

The Sportsman Tourist.

SPORT IN INDIA.

PERHAPS FOREST AND STREAM would like to hear something of sport as we have it in India. It is no doubt the greatest sporting country in the world, both because it contains a greater variety of game than any other country, and because the game is more easily got at than in any other country. This is because camping is so well understood and the native servants can keep you comfortable wherever you go, and British law and order, giving absolute security to person and property, rule throughout this great country, so that the traveler, wherever he may pitch his camp, is perfectly secure against molestation. And let me say here a word about the nature of our British rule over India. I have sometimes talked with American gentlemen who seemed to suppose that there was something harsh or cruel in our grasp of that country. Even in such a high class and usually well informed magazine as the *Arena* I remember to have read some nonsense about "India writhing under the iron heel of English despotism." The truth is, that British Government in India constitutes the greatest blessing that has ever been conferred on a large section of the human race.

The population of India, now numbering nearly three hundred millions, is composed of a great variety of tribes and sects—some of them warlike, others very peaceful. Before the British took possession there was nothing worth calling a government. Various native princes and chiefs ruled in the oppressive Oriental style over different sections of the country and perpetually fought with each other. The warlike tribes raided and plundered the weaker races. The roads, such as they were, were infested with thugs and bandits, and travelers had to get together in companies and go well armed. The very cultivator at his plow could hardly consider himself safe unless he had a sword handy. Added to all this turmoil and insecurity, terrible famines prevailed from time to time over large sections of the country, when hundreds of thousands would perish; while cholera and other pestilences were rife.

And now under British rule the whole population enjoys absolute peace and security. Justice is everywhere administered with impartial hand, and the humblest peasant can go to the nearest magistrate and obtain a patient hearing and redress if any man has wronged him. Good metalled roads and railways cross the country in all directions, and by their means not only has a great trade been developed, but the horrors of famine have ceased. When the crops fail in one section the railways easily supply the deficiency by bringing in supplies from other parts of the country. The vast irrigation canals which we have built also render immense tracts entirely safe against any failure of crops and give the cultivator a double or treble out-turn over what he ever had formerly. And by sanitary improvements, such as proper drainage and water supply systems for the great crowded cities, the ravages of pestilence have been greatly diminished, and we already look to the day when the dreaded cholera shall be finally stamped out.

The population fully appreciate all these benefits and there is no discontent under the British rule; at least the only discontented people are the few lawless characters here and there who would prefer a state of licentiousness and disorder, and perhaps a few descendants of the ancient chiefs and nobles who think they have an inherent right to rule and oppress the people. But they have little to grumble at, because whenever we have been compelled in the interest of peace and justice to dethrone some native prince we have always given him and all his family an immense pension and allowed them to live in luxury in their own way wherever they could do no more harm.

The general content of the vast masses of the people with our government was especially seen during the great mutiny of 1857—a mutiny which was stirred up by some of the discontented princes above said, who contrived by secret agents to arouse a rebellion among the native troops, who at that time far outnumbered the British soldiers in the country.

But the population in general raised not a hand to aid the mutineers; on the contrary, where isolated parties of British with their women and children were wandering about, seeking to make their way to some point of safety, the farmers and country people always succored them, and were heartily glad when we suppressed that mutiny and resumed our beneficent rule.

I know that some people, though aware that the British do a vast lot of good wherever they take hold, as in India, suppose that in return for our firm and just rule, law, order and justice, etc., we extract in some way very substantial monetary advantages. But it is not the case that England derives one cent of revenue from India or any other of her possessions. There is no such thing as "extracting of tribute," and never has been. It is only in the extension of trade and business that she benefits, and therein both sides benefit equally. The taxation of the Indian population is very light; a revenue of about £70,000,000 sterling is raised from a population of near 300,000,000. This comes to about \$1 a head per annum, and it is all spent in the administration of the country.

We want to get to the shooting and fishing, but I hope FOREST AND STREAM will pardon the above little dissertation. It is a very bad thing for any American to suppose that England rules with a tyrant rod over the supposed "downtrodden millions" of India or any other land. Americans who hold such a mistaken notion are too apt to think that they ought, in the cause of "freedom," to oppose England; and such opinions tend to embitter any of the little difficulties that sometimes spring up between the two great peoples. England is the mother of freedom. In India she has given freedom to that vast population; and it is safe to say that at this day all over India life and property are more secure, justice more certain and speedily overtakes the wrongdoer, and crime is far away scarcer than in the great but still far from fully organized or well governed United States.

So Americans who go to India for some of its wild sports will also have an opportunity of seeing the practical working of a wonderful system of government; and, as I have said, any one can camp about anywhere in absolute security. It is a good thing to know that to start with anyway.

For the benefit of the reader who has not got an atlas

handy I will mention that the great triangular peninsula which constitutes India is some 2,000 miles across at its broad end and some 2,500 miles long from its southern point away up north to the Himalaya Mountains. This great tract of mountain country which incloses India on the north is not a single range, but rather a belt of mountains, range behind range, the highest peaks being in some places a hundred miles back from the foothills. Some of the best Indian shooting is among the Himalayas, "hill shooting," we call it, and I may as well begin by giving some account of this and then we can work southward.

The climate of these lofty mountain ranges being of course very different from that of any other part of India, the wild animals found therein are also mostly peculiar to the mountains. The following list will give some idea of the variety of Himalayan game:

Two kinds of bears, the brown and the black.

The snow leopard.

The cashmere stag, a splendid animal, standing twelve or thirteen hands high and bearing horns of twelve or more points and running up to 3 ft. 6 in. long.

The markhor is a magnificent wild goat standing eleven and a half hands high; very massive horns, spirally twisted, reaching 4 ft. in length.

The ibex, another fine wild goat, some 3 ft. high and with horns 4 ft. long.

There are some two or three other species of wild goats and also the chamois, but none have horns exceeding about a foot in length.

The wild sheep resembles the American Rocky Mountain sheep, and has curved horns reaching to 3 ft. in length and 1 ft. in circumference at the base.

Among feathered game the pheasants are very prominent. Seven different species are found, all having the most gorgeous plumage. There are also two or three species of the partridge tribe.

In the lower ranges squirrels, monkeys, hares, etc., are plentiful, but disappear as one reaches the higher altitudes, though the small Himalayan hare is found up to 11,000 ft.

The sportsman who proposes a shooting trip in the Himalayas will make his outfitting point one of the numerous hill stations which are distributed all along the line of these mountains at heights of 6,000 to 8,000 ft., and the right time for starting will be about the beginning of April, so that he will have the summer before him and can reach considerable altitudes or traverse the higher passes without getting into the snow.

At this time the plains of India are beginning to get uncomfortably warm, and all who are able to do so are escaping from the heat and ascending to spend the summer, more or less, in these cool and elevated stations.

The traveler will here find plenty of excellent stores, where he can buy whatever he needs for his expedition. He will hire a couple of experienced guides (shikaris), who in turn will seek out and engage a cook and one or two servants and a sufficient number of porters to carry the camp. Since human portage is the only means of conveyance, and it is difficult to get and keep a large number of men (let alone the expense), weights have to be kept down. The outfit will consist of one light tent, a light camp bed and about half a dozen leather-covered wicker baskets, each forming one man's load when filled with cooking utensils, some canned provisions, ammunition, spare clothes, etc. Generally speaking, some eight to twelve loads of 40 lbs. each will suffice.

The valleys throughout the mountain country are inhabited, so that provisions can be obtained from point to point as one penetrates in. One may have two or three days' rough marching over steep paths and passes, followed by a descent into a cultivated and inhabited valley. The sportsman will usually pitch his camp in a valley or at no very great height up the mountain, and thence ascend to the higher slopes in search of the game.

When he strikes a good place and decides to stop there for some time, he takes the opportunity to send back two or three men to his outfitting point for fresh supplies of provisions, and to get his mails. These active, hardy hill men will cover forty miles a day when sent on an errand, and thus the traveler, though far in the interior of the mountains, can always keep in touch with his starting point. He also takes these occasions to send back for safekeeping any horns and skins that he has bagged and which become a great encumbrance if he tries to carry them around.

The rifle for hill shooting should be not smaller than .45 caliber, many prefer .50, and the trajectory should be flat. British sportsmen in India have hitherto almost exclusively used the double-barreled express rifle, a weapon of immense power, accuracy and flatness of trajectory, and possessing very decisive striking power with its expanding bullet of .45 or .50 caliber. They have so far considered the Winchester and other American rifles as being deficient in power and flatness, the charge of powder being much smaller than in our express rifles. But the Winchester express .45 or .50—the latter for choice with 450 gr. bullet—ought to answer very well for Himalayan shooting.

Let us now descend from the Himalayas. We find ourselves in a belt of forest country extending along the foot of the outermost range to a width of some twenty or forty miles. In these sub-Himalayan forests are to be found nearly all the species of large game which India produces, with some few exceptions, which are only found further south. Here we have the wild elephant (which, however, the Government does not permit to be shot), two species of rhinoceros, the wild hog, the wild buffalo, the black bear (different from and smaller than the Himalayan bear), the celebrated Indian tiger and the leopard. Among the deer tribe we have the fine sambar stag, standing thirteen to fourteen hands at the shoulder, and with horns of three points each running up to 3 ft. in length.

The swamp deer stands eleven to eleven and a half hands high, and has antlers of twelve or more points 3 ft. long. The spotted deer stands some 3 ft. high and has very fine three-tined horns up to 3 ft. long. This beautiful deer runs in large herds among the parklike forests along river sides below the Himalayas. Then in smaller sizes there are the hog deer, the four-horned antelope and the barking deer.

The wild peacock is very common and prominent in these forests, especially in the summer, when his train has reached its full length. Here also is the jungle fowl, the original of our domestic poultry, exactly resembling a neat little bantam cock. The black partridge is found in suitable spots among the forest, also hares.

The large rivers which descend from the Himalayas contain the celebrated mahaseer, which affords sport fully equal to salmon fishing; while the smaller streams contain trout.

These sub-Himalayan forests are very damp and malarious during a great part of the year, but they become dry and healthy in April and May and these are the months in which to camp there. The long grass has then died down or been burnt over and one can get about with ease; at this time these forests are a veritable sportsman's paradise.

Tiger shooting cannot here be attempted unless you can secure the use of some elephants, which is difficult. The tiger makes his lair among the high reeds and grass in some dense swamp, where he cannot be got at except on elephant back. The same applies to the rhinoceros and wild buffalo. But there is plenty of other sport without these. In fact, many of the best sportsmen do not care about shooting from elephants; there is much in it that is tedious and annoying and there is more satisfaction in doing what one can on foot. With your tent pitched on the banks of some great river where it issues from the hills you have the finest of fishing at your tent door, while around you the forest is full of the various kinds of deer, etc., above mentioned. It is hot in the middle of the day, too hot to be abroad with any comfort, and besides the deer at that time have laid up in thick covert. The great drawback to tiger hunting off elephants is that it must be done in the heat of the day, and to be jolted about under an Indian May sun all day among vast swamps of grass and reeds with only a very problematical chance of seeing a tiger is not good enough.

The sportsman who confines to himself to stalking and fishing has a better time of it. His procedure is as follows: Getting up at daybreak, he takes a light early breakfast and sallies forth. Comes in at 10 or 11 o'clock when it begins to get hot, takes a highly enjoyable bath and complete change of underclothes, and then, with a magnificent appetite, attacks a substantial breakfast; then he rests and keeps cool during the heat of the day (the tent being carefully located for shade), and at 4 P. M. again goes out for an afternoon stroll with rifle or rod, takes a light dinner at dusk, and early to bed.

Often have I in the morning landed two or three fine mahaseer or taken a nice basket of trout, and in my afternoon's stroll bagged a beautiful spotted stag, or the rarer and more stately sambar stag, or mayhap one of the smaller deer or a wild boar.

A camp such as this, under good circumstances, forms an episode never to be forgotten in a sportsman's experiences.

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[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

MAGIC AND BULLETS.

"The Grab at the Bullets" trick performed by Mr. Hermann re-echoes the motto of the wise rabbi, Ben Ahiha, "nothing new under the sun." This parallel happened some years ago, 1892, in the following fashion:

In that year the desire to hunt, but not to kill, the inextinguishable love of that enjoyable mode of living, landed me again among the mountains and the lakes of the wilderness of Maine. The camp I placed on a point on Lobster Lake, from which I had a magnificent view of that picturesque sheet of water which served Mt. Spencer, like Narcissus, as a mirror. On clear days even Mt. Katahdin looks over Mt. Spencer's shoulders to see his own image reflected. There I waited for the opening of the hunting season, also for the Indian, a renowned moose caller, whom I had engaged through the kindness of my friend Mr. Atwood, the game warden, in whose service he was until the last of September. Mr. Atwood also camped on that lake during the latter part of September, and proved to be a congenial companion. Meeting him cruising on the lake, he showed me a little brook which he had found accidentally while looking for a spring. The alder bushes had grown so close at the entrance that we had to pull our canoes along by the overhanging branches. A few rods up from the mouth of this brook he showed me fresh signs of a big moose bull. This place the bull had chosen for his feeding ground, as Mr. Atwood was satisfied by daily investigation. With sparkling eyes he told me, "I will bag this moose on the first night in October." Unfortunately he was called away on duty before that time. "But duty before pleasure," he said, and cheerfully handed that moose, so to speak, over to me. He also promised to send the Indian back in time. The last of September came and with it the Indian, who, after a good dinner, made himself at home and proceeded to make a birch bark horn for the next evening's moose call.

As nothing broke the quietness on the lake during the afternoon and evening, I felt sure my game would give us a good show the next night, and with this hope we retired. But next morning, long before sunrise, I heard two rifle reports coming from the direction where my moose's feeding ground lay. I stepped out of the tent and noticed the Indian poking his head out of his, saying: "Well, they got him."

"Who are they?" I asked in surprise.

"Two Indians who came yesterday to go up to the head of the lake to their camp."

"How do you know of that?"

"I met them on the carry at Luce's, on my way to you."

This gave me a great deal to think about, though I did not care to let him know what I thought. I made up my mind to get even with him; but how I did not know at the time. The opportunity offered itself sooner than I expected.

Shortly the two Indians paddled up the lake with part of the moose in their canoe. While watching them the Indian never said a word about it; neither did I. This was conclusive as to my suspicions. Turning to me, he said: "This will be a nice evening for calling. By the way, won't you let me take your gun along? I did not bring my rifle with me. A moose is rather a dangerous animal, and it would be better if both were armed."

I always made it a point when I engaged a guide to tell him that I would do the shooting if any shooting was to be done, and so save him lugging the rifle across the carries instead of something else. To his question I answered that buckshot would not penetrate the skin of the moose.

"Certainly not, but you can make a bullet that will fit your gun?"

After a moment's thought I consented to make a bullet, but before proceeding I interrogated him if he knew how