

RECOLLECTIONS OF
MY LIFE

BY

SURGEON-GENERAL
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the valley of the Bramaputra, and halted at a stage named Ranigodaun. On leaving this rest-house the road was crossed by culverts for drainage, the bridges over which seemed rather slight and out of repair. On approaching one looking rather more shaky than the others, I proposed to cross it first, being a light weight: Colonel Lister, however, pushed on. There was a crash, a cloud of dust, and the colonel disappeared! He had gone right through. Fortunately it was only a few feet deep, and neither he nor the pony was hurt; but he was much disconcerted. I could not help laughing, nor could he after a time!

We arrived at Gowhatty, and went to the house of Colonel Matthie, the commissioner. I was asked to join a party who were crossing the Bramaputra to shoot a rhinoceros, but had not time, and was much disappointed at missing this chance. Colonel Matthie showed us the horns of a cow buffalo he had shot near Dibroghur: they measured many feet from point to point, and are now in the British Museum (amongst the largest on record). The bungalows in Gowhatty are scattered about the station, some on the river-banks, which, like those of other Indian rivers, are receding. The large native town is full of bigoted Hindus, as I judged by the disgusting idol and scenic exhibitions in the bazaar. It happened to be a festival time, and on a densely wooded hill near the town is a very sacred temple and shrine to which Hindus from all parts of India make pilgrimages.

In returning, Colonel Matthie took us some miles down the river in a large state or war canoe. The rowers were numerous, forty or fifty, and were double-banked. One man stood upon a platform near the bow of the boat and chanted to them, they shouting in response and keeping time with their oars. We progressed rapidly and landed at a small station, where we found our ponies and syces waiting. Returning, we took rather a different route. Between Cherra and Nunklao there are two rivers, the Bogapani and the Kalapani, the former of which is crossed by a suspension

for that of the heir-apparent, and the procession then went on, attended by great crowds, among whom money was scattered, to the Moti Mahal palace, where a banquet was prepared, followed by elephant and other wild-beast fights. The king had a large collection of animals—fighting elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, tigers, hyænas, and others. He had also a splendid aviary, in which every conceivable kind of bird was kept. Pigeons were especial favourites, and the art of pigeon-breeding was carried to such perfection, and the fanciers and breeders were so skilful, that they produced the most extraordinary varieties of these birds. Pigeon-flying was a favourite entertainment, especially with the king. Clouds of these birds could be seen soaring over the Kaiser Bagh and the other palaces, responding to signals made with a flag by men on the roof. They were made to perform extraordinary aerial evolutions, settling down at command. Kite-flying was also a very favourite amusement with the king and the nawabs. The native kites, which have no tails, could be seen soaring over Lucknow at all times. Kite tournaments or duels were popular, in which the object was for the string of one kite to cut that of the other, the strings being covered with powdered glass. The greatest dexterity was often shown, and large sums of money changed hands in these contests. The king was a great adept in kite-flying.

Wild-beast fights were not so common in Wajid Ali's time as in his predecessor's: they took place occasionally, as on Outram's arrival, but ram, cock, and quail fighting were constant amusements. The elephant and also the rhinoceros fights used to take place on the plain of the Dili-Aram across the Goomti, just opposite the Moti Mahal. The elephants were full-grown males, highly fed and pampered, and when "must" were brought into the field of battle from opposite sides, when they immediately rushed at each other, pushing and struggling until the weaker gave way. Each elephant had his mahout on his back, who, by the help of a rope or two extending from the neck to

the tail, was able to shift his place when necessary. The animals had their foreheads painted red. They were accompanied on to the ground by horsemen with spears, and by footmen—*bandars*—carrying fireworks. The mahouts were seldom if ever hurt, nor did the elephants suffer, as a general rule. When one elephant found that he was weaker than the other he turned and quitted the field, the conqueror followed, and once I saw an elephant overturned. These fighting elephants, which were kept for this purpose, were nearly always dangerous to all but their immediate attendants, and sometimes to them. They are very much afraid of fireworks, and if the attendants seemed to be in danger, the letting off of fireworks immediately put them to flight. They also dread spears, and were easily turned, even when making a furious charge, by the fireworks or the spearmen. Some of the trained attendants provoked the elephants, either by riding up to them or by dragging a shawl along the ground. It occasionally, but rarely, happened that an elephant did catch a man, and then his destruction was almost certain. When the fight between the two elephants was over, the conqueror was driven off the field by the spearmen and *bandars*. For these fights the mahouts used to receive very handsome presents of money and shawls from the king or the minister.

Rhinoceroses fight much in the same way, but of course they had no one on their backs. They were led on to the ground by chains, the attendants patting them on the back and encouraging them. As soon as they saw each other they made a rush and tried to push over or injure each other with their horns, until, as in the case of the elephants, the weaker gave way and rushed off the field.

Buffaloes fight with each other much in the same fashion. I once saw a young bull pitted against a large male tiger which rushed in, seized him by the neck, pulled him over, and quickly killed him. An old bull buffalo might have beaten the tiger,—they frequently did so. A most amusing fight was one between a hyæna and a donkey.

under my supervision, and, in addition to my proper work, gave me plenty to do. Of course I had numerous subordinates, but they needed supervision, and careful investigation was necessary in relation to the great demands daily made upon the treasury for feeding and providing for all these establishments.

An interesting little episode arose out of this charge. It was one day reported to me that one of the large fighting rhinoceroses had broken loose, had run down a man in the open plain and killed him. I immediately sentenced him to death, and set about carrying out his execution myself, with the help of my friend Gubbins. We sent our elephants to the place where the rhinoceros had ensconced himself, a patch of swampy ground not far from the Dil-i-aram, and there we found him. We mounted our elephants and approached him with our guns ready. He seemed quite prepared for us, pricked his ears, snorted, and looked vicious, showing that he meant to fight. The elephants became very unsteady and would not approach him. Fearing if we only wounded him he might get away and do more mischief, we changed our tactics, left him, and retired to a tope of trees a few hundred yards distant. We each got up into a tree near the place where we knew he would emerge from the swamp. We had meantime sent a number of men with tom-toms to the other side to drive him: he walked deliberately towards the trees where we were sitting. I had sent back to the hospital for some strychnine, and put about 20 grains into a large chupattee which was laid on the path along which we expected him to come. On coming up to it he stopped and deliberately ate it. We watched him with great interest for about twenty minutes, during which he munched the chupattee and did not move from the spot. At last, perhaps beginning to feel the poison, he moved, looking somewhat disturbed. This we had agreed upon as the signal to fire, and we did so, both at the same moment. My ball penetrated through the double shield of skin upon the shoulder; Gubbins' hit him in the neck. He dropped,

falling prone upon his belly, and did not turn over upon his side. On going up to him we found he was quite dead. We left a jemadar with *chumars* to remove his skin. When he returned in the evening he said a strange thing had happened which he had never seen before: the flies that settled upon the carcass as the skin was removed died in numbers!

About this time my brother Richard, who had come from Australia, was living with me. He had been for some time a cadet in the Australian Mounted Police, and was an excellent rider. He continued with me to the end, poor boy! He was killed by the mutineers not long after, when only twenty-three years of age.

On June 27, 1856, our first son was born in my wife's father's house in cantonments. He was christened "Robert Andrew," after my father and hers.

The annexation had made great changes. It had brought many more people and entailed upon me much more work. My hospital went on as usual, but jails were now formed and jail hospitals. They soon became crowded, and there was much sickness and mortality. All this gave me great anxiety, for sanitary science was in its infancy, and there were many difficulties about sanitation and diet. I reorganised the arrangements of the Post Office, which was now made to extend over the whole province. Postmasters were appointed in each station, and Pursid Narain was made deputy postmaster.

During Mr Coverley Jackson's incumbency, in January 1857 I made a tour with him through the province for the purpose of inspecting various localities, laying down sites for new stations, and improving the condition of those already in existence. He was accompanied by his nieces Georgina and Madeline Jackson, and their brother, Sir Mountstuart Jackson, who was an assistant commissioner at Seetapore. We visited a great many stations from Khyreghur to Baraitch, and on our return crossed the Gogra at Beiram Ghât. We had our elephants with us,

On the next day (March 28) we made a long, unsuccessful series of beats over what was a few years ago one of the best finds for tigers, but got nothing. Rangnawas is an enormous swamp in the sâl forest, at least a mile and a half long and perhaps half that breadth, with cover for any numbers of tigers, buffaloes, elephants, and rhinoceroses. We beat it as well as we could, but saw nothing. Elephants were formerly caught here, and at certain seasons they still come, for we saw comparatively recent traces of them. The rhinoceros was more rarely found. We tried several other beats in the neighbourhood without any success.

On March 29 we travelled for about fourteen miles through dense belts of sâl forest and plains covered with long grass, which in some places had been burnt. In these plains are cattle-feeding villages and enclosures with a few huts for the wretched creatures that herd the miserable half-starved cattle. Several times we saw the tracks of wild elephants, but very little game of any description. In the heart of the forest one seldom does see anything except an occasional herd of spotted deer and a few birds or monkeys: the predominant feature is stillness and absence of life. In crossing one of the plains Drury shot two florican which he got down and stalked. Our camp was on the bank of the Kundhwa amongst some seesu trees near a village named Durruk, inhabited by Taroos, a race which claims descent from the Chowhan Chatteries, a sect of Rajpoots, but are probably the aboriginal inhabitants of the Terai, and the only members of the human race who can live all the year round in its pestiferous atmosphere. They are said, though I think the appearance of many of them belied it, not to suffer from malaria. We had some of them into the tent after dinner to consult about shikar. One old fellow promised to take us to a tiger the next day, and he offered to fix him to the spot by an incantation. Of course we were only too pleased, and he set to work with a brass dish and some dry rice.

On March 30 we set out to search for the spellbound tiger ; but, for some good reason of course, the charm had failed, and he was not to be found ! Our way lay through a magnificent sâl forest, of which many trees were cut and roughly hewn into logs. The price of a tree in this district is 8 annas : ere it reaches Lucknow its cost has increased considerably. The scenery of this part of the Terai is really very beautiful. The lower range of hills, now close to us, filling up the background of every break in the forest, with the constantly recurring glades and undulating hills, afforded a charm of variety which had hitherto been wanting.

The Terai (*ter* = moist) is a tract of jungle-land from fifteen to thirty miles in breadth, lying along the lower ranges of the Himalayas. Beyond that is another narrow belt called the Bhabur. This is one great filter-bed of sand and vegetation through which the water draining from the hills slowly percolates, until, being intercepted by a bed of clay, it reappears upon the surface in the form of shallow wells, swamps, and a general diffusion of subsoil moisture. This belt of land is full of fine forests, which no doubt influence the surrounding country by increasing the rainfall, modifying the supply of water to the streams, and the general diffusion of moisture. The roots of the trees and the vegetation on the hillsides have the effect of impeding the rush of water, and of thus regulating the supply which will feed the canals and reservoirs where irrigation is required during the dry season. Such a condition of things, though eminently useful in this respect, has the disadvantage of being most unhealthy at certain seasons of the year, the worst being that after the rains.

On March 31 we moved through broad belts of forest and over an extensive plain, the ground here and there being broken and hilly, interspersed with dry nullahs. Whilst passing through the open ground in the forest, an aheer ran after us and said he could show us a tiger. We retraced our steps, when he took us to an extensive patch

of long grass, surrounded by a deep but dry nullah, which we beat out in every direction but unsuccessfully. It is almost vain to try to find tigers in these places so near the forest: they sneak out when they hear the elephants coming. We went on towards our next encampment, recrossing the Mohaan, and on the other side of that stream we found an extensive plain in which we got some small game. I secured my first florican here, a fine male bird, having stalked him.

The jungle and peafowl are numerous enough near the edges of the forest, whilst the black partridge (*Francolinus vulgaris*) is found wherever the long grass grows. One finds also the florican (*Sypheotis bengalensis*), the leek (*Sypheotis aurita*), the bustard (*Eupodotis edwardsi*), the khair or swamp partridge (*Francolinus gularis*), the grey partridge (*Perdix orientalis*), and also a curious bird, the four-spurred partridge (*Gallo perdix*), called the chau khara, and quail of three or four varieties. In the plains the coolung are common and the bittern and egret. The common snipe, jack snipe, and painted snipe are all common enough, and an occasional solitary snipe (*Gallinago solitaria*), and there is no lack of predaceous birds.

The spotted deer (*Cervus axis*) are in herds, but not nearly so numerous as I had been led to suppose. The hog-deer (*Cervus porcinus*) bounds out from the long grass in all the openings of the forest. The muntjac (*Cervus muntjac*), barking deer, or karker is also found in the forest. Of the larger deer, the gond or swamp deer (*Rucervus duvaucelii*) and the sambhur (*Cervus aristotelis*) are found, but we have seen none as yet. On the outskirts of the Terai the black-buck (*Antelope besoarctica*), the ravine deer (*Gazella benettii*), and the nylgau (*Portax picta*) are also met with.

Tigers, leopards, jackals, and occasionally wolves and sloth bears, are also denizens of this part of the country. The last are rare—we have not seen one as yet. The elephant and rhinoceros are found in the Terai, though

they are perhaps more numerous farther east. Of late years the rhinoceros has been very rare here. A few years ago Hearsey shot two in this neighbourhood.

The wild cat (*Felis chaus* and *F. bengalensis*), the civet cat (*Viverra zibetha*), the porcupine (*Histrix leucerea*), and the common and hispid hare are also found, especially at the foot of the hills. The wild boar is common everywhere, and the pigmy hog (*Porcula salvania*) is also found, though I never succeeded in getting one.

In the swamps and among the trees the python (*Molurus*) is not uncommon. The cobra, bungarus, daboia, and trimerisurus are also found, but not frequently. Crocodiles are common in the swamps and rivers, and gavials in the rivers. These contain a variety of fish, of which the mahaseer is perhaps the finest. He is a noble-looking fish with very large scales, takes out the line, and gives as much sport as a salmon, but is not so good to eat. They are caught in the rapids with a fly or spoon bait, in the slower streams with ground-bait.

The high conical mounds produced by the white ants are a marked feature of the scenery of the forest and plains, and a form of land crab is also not uncommon: the ground in certain places is rough and irregular from the presence of little mounds thrown up by them.

On April 1, after passing through the forest for some miles, we emerged on an extensive plain and swamp named the Munjila Tal. There was too much water in the centre for the elephants to go into it, so we beat along the edges and there found a very fine tiger, which got up out of a patch of grass in front of me just as the loader was calling my attention to fresh footprints. He tried to make for the forest, but as he crossed in front of my elephant over an open space between the long grass and the forest he got the contents of four barrels in the shoulder and ribs. He staggered on up the rising ground, and about 100 yards ahead we came up with him stretched out on some felled trees, which he was biting in his dying agony. This tiger