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SIKHIM & BHUTAN

TWENTY-ONE YEARS ON THE
NORTH-EAST FRONTIER

1887-1908

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAP

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MY SECOND MISSION TO BHUTAN

jong, and on to the plains does not deserve the name of a road. It is nothing but a watercourse most of the way, with mere tracks along bad precipices and almost perpendicular falls, while from Dongna-jong it follows the bed of the river, and must be absolutely impassable in the rains. It was a marvel how my mules managed to get down, but with the exception of being a little footsore they were none the worse, and a few days' rest put them in condition again. One of the reasons this part of the road is so bad is that it is on the slopes of the hills immediately above the plains which receive the full force of the south-west monsoon, probably not less than 300 inches of rain in the year, and no road, unless very carefully looked after, can stand that. It is quite useless from any utilitarian point of view, but the scenery throughout is lovely.

I was not sorry to reach Jaigaon, Mr. Trood's comfortable bungalow, where I was most hospitably entertained, and where I stayed for three days to recruit and to transact some work with some of the tea-gardens on the frontier.

From Jaigaon I travelled west along the boundary to view land suitable for tea on the Bhutan side, and at the same time to look at some copper deposits which I hope may eventually prove profitable to Bhutan.

After inspecting them I turned back and went to the east of Bhutan to look at a coal-mine, travelling via Dhubri and Gauhati. By this time the different kinds of transport I had used during my tour had included, I should think, about every known sort. I had made use of coolies, elephants, mules, ponies, donkeys, yaks, oxen, carts, pony-traps, rail, and steamer, and the only available animal I had not employed was the Tibetan pack-sheep.

The hills where the coal is situated lie on the northern slope of the Himalayas, and are densely clothed with forests, but with practically no population, as it is too fever-stricken to allow of any one living there. They are, however, the haunt of almost every kind of wild animal—elephant, rhino, tiger, leopard, bison, mythun, sambur, cheetah,

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hog-deer, barking deer, &c. The river-beds are full of runs leading to the various salt-licks which occur in the hills. On one of my visits to the coal a magnificent tusker went up the valley ahead of me, and Ugyen Kazi, who pitched his camp higher up the valley, was obliged to move his tents owing to the numbers of wild elephants making it too unpleasant for him to stay on. While I was examining the coal a large tigress with her cub walked down the valley, and on my return I found her pugs, with the little one's pug inside one of her own. It would be an ideal place for shooting, but not easy to follow game, owing to the extreme steepness of the sandstone cliffs.

The elephant in its wild state can go over, or down, nearly anything, and the tusker I mentioned I found had gone up a precipice thirty feet high at an angle very little short of perpendicular.

I found the coal very much crushed and squeezed out of its original bed. The quality also was not very good, with too much ash, but it might be utilised to make gas, which could be supplied to the neighbouring tea-gardens at probably less cost than the timber now in use for fuel. After inspecting the coal I left Ugyen Kazi to attend to some timber contracts he had undertaken, and to the sale of the Bhutan lac, and fortunately finding a dog-cart available, set off to drive to the ghat at Rungamatti, a quicker way of travelling than on an elephant. There had been some rain, but the roads were in fair order. At Rungamatti I had a long wait for the steamer, which had stuck on a sandbank somewhere further up the river, and in consequence we were nearly twenty-four hours late in reaching Dhubri, the present terminus of the railway; but from there there was no difficulty in getting back to my home at Gangtak. This ended my last official visit to Bhutan; but I hope it will not be my last visit, as I look forward to meeting Sir Ugyen and his sister again, as well as all the Bhutan officials, and to revisiting the country in which I have spent so many pleasant months.

CHAPTER XX

BRITISH MISSIONS TO BHUTAN

Bogle, 1774. Hamilton, 1775 and 1777. Turner, 1783. Pemberton, 1838. Eden, 1864. White, 1905. White, 1907.

AN account of the first Mission to Bhutan is to be found in the "Narrative of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of Thomas Manning to Lhasa," edited by Markham, in 1875.

Prior to this narrative, no full account of Bogle's Mission had been published. An attempt to find adequate materials in the records at Calcutta or at the India Office had failed, but fortunately Bogle's journals, memoranda, official and private correspondence were carefully preserved by his family in Scotland, and it is on these materials that Markham has based his narrative. It was the lack of these materials in the public offices that led Eden, in his account of the political missions to Bhutan, to say that Bogle does not appear to have been charged with any political functions with regard to Bhutan. Markham's investigations have proved, on the contrary, that Bogle had a mission to Bhutan, and an important one. The Mission originated in a friendly letter from the Penchen Rimpochi of Tibet, interceding with the East India Company on behalf of Bhutan after the Bhutanese invasion of Cooch Behar, and the primary cause of Bogle's Mission was Warren Hastings' desire to take advantage of this opening given him by the Penchen Rimpochi to establish friendly

APPENDIX III

A LIST OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL ANIMALS AND BIRDS TO BE FOUND IN THESE COUNTRIES, AND THEIR HABITAT

- Elephants*.—Along the lower hills and in the Duars, penetrating in the rainy season into the hills to an elevation of 11,000 feet.
- Rhino*.—In a few of the lower valleys of Bhutan, but not common.
- Bison*.—In the lower valleys and outer hills of Bhutan.
- Mythun*.—Do. do.
- Tiger*.—In all the outer hills and valleys, and occasionally in the lower valleys up to 9000 feet.
- Common Leopard*.—Throughout the hills up to an elevation of 8000 feet.
- Clouded Leopard*.—At elevations from 4000 feet to 6000 feet.
- Snow Leopard*.—Rare, and only met with at high elevations above 11,000 feet.
- Black Leopard*.—Rare, but met with in the dense jungles at elevations of 3000 feet to 4000 feet.
- Lynx*.—Rare; only at high elevations bordering on Tibet over 16,000 feet.
- Wolf*.—Do. do.
- Jackal*.—Has been imported from the plains of India, and is occasionally seen as high as 6000 feet.
- Wild Dog*.—Not very common, but is met with in packs between the plains and a height of 6000 feet. There is said to be a second species, but I have never met with it.
- Shau (Cervus affines)*.—Inhabits a tract to the north-east of the Chumbi Valley.
- Sambur*.—In all the lower hills.
- Cheetah*.—Do. do.
- Hog-deer*.—Do. do.

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- Barking Deer*.—Throughout the hills up to an elevation of 9000 feet.
- Musk Deer*.—In the higher valleys at an elevation of 11,000 feet.
- Coral*.—Throughout the hills at an elevation of 4000 feet to 8000 feet.
- Serow*.—Throughout the hills at elevations from 4000 feet to 9000 feet.
- Thar*.—Somewhat rare; at elevations from 6000 feet to 14,000 feet.
- Takin (Budorcas taxicolor Whitei)*.—Very rare; only occasionally in Bhutan, at elevations from 12,000 feet upwards.
- Tibetan Gazelle*.—At elevations of from 17,000 feet to 19,000 feet in a few of the higher valleys opening into Tibet.
- Nyen (Ovis ammon)*.—Only found on very high ground on the borders of Tibet, from 17,000 feet upwards.
- Nao, or Burhel (Ovis nahura)*.—Throughout the hills at high elevations from 16,000 feet upwards.
- Kyang*.—Very rare; at high elevations on the borders of Tibet.
- Bear*.—Three species, one inhabiting high altitudes from 11,000 feet to 12,000 feet; the common black bear, found everywhere, from 6000 feet downwards; and a third species, also said to be common, inhabiting the lower valleys.
- Monkeys*.—Three species, one inhabiting the slopes near the plains, one at an elevation from 3000 feet to 6000 feet, and the langur, found from 7000 feet to 12,000 feet.
- Cat-bear*.—Not uncommon at elevations from 7000 feet to 12,000 feet.
- Cats*.—Many species, which inhabit the dense jungle all along the hills.

GAME-BIRDS

- Jungle Fowl*.—Throughout the hills, up to 4000 feet.
- Kelij Pheasant*.—Throughout the hills at elevations of 2000 feet to 4000 feet.
- Tragopan, or Argus Pheasant*.—Throughout the hills at elevations of 7000 feet to 9000 feet.
- Blood Pheasant*.—In the Sikkim hills and in Western Bhutan at 9000 feet to 13,000 feet.
- Monal*.—Throughout the hills at elevations of 9000 feet to 15,000 feet.
- Wood Partridge*.—There are two species, distinguished only by a white marking on the neck and a slight difference in size. Found