

Francis and
Riversdale Grenfell
A Memoir

BY
JOHN BUCHAN

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FRANCIS AND RIVY, AUGUST 1914.

other you have to pass through the chapel, only the altar being consecrated. . . . In a quarter of an hour one learns history by simply walking through these rooms. . . . It seems to me that people like the Cecils simply cannot help being clever; in each room are pictures of Prime Ministers, etc. Four of their ancestors have been Prime Ministers! . . . They fairly do teach their children. The Salisbury boy, aged eleven, has read nearly all the family papers. They have a little boy three years old, and I assure you he knows far more English poetry than me."

Francis, too, was not without his taste of society. He went to Calcutta for the Viceroy's Cup, saw the races from the Cooch Behar box, and dined with Lord Kitchener. "Bachelor dinner," he wrote, "and played pool afterwards. Met Hood,* who is in command of a battleship here. He's a proper good chap. Didn't care a damn for Lord K.; bellowed at him as if he was Jones. Such a change after frightened soldiers."

Rivy's devotion to duty was to be rewarded. On his return to the City he found that he could be spared for a couple of months, and on 3rd February he was in the Dover train on his way to India, "studying Burke on American Taxation."

Rivy's Indian trip was one of the most successful expeditions that ever fell to a young man's

* Rear-Admiral Hon. H. L. A. Hood, who went down in the *Invincible* at the Battle of Jutland.

soon got a long lead, and I got first spear. F. G. drew White and Learmouth. He rode 'Recluse' and cut out most of the work; but the pig jinked right back, and let in White, who got the spear.

" 29th March, Wednesday.

" A red-letter day for me. The line started at 8.30 for the semi-finals. Three heats were left in—two threes and a four. I was in the four heat, composed of Barrett (15th Hussars), Last, Neilson (4th Hussars), and myself. We were quite two and a half hours on the line, and had three false starts. At last we got away to a jinking pig. Last and I did most of the riding, with Barrett some way behind. Last nearly got a spear once, and we bumped unavoidably. The pig then jinked right back to Barrett, who was about to spear him, when I came up with a rush. The pig jinked across my front; he speared him very lightly behind, while I ran him through and broke my spear. The umpire said he would give it to Barrett if he could show blood, but luckily for me he couldn't. It would have been bad luck for me if I had lost this spear, as I did most of the riding. So I qualified for the final. 'Barmaid' went wonderfully, but got rather beat, as it was a severe heat.

" On returning to the line I was met by F. G. and General Mahon. F. G. then became stud groom. We took 'Barmaid' and let her stand in the river, and then she had three good rolls in the sand. After an hour's rest we started for the final—Pritchard (2nd Lancers) (on 'Toffee,' the horse which F. G. tried to get me for £100, but Pritchard would only sell 'Barmaid' for £40), Ritchie of the 15th, and myself. We soon got a good start on a pig, and I was on him first and drew some way to the front, and just got a spear as he jumped into a nullah. The mare jumped right over him and knocked the spear, which was smashed, out of my hand. The pig carried my spear some yards. It was a grand feeling as the spear ran into him to think I'd won the Kadir. Pritchard naturally appealed, as I'd dropped the spear, but the committee upheld the umpire's decision.

" In the afternoon the Hog-hunter's Cup, a point-to-point

over three and a half miles, was run, and F. G. won easily on 'Cocos,' going a line of his own the whole way. This rather made people stare, our carrying off the two chief events of the day. F. G. and I then went out and found the pig killed in the final which had been lost, and hacked thirteen miles to Gujraula and caught the train for Calcutta. . . . I went round to the Viceregal Lodge, and found Nipper Poynter as A.D.C. there. I shall never forget the look of astonishment on his face when I told him I'd won the Kadir."

So much for the interloping Rivy's performance in a "game he did not understand." The history of the Kadir Cup, and indeed of Indian sport, hardly contains a parallel. It was the first time that the Cup had left India. He spent the next few weeks shooting at Cooch Behar with the Maharajah and his sons, and had a variety of sport—tiger, rhino, and leopard. On the whole he thought Indian shooting overrated. "It is too civilized. 'To have been tiger-shooting' always sounded in my ears the same as to have gone through a battle and run great risks of one's life. It is not so. The meanest, most diminutive person might as easily shoot twenty tigers as the boldest and the fittest. Yet it is worth a very long journey to see the immense jungle, the elephants, and all the wild and delightful surroundings of the Indian forests." He also reflected a good deal on the difficult question of the education of Indian princes in England,

and came to the conclusion that Lord Curzon's policy of discouragement was right. On 22nd April he bade a sad farewell to Francis at Bombay, and on 5th May he was dining with Harry Rawlinson, Lord Lovat, and his brother Arthur in London.

Rivy spent most of May in his annual training with the Bucks Yeomanry. In that month of gorgeous weather he greatly enjoyed himself, and in his spare hours he started a polo club in the regiment. For the rest his main interest that summer was polo, and he and his brothers Cecil and Arthur played steadily all the season at Hurlingham and Roehampton. To tell the story of those matches would weary the reader, for of all games polo is the worst subject for the resurrectionist. An arid chronicle of strokes and goals achieved or missed cannot reproduce the glamour of those delectable days. A young man living in London and regularly playing polo recaptures the delights of school time. He is in the pink of bodily health, and, as a background to his work in office or chambers or barracks, has that happy world of greensward and glossy ponies, where of an afternoon and a Saturday he pursues a sport which combines the delicate expertness of the tennis court and the swift excitement of the