

MEN  
WOMEN AND THINGS

*MEMORIES OF*  
THE DUKE OF PORTLAND  
K.G., G.C.V.O.

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## X. SHOOTING

**T**he two best game shots I ever met were undoubtedly, in my opinion, the late Lord Ripon, formerly Lord de Grey, and Sir Harry Stonor, both wonderfully good with either gun or rifle. In discussing shooting it was never necessary to ask whether de Grey or Stonor was 'in form', for neither of them ever seemed to be 'out of form'. I think Stonor, until his eyes unfortunately and sadly failed him, was the most graceful handler of a gun I ever saw, though perhaps during the day's shooting he did not kill quite so much as did de Grey. I think de Grey killed about twenty-five birds to Stonor's twenty; but for all that, I do not believe that Stonor missed more shots than de Grey, if as many.

I remember four extremely high birds passing over de Grey on the Groveley beat at Wilton, where the birds fly exceptionally high. He killed the first three quite dead, and I said to myself, 'The fourth has escaped.' But no!—It came down quite as dead as the others. One remarkable thing about de Grey's shooting was that one hardly ever saw a bird even flutter after he had fired at it. I knew him exceedingly well, for in 1882 I went to India with him when his father was Viceroy, and we shot together in Nepal and Durbungah (see Chapter XI). He was very often my guest at Welbeck for partridge and pheasant shooting. I append a list he gave me of the game he killed between 1867 and 1900.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rhinoceros	-	-	-	2
Tiger -	-	-	-	11
Buffalo	-	-	-	12
Sambur	-	-	-	19
Pig -	-	-	-	97



De Grey, I believe, was always accurate when asked the amount of game he had killed, and he did not exaggerate. I remember quite well that after a partridge drive my agent, Mr. T. Warner Turner, asked him how many birds he had killed. He counted the empty cartridge cases, of which there were fourteen, and said, 'I have killed thirteen birds.' Mr. Turner told the keeper, whose duty it was to pick up the dead game, to report to him the number of birds he found where de Grey had been shooting, and when he had done so he told Mr. Turner that there were thirteen.

De Grey was a very fair shot indeed, and never wilfully took the birds going to another gun; but woe betide the man who attempted any liberties with *him*, or who, he thought, tried to take his birds! I remember that a friend shot some birds which should have passed over de Grey. I heard de Grey call out, 'All right, Harry,<sup>1</sup> all right. Two can play at that game!'—*Bang! Bang! Bang!*—and very little went to Harry after that! I once had the ill luck to be drawn between de Grey and Stonor during a day's partridge driving, and a very bad place it was too; for, except the birds that came straight over my head, I had little or no shooting. I think they were the only two guns I have constantly shot with who never, or at all events very rarely, varied in their

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Deer -	-	-	-	-	186
Red Deer -	-	-	-	-	382
Grouse -	-	-	-	-	56,460
Partridges -	-	-	-	-	97,759
Pheasants -	-	-	-	-	142,343
Woodcock -	-	-	-	-	2,218
Snipe -	-	-	-	-	2,769
Wild Duck -	-	-	-	-	1,612
Black Game	-	-	-	-	94
Capercaillie	-	-	-	-	45
Hares -	-	-	-	-	27,686
Rabbits -	-	-	-	-	29,858
Various -	-	-	-	-	9,175
					<u>370,728</u>

The rhinoceroses mentioned at the head of the list must be those I saw him kill dead, right and left, with a four-bore rifle, from the back of an elephant in Nepal.

<sup>1</sup>It was not Harry Stonor: he would have known much better!



## XI. TOURS ABROAD

HAVING heard a great deal about his visit to India from my brother-officer in the Coldstream, Jacko Durham, who had spent the previous winter there, and being deeply interested in our Eastern Empire because my great uncle Lord William Bentinck had been Governor of Madras (1803-1807), and afterwards (1827-1835) a very distinguished Governor-General of India under John Company, I determined to go there myself. Most fortunately it turned out that Lord de Grey, the eldest son of Lord Ripon, the then Viceroy, Lord Charles Beresford, Lord Wenlock, and Lord de Grey's friend Wilfred Greenwood were going there. Lord de Grey most kindly invited me to join this little party.

We left London about the middle of December, 1882, and travelled overland, having a rough crossing from Brindisi to Alexandria, and then through the Suez Canal, to Bombay. We spent a few days there as guests of the Governor, Sir James Ferguson, at Parel, a suburb in which the Governor then lived during the winter months, passing the summer at Malabar Point, which is now the official residence. We visited the island of Elephanta and other places of interest. Lord de Grey and Lord and Lady Charles Beresford then went by train to Calcutta, where Wilfred Greenwood and I joined them, after visiting Ajmir, Jaipur, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Delhi and other places on our way. A grand shoot and *tamasha* had been arranged in Nepal for the Viceroy, Lord Ripon; but at the last moment he was unable to go, because of a serious crisis which had arisen on account of the Ilbert Bill, which, if passed, would, I believe, have given native magistrates power to try and punish





PORTLAND AND AILWYN FELLOWES  
DURBUNGAH





MY TIGER  
DURBUNGAH



Europeans. The protests against this Bill assumed such large and dangerous proportions that certain tea-planters in Assam even threatened to kidnap the Viceroy. Fortunately the Military Secretary, Lord William Beresford, V.C.,<sup>1</sup> had great influence with these fine sportsmen, for he had often been their guest for pig-sticking; and he pointed out how extremely foolish their intentions were. On this account the Viceroy was unable to visit Nepal; so Lord de Grey went in his place, taking us with him.

We travelled a long way by train, and were then driven by young tea-planters in tandem dog-carts to the borders of Nepal, where we were met by the Nepalese elephants, on which we rode to a vast camp on the Rapti River. There we found the Maharajah of Nepal, Sir Runudeep Singh, ready to receive us. He of course had his own camp, and another, most luxurious camp was provided for us. There were no less than seven hundred elephants. Soon after we arrived a heavy thunderstorm took place, and it rained in torrents for about twenty-four hours, until the whole camp was a quagmire. The camp was beautifully situated, and in the early morning we had a wonderful view of the Himalayas, with Mount Everest towering in the background; but after about 6 o'clock it was obscured by haze. The surrounding jungle swarmed with all sorts of game: wild elephant, rhinoceros, tiger, panther, every kind of wild deer and wild boar.

With the Maharajah was Mr. Girdlestone, the British Resident at Katmandu. He had a dear little pet-dog, which was allowed to lick the blood of the dead tigers. Tiger's blood is supposed to give courage and ferocity; but, so far as I could see, it had no more effect upon him than the blood of a rabbit!

<sup>1</sup>Bill Beresford held the important post of Military Secretary to the Viceroy. He was always very kind to me and, in fact, to us all. As is well known, he was not only a great sportsman but also a most gallant soldier, having gained the Victoria Cross at the battle of Ulundi, during the Zulu war. After serving in the 9th Lancers he became A.D.C. and later Military Secretary to the Viceroy. He was altogether the right man in the right place, and most useful to Lord Ripon in every way. He was a first-class pig-sticker—in fact he was *facile princeps* in every form of sport. If one placed oneself in Bill's hands in India, one was certain of a warm welcome wherever one went, and of having the best sport that could be obtained.

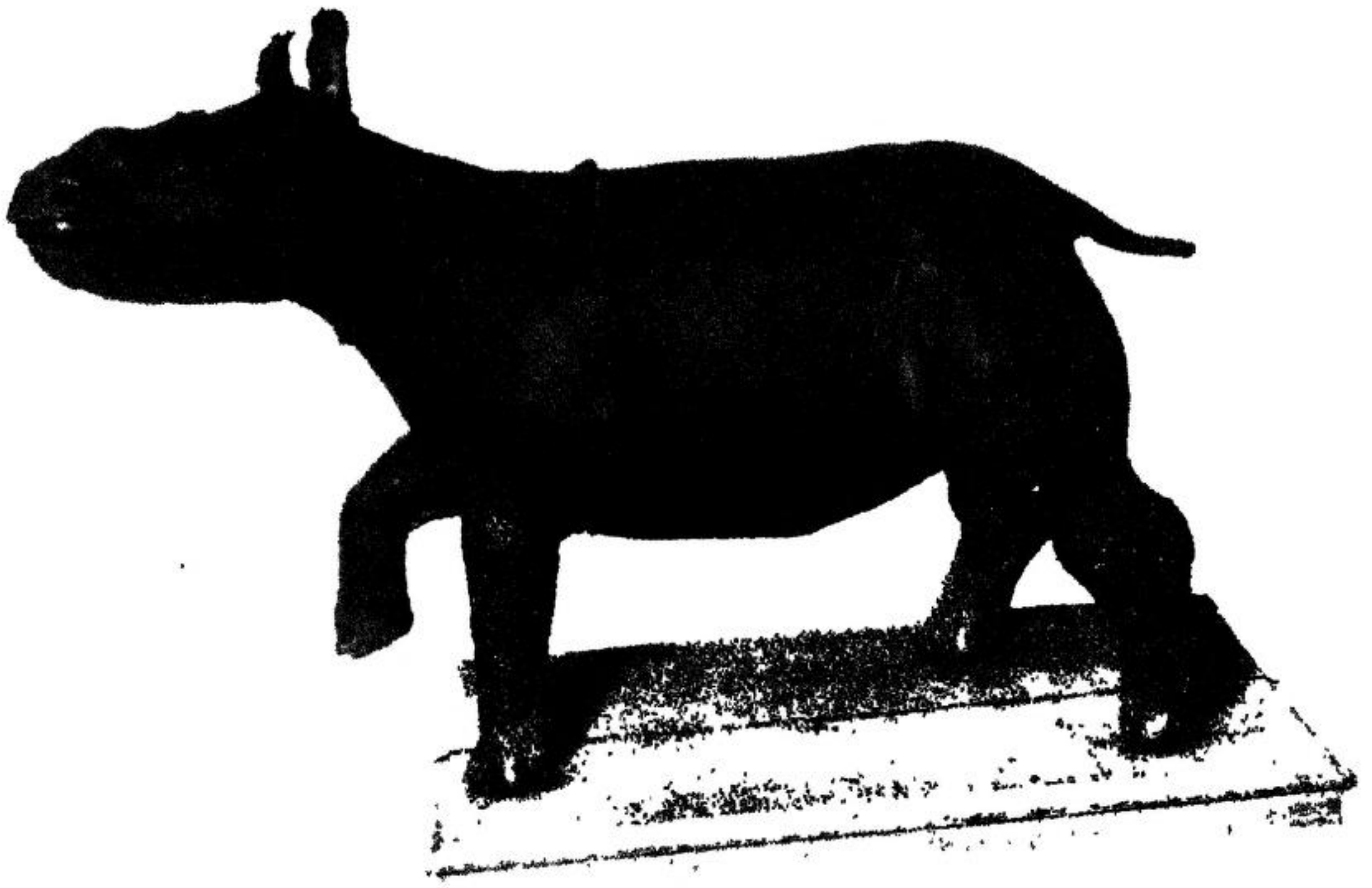


A regiment of Ghurka Infantry was stationed at the camp, with its band, which played to us in the evenings. It was most amusing to watch the Regiment ford the river and streams. The men sat on the bank, and were ordered to remove their boots and trousers; they then crossed over, the bandsmen carrying their instruments on their heads; and they put their clothes on again on the further bank. The effect of the red coats and naked brown legs was most quaint and amusing.

The method of shooting tiger was for the elephants to drive in a vast circle of the jungle and, having done so, form a ring at least two deep. I remember that once there were three tigers in the ring, besides some wild boars. My friends and I rode howdah-elephants, and when the ring was formed we took it in turns to search for the tiger. When the tiger was found, it generally gave a wild roar and charged at the elephant, and then was the chance to shoot it. The elephants forming the ring seemed much more afraid of the pigs than of the tigers. I saw a boar charge the ring, stampede the elephants and get right through. Another smaller boar, attempting the same tactics, got between an elephant's legs, and he kicked it out just as if it were a football. It did not seem to me that there was any danger whatever in shooting a tiger in this way because, however much he might maul the poor elephant, he never managed to reach the howdah.

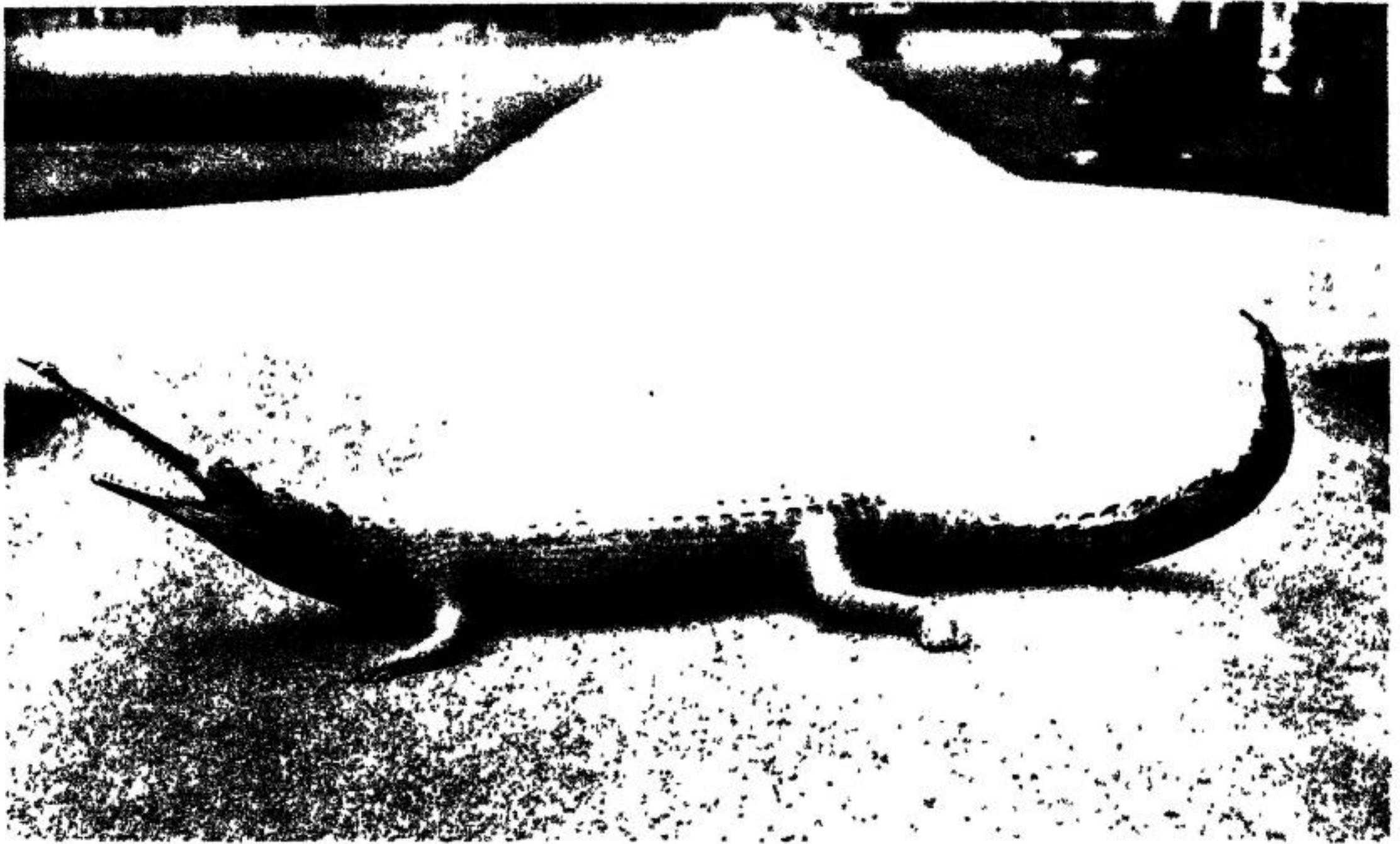
The rhinoceros hunting was more interesting and to my mind much more sportsmanlike. We used fewer elephants than when we were after tiger, marching along in a line through the dense jungle; and when the rhinoceros was found the fun began. Of our seven hundred elephants there were only two which were really staunch—that is, which would not run away if the rhinoceros charged, as it usually did; and we took it in turns to ride them. The rhino I killed charged my elephant, and I was lucky enough to kill it with one shot from my four-bore rifle. When it was lying dead on the ground I noticed something struggling behind it, and found that it was a baby rhino. Charlie Beresford and I tried to catch it alive; but it was much





MAMA AND BABY





CROC.



TAKING HIS BATH, NEPAL



too strong for us, and our friends shouted to us to get back on to our elephants as there were two more rhinos close by, which had been attracted by the squeals of the young one. Knowing that the baby would die without its mother, we shot it. Another time a rhino charged the line of elephants, rushed through our adjacent camp, knocked down one of the tents and escaped through the river.

The most interesting episode of all was a hunt after a large wild elephant with one tusk, which was reported to be in the neighbourhood. Mounted on pad elephants, we left the camp at about 5 o'clock in the morning and, after some time, found the tusker, which made off with our pad elephants in pursuit. The young Nepalese princes stood bare-footed on the backs and heads of the elephants they were riding, to keep the tusker in view, as we crashed through the jungle, knocking down small trees and plunging in and out of nullahs. It was quite extraordinary how the Ghurkas rode and controlled the elephants. Every animal, besides being ridden by a mahout, carried a grass cutter on its tail. The grass cutter was armed with a spiked mallet, and with this he compelled the poor old *hathi*, as the mahout calls the elephant, to go as fast as it could—which, after all, was not more than about five miles an hour. It was a very risky ride for an unpractised passenger, for as we crashed along we had to shift from one side of the pad to the other, to avoid overhanging trees. After several hours' pursuit, and covering about 18 miles of country, the wild elephant stopped and a ring was at once formed around him. He made two or three rather half-hearted charges, and appeared very exhausted. After about an hour our two fighting elephants, one of which, reputed to be the biggest elephant in India, was named *Bijlī Pāsh* (which I believe means Scatterer of Lightning), entered the ring and butted the poor wild elephant until he gave in, when a noose was fastened to his hind legs and he was tied to a tree. Two female elephants were left with him to console him. In about a fortnight's time he arrived in the camp with his lady friends, and before we went away he had begun to carry a mahout, though of course he was not yet thoroughly trained.

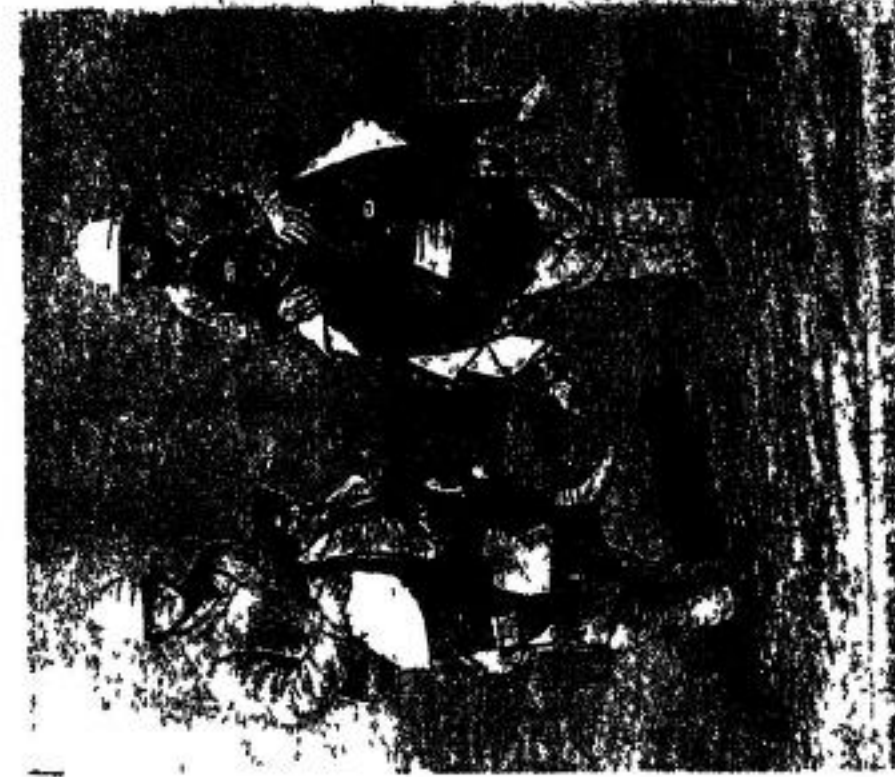


One day, after we had shot a tiger, an individual prepared his camera to photograph it, while we ate our lunch. When we finished our meal and the photographer went to take the picture, he found that a swarm of bees had settled on the camera, and he dared not approach it. I may say that one of the dangers of jungle shooting is an attack by a swarm of bees; so we were advised to have a travelling-rug ready in the howdah, with which to protect our heads and shoulders in case of attack. The natives use their turbans for this purpose. Needless to say we all wore topis, and a quilted pad to protect our necks and backs; for it was very hot indeed during the day, though cool at night.

Nepal has always remained an independent State; and though we recruit Ghurka regiments from there, I believe our recruiting officers did not then enter the country—perhaps they do not do so now—but were stationed at the frontier. Some of these Ghurkas are born and bred in the different regiments. The King of Nepal lives a retired life, the government of the country being carried on by a family of hereditary Maharajahs. The then Maharajah, Sir Runudeep Singh, was a brother of the famous Jung Bahadur, of whom a romantic story is related. A few years before the Mutiny, Jung Bahadur visited England, where he became a great friend and admirer of Laura Bell,<sup>1</sup> a beautiful woman of the time. After leaving England, he sent her a splendid ring, and with it a note in which he said that if ever she required his help she had only to send him the ring, and he would do anything he could for her. When the Mutiny broke out in 1857, Laura Bell told this story to a friend whom I knew very well, and he went to the India Office, taking the ring and Jung Bahadur's letter with him. These were sent to India, with a written request from Laura that the Nepalese Government should either join the British or remain neutral. The Nepalese did remain neutral, and the Ghurka regiments faithful to the British *Raj*. When the Mutiny was over they made an end of the mutineers who had fled into the Nepalese Terai. Among these was said to be the notorious Nana Sahib, who massacred

<sup>1</sup>Daughter of Captain R. H. Bell of Bellbrook, Co. Antrim.





THE RESIDENT'S HORSES



AT OPEN COURT - THE THROPPES OF THE CHAIR



THE RESIDENT'S HORSES



NEPAL, 1883



THE RESIDENT'S HORSES

NEPAL, 1883  
 The central group includes (*left to right*) Maharajah Sir Runudeep Singh, de Grey, Wenlock, Portland, Wilfred Greenwood and Charlie Beresford.



the women and children at Cawnpore, and flung their bodies into a well. Laura Bell, after a good many vicissitudes, married Mr. Thistlethwayte and lived in Grosvenor Square. She became very devout and philanthropic, and Mr. Gladstone attended religious and other meetings at her house. I used to see her as an old lady, and often admired pictures of her in her lovely youth.

We spent six very happy and interesting weeks in Nepal, where I believe that, besides other game, our bag was fourteen tigers and eight rhinoceros. When we left, we went by boat along the Rapti River and had good fun shooting at the crocodiles lying on the bank. I include a photograph of one which I secured. On the way home from our day's sport I often saw big muggers lying in the stagnant ponds. I used to see their heads and eyes and fire at them. One of those we killed contained a woman's bangles, so we thought it quite legitimate to shoot them.

The Ghurkas are extraordinarily brave little men. When we were encamped on the bank of a tributary of the Rapti, we heard a tremendous hullabaloo one morning; and, going to see what it was, we found the Ghurkas killing a croc with their kukris. It appears that they had bathed daily in the river although they knew the reptile was there. For a few days the croc behaved itself, but at last it attacked one of them, and then seven or eight more rushed into the water and cut it to pieces.

Polly Carew gave me a splendid instance of the dash and bravery of the Ghurkas. When serving on Lord Roberts's staff he was present at an attack, made chiefly by the Highland Regiments, upon a valley on the way to Kabul. The Afghans were in a strong position on the hill-sides, and were firing under cover of the boulders.

The Highlanders opened the attack, when suddenly there appeared among them a little Ghurka sergeant. He ran two or three hundred yards in advance of our troops, stalked the Afghans who were sniping from behind the rocks, poked them out with his bayonet, and, as each tribesman ran to find fresh cover, shouted, 'Kill, sahib! Kill!' throwing himself flat on his face.

At the end of the valley was a fort, with a gun in it. Still



well in front of the line, the little Ghurka rushed the gun and bayoneted two of the crew. He then took his cap off and, thrusting it down the muzzle of the gun, shouted, 'This is my gun. I claim it for my Regiment,' after which he sat straddle-legged across it, threatening everyone who came near with his bayonet.

When Lord Roberts arrived, the little sergeant was still in possession. Lord Roberts was very much astonished to see him, as his regiment was not in action on that occasion; but when Polly explained the situation he laughed and said, 'What a little hero! I suppose, strictly speaking, he ought to be court-martialled for absenting himself from his regiment. But I will make that all right for him; and of course he shall have his gun.'

Polly told me that during the occupation of Kandahar the Ghurkas made great friends with the Highland Regiments, particularly the Gordon Highlanders, as they considered they were hill-men like themselves. One day he saw a big, brawny sergeant of the Gordon Highlanders and a tiny Ghurka sergeant, apparently bargaining with a tall Afghan. To Polly's astonishment the Ghurka suddenly flew at the Afghan and knocked him down. Polly asked the Ghurka why he had done so, and he replied, pointing to the Afghan, 'That dirty blackguard tried to cheat my friend, so I put him on his back.'

Reverting to our tour, Charlie Beresford had a dangerous experience with a python. He came across a very large one, curled up and apparently asleep. Not having his rifle with him, Charlie recklessly attacked it with a kukri, and fortunately gave the python so deep a cut as to injure its spine.

One day one of the elephants sank into a morass, lost its head, and became unmanageable. We contrived to rescue the mahout and the occupants of the howdah, and then threw faggots to the elephant, which arranged them under its feet, thus getting a foothold, and eventually extricated itself. All this time the mahout encouraged it, sometimes with endearing names, and sometimes with strong and hearty curses.

On leaving Nepal we were invited to a shooting party by the Maharajah of Durbungah where, as in Nepal, game simply



swarmed. We had nothing like the same number of elephants, but those we used were staunch and good. Both the Maharajah and his Resident, Colonel Money, were very kind and hospitable. As usual there were two camps, one for the Maharajah and another for his guests. Our bag was as follows:

DATE	Ground	Tigers	Buffaloes	Pigs	Deer	Hares	Floriken	Partridges	Quails	Snipe	Ducks
March 1	Birmah		7	32	39	1		137	3	1	
2	Anguri		8	2	3	2	1	68			
3	Peepra	1	1	19	36			47		4	16
4-5	Bikuntpore			20	44			19		1	68
6	Fouroun			56	95	4		100	1	22	12
7	Kurmunchuk			22	45			7		1	18
8	Sydgunj	1	11	11	28	1		17			
9	Bujraha		1	12	4			14	2	38	2
10	Chunderie			32	31	16		47		10	1
11-12	Birnagur			32	68	6	2	23		4	
13	Futteepore			18	7	1		4	1	3	
14	Maharupi			13	7	4	3	8	2	1	2
15	Babuari			2	21			6	1	5	
16	Basmutia	1		2	7	13		2	1		
Totals		3	28	273 <sup>1</sup>	435	48	6	499	11	90	119

After the shoot at Durbungah we went by train to Bombay, staying at Benares on the way as the guests of the Maharajah of Vizianagram. We were going for an early ride one morning in Calcutta, and were waiting for Charlie B. to appear, when Bill B. became impatient and asked his servant, 'Where is Lord Charles Sahib?' 'He in bed,' was the reply. 'Then why the devil don't you call him?' 'But how dare I disturb him when he behind mosquito curtains, in bed with the Memsahib?'

At the end of March, we sailed from Bombay in a P. & O. steamer, as far as Port Said, and proceeded by train to Alexandria. There we embarked upon the *Tanjore*, commanded by Captain Briscoe, who was, I think, an Officer of the R.N.R.

The *Tanjore* carried the mails between Alexandria, Brindisi and Venice. About half an hour before she sailed, an excited

<sup>1</sup> Durbungah is not a pig-sticking country, so it is legitimate to shoot the pigs.





DE GREY



## PART OF THE BAG

Durbungah

*Standing, left to right:* Ailwyn Fellowes, Mr. Shillingford, Lord Yareborough,  
and extreme right, Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson and Wilfred  
Greenwood.

*Seated, left to right:* Lord Wenlock, Portland, Maharajah of Durbungah,  
Lord de Grey, Colonel Money