

SIR GEORGE UDNY YULE, C.B., K.C.S.I.*

GEORGE UDNY YULE, born at Inveresk in 1813, passed through Haileybury into the Bengal Civil Service, which he entered at the age of 18 years. For twenty-five years his work lay in Eastern Bengal. He gradually became known to the Government for his activity and good sense, but won a far wider reputation as a mighty hunter, alike with hog-spear and double barrel. By 1856 the roll of his slain tigers exceeded four hundred, some of them of special fame; after that he continued slaying his tigers, but ceased to count them. For some years he and a few friends used annually to visit the plains of the Brahmaputra, near the Garrow Hills—an entirely virgin country then, and swarming with large game. Yule used to describe his once seeing seven rhinoceroses at once on the great plain, besides herds of wild buffalo and deer of several kinds. One of the party started the theory that Noah's Ark had been shipwrecked there! In those days George Yule was the only man to whom the Maharajah of Nepal, Sir Jung Bahadur, conceded leave to shoot within his frontier.

Yule was first called from his useful obscurity in 1856. The year before, the Sonthals in insurrection disturbed the long unbroken peace of the Delta. These were a numerous non-Aryan, uncivilised, but industrious race, driven wild by local mismanagement, and the oppressions of Hindoo usurers acting through the regulation courts. After the suppression of their rising, Yule was selected by Sir F. Halliday, who knew his man, to be Commissioner of the Bhagulpur Division, containing some six million souls, and embracing the hill country of the Sonthals. He obtained sanction to a code for the latter, which removed these people entirely from the Court system, and its tribe of leeches, and abolished all intermediaries between the Sahib and the Sonthal peasant. Through these measures, and his personal influence, aided by picked assistants, he was able to effect, with extraordinary rapidity, not only their entire pacification, but such a beneficial change in their material condition, that they have risen from a state of barbarous penury to comparative prosperity and comfort.

George Yule was thus engaged when the Mutiny broke out, and it soon made itself felt in the districts under him. To its suppression within his limits, he addressed himself with characteristic vigour. Thoroughly trusted by every class—by his Government, by those under him, by planters and by Zemindars—he organised a little force, comprising a small detachment of the 5th Regiment, a party of British sailors, mounted volunteers from the districts, etc., and of this he became practically the captain. Elephants were collected from all quarters to spare the legs of his infantry and sailors; while dog-carts were turned into limbers for the small three-pounders of the seamen. And with this little army George Yule scoured the Trans-Gangetic districts, leading it against bodies of the Mutineers, routing them upon more than one occasion, and out-manceuvring them by

* This notice includes the greater part of an article written by my father, and published in the *St. James' Gazette* of 18th January, 1886, but I have added other details from personal recollection and other sources.—A. F. Y.