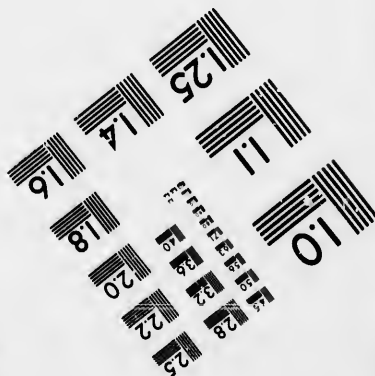
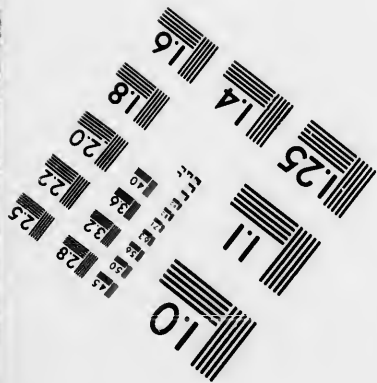
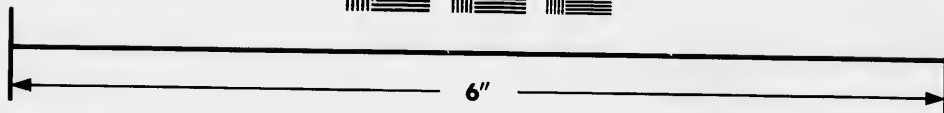
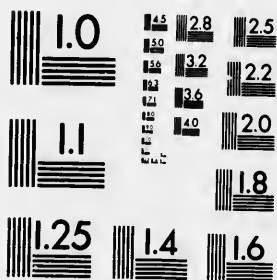


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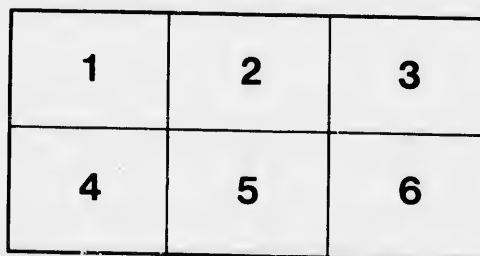
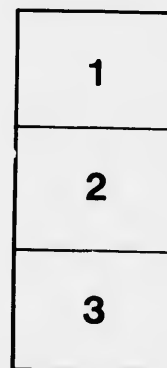
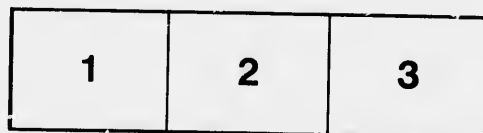
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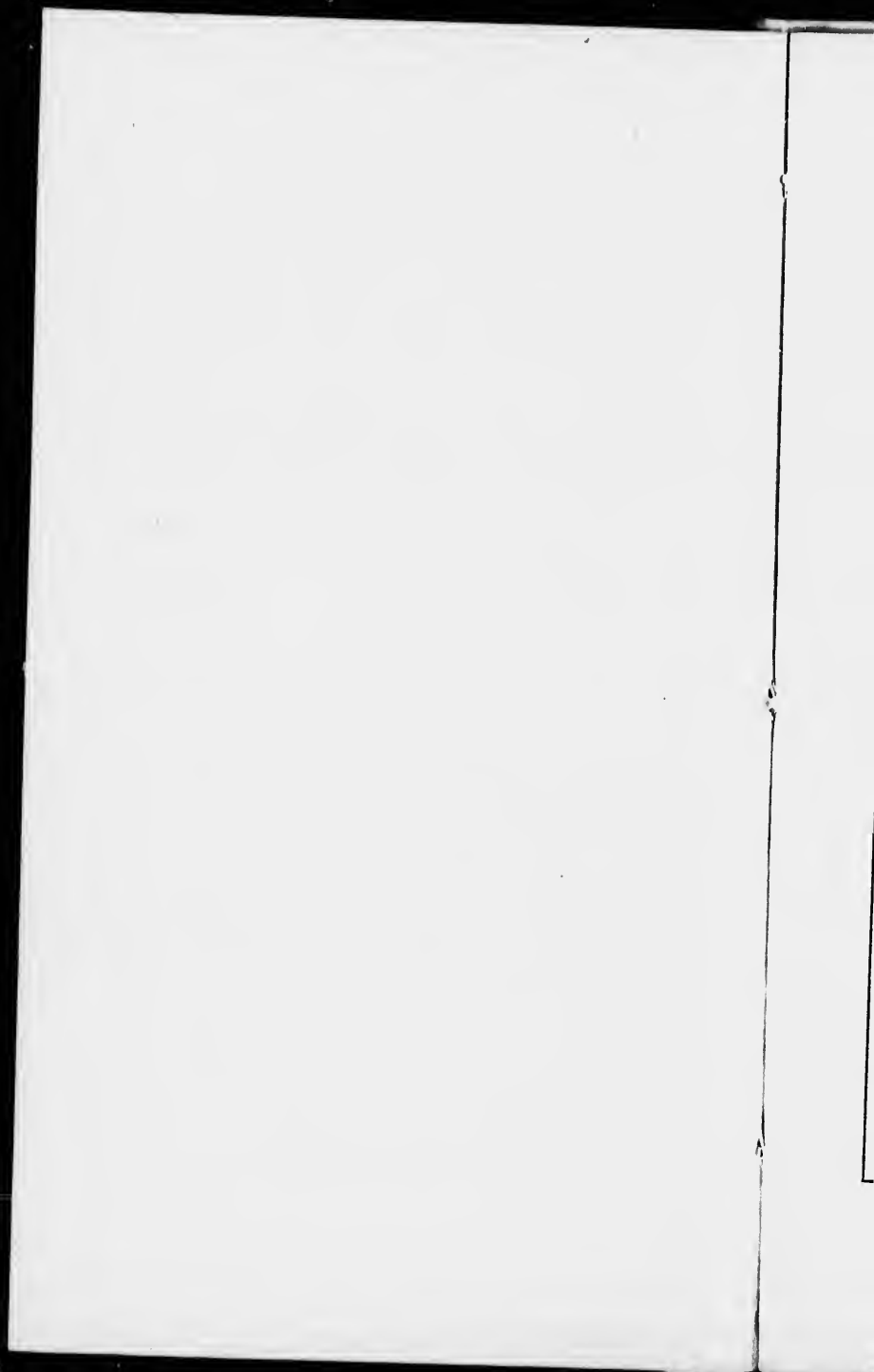
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THE SPORT OF RAJAHS



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The
Sport
of
Rajahs

BY

LIEUT.-GEN. R. S. S. BADEN-POWELL,
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THE SPORT OF RAJAHS

In the smocking-room at Norreys Court, the other night, we had a great pig-sticking "buck."

As is usual where a few Britons are gathered together, several of the party had visited India and knew something of the subject, but it struck me forcibly how ignorant, as a rule, are home-keeping sportsmen of this and kindred Eastern sports.

They seem to understand that some sort of sunshine of sport lies behind the veil of distance which separates England from India, but it is only occasionally that a ray breaks through the cloud—in the shape of a book or article—and gives them a glint of the glamour that lies beyond. India, in the matter of sport, has stood the test of time far better than any of her rivals. In early ages India and America proved equally attractive to adventurous sportsmen. But in America bison, grizzly, deer, and Redskin came to be gradually and effectively wiped out under the deadly bead-drawing of "Old Rube" and his kind.

Then arose South Africa as a rival, and although her day has been a happy one, its sun is setting; ere the next

century has well begun, advancing civilization and improved breechloaders will have cleared off the elephant, rhino, lion, and buck that have made Africa so happy a hunting-ground these past sixty years.

Yet India still maintains her head of game, and bids fair to do so for many years to come. From the North, with its Oves ammon and poli, bears and ibex, to the South, with its tiger, buffalo, sambur, and boar, the sportsman finds game worthy of his steel, in addition to abundance of the lesser kind of buck and bird, and fish and fowl. But, as an old doggerel has it,

The sport that beats them o'er and o'er
Is that wherein we hunt the boar.

Pig-sticking is the acknowledged king of Eastern sports, and there are many reasons why it should and must be so.

For one thing, it demands the assistance of the horse, and this in itself commends it more particularly to the Anglo-Saxon race. Then it is one of the few sports in which the hunter is almost always associated with others of his kind. In most big-game expeditions the shooter is attended only by a few trackers or beaters—more guns would spoil sport; and, although there may be, and is, a certain charm for a time in such solitary life, yet

eventually the sportsman cannot but long for companionship of his fellows in his evening camp. Nor is it good for a man to become accustomed to a solitary life; Englishmen are already misanthropical and reserved enough in all conscience, without such further training. In pig-sticking, on the other hand, the hunters live, and move, and hunt in parties; and yet individual excellence is as necessary as ever to success, while it gains the additional spice born of friendly rivalry with one's fellows.

Again, the risks and chances, which after all form a great part of the charm of most wild sports, are in pig-sticking incomparably greater than those in ordinary tiger-shooting; that is to say, tiger-shooting from an elephant, for I do not look on that carried out on foot as anything but foolhardiness, except under special circumstances.

Moreover, the quarry is not only fast and crafty, but he is also plucky, powerful, and cruel; he enters fully into the spirit of the chase, and he will generally give you a good fight as well as a good run for your money.

That pig-sticking has an affinity to the sport of all true British sportsmen—viz., fox-hunting—cannot be denied, but that there exists a neck-and-neck resemblance between them is not

so easy to see. Yet much midnight oil and gas, liquid and tobacco smoke, have been consumed in country-house billiard-rooms over the discussion and comparison of their respective merits.

As a matter of fact, pig-sticking may equally claim an affinity with polo and with racing. And to the glorious attractions of these it adds a taste of the best of all hunts--namely, the pursuit, with a good weapon in your hand, of an enemy whom you want to kill.

In pig-sticking every man rides to hunt, whereas in fox-hunting the majority (although for some occult reason they will seldom own to it) hunt to ride. The first part of a pig-sticking run partakes rather of the nature of a point-to-point race, since each man is endeavouring to be first to come up with the pig, and so to gain the honours of the run; and, while keeping one eye on the object in view, he has to keep the other on the doings of his rivals, so far as the elation of a glorious gallop will allow him.

When the "first spear" has been won, the dodging and turning and quick rallies required for fighting the bear have no little resemblance to the galloping melee of the polo-field, till, with your worsen passions roused as the grizzled old tusker pits himself against you, you meet charge with charge, and, blind to all else but the

strong and angered foe before you, with your good spear in your hand, you rush for blood with all the ecstasy of a fight to the death. And then:—

All's blood, and dust, and grunted curses.

Well--this is a different thing from the pleasurable enjoyment to be derived from a gallop with hounds in a peaceful English country. Yet in the Indian sport—for all its excitement—you do not get the home surroundings, the stretching gallop over fences and grass, the keen air, the neighbourly pageant, and all the halo of Old Englishness that go to make fox-hunting the lovable sport it is. Indeed it is only after testing other sports that you really appreciate to the full the beauty of this more homely one.

I suppose that in all the notable events of a man's life he remembers his first better than any subsequent experience. On me personally my first hog-hunting day is very indelibly impressed; not that it was a specially eventful day as hog-hunting days go, but the novelty of the sport appealed to me very forcibly, and the picture remains. I see now the sunny yellow grass jungle, and the brown, strong-shadowed coolies beating through it with their discordant jangle of cries and drums. Suddenly a "sunder" of smallish pig tumble out and file

away across the open. My first view of wild pig, and a most disappointing one! Was this, then, the "mighty boar" they talked of so much? But a moment later a form, that at first looked like that of a donkey, caught my eye as he stood surveying the country from the edge of the jungle. This was a boar. He was watching one of our keenest beginners restlessly hovering about in a way that would have successfully headed back any timid-minded animal; but this boar was an old warrior; with an inquisitive look he stepped into the open and trotted towards our trio; a moment later he started into a louping gallop with ears pricked forward and head low, and before our friend could manage to turn his spear in the enemy's direction the pig had dashed him, and had sent steed and rider rolling in the dust. Then he turned in, cut his horse's legs from under with a knowing shake of his head, and trotted gaily back to the cover, whence all further persuasion failed to move him.

Later on a party of us, all griffins, got away after a full-sized pig; in turn we managed to get up to him and to plant our spears in his body and back; but we planted and left them there as beginners are prone to do, so that in a few minutes our pig

somewhat resembled the fretful porcupine or a giant pincushion, while we could only ride near him empty-handed. Whenever he faced us we fled, not exactly from fear, but from a desire to save our teeth and noses from the leaded spear-butts that nodded and swayed above him. Finally, getting tired of the sport, he dropped a spear, which enabled us to give him his coup de grace. And then, to our horror, we discovered that he was not a "he," but a "she," after all! And so heinous a crime is the killing of a sow that we swore to keep our misadventure dark, although we had every excuse for our mistake, since she looked all over like a boar and, as is often the case with barren sows, carried tusches. The crime happened many years ago, but the shame of it has hung over my life ever since, and now in confessing to it openly for the first time I feel a heavy cloud is lifted from my conscience.

Among the several spears hanging in honourable retirement on my wall there is one whose shaft is split for some three out of its six feet of length. And by that split there hangs a tale.

Two of us were out in camp together, more for shooting than for pig-sticking; still we had our horses and spears with us. Our tents were pitch-

ed in a delightful spot on the high-wooded bank of the Jumna. Close to us lay our hunting-ground, rough grass country with occasional strips of thick jungle and frequent "nullahs" or dry watercourses. A preliminary glance at the ground overnight revealed signs of pig—in acres of upturned earth—so abundantly that we were forced to forego our shooting for the first day in favour of trying for a boar instead.

Thus the early dawn found Naylor and myself posted at the point of one of the covers, while the coolies began to beat it from the farther end. Waiting in a state of keen expectancy, we could hear their shouts drawing slowly nearer and nearer, and our horses' hearts were beating quick and tremulous between our knees.

Suddenly both horses fling round their heads with ears pricked; they are trembling in every limb with excitement. There he stands—not thirty yards from us—a grand grey boar with yellow curling tusks, and his cunning savage little eye glistening in the broad morning sunlight. He is listening to the distant sounds of the beaters, and does not see us. We—scarce daring to breath—sit motionless as statues, with all our eyes, all our senses fixed on him. He moves a few paces forward, and pauses again to listen. Will he never go?

At last an extra loud chorus from the approaching line decides him; he swings round, trots for a few paces, and then breaks into a rough tumbling canter away across the open.

Now we cautiously gather up our reins, slide our feet home, and prepare to follow as soon as he has got sufficiently far from the cover as not to be tempted to double back on finding himself hunted. It is a case of Mr. Jorrocks counting twenty-one very much drawn out, till Naylor at length gives the word to go, and we bound away together after the great louping form now distant a good quarter of a mile away over the yellow grass. Our horses are mad keen for the fray, and as one tears through the fresh cool air all bodily weight seems to leave one's extremities and to be concentrated into a great heartful of elation. One realises then how good it is to be alive. On we go with little to check our pace but an occasional grip to fly; presently, however, my horse begins to show that, whatever my own impressions may be, he, at any rate, does not realize any material change in my actual avoirdupois, and I gradually find myself dropping behind Naylor in the race. Nearer and nearer we draw to the pig, and at last Naylor turns his spear (we are

riding with the short or over-hand spear) ready to take the first blood.

But there's many a slip. The old pig is still cantering along in his deliberate yet far-reaching stride, looking to a novice as though he had not seen us; but he knows, his ears are laid back, and one eye or the other is continuously glancing behind him to watch our moves.

At last Naylor's chance comes. Closer and closer he edges to the boar; an extra spurt, and he is nearly on to him. The boar gives a half-turn to the right, and quick as thought Naylor's horse has turned with him—but the boar's half-turn is but for one stride; in the next he whips round at a right angle to his former course, and Naylor's spearhead dives bloodless into the sand a yard behind him. Riding twenty yards behind Naylor I am able to turn my horse more rapidly on to the new direction, and I gain a good start by cutting the corner to head my quarry. As I approach his intended line, the boar cocks his ears, alters his course a point towards me, and, as though projected by some hidden spring, is suddenly close under my horse's girths. My spearpoint is just down in time; by good luck, rather than good management, it plunges in between his shoulder-blades, and I crash it down with all my force, while my horse cleverly

jumps the snorting monster. But the spear is jammed in the boar, and as he rushes beneath me he tears it from my hand, and staggers onward with the shaft standing on him. Nor does he go far, for his blood is up, and when Naylor hastens gaily after him, intent to kill, the enraged old brute turns staunchly towards him, and with every bristle pricked, and tusks chapping, makes towards his enemy. But Naylor's horse, with staring eyes and frightened snort, whips sharply round, and will not face this fearsome foe. For a moment the pig marks the man's discomfiture, and then turns to profit by it. At a sturdy trot he pursues his way towards the jungle looming large ahead. Once more, and yet again, does Naylor try a fresh attack, always with the same result. Each defeat, however, has brought the boar much nearer to his refuge, so as a last resource I take over Naylor's spear and press with all the speed I can command to overtake the pig. He has but twenty yards to go when I am on him. He flies along, nor deigns to turn. Ah, friend, I have thee now upon the hip! I close with him, and jam the spear down, fiercely, on his burly back; the spearhead slips aside. Again I try, with like result, and an instant later the thorny bushes close behind him and bar my farther way.

We quickly make our plans, and, posting ourselves en vedette on either side of the cover in which he hides, we watch against his least attempt at escape.

Presently the coolies join us, and while one goes back to the camp for a fresh spear for me, we get the blunt one fined upon a local sharpening-stone. A grateful interval of refreshment, and then, rearmed and rested, we set the beaters on to drive him forth once more. But this is no easy job. He cares not for their drums and threats, but when they near him charges and breaks through their line, to nestle into some thick bush behind them. They turn again and treat him to an infernal serenade. Suddenly their monotonous yelling takes another tone; there is a confused babble of talking, a hush, and then a succession of somewhat more coherent shouts, from which we can gather that "Old Buldoo is killed by the boar." The beating ceases, and the coolies come huddling out of the bushes carrying one of their number between them. Of course he is not killed, nor anything like it; but his friends hope that he is, seeing in his decease a possible division among them of eighty rupees consolation money from us sahibs. Poor Buldoo has, however, a horrid circular gash

inside the thigh, which has lifted a flap of flesh from a sufficient depth to show the bone. Such a wound on a white man would make a ghastly show, but not so on the darker Hindu skin, nor indeed is there much flow of blood. Such as there is we soon stop, and, using the needles and silk, carbolic, and compress from the handy little St. John's Ambulance wallet in our belt, we soon have him well patched up and homeward bound, comfortably installed upon a native bedstead from a neighbouring melon-gardener's hut.

Then for the first time my shikari steps forward, grinning, and holding in his hand the spear I had lost in the pig. The boar, in charging Buldoo, had brushed close past himself, so that he was able to grip the spear with both hands and to wrench it out. But the shaft was split beyond repair. Once more the coolies form to beat the cover, and, whether it is some innate pluck or a stoical submission to fate that guides them, one cannot but admire the way in which they proceed, unarmed and on foot, to tackle a brute who has ten to one the best of them in the jungle. Naylor, too, dismounts, and is going in with them, spear in hand, leaving me to ride the boar should he break; but at this moment

excited shouting from a shepherd on a neighbouring knoll informs us that our wily quarry has taken advantage of our preoccupation and has quietly slipped away. In a few seconds we are on the knoll, and thence we see our friend lobbing away across the plain (as Mr. Cruickshank used so expressively to describe it), "like a carpet-bag tumbling along end over end." For a second time we have a glorious but an all too short bust in the open, and again Naylor forges well ahead of me. However, the pig is in no humour to give us a gallop; when he finds we are overtaking him, he stiffens his stride, and, dodging in his course for a moment or two, he suddenly turns and comes at Naylor "like a thousand of bricks," "with murder in his eye." But he has not reckoned on the sharpened spear, and as he bounds for the horse with his head on one side to deliver the gash of his razor-sharp tusk, the spear-point catches him fair in the shoulder and rolls him over in the dust. He is on his legs again immediately, and, furious with rage, turns and comes at once for me. He is a grand specimen of sturdy savage pluck as he bristles up large towards me; but he gives one little time for admiration as he plunges headlong at the horse. A good point into his back scarcely, stops the impetus of his rush,

and a quick upward twist of his head, as if merely to look at me, results in an ugly slit in my horse's shoulder. But the bear himself is now sorely stricken. Close to him is one of those curses of the Indian hunting countries, a deep "nullah" or dry watercourse some twenty feet wide and ten feet deep, with steep sides. Into this he plunges, and when we reach the edge we see him creeping into the cover of a big thorn-bush in the bottom. We note that immediately above the bush the sides have toppled in and have completely blocked the ravine. So, moving a few yards down the bank, we dismount, leave our horses, and scramble down, spear in hand, into the bottom of the nullah. Then we advance shoulder to shoulder towards the bush, and from a distance of ten yards or so, we hurl two or three clods into it. Presently there is a rustle, and our friend quietly sneaks out on the far side, trotting lamely up the nullah till he finds his road barred by the fallen walls. Then he turns and faces us, his little eyes sparkling red with rage, blood welling and glistening down his shoulder, his broad nose dry and dusty, and blood and slime dropping from his panting jaws. His picture is photographed on my mind, but the photograph is an instantaneous one; for in

a moment more his ears are pricked, his mane is on end, and he comes towards us at a shambling trot; at five yards distance he changes to a gallop, and rushes blindly at us. Our spears are low, there is a shock, we are both hurled back against the side of the ravine. Then in the cloud of dust we see the boar on his knees at our feet, both spears planted in his chest and shoulder. He essays to rise, but falls back upon his side, and one more spear-thrust into his heart finishes off as game a bear as ever ran.

Well! this is not fox-hunting, but it is something that is very good.

In regimental orders one evening there appeared the notice that the regiment was to parade, mounted, next morning at daybreak, carrying full water-bottles and ten rounds of blank ammunition per man; rations to go out by cart; and, last but not least, "officers and troop sergeant-majors may carry hog-spears in place of swords." A most unique and eventful field-day resulted.

The jungle, a large tract of heavy grass and jhow (tamarisk) bush, was attacked with all military precaution and completeness.

The regiment proceeded through it in line at half-open files; patrols of four officers each were posted or moved well in advance of the line, so that

when a boar was scared by the noise of the approaching line, then one of these patrols nearest to him would ride after him and endeavour to bring him to account.

So successful was the operation that in a short time each of the parties was away after its separate boar. Still pigs were seen to be running away ahead of the line with no one to hunt them, till the colonel, who had hitherto been directing the operations generally, gave the order for certain non-commissioned officers to take patrols of men with them and see what they could do with their swords against the pigs. In a short time several of such parties were to be seen scouring across country in full pursuit of the common foe. To say that they enjoyed it would in no way express their excitement and delight.

They galloped here, they galloped there, They fought, they swore, they sweated.

In a word, they had a glorious time, albeit when the "Rally" sounded the bag—beyond those killed by the spear parties—was not a large one. Still, when all was over, the horses groomed and fed, and the men at their dinners and free to talk, the babel in the bivouac was almost ludicrous, since every man at once was keen to tell his

tale of personal adventure with the Indian pig. Here one was stating how his troopmare, "C" 16, had turned her tail upon the advancing foe, and with her iron-shod heels had sent his front teeth rattling down his throat. And there another, a budding Munchausen, was relating how he stood the attack of "not only one, but four bloom-in swine, all of a go," and how all single-handed and alone he had beaten them off. It was a day that was talked of for months afterwards in the regiment; and though this one experience can have done no more than give the men a momentary taste of the ecstasy of a fighting gallop, pig-sticking is nevertheless par excellence a soldier's sport; it tests, develops, and sustains his best service qualities, and stands without rival as a training-school for officers; nor is it ever likely to languish for want of votaries so long as boars and Britons continue to exist.

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