

ASIA

IN THE LANDS OF  
THE SUN



PRINCE WILLIAM OF SWEDEN



*William*  
*Prince of Sweden*

*Prince William of Sweden.*

# IN THE LANDS OF THE SUN

NOTES AND MEMORIES OF A  
TOUR IN THE EAST

BY

H.R.H. PRINCE WILLIAM OF SWEDEN

WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND  
A PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

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THE HIGH ALTAR OF A WAT.

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THE KING SHOWING HIMSELF TO THE PEOPLE AFTER HIS  
CORONATION.

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A PAWN SHOP IN BANGKOK.



THE ENTRANCE TO WAT POH.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### BUFFALO SHOOTING ON THE KORAT PLATEAU

It had long been my wish to get up to the mountain plateaux in the interior of the country, and this for two reasons: first, to penetrate if possible even farther beyond the boundaries of civilisation than had been the case in the foregoing trip; and secondly, to endeavour to bring down a specimen of the extremely rare Siamese wild buffalo, which, according to the meagre information I succeeded in getting in Bangkok, is said to be still found on the tablelands in the eastern part of the country.

At first those concerned shook their heads in doubt when I proposed this plan, thinking it would be far too dangerous, and would moreover entail severe hardships. But as my sporting instinct is not so easily restrained, but on the contrary was even more fired by the difficulties foreshadowed, and as my hosts at last discovered that I was really bent on a life in the open, they gradually resigned themselves and nodded approval. And when that was once settled, they spared no pains to arrange everything in the best possible way.

In order to avoid all elaborate preparations, I

tried to impress upon them that the trip was of an entirely private nature, and was only being made for purposes of sport and in order to see more of the country.

"Everything shall be arranged according to your wishes," was the reply; "and the authorities shall be informed of the unofficial character of the journey."

"Then what is the difference between official and unofficial?" I asked, with some suspicion.

"If the journey were official, all the authorities would be *obliged* to present themselves at every place you passed. Now there will be no obligation, but they will be there all the same."

So there was no getting off with less, and a fine afternoon at the end of December found Lewenhaupt and me at the railway station of Korat surrounded by all the notabilities of the town, while the inevitable guard of honour with band and colours was drawn up on the platform, trying with praiseworthy energy to coax the Swedish National Anthem out of its discordant brass instruments.

We had left Bangkok the same morning by special train and followed the eastern main line to its terminus, Korat. The first part of the journey, with its endless plains of rice-fields, was anything but interesting. But when, after Saraburi, the country began to rise and the railway wound along steep-sided valleys, where the jungle formed a dense wall on each side of the line and the flora became

more and more luxuriant, with bright splashes of colour of orchids and other flowering creepers, the interest increased in proportion as Nature became wilder and more primitive. The violent shaking of the train at the sharp curves also contributed to this, as it at least compelled some interest in one's own person, unless one preferred to sit on the floor once for all. At home one would certainly have long ago seized the communication-cord with trembling hands. And after a journey which was thus agitating in a double sense, we found ourselves on the eastern tableland and in the little provincial town of Korat.

The latter is properly speaking an important garrison, as no fewer than four regiments are quartered there. As we were lodged with the Commandant of the place, I had the opportunity in the course of the afternoon of inspecting some of the rather poor and wretched barracks. Although spacious enough in appearance, they were nevertheless so cramped for space that thirty cots in two rows, one above the other, were crowded into a barrack-room of which the Swedish Militia would have complained if ten men had been put into it. All that the Crown supplies for these hard wooden beds is a blanket and a pillow as hard as a stone.

That night I did not sleep at all, as a big *to-kai* had its nest in a hollow tree-trunk just outside the window, and entertained me with its

shrill shrieks until sunrise. Of these unattractive lizards the Siamese have a story that their livers grow so fast that once a year—when they shriek most—a little wood-worm darts into their mouths, eats up a sufficient quantity of the troublesome organ, and then goes off again, having duly performed its mission. My tormentor that night must have had an unusually big liver and wanted his worm badly.

With our departure from Korat next morning we also said good-bye to civilisation proper, for now our road lay in an easterly direction through miles of jungle to a little town called Pi Mai, situated on one of the upper streams of the Se-mun River and about sixty miles from Korat. I say "road," for there was really a newly constructed road for the whole of this distance ; so new that the bridges were still absent, and the track actually consisted only of a loose layer of sand. In three days, however, temporary bridges had been put up by the garrison of Korat, and thanks to them we were able to accomplish the long journey by motor-car. I have never driven on a road less suited for this means of progression, and it was only after getting stuck several times in the bottomless sand and bursting two tyres that we arrived that afternoon at Pi Mai. We had been surrounded the whole time by dense jungle, alternating with narrow open glades where the grass grew as high as a man, and it was therefore a welcome sight to have human habitations

once more before us, even if these were of the most primitive kind.

The little community certainly bears the official appellation of "town," but by no means deserves this rank. A few small, low bamboo houses forming two winding village streets, where fowls and oxen supply the place of pedestrians—that is all. But the little town can nevertheless boast *one* sight—the ruins of a Brahman temple two thousand years old, which formerly reared its proud pinnacles of sandstone high above the dark depths of the surrounding jungle. Its massive foundations still remain, as well as part of the richly sculptured lower galleries, but otherwise it is nothing but a desolate sea of stone, which however occupies a considerable area. The legend relates that the original buildings formed the model for the great and mighty temple-city of Angkor in Cambodia.

In a cosy and perfectly new house of mahogany (a wood that grows here in great quantities) we passed a short night, for at 3.30 the following morning we were already in the saddle on our way to the pastures of the wild buffalo, where it was important to arrive before sunrise.

Having been endowed by Nature with a somewhat tall and lanky frame, and being besides anything but a horsy man, I can only ascribe it to the little Siamese pony's phenomenal sureness of foot that I ever reached the open prairies. For the only light there was consisted of an extremely

smoky torch, which the guide persisted in holding just under my pony's nose, so that both he and I had constant fits of the most violent coughing and sneezing.

The journey began with a hip-bath, as we had to ford a river, the water of which reached the ponies' saddles. Then came an advance across ground covered with brushwood, where impertinent boughs continually struck the riders in the face, and finally a masterly balancing act (by our ponies, of course) over some very long and narrow bridges, which, not to mention the fact that they possessed no railing, consisted entirely of loose pieces of wood laid at random over two parallel tree-trunks, on each side of which a black, muddy stream could now and then be seen in the flickering torchlight—and we were out on the great plains. Here our pace was increased, and just at sunrise we reached Ban Chee-wan, a conglomeration of about twenty huts in the middle of the plain, which passed as a "village." Here it was that the elephants were to meet us, and it was not long before Lewenhaupt, Phya Mahibal, and the undersigned sat each in his rolling, swaying, oscillating howdah.

The first half-hour on the back of an elephant seems particularly attractive and agreeable; you look down at the world below you with the feelings of the lord of an impregnable moving castle, and indulge in all kinds of pleasant meditations. But soon these are of a less agreeable sort, and after

riding a couple of hours, your only desire on earth is to feel firm ground under your feet once more. For the continual movement, the swaying backwards and forwards each time the colossus moves his great limbs with easy, regular action, results in a feeling of tenderness all over, and you think you are coming in half. Add to this the fact that the platform of the howdah consists of nothing but thin strips of bamboo without any lining, and you will have an idea of the not altogether unmixed delight of riding on an elephant.

But our business was shooting buffalo, and so I clenched my teeth and rode on.

The broad plain extended as far as the eye could see from east to west, while on the north and south it was bounded by forest or by scattered islands of jungle. Here and there were a few lonely bushes; otherwise the sandy soil was thickly overgrown with short, rough grass. Large tracts were black from prairie fires—the natives set fire to the grass to get a better growth—and in many places huge pillars of smoke rose to the sky.

But what was this? Four black bodies suddenly rose from the grass, and four pairs of semicircular horns were turned towards my advancing elephant. The long-looked-for big game at last!

The range was still too great, but after all the terrible stories I had been treated to in Bangkok I had no doubt that in a few seconds the buffaloes would come on in a mad charge and try to upset



my elephant. My heavy cordite rifle was resting on the edge of the howdah, and I sat with all my nerves at full-cock, awaiting the attack. Slowly the distance between us was decreased. The animals still stood their ground, staring me in the face. The nearest bull began to be uneasy, stamped on the ground, and flung his mighty head hither and thither. Now, I thought, now they must be coming; now is the time to shoot straight and keep steady—but imagine my disappointment and surprise when, instead of attacking, the four animals turned rapidly about and went off at a sharp trot across the plain, where a few moments later they disappeared from view. I really felt so foolish that I could not help bursting into a fit of laughter. So this was the dreaded wild buffalo of Siam, which was said to attack every living thing that came in its way, and which no one ventured to hunt except from the back of an elephant.

Meanwhile I went on, and it was not long before two more buffaloes barred my way. Would these show themselves more aggressive, or should we see the same ignominious retreat as before? Unfortunately, these had no more fight in them than the others; they actually *galloped* away with their tails in the air when I came a little nearer. But this time I was prepared for all eventualities, and sent a bullet into the flank of one of them at long range, though without stopping him.

When the same manœuvre had been repeated

for the third time with a solitary beast, our patience came to an end, and Lewenhaupt and I decided to follow the animal on foot, as he had only run a few hundred yards and was still in sight. But that was no good either, for as soon as the buffalo fancied we must be within range he turned and disappeared in the direction of a pool, where the grass grew to the height of a man.

We determined to adopt other tactics. The ponies were sent for, and we rode on them to some bushes, not far from the spot where the bull had been seen last, while the elephants had orders to beat up the long grass in front.

This was more successful, and a few minutes later Lewenhaupt's first bullet lodged in the bull's shoulder, just as he was trying to reach the cover of the bushes. He staggered, received two more bullets, and disappeared in the brushwood, but was soon found half-dead about a hundred yards farther on, where he was dispatched with a shot in the chest.

We were in great spirits at this, and Lewenhaupt of course became the indisputable hero and Nimrod of the day. The animal turned out to be a young bull with a fine pair of horns, which at this moment forms part of the large and varied assortment of trophies at Aske Castle.

The natives then arrived with information that a big herd had been seen that morning near the village of Ban Krashorn, and we went on there



*[Photo, G. Leuenhauft.]*

THE AUTHOR WITH HIS SIAMESE WILD BUFFALO.

*[To face p. 132.]*

without delay. But it was already dusk when we arrived and duly found the herd in question, which numbered between thirty and forty animals.

A finer sight I have seldom seen. The huge bodies of the animals shone silver-grey in the rays of the setting sun, while their heads and necks looked jet-black. Here and there a wet muzzle flashed or a pair of horns shone like polished ebony. But unfortunately they never came within range, and there was nothing for us to do but to turn and ride back to the camp, which had been pitched round an open *sālā* (resting-place for travellers) outside the village of Ban Chee-wan. As long as the light lasted, our ponies trotted as fast as their little legs could go, but soon darkness came on and forced us to reduce our pace. The crickets were chirping in the grass like tinkling sleigh-bells on a winter day in the North, and the horizon was coloured red with many prairie-fires, which gave the scene a weird and awe-inspiring effect. Not till two hours after sunset did we reach our own camp-fires, after a tiring but successful day of sixteen and a half hours. And perhaps I need scarcely add that our dinner that evening tasted unconscionably good.

The night was cool, and as we lay on the draughty floor of the open *sālā* we wanted all the blankets and rugs that were to be had to keep ourselves warm. But we slept all the better for that, and when the sun was up again we were already in the saddle, refreshed and ready for the toils of

another day. But the extraordinary thing was that the same ponies that had carried us, with very few breaks, for sixteen hours the day before, appeared to be just as fresh as ourselves. The stamina of these little animals really approaches the incredible. For not only did they carry us that morning to Ban Krashorn (12 miles), but we afterwards rode from there, first to the camp, and on the following morning all the way back to Pi Mai (25 miles), still on the same ponies.

Not far from the camp two solitary young bulls were sighted, and now it was my turn to bring down one of them, after stalking him for a good while. This one had decidedly more malicious intentions, and tried several times to attack after the first bullet; but his strength failed him, and after a further greeting from the carbine in the shoulder-blade, he thought proper to give up the attempt, and with it the ghost.

Our plan for the day, however, was to try to get at the big herd at Ban Krashorn; on arriving there we again mounted the elephants, which had passed the night at the village, and rode out towards the buffaloes, which were still grazing where we had left them. In order to force an attack, an enveloping movement was made, so that we had the herd between the village and ourselves. But even this was no use. Led by two big bulls with enormous horns, the whole herd made off to one side before we came within range. We did manage

to wound one of them severely, but unfortunately he got away.

We then tried to adopt the same tactics as the day before, but this was also a failure. The curious thing happened, however, that the elephants—which had been relieved of their howdahs so that they might move faster—were now attacked by the two big bulls and forced to fly for cover behind some trees. It was a most extraordinary spectacle, full of imposing and irresistible force, but it did not help the sportsmen to come any nearer their game. However, the herd became scattered in the general confusion that ensued, and we set out in pursuit of a group that was flying over the plain. Among these animals was a little calf, which gradually dropped behind, and at last, dead-beat, allowed itself to be caught with ease. Amid the most distressing bleats it was duly photographed, and then set at liberty.

Meanwhile the rest of the herd was going farther and farther away, and soon the great prairie, that had lately been the scene of so much life and movement, was perfectly empty and deserted. The sun had long since passed the zenith, and there was nothing for us to do but to return to camp.

As I rode through the village of Ban Krashorn, I happened to see how the natives fish in shallow streams. Their method was unquestionably a primitive one, though evidently profitable, as one

silvery little fish after another was drawn up. The simple tackle consisted merely of small, half-spherical baskets, at the bottom of which was a hole, large enough for a child's hand. For it was exclusively the younger generation that took part in the fishing, splashing about in the little river with *panungs* tucked up to the waist. The actual catching was done simply by plunging the basket as quick as lightning against the bottom, after which the hand was thrust in through the hole to feel whether there were any fish inside. In this way the stream was searched in all directions with, as I said, good results.

The following forenoon found us back at Pi Mai. The zealous little Vice-Governor of the district had arranged a boxing competition in my honour, and all that the place could show in human or animal shape assembled on the open space outside my quarters. There may have been a couple of hundred people in the crowd, all squatting on their haunches and waiting with stoical calm for the popular sport to begin.

After a while, three pairs of quaintly costumed individuals entered the arena, one of them a grey-headed old fellow of at least fifty. Red or green fillets were wound round their heads, and their *panungs* were of the same colour (this to make it easier to distinguish the combatants). Their hands and wrists were bound with thick folds of dirty linen rags, as were also their loins. A

thin cotton jacket covered the upper part of the body.

The boxing was preceded by a series of fantastic leaps and capers, balancing feats, etc., all with the object of screwing up the boxer's courage and inspiring his adversary with fear — and then the fighting started, two by two. Every trick seemed to be allowed, and they hit and kicked by turns with an energy that was worthy of a better cause. It was chiefly the antagonist's face that was aimed at, and especially his nose. To have his olfactory organ broken is regarded as the severest defeat a champion can suffer, and one of the combatants still showed evident traces of such a blow; for where his nose ought to have been was only a formless lump of flesh, pointing crookedly up to the sky. There was one young man in particular — the victor of the day — who distinguished himself by his almost cat-like agility and quickness. His favourite trick was to give a box on the ear — with his feet, and every time he got in one of these, the spectators applauded as if they were never going to stop. But the old man — a former champion boxer — did not come off badly either, and finished a good third.

The competitors did not possess any noteworthy degree of endurance. Each bout lasted only a few minutes, after which came a long rest before the fight could be continued. The pauses were used for attending to the boxer's wounds or



giving him a douche. In the first of these processes the "doctor" simply spat in his hand and then rubbed the injured spot until the bleeding stopped; if necessary, the saliva was mixed with a little earth. The "douche" was if possible even more primitive: the second filled his mouth with a good swill of water and then sent it out in the form of fine rain over the victim's face.

The judging is very simple. When a man thinks he has had enough punishment, he leaves the field without more ado to his opponent, who then tackles the next man. Thus one after another is weeded out until the victor is left alone on the field of battle and receives from the hands of the guest of honour a sum of money, large or small according to the nature and size of the competition. No resentment is felt after a severe pummeling of this kind, and the day usually ends in all good-fellowship with the victor offering each of his defeated opponents a meal of rice and a chew of betel.

The next day—the last of the year—we arrived safely at Bangkok, tired, but with nothing but pleasant memories of an interesting shooting expedition. And the buffalo horns from Ban Cheewan are at present the proudest specimen among my hunting trophies, since, as far as I know, Lewenhaupt and I are the only Europeans who have ever shot any of this species of the Siamese

fauna. And in future it will be still harder—not to say impossible—to bring down these animals, as on account of the small number of them in the country it is proposed to protect them altogether—undoubtedly a wise measure, especially as the herd at Ban Krashorn appears to be the only one left in the whole of Eastern Siam.

And now not much more remains to be told of our long stay in the Land of the White Elephant. Our departure, which had already been postponed on account of an outbreak of smallpox on the *Mahachakreri*, was finally fixed for January 6, and the few days that remained were chiefly devoted to farewell visits.

Three of the evenings were occupied by historical pageants, arranged on the Wild Tigers' playground, and carried out by all the members of the Club. With their excellent scenic arrangements they gave a good idea of the history of Siam from the earliest times to the present day. The costumes were historically correct, and no pains had been spared to make the performances as realistic as possible. Nor were battle elephants wanting, richly hung with costly trappings and jewelled ornaments. As usual when the Wild Tiger Corps was concerned, the King himself was the leading spirit of the undertaking: he would suddenly appear among the players where he was least expected, and in addition performed the

difficult duties of stage manager with praiseworthy success. The last representation ended at 1.30 a.m. with a trooping of the colour and the singing of the following patriotic song, written by the present King when Crown Prince :—

LOVE OF OUR RACE AND OUR FATHERS' LAND

Free-born men,  
 Let us not forget our race and our faith ;  
 Let us not have been born in vain  
 Of a free nation.  
 How could a man who respects himself  
 Remain idle ?  
 Each one ought to work,  
 That all may be ready !

In a country without love and union  
 The best work cannot bear fruit ;  
 And if a nation is breaking up and near its ruin,  
 How can the private individual hope for prosperity ?  
 If foreigners should rule over us,  
 We should be slain and ill-treated ;  
 They would oppress us from morning till night,  
 As is the way of conquerors.  
 Do not imagine that they would respect our position and name,  
 Or that they would consider our birth ;  
 We ourselves should suffer  
 And be put to shame before the rest of the world.

Therefore, comrades, may we be loyal to the King  
 And true to our country and our faith :  
 May we offer our lives without regret  
 That the freedom of "the Free" be not lost !  
 Let us stand united,  
 And certain victory is ours !  
 Let us be brave and firmly determined  
 To protect our liberty till heaven and earth pass away !

Then our last day in Bangkok arrived. In the courtyard of the Saranrom Palace all our Siamese

pages<sup>1</sup> and servants were drawn up for a final farewell, and for the last time the guard at the gate saluted with drums and trumpets as we left the walls of the hospitable palace behind us and drove off to pay our farewell visit to the King. It was with real regret that I pressed his hand for the last time, for during our long, almost daily companionship I had learnt to value not only the monarch and autocrat, but also the man and the friend. And the truly magnificent Oriental hospitality that was shown us by our royal host during the whole of this long stay in Siam, I shall indeed be slow to forget. He was most anxious to give my wife a little girl—daughter of one of the chamberlains—as a parting present; but we excused ourselves, pointing out the unsuitable character of the Northern climate for such a child of the sun.

With a final shake of the hand we separated, and not long after I sat once more on the deck of the *Mahachakreri*, steaming eastward in search of new adventures.

<sup>1</sup> These pages are educated at a special school, and are often of very high birth. Thus, for instance, our chauffeur was a Prince, and the groom on the box an Excellency! Until they have completed their education, however, they have no right to bear these titles.



ANGKOR THOM: ONE OF THE CITY GATES.

[To face p. 188.]

## CHAPTER XI

### MOIS AND BUFFALOES

It has often been said that East Africa is the only really good place for big-game shooting. I admit that I have never had the chance of visiting that part of the world, though it is nevertheless pretty familiar to me from the number of books on sport and travel that are accessible to one interested in Nature and wild life. But for all that, I venture to assert that there is another sporting Eldorado, which in the matter of big game may certainly compare with the African wilds, and that is Cochinchina and Annam, in the peninsula of Farther India. Here the wild elephants still roam in freedom through the jungles, in many parts without ever having been disturbed by man; here thousands of wild buffaloes raise their curved horns above the high grass of the prairies, threatening, with the right of the stronger, any intruder on their wide pastures; here thick-skinned rhinoceroses tread their hidden paths through dense thickets, and soft-footed tigers and leopards steal through the half-light of the jungle, lying in wait for their unsuspecting prey, while sportive monkeys leap

from branch to branch. The bird world is also richly represented, from the gaudy peacock to the shrieking parrot, the grotesque hornbill or the brilliant bird of paradise. The antelope species, on the other hand, are not nearly so numerous as in East Africa ; and the zebra, of course, is altogether absent.

That these regions are so little known is due no doubt to the great difficulties connected with fitting out a shooting expedition. For there are no hunters by profession, accustomed to provide and lead a *safari*, and the natives only lend themselves very reluctantly to such an enterprise. Many of the best shooting districts are infested with fever and altogether uninhabitable at certain times of the year. Besides this, a number of the tribes in the interior are savage and not to be relied on, for which reason one is compelled to travel in company with somebody who knows them and is familiar with their manners and customs. Particularly necessary is it to know about their "dangerous days," for woe to the European who enters an apparently peaceful village on such a day ; within twenty-four hours he is a dead man, either from a spear in the back, or still oftener from poisoned water or rice.

It was thus, I may say, a pure piece of luck that I ever had the chance of using a rifle in this part of the world. As already mentioned, there happened to be in Saigon the Duke of Montpensier,

a keen and experienced sportsman ; familiar with the various districts, he has already traversed the whole country—often alone—many times and in different directions, and much big game has been made to bite the dust by his never-failing energy and sureness of aim. He it is above all, together with his friend Oddéra—a Frenchman, a sportsman, and a lover of open-air life—that I have to thank for a few never-to-be-forgotten days on the desolate prairies below the wooded heights of Annam, an Eldorado for the sportsman on which, but for them, I should certainly never have set foot.

The day after my return from Pnom Penh the little party started off in a hot and noisy train, armed to the teeth with a very respectable arsenal of firearms, thermos flasks, kodaks, etc., besides a number of big cases of provisions and camping-gear. Our route ran in an easterly direction, alternately through rubber plantations and impenetrable jungle. When the greater part of the cooling contents of the thermos flasks had disappeared down our dusty and thirsty throats, we arrived after a few hours' journey at the little station of Chua Chang, situated in the middle of the forest. Here we were met by the local "Buffalo Bill," *alias* M. Oddéra, and the whole party rode up to his charming bungalow, where we had our quarters for the night. Our hostess appeared, accompanied by two small tame elephants, half a dozen dogs and about the same number of cats and fowls, and we



were welcomed in the kindest and most courteous way by Madame Oddéra, a bright and buxom French matron, who spared no pains to make her guests comfortable. The roomy bungalow, built of teak, looked particularly cosy and attractive with its broad verandahs running round the four walls, and it was not long before the whole party, including the domestic animals, felt perfectly at home in the place and with one another. So much so, in fact, that one of the little elephants took it into his head to march into the dining-room and snatch up some of the bananas from the dinner-table. Round the house was a neat little garden full of flowers. But judge of my surprise when on one of the beds I discovered big strawberry plants, with splendid ripe strawberries! Imported from France, they seemed to thrive remarkably well, and were evidently Madame Oddéra's special pride. Chua Chang is the only place in this part of the world that can show such dainties. And that was not all—on a fairly high hill close by the squatter's energetic wife has even got wild strawberries to ripen.

And at the dainty dinner, which not long after made its appearance on the massive teak table, prepared by the hostess herself according to all the mysteries of the French cuisine, we had an opportunity of tasting this Northern fruit, sighing in secret over the insipid mangosteens and everlasting bananas of the East. Later in the evening shooting stories followed each other in rapid

succession, and the night was already far advanced before Lewenhaupt, the undersigned, a cat and a dog, were finally able in the same room to enjoy a few hours of much-needed rest.

Precisely at sunrise we started from the comfortable bungalow. The object was to avail ourselves of the refreshing coolness of the morning hours, so as to be able to spare the ponies in the midday heat. A powerful but not very melodious concert of hundreds of monkeys from the neighbouring hill accompanied our departure. "That is the men-monkeys coming home from the club and getting it hot from their wives," suggested one of the party, and really it did not sound much better. Followed by these howls, the long caravan moved off, and soon found itself on an endless winding path through the dark jungle that separates Chua Chang from the wide expanse of the open prairies.

In front marched a group of natives with the lighter baggage, and foremost among them a guide, in the simple but convenient costume of Adam, swinging with a contented air a big black umbrella over his fuzzy head. This article, however, was not merely for show. Besides being a symbol of power and authority (for he was the "old man" of a little village), it was used to great advantage for hitting the other porters over the shins. Then came the sportsmen on horseback—the Duke and I on two Andalusian steeds, the others on shaggy and sturdy ponies—and finally the heavier baggage.

provisions, etc., in creaking ox-carts with enormous, massive wooden wheels. In my innocence I suggested greasing the axles to reduce the noise. But it appeared that that was just the best part of it, as the strident sound was calculated to dissuade a possibly lurking tiger from attacking. And it is certain that in the stillness of the forest the caravan could be heard three miles off.

Last of all came Oddéra. This man, remarkable in many ways, is well worthy of closer acquaintance. About twenty years ago he emigrated—on account of an unhappy love affair, it is said—to Cochin-China, where he vanished completely for a number of years. He spent this time among the wild race of Mois, living like one of themselves and supporting himself by hunting and fishing. With a perfect command of their language and an intimate knowledge of their peculiar manners and customs, he gradually acquired such influence over the race that to this day he is universally known as “le Roi des Moïs.” Meanwhile the affair of the heart arranged itself; he returned to civilisation, married his first love, and now leads a happy family life in his bungalow at Chua Chang as one of the most valued and trusted officials of the French Government. But as soon as any question crops up concerning the Mois, the authorities always have to seek Oddéra’s help, for without his intervention they cannot get a single one of these savages to do anything willingly. I soon learned to like and

esteem this child of nature—blunt and taciturn, but with a frank and winning manner—and to see in him a type not only of the confident and daring sportsman, but also of the lover of Nature and the friend of man.

After a six hours' uninterrupted ride, mostly through thick jungle, where lianas and creepers formed an entangled confusion among the trunks and branches of the great trees, we reached at last the goal of our journey: a fairly large and roomy bamboo hut built upon lofty piles, situated just on the edge of the forest, and only half a mile from the great open plains. The most remarkable thing about the building, however, was the total absence of nails; all the joints were either accurately morticed together or lashed with thin cane, a plant which grows abundantly in these regions and is used for pretty nearly everything. This was to be our headquarters for the next few days, and we soon made ourselves at home in our airy but convenient dwelling, inspecting rifles and cartridges and getting ready for our coming exertions.

At dusk the Moïs arrived. There were about twenty of them, men and women; the former with tall, well-proportioned frames and regular, far from ugly features; the latter of smaller stature and anything but handsome according to Western ideas. The costume of both sexes was the least imaginable: the women wore a shawl round their

waists and long rows of glass beads round their necks; the men had big pieces of bamboo in their ears, in which they kept snuff, tobacco, betel, etc., thus forming an excellent substitute for pockets. I happened to have the pleasure of seeing one of their ears without its bamboo decoration; the lobe was so distended that it reached down to the shoulder and there lay in several folds. This will give an idea of the size and storage capacity of the ear-ornaments.

There are about 100,000 members of the race, but their descent is a matter of some uncertainty; probably they are a mixture of Malays and Annamese. Most of them are nomads who live by hunting and fishing, while a small number have settled in fixed abodes and carry on a meagre and primitive form of agriculture. Their huts are like big dove-cotes on lofty piles, with a ladder of plaited cane. Usually two or three families inhabit one of these dwellings, which however only contain one room. A post in the middle forms the boundary between "meum and tuum," but things must be rather mixed all the same, when men, women, children, dogs, and fowls have to pig together on a floor space of only a few square yards. Their weapons consist of a long spear, a bow and arrows; the former is well rubbed with a very powerful poison prepared from a liana root, against which no remedy is of any use, death ensuing inevitably within a few hours.



BUFFALO CARTS AT THE CAMP.



MOIS.

[To face p. 208.]

Their shooting is very accurate, and at 50 to 100 yards their arrows seldom fail to hit the mark.

The savages were told off to a corner of the wide verandah which surrounded our bamboo house on every side, and here they squatted down with a big earthenware jar among them, from the mouth of which a long reed projected. The jar contained rice-brandy, a fairly strong, acid-tasting drink, with which they like to intoxicate themselves on special occasions. Then followed a ceremony intended to propitiate the deities of hunting and dispose them favourably towards the expedition of the following day; for, if any game fell, the devout worshippers were certain of getting their allotted share of the prey. The men chanted a monotonous song, while the women—with their backs turned to the spectators—hammered on half a dozen gongs that had been brought with them. When this had gone on for about half an hour, the singing suddenly stopped, and all the whites present were ceremoniously invited to take a pull from the big stone jar. Then followed a long, incomprehensible speech from the leader of the Moïs, who concluded by presenting us with a chicken and a few eggs. The singing began again, and now the rice-brandy passed from mouth to mouth among the blacks, who greedily sucked up the relished drink. Then by degrees the jar was emptied, and one by one they staggered down

to the camp-fires to sleep off their liquor and renew their strength for another day.

Soon the impenetrable darkness of the tropical night settled down over the camp. The fires were tended, so that the embers might glow all night, and powerful acetylene lamps were placed on the three ladders leading to the house, to keep off any tiger who might think of making a nocturnal call. All was silent and still, as silent as only a sleeping jungle can be, separated from the roar of civilisation by leagues of almost impenetrable wilderness.

It was still dark when we mounted our ponies the following morning. We had to be on the ground by sunrise, and hunt during the coolest hours of the day, before the buffaloes took their rest in the midday heat. At an easy pace we rode through the belt of forest which separated the camp from the prairies, and soon we came out on to the latter. Here a sight met my eyes which I shall be slow to forget, and the beauty of which was worthy of being immortalised by the brush of a master. Before us lay the immense plain in its majestic desolation, covered by a thin grey mist, above which the tree-tops projected here and there like green islands. In the background rose the lofty wooded hills of Annam, behind which the sun was just beginning to show as an orange-coloured ball. By degrees the mist cleared away and the ground was all spangled with silver,



as the first rays shone upon the thousands of dewdrops which hung like diamonds upon the gossamer threads between the quivering blades of grass.

But there was no time for losing oneself in contemplation, for suddenly the leader pulled up his pony, raised his arm and pointed to some dark specks in the tall grass. Buffaloes! We were out of the saddle in a second, and then began a rather troublesome advance on all-fours along the wet ground, which was still black and sooty from a prairie fire. After a while, six animals could be distinguished, grazing peacefully by a pool of mud. Slowly and cautiously we crept forward till we were within about a hundred paces of the animals; when our way was suddenly barred by an impassable swamp. But Oddéra knew what to do. Hidden in the grass, which was nearly as high as a man, he began to imitate the melancholy bleating of a young buffalo-calf with amazing faithfulness. The dark monsters immediately stopped grazing, turned their heads in the direction of the sound, and then began cautiously to approach. But they also seemed to find the ground too swampy, and after a few steps they halted, evidently disinclined to continue the advance. It was in vain that our "buffalo-calf" tried to entice them nearer with his most insinuating plaints; they only stood still and stared.

As it was clear that we could not reduce the

range in any way, it was decided to let them have it from where we were. I was to open fire, and immediately after a .475 covered express bullet lodged somewhere in the chest of the bull on the extreme right, who then received two more well-aimed shots from the Duke and Oddéra, bringing him to the ground. The other animals also had a reminder of our presence from Lewenhaupt's rifle, but unfortunately none of them was brought down, and they all got away in the tall grass. An enveloping movement—partly to avoid the swamp, partly to approach the wounded animal from behind (a rule which should always be followed in this kind of shooting)—brought us up to the buffalo, which was now dispatched with a shot in the forehead. He was a fine old bull with particularly handsome and powerful horns and well-developed "rings." For the first time I was able fully to appreciate the immense size of these animals; a full-grown man just reaches up to the back, and the huge neck is far more powerfully developed than in any fighting bull I have seen killed in the Spanish bull-ring.<sup>1</sup> Truly a worthy and imposing object for a sportsman's bullet.

After he had been duly photographed, we went on across the plain. Here and there a few dark specks showed up at long range among the green, or a pair of pointed horns, like caliper

<sup>1</sup> Their weight varies between 1 and 2 tons.

compasses, rose above the tall grass; but the buffaloes had evidently been warned by the first volley, and preferred to retire rather than brave the unknown danger. Suddenly a fine bull appeared from the nearest "island" of jungle (these islands were to be seen all over the plain), stopped for a moment staring at us in a very defiant attitude, put his head down between his forelegs, snorted once or twice, and came slowly towards us in this position, evidently with anything but friendly intentions. It was the work of an instant to jump out of the saddle and snatch the rifle, but before I could get it up to my shoulder a well-aimed shot rang out from the Duke, which was enough to make our opponent change his mind. He staggered, went on a few steps, received two more bullets in his chest, and then sank together in a big, dark, shapeless mass. A few fresh shot-wounds in his body showed clearly enough that he was one of the animals hit that morning, which, thanks to his intrepidity and fighting spirit, had thus been freed from further pain.

The sun was rising higher and higher in the cloudless sky; it was getting on for noon and the heat became more intense every moment. We therefore decided to allow both our ponies and ourselves a few hours' necessary shade and rest, and rode to the nearest "jungle island," at which the rest of the *safari* also arrived by degrees.

Great quantities of cane grew here, and in a few minutes the handy natives had plaited together a table and benches of this flexible but strong material, upon which we then partook of a dainty shooting-lunch. Close to our resting-place ran a fair-sized stream, on the banks of which herons and storks promenaded at their ease, and now and then the smooth surface was ruffled by the appearance of dark objects, which vanished again as quickly as they had come up. These were alligators, which thus followed our rustic meal with covetous eyes, and doubtless felt strongly inclined to come out and snatch some of the good things.

As soon as the worst of the midday heat was over, we got into the saddle again and swept the plain with the field-glasses. A number of axis deer were to be seen here and there in the grass or flying swiftly across the open spaces. The Duke—one of the best shots I have ever seen—had the chance of making an unusually fine double; at his first shot a deer fell at 150 yards, and at his second a large eagle, which at that moment came flying over our heads, only to fall to the ground with a .405 express bullet through its body.

At last a solitary buffalo was sighted. This time it was Lewenhaupt who with a fine shot put the first bullet in its shoulder. It was a large cow with long, pointed horns, which at

present form part of the fine and varied collection of trophies at Aske.

The sun was already low, and it was time to think of returning. In spite of our fairly active pace we did not manage to reach home before darkness came on, and the last part of the way through the jungle was covered by torchlight. In this light the lofty trees, with their entwining creepers, looked if possible more grotesque than by day. It was as though they stretched out thousands of long, greedy arms after the venturesome traveller who boldly intruded into their insidious mazes.

On the following day we went through a most exciting adventure, which I believe is at present unique of its kind. At any rate, M. Oddéra, who has taken part in the shooting of over a thousand buffaloes, had never before been exposed to anything of the kind.

We had ridden about the prairie all the morning without seeing a living thing, and the sun had already begun to be warmer than was pleasant, when suddenly the dark backs of some buffaloes appeared above the high grass. We joyfully jumped off our ponies, which were led away to a little wood, and began the usual advance on all-fours. When we had kept this up a good while and thought we were within range, we cautiously looked up over the grass. Just so, the range was good, and before us in a wide semicircle

stood, not merely the two or three animals we expected to find, but between twenty and thirty big buffaloes, all staring in our direction. The shots came almost simultaneously, though without any apparent effect. The whole herd wheeled about and made off at a slow jog-trot. We got up in annoyance and stood for a moment looking at the retreating game, when suddenly they made an abrupt turn and began to come straight at us. Nor was that all. From a pool of mud close by, which we had not observed from our prone position, one dark monster after another rose and joined the hunted animals; and soon, at a distance of scarcely 200 yards, we had a long line of about 120 buffaloes facing us, with a front of something like 300 yards. It was a grand sight to see all these monsters coming towards one, with their necks thrown forward and all their wet muzzles at the same height, reflecting the rays of the sun and flashing like lightning. But as we were clearly the object of their wrath, and the distance between us and the onrushing avalanche was decreasing every second in an alarming way, it was high time to think of our own skins, if we did not wish to run the risk of being trampled down and crushed under the weight of the huge beasts, and afterwards forming a convenient dinner for the ever-watchful vultures.

The situation was undeniably critical. The distance to the edge of the wood, where our ponies

stood, was about five furlongs; there was thus no possibility of getting there before the avalanche was upon us. To stand still and await the attack, bring down a few animals and then be trampled by the rest, did not seem to us very attractive either. A few shots at the leader of the herd—a fine old cow, whose enormous horns I would have given a good deal at that moment to be able to add to my other trophies—hit their mark well, but did nothing to check the violence of the attack. Within a moment they would be upon us, and there was nothing else for it but to take our chance and run for bare life. It was really one of the most exasperating moments I have ever experienced: to be forced, with a good rifle in one's hand, to take to flight before all this splendid big game. But necessity knows no law, and so we ran.

The wild hunt went on for about a hundred yards, the distance between us and our pursuers was constantly decreasing, and the shelter of the wood was still far off. It looked pretty hopeless.

Then the galloping line suddenly stopped just at the spot where we had been lying and firing. Our empty cartridge-cases and presumably the scent we left behind seemed to affect their flashing muzzles unpleasantly. This gave us a moment's breathing space. A few shots were fired, one or two of the animals turned clean round, and then

the chase began again. The long line now divided itself into two, one of which continued straight on, while the other made an enveloping movement, evidently with the intention of falling on our flank. But for some reason or other they gradually slackened their pace, and only came after us at an easy jog-trot. Breathless and dripping with sweat, we at last reached our ponies, and felt ourselves once more masters of the situation.

Again the buffaloes looked like making an attack, this time on an ox-cart belonging to the *safari*, which had ventured too far in advance; but again they abandoned it.

After this, we rode back diagonally towards the herd—which stood staring at us all the time—trying to reach some scattered trees a little way from the edge of the wood, in which we were successful. In spite of the fairly long range, the big cow received several shots in the body from here, but unfortunately she did not fall. By this time the animals had evidently had enough of the game. They turned, one after another, and vanished in the high grass; and soon the place was silent and empty again, after having just been shaken by the thundering hoofs of a galloping herd of buffaloes.

I hear the reader express his astonishment that not one of the animals fell to all our shots. I need only explain that this species of buffalo is the hardest to kill of any kind of Asiatic big



game, and is provided with a layer of skin and fat over its body of about an inch in thickness. It may be mentioned as an example that one of the big bulls we brought down had no less than nine bullets in chest and shoulder before he finally fell, besides which he received two heavy revolver bullets in the neck to make him stop flinging his head about.

Our little adventure, which luckily passed off without further inconvenience—if we except a thorough sweating—occurred on January 17, and on the afternoon of the 20th the boat was to leave Saigon. It was therefore high time to think of returning, and on the following morning we said good-bye with great regret to Vo Dat, that idyllic spot in the heart of the wilderness where we had spent some exciting and never-to-be-forgotten days under the very special protection of the goddess Diana. Little did I then guess that shortly afterwards I should revisit the place and once more ride over the sun-baked prairies watching for the dark forms of buffaloes. For shortly after Lewenhaupt and I had reached Saigon and joined the rest of the party—who were just as full of Angkor and ancient Khmer civilisation as we were of buffaloes and Mois—I fell ill, was forced to keep my bed for a few days—and we missed the boat.

This was really a fatal occurrence in many ways, as the next mail did not go for a fortnight,

and the trip to India, already planned and arranged, had to be entirely altered at the last moment. Besides, I think it would be difficult to discover any more tedious occupation than lying in bed in a warm and moist tropical climate, especially when one is on the point of starting and feels quite game and full of activity. And it was with far from friendly feelings that I greeted each fresh day of enforced idleness.

But "it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and so it proved here. The others spent their time in visiting hospitals, schools, charitable institutions, shops, etc., and soon knew Saigon as well as they did Stockholm. When they had done the town, they took in hand the surroundings, and by the time these had been duly dispatched I was out of bed and ready for fresh adventures. As there was nothing left to see in Saigon, it was unanimously decided that we should all return to Vo Dat and enjoy a week of refreshing open-air life while waiting for the boat. And so it was that, just eight days after my first visit to the jungle, I again found myself on the same spot, though this time with a considerably larger party, as both the ladies and Rudebeck went with us.

For a week we then enjoyed the splendid free life of the wilds, riding out at sunrise and roaming over the prairies in every possible direction (though prudently keeping out of the way of any *large* herds of buffaloes!). The two ladies bravely

shared all our fatigues, and often stayed for twelve hours in the saddle without turning a hair. One day was taken up with an excursion in small dug-out canoes on the little river that flows through the middle of the plain. On its banks we came across perfectly fresh tracks both of tiger and elephant, but unfortunately we never had a glimpse of the animals themselves.

On returning to the camp-fires we often sat on the wide verandah, listening to Caruso or a lively two-step on the gramophone that had been brought with great trouble; or athletic sports were got up among the Mois, who entered into them with heart and soul. The savages were greatly impressed by the gramophone, which they instantly christened "the singing box," and a bit of ice, which they chanced to get hold of, passed from mouth to mouth till it came to one of the chiefs, who, to the ill-concealed annoyance of the rest, swallowed it whole. Ice received from them the appellation of "hard water."

February 1 saw us back in Saigon. It felt quite strange to be once more in civilised surroundings, sleeping in a proper bed, driving in a motor-car, and wearing one's best clothes!

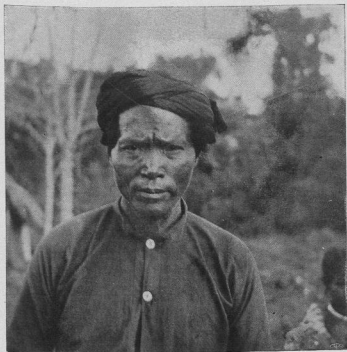
On the way to the Residency—it was already dark—we met a curious procession. Shouting, shrieking, and gesticulating, a mob of white-clad Hindus were marching round the streets, swinging big torches in the form of tridents above their

heads. They were followed by an enormous car, drawn by four pure white oxen, which were hung with crimson trappings. Their horns were painted red and black, and their legs were decorated with thick silver rings, wound many times round and reaching to the hoofs. Round their necks hung heavy bells, which jingled at every step. On the car itself was a silver model, as high as a man, of an ancient temple, with a grotesquely costumed figure of Brahma decorating the front of the work of art. It was covered with little lamps of different colours, and at the sides hung gorgeous decorations of the rarest flowers the local tropical flora could offer. Two clean-shaven priests in white togas held the reins, but had some difficulty in guiding the lengthy conveyance round the corners of the narrow streets. Sometimes the car was on the pavement, sometimes it charged and bent the lamp-posts, sometimes the team refused to move and the oxen simply turned round and stood staring at their heavy load, when neither whips nor kicks could make them change their minds. But the chief thing seemed to be that the members of the procession should make plenty of row, and this they did to their hearts' content. The cause of all this hubbub was a religious festival, which was celebrated especially by the numerous wealthy Brahman merchants — *chettys* — of the town.

To call still further attention to the feast, they



MOI WARRIORS.



BAMBIAN: ONE OF THE MOI LEADERS.

*(To face p. 922.)*

let off some magnificent fireworks later in the evening in honour of the town.

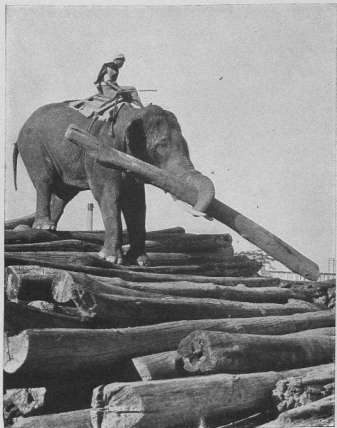
And now not much remains to be said of Cochin-China, as the s.s. *Tonkin* left the Paris of the East the following evening and steered westward for Singapore. A more cordial farewell than that which was given us can seldom have fallen to the lot of any roving tourists; my wife especially was the object of warm ovations, and the wealth of flowers that decorated her cabin during the passage defies description. The whole town came down and waved handkerchiefs, and long after the steamer had cast off we heard the cries of "Au revoir!" and "Vive la Princesse Lointaine!"

And then we were once more on the blue billows.

It was one of those marvellous, calm tropical nights with a bright full moon shining in a cloudless sky, when all Nature lies asleep in a web of the finest silver threads. The river banks glided slowly past like the scenery of a shadow play, and here and there the slack sails of *sampans* were mirrored like great bats' wings in the glittering water. Saigon with its lights and noise grew more and more distant, and soon the majestic silence of the night reigned over land and sea, only broken by the regular throbbing of the engines.

Farewell, Indo-China! Farewell, jungle and

prairies, that I have learnt to love and that call me back with a strange enchantment—an enchantment which I hardly understand myself, but which makes the blood run quicker at the memory of your virgin charm and beauty. Farewell, glorious life of the wilds! When shall I know you again?



IN THE TIMBER YARDS OF RANGOON.

[To face p. 240.]





THE MAHARAJAH OF COOCH BEHAR.

[To face p. 250.]

## CHAPTER XIV

### SPORT IN COOCH BEHAR

A FEW days after the wedding just described I met the Maharaja of Cooch Behar for the second time at a dinner given by India's far-famed "lady shikari," Lady J., of whom it is said that she handles the fan in a drawing-room with as much skill and grace as a rifle in the jungle, and that the tigers that have fallen to her sure aim have reached double figures. And it was thanks in great measure to her friendship with the Maharaja that shortly afterwards I found myself in a noisy and shaky train on my way northward to his little principality for a few days' tiger-shooting.

The journey took sixteen hours, and during that time I had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with Indian railway carriages, which are unusually wretched and uncomfortable. There is no corridor either from one carriage to another or between the different compartments, and where you have once taken your seat you have to sit until the train is pleased to stop. The fittings consist of nothing but two hard, though broad couches along the outer sides; and—as already

mentioned—every kind of sleeping-car comfort is banned. The traveller himself has to manage that as best he can. On the other hand, there are usually one or two electric fans in the roof, which during the daytime provide a dusty coolness. In a corner there is often a rusty old wash-stand, and if you have luck you may sometimes find water there—but this is distinctly the exception, which is therefore greeted with all the more joy. The thing that is not stinted is floor-space, and provided the door is wide enough, you can very well travel with one or two moderate-sized trunks in the carriage. Delays are almost as common as in Italy, but here they are of little account, as the Oriental has no real idea of time, but resignedly follows the old motto "Festina lente."

In the evening we ferried across the sacred river Ganges, over which a great railway bridge was in construction, to avoid the troublesome changes; and on the farther side another line took us up, with a rather narrower gauge but a good deal more shaking, on which Lewenhaupt and I tried in vain to get any real night's rest.

In the morning, when we had crossed the border, our royal host was pleased to climb in person on to the locomotive and to drive the long train with his own gloved hands. This is one of the little personal pleasures that no one has the heart to deny him, especially as, according to the statement of the English engine-driver, he performs

the duty in an irreproachable way. Just after I had got into my carriage a message came with an invitation to mount the engine, and so at the first stop I made my way to it, and luckily arrived just as the train was starting. But at the last station before arriving, when I was going back to my carriage to remove some of the dust and dirt from my clothes, my dash was not equally successful, as the train was a long one, and when I had got half-way the Maharaja took it into his head to start the engine, which forced me to jump up on to the step of the nearest carriage. But, as luck would have it, this was the mail van, and as there happened to be nobody in it and the door was locked, the result was that I made my entry into the capital standing on the step and, so to speak, hovering between heaven and earth, to the great astonishment of the assembled congregation, who—very naturally, I admit—could not exactly make out what business I had to be there.

Cooch Behar itself, lying in the middle of the little principality of the same name in the north-eastern corner of Bengal and just on the border of Assam, is really a very large village, with a population of only two or three thousand. Besides a palace, outwardly magnificent but inwardly rather badly damaged by an earthquake, the place has no sights to boast of. But then I had not come there for sight-seeing, but for a far more exciting

and—in my eyes, at least—considerably more interesting business. For it was here that the mysteries of the Indian jungle were to be disclosed to my eyes for the first time, and the veil that surrounds the impenetrable thickets was to be torn aside by the powerful tusks of trumpeting elephants.

We stayed two days in the town, waiting till all the arrangements of the camp were completed. Meanwhile a few small shoots took place in the immediate neighbourhood, at which a number of wild pigs, civet cats, and other small game were killed—all from the backs of elephants. Then at last, on the morning of the third day, we started by motor-car along a rutted and uneven road for the camp. This road went across a plain, where hundreds of lean kine were trying to get as much nourishment as possible out of their equally lean pasture. Here and there a group of vultures could be seen, making their dinner off some old carcass. Cows and oxen are of course sacred beasts to the Hindu, so that when one of them dies the flesh is never used, but the carcass is left where it fell to be dealt with by Nature's own scavengers. Three ferries were successfully crossed on temporary bamboo rafts, and by degrees the open country began to give place to jungle and high elephant-grass.

After a two hours' drive, we reached the boundary of the hunting-grounds forbidden to

ordinary mortals, and soon after the car drove up a broad street of tents, with magnificent canvas dwellings on each side. Each of us had one to himself, containing besides writing-room and bedroom a little bathroom at the back. Lewenhaupt had the tent alongside mine, and then on each side of us were our host and seven or eight gentlemen of his Court. At the end nearest the street stood two larger tents, one arranged as a dining-room capable of holding at least forty guests, and the other fitted up as a luxurious smoking-room, with a good-sized French billiard-table as well. Behind these were about fifty tents for cooks and servants (two hundred or so in number), and still farther off a large open space, where the elephants were picketed. All these tents were pitched on the bank of a little river, which with its crystal-clear waters from the slopes of the Himalaya wound through the jungle. Now it should be observed that from the very first I had begged my host not to put himself to any great trouble for my sake in the way of lodging and so on, as both Lewenhaupt and I were used to camping in the open air. When I pointed this out to him, he only gave a broad smile, and said that what I saw was only regarded as a very small camp, and that it had been no trouble at all to those concerned to put it up in the short space of two days. Such is the Oriental way of looking at things!

Here I spent a few pleasant and memorable

days in roaming on the back of an elephant through the otherwise impassable jungle, and in the evenings enjoying a cheerful and unconstrained camp-life. One of these days I shall try to describe here ; but, before I go farther, perhaps a few words about the methods of big-game shooting may not be out of place.

All shooting is done with and from elephants. It may here be pointed out once for all that no other way is possible, as the elephant is the only animal under man's control that can force its way through the dense thickets of the jungle, or the rough, almost impenetrable elephant-grass. To go on foot over this ground, where one would have to cut one's way step by step, is unthinkable, besides being attended by great risks. There is therefore no other alternative than the back of an elephant, and it is on these animals—just as much as on the skill of the sportsmen—that the successful result of a day's shooting depends. The animals are extraordinarily well trained, and it is a real pleasure to see them at work under the guidance of their mahouts.

There were about thirty of these monsters in the present Maharaja's elephant-stable, or *pilkhana*, as it is here called. They are divided into two groups :—

(1) Howdah elephants, saddled with the large and heavy howdahs, with room for one other person besides the sportsman, if required. For this purpose

the largest, strongest, and best-trained animals are usually chosen, and preferably "tuskers." They ought to be so well trained that, even if attacked by a tiger or other big game, they will take no notice but stand as firm as a rock. It occasionally happens that at the critical moment they bolt or themselves attack the enemy, but such things are said to be very exceptional.

(2) Pad elephants, or the rest of the *pilkhana*. These, which besides the mahout only carry a broad, stuffed pad on their backs, are generally younger, and sometimes quite untrained animals, which are used as beaters in the line. On account of their lighter load they are able to move more easily and rapidly, and are therefore often used for riding when a long distance has to be covered.

The elephants are distributed in such a way that the ground where the game is expected is surrounded by the "pads," which then beat the jungle in the direction of the "howdahs," posted in a convenient open space on the edge of the ground in question.

But how is the game to be located?

Buffalo, bison and rhinoceros are usually fairly stationary, so that information about their haunts may be had from the native shikaris.

Not so with tiger or leopard, which between sunset and morning roam through the jungle in all directions, often covering a distance of 20 or



25 miles, without having any fixed lair. In hunting these animals one has first to await "khubber." This means that news has come in of an animal—usually an ox, cow, or calf—having been killed by a tiger or leopard in the course of the night and dragged into the jungle. If there is water in the neighbourhood, you may be sure that, after satisfying his immediate hunger—always beginning with the hindquarters—and quenching his thirst at the water close by, the beast of prey will lie down to sleep in the immediate neighbourhood of his kill and stay there during the hottest hours of the day. On the other hand, if there is no water, he will go away after only drinking his victim's blood, and will not return.

By the size of the footprints it can usually be seen whether it is a tiger or a leopard that has been at work, though the tracks of a big leopard and a young tiger are not easily distinguished. Besides this, they kill their prey in different ways. A male tiger always springs on to the back of his prey and breaks its neck; a tigress always attacks from below and seizes it by the throat. The leopard kills in the same way as the male tiger, but as a rule only calves or small cows.

And now, dear reader and fellow-sportsman, follow me in your thoughts on the broad back of Hirām-Pershad through the mazy thickets of the

jungle, and I will try to give you a picture—though but a feeble one—of what is, in my opinion, the most magnificent sporting panorama to be seen in the whole world.

At nine in the morning two leopard khubbers had been brought to the camp; as they appeared to be good, it was decided to follow them up. Besides this, the natives had brought news that not far away a wild bull buffalo had come upon a herd of tame ones, driven off the herdsmen and the tame bulls, and was now ruling with the autocratic right of the stronger over his new subjects. No wonder the natives were anxious to get him dispatched to happier hunting-grounds. Most of the pad elephants, together with the "howdahs," carrying rifles, cameras, etc., were sent in advance, and at ten o'clock six of the swifter pad elephants marched up and lay down with a sigh, while we climbed by the help of a ladder on to their broad backs, two on each. At a word from the mahout they got up again, and then we left the camp in single file, and soon came upon a broad trampled path leading through the long grass.

The landscape was flat, without hills or mountains; here and there it was traversed by clear, winding mountain streams, coming from the mighty range of the Himalaya. The plains with their high grass lay brown and monotonous; only now and then a wild cotton-tree gleamed like a

torch with its red flowers. Farther off the jungle could be seen with its luxuriant verdure and the fine network of the slender bamboo. The sun was already beginning to burn, and we went slowly forward in silence through the wilderness.

Soon the grass became thinner, and we came out on to an open plain, where tame herds were peacefully grazing; at the edge of the jungle stood some low bamboo huts, and a number of natives watched the advancing procession with inquisitive eyes. Then into thicker grass and jungle again, to come out once more on a smaller open space, bordered on one side by dense jungle and on the other by a narrow river.

Here the "howdahs" were waiting, and I climbed over to my comfortable seat on the back of the mighty Hirām-Pershad<sup>1</sup>; behind me sat one of the Maharaja's secretaries, whose mangled English was rather difficult to understand, but who was able to give me a good deal of useful information in the course of the day's shoot.

In the howdah I found, besides my own '475 express, a '450 and a '375 hammerless express, besides a double-barrelled gun—an excellent Holland & Holland—so with that arsenal I could feel fairly safe and prepared for the worst.

It was the buffalo's turn first, and we started

<sup>1</sup>"The diamond-like."

in the direction of the river, where he had last been seen. Quite right; about 500 yards in front of me was the tame herd, on the fine sand by the bank of the stream; and after a while I caught sight of a huge dark mass, quite a head higher than the other animals, marching about with stately steps among the tame cattle and reviewing his terrified subjects. The intruder was easily distinguishable from the rest by his enormous, glossy black body, his broad neck, and his powerful horns.

Then followed an enveloping movement with all the elephants, and soon the whole herd, including the big bull, was surrounded. The latter began to show signs of uneasiness, pawing the sand and throwing his head about.

My elephant advanced obliquely towards the animal, and the distance between us grew less and less. Now I will admit that at that moment my feelings were far from pleasant. It was my first shot at big game in Cooch Behar, and I could feel the eyes of the other sportsmen acutely in the back of my neck; if I missed, my moral condemnation would certainly be severe. And to put a bullet from the top of a never quite motionless howdah at fairly long range into the right spot on an animal surrounded and partially covered by tame cattle, did not appear to me a very inviting task. For how easy it was for one of the latter to come in the line of fire just at the critical

moment—and I should have disgraced myself for ever!

But all went well; the .475 bullet struck just behind the shoulder, and the animal showed that he had been shot in the way so characteristic of buffalo—back arched and head down between the forelegs. He ran a few steps, stopped, tore up a great cloud of dust with his forefeet, and glared angrily at my elephant. If he could have done so, he would certainly have charged at that moment; but he got another bullet and at the same time a couple more from Lewenhaupt, who had gradually ridden up from another direction, and this brought him to his knees. I rode up to the beast and gave him the finishing shot in the head at close range.

He turned out to be an old bull with a big body, but unfortunately very poor horns. As tenacious of life as all his race, he had required no less than six bullets to finish him.

We then rode back to the edge of the jungle, and the work of the forenoon was considered at an end. Two immense tiffin elephants, loaded with chairs, tables, and hampers containing everything imaginable in the way of eatables and drinkables, marched into the arena, and soon a dainty meal was served in the first shady place to be found. To say that we suffered starvation or any other hardship on these shoots would be grossly untrue.

The place where we were resting was quite close to one of the khubbers, and after tiffin an extremely lively and animated conversation took place among the native hunters as to how the next beat should be taken so as to get the leopard out at the right place. Each of them evidently had his own idea on the subject and considered his proposal to be the only one of any use. However, the dispute was settled very quickly by our host, who with genuine Oriental serenity told them to stop their noise and then decided the matter himself.

The howdah elephants came up, knelt down, and soon I was back in my seat, rocking to and fro in time with Hirām-Pershad's deliberate footsteps. My elephant stopped on a narrow forest path with the other howdahs on each side of him. To begin with all was silent and still, but soon the crash of the advancing line of beaters could be heard. Irresistible as an avalanche it pressed on through the dense jungle, the powerful animals forcing their way with the help of trunks and tusks. Trees and branches were broken and fell in all directions; I could already make out the head of one of the mahouts above the thick undergrowth; nearer and nearer came the line—and at last they reached us. Not a shot had been fired and no game had passed—with the exception of a couple of hares and a wild pig; the prey we had looked forward to

with such excitement had evidently scented danger and made off before our arrival. On my asking where he could have gone, I received the following encouraging reply from one of the shikaris: "He must have trotted off to Calcutta."

After this we made for the site of the other khubber, which lay on the opposite side of the river. The banks were fairly high and steep, and in order to preserve his dignity in going down them, Hirām-Pershad simply sat on his haunches and tobogganed. On reaching the water there was endless splashing and squirting with the trunk, a thing that these animals seem to be very fond of.

Arrived on the other side, I was soon at my post again, listening to the advancing beat.

Soon a loud trumpet signal was heard from one of the elephants, a sure sign that the game was "in." Nearer and nearer came the line, and suddenly I saw a glimpse of the leopard, which instantly disappeared again. The beat had now reached the edge of the jungle, and at the same time I had another sight of the animal, scared out of his wits and running the gauntlet under the noses of the elephants, in a vain attempt to find an opening through which he might break back again. He was met with cries and loud trumpeting, made up his mind and dashed at full speed for the wing where Lewenhaupt and I stood. As soon as he was clear of the other elephants, our



THE FIRST LEOPARD.



THE LINE OF ELEPHANTS.

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shots came almost simultaneously. The leopard, evidently badly wounded, began to twist like mad round the legs of Lewenhaupt's elephant, but calmed down after another shot from him and made off into the thick grass, where he evidently fell. I rode up to the approximate place, and then Hirām-Pershad had to show what he was worth, as a wounded leopard is not to be trifled with. Encouraged by the cries of his mahout, with shrill trumpeting and with his trunk rolled up into a ball between his huge tusks, he reluctantly began to push aside the grass in the direction of the wounded animal with his forehead and forefeet. It was not long before I saw the leopard, which was lying between two big tufts and glaring at me with his fierce yellow cat's eyes. A shot from the '375 in the neck—and he lay still for ever. At the same moment thirty trunks went straight up into the air, and loud, if not melodious, fanfares from all the elephants proclaimed the joyful news far and wide. It was a grand and imposing spectacle, which I shall be slow to forget.

The leopard, which was found to be a handsomely marked male, measuring 7 feet  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches from his nose to the tip of his tail, was hoisted by a rope round his neck on to the back of a pad elephant, and then we started for home.

Then began the last phase of a day's sport in the jungle—the "general shoot." All the elephants

were formed into a long, straight line, in such a way that the howdahs were posted at regular intervals, with five or six pad elephants between. The word was passed: "Everything may be shot, from rhinoceros and tiger to hare and partridge." And so the long line moved off in the general direction of the camp.

I stood rifle in hand on my rolling platform and tried as well as I could to keep my balance. Soon I was in amongst the densest thickets, and then Hirām-Pershad had some hard work. It is perhaps on these occasions that the cleverness and wonderful training of the elephants is seen to the best advantage. Now it is a thick branch which stops the howdah. "Break," says the mahout, and the mighty trunk takes a half-turn round the branch, which is flung to the ground with a crash. If he should take hold of the wrong branch by mistake, he leaves go of it at once on being told by the mahout, and tries another until he finds the right one. Now it is a big tree that bars the way: Hirām-Pershad goes quietly up to it, puts his forehead to the trunk, breaking it like a match, and then bends the tree to the ground with one forefoot, to the right, left, or straight ahead, according to the order of the mahout.

Although I know that my neighbours on either side are only a few yards from me, the jungle is here so dense that I see nothing of them. And when I stand upright in the howdah, it is still about

6 feet to the top of the high grass. Only then does one fully realise man's powerlessness to penetrate this vegetation alone.

But by degrees it grows thinner. The twilight that prevailed is gradually dispersed, and then the whole line breaks out of the jungle almost at the same moment, and the great unbroken plain with its brown grass — here short — lies before us in imposing desolation. The tents of the camp show up on the horizon, and behind them the blood-red evening sun hangs upon the tree-tops, as though hesitating to say farewell to the landscape.

A few shots ring out. It is a covey of black partridges (*Frankolinus frankolinus*) that has risen and receives its due salute. An indistinct form steals through the grass in front of me, is stopped by a shot from the 12-bore, and on being picked up turns out to be a large civet cat. A few wild cocks rise amid loud crowing and fly away over the plain.

Slowly the long, straight line moves without further hindrance over the open ground in the direction of the camp. Now and then partridges or snipe get up, or a deer runs for its life. The shots are amusing, but difficult, and shooting snipe or woodcock from a lurching elephant is about the hardest kind of sport to be found. The sun sinks more and more, and by the time we reach the camp it has disappeared below the horizon; its

place is taken by a round full moon, and soon we are sitting in front of the tent door with a pipe and a whisky-and-soda, enjoying the fresh coolness of the evening, and discussing the various phases of an eventful day's sport. But later in the evening, when all is quiet in the camp and I walk up and down the broad street of tents alone under the flashing stars of the tropical sky, listening to the nocturnal sounds, I hear now and then a soft purring like that of a cat; this is the tiger stealing round cautiously and treacherously, stalking his prey in the dark silence of the night.

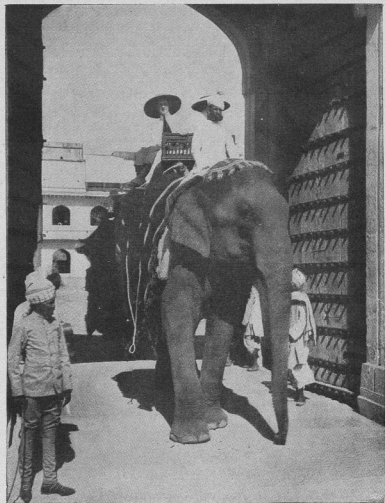
Thus one day after another went by, with varying fortunes, but all equally interesting and agreeable. Altogether we shot during this time one buffalo, three leopards, two wild pigs and four civet cats, besides a number of hares, partridges, woodcock and snipe. One of the three leopards offered a very interesting shot, as he flew like an arrow, trying to get across a few yards of open space between two points of jungle, and was brought down in doing so. This episode involuntarily carried my thoughts back to similar snap-shots at home, when puss has doubled and one stands waiting for her hasty retreat across a narrow forest path.

As will be seen, unfortunately no tiger was bagged. In this respect we really had persistent

bad luck. Of all the khubbers, only one was of tiger, and although time after time we came upon perfectly fresh tracks, not one of the coveted striped cats was ever found in the beat. When we returned to camp on the last evening, we found great excitement among the servants, and they all collected, yelling and gesticulating, round our elephants. It appeared that about an hour before our arrival a big tiger had come down to drink in the little river, hardly 150 yards from the camp, and all those left at home had stood on the bank by the tents and watched him. It was then too late in the evening to do anything, but early the following morning some drives were made about the spot in the doubtful hope that the big cat might have stayed the night there; the only thing we got was—a porcupine.

Unfortunately, the time I had at my disposal soon came to an end, and much against my will I was obliged to leave our hospitable friends and say good-bye to the glorious camp-life. At midday Lewenhaupt and I left the camp in Cooch Behar, and on the following morning we were back in Calcutta. But judge of my mortification when I learned a little later that on the afternoon of the very day on which we left the camp a big tiger had been shot in the immediate neighbourhood by one of the Maharaja's gentlemen. That was really a piece of bad luck.

In spite of my disappointment at not even seeing the tail of one of these animals, those cheery and refreshing days of sport in Cooch Behar will nevertheless always remain among my pleasantest memories of the Indian peninsula.



THROUGH THE PALACE GATES OF AMBER.

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