



Thirteen Years Among The Wild Beasts Of India: Their Haunts And Habits From Personal Observation With An Account Of The Modes Of Capturing And Taming Elephants

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George Peress Sanderson (1848-1892), was the officer-in-Charge of the Government Elephant-Catching Establishment in Mysore, India. Mr. Sanderson's early death robbed India of her chief authority on elephants. He actually caught 404 of these huge beasts in one season, and 132 in a single drive. This handsome volume, has taken rank as one of the classics upon the wild beasts of India. Mr. Sanderson, the eldest son of an Indian missionary, afterwards Governor of the Wesleyan College at Richmond, went out to Madras in 1864, intending to join a friend on a coffee plantation. Before he reached India, however, this friend had been eaten out by the "borer" insects or by blight. Mr. Sanderson's vision of wild elephants, tigers and bison seemed hopelessly dispelled. It was only in 1873, after some years spent in the Irrigation Service, that the Mysore Government employed him to capture some of the hordes of elephants which roamed that province. The work proved most congenial to himself, and most profitable to the Government. Better still, it taught the authorities the capabilities of the elephant as a beast of burden, and has gone far to secure the magnificent creature immunity from the hunter's rifle. Such was the success of Mr. Sanderson's work that well-informed people are anxious to see some one with similar gifts sent to Africa to capture and train its elephants for service in the Dark Continent. Mr. Sanderson feels that the elephant's intelligence has been much over-rated, and throws considerable doubt on many of the accepted stories as to his sagacity, but he shows that the huge beast has an extraordinary power as a learner, and that in obedience, gentleness, and patience none of our domestic animals excel it. There are many delightful details as to its habits, and some stirring stories of sport, with full descriptions of the keddah and the way to capture and train wild elephants. To bison-stalking, which is only second to elephant-shooting, Mr. Sanderson gives some spirited pages. The chapters on the tiger are still more exciting, and will be eagerly read by both sportsmen and lovers of natural history. The book is handsomely got up, with excellent maps and illustrations. It is an enduring monument to one of the best-informed and bravest of sportsmen who ever set foot in India—a man who has done more to make the elephant a worthy servant of the Crown than any Englishman who ever lived.

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