen jungle villages. A tigress with young cubs will first growl a warning and then attack and drive off any man or a party of men blundering near her young family. A hungry tiger, enjoying a succulent meal of venison or pork, will not willingly depart without protest. These exceptions do not disprove the general rule that the average chance-met and undisturbed tiger in the jungle is really a welcome, interesting, and friendly acquaintance, and not a source of fear or danger to man. But doubtless the average stranger to jungle life will not believe this.

In this book, however, this aspect of a tiger is not very evident, so it is the more necessary to mention it. When, however, a tiger is hunted and chivied and chased, he becomes annoyed. If he can find no way of escape, he becomes really angry. When cornered and wounded, his armament of claws and teeth, his tremendous energy and power, his superb pluck and fearlessness, combine to make him the most terrifying and the most dangerous animal in all the jungles. This is the view of tiger that is presented again and again in this book, which follows inevitably from the method of the Maharaja's shikar. But it is an abnormal view, as abnormal as the view the author once had of a tiger climbing a tall tree to knock his wife out of her high machan, and does not represent the typical live-and-let-live attitude of a tiger's life.

A Terai tiger, on the whole, has a grand time. He is so perfectly suited to his environment that he has no difficulty (unless diseased or maimed) in obtaining abundance of food and keeping in splendid condition. His tremendous shoulders and bulging muscles are in striking contrast to the unavoidable parodies of tigers in zoos all the

world over, which do not cover ten or fifteen miles a night, nor break the great neck of a buffalo or a sambhar stag. When about one year old, he leaves his mother and family and successfully fends for himself, in due course picking up a mate. The act of breeding by wild tigers has very rarely been actually seen, but has more often been heard, as it is characterised by an appalling amount of noise. A tiger will often stay with his mate for years, successfully raising one family of cubs after another. If the male cubs do not leave when they should, sometimes trouble arises. The author knew a big tiger and tigress who lived together for seven years, and twice in that period the father killed one of his sons when about seven feet long—probably for becoming obstreperous with his mother. In each case there was not a mark on the cub's body, except tooth marks on the head, and the skull crushed and cracked like a walnut! Such is the strength of a big tiger's jaws.

The illustrations in this book give a poor idea of a tiger's wonderful camouflage, because they were mostly taken when the tiger was attacking or being chased. (Photo (i) on plate 6 is an exception, and gives a good idea of a tiger's power of concealment.) A tiger's favourite haunts are in the Terai savannahs, or along the margins of streams, or in the foothills, where for seven months of the year (December to June) the grasses are red or ochre or brown with which the rufous and black stripes blend perfectly. In spite of this, however, the eyes of the other forest denizens, incredibly quick to catch *movement*, often pierce his disguise, and a tiger's route through the forest is frequently marked by the alarm calls of his potential prey, a sambhar's melodious bell, a chital's or a porcupine's treble call, a karkor's harsh bark, a grey ape's violent A—a—a—aw. Why the *langur* (grey ape) should get more excited over a tiger than a leopard is a jungle mystery, since the latter is the *langur*'s real danger. Perhaps it is some race-inherited instinct.

Magpies and crows chatter and caw vociferously at the sight of a tiger; these little thieves, who steal a meal from a tiger's kill when they can, have been too often disturbed by the tiger's approach not to feel annoyance at the sight of one. A tiger, on the other hand, feels (and roars) his annoyance at the sight of vultures, those larger thieves who spoil his kill altogether, unless it is carefully concealed and carefully guarded. He must experience great satisfaction when, as occasionally happens, he manages to kill one that has failed to escape his swift return.

In the cold weather, a tiger likes to lie up in the day in the warm dry savannah grasses of the Terai, or on a sunny spur in the foothills. He hates the fierce heat of an Indian summer as much as a European,

PLATE 6.



(i) TIGER SNARLING.



(ii) TIGER PREPARES TO CHARGE.

and then he is found in the cool shady canebrakes of the Terai or on a patch of damp sand by a shady rock in some wild stream of the foothills.

As regards a tiger's senses, it is well known that while his sense of smell is negligible, his hearing and especially his eyesight are simply marvellous. It is however movement and not stationary objects that catch the tiger's eye. Once the author sat on a bare burnt fireline by the side of a forest road watching, in full view but unseen, a tiger come leisurely along the road from a quarter of a mile away to within a dozen yards. Then the orderly's nerve broke, and he dashed up a tree. With his first slight movement, the tiger saw the two humans and bounded lightly away into the tall grass nearby. On another occasion the author sat unobserved on another cleared fireline, watching, at a range of about 40 yards, a family of 4 large tigers playing in the sunshine, until after a quarter of an hour or so they moved off into the forest. In both cases, it may be noted, no weapon was available and it was knowledge, not bravado, that enabled the interesting scene to be enjoyed without a sense of fear. But had the family included young cubs, it would have been quite another matter!

The enormous power which a tiger can exert in his spring is well illustrated by an incident in the Maharaja's diary, when a big tiger, dragging his kill, weighing probably  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 hundredweight, came to a sheer bank of over 15 feet. Carrying his kill, he leapt this in one bound.

The author saw a similar case in another part of the Himalayas, where a small stream cascaded over a sheer waterful of 11 feet, which a tiger negotiated in a bound, carrying a full-grown hill bullock.

Someone once wrote that the tiger is a gentleman, but the leopard is a bounder, a statement which is very largely correct. The dog-snatching leopard of hill stations and cantonments is a universal and unavoidable evil of Himalayan sanatoria. So is the goat and cow-killing leopard of jungle and hill villages. When he turns to man-killing he is a perfect terror, witness the famous man-eating leopard of Rudraprayag in British Garhwal, which killed 126 human beings before he was finally shot. The boldness of this animal was incredible. His favourite method of hunting was to go into a village at night, push at the doors until he found one open, and then go in and drag out the nearest human being. Towards the end, such was the terror he created that every hut and building within a ten-mile radius of Rudraprayag was barricaded every night.

Where tigers abound, leopards are scarce, and *vice versa*. As tigers increase or decrease, leopards show a corresponding decrease

or increase, and generally speaking leopards shun the vicinity of tigers. It is remarkable that on several occasions in the Maharaja's shoots, one ring should have enclosed both a tiger and a leopard.

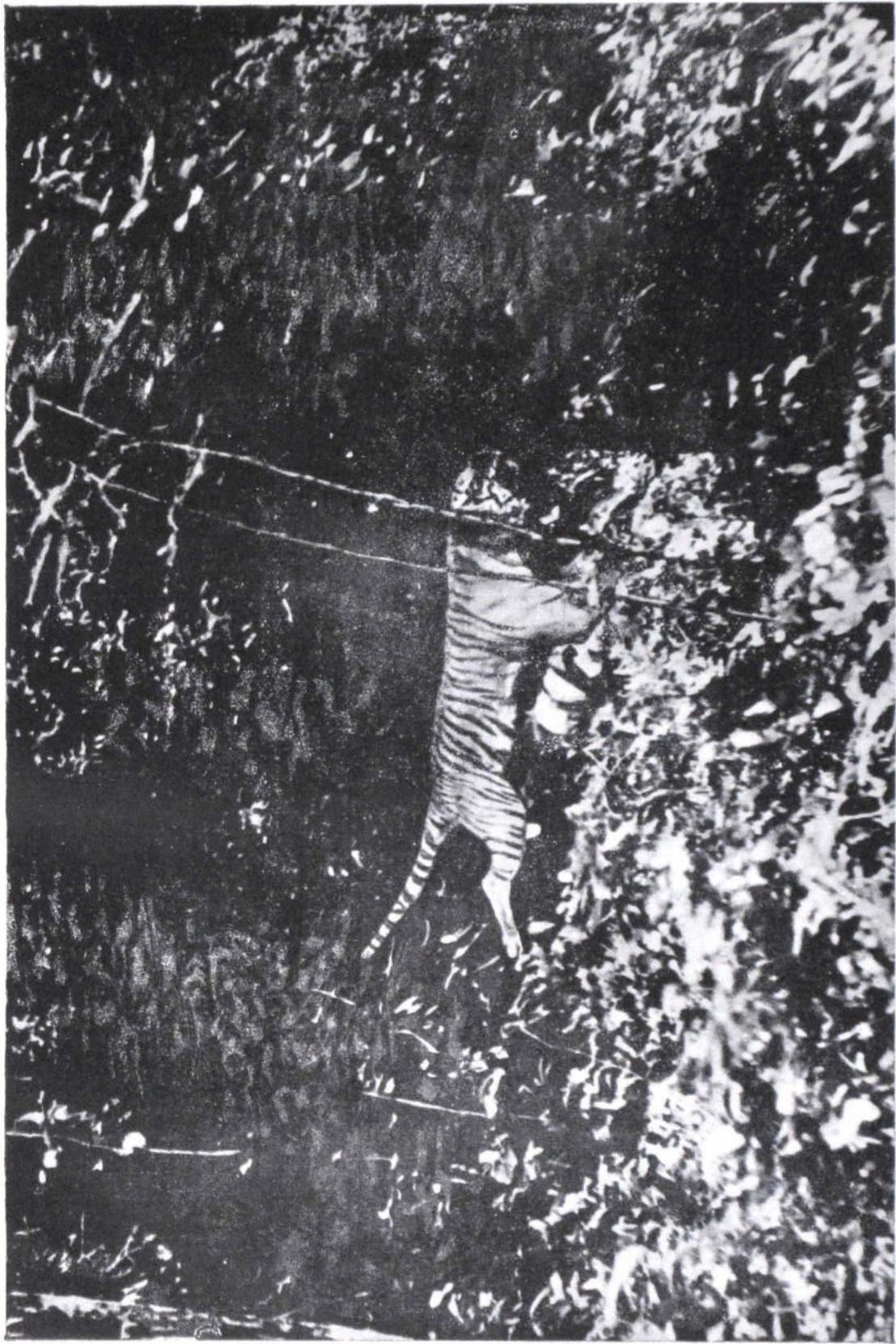
Leopards are beautiful tree-climbers and very arboreal, and, as recorded elsewhere in this book, quite a number have been shot by the Maharaja up trees. Several cases are known of a leopard being treed by a pack of wild dogs. It is also quite common for a leopard to pull his kill up onto a tree. The author once saw a chital stag in a fork of a tree 15 feet from the ground, in an open place not far from a forest encampment. Vultures were perched around, hungry but incapable of eating the kill in a tree. The next day, half the chital still remained, and now 35 feet up the tree, with the hungry and tantalised vultures still hanging about.

The leopard excels even the tiger in its power to make itself invisible, and to move silently as a shadow. Sitting up in a quiet machan over a kill, one usually sees and/or hears a tiger approaching some way off, but a leopard—materialising out of thin air—is suddenly there, with no sound or sign how it arrived. In the ring shoots of Nepal, leopards sometimes manage to sneak out unseen, but a tiger never does.

It is interesting to see leopards hunting in couples, exhibiting team work. On several occasions a leopard has been seen lying concealed and motionless on the horizontal branch of a tree, while its mate manœvres about on the ground, trying to drive or frighten a sambhar hind or a herd of chital under that particular tree. And, reversing the position, a leopard has been seen climbing about on trees laden with numerous brown monkeys, trying to drive one or two to make a hasty dash from one tree to another along the ground where the leopard's mate was lying concealed, hoping to catch one *en route*.

The only other carnivorous animal of any importance in the foothill forests is the wild dog. The size of a collie, and as red as a fox, the wild dog usually hunts in small packs of six to ten—not in hundreds as Kipling described in the jungle books. The method employed by a pack in killing their prey is, from the human point of view, altogether abominable. They are quite tireless and hunt their prospective kill—a sambhar hind, for example—for miles, in the end usually driving it into an open stream bed. The author once disturbed a pack in a stony river bed which had just brought down a sambhar hind. It was still alive, the flanks were bleeding from a score of bites and both eyes had been bitten out. But for the interruption, the pack would have started to eat it, helpless but still alive.

PLATE 7.



THE TIGER CHARGES.

Rhinos occupy a conspicuous place in the Maharaja's shooting diary, but the author's experience of these great beasts is as limited as their distribution. (A few specimens of the great Indian rhinoceros still survive in parts of Bengal and Assam, but in appreciable numbers they are now to be found only in the famous Chitawan valley in Nepal.)

The undisturbed rhino appears to be as inoffensive as he looks alarming. One evening a specimen, that must have weighed a couple of tons, took up his stance a few yards in front of the author's tent, and disturbed the process of bringing his dinner. The beating of a frying pan on a kerosine tin did not perturb him, nor annoy him, but he moved off quietly when a shot was fired in the air, and the delayed dinner was resumed. He could of course have trampled the whole camp flat in a few moments if he had so desired. During the nights of early winter in Chitawan, numbers of rhino visit the ricefields ripening to harvest, returning in the early dawn to the areas of tremendous grass growth and scattered riverain trees of semal, khair and sissu near the rivers. In the hot weather, when all the forests and most of the grassy savannahs have been burnt, they can be seen, a dozen or a score at a time, wallowing in jungle pools and backwaters. In the rains, when the tall green grasses are shooting up everywhere, they scatter and graze in all the open forests.

The Tharu cultivators are kept busy on winter nights, clanging tins over their fields. They also dig deep trenches—almost miniature tank traps—to check the rhino's depredations.

The rhino has the curious habit of going regularly for days to the same spot to deposit his droppings (which look like droppings of a small elephant), until they form quite a high pile; these little pyramids of droppings are a common feature in Chitawan.

Major Lalit Bahadur (His Highness's head shikari) has supplied the following additional and interesting details about rhino. Although rhino are usually fairly harmless, under certain conditions they can be very dangerous. As a cow with calf will charge a man or an elephant, so also will a *musth* rhino; while a wounded rhino or one that has once been wounded and has recovered is particularly dangerous.

An extraordinary feature of rhinos is their behaviour towards a *padah* tied up as bait for a tiger. A male *musth* rhino will attack it and kill it; a female rhino, on the other hand, shows a strong protective reaction, and will stay by or near the little *padah*. Should a tiger make his appearance during the night, she scares him away and will not allow

him to make a kill. It is suggested that the female rhino in some way confuses the young buffalo for a young rhino, and hence this protective attitude!

It is hoped that these random notes on the natural history of some of the animals frequently mentioned in the Maharaja's shikar diary may prove of interest.

## CHAPTER III.

### A SHORT LIFE-SKETCH OF HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA.

BEFORE proceeding to describe the Maharaja's shikar exploits, it will be of interest to give a short life-sketch of the ruler of the independant kingdom which has been briefly described in the previous chapter. It will be very short, as a complete account would fill a volume, and that must be the work of some future historian.

He was born on the fourth day of Baisakh 1932 (April 19, 1875 A.D.) at Kathmandu. He was the tenth (and youngest) son in the line of succession of General Dhir Shumshere, who had held for a long time the office of Commander-in-Chief and practically that of Prime Minister also. In accordance with the usual custom he was created a Colonel of the Nepal Army in his infancy by the Prime Minister Jang Bahadur (elder brother of Dhir Shumshere).

In 1884 when the boy Joodha was eight or nine years old, his father General Dhir Shumshere died, and with the death of this power behind the Prime Minister, a period of disturbance followed.

At 16 he was appointed General, and his military duties began in earnest. Two years later he was promoted to the command of the Patan Brigade. During his early manhood General Joodha suffered from poor health, but his strong character and powerful sense of duty enabled him to overcome this handicap.

With the death of Maharaja Bir, and after Deva Maharaja Chandra Shumshere became Prime Minister, General Joodha became Commanding General at the age of 28. He accompanied his brother the Maharaja Chandra in 1908, in the capacity of Chief General of his staff, to Europe and visited Britain, France, Switzerland and Italy. He filled this post again when King George V came for his famous shoot in the Nepal Terai in 1911. Two years later he became senior Commanding General and thus responsible for the organisation, training and equipment of the Nepalese Army, a large contingent of which went to British India at the outbreak of the first world war of 1914-18.

PLATE 8.



HIS HIGHNESS IN DURBAR DRESS.



From 1926 he suffered again from ill health, and at one time the doctors despaired of his life. It was due to the efficient medical aid and ministration of an eminent Ayurvedic physician, Kaviraj Sivanath Remal, that His Highness's life was not only saved, but up till now His Highness is keeping perfectly fit and well. But before the death of his brother Maharaja Chandra, he had fortunately returned to perfect health and vigour, and during the life of Maharaja Bhim Shumshere he occupied the important administrative post of Commander-in-Chief. On his death in September 1932, His Highness Maharaja Joodha Shumshere became Prime Minister and Maharaja, and for the last ten years the prosperity of his people and the destiny of his country have been in his hands.

The Maharaja was 58 years old when he became Prime Minister. For more than 30 years under Maharajas Bir. Chandra and Bhim, he had held important administrative and military posts, and was thoroughly experienced in the art of statesmanship and trained to the high office he has since adorned.

Within a few months of his accession, the Prime Minister was faced with a national disaster altogether without precedent. On January 15, 1934, when the Maharaja was shooting in the Naya Muluk (see chapter V), the appalling earthquake which shattered Bihar and north-east India generally wrought terrible havoc in the valley of Nepal, which was near the epi-centre. Many of the old stone temples suffered severely, including Mahabudha. (It is interesting to record that this temple was built about 250 B.C., and in the foundation was found a parchment giving exact details and measurements of the temple from which it has since been accurately reconstructed.) But it is worth noting that the pagoda-like wooden temples escaped almost entirely, while the most famous and sacred of all, Shayambhunath of the Buddhists and Pashupati of the Hindus, were also unscathed.

It may be noted that His Highness has contributed in all nearly Rs. 75,00,000 (£580,000) including materials and no one would now imagine that the valley of Nepal had ever suffered an earthquake at all! The Joodha road, the main thoroughfare between the parade ground and the Durbar square in Kathmandu, is a fine modern creation, 60 feet wide, lined with fine shops and houses, and lit with neon lights! It is largely due to His Highness's action and energy that Nepal has made so rapid a recovery from one of the greatest disasters in all its history.

While Maharaja Joodha's name will always be associated with the remarkable recovery of Nepal from the great earthquake, there have been many other developments and activities during the nine

PLATE 9.



HIS HIGHNESS IN HAPPY MOOD ON PAD ELEPHANT.

years of his rule. Chief among these is perhaps economic development, and among the items of economic importance to the country may be mentioned a big jute mill, a soap factory, a match factory, new hydro-electric power houses near Kathmandu and Morang, a new branch of the Nepal Government Railway at Jayanagar, and the creation of the Nepal Bank and its branches in Terai districts. To examine and plan further developments, the important Development Board was set up with Commanding General Babadur as President, which is supplemented by the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, under Commanding General Kaiser.

The Maharaja has taken a keen interest in the development of cottage industries, for which a special department has been started and special funds allotted.

On the civil side, reforms in the civil administration of the country have been inaugurated, too numerous to mention in detail, but the following deserve brief reference. A system of pensions for civil servants. (Previously no pensions whatever were payable in Nepal.) The judiciary and executive have been separated. The whole Terai from east to west has been, and is being, linked up by telephone with Kathmandu, facilitating administration in this land of difficult communications. Arrears of long outstanding fines, court fees, etc., have been remitted to the value of many lakhs of rupees.

On the social side, abuses have been abolished and steps of a far-reaching character introduced. Thus the Hindu custom of wild extravagance on marriages and wedding feasts has been completely stopped by fixing a prescribed maximum on these, and the same applies to funerals.

On the military side, the opening of the Military Academy School and Army Savings Bank, Army pensions and the expansion of an explosive and ammunition factory, and additions to the Nepal Army, should be mentioned.

On the political side, the creation of a Minister, and appointment of a Minister, in London has been an important step, and diplomatic missions have been sent to Belgium, France, Italy and elsewhere. The Maharaja has also made diplomatic visits to Delhi and Calcutta from time to time.

These visits will remain ever memorable in the annals of Nepal, in so far as they gave striking proof of the high esteem and regard in which the Maharaja is held not only by his countrymen but also by the Government and the people of India. During His Highness's visit to New Delhi in January 1935, he stayed in the Nizam's Palace as the special guest of the Viceroy, and a magnificent military manœuvre

and parade, in which 15,000 troops took part, was held in his honour—a special mark of respect and recognition which no other Eastern Ruler or potentate appears to have ever received in India's capital. Again when the Maharaja visited Calcutta in December 1939, he received many more convincing proofs of India's cordiality and affection towards him expressed in many a meeting and civic reception held in his honour, and yet another signal mark of distinction, viz., the insignia of the Order of G.C.B. (Military) which was conferred upon him by His Excellency the Viceroy, the Marquis of Linlithgow, at a special investiture ceremony. Indeed, the Maharaja's visits evoked great enthusiasm and interest in India.

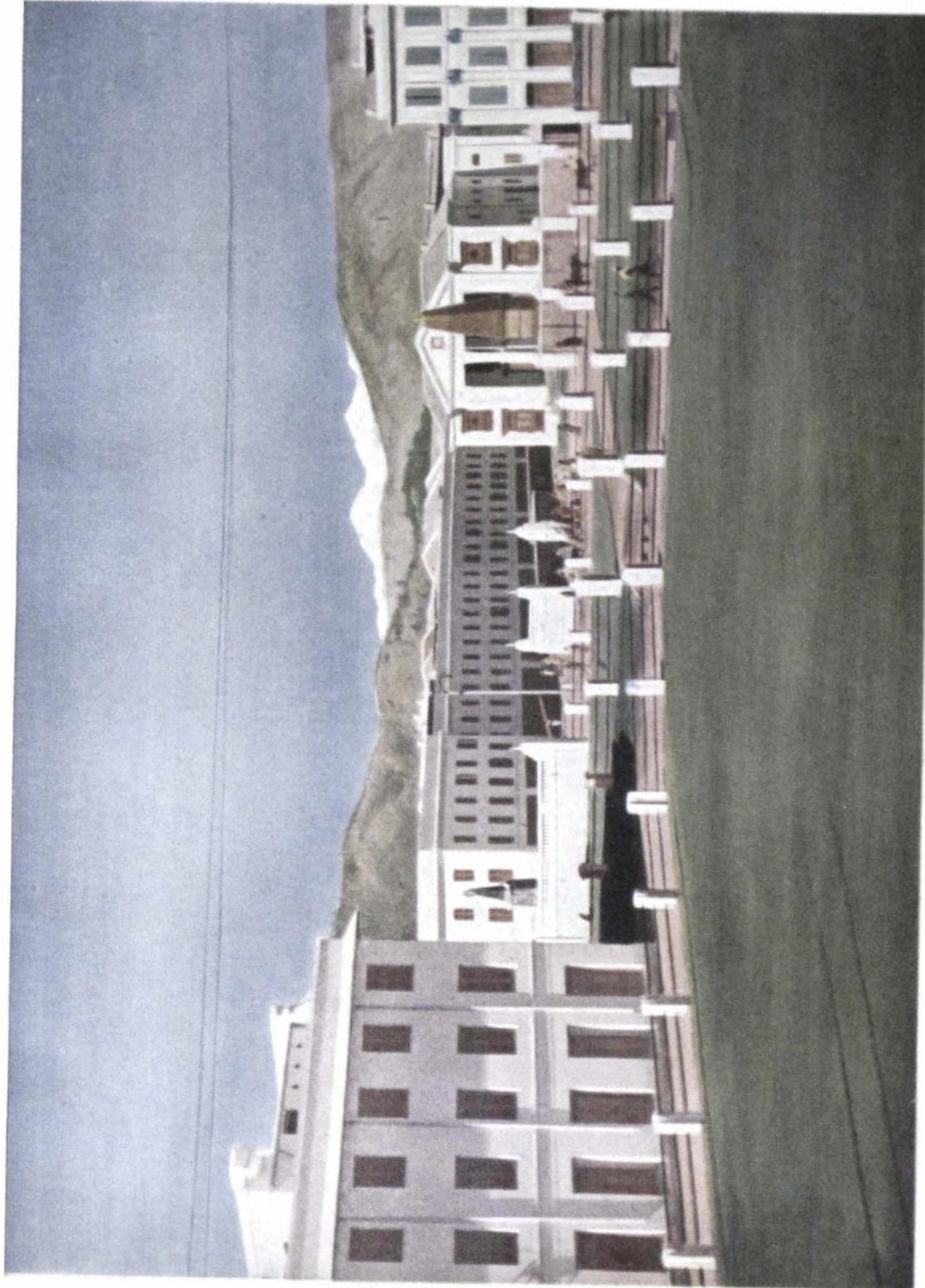
At the outbreak of the war in September 1939, the Maharaja foresaw that the struggle would be long and hard, and as a staunch friend of Britain and supporter of the British cause he immediately came forward with a spontaneous offer of friendly help, which was gladly and gratefully accepted by the Government of India. That help included the despatch of two brigades of the Nepalese Regular Army to India, under the command of His Highness's eldest son, Commanding General Bahadur Shumshere J. B. R. (formerly the first Nepalese Minister in London). The request for recruits from Nepal for the British Gurkha Regiments in India also found a ready response, with the result that very soon the strength of the Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army was *doubled*, i.e., increased from 20 to 40 battalions. Requests for 10 to 14 thousand more Gurkha recruits were subsequently received and by special recruiting measures were complied with. This was a tremendous effort for a comparatively small country, but carried out punctually and efficiently under His Highness's directions.

Nepal's contribution to the war effort was not confined to the supply of troops and recruits. The output of timber and other materials for war purposes was considerably increased, while money contributions to the various war organisations were also liberally given.

All this shows how closely the Maharaja has associated himself, and the country he rules, with Great Britain, and his determination to do everything that this small and independent kingdom can do to help the British Empire in her life-and-death struggle.

His Highness Maharaja Joodha Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, though over 66 years old, is an indefatigable worker, wonderfully active and vigorous. Being a very devout Hindu, he rises early in the morning, takes his bath, performs his puja, goes out for a morning ride, after which he hears in detail public petitions presented by the Bintipatra Niksari Adda, with the petitioners picked out standing

PLATE 10.



JOODHA ROAD, KATHMANDU, REBUILT AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.



before him. Even the poorest of his subjects are granted audience and this personal touch with the ruler is very highly esteemed and appreciated by his subjects. He then hears the official letters of Chitthi Niksari Adda and the papers brought by the Hazuria General. In order to keep himself in close touch with the working of every department of administration the Maharaja, every day after his morning meal at 12, gets into telephonic communication with all heads of important departments. He then attends to the official correspondence of the war office, and then takes a short rest. He comes out at 3 or 4 p.m. when the heads of the several departments according to routine come in turn with their papers for his necessary instructions. He then goes out for an airing on an elephant towards Tundikhel after which he reads newspapers and listens into radio news. Then he takes rest and notes important points of the day. After supper he takes his night's rest.

Every Saturday is his day of nominal rest, for he has to attend to personal affairs.

When the Maharaja goes on a long tour in the Terai, the schedule of work is modified. It should be mentioned that all the important officers accompany him. Normally, on tour, High Highness attends to correspondence and office work from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Then after lunch, if there is a ringed tiger or other shikar, he sallies forth to enjoy it. On off days he continues with office work from 2 to 4 p.m., and then gets some fresh air on an elephant. The combination of work, touring, and shikar, make these periodic visits to the outlying parts of his domain a very busy and strenuous time.

But this book is concerned chiefly with the Maharaja as a shikari and sportsman, and the following brief description is given by one who has often seen him in action :—

“ What strikes one chiefly and primarily about His Highness is his absolute fearlessness. He goes into a ring raging with tigers, and remains throughout cool, calm, and collected, never flurried and ready for all eventualities. By nature and abundant practice he is a magnificent rifle shot, quick to spot the animal in the thick grass or undergrowth and quick to kill it as soon as a fair opportunity arises. His knowledge of wild animals of the jungle is immense, and his shikar-craft most impressive.”

The striking illustration of His Highness aiming at a tiger, which is in the very act of leaping on his elephant (*see plate 23*), is a fine example of his coolness and nerve.

It will be convenient here to summarise His Highness's unique record of shikar. Other individuals may, in a life-time of shooting,

have exceeded the total bag of tigers shot (his uncle Jung Bahadur is one for example), but for velocity or rapidity of shooting, there is nothing, it is believed, to approach the following records of big game killed in the Maharaja's shoots :

- (1) Individual *daily* bags : Seven tigers, 5 rhinos, and 5 bears.
- (2) Single *season* bag : In *one* season, covering 68 days, the total bag included 120 tigers, 38 rhinos, 28 leopards, 15 bears, 11 crocodiles and 1 elephant (captured).
- (3) Total bag in seven seasons : 433 tigers, 53 rhinos, 93 leopards, 22 bears, 20 crocodiles, 1 wild buffalo, 3 elephants (captured), and many wild dogs, hyena, deer, etc.
- (4) His Highness has shot the world record for Indian leopard, the measurements, as recorded in "Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game", are—

Length before skinning . . . . .	9 feet 4 inches.
Length of dressed skin . . . . .	10 feet 1 inch.
Width across fore and hind paws . . . . .	5 feet 11 inches and 5 feet 8 inches.

(No other Indian leopard is recorded over 8 feet 6 inches, and this received the Gold Medal for the finest shikar trophy at the Allahabad Exhibition, 1911.)

His biggest tiger measured 10 feet 9 inches, a gigantic animal that weighed 705 pounds !

The figures given above, which are scrupulously accurate in every way (being summarised from His Highness's shikar diary, in which no exaggeration is possible, as it is written under his personal direction), prove conclusively, what a wonderful country Nepal is for big game shikar, and what a wonderful big game shikari Maharaja Joodha is !

His Highness's favourite weapons for tiger shooting are in order of preference—(1) .465 Express Rifle, (2) 12-Bore Paradox and (3) .375 Magnum Rifle. For rhino and buffalo he uses chiefly the .465 Rifle.

PLATE 11.



ELEPHANTS RESTING AND WATERING.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EVOLUTION OF BIG GAME SHIKAR IN NEPAL.

(Including the Hunting of Elephants.)

CONTEMPORARY paintings of tiger hunting in the Nepal Terai a hundred years ago give a vivid impression of the thrills of big game hunting by comparatively primitive means and methods in those early days. From these old paintings it appears that in the times before the days of Maharaja Jung Bahadur, various methods were used. Sometimes the tiger was brought to bay by a posse of elephants, occasionally he was attacked at close quarters on foot with sword and spear. The rulers of Nepal have never lacked pluck and courage both in war and in their dangerous sports.

Maharaja Jung Bahadur, after he became Prime Minister in 1903 (A.D. 1846), was able to indulge in his passion for big game hunting, and during the next 31 seasons he made many cold weather shikar trips to the Terai, and is said to have killed over 550 tigers. At first shikar methods were simple and primitive. Wherever Jung Bahadur camped, inquiries were made from the local villagers regarding recent kills, or where tigers had been seen or heard, and on such uncertain *khabbar* an area was beaten by elephants in the hope that the tiger might be inside. In those days, the number of tame elephants in Nepal was enormous, and Jung Bahadur frequently had as many as 700 for his shikar. But the uncertain methods of locating tigers did not at first produce very good results. Later Jung Bahadur created a special service of 120 shikaris, whose duty it was to find fresh tiger tracks and other signs, to tie up kills (goat at first and later young buffalo calves), and quickly send in news of any kills. It was Jung Bahadur who first evolved and developed the ring method, which more recently has been improved and supplemented by His Highness the present Maharaja.

Before attempting to describe His Highness's shooting experiences, it will help the reader to visualise the scene if a description is first given of the method almost invariably used in all big shoots in Nepal, the famous and unique "Ring". This method is used only in Nepal, where it has been brought to an art, the highest pitch of perfection, and a most deadly method of killing all big game. There is in fact no other country in the world where the necessary factors for the "Ring"

shoot exists, the enormous stud of shikar elephants, the trained experience and skill of their mahouts and the shikaris, the tremendous stretches of Terai forests, and the wonderful stock of tiger and rhino.

The natural home of tiger is the forest-clad foothills of the Churia (Siwalik) range of the Himalayas, with the enclosed duns and valleys, and the adjoining forests of the flatter Terai. This great belt of tiger country stretches the whole length of Nepal, a distance of nearly 550 miles on the map, and for more than half the year it is deadly to man owing to the malignant Terai malaria. But from December to March, it is a perfect paradise, with a glorious climate, wonderful scenery, and always to the north the incredible panorama of the eternal snows towering into the sky.

In this superb setting occur the big Nepal shoots. A wonderful organisation is employed to ensure success. For weeks before the shoot commences, rough but serviceable motor roads and temporary bridges are constructed radiating out from the various jungle camps. All the jungle paths and streams and sandy river beds are examined to see where the tigers are, for in such places they leave their footmarks. A day or two before the shoot starts, young buffalo calves are tied up as bait, in scores or even hundreds, on every likely route a tiger may take. (The cow, being venerated, its progeny cannot be used for tiger bait.)

There are seven or eight groups of regularly appointed shikaris, each consisting of an officer (*subedar*), ten or twelve subordinates, and two mounted soldiers for taking messages. Every group of shikaris has ten to fifteen buffalo calves (*padahs*) for tying up at suitable places. They live in temporary sheds in the jungle, primitive huts of wooden poles, leaves, and jungle grasses fastened with strands of creepers, which they quickly erect with their kukris from the abundant material all around. Between them the various groups cover the whole tract of forest for miles around the central camp.

At dawn the shikaris go out and examine the *padahs*, tied out the previous evening. If or when one has been killed, they carefully examine pugmarks (footprints) to see if it is a big tiger or small, or one or several. They examine the drag and the direction taken. They then quietly proceed on foot and make a large circle of a quarter to a half mile diameter, demarcating the circumference with chipped stems and grass knots as they go and are very careful to see that the drag has not gone beyond the circle. If it has, they make another one, as they must have the circle enclosing the end of the drag. This is called "cutting the circle" by the shikaris, and the final circle makes the future "Ring".

PLATE 12.



RING ELEPHANTS MOVE TO MAKE A NEW RING.

Meanwhile, as soon as it is seen that a *padah* has been killed and dragged, a special messenger mounts his horse and gallops off to bring the *khabar*. Sometimes motor cars are parked at central spots to accelerate the delivery of the news, and sometimes even a telephone line has been prepared and operators engaged to flash messages to the camp.

Within a very short time the news has reached the camp from all directions whether and where there are kills, and the day's plan of campaign is discussed and settled. Immediately a great string of 200 or 300 elephants move off in single file to the first kill, a few with howdahs, the majority with pads. The shooting party follow at leisure in cars as far as possible, and then on pad elephants.

The tiger or tigers have been approximately located by the shikaris from the direction of the drag, the nature of the cover for lying up, and the process of cutting the circle as already described. When the elephants arrive, they divide into two parties, which proceed very quietly in single file right and left along the line of the cut circle and it is astonishing how quietly an elephant or line of elephants can move through the jungle. The rear elephants gradually drop out to take their stations at regular intervals, and finally the two leading elephants meet, and the word is passed down both sides that the circuit is completed, "*Lam pugyo*". Then the order "*Mudi phira*"—turn the heads inwards—is passed down.

The shooting party mount the elephants, and the whole circle now move inwards, crushing the grasses and shrubs, and the men on their backs shouting and whistling to drive the tiger towards the centre. The circumference of the circle of elephants gets smaller, until finally it is less than half a mile round, and the elephants get closer and closer until they are almost touching, and the tiger is surrounded by a solid wall of elephants. Then the order "*Lam-tham*"—stop the line—is shouted out, and the ring is complete.

The stauneher elephants then move into the ring. Glimpses of one or more slinking forms are seen in the grass and undergrowth, when suddenly a tiger breaks cover and charges with a roar, to be met by shots from the rifle, or shouts and missiles if he charges the ring. It is the moment of climax of a culminating excitement. Backwards and forwards he dashes striving to find an escape, to a pandemonium of men shouting and elephants trumpeting, grumbling and gurgling, thumping on the ground, and occasionally, when directly charged, turning tail and bolting in terror.

It is necessary to emphasise that a tiger is not normally a dangerous animal, and does not attack an elephant or a man, but once he feels

cornered, he becomes a fighting mass of diabolical fury, utterly fearless of man or elephant, whom he attacks in his mad rage without a moment's hesitation. He has been known to climb a tree and hurl a (lady) shikari out of a high machan, he has been known to leap a height of 15 or 16 feet into a tall howdah and more often than not a tiger will try to break through a ring by charging home on an elephant unless he is killed or crippled first by a well-directed shot.

It must also be realised that the Nepal Terai jungles, with a fertile soil and rainfall of 100 inches, are either gigantic grass growth, frequently the height of a howdah, or are a dense forest of trees, matted together with great climbers, and a thick undergrowth of shrubs and shade-bearing plants, in which, if an elephant bolts, it is almost inevitable that howdah and rider and mahout and everything on the elephant's back will be swept with a crash to the ground by a thick branch or the loop of a tough climber. In either case it is extremely difficult to see a tiger at all until the area has been well trampled, by which time, naturally, the tiger or tigers are desperate and in a highly dangerous condition. "It is no sport for bad shots, hasty excitable people, or those with no stomach for danger. Even the most blasé hunter is likely to experience for a second or two a sudden spasm of fear when he first hears the blood-curdling roar of an infuriated tiger, and sees the great striped body launched in its charge, a thunder-bolt of death and anger in mid-air. It is one of the most terrific sights in the world".\*

Imagine what it must be like when, as frequently happens in the rings in Nepal, not one but four or five and, once or twice, six tigers have been trapped simultaneously in one ring! The danger and heart-bursting excitement may continue for hours, until a succession of well-placed shots finally brings the thrill and nerve-tension to an end.

That describes briefly a typical tiger shoot in the Nepal forests by the famous "Ring" method. But, as numerous incidents recorded in this book show, the ringing by elephants produces endless variations of the standard, the only constant and certain factor is the intense excitement.

This was the method used in many famous shoots in the days of Maharaja Jung Bahadur and Chandra Shumshere, including the famous shoot for His Majesty the King Emperor George V in 1911, and for the Prince of Wales (Duke of Windsor) in 1921. But Maharaja Joodha Shumshere has during the last 9 years evolved and introduced considerable improvements and innovations which will now be indicated.

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\* Wentworth Day's "King George V as a Sportsman".

PLATE 13.  
Hunting Wild Elephant.



(i) THE WILD TUSKER LURED INTO THE OPEN BY FEMALE ELEPHANTS.



(ii) THE WILD TUSKER AWAITS THE ATTACK.

On some lucky days two or three kills may be reported and tigers located in several places some miles apart. Since Jung Bahadur's days, the number of elephants available has been considerably reduced, and it is a problem how to enclose and keep enclosed several tigers in several localities, until the shikar starts. His Highness evolved an ingenious solution of this problem. The available elephants are sent to the nearest or most convenient locality, and ring the tiger. When he has been ringed, long strips of white cloth are fixed up on small posts or trees, just in front of the ring of elephants, thus making a ring or *purdah* of white cloth, which -as experience has proved- is by itself sufficient to keep the tiger within the ring, as the sudden appearance of this white cloth, flapping in the breeze, arouses his strong suspicions. A few elephants are left to keep watch, and the rest go off to carry out the same operation at the next locality, and so on. It thus becomes possible to hunt several tigers or groups of tigers in a single day with a limited number of elephants, which otherwise would be impossible.

Another innovation the Maharaja has introduced shortens the period of hunting inside the ring and adds greatly to the thrill and excitement of the shikar, but it also demands a high standard of shooting. Formerly it was the custom for the Maharaja (or some favoured guest who was to shoot the tiger) to wait stationary at one point just inside the ring, while other elephants trampled the undergrowth and beat inside the ring trying to drive the tiger to some other part of the ring, which occasionally in his fury he charged and broke, thus making good his escape. But now the Maharaja does not wait for this. He dispenses with the beating to a fixed point, and instead himself invariably advances into the ring on his howdah elephant, supported by an elephant on either side and 3 or 4 elephants forming a skirmishing line in front. As soon as the tiger is located and starts to move, the skirmishing line withdraws, leaving the Maharaja to face and finish off the quarry alone ! This is obviously not a method that could be employed with an indifferent or inexperienced shot but fortunately His Highness is a crack rifle shot, and, what is much more, a magnificent snapshot. The ring of white cloth, added to the ring of elephants, facilitates this mode of shikar, and helps to prevent the tiger from charging the ring. By these innovations and improvements the tempo of big game shooting has been greatly accelerated, and this has enabled some phenomenal daily bags of big game to be obtained on the Maharaja's shoots, not only tiger but also bear and the great Indian rhinoceros. Thus 7 tigers have been shot in one day, and on another occasion 6 tigers in one "Ring" ! Again, no less than 5 rhinos have been hunted and shot in one day (but not in a "Ring") and elsewhere 5 bears on another day. Daily totals on this scale are believed to be unique in India or anywhere else in the world !

But the whole marvellous organisation is itself unrivalled : the elaborate arrangements for locating every tiger for miles around by skilled parties of shikaris, the quick receipt of *khabbar*, the great stud of well-trained elephants with their splendid and plucky Tharu mahouts, the methods to prevent the encircled tiger from breaking the ring and escaping, all this, with first-class shooting, make such a deadly combination that few tigers can escape. In fact, if repeated at too frequent intervals in any locality, there would be a considerable risk of tigers becoming exterminated in that locality. In Nepal, however, although the stock of tigers has no doubt been reduced appreciably in the past decade (at the start their numbers were excessive, and they did much damage to village cattle), extermination is safeguarded by two factors. One is the great expanse of broken hill forests, where the ring method cannot be used, which forms a natural sanctuary and breeding ground for tiger. The other is that with tiger country stretching along the foot of the hills for 550 miles, there is such a vast tract to visit that the Maharaja can have shoots with the ring method without frequent visits to any one locality. It must of course be realised that no tiger, rhino, or buffalo may be shot anywhere in Nepal without the Maharaja's special permission.

### ELEPHANT HUNTING.

There is one form of big game shikar where the ring method is not applicable, which is perhaps the most exciting of all. This is the hunting of wild elephants, and the *modus operandi* may be briefly described. It must be realised however that the elephant, besides being invaluable for shikar, inspection, touring and procession, is sacred to the Hindus, being a symbol or representation of the Hindu god Ganesh, and as Nepal is a strictly Hindu kingdom, in fact the only completely independent Hindu kingdom now existing in the world, it is strictly forbidden to kill an elephant, except if human life is immediately in imminent danger. So the object of this shikar is not to shoot or kill the wild elephant, which must at all costs be captured alive.

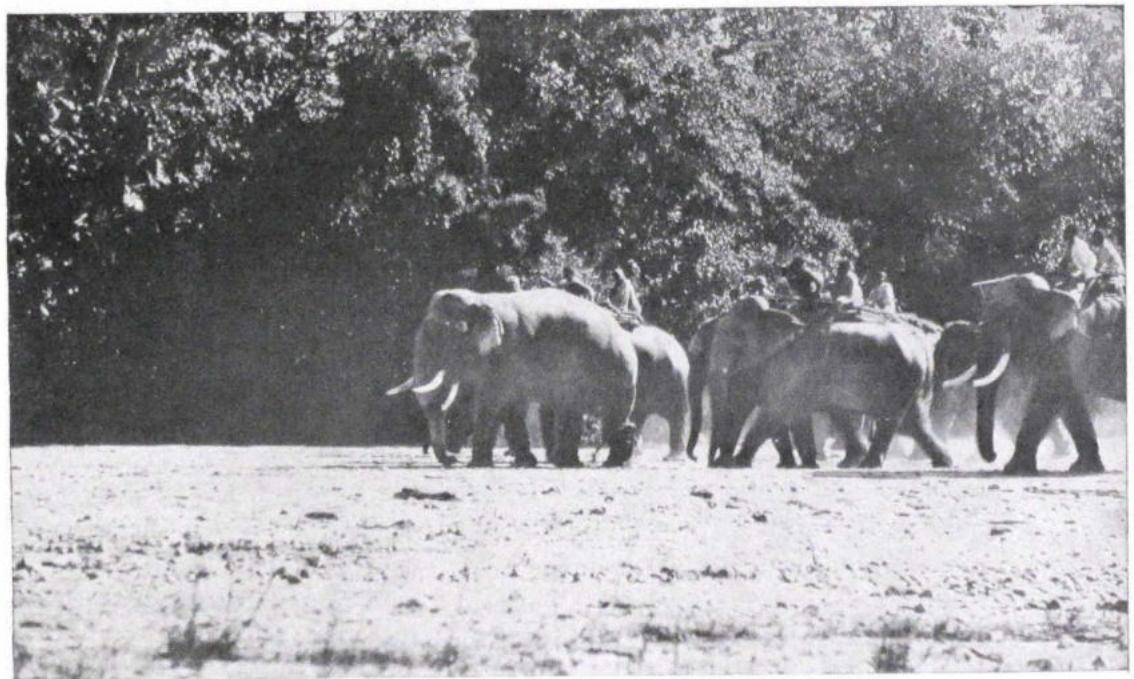
There are actually three methods of catching elephants employed in India: The "Kheddah" method, usually employed in Mysore and Assam, is well known, and consists in driving a herd of elephants into a strongly built stockade, in which they are trapped. This method used to be employed sometimes in Nepal in the days of Jung Bahadur and Chandra Shumshere, but has not been used lately.

The second method, which was also infrequently used in days gone by, consists in trapping elephants in pits. This method is used

**PLATE 14.**  
**Hunting Wild Elephant.**



(i) THE HUNT BEGINS.



(ii) THE CAPTURED ELEPHANT LED HOME.

only occasionally nowadays, chiefly in order to get rid of a troublesome solitary rogue, which has been driven out of the overlordship of a herd by a more virile tusker, and wanders alone in the jungle, ill-tempered, dangerous, often *musth* (a sexual condition), and a living threat to travellers, jungle villagers, and domestic elephants. A large pit is dug, sufficiently large to accommodate an elephant, and carefully concealed by a weak platform (inadequate to support the weight of a big elephant) and camouflaged with soil and grasses and weeds. Forty or 50 yards beyond this pit are stationed some tame female elephants. Normally an elephant is very cautious where he walks, and usually taps or feels the ground with the tip of his trunk at every step before trusting his weight on it. But the *musth* elephant, on sight or scent of the female elephants, loses his natural caution in his excitement, his instinct of precaution being submerged in the sex appeal, and rushing blindly forward he falls into the pit.

Then follows the exciting process of getting him out of the pit into safe captivity, which has been described elsewhere (*see chapter V*).

The third (and commonest) method in Nepal is the most exciting, the jangi or war *kheddar*, and is used for catching a single elephant and also herds of elephants. This elephant hunting is far more exciting than fox hunting, pig sticking and any other known form of hunting. The tame elephants are specially fed with rice and sugar supplementing their natural food, and kept in splendid condition. When a herd or, say, a single elephant is located, the swiftest and best elephants set off in pursuit. They are stripped of all pads or howdahs, but the mahout crouches low on the neck band, and a "pachwa" stands on a rope loop behind the tail, also crouching low, and armed with a wooden handle or club studded with blunt nails.

The wild elephant dashes off, and the elephant pack go hell-for-leather after him, crashing madly through the jungle, lashed with branches, the smaller trees falling like ninepins in front of them, creepers and grasses swishing over the backs and sides, and goaded on by the clubs of the yelling pachwas to exert their utmost speed. Elephants can develop a wonderful turn of speed for a short burst, but cannot keep it for long. So after a mile or so the wild tusker turns and shows fight. The domestic females are stopped, and the big fighting elephants go forward to titanic battle. One is filled with admiration at the pluck of the mahouts, as they urge their tuskers to in fighting with the wild one! One tusker attacks head on, with tusks interlocked and writhing trunks, making what is called "*chaudant*" (the four-tusks fight), while others push and pommel at the sides. The wild elephant after a time gives up the unequal struggle and turns tail in flight. Again the wild pursuit is taken up, without giving the wild

elephant any possibility of rest and recovery. Again he is brought to book, and so the fight and the pursuit goes on, until he is utterly exhausted. Sometimes the fight and pursuit continue for two or even more days, and in one case the wild tusker finally gave in close to Raxaul on the Nepal border, many miles away from the forests. Finally the tame tuskers close in on him for the last time, nooses of strong rope are slipped round his legs and neck, and he is led off into captivity and tied to a tree or strong post. For a week or so he is not allowed to get any sleep, while relays of trained men sing songs and teach him to obey words of command. This may be considered cruel, but a certain amount of cruelty is inevitable in catching and training wild elephants; it is kept to a minimum, and thereafter in the service of man he is well treated, well fed, with three attendants to look after him until the end of his life.

In this thrilling manner wild elephants are caught and brought into man's service (His Highness has not actually taken part in the wild combat of the hunt, but he has followed along rapidly on a swift pad elephant, and supervised the fight and the final capture).

### RHINO HUNTING.

When hunting rhino, the "Ring" method frequently fails, and for the following reason. Elephants, despite their great bulk and strength, are naturally timid animals, and even small animals like cats or porcupines in their vicinity make them nervous and restless. But of all things that elephants fear most, the rhino is *facile princeps*. Most elephants bolt at the mere sight of a rhino, and very few are staunch. A rhino in a ring has only to charge the ring to break it in confusion and make his escape, and although rhino have been shot in rings, the more usual practice is to stalk them or track them down with 3 or 4 of the staunchest elephants available.

Rhinos in Nepal are now confined to the famous Chitawan area in the Rapti valley and near the Gandak river. In this rhino preserve *chaukis* or posts are stationed at various points; these *chaukis* are under the Banjanch officer (forest inspectorate) and five to seven guards are stationed at each. In all there are over 100 guards in Chitawan, whose main duty is to protect the rhinos from poachers, and to find out where the rhino feed and wallow and lie up. The fact that the rhino horn has a very high commercial value in India a good horn is worth over Rs. 1,500 or over £100—makes it a very valuable prize for the professional poacher, and the species was nearly exterminated in Assam by poachers until adequate steps were taken for its protection. (Rhino horn is supposed to be a strong aphrodisiac, hence its fantastic valuation.)

PLATE 15.



RHINO PREPARES TO CHARGE.



In Nepal however the rhino has been more carefully preserved, and there are probably more specimens of the Indian rhinoceros in the Chitawan preserve than in all India put together. It is estimated that at present the total number is between 300 and 400. On most nights one or several rhino may visit a camp, and their breathing and heavy footsteps can often be plainly heard a few yards away, and a torch flicked on would reveal their nearby presence. It is an interesting experience.

When the Maharaja has decided on or sanctioned a rhino hunt, the "gun" is mounted on a particularly staunch elephant. "Rhino tracks naturally abound, and it requires skill of no mean order to pick out the fresh tracks of a really big bull over hard ground. When these have been found, the tracker, mounted on a small and clever elephant, follows them, leaning so far downward that his head is near the ground. When the rhino is overtaken, the skill of the gun comes in, for it is of little avail to pump lead into a rhino's body, and it is very difficult to get the beast to present the head or neck for a deadly shot"\*\*.

The Maharaja, although he has shot many rhinos, regards this sluggish and slow-witted animal as a poor form of sport, not to be compared with the tiger. But a furious wounded rhino charging a fleeing elephant would provide enough thrill and excitement to most sportsmen.

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\* Quotations from Stanley Reed's description of shoot by King George V in Nepal, 1911-12.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MAHARAJA IN NAYA MULUK.

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE NAYA MULUK.

THE Naya Muluk is a tract of Terai country at the foot of the hills, about 80 miles in length and 15 to 20 miles or more in breadth, bounded by the Sarda and Rapti rivers on the west and east, by the British India frontier on the south and by the Churia range, the last rampart of the Himalayas, on the north. This Churia or Siwalik range, densely covered with forests of sal and saj, karma and sallo\* and many other trees, leaps abruptly from the gently sloping Terai, rising from 1,500 feet to 5,000 feet or 6,000 feet. It is a natural sanctuary for tiger, where shikar with elephants is impossible, and is the source of many streams and little rivers that come down in spate during the monsoon rains and dwindle to a trickle in the cold and hot weather. Below the foot of the hills comes a dry belt of boulders and sandy soil called the Bhabar, infertile for cultivation and destitute of water and therefore occupied by great stretches of primeval forest. The Bhabar merges gradually into the Terai proper where the subsoil water comes to the surface in many springs, and the streams and rivers have perennial water. Here the great forests are broken up with many patches or strips of cultivation and village-lands with rice and mustard, chillies and tobacco, sugarcane, bananas and fruit trees. The tenants are chiefly Tharus, an aboriginal tribe who alone of all mankind are practically immune from the deadly *awal*, the virulent Terai malaria that infests this tract. They are a delightful race, clean, simple, cheerful, good cultivators and very expert in jungle lore and the habits and customs of the wild animals around them. They are passionately fond of, and very expert in, snaring or killing deer, pigs, jungle fowl, and they also keep large herds of cattle and buffaloes, poultry and pigs.

Although cultivation has increased in recent years, the Naya Muluk is still essentially a district of forest, and 60 or 70 per cent of its total area is covered with primeval jungle, a sea with islands of cultivation.

The forests are of many types. The commonest and most important are the forests of sal, the most valuable timber tree in the

\* For botanical names of trees see Appendix II.

sub-continent of India. These sal forests are replaced on the lower and poorly drained soil by wide savannahs of Terai grasses, the narkul and the giant ulla, dotted with clumps and groups of miscellaneous trees, semal, siris, dhak, sissu, khair\*, etc. The sal forests are also broken up by numerous broad shallow river and stream beds, covered with sand and pebbles and bordered by grasses and thickets of sissu and khair, the favourite haunt of tiger, where they leave their pugs or footmarks, and the shikari can trace their movements and location. Or again, we find a patch of thorny canebrake in a swampy pocket of land, cool, impenetrable, a favourite lie-up for the big carnivora.

Through this wide expanse of ever-changing forest types the denizens of the jungle roam. In the Naya Muluk rhino and wild buffalo do not now exist, but herds of wild elephants occur; amongst the carnivora are tiger, leopard and wild dog, while the deer tribe are represented by sambhar, chital (spotted deer), para or hog deer, karkar or barking deer, and occasionally gond or swamp deer.

Other animals often seen are the grey ape (langur), pigs, and more occasionally bear. Wild duck and snipe are found on or near the jhils, black partridge and peafowl in the savannahs and river beds, jungle fowl and pheasants in the foothills. Bird life is particularly abundant and varied; large flocks of green parrots continually flicker screaming overhead or through the trees, raucous hornbills are heard, making their astonishing noises in the distance. Brilliant kingfishers haunt the streams, plovers and terns and cormorants the bigger rivers, night-jars and owls and cuckoos disturb the night hours, while paddy birds, hoopoes and orioles, babblers, drongos, magpies, blue jays, and many other families and genera too numerous to mention, swarm in this bird paradise.

The scenery, as mentioned elsewhere, is magnificent, the cold weather climate superb, with cold dewy nights and brilliant sunny days. To the sportsman and lover of wild nature, the Nepal Terai and Naya Muluk make an irresistible appeal during this cold weather season.

An additional reason for visiting the Naya Muluk was that no Maharaja had visited this out-of-the-way corner of the kingdom for nearly 40 years, the whole district was swarming with tigers, which were doing considerable damage to the village cattle, and it was important to reduce their numbers.

It was here in the year 1876 that Maharaja Jung Bahadur arranged a big shoot for King Edward VII (then Prince of Wales). Again in 1890, Maharaja Bir Shumshere invited Prince Albert Victor to a shoot

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\* For botanical names of trees see Appendix II.

in this terrain, and there had been a smaller shoot and some elephant hunting in 1895. So it is little wonder that the district was saturated with tigers, in fact it was reckoned (by the United Provinces Forest Authorities) that 40 or 50 tigers migrated every year from Nepal into the adjoining forests of British India! Thus there was every inducement for His Highness to visit Naya Muluk.

### THE MAHARAJA LEAVES FOR NAYA MULUK (1933-34).

On Mangsir 26, 1990 (December 11, 1933) the Maharaja and his court left Kathmandu, the beautiful capital of Nepal, for the long journey to Naya Muluk. This hill road, although greatly improved in recent times, is still, probably the roughest and steepest track to the capital of any country. The first eight miles to Thankot is quickly covered on a motor road, but from here for the next 21 miles to Bhimpedi, pony, dandy or coolie is the only means of conveyance.

The bridle road rises steeply, nearly 2,500 feet in three miles through well-preserved evergreen forest of oak, rhododendron, magnolia and many other species, to the Chandragiri pass (7,500 feet) of the Mahabharat range, from where, looking back, a marvellous view is obtained, which has already been described.

Then the bridle track drops down, sometimes steeply, sometimes more gently, to the hill torrent at Kule-Khani, about 4,000 feet altitude, and again climbs steeply 2,500 feet to the Chisa-pani Garhi pass, and once more a steep drop of 3,000 feet to Bhimpedi, the motor terminus from the plains. This well-constructed motor road drops a further 2,000 feet to the Rapti valley, at the head of the famous shooting preserve and the home of tiger and rhino, and then up 2,000 feet to the tunnelled pass over the Churia range, before finally descending nearly 2,500 feet to Amlekhgunj, the terminus of the Nepal Government Railway.

The day, auspicious for departure decided by the Astrologer Royal (Raj jyotishi), is a public holiday in the valley, and all the military and civil officers call at the Singha Durbar or the parade ground to wish *bon voyage* to the Maharaja and his entourage. Then the journey begins, involving ascents which total 7,500 feet and descents of nearly 10,500 feet.

### December 16.

After five days, the Maharaja arrived at the foot hill camp of Amlekhgunj, where a halt was made for several days and attempts were made to shoot a few tigers. But although there were a number of kills,

no tigers were found inside the ring. The bulk of the shikar elephants had left months before for Naya Muluk, and only a few elephants were available here. It is interesting to record that it was here the idea of using strips of white cloth to help to ring the tiger, and supplement the elephants, was first used.

On December 21, His Highness travelled by the N. G. R. special, arriving at Raxaul, on the frontier between Nepal and British India, in the evening, where His Highness was met by the Commissioner of Tirhut Division on behalf of the Bihar and Orissa Government, and by Mr. (now Sir) James Williamson and Mr. J. D. Westwood, the Agent and Traffic Manager of the B. & N. W. Railway.

Early the next morning the special train stopped at Kunraghan station near Gorakhpur, where His Highness proceeded to inspect a Guard of Honour of a Gurkha regiment, the Gurkha recruiting depot under Lieutenant-Colonel M. Wylie, and the Gurkha Brigade War Memorial. During the course of this inspection, His Highness made a speech to the Gurkhali pensioners, and the following brief extract illustrates his typical generosity :—

“ At the time you come here to take your pensions, we see that you have to live in tents in case of illness. As the open space and the damp and the influence of climate would aggravate your malady, I shall grant you necessary money for the building of a hospital through Colonel Wylie. If that sum is not enough for the purpose, I shall give additional sums of money. I think you will be benefited by it ”. The same day he entrained for Gauriphanta, the last station on the Dudwa branch of the R. K. Railway in the Kheri district, near the Nepal frontier. The train reached Gauriphanta on the morning of the 23rd, and His Highness proceeded to his camp two miles away.

### MACHHALI CAMP.

**December 23.**

#### **The Maharaja benighted.**

“ *Sometimes a drop of water nectar turns,  
Sometimes the cloud a golden heaven burns,  
Sometimes the worm a silken fabric weaves,  
Sometimes a hut the mighty one receives.* ”

—A Nepali Poet.

On arrival at the camp, it was learnt that a tiger had killed a village buffalo two days before, but his exact whereabouts was not known.

However as His Highness was desirous of an outing, a ring of elephants was made at a venture. While this rather forlorn hope was in progress, information came in from another quarter that a second buffalo had been killed about eight miles away. The shikar elephants were sent off to make a ring, but by the time the Maharaja and shooting party arrived, it was 5-15 p.m. and nearly dark, being the shortest day of the year. By the glimmer of twilight it was impossible to find the tiger, and the Maharaja had to return without firing a shot.

Night found the party many miles from the camp, in the depths of the trackless forest, and the cold of a winter night. His Highness saw the lights of a little Tharu village nearby, and decided that it would be better to pass the night in a village hut near the tigers (which he bagged early next morning) rather than to attempt to return to camp through the thick gloomy forest. One can imagine the astonishment of the simple Tharu at the sudden appearance of the Maharaja and all his entourage, requiring accommodation, beds and blankets, food and milk and shelter! One can also appreciate what a new experience it must have been to the high officials, accustomed to the palaces of Nepal, to find themselves in the little mud and grass hovels of the jungle aborigines. An ordinary *charpoy* of the Tharu was provided for His Highness, who, being very tired, slept soundly, despite the unusual surroundings. Next morning on departure, he richly rewarded the owner of the hut by giving him some land in perpetuity and ordered for a brick-built house in place of his mud hovel.

### December 24.

A ring was formed in the Khamaura forest, and the first animal to be beaten out was a half-grown tiger cub. It should be explained that the rules strictly enforced in the United Provinces of British India against shooting tiger cubs are not in force in Nepal (nor in the other provinces in British India and Indian States for that matter), and a tiger is a tiger whether its length is 6 feet or 10 feet.

But this astonishing cub unexpectedly and pluckily charged the line of elephants, throwing a small section of the line temporarily into confusion and taking advantage of this to slip through. Simultaneously the two parents were seen, one on either side of the Maharaja's elephant. The Maharaja brought down the tiger (9 feet) with one shot and the tigress (8 feet 9 inches) with two shots, thus achieving a remarkable "right and left"!

Two miles away from this scene, there had been another "kill" overnight, and the elephants and shooting party moved off to make another ring. This enclosed a tigress and 2 large cubs, and the

PLATE 16.

The Nepal Ring.



(i) THE VICEROY'S PARTY CIRCLE THE RING.



(ii) HIS HIGHNESS AND HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
ENTER THE RING.

Maharaja's first shot wounded the tigress. Immediately she charged the howdah elephant, leaping up at the head. With another remarkable shot, His Highness shot her through the chest in mid-air and she collapsed at the elephant's feet (8 feet 3 inches). The 2 cubs were also killed, making a bag of 5 tigers for the day.

A solitary wild tusker elephant had been wandering around in the vicinity of the camp for several days, and that night at 9 p.m., when returning to camp, Commanding General Bahadur Shumshere (His Highness's eldest son) suddenly met him face to face. It is a very unpleasant sensation at any time to meet a wild tusker while riding a tame female elephant (as the writer knows), since the tusker is liable to molest the female, and killing or firing at wild elephants is strictly prohibited, but still more unpleasant at night. However General Bahadur fired several shots in the air, causing the elephant to retreat some way and enabling him to escape.

The wild elephant did not follow but went to the hut where His Highness was passing the night, and was finally frightened away by flaming torches.

### **December 25.**

This day the wild tusker again created trouble. While His Highness was on his way to the ring, he appeared and moved on a parallel course a short distance away, and again later interfered with the ring of elephants. So the Maharaja decided he should be adequately punished, and captured if possible. (As previously mentioned the elephant is regarded as the incarnation of Ganesh, the elephant god, and in Nepal may not be killed.) But the ropes and gear required for capturing wild elephants were not immediately available so the project had to be postponed.

On this day a tigress was shot in a ring (8 feet) and on the following day (December 26) a tiger (9 feet 3 inches) was killed.

### **December 26.**

To-day it was decided to organise a punitive expedition against the troublesome "rogue", which had been doing considerable damage to the tenants' crops as well as harrying the camp and the tame elephants.

So early in the morning the Maharaja personally conducted operations, and with three big fighting tuskers, Khor Prasad, Jaya Prasad and Bahadur Prasad, and a number of female elephants, set out against him. The wild tusker, a magnificent animal, did not attempt to flee,

but showed fight, and the tame tuskers in turn tackled him in titanic turmoil. The pluck of the mahouts armed with only a kukri, sitting on the necks of their champions, in head-to-head battle with the wild one is almost incredible! One of the tame elephants had the worst of the fight and retired, but after an hour and a half of continuous fighting with the others, the wild elephant at last turned and fled before the third tusker, who was however too exhausted to follow him. The grass and undergrowth had been crushed to pulp and trees uprooted and broken over a considerable area during the fight.

And so the elephant escaped for the time. We shall however make his acquaintance again.

### **December 28.**

A kill was reported seven miles to the north-east of the camp. Commanding General Kaiser Shumshere went in advance to inspect the spot and lay out the ring. He sent back word that a fine tiger had been successfully ringed. His Highness motored out some distance, then changed to a pad elephant and again changed to his howdah elephant at the ring-side. Following his usual custom, he moved into the ring with a couple of elephants alongside to walk up or hunt the quarry. This was the innovation in ring shooting introduced by His Highness, which, while certainly increasing the thrill of the sport, also at first tended to increase the anxiety of the rest of the shikar party and officials.

On this occasion, the tiger suddenly broke from under a thick clump of tall grass, and the bullet gave him a long superficial graze on the flank. Blind with fury, he charged straight at a weak point in the line of elephants, who wavered and broke (as they often do, it is a very exceptional elephant and mahout that will stand firm to the direct charge of an angry tiger), and the tiger was through.

But the Nepalese and mahouts are wonderfully expert at dealing with such a situation, which to the ordinary shikari has developed beyond hope of recovery. A slightly wounded tiger, or an unwounded one that has been fired at and missed, is almost impossible to get. He usually dashes off at full gallop a hundred yards or more and then proceeds more cautiously, but is very wary and will not show himself in any pursuit.

But the Nepalese method is often able to deal with this. When the tiger has charged through, the ring is immediately broken up, and like a well-drilled battalion the elephants rapidly wheel right and left, extending the two lines which close in and make a new ring as fast

as possible. Sometimes the tiger goes right away, but quite often it is caught by the rapidity and efficiency of the trained staff and elephants. In this case, the tiger was again enclosed in a ring of elephants, but although he endeavoured to break through once more and escape into the nearby foothills, a well-directed shot killed him instantly.

It was on this day that Sir Frederick O'Connor, at one time the British envoy at Nepal, joined the camp by invitation of the Maharaja, who had also invited Mr. Verney, the well-known American sportsman and naturalist, who was touring India at that time, collecting animals, skins, horns, etc., for the wonderful Natural History Museum which he ultimately completed in America.

### BHIT-GHAT CAMP.

#### **December 29.**

The camp was moved to a new site some miles to the west. Here two kills were reported from two different places. The first ring drew a blank, except for a small porcupine, but the second ring contained 2 tigers and a tigress. The tigress charged an elephant, scratched and bit the trunk, and, breaking the circle, made good her escape. (The method described above, of making a second ring quickly, is obviously impossible when a tiger or two are still in the ring and have to be dealt with.) The Maharaja killed the 2 tigers with a couple of shots apiece. They measured 9 feet 4 inches and 9 feet 2 inches.

The Bhit-Ghat camp was cold and damp. A morning mist hung about until the sun was well up, and the heavy dew dropped slowly from every leaf and twig in the jungle, or spattered down in a shower when an elephant accidentally touched a sapling. But with the lifting of the mist a superb panorama became visible, with the white peaks of the great Himalaya outlined against the sky, forming a glittering background to the dark ranges of Mahabharat and the nearby foothills of Churia.

#### **December 30.**

This day provided a plethora of thrills and excitement. About five miles from the camp two kills had been made fairly close together, and the pugmarks and other indications suggested the possibility of two pairs of tigers. When the ring was closed and the Maharaja with the attendant elephants started to disturb the enclosure, it was seen that all 4 well-grown tigers were in the ring !

The first shot was at a tigress, which wounded her fairly badly, and she crept back into thick cover, snarling horribly. Simultaneously

the other 3 broke cover, and started bounding and charging in all directions. Pandemonium followed. The roars of the encircled tigers mingled with the trumpeting of nervous elephants, the yelling of the men on the line who set up a ceaseless and deafening "ha-ha-hoo-hoo howah", and hurled missiles whenever a tiger approached, the snapping and crashing of saplings and undergrowth by the howdah elephants inside the ring, all this combined to make a tense scene of excitement. And in the midst of all this turmoil stood the Maharaja on his elephant!

Then the other tigress charged the ring, and leapt through. There still remained 2 tigers and the wounded tigress. The latter was killed first, and then His Highness succeeded in killing the 2 tigers after further thrills.

Orders were then given to make another ring, on the possible chance of circling the one that had escaped. With astonishing skill this was successfully done, despite the delay while the other tigers were being killed. His Highness with two other howdah elephants, in one of which was Sir Frederick O'Connor, entered the new ring, after the infuriated tigress. Presently she charged straight at the Maharaja, but a nearby tusker, Bikram Prasad, intervened and the tigress jumped on his head, scratching his trunk and ear before bounding away. It was all so quick that there was no time for a shot. Again she attacked another small female elephant, clawing the head and trunk. This elephant shook so violently that the "pachwa" was thrown off, luckily away from the tigress, and he picked himself up unhurt and hastily scrambled up a convenient tree. However this fighting tigress had again broken the ring and made good her escape.

A third ring was made and it speaks volumes for the amazing organisation and skill of the Nepalese that once more the tigress was encircled, and was finally despatched by Sir Frederick O'Connor. She measured just under 8 feet. Thus ended a grand day of shikar with 4 tigers and many exciting incidents.

### **December 31.**

This day was blank except for a gond (or swamp deer) which was added to the bag.

### **January 1.**

New Year's Day (by the Christian era) was to prove another red-letter day. Information comes in that there are three kills in three different directions. At the first kill, although blood and hair around the tying-up post clearly indicate a kill, there is no sign of a drag. The

shikaris, somewhat non-plussed, mark out a circle, which however, as the subsequent ring proves, does not contain the tiger. A further search is made. To the west is a sandy stream bed with a steep bank of 15 or 20 feet on the further side. The fresh marks of a very big tiger are seen crossing the stream bed to the high bank. On the top of the bank, clear marks of a drag are observed ; incredible as it sounds, it is quite clear that *the tiger has jumped this astonishing height with the padah!* Not only that, but he has dragged the kill for nearly a mile beyond the high bank, and there has had a good feed and is presumably lying up close by. Never has such a drag been seen before—up a 20-foot sheer bank and over a mile in distance. He is ringed, and the Maharaja fires two barrels into him. One wild dash and he drops dead, a splendid tiger measuring 10 feet 3 inches.

The elephants then trekked six miles to the east, to another kill, where a big tigress was found. A shot from the Maharaja wounded her in the shoulder, and charging the line of elephants she leaped on the head of an elephant, clawing its trunk. A chorus of trumpeting and shouts broke out, and a shower of missiles drove her back into the ring where she was ultimately killed by His Highness. She measured 9 feet 4 inches, which is quite exceptional for a tigress, and the record shot in Naya Muluk. A striking film of this fight was taken by an intrepid photographer on the elephant next to the one attacked.

### **January 2.**

No tiger was shot to-day, but a hyena added further variety to the bag.

### **January 3.**

Three guests accompanied the Maharaja on the shoot to-day—Sir Frederick O'Connor, Mr. Verney and Mr. Musselwhite the film operator. They had a day to remember ! A single tiger was first found, a fighting beast who provided some fine film before he was finally killed. He measured 9 feet 9 inches.

The next ring was nearly eight miles to the south and provided hours of excitement. This locality was characterised by very heavy grass taller than the elephants, and undergrowth in which it was almost impossible to see the quarry. A tiger is first put up, at which the Maharaja fires two shots. The noise disturbs 4 more tigers, and so there are 5 tigers in all enclosed (2 tigers, 2 tigresses and a large cub, i.e., two families). It is a nerve-racking business to tackle so many tigers in that tremendous grass, in which they can lie unseen

within a few feet of the elephants. But they are moving about, growling and slinking unseen, without offering a shot to the marksman. Suddenly pandemonium breaks out at one section of the line, elephants trumpeting, fidgeting and curling up their trunks, with the usual accompaniment of shouts and yells, clearly indicating that one or more tigers have gone that way. At last after further beating, an animal comes out where the undergrowth has been trampled, and is killed with two shots (8 feet 8 inches).

The ring is beaten again, and a tiger leaps on to the rump of one of the beating tuskers Hiranya Prasad, and stays on for several yards, biting and clawing, before dropping off. Mr. Verney fires, and the wounded animal is quickly finished off by His Highness (9 feet) who presents the skin and the lucky bones (*baju* in Nepali) to Mr. Verney. Again the howdahs and beating elephants go through the heavy grass, and six shots are fired at intervals as one or another tiger shows itself for a moment. The next to fall is a tigress (8 feet 3 inches).

By this time the sun has set, but there are still 2 tigers in the ring, and the howdahs turn once more into the heavy grass, which however by this time has been trampled down a good deal. For a change, the next tiger charges the line. A pad elephant is panic-stricken, whiskers round and bolts, throwing off its mahout and Lieutenant Brikha Bahadur to the ground. They are however unscathed by the fall and by the tiger, and are quickly mounted on another elephant. The tiger turns back instead of breaking through, and is shortly despatched by Colonel Kiran, His Highness's son. He measures 8 feet. This is the first tiger shot by Colonel Kiran, who, in accordance with the custom prevalent in Nepal, presents *nazar*\* to His Highness.

It is now 6-45 p.m. on a winter night, and the light has completely gone. But still there is another tiger in the ring, a tigress (as it happened), and by now a fury incarnate. It is a weird amazing scene, a nocturne of the jungle, where nothing can be seen except the crowns and branches of the scattered trees against the light of stars. The Maharaja, and Generals Babar and Bahadur fire at intervals at a noise or at random. Then the hunt takes on a different aspect, as torches blaze out all round, and by their light the tigress is at last spotted and killed (8 feet).

Six tigers in one day, the last killed by torch light ! To paraphrase a famous poem — God of shikar, was ever shikar like this in the world before ?

\* This custom is equally prevalent in India also, and consists in presenting a coin, which is touched and given back.

His Highness returned to camp by the light of the torches at 9 p.m. What the representatives of Britain and U. S. A. thought of such a day of sport and excitement is not recorded in the shooting diary.

The primitive Nepali shares with most uneducated Orientals a marked, and sometimes distinctly annoying, inability to give any reliable idea of distance. The expression *Ai pugyo* (it has arrived) may mean a mile or two further, while *Ailekati tadha* (a short way) may easily be four or five miles (or furlongs). When some concrete figure of miles or kos has at last been obtained by persistent inquiry, it is usually safe to double or even treble it. (A kos is the Nepali measure of distance, and is about 4,000 yards.)

To-day His Highness experienced this characteristic failing. The messenger brought the news of a kill which he said was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  kos away. So the Maharaja spent the morning dealing with accumulation of administrative work, and started leisurely at about 2 p.m. on an elephant. However the distance proved to be 5 kos, and it was already dark before the ring was completed. But by the light of some torches a tiger was killed, followed by a weary trek back to the camp by the faint light of a new moon.

#### HIRAPURA CAMP.

##### **January 4.**

The camp moved to-day to Hirapura some miles westward. After 2 p.m. a beat was made and a small leopard (6 feet 6 inches) was shot.

A good tiger was killed on 6th. On 7th although there were four kills and three rings were made, the tigers were not in the rings or vicinity.

##### **January 8.**

The solitary wild tusker, previously mentioned at Machhali camp, turned up again at this camp and caused considerable trouble at night around the elephant encampment and also around the Maharaja's camp. So the day was spent in giving him a lesson. He was located in the morning about half a mile away, and when he saw the tame elephants, he made a rush at them. But a volley of blank cartridges frightened him off, and the tame elephants set off in hot pursuit. In mid-jungle he turned at bay, and the biggest of the fighting tuskers went in to tackle him. After a brief fight the wild one turned and fled, and although

followed for a time by the tame elephants, and later followed by the trackers for 17 miles, his tracks were finally lost and he escaped.

To-day Sir Frederick O'Connor and Mr. Verney departed.

### **January 9, 10 and 11.**

Three tigers were shot but there was nothing of particular interest to record.

### **January 12.**

Another wild tusker, attracted by the large herd of female elephants, had turned up and was proving a nuisance. This was not a very large one, but was very active, and an attempt at a *kheddah* proved useless for this reason. The tame elephants had had a strenuous three weeks hunting tigers almost daily, and were rather out of condition in consequence, so could not catch him.

It was decided to try the pit method and Commanding General Bahadur Shumshere made the following arrangements under his personal supervision. A pit was dug as described in chapter IV, on a path the elephant was likely to follow, and several female elephants were tethered on the side nearer the camp. During the night of 12th/13th, the tusker came and fell into the trap and was caught. There followed the tricky business of getting strong ropes on to his legs and around his neck. As the pit was too narrow to permit him to turn round, it was exciting but not very dangerous work to get ropes round his back legs, but noosing his neck, with his trunk lashing and writhing round, was a more difficult problem. However by the morning he was securely roped, the ropes being fastened securely to 4 big tuskers fore and aft.

Then followed the process of getting him out of the pit, and an interesting film was taken of the proceedings. The bank in front of him was partly broken down, and helped by a steady strain on the ropes, after violent efforts he managed to struggle out. At once he made a dash for liberty, to be pulled up by the rear elephants. Then he tried to turn to one side, to be stopped by the elephant on the other side. For an hour or more the struggle went on in fairly dense tree forest, and the ropes sometimes became tangled with the trees and creepers, which further aggravated the difficulties. Partly by coaxing and partly by force, with big tuskers occasionally pushing him here and there as necessary, he was at last brought out into the open, to form the centre of a triumphal procession back to camp, led by the Maharaja, who was very pleased with the capture.

PLATE 17.



(i) HIS HIGHNESS WITH SIR FREDERIC O'CONNOR AND MR. VERNEY.



(ii) LORD JOHN HOPE AND BRITISH MINISTER.

## SISAIYA CAMP.

**January 15.**

To-day was remarkable for two events. Although there were no kills, *khabbar* was brought that a big leopard had been seen trying to kill a village buffalo in an open grassy plain. (It is very rare for leopards to attack a buffalo, although they frequently kill buffalo calves tied up as a bait.) Part of the elephants searched the light grass and the rest searched the adjoining forest, while His Highness dismounted for some refreshment.

Presently an elephant arrived from the line in the forest, bringing the news that the leopard had been seen. The howdah elephants and most of the rifles were away in the other party, but the Maharaja climbed on to a pad with a Mannlicher rifle, and successfully killed it. It proved to be 9 feet 4 inches in length, which is believed to be easily a record for the whole world. (A leopard of 8 feet 6 inches obtained the gold medal for the finest shikar exhibit at the Allahabad Exhibition, 1911, the exhibition where many of the world's record trophies of Indian game were shown.)

While this shoot was in progress, at 2-15 p.m. the people in the camp felt the shock of a powerful earthquake, although this was of course not felt by the shikar party on the elephants. It passed in a moment, and was a subject for interested conversation but not perturbation. Naturally no one realised at the time that this was the distant ripple of the greatest calamity Nepal has ever experienced, which has been described elsewhere.

**January 17.**

There was no kill to-day, but Commanding General Bahadur Shumshere saw a tiger and tigress while returning to camp. Immediately the elephants available on the spot commenced to make a ring, but before it was completed the tigress made her escape: However the tiger was trapped and successfully despatched by General Bahadur. As this was the first tiger he had shot since His Highness became Prime Minister, General Bahadur presented nazar according to time-honoured tradition.

It is another tribute to the wonderfully developed skill and shikar sense of the Nepalese that more often than not they can successfully deal with a chance-met tiger casually seen on the way. If by sight, sound, or a kill, a tiger can be approximately located, it is an odds-on chance that the trained personnel and superb *bandobast* will add it to the bag!

## DHAKANABAGH CAMP.

**January 19.**

The camp was moved to-day to this new locality. Here wild rumours of some appalling catastrophe in Nepal reached the camp, but the complete breakdown of all communications, telegraphs, roads, railways, etc., both in Nepal and in Bihar, made it impossible to obtain any reliable information. It was not until January 23 that two eyewitnesses arrived to describe the destruction of cities, the wrecking of palaces, the loss of life and property. This great catastrophe has been described elsewhere, and one can appreciate the feelings and sensation of the Maharaja and all the camp entourage at the receipt of this news away in the jungles, some hundreds of miles from Kathmandu. It brought the shooting trip to a premature close, but while arrangements were being made for special trains, etc., for the long return journey, a number of tigers were shot in the vicinity of Dhakanabagh and Banbassa.

The return journey was started on January 27 and proved a terrible ordeal. The B. & N. W. Railway system in Bihar was shattered, with bridges wrecked and the track a corkscrew; motor roads had vanished and the surface of the country was fissured with gaping cracks. It was not until February 4, that His Highness could reach his capital.

The total bag for the period December 23 to January 26 was 36 tigers and 4 leopards besides the capture of a wild elephant and a python, not counting numerous sorts of deer and some boar.

## THE MAHARAJA REVISITS NAYA MULUK, 1936-37.

## JOURNEY TO NAYA MULUK.

Three years before, the Maharaja's visit to Naya Muluk had been abruptly cut short by the great earthquake, and as a result nearly half the district had been left out. He wished to see the condition of the people on the eastern side and also what works of improvement had been completed on the western side as a result of his first tour. The court left Kathmandu on December 3, 1936, and stopped for two days at Amlekgunj. On the 4th, the efficacy of the purdah ring was clearly established. There were less than 30 elephants available, as the great majority were waiting at Nepalgunj, 150 miles or so to the westward. A tigress had killed, and the shikaris, who cut the line, were confident she was enclosed. General Surya Shumshere, who was in charge of shikar operations this year, fixed up an enclosure in two hours with half a mile of white cloth (see photos illustrating the purdah ring).

Outside this, about 20 elephants were dotted at 40 yards intervals. Then General Surya went into the ring with a couple of elephants to make sure that a tiger was enclosed. After half an hour a tigress suddenly emerged from thick cover, and a messenger galloped off to camp with the news.

His Highness arrived at 2.30 p.m. and advanced into the enclosure. The tigress again broke cover and went bounding away, but when she came to within 15 yards of the white cloth, she shied off, and repeated this manœuvre three or four times. Presently His Highness fired two shots, which wounded her, and "with a furious roar she made a charge at the howdah and the 3 elephants turned their backs and fled. The tigress came charging after them for 40 or 50 yards, when the Maharaja turned round and with unerring aim put a shot into her chest, and the charging tigress stopped short\*." It was a remarkable shot from a restive elephant! It is certain that without the white cloth, the tigress could never have been bagged, but would have made good her escape through the widely scattered elephants.

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, General Padma Shumshere, arrived shortly afterwards and admired the skill shown in this shoot. It may be noted that it was the first time during His Highness's régime that the Maharaja and his second-in-command, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, left Kathmandu and toured together.

Two days later the court left by special train for Raxaul, the frontier station on the Nepal-Bihar border. On a clear winter morning one of the most wonderful mountain panoramas in the world is visible from the elevated station foot-bridge. Looking northwards over 20 miles of flat plain, the Churia range of Siwalik foothills can be seen looking very diminutive from here. Behind, the dark masses of Mahabharat rise to 9,000 feet and 10,000 feet above sea-level. Behind this again, the greatest snow peaks of the Himalayas tower up into the blue sky. Two hundred miles to the east-north-east the great massif of Kanchenjunga (28,100 feet) is clearly visible. Slightly westwards two peaks, almost hidden by the Mahabharat range, prove to be Makalu (27,800 feet) and Everest (29,000 feet). A hundred and fifty miles to the north-west Dhaulagiri (26,700 feet) is seen in lonely splendour. In between, four more great mountains of 26,000 feet and over, Annanpura Himal, Manaslu, Himalchule, Gosainthan, tower over Mahabharat; in all, eight peaks of over 26,000 feet height—in a range from Dhaulagiri to Kanchenjunga of 300 miles of the snowy Himalaya! Surely such a panorama must be unique in the whole wide world!

Stopping for a while to admire this wonderful view, the Maharaja and suite departed by special train on the B. & N. W. Railway to Bahraich and Nepalgunj Road Station, which was reached on the morning of December 7. Here, after being welcomed and garlanded at the station by high officials of the district of Bahraich (India) and Naya Muluk (Nepal), His Highness motored 11 miles to the first camp Gulari.

As endless repetitions of the same theme must inevitably become monotonous and boring, the shikar incidents of this tour will not be detailed, but only the more exciting or instructive items will be recorded.

On December 7, to quote the official record, "A single tusker wild elephant came in the night and attacked our *hathisar*, eloped with a she-elephant". However this jungle honeymoon was of short duration, as the she-elephant was recaptured on the 8th.

On December 8, a tiger was shot in the morning. After a couple of rings round other kills had proved futile, a tiger was ringed after 5 p.m. His Highness decided it was too late to go out several miles to the spot, and sent back orders that the Generals and senior officers should return to camp, but the rest of the officers, sepoys, orderlies and mahouts with their elephants should remain, and *keep the tiger in the ring all night!* Arrangements were made for their feeding during the night.

At 9 p.m. the orderlies took the long strips of white cloth to make the purdah ring, and were engaged in fixing it up, when the wild tusker appeared on the scene and again molested the ring elephants. One of these—a zamindar's elephant—took fright, threw her mahout, and bolted into the ring where the tiger was. This disturbed the tiger and he started roaring and moving about. The orderlies however bravely went on with their job. "As the tiger was within the ring there was some danger of him attacking them, and of the elephants getting nervous and trampling upon them. But for two hours they continued to fix the purdah wall. From the inside the tiger made attacks, and from the outside the wild elephant made attacks, but the job was completed. Had it not been for the cloth, it would have been impossible to keep the tiger confined. The wild elephant was finally frightened away with pistol shots and noise of explosives".

Imagine the scene, in the depths of a winter night and a Terai jungle! An astonishing tribute to the Nepalese pluck and organisation. To continue the quotation. "The strip of white cloth made them feel safe against the tiger, and the running away of the wild elephant gave them a sense of security, and so they slept for some time. When the noise and the tumult of men abated, the tiger snarled hideously many

PLATE 18.



THE TIGER THREATENS WITH SHATTERING ROARS.

a time, while the officers patrolled with a lantern and torches. Shortly before daybreak the tiger showed his eager intention to escape, but his nose struck against the cloth and he retired into shelter in the middle of the ring". His Highness with the Commander-in-Chief and other Generals left camp at 7-15 a.m. and entered the ring at 8-30 and the tiger was successfully killed shortly after 9 o'clock.

To keep a tiger ringed all night, in spite of interference of a wild elephant, was an outstanding achievement.

Later in the day, His Highness inspected Nepalganj town, and sanctioned the construction of pucca roads, and a pipeline for improved water supply and ordered steps to be taken to stop the depredations of dacoits and thieves. Rupees 500 was distributed amongst the aged and disabled inhabitants.

Two days later, news was received in camp that King Edward (now Duke of Windsor) had abdicated in favour of the Duke of York.

December 12 was distinguished by a bag of 4 tigers shot in two rings. A week later, when His Highness was returning late in the evening with a few pad elephants, the big wild tusker, who had been following the camp since his lady friend had been rescued from his attention ten days before, was suddenly met at close quarters in the dusk. The diary notes: "His Highness showed admirable coolness on this occasion. The wild one stared at him for sometime, and everyone stood at gaze for several minutes. Then he raised his trunk and was coming towards the party, but was stopped by firing of shots into the air. His Highness decided to capture him after some days, as an attempt at immediate capture would interfere with the tiger hunt".

By December 28, a considerable number of tigers had been shot, including two magnificent fighting tigers each measuring 10 feet 5 inches. The shoot on the 29th provided a terrific incident, probably the most exciting of all in the Maharaja's shooting career, when, in fact, the Maharaja was in considerable danger of being killed!

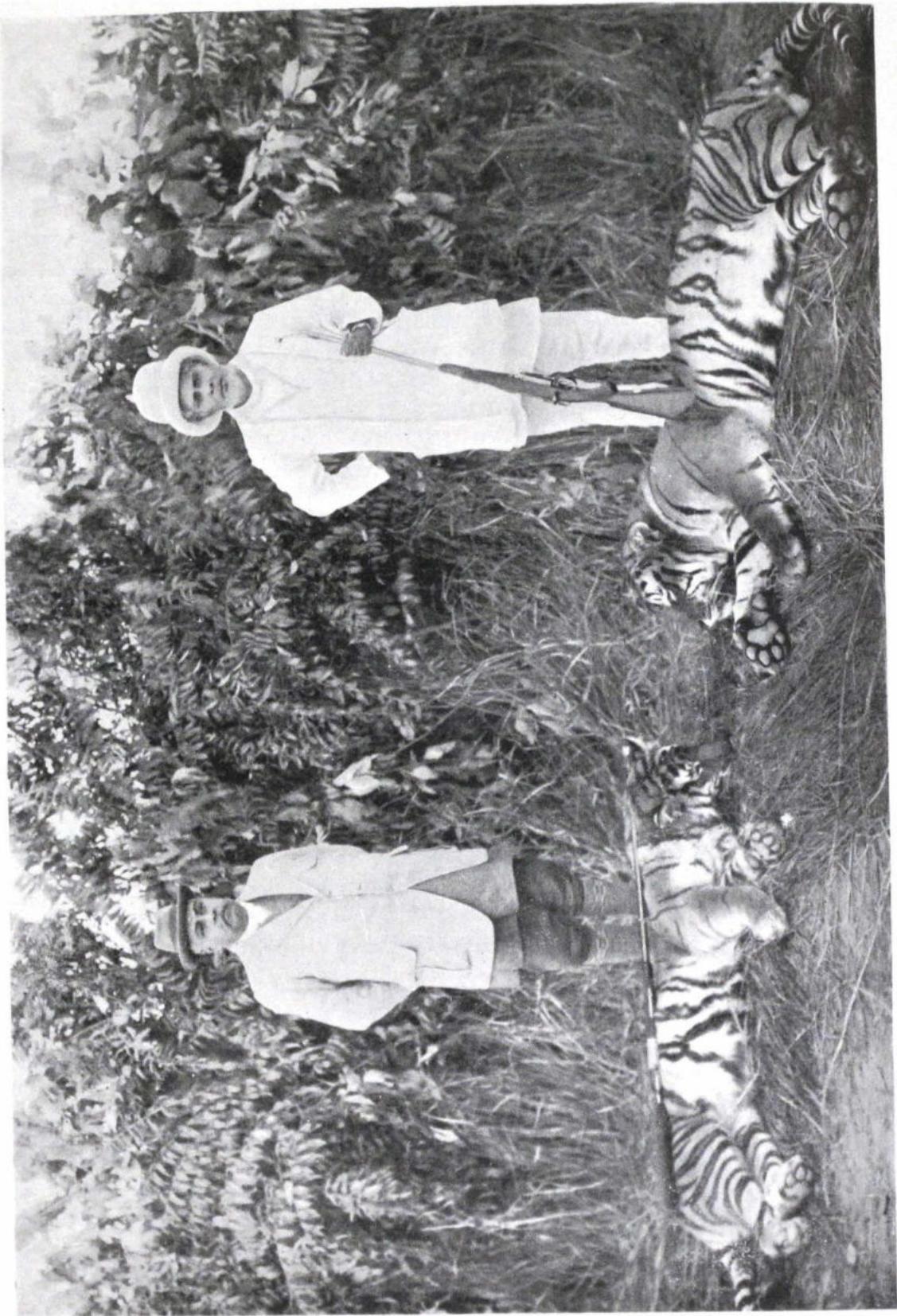
General Surya, who was organising the shoot, went early in the morning and by 8 o'clock had made a successful ring round a tiger, and sent in news to the camp. At 9-15 His Highness and the Commander-in-Chief motored out and reached the ring about two hours later. His Highness and General Surya mounted the tusker Bhimgaj, while the Commander-in-Chief and General Mrigendra rode on another big tusker Ganeshgaj. Several pad elephants also entered the ring to beat out the tiger.

A tiger and a tigress were put up, and His Highness hit each with his 12-bore Paradox. Both wounded animals retired into thick shelter in the middle of the ring. The cover was tremendous and the 2 wounded tigers refused to break. So the only thing was to follow them up close, and to follow up a couple of wounded tigers into such thick cover, soon after being wounded, is about the most dangerous action that can be taken in Indian big game shikar. The Commander-in-Chief begged to be allowed to go forward, but His Highness would not hear of it, and insisted on going himself. He pointed out that his elephant Bhimgaj was staunch, while the Commander-in-Chief's was nervous. Nothing could be seen of the tiger in the undergrowth, but suddenly, from a range of 8 feet, he leapt on His Highness's elephant, catching hold high up on the trunk and started savagely biting and clawing. The other elephants turned tail and commenced to bolt, but Bhimgaj vigorously counter attacked, and tried to kill the tiger by crushing it on the ground. This meant that the elephant was almost standing on his head, and "the howdah was tilted downwards almost to the ground. There seemed to be no possibility of the men in the howdah keeping their position. If they fell out, they would inevitably fall into the jaws of death". (The second wounded tiger was circling around, near its mate.) In this critical situation, deafened by the mad roaring of the tigers and the trumpeting of the elephants, His Highness kept his position by bracing his legs against the front of the howdah and firmly clutching the hand rail. General Surya, who was terrified of falling on to his father and knocking him out, similarly clutched the back of the howdah with all his might.

For minutes which seemed like hours, this life and death struggle between the elephant and the tiger continued, while any attempt at shooting was out of the question. A superb painting of this dramatic moment, by the photographer-artist who was an eye-witness of it, hangs to-day in the great Durbar Hall in Kathmandu, which is reproduced in this book (see coloured plate 20).

"Then Bhimgaj raised his head and retreated for several paces, but the mahout stopped him. Everyone was struck dumb for some time. People were gazing but all were speechless and all faces turned pale. Then His Highness laughed a merry laugh and advanced once more, and His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief begged him not to move forward, lest the elephant should once again charge the tiger, upon which His Highness replied that there were no grounds for fear, and calmly fired at and killed the tiger. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief said it was one of the most terrifying incidents that had ever happened, and it was only the grace of Sri Pashupatinath that had protected him. He offered his congratulations on His Highness's escape". The tiger measured 9 feet 6 inches and the tigress 8 feet 11 inches.

PLATE 19.



HIS HIGHNESS AND HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WITH TWO TIGERS.

Such an episode would have been enough for the nerves of most shikaris for a time, but His Highness evidently has none, and the very next day was engaged in another nerve-shattering incident. The morning was spent in hunting an elusive tiger which escaped, and it was not until the late afternoon that another tiger was successfully enclosed. The Maharaja and party reached the spot at 5 p.m., where a cloth ring had been made. As soon as His Highness advanced into the enclosure, a tiger started and reached the southern sector, where he turned from the noise and the yelling, and, galloping right across, he jumped the cloth and broke through the elephants. The mahouts immediately swung right and left (as has been described elsewhere) and enclosed him again. Once more he broke through, and once more he was successfully ringed. By this time it was evening and getting very dark. The animal had concealed himself in a big thorny bush, and the beating pad elephants could not drive him out. But as His Highness came near, he charged one of the elephants and scratched her nose, and His Highness fired and wounded him, when once more he went into the thick shelter. It was now difficult to see even the end of the rifle, *so torches were lit!* An elephant with an orderly holding a torch was charged furiously, the tiger climbing on to the hindquarters and hanging on for some ten yards. After this "the other elephants could not take courage to start it again, or to go near it," which is scarcely surprising. The very idea of trying to finish off a wounded and furious tiger, by the light of flickering torches in thick Terai jungle, is enough to give shivers to the average shikari!

So the shoot had to be abandoned for the night (the only case recorded in all the shooting diaries where His Highness had to leave a wounded tiger without finishing it off. It was found dead next morning).

A period of comparative calm followed all these thrills and adventures. A tiger was shot every second or third day, but there were no more fighting tigers until towards the middle of January. On the 12th, the stout elephant Jaya Prasad had a sharp fight with a big tiger, which the diary describes as follows: "When Jaya Prasad went to start him, the tiger hung by its trunk and scratched it, and went off into refuge. When started again, the tiger charged furiously, whereupon the tusker gored him with its tusks and rolled him over. But the tiger caught hold of the elephant's legs with his claws, and the elephant ran forward dragging the tiger for several yards". This tiger, which had been blinded in one eye by a porcupine's quill that was discovered there, measured 10 feet 3 inches.

The following day provided one of the most ferocious fighters in the Maharaja's experience. When the ring was formed, it was known

that a big tiger was enclosed, which the Maharaja wanted His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to shoot. When the shooting party entered the ring on several elephants, the tiger made a desperate attempt to break through the eastern line, then turned and tried furiously to break through on the north, but each time checked at the yells of the mahouts and the volley of missiles. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief fired a grazing shot and the tiger retreated into thick cover, and for a long time the beater elephants could not drive him out. At last he came out with a roar and a rush and sprang on to the head of a pad elephant called Ekraj, then dropped to the ground and immediately leapt on to the head of Khor Prasad and hung, clawing and biting this elephant's trunk for a couple of minutes, causing deep gashes and wounds. Again he dropped to the ground and bounded off into thick shelter. His Highness advanced a hundred yards towards him, but before he could get a shot the tiger rushed forward to the north-eastern side and sprang on the head of a third elephant, Bhim Kali, and then bounded off and attacked a fourth on which was a boy mahout aged only 13 years.

"The scene was very terrible and pitiable, for the heads of the boy, the tiger, and the elephant appeared to be all together, the tiger was holding on to the elephant's head with one paw and to the mahout's leg with the other. A soldier on the pad was holding on to the boy mahout by his belt, and the boy was holding on to the elephant's ear with both hands. After a long minute the tiger dropped to the ground ; he had torn away the flesh of the mahout's leg down to the bone, which was immediately bandaged by Dr. Ganga Prasad." (A doctor always accompanies the Maharaja's shoots, in case of such accidents.)

Meanwhile His Highness put up a tigress and killed her with four bullets in swift succession. But the wounded tiger, after himself wounding 4 elephants and a mahout, had broken through the ring. Immediately, the well-trained staff and elephants swung round and succeeded in enclosing him again. He was still full of fight and once more charged the beating elephants and bit two of them on the legs. Several more bullets were required finally to finish him off. It had taken one hour and thirty-five minutes to kill him, and he proved to be a magnificent tiger measuring 10 feet 4 inches.

A fortnight later there was another extraordinary day of shikar. "The beater elephants were beating the undergrowth, when a tiger suddenly started and roared, and the sound made a leopard climb a tree. A bullet from a '375 rifle hit it, and it fell to the ground but ran away. The tiger was again started, and he made another thunderous growl, at which the leopard again climbed the tree and remained there, closely hugging a fork. His Highness saw it and fired a shot that hit

PLATE 20.



BHIMGAJ VIGOROUSLY COUNTER ATTACKS.



it in the side, and it dropped down again, and, staggering and rolling, it collapsed. Meanwhile the tiger was making for His Highness's elephant, but a bullet from the '375 caused it to roll over, and His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief finished it off. It measured 9 feet 8 inches".

In this ring a tiger and a leopard had been killed, and everyone thought there would be no more shikar. But suddenly there was a great commotion, and a sambhar stag, several chital and peafowl dashed off in panic, giving alarm calls, and breaking through the line. So the ring was beaten again, and yet another tiger (*not* a tigress) appeared, and immediately attacked Moti Prasad, the elephant nearest to him. "The tiger hung by the elephant's belly, and began to bite it. The elephant too kicked with its trunk and legs, and tried to dash the tiger down, and the tiger also tried his best to hurt the elephant, and for some minutes they were making a great battle. Then the tusker dropped down and rolling over, pressed the tiger with its huge bulk. The *kun-kun* noise of the elephant and the *A-O AO* groan of the tiger were heard, and there was great excitement all round". The body of the tiger could not be seen, but the head was projecting from under the elephant, *and the head of the daroga on the pad struck against the head of the tiger!* The *pachwa* (i.e., the man who stands at the back of the elephant) and mahout were thrown clear and hastily scrambled up a tree. "The beater mahouts called out to the *pachwa*, and hearing this the men on the ring shouted. 'The men on the elephant are killed by the tiger. Surely killed. The elephant's legs alone are seen but the men are not,' and there was a great uproar and excitement".

Directly His Highness heard the noise, he ordered his mahout to advance immediately, to try and rescue the men being killed (as he thought) by the tiger, regardless of any possible danger to himself, and despite the remonstrance of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. As he approached the elephant Moti Prasad stopped rolling on the tiger, and got up, and went to His Highness's elephant, with the daroga, speechless with fright but quite unhurt, still sitting on the pad! The tiger was lying on the ground, still alive and snarling but unable to get up owing to his crushed condition, and His Highness quickly killed him with a couple of bullets. The mahout and *pachwa* then appeared, and His Highness was very relieved to find that none had been killed or even injured by the tiger.

During the first week of February (1937), the British Minister to Nepal, Colonel Bailey, was having a shoot for swamp deer in the Kheri forests about 18 miles away, with some distinguished guests and several ladies. Colonel Bailey wrote and asked if the Maharaja would

very kindly show his guests and the ladies the famous Nepalese ring method of tiger shooting, as they were very anxious to see it. His Highness not only agreed willingly, but with his usual generosity, he offered, if opportunity came, that two of the guests should have a shot at a tiger.

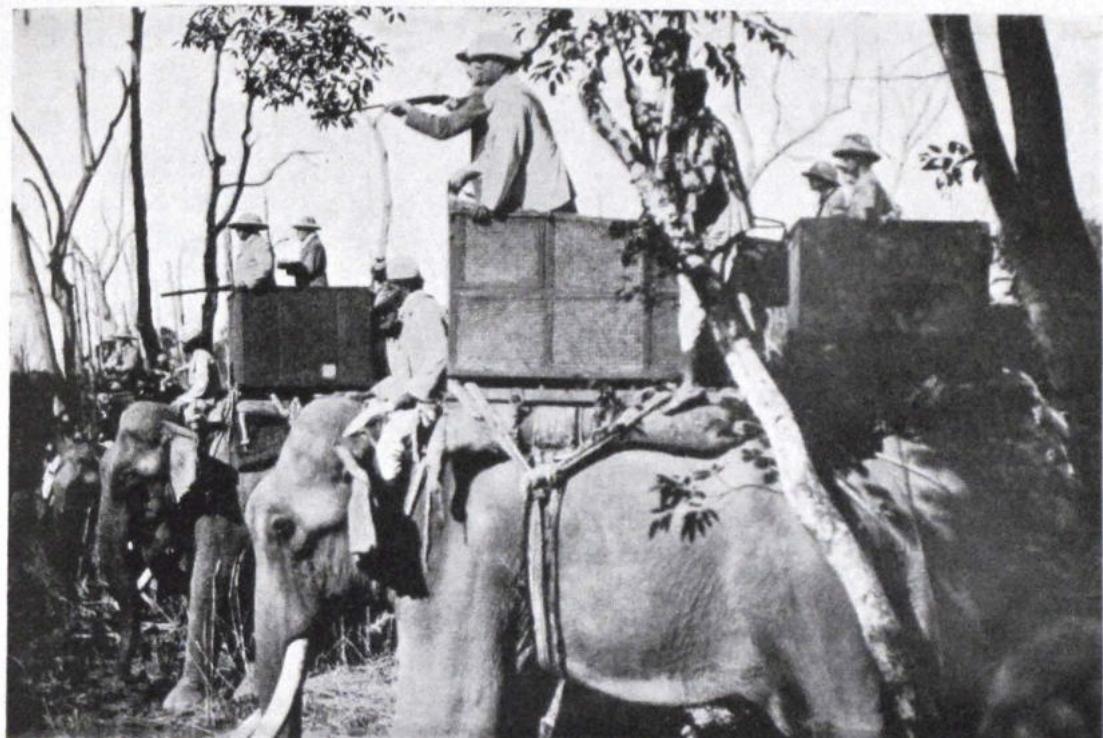
On January 31, cars were sent and brought to His Highness's camp the following party : -

The British Minister (Colonel Bailey), the Earl of Aylesford, Major-General Sir Richard Howard-Vyse, Colonel Stevenson (the Legation Surgeon) and four ladies. There were no kills or tigers located that day, so His Highness gave a practical illustration or dress rehearsal. the gathering of the elephants, wheeling and dividing them, narrowing down the ring, beating the enclosure, conducting a *jhoruwa* shikar (i.e., general shikar with a long line of elephants moving through the forest). These and other shikar methods were shown. The English guests appreciated the demonstration immensely and enjoyed the sight of a shikar with so many elephants.

The next day, General Surya sent in the news that a big tiger had been successfully encircled, and a purdah ring was being fixed up. On receipt of the news, His Highness sent cars to bring the British Minister's party, and on arrival at the scene of the enclosure, they (including the ladies) mounted the howdah elephants, all agog with excitement. As the shoot was about to start, a mounted messenger brought the news that another tiger had killed in the Bunda khola jungle, and the shikaris believed it was in the cut circle. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief with General Howard-Vyse in his howdah entered the ring, with His Highness on another elephant, and the beater elephants presently disturbed the tiger, but the General could not see it clearly. A further 20 minutes of beating, and the tiger was driven out into view, and General Howard-Vyse dropped him dead with one shot, a magnificent beast of 10 feet 3 inches. " His Highness congratulated the General on his crack marksmanship, and the latter lifted his hat in grateful salutation. All the ladies' faces beamed with delight, and many photographs were taken ".

After lunch His Highness motored with his guests to the second enclosure. No cloth circle had been formed here. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief with the Earl of Aylesford advanced into the ring, and presently the tiger was glimpsed, but he charged the line and broke through. Immediately the well-drilled personnel formed a second ring, which successfully trapped the tiger. The Earl's first shot missed, but his second barrel hit the tiger badly and he was soon finished off. Measurement 9 feet 10 inches.

PLATE 21.  
The Nepal Ring.



(i)



(ii)

(i) & (ii) THE SHOOT WITH FIELD-MARSHAL MANNERHEIM.

Thus in the course of the day each of the distinguished guests bagged a big tiger, and the whole party was treated to a superb exhibition of the splendid efficiency of the Nepalese method of tiger shooting.

A few days later, Colonel Bailey wrote again to the Maharaja saying another distinguished visitor had arrived, the famous Field-Marshal Mannerheim of Finland, who was also very anxious to see Nepalese tiger shooting. His Highness replied that he would of course be delighted and he hoped during the next few days the Field-Marshal would be able to shoot a good tiger. "The British Minister motored over and introduced the Field-Marshal to His Highness, who said that he felt great pleasure in making his acquaintance, to which the Marshal replied that he felt highly favoured to have this interview with 'the greatest head of the only independent Hindu kingdom', and that he had fought in the Great War as an ally with the Nepalese. He further added that by His Highness's favour, he was greatly looking forward to the pleasure of a fine tiger hunt".

On February 6, a very big tiger was ringed by elephants and white cloth, and an invitation was sent to the British Minister to bring his party, which included Field-Marshal Mannerheim, the Earl of Aylesford, Mr. Lloyd Smith (an American millionaire) and several ladies. For an hour and a quarter the party enjoyed all the thrills of a tiger ring shoot, with the tiger appearing and disappearing in the heavy growth of gigantic grasses. Field-Marshal Mannerheim was often unable to spot the glimpses of the slinking form, and several shots missed the mark. At last a shot went home, but it required three more to finish him off. The diary notes—"This was an eight-toed tiger who had eaten eight *padahs*, and was killed with eight bullets. Four bullets had hit him, and he measured 10 feet 7 inches, being the record size for the Naya Muluk jungles. His Highness expressed his congratulations, and the Field-Marshal replied that he felt himself very highly favoured in killing such a magnificent and enormous tiger".

This great shooting expedition in Naya Muluk was now drawing to a close, but on the 10th, variety was added to the bag by several shooting parties visiting an area of grassy swamp and *jhil*, a well-known haunt of swamp deer. His Highness did not go, but the parties included His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, Generals Surya, Mrigendra, and others; the shoot was highly successful and totalled 13 fine gond (swamp deer) stags.

This was the last day's shooting, and on the 12th His Highness and party entrained at Gauriphanta for the return journey. The Maharaja had long cherished a desire to visit Rummimdei, "the quiet thicket of rising ground where the Emperor Asoka set up for ever his

pillar to witness that there the blessed one was born--the spot sacred beyond all expression to the teeming millions of Buddhists in all lands". So the special train went by Nautanwa, from where the Maharaja motored to Rummindesi, and had a *darshan* of Maya Devi.

The journey back was then continued, and by easy stages the Maharaja returned to Kathmandu, which was reached on February 19, thus completing a tour of two and a half months.