

THE PRINCE OF WALES  
IN INDIA

OR

FROM PALL MALL TO THE PUNJAUB,

BY

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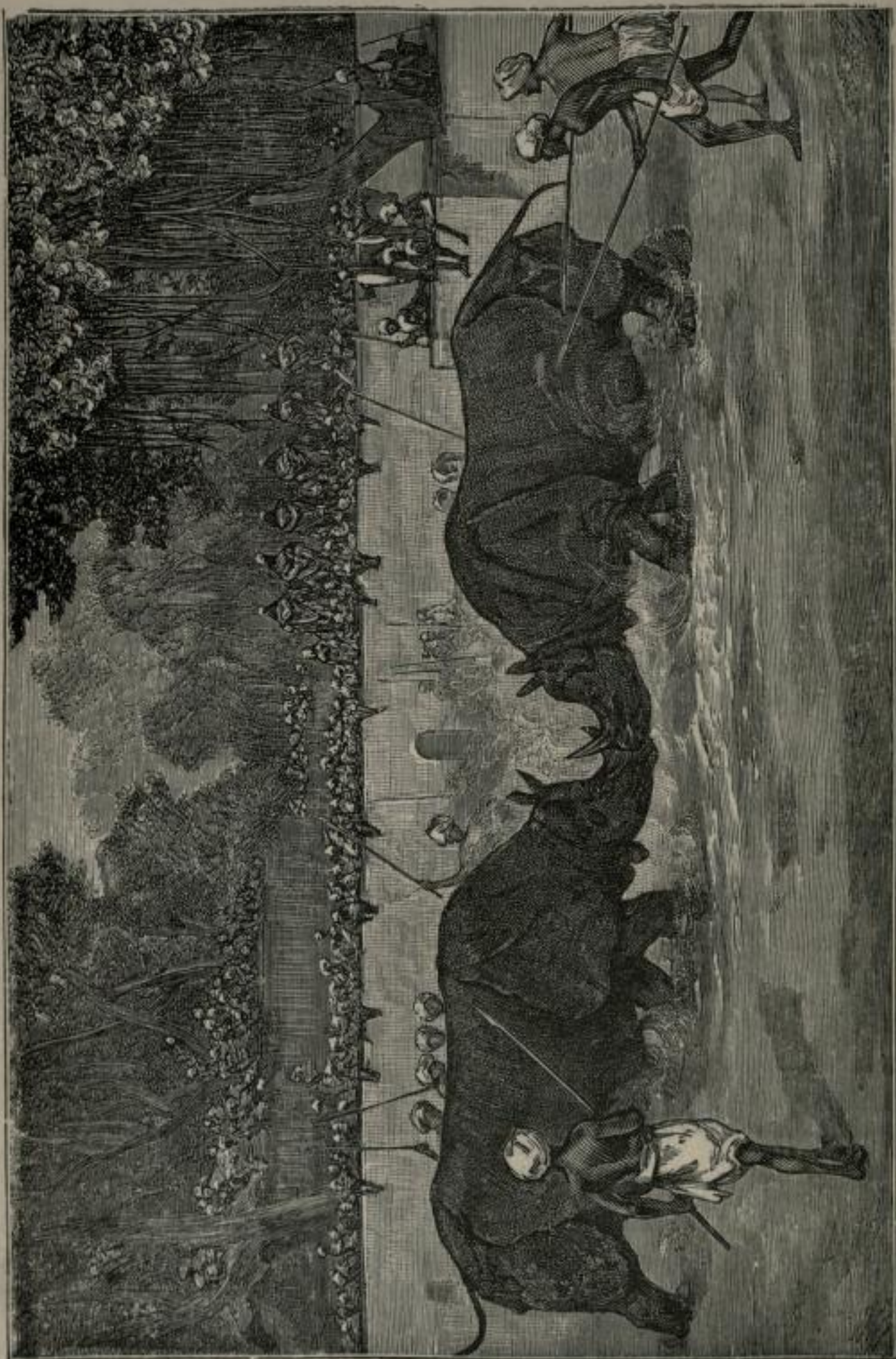


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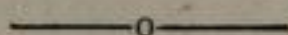
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1877.

6/3/21  
4-28885



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## CHAPTER VII.

### GAMES AND SPORTS AT BARODA.

The Prince was well received at Baroda. The scene which presented itself at the railway station the morning he arrived was in keeping with his previous receptions.

The city of Baroda proper lies far from the embodiment of science which we owe to George Stephenson. The inhabitants are as singular in their costume, and I should say as objectionable in their habits, as they were when tea-kettles, to say nothing of steam-engines, had yet to be invented. And as the railway has not, for manifest reasons, come to them—that is to say, to their very doors—they have declined to come in their corporate capacity to the railway. Individually they come by thousands; but they have not extended their buildings nor enlarged their borders so as to embrace the line and its belongings. Three tradesmen, more enterprising than the rest of their countrymen, have established shops at which stores to the value of about eighteenpence are regularly kept. But, beyond this, the unsoaped, semi-nude native prefers the bazaar to the open country road, and sits quite contentedly there, far from steam-whistles or the noise of railway-trucks. As a consequence, there is a fine open space in front of the station, fringed with pretty Eastern trees, amongst which figure three or four palms, plenty of banyan and plantain trees, and a goodly number of large-leaved and heavy-foliaged specimens such as can only be found in a climate like this.

With a view to watching somewhat closely the behaviour of the people on the occasion of his Royal Highness' entry, I started for Baroda on the day previous to the Prince's visit.

arms" by the soldiers, and a vast amount of bowing from the crowd. His retainers, the chiefs and sirdars of the kingdom, in number nearly a hundred, ranged up in two lines a little lower down the road than the place where the elephants stood. Suddenly a number of fog-signals, which had been placed upon the line for the purpose of indicating the approach of the Royal train, were fired, whereupon the two companies of the 83rd regiment of English troops, drawn up on the platform, presented arms. The Resident of the Station, the Assistant Resident, the English officers, and the officials of the place, stood round the Guicowar and Sir Madava Rao, and the band struck up "God save the Queen." As the engine approached the Prince was seen standing outside the saloon carriage, looking on the platform with evident interest, and, as soon as the train stopped, his Royal Highness descended and shook hands warmly first with the Guicowar and then with the Premier.

Sitting down on a couch, the Prince conversed for some minutes with his Highness, who afterwards led him outside the station, where the elephant with the golden howdah was kneeling. Taking the Prince of Wales by the right hand, the little Guicowar asked him to ascend the ladder to the howdah, which, albeit that the elephant was kneeling, was yet six or seven feet from the ground. To this the Prince assented, and, being followed by the Guicowar and Sir Madava Rao, was hoisted into the air, and so sat high above everybody, on the right of the youthful ruler of Baroda. The staff of the Prince followed, four sitting in each howdah, till all were in their places, whereupon a procession was formed of javelin men, banner-bearers on horseback, chieftains, hussars, irregular cavalry, Royal Artillery, and the elephants, the whole being brought up in the rear by the Guicowar's soldiery. Slowly moving along, the Prince passed by the gates of the city towards the cantonments, where, under Colonel Thompson, the Brigadier of the district, and a distinguished officer, the excellent native 9th and 22nd infantry

regiments were found drawn up. Receiving their salute, the Royal party made for the Residency, where a durbar was shortly afterwards held, at which the Guicowar and the Prince sat together in the sight of the principal men of the State.

It had been announced that in the afternoon there would be an elephant fight and other sports, and I made the best of my way to the arena to see the sports of which I had heard. This was a large, oblong space, strongly walled in, entered through a gateway, across which three thick bars of wood were thrown. Inside this space were three structures, which were at once noticeable — a huge grand stand of four storeys; a circular structure of brickwork, about five feet high, with a tree in the centre, and two flights of steps cut in the stone; and a circular walled structure, looped with holes just large enough to allow of the ingress of a man—particularly a flying, terror-stricken, elephant-hunted man—should such a one need its hospitable shelter. Overhanging the walls were trees rich in foliage, forming a splendid background from whatever side you scanned the picture. On the tops of the walls thousands of Mahrattas, in all kinds of costumes, were perched, their faces full of glee, and their arms full of children; on hills, which overlooked the arena were thousands more of them; peering in at the various gates between the bars were hundreds again; and inside the arena, about one hundred athletic men, some with spears, others with flags, and the rest with nothing save ropes and chains, were standing about waiting to take part in the promised fun. Outside the gates were cages full of tigers, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, and rams. Two huge elephants were fastened to the walls inside, about twenty painted and decorated elephants were ranged in a line opposite the grand stand, where was assembled a brilliant gathering of English ladies and gentlemen—the former in gaily coloured silks, the latter mostly in uniform—waiting for the Prince. They had not long to wait, for, just after we entered, a blast of trumpets announced his Royal Highness'



AN ELEPHANT FIGHT IN THE ARENA AT BARODA.

SEWELL & J.C. DILLON.

approach, and a moment later showed the golden carriage of the Guicowar in full motion, with his Highness and the Prince of Wales inside.

The first entertainment on the list was a wrestling match between half a dozen couples of semi-nude muscular savages. There was a bald man, who was evidently a very old stager; a Nubian, whose chief aim was to hug his opponent and fall on him, a tall man, who every now and then lifted his rival into the air, and tried to throw him out of the square marked out for this class of the sports; and a short, stout man, who enjoys the reputation of being the best wrestler in India, and who is very proud of the title. Two particular points are worthy of notice—one that each athlete had greased his body so completely that it was next to impossible to grasp him; the other that the use of the feet in wrestling was wholly disregarded, and that the French hug round the neck was the style of competition, rather than the Cumberland mode of wrestling. Picture twelve particularly strong men attempting to throttle and throw each other; now struggling till their eyes nearly start out of their heads, and now rolling over and over in the thick dust, emerging at length from the conflict begrimed and besmeared, and only vexed to find that they must go away and make way for the elephants. Anything like remonstrance would, however, have been somewhat out of place, for a number of men were hovering round the captive elephants fastened to the wall, the tame and decorated elephants were leaving the ground, and all kinds of preparations were being made for a struggle.

I rather suspect that these elephants were sly, old fellows, who, like the gladiators in olden times, did not hurt each other a bit more than was necessary, and often "made believe" in a sadly deceptive fashion. These had clearly been in the arena before, and knew just what was expected of them. First they rushed at each other, and with their blunted tusks pushed and



tugged for a few moments, and then stopped. At this juncture a Mahratta came out with a stick; whereupon one of the elephants rushed at him, chased him into one of the recesses in the wall, and pulled a lot of the brickwork down. This diversion, however, lasted but a minute. Entwining their trunks with quite as much care as the wrestlers who had preceded them in the ring had joined hands, and adjusting their tusks in such a position as would give the greatest leverage, the elephants once more began the tug of war. And a terrible tug it was. Two huge beasts, of almost fabulous size, straining, pushing, groaning, strove for the mastery. The younger of the two elephants was the better formed and the more courageous, and very soon he had worsted his opponent and driven him against the wall. No sooner had the larger but weaker elephant run to the wall for shelter than the conqueror lowered his head, gave a roar of defiance, and charged with terrific force. The tusk struck the conquered one with a fearful thud, the wall and the miserable elephant's head had a sharp collision, and a moment later the bars of the gateway close by were on the point of being forced, when two men ran out with rocket tubes, discharged the contents at the elephants, and separated them in a moment. Away ran the victor across the arena, followed by the vanquished one, and for an instant there was quiet. Immediately after another encounter took place, and was going on merrily, when hampering irons were slipped round the hind legs of the infuriated animals by the Mahrattas employed for the purpose, stout ropes attached thereto, more rockets discharged, and eventually the animals were led into captivity.

Meanwhile a very wily old elephant was being prepared for the arena. His business was to attempt to catch a horseman, who, mounted on a white Arab and armed with a spear, was already within the precincts of the arena. For a moment or so the huge beast walked slowly about, as though he were in his native woods taking a gentle stroll after dinner, and not within

a hundred miles of horsemen or footmen either. But, just when he looked most unconcerned and careless, he gave a sudden rush, got his trunk in the saddle of the rider, and only missed by an inch or two unhorsing the Mahratta and making him pay for his temerity. Had that Arab steed stumbled, or had the man lost nerve, the elephant would have ended the contest in a very summary manner.

The next contest on the list was between two huge rhinoceroses, and, as the beasts were led in, all necks were craned forward and all eyes strained to look at them. One had a long, sharp horn, and was a fearful animal to behold; the other, thickly set, had a blunter horn, but, if possible, a more powerful back. So soon as they were loosed, they rushed at each other with tremendous determination. For a time they struggled hard to push their respective prows into each other's necks, but to no purpose. In vain two men on each side patted their horny sides and invited them with loud cries to continue the battle; their encouragement was useless. Still one was a little afraid of the other, for suddenly the owner of the blunted horn turned round, and, with snorts like the magnified grunts of a frightened pig, rushed from the struggle. Onlookers held their breath, for the keepers were not far from being run over, and consequently crushed. But, as luck would have it, they ran away, and "live to fight another day." More than this, men procured buckets of water, and emptied them over the backs of the gladiators, stroked and patted them, prodded them with long spears, and in other ways urged them to deeds of valour. As soon as the animals came close together again and felt each other's weapons of war, they simultaneously snorted and scampered off, and positively refused to fight. It was clearly a drawn battle, and Sir Madava Rao ordered the creatures to be led away forthwith.

Then came the turn of the buffaloes; two of them were ushered into the arena—one a young, light-coloured animal, and one a dark beast. A perfect crowd of rascalions accom-

panied them to the fight, and, with spears, ropes, sticks, and fists, encouraged them very considerably. The buffaloes, however, needed very little incentive. Rushing at each other at a tremendous pace, they struggled violently for a moment; and the young one was winning fast, when one of his horns broke off short, the blood spurted out, and it was forced to retreat. Away rushed the poor brute, chased by its enemy. Fortunately the gate bars were sufficiently wide open to admit of escape, and the vanquished, bleeding bull flew through, scattering the spectators in every direction, and mingling the turbans in almost inextricable confusion. Another couple of buffaloes followed and fought, one of them being thrown by the other, which at once attempted to rip it open. Happily, its horns were blunt, and before it could do more than inflict a deep flesh-wound, the beasts were separated, and another couple introduced.

This third conflict was not, however, a severe one, and it was scarcely over before several couples of rams were introduced to the ring. Rams with peculiarly hard heads and strong horns have for long years been the especial pride of Baroda down to the uproarious days of Mulhar Rao, the man now living quietly at Madras. Some of the strongest pates ever discovered were brought to the show, for the delight of his ladies and subjects. Then the rams were allowed to fight till they killed each other, the sight of blood being by no means distasteful to the gentleman who was accused of having attempted to kill Col. Phayre. But more human days have dawned, and in the presence of the Prince, at least, no very desperate encounter was allowed. The plan of action was simply this: Two animals were brought within about ten feet of each other and then let slip: instantly with tremendous force they rushed at each other, and their skulls met with a tremendous crash. If by this first thud either ram was knocked down, it was at once declared beaten and led away. Sometimes, however, victory was not so easily decided, and it was not till after a dozen sharp blows at

## CHAPTER XXV.

### FEATS OF SKILL AND STRENGTH.

Yet if the battle at Delhi was somewhat theatrically managed, there was a contest of a different nature on the following Monday which was very real indeed. It had been announced that after a cavalry parade in the morning the Prince would be present at some sports in the camp of the 15th Hussars, at which both English and native soldiers from the whole army would appear as competitors. As on the day of the review, therefore, all fashionable Delhi turned out; some on horses, elephants, and camels, others in vehicles, with multitudes on foot. For just then the native of Delhi was quite ready to don his most startling dress at a moment's notice, and would, I believe, have slept in it if that arrangement would have ensured his gazing at every sight engendered of the Royal visit. This being the case, he systematically appeared everywhere with his children and his birds, leaving only his wife at home. She never came out. Unlike the dame of Madras or Bombay, she might be curious, but she must not be visible; she might see, but must not be seen. No rows of handsomely-attired ladies with olive complexions and long oval eyes welcomed the entry of the Prince to the old capital of India; no bullock-gharries full of native damsels, rolled and jolted on the camp-ground to look at the sports. Had the revelry been held in front of the houses in the Chadni Chauk, inquisitive faces might have been pressed against the gratings which act as windows in the native houses. But, there being no houses near from which they could look, the Hindoo and Mahomedan ladies were shut out from witnessing the sports;

while their lords put on the best puggaree and quilted coat, and sallied forth for the day. However, it was not for them that the *fête* took place, but for the English ladies and gentlemen, who came up in hundreds, and began a grand pic-nic an hour before the time announced for the sports. It was a bright day. The space was pleasantly shut in by trees; all round, under the shade, well-appointed equipages might be seen. There were luncheon-baskets of all shapes and sizes; the sound of the champagne-cork was heard in the land, and brilliantly dressed ladies might be seen everywhere. Those huge elephants with gold and scarlet howdahs, those camels with trappings of bright colours, those black servants, that singular crowd of dusky faces, and those broad-shouldered Sikhs with gold-striped turbans, belonged to no English city. Where the Prince was to sit long lines of native infantry were drawn up to keep the ground, and there the native horsemen, preparing for the contest, were also in full view. I remember how varied were the feelings with which I waited by the arena at Baroda to see the fights between wild beasts. There was all the curiosity which belonged to ignorance. One wondered what a rhinoceros contest would be like—after what fashion elephants would struggle; but withal there was a strong sense of the brutal which would crop up every moment and spoil all interest in the sport. But here was a sight which could be regarded with unmixed satisfaction; the swordsmen of India were to be pitted against the Hussars of England, the Lances of the Punjab against the best horsemen from home. Then too, there were to be races afoot, high jumps and low jumps, tournaments with blunted spears, and many another diversion. Oddly enough, a band of European strollers, their faces bedaubed with lamp-black, their heads covered with woolly wigs, in their hands the familiar banjo, concertina, and bones, and on the backs of their necks the old, old hats, which we used to look at with amazement when very young indeed, appeared close to the Prince's

daïs, and favoured his Royal Highness with a version of "I'm off to Charlestown," from a Christy's Minstrel melody book. The effect was almost too ridiculous for anybody to request them to go to Charlestown at once. They sang their song in a villainous fashion, held out their shabby hats for money, and forthwith departed to frighten elephants, camels, and horses with their discordant shouts.

The National Anthem sounded the arrival of the Prince, and immediately afterwards the bands—there was plenty of them—struck up a more lively tune, and the competitors entered the lists. The first champion, a broad-shouldered Sikh, wore a blue puggaree round his head, and a blue linen coat. On the head of the lance he carried was a huge piece of cork or indiarubber, and on his breast shone many a medal; the star, with the magic words, "For Valour," glittering on his dress; at the sight of him many a caitiff rebel had fled; his lance had in days not very long gone by been couched at stubborn foes, and had overthrown them. To meet him there came another no mean antagonist, a burly Punjabee, with his puggaree curled round his head in military fashion, with a red end turned over the front. He, too, led by the gallant Nicholson, had used his lance against Sepoy foemen. No child's play was the thrust of his arm when his blood was up. The spectator looked on with some awe. Both warriors were well matched, and it was a great question who should win. The chargers of the opponents were pawing the ground waiting for the signal. At last it was given, and each dashed against the other. Thud! Thud! but to no purpose; the shock has effected nothing, for the horsemen have wheeled round. Once more they rush, and again without success, though you and I, and less marvellous horsemen, would have been hurled out of the enclosure. No fear is there that their lances will shiver; as well might you expect to see a Muniporee's polo stick break. They clash and then charge again, they strike each other on the backs as they wheel round,