

The Shoot in Nepal.

THE KING AND THE NATIVE STATES.—MANY INVITATIONS EXTENDED.—THE SHOOT IN NEPAL.—PROMISE OF 1906 RENEWED.—DEATH OF THE MAHARAJ DHIRAJ.—THE SHOOTING COUNTRY.—HAUNT OF RHINOCEROS AND TIGER.—THE MAHARAJAH'S PREPARATIONS.—LUXURY IN THE JUNGLE.—ROYAL SPORT ENJOYED.—THE KING'S FINE SHOOTING.—THE BAG.—THE QUEEN IN RAJPUTANA.—VISITS TO JAIPUR, AJMERE, BUNDI AND KOTAH.—AN OLD-WORLD STATE.—THE KING AND QUEEN RE-UNITED.—ENTHUSIASM IN NORTH BEHAR.

S soon as the visit of Their Imperial Majesties was officially announced, the Ruling Princes vied with each other in offers of hospitality. But the position made acceptance of them an impossibility. The time at the disposal of His Majesty was extremely short—just the brief interval between the Durbar and the visit to Calcutta necessary to allow the Governor-General and others to assemble in Calcutta—and if one or two invitations only had been accepted, the distinction would not have been happy. But one State stood in an exceptional position. The kingdom of Nepal, which stands on the North-East Frontier of India—our buffer between India and China—is not a feudatory State but an independent kingdom in close and firm alliance with Great Britain. It is well nigh isolated from contact with Western civilization, for no Englishmen live there except the Resident and his suite, and travel in Nepal is barred to the Englishman without the special permit of the Foreign Office. It was arranged that His Majesty should visit Nepal when he was in India in 1906, and preparations were made for such a shoot as is given only to kings. But the fates were unpropitious, and just before His Majesty was due, cholera broke out amongst the beaters, the projected visit had to be abandoned, and the Prince of Wales passed the interval in his tour (which should have been spent in Nepal) as the guest of the Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior.

The disappointment in Nepal was acute, and none felt it more than His Highness the Maharajah Sir Chandra Shamsher Jung Rana Bahadur. Two years later His Highness visited England—an experience which had none but the happiest results; he returned to India deeply appreciative of the splendid hospitality extended to him and with the alliance between Britain and Nepal, if possible, still more firmly cemented. But the abandoned visit of 1906 remained an unsatisfied aspiration, and as soon as it was known that His Majesty would come to India to announce in person his Coronation to his Indian people, the Nepal Durbar extended to him a pressing invitation to fulfil the promise of six years before. To the delight of the State the invitation was accepted, and elaborate preparations were made to receive His Majesty on a scale fitting the occasion. But again the stars in their courses fought against the visit. The Maharaj Dhiraj of Nepal, who had been suffering from cirrhosis of the liver since July, died on December 11th. To make the position quite clear, a reference to the polity of Nepal is necessary. The titular ruler of the State is the Maharaj Dhiraj, but all power and authority really centre in the Prime Minister, now Sir Chandra Shamsher, a present day parallel to the position of the Mikado under the Shogunate. But before he passed away, the Maharaj Dhiraj expressed an earnest wish that nothing, not even his demise, should interfere with the shoot, and the Prime Minister indicated his own desire and that of his people when he conveyed the hope that His Majesty would carry out his intention of visiting Nepal, as it would be a great disappointment if the

Durbar were deprived for a second time of the honour of receiving the King Emperor. Inasmuch as the mourning was over in accordance with Shastric injunctions and precedent before the King was due, and the succession was announced, His Majesty yielded to the wishes of the Nepalese Royal family and decided to fulfil his engagement.

In the popular imagination Nepal is a kingdom of mountains, the home of the Gurkhas who form such a fine element in the Indian Army, with the capital of Khat-



A MISTY MORNING IN THE NEPAL JUNGLE.

mandu perched in the midst of well-nigh inaccessible peaks. But that is only one aspect of Nepal. Where the hills meet the plain is a belt of deep jungle, known generically as the Terai, a belt of swamp and forest, malarious during the rainy season and the months immediately following, but a sportman's paradise when the swamps have dried, for this is the haunt of elephant and rhinoceros, of tiger and leopard. This was the scene of the Imperial shoot, and it affords such sport as only India and perhaps East Africa can show. The nearest point on the railway to the shooting camps was the little wayside station of Bikna Thori, ordinarily utilised for the reception of the timber which comes down from the forests of the Terai. The Nepal boundary is distant a quarter of a mile in the bed of a large boulder-

Ernest Brooks.

THE ROAD TO THE SHOOTING GROUND.

strewn river. The road to the camp lay right through the forest, being, in fact, a clearing itself, following for the greater part of the way the banks of rivers. Beginning with a slow climb, then gradually easing into the plains, this road wound in and out of dense jungle, amid tall and stately *sal* trees as symmetrically arranged as if they had been artificially planted, with all the mystery of the forest in their depths, but with many a patch of open verdure and smiling yellow flowers. Thirty miles of scenery of this character, with ever-varying glimpses of the distant hills, led to the first shooting camp at Sukhibho, on the banks of the River Rapti, which flowed in a gentle

THE ROYAL ELEPHANT FORCING A PASSAGE THROUGH THE DENSE FOREST GROWTHS.



curve at the foot of the encampment, skirted by flowering pampas and trees of mighty size, with the hills rising tier on tier until overtopped by the mighty Himalayas. Seven miles farther on was the Kasra Camp, reached by a motor track, even more picturesquely situated on the banks of the Rapti. Here the high grass of the jungle ran right down to the river bank and was known to teem with rhinoceros. Indeed, during the period of preparation they were often seen in the morning and evening coming down to the river to drink and bathe. Tigers too were numerous in the drier forest all around, and wild boar, marsh deer, sambhur and wild elephant were also plentiful.



CARRYING OFF THE SPOIL.

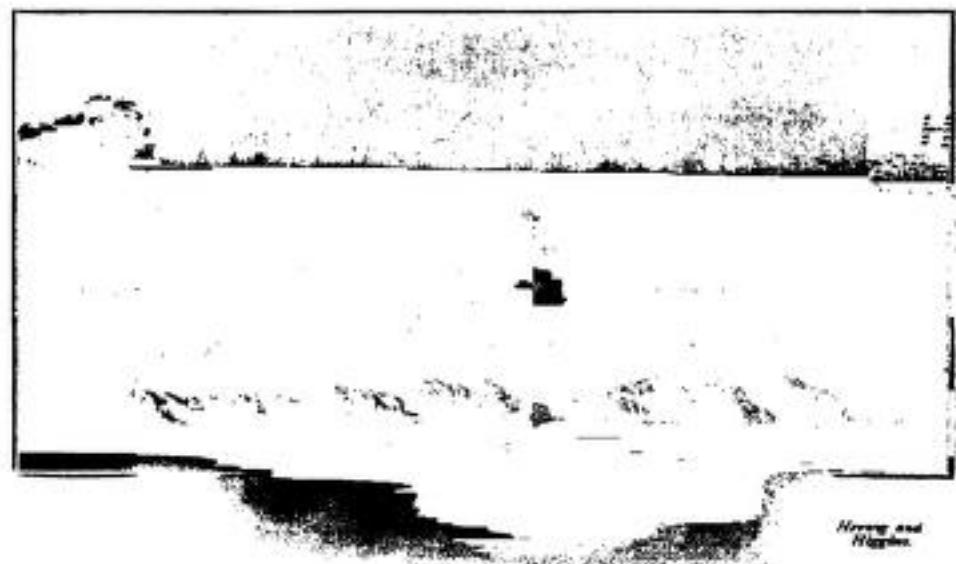
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It was difficult for those who first visited the scene when the King and his suite arrived to realize all that had to be done before this perfection was reached. When the engineers and road-makers and tent-pitchers commenced, there was nothing but the tiny station of Bhikna Thori and the jungle, part of the reserved forest of the Nepal Durbar. The station was enlarged, the river bridged, and a road made through the jungle which brought the camp at



Sukhibho within two hours by motor of the rail-head. There the Royal Camp was pitched in a huge open meadow, the grass of which was sown and tended until it was almost a lawn. Here was the King's shooting box, a house with the comforts almost the luxuries of an English country seat, with electric light, hot and cold water, telephones and telegraphs. The camp for the King's Staff and attendants was pitched near the shooting box. The Nepal Camp, where resided the Maharajah, with the elephants, retainers, soldiers and shikaris, was about a mile distant, also on the river bank. At Kasra the jungle grew right up to the wire fence which encircled each camp to prevent any too inquisitive beast from pursuing his investigations of the tents which had sprung up—tents which offered to the guests all the amenities of civilization amidst the haunts of rhino and tigers.

The prospects of sport could not have been better, and with reason the Maharajah anticipated an extraordinary bag of rhino and tiger. The methods followed in tiger shooting are these. Buffaloes are tied up in likely places, and if a kill is reported, the tiger, or even a family of tigers, may be relied upon to lie up in the vicinity. The Nepalese shikaries are extremely skilful in determining the whereabouts of tiger. These having been ascertained, the spot is ringed with elephants—there were six hundred collected for the purpose



A SPLENDID BAG: 7 TIGERS, 2 RHINOS, 2 BEARS.

*Hunting and
Hippopotamus*

TIGERS BREAKING COVER DURING THE BEAT.



of the shoot—and the circle gradually narrows. During this process the tiger generally shows himself, and his exact whereabouts are marked down. The elephant carrying the principal "gun" is posted near the spot, and one or two fighting elephants enter the ring to drive the beast toward the "gun." On occasions a whole family of tigers is found within the ring and then the sport becomes fast and furious. With rhino the methods are quite different. 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 track of a really big bull. 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 the rhino's body, and it is very difficult to get the beast to present the head or neck for a deadly shot.

To these scenes and with these prospects His Majesty proceeded from Delhi. He left his special train at Dighaghat station, where he crossed the Ganges so that he might obtain a view of Patna, the capital of the new Province of Behar. He arrived at Bhikna Thori on the morning of December

the 18th, where he was met by Maharajah Sir Chandra Shamsher Jung, and motored at once to the camp at Sukhibho. The ten days which followed were days of unalloyed delight. The sport was magnificent. The bag reached thirty-nine tigers, eighteen rhinos and four bears. Of the tigers, the largest number, twenty-one, and the biggest in size, fell to the King's rifle, as well as ten rhinos and two bears. King George's bag of tigers thus surpassed by sixteen that of King Edward when he visited Nepal as Prince of Wales. The day's sport was always interesting, the arrangements were perfect, and

Hunting and Hisses.

A FINE HEAD.



Great Break.

STARTING FROM CAMP.

His Majesty entered into the spirit of the sport with a keenness and zest which must have been sharpened by the long round of State ceremonials at Delhi. His Majesty's skill as a shot is well known, and was never better shown than when he laid low tiger after tiger with swift and unerring aim.

The shooting camp was broken by two pleasant interludes. On the way to Bhikna Thori His Majesty halted at Arrah, and after morning Church informally inspected the Behar Light Horse, who were in camp. He then motored to Arrah House, and visited the scenes made memorable by the stubborn defence maintained during the Mutiny. In a succession of melancholy events in Bengal, the defence of Arrah stands boldly out; for there a handful of Englishmen and fifty Sikhs under the hero Boyle defended the house with its rude and improvised protection against four Native Regiments of mutineers, until they were relieved by Major Eyre's column. On the following Sunday there was another interlude. The Maharajah had assembled a remarkable collection of the manufactures and products of Nepal, including exquisitely carved tusks, gold, silver and brocade work, and quite a menagerie of animals, including some rare specimens for presentation to His Majesty. In the afternoon the King made a close inspection of these treasures. In the evening the Nepalese officers of note, led by Senior Commanding General, Joodha Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, brother to the Maharajah, and the smart and youthful sons of His Highness, General Mohan Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, Lieut.-General Babar Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, Lieut.-General Kaiser Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, the husband of the Princess Royal of Nepal, now the Crown Princess, Major-General Shingha Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, the husband of the Second Princess of Nepal, were presented to His Majesty. The Maharajah himself was honoured with a G.C.V.O., his brother General Bhim Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, the Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, was awarded the K.C.V.O. Many as were the honours conferred by His Majesty none was better deserved than that of His Highness Maharajah Sir Chandra Shamsher. Sir Chandra's reputation as an able administrator is well known. He has opened a new epoch in the history of Nepal by introducing social and administrative reforms and by developing the economic possibilities of the country by hydro-electric installations and in other ways. It is he who has, in a sense, made modern Nepal, where peace and order have come to reign in the place of disorder and panic. Great Britain has no more trusty ally.

Whilst His Majesty was enjoying the sport of kings in Nepal, the Queen Empress was renewing her impressions of the most romantic part of India—the land of the brave and chivalrous Rajputs. A brief halt was made at Agra, where Her Majesty revisited the Taj Mahal and the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra, and motored to Fatehpur Sikri—perhaps the greatest memorial of the splendour and capriciousness of Moghul rule. For Akbar deserted his new capital before the building of it was complete, and it stands to-day, every stone stamped with the impress of his soaring spirit, well nigh as perfect as when he abandoned it, three centuries ago, to the vulture and the jackal.

*Herzog and Higgison*

IN THE HIGH GRASS BY THE RIVER BANK.

From Agra a short railway journey brought Her Imperial Majesty to Jaipur, where the Maharajah was proud indeed to welcome her again to his capital. Clad in his richest robes and wearing priceless pearls, His Highness met the Queen Empress at the station, and laid his jewelled tulwar at her feet in token of fealty. The scenes which met the Queen Empress must have vividly recalled to her memory the progress through Rajputana six years before. For here were all the surroundings of the India of the Middle Ages, of which no more than a passing glimpse was afforded at Delhi on the day of the State

Entry, when the Native Chiefs passed in procession. A band of Nagas in aigretted turbans and green jerkins, with painted legs, preceded the carriage, brandishing their swords and performing their weird gyrations. Matchlock men with ancient muzzle-loading guns, spearmen in saffron and green, camelry carrying swivel guns, and gorgeously caparisoned bullocks drawing tiny field pieces lined the road, whilst forty noble elephants, painted to the eyes, with their jhools sweeping the ground, completed the oriental note. The song of praise which was raised by a choir of schoolboys also showed that, although the romanticism of India is becoming increasingly a thing of the past, nevertheless it lives, for they sang in Sanskrit a hymn whose principal stanzas may be rendered in these words :—

- “ Hail Empress, hail ! Your most Excellent Majesty has taken a great vow to protect Your Majesty’s subjects. So the star of Your Gracious Majesty’s fortune has reached to unparalleled height. O Empress, victory be with you.”
- “ Hail Empress, hail ! The ocean of Your Gracious Majesty’s nectarlike mercy is within the reach of everybody at all times. O Empress, victory be with you.”
- “ Hail Empress, hail ! As the moon makes the lotus to bloom with joy, so doth Your Royal Majesty’s charming presence delight the very heart of Your Excellent Majesty’s loyal subjects ; and we all in one voice pray the Almighty God to confer His blessing on your Imperial Majesty and on our Most Gracious Majesty the King Emperor. O Empress, victory be with you.”

It was not Jaipur alone, however, which attracted Her Majesty. “ The Pink City ” has a charm of its own : the broad streets laid out on the chessboard principle and the rose-red crenellated walls and houses have a bizarre novelty unique in India ; but if it is not vandalism to say so, it is a meretricious attraction which soon fades. For picturesqueness and historic association the traveller must leave Jaipur for Amber, the ancient capital of the State, five miles from the modern town, a deserted but not a ruined city standing at the mouth of a rocky mountain gorge amid scenery of exquisite beauty. For Amber was the seat of the Kachhwaha Rajputs from the eleventh century until Jai Singh deserted it for his new capital in 1728, and the old palace, still in a state of excellent preservation, ranks second only to that of Gwalior as a specimen of Rajput architecture. The Queen Empress visited the palace in the morning, when the view of its fine walls, mirrored in the

lake at the foot of the rocky pinnacle from which it springs, is lovely. In the evening the Nagas danced their frenzied measures by the light of torches in the gardens of the Residency, performing too feats of swordsmanship reminiscent of the days when they were a terror in the State. Her Majesty left a happy people when she quitted Jaipur for Ajmere—not the less happy because the Maharajah, in honour of the occasion, remitted fifty lakhs of the arrears of land revenue.

Her Majesty returned to British India for a day at Ajmere. When Rajputana passed under British protection in 1818, the Government of the day assumed actual control over a small area, Ajmere-Merwara, which constitutes an island of British India in a sea of Native States. Here are to be found solid evidences of British rule like a college for the sons of the Rajput Chiefs, a bustling trade and the workshops of a great railway, cheek by jowl with architectural monuments dating back to the earliest history of India. Each in turn attracted the attention of the Queen Empress. A visit was paid to the Mayo College, where the cadets of the Ruling Houses receive an education modelled on that of an English public school, and to the pretty Pushkar Lake. Then Her Majesty drove to the Arhai-din-ka-jhonpra (the shed of two and a half days), a Jain temple converted into a mosque by Kutab-ud-din in two and a half days, where one of the finest specimens of early Mahomedan architecture is superposed upon the work of the Jains, and took tea in the pavilion built by Jahangier overlooking the Ana Sagar Lake.

It was a transition indeed from Ajmere to Bundi, for the capital of this little State is the last complete and living survival of mediæval India. Standing ninety miles from the railway, Bundi has been almost untouched by western influence; it takes us right back to the sixteenth century, for here the people still live and move and have their being in the fashion of the storied past. Once inside the four gateways that alone pierce the crenellated walls of the city there is scarce an evidence of the impact of the Occident. "Great lumbering bullock carts from the country creak and groan over ill-paved streets; a huge elephant picks his way daintily through the crowded bazaars, where closely-veiled women are chattering merrily over their bargains; worshippers, male and female, pause for a moment as they pass in front of a favourite shrine, sometimes a mere uncouth figure of the elephant-headed Ganesh, smeared all over with a red, oily pigment, sometimes a stately temple of Shiva or of the Great Goddess, with delicately carved columns and strange tales of Hindu deities unfolded in relief upon the wall. Wild Bhils, some-

His HIGHNESS THE MAHARAO RAJU RAGHUTURSINGJI BAHADUR OF BUNDI,
G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., G.C.V.O.



what scantily clad, from the hills, open-mouthed peasants from the country-side, and townfolk of the lower castes step respectfully aside when the lordly Rajput comes along, bearing himself always as one born to rule." But the chief glory of Bundi is the palace, approached by a steep path leading through an arched gateway whence an interminable series of courts, crowded with retainers and servitors, leads to the marble halls where the Maharajah, who is the head of the Chauhan Rajputs, still discharges all his public and ceremonial duties with the pomp and circumstance of ancient tradition. The advent of the Queen Empress at this old-word city produced an ineffaceable impression. The people crowded in the streets and on the housetops, wherever a passing glimpse of the Rani Sahiba could be gleaned, excited, joyous, orderly, for were not their lives purified at viewing the sacred *darshan* of the Queen Empress?

Yet another Rajputana State, Kotah, claimed Her Majesty before these happy interludes came to an end. Then the Queen Empress left Kotah, halting at Guna to review the 38th Central India Horse and to take tea with the officers, on December 28th, and His Majesty broke camp at Kasra on the same day, the King and Queen meeting at Bankipore where they joined their special train for Calcutta. The scenes which sped His Majesty from North Behar were significant of the impression made by the Royal Visit on Indians who live simple and isolated lives. The people of all classes crowded so thickly along the line and at every wayside station that it was impossible for His Majesty to rest. At Pahleza Ghat, where the King had to cross the Ganges by steamer, the whole countryside was assembled, and when His Majesty was seen there was a great cry of *Jai Ho Badshah ki jai-ho ! Bharat Samrat ki jai-ho*. As the King bowed his thanks, the crowd surged forward and the aged raised their hands to heaven whilst tears of joy poured down their wrinkled cheeks.

