



HIMALAYAN WANDERER

C.G. Bruce



From a painting by G. P. JACOMB HOOD

THE AUTHOR

HIMALAYAN WANDERER

BY

BRIG. GEN.

HON. C. G. BRUCE, C.B.



WITH 25 ILLUSTRATIONS



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS book has been written purely for amusement. Carping critics are asked to be indulgent to the author, who makes no claim to literary merit.

I have to thank Cav. Vittorio Sella and Professor J. C. Norman Collie for the illustrations facing pages 84, 100 and 128.

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CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

“Whenever they were dull or sad,
The Captain danced to them like mad,
And told, to pass the time away,
Droll legends of his infancy!”

Bab Ballads

“WELL,” said the publisher, finishing his tea and vigorously making use of a sober-coloured handkerchief, “I think that’s the silliest remark I have heard for a long time. Wouldn’t it be rather fun?”

“Well, fun!” I said, “if that’s the line I suppose I had better give way.”

“Go ahead,” he said, “and begin young, for seeing how silly you are at the present time you surely must have committed idiocies when young which might amuse those of a light mind.”

“Very well,” I replied, “but remember, whatever happens from this time on is your fault and not mine. Will you put up with it?”

“Oh, you go ahead and get to work and don’t talk nonsense,” and with that we parted.

Thinking over these words of wisdom it was borne in on me that it might be rather fun to put down what I remember of what, at least, has been an extremely

active life. And, as for fun, I think I may truthfully say that I have always had a very highly developed sense of enjoyment, and further that I have had much more than my share of very real happiness in my numerous, if rather insignificant, activities, for mine has not been a life of great successes in any particular form of sport or otherwise, because I must make it perfectly clear that although I have dabbled in many things I have never been a great performer in any special line. I think, however, I have had a certain capacity for using the skill of other people, especially in the matter of exploration and mountain climbing. But still I think that on the whole the actual ability I showed never to be very good at anything at all was, in itself, a very great asset.

I was able, in the line of sporting activities, to turn my mind to so many different forms, and for almost the youngest of a very large family (to wit, fourteen) I think I was extremely lucky to have had the many experiences I have had. The great point to remember, however, in this little chronicle is that I was never a model character by any means—such a thing would be intensely and hopelessly impossible, and I am not setting down these experiences as a model to be followed by other people, but merely because for the moment I find great amusement in recalling them as my excellent friend mentioned at the beginning of this chapter foreshadowed, and because there are certain parts of this book which may bring

back to some glorious and delightful days of hard physical work and of intense enjoyment in the marvellous mountain countries of the East, ineffaceable memories when all that is pleasurable is remembered now and all the disadvantages forgotten. I suppose at the beginning of my time I missed, through one side of my "make-up" being for many years irretrievably lazy, many great opportunities. (I was hopelessly lazy in my books all my school life and afterwards, but I made up for it by a very useful capacity for passing exams. well with the minimum of knowledge. In fact, looking back, I have always felt desperately ashamed of these lost chances which I had when I was quite young, as with quite ordinary endeavour I might have fitted myself so infinitely better than I did for what was to come. Also, I am afraid, I began being an irreclaimable ruffian at a very early age, and for this ruffianism in the family I was sent to school at the age of five and handed over to the care of the two sisters of John Leech, the artist and humorist ; these same dear old ladies being early Victorian and humourless to the very last degree. Can you imagine any old ladies at any period giving a small boy hot tea to cure a tummy-ache ! I have never forgotten it and the subsequent agonies of those dreadful draughts.

There were, however, many other recollections of that time far more pleasurable, and I have still very clear in my memory being taken by my father, at a

very early age, to call on old Lord Albemarle on Waterloo Day. Lord Albemarle was one of the last survivors of Waterloo, having been an A.D.C. to the Duke of Wellington at that battle. Next Harrow. My brother had been a most distinguished member of the school. I was informed after I had left that I, at any rate, had left my mark, for during the five rather hectic terms that I spent there I gained the reputation of having been "swished" by the Headmaster more often than any boy in such a short space of time. My brother was a great athlete and scholar—in fact, a credit to the school. I, on the contrary, was the most irresponsible and thoroughly naughty boy with, however, a keen sense of the ludicrous which was, beyond anything else, my downfall.

I shared a room with the late Lord Athlumney, who was quite as naughty as I was and of the same age, but he had a highly developed sense of caution, and in all the fusses that we got into I was almost invariably caught whilst he escaped. I think almost my last visit to the Headmaster was for being captured after having thrown a pot of geraniums at a well-known Harrow lawyer from the very top of my Housemaster's house. The subsequent explosion, fright and flight of the said lawyer, which appeared to me exquisitely funny, was my Sedan. Unable to move for laughter I was easily apprehended. Athlumney had disappeared! But the beating, which still sticks in my mind, and which I consider the most

terrible hard luck, was due to a mere taradiddle, and considering the real brilliance of the performance, in every way a misfortune. I had been given fifty lines and been told to bring them up on the following morning at early school. Naturally, I had not done them, though I said I had and had forgotten to bring them. Priding myself on being, through intensive culture, the fastest writer of lines in the school even at that youthful age, I sprinted back and hoped to meet the form-master as he passed the house. I did so, with the written lines—a record. Unfortunately I had only blotted one side of the paper ! But what a reward for a record holder !

Apparently my reputation was undying, as many, many years afterwards, on my return from Tibet, when dining with the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Province in India, who was a near relation of the Headmaster under whom I had suffered, in the cruellest way he asked me if I had ever met, during my time at Harrow, Dr. Montague Butler. My answer was clear and to the point.

“ Yes,” I said, “ many, many times. He would recognise me anywhere, of that I am certain, possibly to this day, but I don’t think that he would recognise my face ! ”

No, I was not thrown out !

Luckily for such a hardened rascal I went to Repton and was under that great assistant master Arthur Forman. My little jokes were not taken seriously—

in fact, they were taken with much laughter. No visit to the Headmaster, but my head very severely smacked. There was, consequently, but little fun in continuing the more ruffianly side of my career, and my energies went into athletics. I only wish they had gone still more energetically into educating myself otherwise. Still, there was great humour in the fact that during my last year or so I was in the Army Class and was the only one in it, and was educated by many masters, so it was really most uncertain where I should be at any particular hour. I knew myself very often, but they didn't! This suited my book admirably.

I left Repton, however, instructed in certain subjects fairly well. I had a passion for geography and a passion for India, and had received a prize from the Royal Geographical Society for these subjects. (I also left a fair cricketer and a fair athlete, but nothing more. No doubt I should have been a better cricketer if I had played after leaving school at eighteen until I joined my Regiment when I was twenty-one, but cricket very seldom came my way in those two years when the greatest progress should have been made, but even then I should never have been more than a fair cricketer. I took up many other forms of athletics and became fair at these but nothing more. About this later. However, in justice, I must rather correct the impression that there were no other experiences. To begin with, my family had, I think, a

passion for history, my father being a great military historian and a friend of Wolseley and Lord Roberts. My mother, a daughter of Sir William Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War, brought us all up in the Napier tradition—in fact, we were all soaked in Napier lore. In my father's possession, too, were the Diaries of Sir John Moore, which came to him through my grandmother, a daughter of General H. E. Fox, and who had for a time in her youth been engaged to Sir John Moore, and who owned the Moore Diaries.¹ We were also soaked in Moore tradition, and especially in what interested me so tremendously, the dramatic campaigns of Sir Charles Napier in Sindh and his subsequent career as Commander-in-Chief in India. Still more, one of the greatest thrills that I have ever had in the whole of my young life was when I was about eighteen and visited my cousin, General William Napier, who put around me the silk belt worn by Sir John Moore when killed at Corunna, and which was an heirloom in his family, his father being Sir George Napier, who had been one of Moore's Majors at Corunna, the other being Major Stanhope. This belt is now, I believe, in the United Services Institute in Whitehall.

My home, too, was in the hills of Glamorgan, in the Aberdare Valley, which lies just south of Merthyr Tydvil, and I spent all my time running about the

¹ Afterwards published by General Sir F. Maurice.

hills, and sucked in from my earliest time a love and understanding of mountain country without my appreciating it at the time, my father being a most complete lover of his own valleys and hills, and was, in fact, until quite late in life a great walker and a fine shot even up to nearly his eightieth year.

My father had grown up with the growth of Glamorgan—one might almost say their growth was synonymous. It was really wonderful to think, considering how many years he was spared and how many years I had the advantage of knowing him, that he was actually born before the Battle of Waterloo, remembered the death of George III, and had come to man's estate when Glamorgan began to pass from a purely rural district to an industrial one, owing to the immense development of the coal industry and to the increasing immediate growth also of iron, steel, copper, etc. Not that there had not been foundries in Glamorgan from quite an early date, but not sufficient to change the face of the country. It was curious to think that when he was young he worked his spaniels from one end to the other of the Rhondda and Aberdare Valleys without let or hindrance, from farm to farm. Those two valleys are now filled to overflowing with humanity. Few people knew more about the habits of a woodcock or how to get round him. I have heard him described as one of the finest fore-hand shots to be found anywhere.

He also was a remarkably active man and kept

his activity almost to the day of his death. As an instance, he was visiting Dunvegan Castle in Skye, the home of the Macleods, in 1867, when he was not only fifty-two years of age but also Home Secretary, and was watching the Highland Games held in honour of Macleod's birthday. Seeing that the jumping was not very good he asked to be allowed to take part himself, and jumping in ordinary knickerbockers and light shoes he accomplished the extraordinary jump of 4 ft. 9 in. One of the other guests also was fired by his example and took part, no less than Heathcote, the well-known tennis player.

Curiously enough years afterwards, when dining with my cousin General Tyler at the Artillery Mess at Aldershot, I related this incident, I then being a very young militia officer on my way into the army. The only results of the story were that they intimated to me that I had begun young and that they were rather too old to have their legs pulled by a wart, when, to my astonishment, from the end of the table, a very senior officer got up and said, "I can bear witness to everything that has been related as true. I was present myself at Dunvegan at the time as a guest." It was General Albert Williams, then a well-known Artillery officer and very prominent in the great world as well. A triumph!

Nothing my father adored so much as taking us out on the hills. Our Sunday walks over the hills with our large family was never missed, and if my

subsequent life has perhaps been too much taken up with my mountain life as opposed to my professional life there is an excuse for it.

Both my brothers helped, too, the eldest being a great sportsman and the other a tremendous coverer of hill country. All my spare moments I was out with the gun in my holidays, following an elusive cock pheasant or an elusive woodcock in out-of-the-way parts where I could do no harm to the real shoots.

In those days there were plenty of rough characters in the hills, and I used to join the keepers in hunts after a special gang which we eventually broke up. It might possibly be amusing to set down their names. I remember them so well : they were a rough crew, and after they had been rounded up and had completed their punishments they came back and stole my father's guns from the gun-room at home. I believe they were again punished for burglary. They were Bill the Butcher, Shoni Kick-o-Top, Billy Blaen Llechau, Dick Shon Edwards, and there was also Dai Brass-knocker who was not so notorious. I remember well that we ran down one of these poachers after a long chase over the hills and through the woods into a little village called Georgetown, where, unable to escape, he ran into a house and hid himself in the bed of the lady of the house, and was finally found snoring for all he was worth until dragged out in fury by the owner and handed over to us.

Just to give an idea of some of the conditions in these valleys (we won't say where it is), there was a new colliery village which grew up round the colliery, with one long street, and in the middle of it you could see, if you looked carefully, a lady's marriage lines plastered in the window, she priding herself on this, as the report said she was the only lady in the street who owned one !

I had a mentor too—a regular old Welshman and a true supporter of the family. He was a man of well over fifty, a farmer and an innkeeper and a terribly keen sportsman. Many days we had together, and much of the history of old Glamorgan and Glamorgan hill families I learnt from him. He had spent some years of his youth in the old days in California and British Columbia, and earned a precarious living by shooting for the pot and supplying pioneers with game. He was a great raconteur and an excellent companion. He had a weakness, however, which now would be a distinct drawback in my opinion, and that was his love of pigeon matches and pigeon shooting—thank goodness now departed from the land.

It was during this time, when my school days were very nearly finishing, that I started a passion to see India, and this passion had really as much as anything been acquired from reading *The Old Shikari* and *My Indian Journal*, two of the earliest published books on sport in India, and never have better books been

written. The author was Campbell of Skipness, who had been a friend of my father's. The interest in these books was greatly enhanced by the fact that Campbell's son, Archie Campbell, was then a curate in Aberdare, with whom I made the greatest of friends. He used to come out shooting with us occasionally when he was free, and his descriptions of Highland sport and his reminiscences of his father's life filled me with a strong desire to follow in these lines. Campbell was afterwards Bishop of Glasgow, and was the most delightful and unconventional and stimulating of men. Then, too, a little later, my father gave me General MacIntyre's *Hindu' Koh*, the best book on hill sport that I have ever read, and which added to my determination to go to India, and turned my thoughts towards the Himalaya and Gurkha troops, not that I mentioned that side of it for a long time.

Naturally, we did not spend all our time in Wales : in those days people went to London about April and came away after Lord's in July. We lived for some twenty-eight years in Queen's Gate. Those were days infinitely more conventional and of much greater formality. We had, as usual, a special afternoon—a Wednesday afternoon—when there was an At Home, invariably with all the trimmings of that time—footmen in knee-breeches and white heads. In fact, they were to me a terrible ordeal and I escaped whenever possible.

However, even such stately things as Wednesday At Homes sometimes had their humorous side. They were, none the less, or would be thought now, extremely pompous and formal. The guests were ushered in with the utmost ceremony. The household suffered about that time, in a way, from a footman who had an astonishing sense of humour and of the ludicrous, which occasionally took complete charge, and was his end as far as we were concerned. There was at that time a French friend who was rather a regular attendant and was an Attaché at the French Embassy. His name, Monsieur de Blacasse, was altogether too much for the young footman, who threw open the door and announced in a loud voice, "Mr. Black——," and exploded with laughter. That was the end of his career as a footman but not as a humorist, for some nights later he returned, and knowing the habits of the house, broke into and stole from the basement all the left foot boots, a large number of which had been collected for the morning clean, and the house was left with right boots and right boots only !

Owing to my shocking habits of laziness I went into the army through the Militia, having again made a record by sending in my entrance papers for the Sandhurst examinations twice too late. And so to the Militia I went. However, I spent two most enjoyable years, with a minimum amount of work and a maximum amount of all sorts of athletics.

We trained both years I was in the Militia at York, and I put in a strenuous three weeks on each occasion. Most undoubtedly I ran the greatest possible risk of losing all chance of a further army career during this period. Another joke—this time a thoroughly bad one. I think we only escaped very condign punishment partly through the really good nature of the victim and of justice being tempered by kindness by the C.O. himself. As a matter of fact we were egged on by a senior officer who ought to have known better, and I daresay this had something to do with the leniency shown to us.

A certain Captain of the Regiment had unwittingly and, I consider now, quite unjustly made himself unpopular, so some of the younger sparks proceeded to take certain steps for which there was no excuse. In fact, while he was at Mess they packed every stitch of his uniform, the whole of his kit, everything that belonged to him, took it quietly down to the station and forwarded it to his home in Yorkshire. When he finally went to bed he was homeless and the following morning we were all under arrest. I think a curtain should be drawn over this incident, but it only shows in a way to what lengths rather reckless youths went in those days.

I have a pleasanter episode to relate, and which has never as far as I know been repeated, and probably will not be repeated unless this record may produce sufficient enthusiasm in the two high con-

tracting parties so to speak to copy my terrible example, but such a combination of characteristics is difficult to conceive. The then Archbishop of York was a friend of my family, and he invited me to stay at Bishopthorpe at the end of my training. One wet afternoon certain abilities which I had acquired for amusement's sake were by request made use of. Among them I had acquired an art of balancing a peacock's feather on the end of my nose, and further of blowing it up high and catching it again on my nose, of carrying it over the furniture—in fact, it rested there in perfect safety under nearly every condition. I gave a small performance and the other guests of the party joined in, and finally I had the glorious satisfaction of teaching the Archbishop successfully to copy me; but the great disappointment was that no, oh never! could he, after blowing it to the ceiling, recapture it on his nose, no matter how I coached him.

Among the great friends of my family was the Benson family, and Frank Benson, now the well-known actor, Sir Frank Benson, who had been one of the greatest amateur athletes of his time, was a hero of mine and a friend. He also had a pleasant adventurous spirit, and after many excursions that we made into the rougher parts of the East End of London we came to the conclusion we must have a real adventure, and that it should take the form of going to the Derby dressed as costers. We were

coached and dressed for the part by my boxing-master, old Ned Donnelly—"The Royal Professor" as he called himself. We had tremendous fun getting ready for it. We were to have a barrow and a donkey-cart, and I was to meet Benson on the eve of Derby Day, when we were to set out. Unfortunately, I had nowhere to go but my own home, and with the greatest care and caution I managed to get myself ready, all complete with kicksies, and crept down to the hall. However, when I opened the door to leave who should walk in but my mother, and no Derby for me! The tableau was marvellous! She had the greatest sense of humour possible, but equal determination. Frank went by himself and I believe enjoyed it. What a terrific joke it would have been, and I wonder whether we should have been able to have kept up the part together!

I used to do a lot of boxing in those days in a mild way, but as I had one damaged arm I could never get very good, like everything else. I worked very hard, too, at fencing, to which I had been introduced in France, being a pupil of Mauriette, the fencing-master of the 1st Regiment of Artillery at Chalons, himself a pupil of the great Merignac. I used to frequent, both for fencing and boxing, Waite's School and there saw a great number of professional bouts, but not only in Waite's School. I also took up running in a spasmodic manner, but as usual was no more than middling at that. I began, too, at that

time a career of "wobbling" which spoiled my other running, *i.e.* long distance running at a slow pace and walking, and when I left London for Heath End College, near Aldershot, I somehow or other managed to get in, during the right season of the year, four or five days with the different packs of beagles. We even had a small pack at Heath End College in those days.

The countryside and the Aldershot Gymnasium took up the greater part of my time, and while there another little adventure occurred. Somehow or other I managed to form part of the English team which ran against the French for the first time in Paris. I forget now how I succeeded in getting a nomination, but it was my own doing and through my own worrying as much as anything; and further, knowing perfectly well that I had no business to do what I was doing, I went over to Paris on the strict Q.T. to take part in these sports. We had a really marvellous experience and a very great success. The French, in fact, had only just taken up serious training for athletic sports, which was very largely due to the enthusiasm of Mons. St. Clair and of the Racing Club de France. Mons. St. Clair had a half-brother Sinclair who was in one of the Highland Regiments, I believe, and it was due to his endeavours that this semi-International match was arranged. Three of us at any rate, who took part in that little adventure are alive to-day—Mr. C. G. Wood, Mr. Mabey and

myself : Wood and Mabey being quite at the top of the tree in their own departments of athletics in those days and myself an interloper.

I think I am correct in saying that the English team was successful in every event. What a difference to the present day ! Doubtless France owes a great debt of gratitude to St. Clair's enthusiasm. We had the most marvellous reception it is possible to conceive. After the sports we were entertained to a great dinner at which the Governor of Paris was present, and royally entertained afterwards among the most amusing, delightful and friendly crowd one could wish. And what enthusiasm ! We had just time the next morning to bathe and catch our train, and no more, and back I came to my military college hoping that I had escaped all notice, but terrified of parental disapproval. And it came, of course. A letter from my mother—the Press had given us away, and an enthusiastic butler had done the rest in drawing attention to what little success I had had. I rightly deserved all I got, but was able to modify the "telling off" that I received owing to the fact of my mother's sense of humour, which again saved the situation when I pointed out to her that my exploits were not in the paper she quoted to me by mistake, which was no less than the *Pink 'Un*, but in the respectable daily press. We had great fun over this afterwards.

One more athletic performance before going to the

army is worthy, I think, of notice. For a little wager with a friend—I think only of a dinner—I bet myself to go from London to Brighton in a certain specified time, the conditions being that I should go by myself, that I should get myself up in the morning, pick up my food on the road and go in ordinary shooting kit, and if I arrived inside the stated time that he would pay for the dinner, and if I lost I was to do so. I won by the skin of my teeth. Beer and cold beef at Reigate, beer in large quantities and ham and bread and cheese and a violent flirtation with a barmaid, almost bringing oblivion to the task before me, nearly completed my ruin. Tearing myself away, and rolling like an oil tanker in a heavy sea, I staggered away from the Crawley Arms, and picking up a helper or two later on with the reward of certain shillings, I just managed to arrive in Brighton, tired but triumphant. There was a little dispute about the exact time of meeting, as my friend missed me in the crowd and only found me in a hot bath in the hotel. But he played up and paid for the dinner, and we were swimming in the swimming-bath in Brighton early next morning, none the worse for the trip.

And so finally to the army. In June '87 I joined the 1st Battalion of what is now the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, then and still known as the 43rd Light Infantry, and I joined it at Shorncliffe, the spot where my grandfather had actually joined the Battalion eighty-three years previously

when it formed part with the 52nd, its present 2nd Battalion, with the Rifle Brigade of Sir John Moore's Light Division, and where it received in those days the training which made that Division supreme at its special duties and a model for the entire British Army. Even then, in '87, the Moore tradition was strong. It was a period when the drilling and manœuvres of the English Army was still behind the times, when rapidity of movement, good skirmishing, really hard marching, handling of country as an art, were thought but little of, nor widely appreciated. But luckily for us at Shorncliffe both the Infantry Battalions (for next to us lay the 2nd Battalion of the 60th Rifles) had made a speciality of these points, and I was lucky enough to be appointed to a Company commanded by a remarkable enthusiast, both as a Light Infantryman, as a military historian and as a reformer in military training—Major William Clark.

Perhaps he was not the most tactful of men in many of his dealings, but he knew how to inspire enthusiasm, and no doubt his own passion for all kinds of sport and athletics was what made me immediately give my heart to him. I am afraid, however, in one way he strengthened my innate desire for travel and India, for his stories of the Burma War, the little incidents he had had with Gurkhas belonging to some of the Assam Battalions, and many recollections of sport, etc., such as were far

beyond one's reach in England—at least far beyond the reach of one with very small personal means—filled me with a longing to cross the seas.

I joined the 43rd, as I have said, at Shorncliffe, with another friend who had been with me at Aldershot as my sole acquaintance. We arrived together : he was the only one who knew that my nose was more than double its proper size—luckily. I had had a little trial with a professional boxer in London the day before, and that was the result. No one knew me and so no one recognised my nose. It gradually reduced, so all was well.

I was put through the mill properly in the 43rd but given every opportunity to continue my physical activities. The Regiment had always been a very active one, and all forms of athletics were encouraged, although the work was taken most seriously. We had delightful cricket matches both at home and out, playing for the Regiment or Shorncliffe Garrison, and I think I was one of the earliest, with the approval and assistance of the before-mentioned Major Clark, to start a boxing class. Then an event occurred which quite upset the balance of so young an officer. About this time it was necessary that new Colours should be presented to the 43rd, and to my prodigious joy and pride it was unanimously decided to ask my mother to present the Colours, she being the daughter of Sir William Napier who had, though not actually gazetted Lieut.-Colonel, commanded the

Battalion through the latter half of the Peninsular War, especially at Salamanca, Vittoria and the subsequent campaign through the Pyrenees. My father was also present, and myself on parade. My mother made a speech to the Regiment, for which she received afterwards a letter from the Duke of Cambridge, then Commander-in-Chief of the Army, congratulating her and thanking her for having made such a stimulating and sympathetic speech to British soldiers. Following the presentation there were naturally festivities in the Regiment. Anyone who does me the honour of perusing this simple chronicle, and whose mother has ever presented Colours to a Battalion, especially if it was nearly fifty years ago, will sympathise with what I had to put up with from all ranks in the Regiment, particularly from the members of the Sergeants' Mess. We only escaped in the early morning when I and my friend, now General Frank Lamotte, took the only step that was possible to make us respectable members of society, changed into sweaters and flannels and went for a ten mile run over the hills behind Shorncliffe. Thus were the martyrs saved !

I was an unwilling participator about this time in a rather dramatic incident in the running world. I had been doing a certain amount of running in London, and during that time had often done practice with certain of the best professional runners in England, for professional running was then in its heyday

and immense sums changed hands on the results of Sheffield Handicaps. There were two well-known runners, Ransome and Moody, who regularly practised at Lillie Bridge, and also that marvellous athlete, Harry Hutchins. Harry Hutchins was already some thirty-two years of age when a match was made with him to run Gent of Darlington for the professional championship, and enormous interest was taken in this event, and to me it was of great interest because I knew Hutchins very well myself and therefore made a point of being present at the match.

Owing to Hutchins' age it was considered unlikely that he would be able to hold the younger man, who was a very remarkable performer ; but curiously enough Ransome, a sprinter of the very first class, was engaged by both backers of Gent and of Hutchins, privately, of course, to run each of them a trial, and that very shortly before the match. It then leaked out somehow that Hutchins had quite regained his old form and that on the result of these two trials Gent really was a beaten man. This was private information, but somehow or other it became known at Lillie Bridge grounds where the match was to take place ; the hubbub that went on, where there were thousands of Yorkshiremen supporters of Gent and thousands of Londoners supporters of Harry Hutchins, who was a Putney man, was tremendous as the betting changed from 2-1 on Gent to no less than 6-1 on Hutchins. But no runners appeared, and by

degrees the crowd got more and more impatient, and eventually a feeling that all was not well seemed to surge over that great multitude. Finally, after waiting some three-quarters of an hour, the dressing-rooms at Lillie Bridge were rushed by the crowd, and behold they were empty ! A wave of fury seemed to sweep over everybody ; who started the riot I cannot tell, but in a moment fires were lit and very shortly the great Pavilion and some of the side stands were in flames. Not only that, the very tall flagstaff in the middle of the ground was uprooted and used as a battering-ram to smash down more of the Pavilion stands. As practically everything in those days was built of wood, in no time there was a great conflagration, and there came down through the entrance tearing columns of police with their batons drawn.

I said to myself, " This is no place for me ! " and made for the railings on the east side of the ground on the other side of which was the Underground Railway. It seemed impossible to escape, but I found a tall Guardsman in the same predicament and somehow or other we helped each other up and without much damage dropped down the far side, ran along the line, through the tunnel and out at Walham Green station. I was only too glad to escape.

The police had great difficulty in calming the mob, and free fights were naturally very much the order of the day. It afterwards became known that two London bookmakers, perfectly well known as backers

of Gent, had rushed and kidnapped both runners and carried them up the covered way to West Brompton Station and rushed them out of London in hansom. I got back to Shorncliffe thrilled with my adventure. Luckily no harm was done to either of the runners, nor was it ever decided in public after that which was the better of the two men. At any rate it was an incident to be remembered.

That year brought me to another incident in my life which was my entry into what has been ever since then my greatest pre-occupation probably, for in that year I climbed for the first time my first snow mountain. My friend before-mentioned in the Regiment, Frank Lamotte, had already as a boy been up Mont Blanc and one or two other expeditions in Switzerland, and his conversation had fanned a fire already lit for Alpine experiences. I had previously become from my bringing up what I was later on known as among many of my friends, which they shortened to the term "M.M.M.", which means "Mad Mountain Maniac." I had walked with another friend, the present Sir Rhys Williams, before this time, from South Wales to North and had already become a worshipper of wild Welsh mountain scenery, and I had a great yearning to extend my activities further afield.

So in rather fear and trembling the two of us, as it was summer and therefore the drill season, asked for a short leave to visit Switzerland, and to our great

joy it was granted. We had very little time on our hands and our aims were not ambitious, but we travelled to Lucerne, walked over the St. Gothard, over the Furka Pass and so to Meiringen, made an ascent of the Wetterhorn. Back again the same way, crossing the Rhone Glacier to the Furka Pass and so home by the same route. My first snow mountain, and once more a little French proverb, "Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte," proved very much to be correct. For that first taste of the mountains woke a passion for mountain travel and exploration which shows no signs of diminution to the present day. However, I was not to see a snow mountain again for three years, and then under very different conditions indeed, and for still longer was I to base my authority of snow and ice work on that one climb, undertaken between two excellent guides ! In fact I started my climbing in the Himalayas on that basis—a little knowledge is a dangerous thing indeed ! At any rate we had a most glorious and enjoyable time, and one that lives in my memory as vividly to-day as the day I came back to Shorncliffe. I saw, too, two first-class mountaineers at work, and that alone was of the greatest interest ; further, I still remember equally well that as we entered the Dossen Hut under the Wetterhorn meeting Miss Katharine Plunket and her guide, Peter Baumann, passing on their way down. What a memory ! Miss Plunket died only the other day, aged ninety-seven.

In the early spring of '88 the Regiment moved to Newport in the Isle of Wight, while at that time I had determined to leave the English Army and go to what was then called the Indian Staff Corps, and, in fact, left the Regiment in the autumn of '88. Before leaving, however, I managed to account for some army running championships, and also took part in the first race authorised by the A.A.A. (Amateur Athletic Association) when for the first time officers were allowed to compete against the men. Before that, owing to the fact that men had run for money prizes, officers technically became professionals if they competed against them. My debut was in a way a little dramatic. I had been already informed that I should not be allowed to compete against the men, and after the first day's athletics when my work was finished I had dined with the Yorkshire Regiment in Aldershot and with friends, and dinner had been followed by a most extensive "rag," and the night spent in innumerable activities, almost all of them of the most athletic type, thirst-producing and in which that thirst had been duly quenched.

I got back to my quarters in Aldershot about six in the morning, stiff and very sore from numerous tumbles, cock-fighting, wrestling, etc., and at 7.30 was woken up by gallant Col. Fox, Commandant of the Aldershot Gym and Director of the Aldershot Athletic Meeting, with a telegram to say that the A.A.A. had withdrawn their objection and that I

was to run in the 300 yards Championship that afternoon.

There was only one thing for it. To Macdonald's¹ Turkish Baths I went, and for three hours or more I was sweated and pummelled and pummelled and sweated until my limbs became limber again. The race was held early in the afternoon, and although I was supplied with a very powerful stimulant before starting I was left at the post. But having really the legs of the Company I managed to get a good second.

Yes, I think I may say that about that time I was a healthy young man. No further remarks are necessary, with one exception—that I could enjoy a rag and did so, and also for some years afterwards, how many I don't intend to divulge!

Now the time was drawing on when I had to leave the Regiment, which was my own doing, no doubt. It was not the usual way of getting into the Indian Army, as I had not previously put my name down for it; but I had had so much talk with my chief mentor, Maj. William Clark, and with many other of the officers who had spent many years in the East, that my mind had become made up. Maj. Clark, during his experiences in the Burma War, had commanded small columns and had acquired a great admiration for and a great interest in Gurkha troops with which he had worked, and many of his stories had

¹ Mr. Macdonald is now the greatest tattooer in England, and is to be found in Jermyn Street.

specially fired me with ambition. About that time, while we were in Newport, came the account of the death of Col. Battye and his companion Urmston on the Black Mountain on the banks of the Indus, on the Indian Frontier, and an account of how well his small escort of Gurkhas had behaved. All this added fuel to the fire, but I little thought that I should join the actual Battalion in which Battye had passed his distinguished career. I think, too, that probably for a young officer of very small means indeed my decision was a wise one, for I could not live economically at home, and my activities and bent and interests all tended to be rather expensive. At the same time, however, I felt a terrible deserter. My connections with the Regiment and the kindnesses I had received in it remain an unpayable debt of gratitude. My education in the Regiment had been short but absolutely invaluable: I had been made to work but encouraged to play, and specially had learnt one thing—that all soldiers one has to deal with in the British Army are exactly the same as oneself, with the exception that they have not had equal advantages. Such knowledge is a liberal education.

More I learnt, too, for again let me say that drill and training were still rather formal. Good steady drill was the watchword of the army—probably, to put it more clearly, drill was the means and the end, instead of the means to an end. I remember particularly the inspection held by the Duke of Cam-

bridge in '87. On one day we had a field day on the hills behind Folkstone and in the rather broken and wooded country at the back of it. Fancy going out nowadays in full kit. I myself had to carry the Colours besides, dressed in red coat with a full-dress belt, white gloves and everything except one's gold-braided trousers, which one had in those days for a Court ceremonial. But we let nothing interfere with our rapidity of movement, notwithstanding the archaic outfit we were in. I remember afterwards my repairs cost me over £5. We had been through every kind of country—woods, hedges, hillsides and all sorts of rough ground, and going fast on a hot day. No wonder even a simple field day of that description was detested by officers and men alike at that time. However, thinking we had done well and had shown our pace and our paces, we were hardly prepared to be told that what the Regiment really wanted was “good, steady drill”! But such was the spirit of the time—a time happily now past from that point of view.

Lord Roberts was already a friend of the family and had written to my mother to say that he would see that I was posted to a Gurkha Regiment. I therefore left comforted greatly by that assurance and a little bit possibly uplifted more than was justified.