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**THE
LIFE OF A TIGER
AND
THE LIFE OF AN
ELEPHANT**

The Life of a Tiger
and
The Life of an Elephant

By
Sir S. Eardley-Wilmot, K.C.I.E.
Author of "Forest Life and Sport in India," etc.

Illustrated
by
Iris Eardley-Wilmot

London
Edward Arnold & Co.

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THE LIFE OF AN ELEPHANT, FIRST PUBLISHED 1913
FIRST ISSUED IN THE KINGFISHER
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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
LOWE AND BRYDONE PRINTERS LTD., LONDON N.W.1

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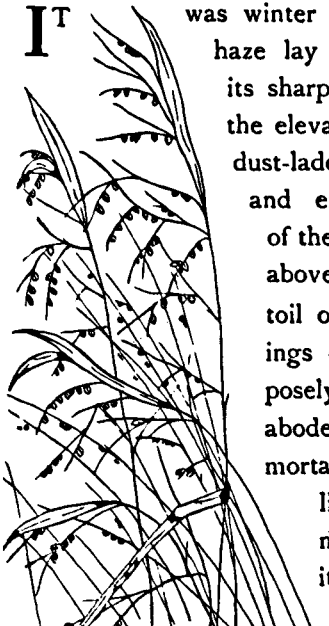
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THE LIFE OF A TIGER

CHAPTER I

The Home of the Tigers



IT was winter in northern India. A haze lay over the arid plains; its sharply defined line shewed the elevation beyond which the dust-laden air might not rise, and emphasized the purity of the clear, blue atmosphere above it. It was as if the toil of men and the sufferings of animals were purposely hidden from the abode of the gods. To the mortals below this straight line of haze formed a mysterious horizon, and its greyness was absorbed in the distance

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on either hand; but in the centre the sun was balanced like a fiery ball in a still lake of vivid orange.

The forest stood, silent and sombre, facing the sunset, and now a cool breeze arose and blew fitfully. Its coming could be heard like the murmuring of shallow but rapid waters. First in the distance the tops of lightly poised bamboos swayed to and fro like green banners gently waved in warning; then the trees took up the challenge and rustled stiffly, while a few withered leaves fluttered in spirals to the earth; lastly the drying grasses bent their heads, protesting with soft shiverings. The chilly air passed away towards the south, and there was silence until the next sigh from the mountains reached the forest.

The land was one of tall trees and giant grasses, of running streams, and of deep ravines with clear-cut banks. Here the vegetation held sway over the waters. During the monsoon the turbid torrents revenged themselves for the restraint of the past months by widening the watercourses and uprooting

such trees as came within their reach; but during the rest of the year the luxuriant growth of grass and timber asserted itself; it seized on every vacant spot and fortified it with wide-spread roots against the next attack of the enemy.

Now the rivers were quiescent in their sandy beds, and between the rocks and boulders only a faint trickle of water poured into the pools that the floods had deeply scoured. In these pools were great fish, entrapped till the next mountain storm should send them release; they lay motionless in infinite patience. From time to time the birds of the waters came to visit them; the white-capped robin displayed his harmonious plumage of indigo and chestnut; the fork-tail, in handsome dress of black and white, perched on a boulder to utter his joyous song,



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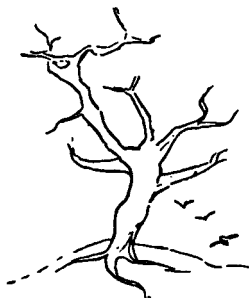
or the blue thrush whistled his sweet notes as he hurried past.

In one such watercourse an island had withstood a century of successive floods; a few trees stood high above the tall grasses and their spreading boughs looked down on the impenetrable tangle, with here and there a glimpse of the solid earth. In a slight depression in the soil lay three puny, helpless kittens with clouded blue eyes, big ears and enormous paws; a glance at their yellow bodies, striped with black, permitted no doubt of their parentage, even were it not that close at hand there reclined, in the watchful sleep common to all wild animals, a handsome well-marked tigress of unusual size. To one side lay a hollow log, the remains of an ancient stem from the thick forest that clothed each bank of the stream.

The sun was now low in the west; the evening breeze had become more persistent and the resistance of the vegetation to it more audible. A slight mist was forming

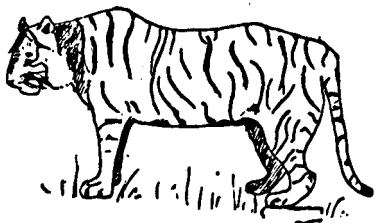
in the low ground, and, as it rose above the sheltering banks, it was torn away and floated southwards in the air currents.

The birds were passing on their homeward flight or were settling themselves in their roosting places with much rustling of feathers, with gentle chirpings, or with angry scoldings, according to their family habits. The cubs commenced to whine and to stray aimlessly over the trampled grass raising their paws high at each step and staggering with the weakness of unaccustomed muscles, and then too the tigress



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arose and yawned widely, her head bowed between distended paws. She collected her family by picking up each cub in her mouth and lay down beside them till



contented murmurings were followed by the sleep of repletion. Then, again picking up her cubs, she pushed them into the mouth of the hollow log and stood looking around her, for the time of hunting had already arrived.

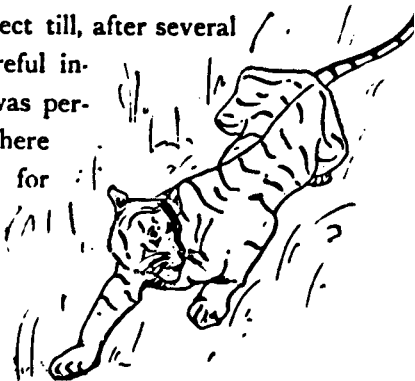
Within a few inches of nine feet in length and standing some three feet high at the shoulders, the pure black and white of her markings and the clear red of her colouring were especially noticeable, as well as the lissom strength of her supple body that gave promise of quickness and agility. Then, as the short twilight of the East faded away and darkness fell on the earth, though the sky was still luminous with dying colours, she seemed

to be swallowed up in the evening gloom as she moved noiselessly into the forest. At first she appeared to have no defined purpose, to be awaiting guidance from any chance sound that might reach her ears. And so she strolled on for miles, avoiding the denser patches of cover, standing sometimes to listen intently, and losing no warning that the sighs of the jungle might afford. When the brown night-jars lay crouched on the faded leaves, uttering their monotonous notes, it was to the tigress a proof that nothing was lurking in her path; when they suddenly rose and, wheeling, displayed their white wing-spots, she halted to learn the reason of their flight. Even the creaking of the bamboo stems as they rubbed together brought her to a standstill, and, when a dry branch snapped with its own weight and fell with a dull blow upon the earth, she had crouched at its first movement and did not



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again stand erect till, after several minutes of careful inspection, she was persuaded that there was no cause for anxiety. She had, in short, to keep every sense continually on the alert with a view both to self-preservation and to success in hunting.



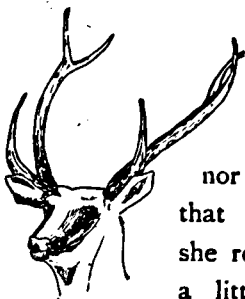
And thus feeling the pangs of hunger more pronounced as each hour passed she struck at length a narrow footpath running at right angles to her course. The dew was dripping heavily from the trees as she stood undecided whether to turn to right or left, then, making up her mind, she stepped on to the track, keeping to its darkest side and approaching each bend and turning with slow precision that augured ill for any that might be coming that way. Her footsteps were noiseless on the beaten footway.

Suddenly the tigress stopped and lay crouching on her belly, motionless save for the nervous twitching of her tail that lay snake-like along the path. At some distance ahead slight movements were audible in the forest, footsteps amongst the dead leaves, a rustling in the tall grasses, even a sound of foliage being torn from the branches ; but all so indistinct as to render almost impossible any decision as to their origin. The tigress during her long walk had seen no living animal. From a distance several times had come the alarm cry of the spotted-deer, and once a sounder of pig had rushed through the forest as the breeze bore the scent of a dangerous enemy to their nostrils. She had been unlucky in having the game down-wind on each occasion, and, now that she was more favourably situated, she could not recognize the sounds she heard ; she knew only that they were too gentle for the movements of an elephant through the forest, and too noisy for those of a



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grazing porcupine, the two extremes of the wild life around that at that moment possessed an interest for her.



But the wind, eddying over the forest, brought the information that neither eyes nor ears could afford; it whispered that there were deer ahead, and she responded with drawn lips and a little sigh of satisfaction. A

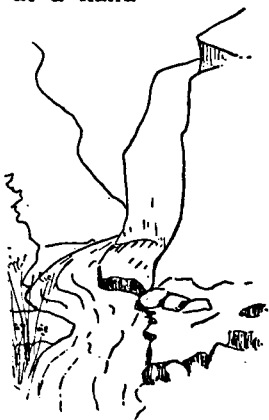
few moments later a sambhar stag stood on the path browsing on the foliage, and from time to time petulantly thrashing the overhanging boughs with his horns; for the rutting season was long past and the dead antlers were pressing on the living burrs, so that an unpleasant tickling urged him to rid himself of this constant annoyance. The stag was in the prime of his strength. His massive horns swept in a forty-inch curve to either side, and the long brow-antlers and the two tines on top were sharp and white from constant use. His hide was covered with patches of mud where he had wallowed to rid

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himself of the pest of midday insects, and long, black hair hung from his throat that was scarred from a hundred fights. His huge ears were never still, and the deep, black eyes were keenly on the alert.

The tigress' chance had come, and it depended now chiefly on her skill whether or not she would secure a meal. She rose and hurried down the narrow path with stealthy, sinuous strides; but for the time luck was against her, and the crackle of a broken twig under her fore-paw sounded loud and clear in the still night. The noise startled the stag and sent him off at a hand gallop; not for two or three hundred yards did he stop, and even then remained thoroughly suspicious. The path here skirted a deep declivity, and at its foot a small watercourse glimmered faintly in the light of a rising moon. The opposite banks were of



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inky blackness, all detail being obliterated; only the general direction of the ravine was indicated in a light so dim



that it seemed merely to intensify the darkness of the shadows.

As the stag stood, uneasy and uncertain of the course he should pursue, a quick thudding of feet renewed his alarm; he turned to spring down the slope and seek safety in the turns and bends of the rivulet when he was struck as by a thunderbolt and, rolling over and over in a cloud of dust and gravel, lay with a broken neck, damming up the water with his heavy body.

The tigress at first crouched beside her victim, trembling with the excitement of the hunt and furious at the pain of the bruises she had received in the headlong fall; for she had not quitted her hold of an animal of nearly twice her weight until it lay dead beneath her.

She watched the stag with eyes that seemed to burn with a crimson flame, and from time to time uttered low growls, as if to express a longing for any interference that might give opportunity to vent her rage ; then, rising, she seized the sambhar roughly by the neck and shook it till the antlers rattled on the stones, finally dragging it into the heavy cover on the banks of the stream. From this retreat a tearing of flesh, a crunching of bones and ill-tempered snarls plainly proved that she was satisfying her appetite.

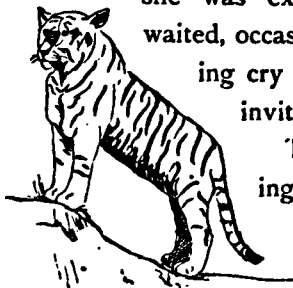
The moon was high when she again appeared and drank deeply from the running water ; then, three times in succession, at intervals of about a minute, she uttered roars that echoed through the forest and were thrown back from the hills. The first

reply came almost immediately in the alarm cry of the spotted-deer and in the grunts of frightened monkeys, even the peacocks from their high perches joined in the warnings



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uttered for the benefit of all the forest-folk. Later came in an answering roar, the signal she was expecting, and she quietly waited, occasionally giving a low moaning cry to direct the guest she had invited to the feast.

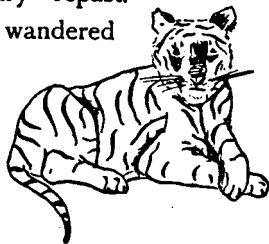


The stream now lay glittering in the moonlight, its sandy banks defined in brilliant white, and at a distance a vague movement could be detected, ceasing where the shadows lay more pronounced in the rays of the moon. It was as if a silver snake was undulating in a mysterious course, a phenomenon weird and inexplicable that laid a grip on the heart of the fear of the unknown. But the tigress still appeared to be indifferent; she was ostentatiously engaged in removing from her coat the signs of the recent struggle and of the feast that had followed, nor did she look up when a tiger stood on the sand-bank before her, or admire the effect of the moonbeams which converted his sleek back into shining

metal, while his massive limbs seemed carved out of ebony in the deep shadow thrown by his body.

His colouring was not so vivid as that of his mate, but she looked almost a weakling by his side; his deep ruff made his head appear ponderous, and on his shoulders the supple skin moved tightly over the rounded masses of muscle. He greeted the tigress with that quiet retraction of the lips which in the cat tribe is made to do duty for the expression of many emotions, and is unmistakable even by dull human beings should they be given opportunity to translate it in conjunction with the silent eloquence of the eyes. She moved away into the forest; for tigers have this one thing in common with the natives of India that they will not eat in the company of their females, preferring a solitary repast.

In a listless manner she wandered towards her lair, somewhat oppressed by her heavy meal, not again to be tempted to the hunt,

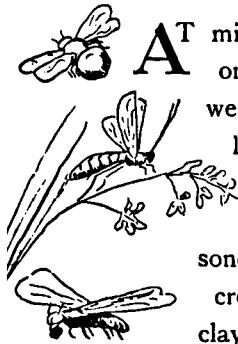


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though not omitting to mark the direction taken by deer or pig as they passed in the moonlight; till, as the daylight was again spreading over the forest, she stood by the hollow log and answered gently to the impatient whinings of her hungry cubs. They struggled towards her, stumbling as they came, and her eyes now shone kindly with a yellow light in marked contrast to her looks as she lay a few hours ago beside her victim. She had suckled her family, had made their toilets, had even replaced them in the hollow log, and was dozing beside the entrance to the nursery before heavy footsteps proclaimed the arrival of the tiger, gorged with flesh, and wanting nothing but repose after the feast that had followed on many hours of fruitless hunting. Then the whole family, happy in their lives and in their surroundings, slept without awakening until far into the noontide.

CHAPTER II

A Forest Fire



AT midday the forest was silent, only the insects and the birds were working and watchful, enlivened by the genial warmth. From time to time a great carpenter-bee passed with sonorous drone, or a wasp-like creature carrying a ball of moist clay to build a secure retreat for a posthumous offspring. A furtive ichneumon fly, encased in brilliant green armour, lay in wait for any chance to provide for its future family at the expense of another. On the pinnacles of the white-ant citadels the area of wet earth increased, shewing the activity of subterranean workers. Fly-catchers and bee-eaters perched silently on the boughs above.

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At intervals they flashed through the air and a flying insect was captured, or, escaping for the moment, was



followed in its hasty flight by streaks of coloured light, azure or green, so rapid that the form of the hunter could

scarce be distinguished. Then the bird returned to its perch with the insect in its bill, and paused to give thanks and to draw breath before proceeding with its meal.

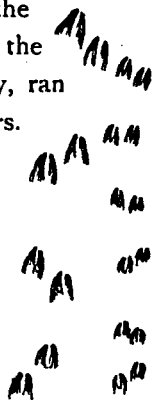
At some distance a rustling became audible in the dry leaves; there was a sound of many pattering feet. The cold night breeze that blew down stream had long since ceased, now a warm breeze from the plains ascended the ravines towards the colder hills. A herd of spotted-deer appeared on the high ground and looked longingly at the clear water below, but before risking the descent, they paused to make sure that no hidden danger lurked. Most of the females had young fawns at their

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feet: they stood huddled together watching the movements of the old hind who was still intent on reading the signs of the jungle; and, though the sun shone brightly through the thin foliage above, yet from a short distance it was difficult to distinguish between the flecks of light on the withered leaves and the white-spotted, chestnut hides of the deer. No sound or sight aroused the suspicions of the leader of the herd, but the breeze brought to her moist nostrils the unwelcome scent of danger, and she stamped fiercely with her fore-foot. Instantly the deer became motionless, and, after a moment's pause, turned away from the water and noisily disappeared into the forest. They reappeared higher up the stream and there, satisfied of safety, ran down to eagerly drink of its waters.

And now for the first time the stags appeared, bulkier and taller than the hinds, but meek of aspect, for on their heads were the tender velvet-covered growth of the new horns, and they feared the slightest



accident that might lead to a painful injury. The stags had lost the fine colouring of the summer months, and were heavily coated in dull chestnut. The white spots were almost concealed by the long brown hair of winter. They moved with lowered heads to avoid the branches, and gave way before the more energetic females, not resenting even the gambols of the young fawns around them as they eagerly drank. From down stream came the warning cry of the red monkeys, perched high up in the trees, and at the first note the stags silently disappeared into the forest. The hinds, too, retreated from the water's edge and gained the higher ground; here they stood for some minutes considering what should be done on this occasion of distant danger; then, led by the barren hind, they entered the forest and, in single file and noiselessly, took the way to some safer retreat till evening should fall.

Meanwhile the family of tigers, save when on the hunt, paid small attention to the movements of the jungle tribes around them; they lived their own quiet if laborious lives, and as

the days passed the cubs throve apace. Soon they were able to play together on the soft sandbanks in front of the lair; they extended their knowledge by exploring the recesses of the tall grasses around the hollow log, and could even take refuge in this retreat on hearing a warning growl from the ever watchful

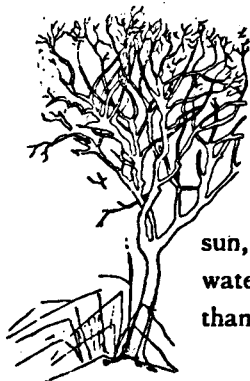


tigress. But the presence of the family was long since known to all the jungle-folk. The crows were constantly scolding from safe perches in the vicinity, the jungle-fowl and the peafowl too, resented the intrusion, and the monkeys were never tired of proclaiming aloud what all around were already aware of; during the hours that should have been given to slumber after arduous hunting it was trying to be under the observation of all who might be idling in the tops of the overhanging trees.

Abroad, too, game was getting scarcer, and each week longer excursions were necessary

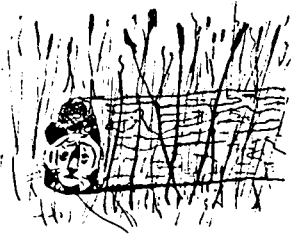
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to secure food, while the animals were so constantly on the alert that success was not so frequent as always to relieve the pangs of hunger. The strain on both parents showed itself in the growing ill-temper of both tiger and tigress. They still profited by each other's hunting, but the tigress showed the greatest caution in approaching any animal she had not herself killed; and on one occasion the tiger had so far forgotten the law of the jungle that he had driven her off the body of a pig she was ravenously devouring, and had appropriated it for his own repast. Everything, in short, indicated that a change to some other hiding place would be desirable where the presence of so many tigers would not be so notorious; and the more so that the grasses were commencing to dry up, that the trees no longer afforded sufficient shelter against the sun, while the supply of running water began to diminish. More than once, too, the approach of



spring was indicated by an ominous glow at a distance towards the south, which proclaimed the fact that the grasslands outside the forest were being burnt, and that at any time fires might extend to the forest itself, when it would go hard with any animal which could not outstrip the flames.

The uneasiness felt by the tigers was soon justified, for as the season became hotter and drier the evening dews failed to extinguish the fires which were lighted by cattle graziers during the day, and it



was not long before the nearer approach of the flames was heralded by clouds of smoke passing over the forest, and by flakes and spirals of burnt grasses whirling and scattering in the air. To the cubs, with their instinctive dread of fire, these were awful portents; they wandered to and fro in an aimless attempt to escape from their own fears, and at last sought refuge in the hollow log, where they

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huddled with piteous whining. Meanwhile the tiger had already slunk away down wind, heading for a swamp that afforded a safe protection from fire, save in the driest seasons; and the tigress, longing to follow his example, still hesitated to leave her young to their fate. She had indeed started on the road to safety, but finally returned to the lair and encouraged



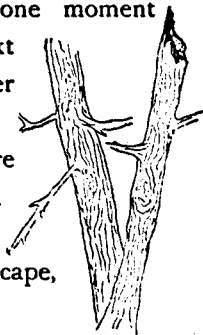
her cubs to follow her as she retreated from the rapidly approaching conflagration.

But their strength was not equal to the occasion, and after a short time their tottering feet refused to bear them further over the obstacles they encountered in the forest; and finally, weak from fatigue and fear, they sat side by side, helplessly awaiting their fate.

The fire was now close at hand, near enough to light up the forest so that each stem stood darkly defined against its glow. From time to time the flames died away, and then reviving

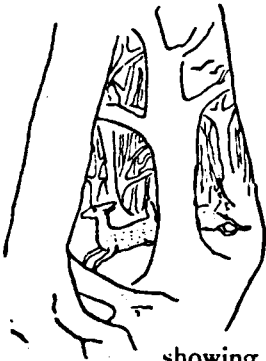
shot twenty or thirty feet skywards; or, flattened by the wind, covered the earth with a horizontal sheet of fire, licking up everything before it. As the heated blast reached the green foliage it wilted away and hung lifeless from the branches, and the next instant a tongue of flame sprang forth and the tree was enveloped in a column of fire. When it passed only a blackened trunk was left to mark where so shortly before a monarch of the forest had stood in the pride of wide-flung leafy branches. The air seemed full of uproar and confused noises; the bamboos split with loud reports as of musketry; falling branches flashed and struck the earth with a crash of leaping sparks, and above all sounded the incessant roaring of the burning grasses, at one moment standing erect, and the next dissolved into clouds of bitter smoke.

From the direction of the fire came a stream of terrified animals running before the wind, each intent on its own escape,



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some so bewildered that they turned from imaginary dangers to rush blindly towards the flames; troops of monkeys climbed the tallest trees in the hope of reaching safety, and falling one by one, suffocated by the heated fumes, were dead before the fire passed over their



helpless bodies. Above the tawny smoke which rose in billows to the sky king-crows and other birds hovered, snapping up the insects which had escaped from the furnace below; they alone of the jungle folk showing no trepidation at the ruin that was overwhelming both animal and vegetable life.

Fear for herself and anxiety for her young seemed to rouse in the tigress a fury that was indifferent to all dangers. Missing her cubs she returned and endeavoured to carry the two smallest in her mouth and save them

from the approaching flames. At times she succeeded in doing this for a few yards, then one would fall from her uneasy grip, and so she returned to and fro on the line of retreat until some distance was placed between them and danger. The third and strongest cub, unwilling to be left alone, also resumed his painful march, following instinctively the trail left by his mother; till after passing through a belt of shady undergrowth he stumbled down the bank of a stream and lay in its waters panting and exhausted. The crackling of the flames was still audible and the acrid smell of smoke filled the air, but the fire died away as it reached the evergreen shrubs lining the water-course, so that safety was at last assured.

Along the banks of the stream were many refugees, and the common danger made them indifferent to company otherwise distasteful. A truce was proclaimed that none might break, and the cub then saw more of the jungle tribes than before in all his short life. There were groups of spotted-deer who pressed

against each other in their anxiety ; the fawns had lost all the joyous abandon of infancy and the stags stood moodily with lowered heads, the grey velvet of the new growth of horn glistening in the yellow light. Sambhar hinds

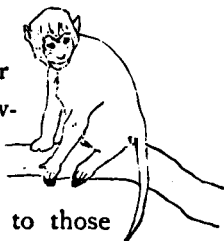


and calves also there were, silently watching, turning their huge ears to every sound ; while one stag rested with heaving sides, a slow trickle of blood descending from his head, shewing that he had avoided the flames with difficulty and had lost his antlers in his headlong rush through heavy cover, perhaps some days before they were quite dead. Some pigs moved uneasily, snuffing in the low foliage, not desirous of the approach of even their own kind, and losing no opportunity to strike a petulant blow at any intruder. A barking-deer stepped daintily over the soft ground ; his little horns stood on pedestals above his head and these formed a V-shaped marking on his face ; the two white tusks, that look so harmless and are so effective, gleamed from the sides of his mouth. Above were monkeys,

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brown and grey, that were for the time dull and silent after their exertions ; not so exhausted, however, that they did not notice the tigress returning in her tracks, or, fail to give warning to those below. The deer moved uneasily to one side as the tigress passed, and she, faithful to the law of the forest, turned neither to right nor left ; she went straight to the shallow water where her cub was lying still too tired to move, nor did she show ill-temper when he scratched, and bit, and struggled against her interference. She seized him by the back and bore him gently away to the new home she had chosen for her family.



CHAPTER III

Schooldays



THE place selected by the tigress as her future home was in all respects different to that previously occupied, for now protection was required against a pitiless sun and against the scorching winds of early summer. Cool water and dense shade were necessary to the comfort of animals that feel the heat intensely, that are more at home in the snows of the north than in the tropics, and that seem to have been left behind in the ages when the glaciers were receding; for both tigers and elephants are perhaps survivors of climates different to those they now inhabit, and neither have through

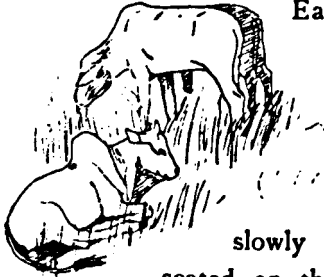
countless generations adapted themselves fully to their present surroundings. All the necessary advantages were secured in this new abode, where water flowed beneath the constant shade of evergreen trees; while on the one side lay a wide, open plain where the new grass was springing up after the fires of spring, and on the other the burnt forest stretched away through arcades of blackened stems, so that, while no enemy could approach unseen, the movements of the jungle tribes might be watched from a secure hiding place.



It was true that the shelter of the stream brought the tigers also into the closer neighbourhood of man, for at some distance to the west lay a cluster of grass huts and sheds that denoted the establishment of a cattle station whence buffaloes and cows started to their grazing grounds, and where they returned at intervals during the day or night. The buffaloes left the sheds in the late evening to return in the early morning,

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but the other cattle, enjoying the warmth of the sun, were not so nocturnal in their habits.



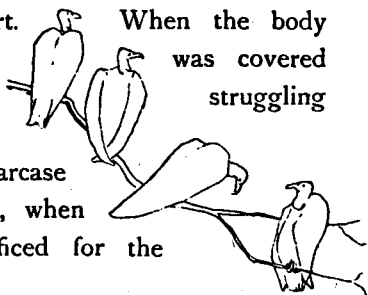
Each herd was led by an experienced cow which carried a deep-toned bell, and with each went one of the graziers, following

slowly behind the herd or seated on the broad back of one of the buffaloes when these entered a swamp or crossed a river. The weird cries of the herdsmen echoed through the forest and the cattle responded by coming slowly towards the call; each was known by name and the absence of one among many hundreds was readily detected when the muster was taken at the cattle station. The men and women were occupied in milking the cattle and in preparing "ghee," or melted butter, for sale; they lived in small grass huts, and outside the limits of the station was settled a small community of "pariahs," outcasts who made their living by selling the hides of dead cattle,

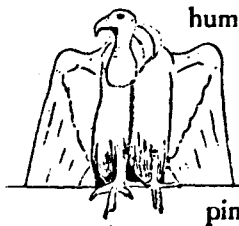
and who did not hesitate to rob a tiger of his kill if they could do so without fear of reprisals.

Around the habitations of the "pariahs" the vultures sat perched in high trees, ready to appropriate the remains of the carcase when their allies had left it; so experienced were these birds that they followed when the men started on a business trip, and on their part often involuntarily afforded information to the hide-hunters. The two—man and bird—were to some measure inter-dependent, but the latter had the advantage in that it could soar to heights out of the heat and dust and return refreshed to the toil of making its living; the man must remain in subjection through all his life; for him there was no hope of improvement in status or comfort.

When the body of buffalo or cow was covered so thickly with struggling birds that no glimpse of the carcase could be obtained, when half an hour sufficed for the



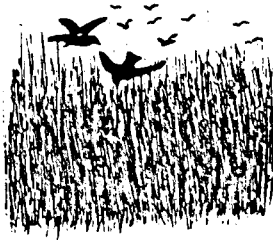
disappearance of the largest animal, so that only a reddened skeleton remained on the plain, then the victors in the struggle for food rose into the pale blue sky in rapid spirals, carrying full crops of provender to their young. They gained a height of several thousand feet without effort, climbing the steep curves with outstretched wings till almost invisible to the



human eye; then, with the gale rushing through the separated feathers, they glided at speed down an inclined aerial plane, not moving a pinion in miles of flight till the nest came in view. The wings were then backed and the heavy bird alighted on a stout branch of some tall tree that stood isolated in an inaccessible precipice, and there received the clamorous welcome of the expectant young.

At night the parent birds remained motionless with heads sunk between their shoulders, nor moved till the sun's rays rose above the horizon; then, drenched with dew, they sat with wings hung out to dry, extended to the

increasing warmth, and later would flutter ungainly to the nearest sand bank to complete their toilet. Then, rising once more into the clearer air above the dust, they would take their course to well-known food supplies, not halting in their rapid flight unless the sight of crows, busy over some dead or dying beast, repaid



the trouble of a swift descent in an almost vertical drop through space with hanging feet, to be changed, when close above the earth, into a sloping flight with wide-spread wings.

Now that the tiger cubs were becoming knowledgeable one or other of the family appeared to be always watchful during all hours of the day to listen to any suspicious sound, or to discriminate between the various scents that were wafted on the strong southwestern breeze. For although tigers are not credited with much refinement of scent, and though they cannot compete in this respect

" with members of the deer tribe or even
 " with other jungle folk, such as bears
 " and pigs, whose chief security is
 " afforded by their sensitive nostrils, yet
 " the great carnivora can follow a trail
 " with ease and can distinguish, not only
 " between the different animals of the
 " jungle, but also between different
 individuals of their own species. With them,
 indeed, offence rather than defence is pro-
 vided for by the gifts of Nature; and so it
 was, therefore, that of the five members of
 that still happy family there was always one
 who, more by accident than design, was pre-
 pared to give warning of danger, or to
 recognise in the approach of some unsuspect-
 ing animal an opportunity to appease the
 constant hunger that besieged them.

The tigers, however, did not always remain
 in one spot now that the cubs were stronger;
 they moved for miles up and down stream
 and so avoided too much publicity, often being
 absent from headquarters for days when hunting
 had been successful. The cubs accompanied

their mother when these temporary changes of quarters were made, and now even shared short midnight prowls, or sometimes even joined the tiger when, after he had secured a meal, his roars were heard re-echoing from the hills. On such occasions they gnawed at the kill, hardly yet able to tear the flesh, and fought noisily amongst themselves till warned to desist by threats or even by more practical interference. Each day towards sunset the parents became uneasy and, even if not hungry, took to restless wanderings to and fro, until the twilight set them free to roam with fuller liberty; and the cubs too began to experience this feeling of unrest though the pleasures of real hunting were still unknown to them.

One night, when the sun had set in a golden haze and the distant hills had faded into a purple mist, when the bells of the grazing herds had passed towards the cattle station; when even the voices of men, voluble over the evening meal, had hushed, the tigress and her cubs stole out upon the quiet plain. The moon was almost full, so that to them there

was little difference between night and day; every blade of grass and each trembling leaf seemed edged with silver; in the distance the forest stood upright as a black wall, while little flecks of whitened mist hung over the dwindling drinking pools along its foot. The tigers passed in silence, skirting the tall trees.

On the olive-green plain were vague groups of moving deer, and from time to time

from the herds would come the sharp

challenge to an unknown danger, uttered by some inexperienced

hind. Then all heads would be

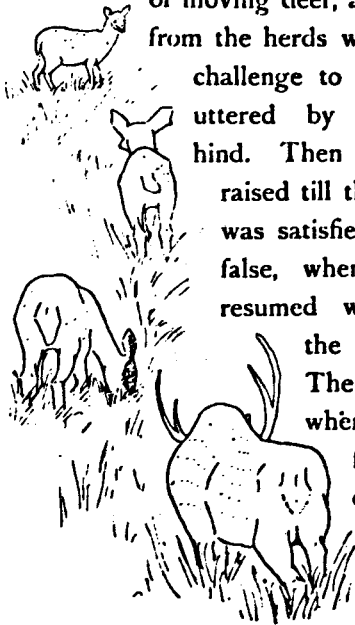
raised till the leader of the herd

was satisfied that the alarm was

false, when grazing would be

resumed with hasty bites of

the new, green herbage. The tigers noted the whereabouts of the jungle folk, rendered more conspicuous by so loudly voicing their anxiety, but none



were so favourably situated that they could be approached under cover within striking distance.

Suddenly the tigress dropped in the short grass and her cubs instantly followed her example ; she raised her head, gazing towards the low horizon and at once three smaller heads appeared above the grass, and next a sinuous line of one large and three small bodies was winding over the plain, taking advantage of every tussock of grass, of every anthill, till the shelter of a low thorny bush was reached. The night breeze was blowing as usual from the mountains, and across the line from tiger to deer, and so it was that some fifty yards away one spotted-stag and three hinds were unsuspectingly cropping the grass. The stag was commencing to feel the influence of spring, his coat was more brilliant in its colour, the markings on his face more pronounced. From his horns, reddened with the sap of soft-wooded trees, were hanging streamers of withered velvet that had been rubbed off against selected saplings. He was

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fat with the luxuriant feeding of spring, and in his blood courage and gallantry were already making their calls upon him.

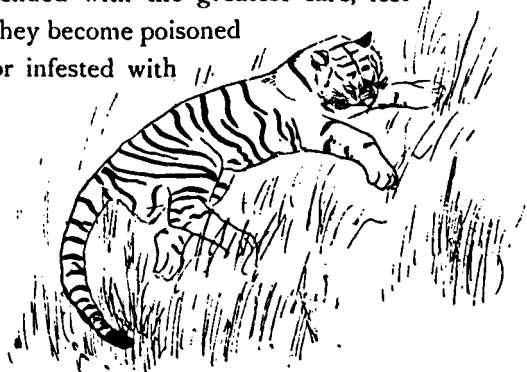


The hinds fed more greedily than did the stag, and passed him as the group pressed on its way across the shadowy plain; he was left several yards behind.

Meanwhile the tigress was preparing for the attack by gathering her hind-legs under her body, by gripping the earth with her fore-paws, by repeatedly readjusting her position so as at last to obtain perfect balance. Then there was one easy spring, followed by the loud thudding of her feet, raising little clouds of dust from the level plain; she had covered half the distance towards the startled stag ere he had time to raise his head, and before he could get into his stride he was overtaken, and tigress and deer slid along the ground with the impetus of her onslaught, while the hinds fled, protesting loudly at the outrage.

The tigress lay for some time beside the stag, holding it by the throat and sucking its life-blood, then rose and dragged the carcass away into the shelter of the forest, the cubs playing round the trail, snapping at the helpless limbs, and hindering rather than helping in the work. Then they took their first taste of warm flesh, fighting amongst themselves, while the mother lay near by licking the scratch she had received from the antlers and brushing the dust from face and eyes.

For hunting is not without danger to the great carnivora, and in a tropical country wounds, in themselves not severe, must be tended with the greatest care, lest they become poisoned or infested with



maggots. It is almost a hopeless task to ward off the attacks of the myriad insects that whirl in the summer sun and that, even by night, are on the alert to harass the healthy or to drive the wounded to distraction; and solace is sought by all in the healing virtues of the earth, in rolling in the damp clay so that an impenetrable cuirass shall be borrowed, in filling the wounds with loam so as to exclude the air. Nature treats those kindly who seek relief from the simple remedies she offers, lest they, becoming defective in sight or limb, in any weapon she has provided, should suffer from inability to sustain life in the selfish struggle in the jungle, and thus die of starvation in the midst of the plenty they are not able to reach.

After the first taste of the pleasures of the hunt the cubs rapidly gained the wisdom necessary for their existence; their days passed in careless happiness, for they were not dependent on their own exertions for their livelihood. They gradually learnt of the progress of the seasons, of the frosty nights

and of the winter mists which exaggerated every form; of the fervent heats and the ceaseless gales of spring, and of the torrential summer rain which flooded the parched land and converted the open plains, within the space of a few days, into seas of luxuriant grasses. They learnt too how to follow the game as it migrated from one feeding ground to another; how the animals deserted the

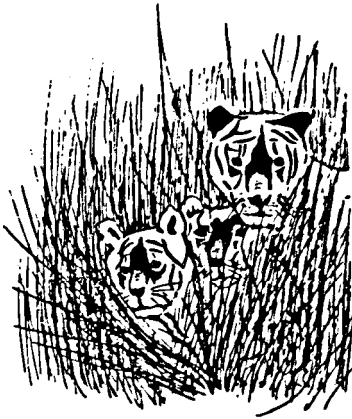
dry hill-slopes to graze on the new grass in the plains, moved from thence to the moist, secluded valleys, and again to the savannah - lands where,



when the grass had grown high, some refuge might be found from the unwearied assaults of exuberant insect life in the autumn months. They became acquainted with the features of the country for miles around; they visited in succession all the water-holes and streams; they lay in the steep-sided shady ravines; they knew all the stony watercourses and the secret tracks leading to all parts of the forest;

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so that if separated by any chance they could without difficulty find the way to come again under the mother's care when her call



rolled through the close-standing trees or over the open swamps.

Moreover they were learning to hunt, to lie in wait for the deer and pig as they left the forest and to follow

them noiselessly across the grass-lands, even to track a wounded deer to its last refuge in the densest cover and to rouse it so that it might fall an easy prey to the waiting tigress. And this was a difficult education, and time after time they made the same mistakes of over-eagerness and impatience; for it takes many years to learn that these are the hunter's gravest faults, and that

the punishment of hunger inevitably follows thereon.

The final struggle was not yet for the cubs and would not be till the permanent canine teeth were grown; but they gained in strength and experience and picked up many a toothsome meal even from amongst the most wary of birds and animals; and on such occasions there was joy and pride in their sagacity and agility. Not infrequently the jungle-fowl and pea-fowl fell victims to their skill, and even the monkeys were not safe in spite of their vigilance. To slay and to eat the porcupine without serious damage was a lesson not



learnt without stress and pain, for it took some time to understand the sudden stoppage of the flying rodent, and the rapid backward rush that plunged the sharp quills into the face and throat of the pursuer, and it needed self-restraint to head off the well-armed victim and despatch it with a blow on the snout.

The habits of other of the jungle tribes had also to be studied. When near the mother the cubs were safe from panther, bear, or wild dog, but when alone they might easily be overcome by the attacks of these animals. Their safety then lay in concealment, in the desire that their scent might warn the intruder against interference, in the hope that they might be over-estimated as regards strength and courage.

And so two years had passed happily away and the family life of the tigers was soon to come to an end.

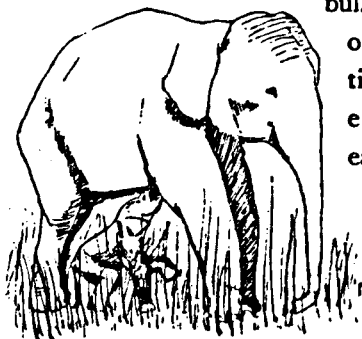
CHAPTER IV

The End of Home Life

AT two years of age the cubs were about six feet in length, light in frame and with undeveloped muscles; but at no time in their lives would they be more agile than at this age, and they loved to display this accomplishment in playing amongst themselves and even in teasing the other jungle-folk who were still too powerful to feel that respect which a full-grown tiger commands. On one occasion they harried an old sloth-bear by following him through the forest and snapping at his defenceless hindquarters, till in despair he must sit down and wave his great paws in fury. Then one would frolic in front, exciting the heavy beast to charge, only to evade his onslaught, while another again snapped at his legs. The game went on

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till the forest rang with the noisy remonstrances of the bear, and the jungle-folk trembled at the sound. On another day it was the wild elephants who were made to provide sport, the anxious mothers of young calves being tormented with simulated attacks until the herd

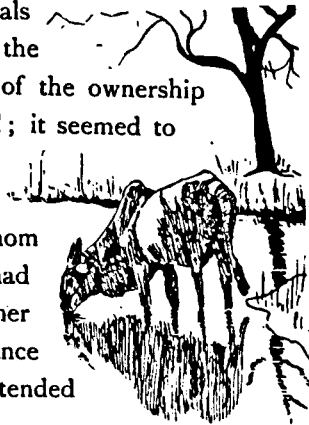


bull arrived to drive off the intruders. At times such games ended in deadly earnest, when the cubs suddenly discovered that they were able together to despatch an animal which

was safe from one or even two of their number; then the scent of blood, perhaps first flowing from playful scratches, changed a comedy into a tragedy, and increased that fierceness which is so often present in young animals.

The family party was soon to be broken up, for it is the natural law of the forest that each should seek his own food as soon as he can

do so, and that there should be no organized communities to terrorise or destroy other families less happily situated. The difficulty of providing for these well-grown cubs lay heavy on both father and mother. The former indeed absented himself more frequently as time went on, often not returning for many days to the lair and, unaided in her duties during these intervals, the tigress was sometimes forced to take toll from the neighbouring cattle-station. She did so with reluctance; to kill a bull or cow that had strayed alone into the depths of the forest came easy to her, but to follow a herd of animals that bore on them the marks and the scent of the ownership of man was distasteful; it seemed to bring her into closer connection with those human beings near whom she lived, and who had shown to her and to her young as great a tolerance as she hitherto had extended



to them. The herdsmen knew where the tigers lay and what they did; for the jungle tribes could not be avoided by men who passed through the forest by day or night, but the graziers neither molested them nor expected molestation, and, should this have occurred, would have given the offender no peace till he had either left the country or his bones were whitening on the plain, for these men were not, as in the olden days, on tolerance in the jungle; they asserted their own right to be there, though not wishful to encroach on the rights of others.

It was on a sultry night preceding the setting in of the monsoon rains when the tigress and her cubs were lying panting on the open plain, longing for the breeze that had died away at sunset. From the distance the sound of a deep-toned bell came at intervals as the buffaloes grazed slowly through the forest, and brought with it the temptation to secure an easy meal instead of starting on a laborious hunt in the enervating climate. One



of the frequent storms of this season had just passed away towards the hills and, as the tigers quickly trotted through the forest, every leaf was dropping moisture on the reeking soil; a scent of decaying vegetation pervaded the air, and the hum of countless insects, overtopped always by the strident music of the tree-cricket, seemed to shut out all other sounds. From time to time the horizon was lighted with a dull-red glow as the heavy darkness lifted to disclose a band of fire, and instantly shut down again; a continuous rumble of distant thunder added to an uneasy depression that affected all animals with unusual anxiety.

Soon the tigers arrived near the edge of a shallow lake, where in the muddy waters a herd of buffaloes was lying. Its surface was placid in the dim light, save when from time to time a massive head would be shaken and the long horns churned the water on either side, as the buffalo tried to obtain relief from the winged torments that buzzed around,

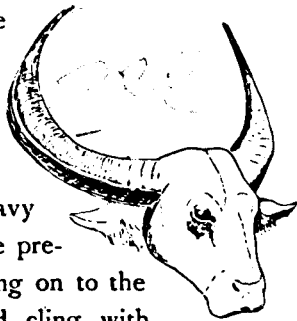


or when the waterfowl clucked and dabbled in the reeds. A carpet of thick, green grass spread from the water's edge up to the roots of the trees that marked the limits of the floods, and under the shelter of the great stems a tiger was lying watching silently for an opportunity to attack the buffaloes, which were for the moment safe from every onslaught. The tigress, too, and her cubs lay down at a respectful distance and watched. Some hours of silence passed; for the lesson had by now been learnt that there could be no successful hunting without awaiting the most appropriate moment for action, and that, the more timely the attack, the more food and the less danger in obtaining it.

But at last the buffaloes, one by one, rose to their feet, streaming with water and plastered with mud, and turned slowly into the forest on the homeward trail. The shimmering of their hides, as these reflected the feeble light, lent a ghostly effect to the cumbersome animals as they moved heavily along, grazing as they

went. The tiger also rose and trotted, quickly yet noiselessly, to intercept the herd; then crouched on slightly rising ground, his face towards the buffaloes and towards the soft breeze of approaching dawn. The buffaloes wandered unsuspecting along the narrow track, an old cow tolling her sonorous bell, the younger heifers and calves close behind, and last of all the bull, a ponderous brute with formidable horns which seemed to weigh down his heavy head.

A tiger has various methods of killing heavy game; in open country he prefers to make a bold spring on to the back of his victim, and cling with teeth and claws; then in the startled rush that follows he endeavours to wrench back the head and break the neck, so that death may be instantaneous in the crushing fall. But in timber country this is too dangerous a method, for the risk of being dashed against a tree and seriously injured is not willingly incurred, and in



the forest the tiger would rather gallop alongside and seizing the throat, trust to his weight and to the loss of blood to bring his quarry more gently to earth. On this occasion the tiger, confident in his strength, but afraid to seize a cow in front of the following bull, decided on a direct attack in spite of the unfavourable surroundings. He could not have



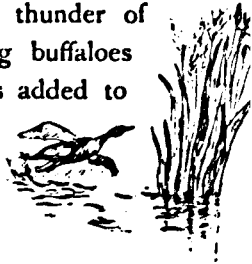
realized that this was a bull of the wilds which had attached itself to the herd during grazing hours, but refused to approach the abode of man.

His spring was followed by a deep bellow, and the bull was forced upon his knees, his horns pressed into the soft earth by the suddenness of the attack; and so it was that his neck and throat escaped serious injury, and what was intended to be an assassination became a duel to the death. After the bull had risen to his feet and had fiercely hurled his opponent to a distance, a scene followed so confusing

in its rapidity that none but the main incidents left any impression on the mind. The enraged animals trampled in the mud, tearing down bushes and saplings, and responded to the blows and bites they received with incessant roaring and bellowing; then after a time the two stood apart, the bull incapacitated by a broken fore-leg and tottering with exhaustion; the tiger crouching and regarding his adversary with fierce and implacable eyes. The end was now not far off, and at the next onslaught, in spite of a gallant defence, which inflicted many wounds on his attacker, the bull was dragged to earth and the exhausted combatants lay side by side, the buffalo sobbing out his life in long-drawn sighs, and the tiger breathing hurriedly with muffled growls.

There had been no chance of interference by the tigress and her cubs, for the whole herd of buffaloes, startled by the attack and incensed by the smell of blood, were charging round in circles seeking also to kill. The tigers separated and ran for their lives, hiding behind fallen trees and listening with dread to the uproar in the forest,

whose inhabitants were impelled by an uncontrollable excitement. The monkeys shouted from the tree tops, the peacocks uttered strident calls, and even the smaller beasts and birds joined in the clamour. Far away towards the hills a herd of elephants commenced to trumpet in alarm, and the water-fowl sought safety with clattering wings; the thunder of the hoofs of the galloping buffaloes and their fierce bellowings added to the noise of the riot that had so suddenly broken the peaceful silence of the jungle.



This silence but slowly asserted itself; the buffaloes disappeared in the direction of the cattle-station, and the deer drew off, to spend the rest of the night in anxious fear; and then the tigress and her family came cautiously from their retreats. The dawn broke, revealing a sky laden with rain clouds, but towards the north and east there were narrow bands of light, and, as between bars, were seen the distant glories of the Himalaya, in white fields of

snow or in dim valleys of deepest blue. But both tiger and buffalo were long since dead, the one battered and gored, the other crimson with scratches and bites ; while at no great distance lay the body of

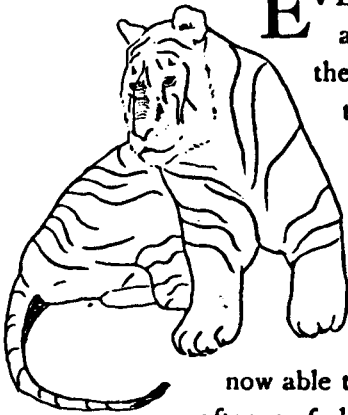
one of
the cubs,
trampled
out of



recognition, for the buffaloes had charged over her and then returned to wreak a useless fury on her broken body. And now the voices of men were borne through the damp morning air ; a search-party was coming, guided by the tracks of the flying buffaloes, and the diminished family party slunk away into cover, their hearts full of dread at the tragedy of the past night.

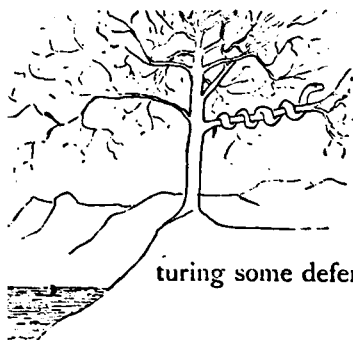
CHAPTER V

Alone in the Forest



EVENTS moved rapidly after the first break in the family circle, and, though the tigress and her two cubs still remained together, they grew almost daily more independent of each other. The male cub was now able to make his own living after a fashion, though still not powerful enough to tackle the larger animals of the forest; but self-reliance increased with his mother's reluctance to share with him the proceeds of her hunting. The female cub, on the other hand, grew more helpless as time

went on; for whether terrified by the tragic death of father and sister, or weak and indolent by nature, her distaste for hunting seemed to increase with time; she would not attack any but the most harmless beasts and fled from the sight of any animal with horns, so that her upkeep became a burden, and the grudging consent to feed from the kills of mother and brother soon changed to the strongest objection to her mode of life. It ended in a fierce quarrel with sundry blows and bites, and she left the family party not again to return. All night she wandered through the forest seeing much game and not daring to attack it, and rested at last in a thicket not far from the banks of a wide tank. From a deep sleep she was



awakened about midday by the alarm call of monkeys, and she sneaked through the underwood in the hopes of capturing some defenceless animal. The

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monkeys redoubled their cries on seeing her slim form crouching beneath them.

. On the banks of the lake stood a broad-crowned "kusumb" tree, its sturdy branches overhanging the water on one side and the solid ground on the other; and coiled on a branch some eight or ten feet from the earth lay a fine python. He had just shed his skin and, where the sun shone through the heavy foliage, he looked as if clad in bronze armour. With the change in his appearance had come also the desire to break a fast of many weeks. His instincts were primitive; he required some living thing to satisfy his hunger, and therefore any object that moved, if not too big, would serve his purpose. There was none in the forest that would molest him; he had already outgrown the fear of attack even from the largest hamadryad, and, so far as his experience went, no animal had been able to resist his sudden onslaught. On that bough he had lain motionless for many hours, and, now that he saw a yellow-striped animal approaching within striking distance, such passions, as

his cold blood permitted were roused. A quiver ran through the folds of his body and his forked tongue shot out in anticipation. Then, as the cub stood beneath the tree and gazed curiously over the water, she was suddenly struck to the ground, breathless and bruised. She staggered to her feet, wild with rage, and with all her fighting instincts roused, but rage soon gave place to terror as she realized that she was held fast as in a net and could neither scratch nor bite. Already her hind-quarters seemed paralysed, and soon her chest was being pressed so that it was difficult to breathe. The unequal struggle was watched by the monkeys with intense delight, for, though they dreaded the snake, they hated the tiger still more. When they ceased to take an interest in the scene the snake was lying motionless on the ground; his eighteen feet of length was arranged in neat coils, those in the centre as thick as a man's thigh, and, where they



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met, glimpses of yellow hair proved that he held his prey in his grasp and that he need not again exert himself for many weeks.

After the departure of the second cub the survivor, alone with the tigress, not only secured ample food but had many opportunities of gaining experience which was soon to stand him in good stead. He was now completing his third year and in size was nearly equal to



his mother; his permanent canine teeth were nearly full grown, and though he had neither the distinctive ruff of the mature tiger nor its bulk he gave good promise of becoming a formidable example of his race, should he be fortunate enough to escape the numerous dangers incidental to his manner of life. The chief of these dangers, though the tiger did not yet know this, would be due to man, the being who hunts for pleasure as well as for food, and is thus always eager to kill although he may have no use for his victim. It is true that amongst the forest tribes, who only hunt

in order to support life, the young and inexperienced will in the joy of youth or in the strength of approaching maturity sometimes break



this rule and slay for pastime, but this rarely happens and the lust of slaughter is soon appeased. But besides those due to man, other dangers surrounded even the most powerful of jungle animals. Accidental injuries may bring him to the severest straits, and accidents are common in the tumult of wild life. The struggle to attain to supremacy or to maintain it is constant, and want of success, which may be due to a broken bone or to a fly-blown wound, brings results, either in exile to a place where want of local knowledge enormously increases the labour of living, or even in a lingering death from the growing weakness of starvation.

Meanwhile the young tiger, no longer a cub, was left more and more to his own devices and often for days at a time did not see his mother. When they did meet she regarded him with indifference, while the full-grown tiger

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that now accompanied her looked upon him with increasing ill-temper. It was in these days fortunate for the youngster that his upbringing had been good, that he had been taught to venerate his own father, and to keep at a respectful distance from him and that, though jealous and sulky, he was able to refrain from any expression of hostility that could have but one ending. One blow from the intruder's paw would have stretched him senseless on the ground, and long before he



could have risen his chest would have been crushed by the huge fangs of his opponent. But even his moderation could secure him no place in the newly arranged family party, though it was not for several days after he had been left to his fate that he realized the

desertion. Then he wandered through all his own haunts calling loudly for his mother, but his poor cries received no answer; they merely proclaimed his presence



to all the forest tribes and drove them from his neighbourhood; and so it was that hunger forced him to silence and he began to forget his troubles in the labour of appeasing his appetite.

He soon learnt that further trials were in store for him, in the warnings that he must either fight for the possession of his old hunting grounds or leave them to the enjoyment of his supplanter. He wisely selected the latter alternative, and, with fear and rage in his heart, wandered away towards the north, to a land where he knew none of the game runs, none of the water-holes, and none of the secret tracks that provided either a quiet way to the hunting grounds or a means of escape from pressing danger. In an unknown country of thick forest, of tall grasses, with the distant view shut in by vegetation, and a horizon



limited by the few feet which raised his eyes above the earth, the tiger, strong and active as he was, had nothing to guide him but the general direction in which lay the hills ; at least till his surprising memory for locality should place him more at his ease. On the march he was continually afraid lest he should inadvertently be trespassing on the domain of another and be suddenly confronted with the enraged owner of the forest, and so much of his time was passed in crouching and listening anxiously for any suspicious sounds that he made but slow progress in his journey. Distracted by all these changes in his surroundings he had but little chance of successful hunting, and at last so intense were the pangs of hunger that he greedily fed on the frogs that crowded in the drying water-holes, and did not despise even lesser game. It was well at this time that he encountered no defenceless human being in the forest or he would certainly have taken its life to save his own, and might have developed into a man-eater, and with his

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strength and agility, would then readily have devastated a whole country side.

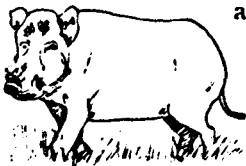
He lay one morning at some distance from a cattle-station, whence came the voices of men and the grunting of buffaloes. His instinctive avoidance of men and their cattle had prevented him from approaching nearer even in the hopes of finding a meal; but it happened that some buffaloes were returning in single file along the narrow track within a few yards of the watchful tiger, and the last of the herd was a young cow, which could offer little resistance and would furnish a toothsome repast.

In the face of this sudden temptation all caution was thrown to the winds. Almost before he knew it he had bounded upon her back and exerting his full strength, quite unaware of his own power, had in an instant broken her neck. She lay dead in her tracks and all would have been well had he allowed the herd to proceed. But the starving tiger was now obsessed with the



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lust of slaughter and his eyes shone as if suffused with blood. He sprang upon the next buffalo and bore her to the earth, killing her as instantaneously as he had the first, and then upon a third, which for a time resisted his attack. But now the herd, thoroughly aroused, charged down on him with lowered horns and fierce bellowings; men ran, shouting to the assistance of their cattle.

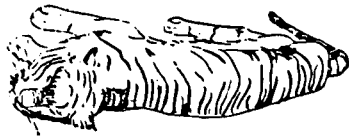


and the tiger slunk away through the underwood raging with hunger and excited with blood. As his good fortune would have it, just at this moment a pig, disturbed by the commotion, ran almost into his jaws, and he despatched it with one savage blow; then, seizing the carcase, he shook it with violence, dashing it on the earth as if to crush out every vestige of life, and at once commenced a repast that soon brought his sufferings to an end, and as quickly soothed the violent passions that his misfortunes and mistakes had aroused.

CHAPTER VI

Gaining Experience

BUT though the tiger's troubles had for the moment passed away he was yet to gain further experience through suffering. He had gorged himself with the flesh of the pig, but, loth to relinquish any portion of his kill, he had dragged the remains to hide them in the grass which lined the banks of a not distant stream, without thought of the danger that lay in harbouring so far from the forest, surrounded on all sides by open country, and within easy reach of the human beings he had despoiled and of the vengeance that might follow on the outrage he had committed. He lay down to sleep for the first time for many days with a sense of comfort and ease, chiefly due



to the satisfaction of the hunger he had so constantly felt, and noon had long passed before he was disturbed. Then he heard in the distance the sound of human voices, and was at once on the alert, crouching low in the grass, ready equally for defence or attack,



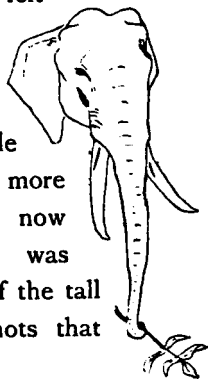
but not sufficiently experienced to slink away while there was yet time.

He was curious as well as anxious, for before the intruders had become visible on his limited horizon other senses than that of sight

had instructed him of the advance both of men and of elephant. The latter he knew in a wild state and treated with respect; with the combination of the two he was unacquainted, and he became filled with trepidation. The time for flight had however passed, for now the elephant came into view towering above the short grass and presenting a formidable appearance with

its white tusks gleaming in the evening light. It advanced until within a few paces, and then a loud report was followed by a stinging pain in his leg that at once roused the tiger to furious retaliation. He reared up on his hind legs and struck a blow at the man who stood in the howdah above him, and he heard the crash of the panels as they yielded to his fore-paw. The instinctive dread of his opponents again asserted itself, and he bounded across the stream and ran hurriedly along its further bank till he found shelter in a dense clump of grass beneath some leafy trees.

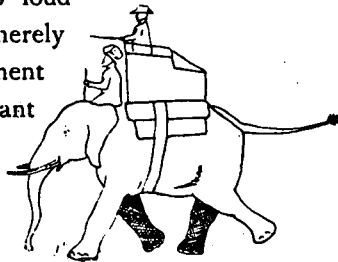
He lay concealed, bearing as best he might the pain of his wound, which now felt as if hot irons were being pressed into the flesh, and from time to time a groan of rage and suffering escaped him. Meanwhile the elephant had followed more leisurely along the stream, and now each movement of the tiger was signalled by the trembling tops of the tall grasses which invited random shots that



flew around, but fortunately failed to strike him. But he was terrified by the loud reports and at last realized with a growing fury that he was brought to bay and could only escape by fighting his way to safety. To cross the water and attack the elephant would have been to take the risk of showing himself in the open, a proceeding from which he was always averse; to fly across the plain was even less to his liking, and no third course was open until the elephant moved away, and, crossing the water at some distance away, proceeded to approach the tiger on the land side of his retreat. Then would have been the opportunity to make good his escape into the tree forest, but this chance also the tiger let slip: he remained crouched in the grass where he had so far found an impregnable refuge; but it was not long before he regretted his choice.

The elephant instead of remaining as before at a respectful distance now advanced steadily, on the alert but without fear, with trunk extended to inhale the scent of his foe and to ascertain exactly his whereabouts. It evidently

intended to crush down the tall grasses of the tiger's hiding place and force him to fight or fly, and this was too much for the impatient anger of the tiger to brook. With brain aflame he rushed upon the enemy, at that instant indifferent to the tusks of the elephant or to the weapons of the human beings above him; he indeed heard two loud reports, but the noise merely increased his excitement and, had not the elephant turned and fled, a fight at close quarters would undoubtedly have ensued. Even



when he had thus asserted his courage he continued to pursue the flying foe, panting with the desire to bury fangs and claws in the warm flesh; but here again he made the mistake of miscalculating the natural courage of the elephant which now reasserted itself, in spite of the remonstrances of the frightened mahout. The tiger stopped and then in his turn fled towards safety, followed by dreadful

visions of a ponderous brute that pursued him with gleaming tusks; fearful that at each instant his life might be crushed out under those heavy feet or his back riddled by those ivory spears.

And as he regained his hiding place for once fortune at last befriended him, for the elephant in his excitement passed under a low horizontal branch, and in an instant the howdah was smashed to pieces and his pursuers became harmless for offence; they drew off in sorry plight, first to investigate the damage done, and next to leave the battle-field, morose and regretful. The tiger lay silent save for a few growls that evinced his subsiding passion; and then, as the sun was sinking like a red ball into the straight horizon of the grey plain, he realized that the fight was over and that he was left alone to bear the acute pain that now made itself felt in every movement of his wounded leg. He had aged by years of experience in the last few hours of his life; he had learnt some of the dangers that the proximity of human beings might produce; and

he had some inkling of the fact that there might be other hunters besides himself, and that in future caution must be exercised, not only to enable him to satisfy his hunger but also to preserve his own life from those who seemed able and willing to take it.

As the moon rose over the dark forest, silhouetting each branch and leaf in deepest black, and then poured its rays on the silent plain, now dotted with moving mysterious forms of grazing deer, the tiger limped away in the direction of a swamp he had passed on his journey of the previous night. There he had seen that deep water surrounded islets covered with heavy grass, and there instinct told him might perhaps be found the quietude that was necessary for the healing of his wound. He completed the painful journey at last, and, walking out into the water until only muzzle and ears appeared above its surface, he swam with powerful and silent strokes towards the haven he had selected, nor did he land till he had made certain that he was not intruding in this new abode. Then emerging from the water,

his coat glistening in the moon-rays and showing each muscle of his powerful frame, he limped slowly into the sheltering grasses.

The refuge which the wounded tiger had chosen possessed the advantage that it could not be approached noiselessly or secretly by any enemy, least of all by man ; but it was not devoid of animal life. On the edge of the island was as it were a beach of bright short grass that bent under the little wavelets and bowed beneath the breezes. Beyond this beach a forest of tall grasses reared their flowering heads some twelve or fifteen feet towards the sky, always nodding in the eddies of the winds and rubbing reed-like stems together with gentle grating sounds. In the centre of this little stronghold a single thorny tree had taken root and spread its rough branches in a circle round the fissured stem. In the shade of its crown there was soft, dry sand where the grasses, deprived of direct sunlight, would not grow, though they crowded round this little oasis in a wall of pillared vegetation. From the boughs of the tree hung, swinging in the

breeze, many nests of the weaver-bird, through whose tunnelled entry no snake could approach, and beside them were little canopied perches where the father of the family in the intervals of work watched and twittered encouragement to his mate.



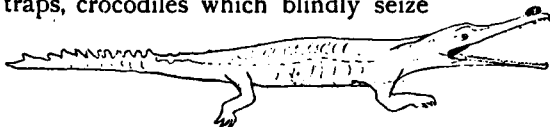
In the day-time there was silence in the swamp, but as night fell its inhabitants made themselves heard; coots and waterhens swam boldly into the open water, now safe from the hawks and eagles which had made day fearsome for them; ducks flapped on the surface of the lake and noisily greeted any new arrivals who descended from the heights with whirring wings and ploughed long furrows in the water as they broke their impetus before alighting; parties of croaking night-herons arrived to fish in silence in the shallower water, and the bitterns boomed solemnly to each other across the misty waste; from time to time a great fish-owl called "U-hu-hu" in deepest bass, and thereupon immediately took

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flight, to reappear in some quite unexpected quarter. Other dwellers there were in this fastness of grass and water; swamp deer with wide-spread hoofs, able to walk on treacherous bogs where heavier animals would have been engulfed; the stag with thick-branched antlers of from twelve to twenty tines, often concealed with dry grass which had become entangled as he passed through the heavy cover, the front of his horns ivory-white from the constant friction of the reeds where he sheltered. The little groups of swamp-deer stood belly-deep in water grazing on the aquatic plants, turning huge ears to catch any sounds of danger, and rising from time to time velvety black eyes and polished inky muzzles to detect any undesirable intrusion on their grazing grounds.

In the more open grasslands hog-deer grazed and gambolled, their speckled fawns uttering plaintive whistles when deserted even for a few moments by the mothers; and to all this exuberant life on land the waters contributed

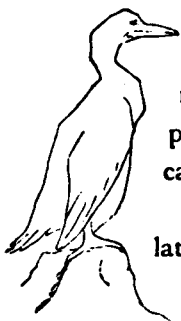
their share. In the deeper channels and reaches of the lake there floated, here and there, black logs which were in reality death-traps, crocodiles which blindly seize



their prey and sink with it struggling into deep water, giving no chance of escape or of retaliation; ruthless monsters who, in addition to other senses, seem so acutely sensitive to vibration of earth or water that they possess almost unfair advantages for attack or defence. Not so harmful, but still to be feared, were those rounded drifting objects, the heads of fowl tortoises which tear to pieces any defenceless animal that may trespass in their domain. Great fish, too, there were, which from time to time rose from the depths, collecting from the stems of the water-plants the animalculae that infested them, and again subsided with a sound of sucking as their soft lips unexpectedly reached the freer air of the lake's surface. The tall trees around appeared to be festooned,

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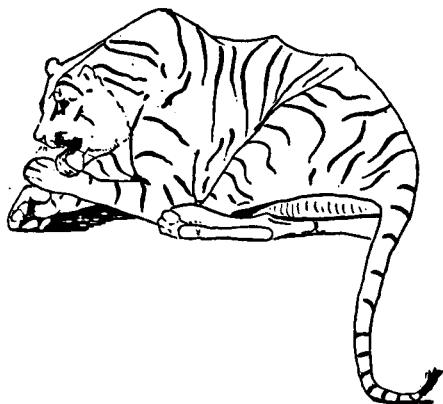
some with white and others with black, against the luminous indigo of the sky, for the egrets



and the cormorants roosted in colonies apart, and perched motionless until the dawn should permit them to recommence the campaign against frogs and fish.

In the midst of this mixed population of jungle tribes the wounded tiger felt secure, for he possessed an army of detectives who would afford information of the approach of any intruder, while his solitude was enlivened by the movement and life around him. He required no food in the fevered state of his blood, but long draughts of cooling water and rest were soon to effect a cure. He lay in the shade of the thorn tree until the heat of the sun aroused the flies to torment him and then sought relief from their attacks in the dense grass, the while occupied in licking his wound till it commenced to heal rapidly. Even if he had felt the desire to kill, it would have been difficult to gratify it in the seclusion of this

retreat, but until health had been recovered he had no wish but for quiet forgetfulness. And so after ten or twelve days he felt himself once more ; his wound was safe from the attacks of flies, the fever had left him, and again appetite impelled him to a more active life. He crossed the lake one evening and set his face towards the hills, for, though he did not realize it, the instinct was strong upon him to discover a kingdom where he might reign in security.

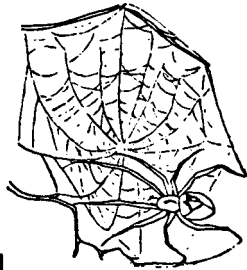


CHAPTER VII

Maturity

ALL that night the tiger roamed in an unknown country, missing, for want of local knowledge, more than one opportunity to secure a much needed meal, and when dawn broke, weary and exhausted after his long fast, he found himself at the foot of a low mountain range that stretched to right and left across the course he was pursuing. He looked, from the slight elevation he had gained, back towards the route he had followed during the night's journey, and the scene satisfied even his ideal of a hunting country. The first horizontal rays of the rising sun were shining through a golden mist, and the foliage shimmered and sparkled in the morning light; between the trees gigantic cobwebs were suspended, and in the centre of each sat a

great spider clad in vivid green, like an emerald enmeshed in brilliants of dew. Here and there rivulets rippled over the rounded pebbles, and between were islands of "shisham" trees, their branches heavy with the green flower-clusters or weighted with last year's seed-pods, while all around



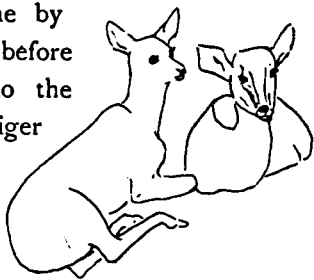
were deep ravines cut by the monsoon floods in their torrential course. Here was a place with both shade and water, offering, too, many ways of escape from danger as well as of silent and unsuspected approach when hunting. Moreover, during the night's march no sign of other tigers had been detected, and it only remained to discover whether in this paradise there was food enough to satisfy before settling into his kingdom.

It was but right that some good fortune should follow on all the reverses the tiger had sustained, and as he lay basking in the warm rays of the sun, lazily cleaning from his coat

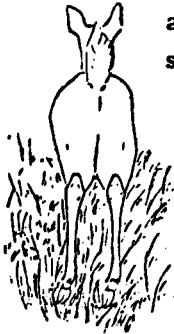
the marks of his long journey, he detected in the distance a movement in the grass and saw that a herd of spotted-deer were crossing from the wide plain, with the intention of entering the forest and passing the day in its recesses. He lay still till they had gained its shelter, and then ran hastily under the cover of the steep bank to follow them; in his eagerness he had almost overrated the speed of their movements, but checked himself in time to see them unsuspectingly ascend a ziz-zag path which led to the level ground above; then creeping up a neighbouring ravine he found himself in a most advantageous position. An old hind led the herd; her chestnut coat had faded to a dull yellow with age, and the white flecks on her sides were hardly noticeable at a distance; behind her came other hinds and young stags, while still younger fawns gambolled around or uttered shrill squeaks, simulating distress so as to attract the notice of their elders. Last came the stags, serene, almost haughty, in their bearing, with white gorget and black V-shaped marking on the face, the dorsal stripe

intensely black and the antlers rough and beaded, red from frequent rubbing against soft-barked saplings. The herd strolled slowly forward and halted under the shade of a fig tree whose wide-spread branches, covered with the bronze-red leaves of spring, gave promise of ample shade in the summer heats ; and here

the hinds lay down one by one to chew the cud before following the stags into the denser cover. The tiger still watched for his opportunity, patient and wary, when other footsteps were heard,



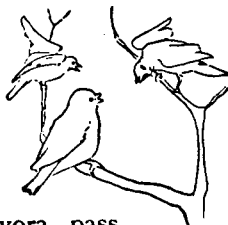
displacing the loose gravel of the narrow track ; a solitary belated deer was following the path already taken by the herd, and to kill it was easy ; in one bound he had fallen upon his prey and dragged it into the cover of the ravine. From above came the cries of the deer, startled by the unusual sounds, but still undecided as to their origin ; they died away in single notes of

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alarm as the midday silence settled over the forest.

The tiger had now leisure to explore his new domain and some months passed before he was well acquainted with the hills and ravines, with the grassy savannahs and swamps, and before he was able to trace his way by day or night to any spot he desired to reach. For until he was at home in the forest a sense of the unknown caused much uneasiness. He seldom remained long in one place; not for fear of man or beast, for at first there seemed to be none to interfere with his sovereignty, but rather because hunting became difficult after the jungle-folk are surprised out of sense of security and when alert and suspicious of the presence of danger. For fear is not constantly or even ordinarily present with the tribes of the forest; they are alarmed at certain known and at all unknown noises and sights, but their fine sense of scent enables them not only to

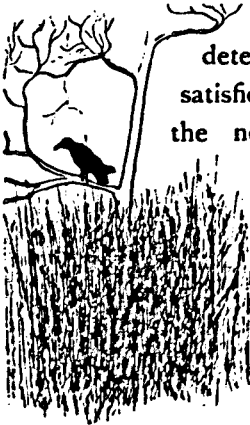
detect the neighbourhood of an enemy but also to locate it. Flight from danger does not always follow its detection ; often the deer consider it safer to keep an intruder in view and will surround a tiger or panther at a safe distance, uttering the while loud cries at his every movement. Then the monkeys and the birds, from pea-fowl to warblers, will pass on the warning to others to whom the danger is perhaps more urgent. Alone the birds of prey maintain a dignified silence as the great carnivora pass, and recognizing brothers in craft refrain from in any way spoiling sport.



When then the jungle remains silent a feeling of security is soon induced and it is just at that time that it becomes easiest to secure a meal. The tiger therefore would arrive in his new quarters some time during the night, having perhaps covered many miles at a leisurely pace, but also having exerted himself to the utmost to procure a kill before daylight. If he succeeded

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he had three days supply to hand and on the fourth night would move away as silently as he had come. If unsuccessful he would have to continue his prowling, but in either case his presence would probably be detected shortly after sunrise. From the height where the crows were passing in marauding flocks it was easy to look down into the deepest cover, and their own evil habits raised suspicions of the ill deeds of others. The signs of a struggle, the trace of a "drag" through the forest, unusual excitement in the smallest birds, each was sufficient to bring down from the sky



some of these black detectives, and, their curiosity satisfied, they quickly spread the news amongst the other jungle-folk. Once they had discovered him the crows never left the tiger; they placed a sentinel over him while they snatched a hasty meal, late in the

evening they left for their roosting ground and at earliest dawn were ready to enquire after his health, nor was it until they had seen him retire to a safe distance that they would descend to gorge on the remains of his repast. And so it was that, shortly after arrival in any part of the forest,

its king was the object of a persistent watchfulness which rendered successful hunting almost impossible ; he might



tolerate this ceaseless scrutiny when a fat pig or deer was lying in his larder, but when hungry it made him so uneasy that he preferred to continue his travels.

As a rule it took the tiger about a fortnight to make his royal progress, though if game were plentiful the tour might last much longer. He fed in great mouthfuls, beginning at the haunches and feeding upwards to the head ; not waiting,

as does the panther, to push aside skin and hair, for these probably aided in the rapid digestion of the quantities of food swallowed; he would crunch the largest bones and eat them with relish; in short he seemed to exult in his strength and appetite, in the ease he could drag a beast of three or four times his own weight up ravines or across rivers and then devour thirty or forty pounds of its flesh at one meal, and yet return to the next with the joy of anticipation. Always scrupulously clean, he spent hours in combing

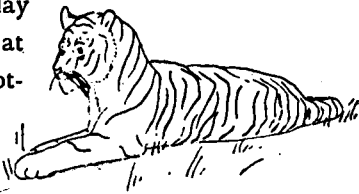


his fur with his rough tongue and in rubbing head and neck with his paws; his claws he kept clean and sharp by scratching on the trunks of soft-barked trees, and thus left in the forest many marks of the range of his reach when erect.

Often in the early morning he would ascend some hillock to lie in the short grass and dry the dew from his coat, and looking over his forest kingdom would feel content and happy. In the spring, when the forest was responding to the genial warmth and hastening to assume

its foliage before the great heats of summer should arrive, the scene was indeed beautiful.

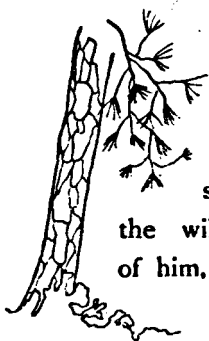
To the south lay the gravel beds that sloped from the foothills of the Himalaya, divided by the wide



streams of rippling waters bubbling over the boulders, so that the land was mapped out in patchwork of vivid coloured foliage of all hues, bounded by ribbons of blue or outlined by the whiteness of the sandy banks. Beyond were the dense forests of the Tarai, where tall cotton-trees raised crimson flowers to the sky, and the "dhak," or fire trees, stood out like sheets of orange flame; the savannah-lands, recently burnt, showed black in the distance; and in the swamps, where the lush growth had resisted the fire, the tall grasses nodded plumed heads and bent in green billows to the passing breeze. To the north, stood the barer hills where tussocks of golden tipped "baib" grass stirred to every eddy, and trees

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of varied foliage, from yellow to green, from pink to bronze, stood singly or in groups wherever they could find foothold in the meagre soil. Deep water-cut ravines led up to wider plateaux where the "sal" forest held possession, with serried ranks of straight grey saplings, or with groups of wide-crowned veterans, whose massive branches looked down on the thick carpeting of seedlings at their feet. These plateaux again led upward on to narrow ridges which climbed the heights to the summit of the precipitous watershed, and here the long-leaved pine found a congenial home among the heated rocks, covering each slope with slippery brown needles, while the wind ceaselessly moaned through the stiff branches and the evening sun changed the ruddy stems to pillars of burnished copper. In all this beautiful country the tiger was supreme save for two of the forest tribes, the wild elephant which had no fear of him, and the wild dogs whose habits and whose scent he abhorred.



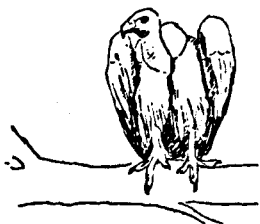
CHAPTER VIII

A Rebel Tribe

IN the heart of the forest was a deep ravine leading from the hills to the plains below. It twisted across the gentle slopes in unexpected turnings, making a day's journey of a distance which a strong man might cover in a few hours. Above, it was narrow with precipitous banks hidden by grasses and climbers, so that though it was easy to fall into this unexpected chasm the level ground above was not so readily regained. Lower down the ravine had been widened out by the insistence of the autumn floods, which undermined the retaining walls of earth and brought them down in a confused medley of stones and trees. The bed of the ravine was dry in the spring; but few animals used this secret way, for it was blocked by fallen stems, and moreover they distrusted its

sharp turns and its vantage ground for ambushes.

One of the slopes, not far from the foot of the hills, faced the evening sun and was sheltered from the midday glare by overhanging branches of great forests trees; and here were signs of fresh earth thrown out by busy feet from the tunnels that penetrated the bank, and



the grass around was trodden down, while bones and other remnants of the hunt littered the soil. A vulture sat perched high above, stupidly contemplating the scene as

if he expected that where there were still signs of food some might possibly come his way.


From one of the tunnels a sharp muzzle and a pair of bright eyes protruded; they were followed by a scraggy red body ending in a pitiable apology for a tail, and soon, fortified by the example of the most audacious, a number of puppies were disporting themselves before the entries to the earths. They behaved as most puppies will, save that their movements

were uncouth, their diversions merely savagery, and their odour peculiarly offensive. The vulture recognized that he had nothing to gain by staying and flapped heavily away, while



from the distance came a faint rustling through the forest and almost immediately a pack of ten or twelve wild dogs stood before the entry to their nurseries. The puppies had hurriedly sneaked away directly a movement had been heard, and now the mothers followed them into their retreat, no doubt to suckle their young. The dogs stood or lay around on the soft sand, their sides gently heaving and tongues protruding. They seemed to be constantly on the alert and to have no desire for friendly intercourse with each other. Thin and long, with bright rufous coats, bushy tails and cruel fangs, they moved restlessly to and fro, each avoiding the other, till black darkness swallowed up the ravine and no further movement could be detected.

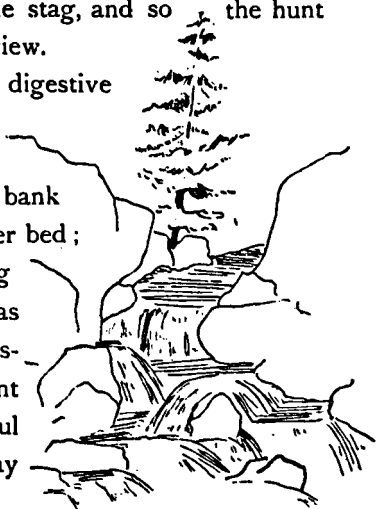
At dawn the pack stood once more before

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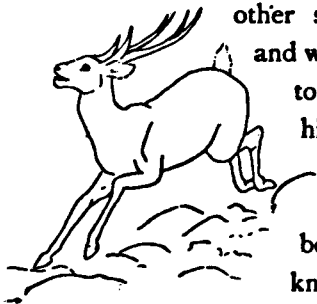
the earths and waited but a signal from their leader to start the hunt. They spread through the forest, running with lowered heads in the hopes of picking up a scent, nor had they long to wait. A whimper from one of the pack brought the others hastily to his assistance, and together they ran a fresh trail for about half a mile until they viewed in the distance a great "sambhar" stag. He was leisurely returning in the early morning to his accustomed retreat in the distant hills, and, as he saw the pack, he threw up his head and trotted hastily to the north. They followed with fierce yappings and the hunt was up. Sometimes running to sight but more often by scent, the pursuit remorselessly continued, the stag using every wile to shake off his tormentors, sometimes gaining so much time that escape seemed within reach and then again urged to speedier flight by the near

approach of the persistent dogs. Till at last, exhausted after a couple of hours of constant exertion, the memory of a mountain stream, bounded by protecting rocks, urged him to a final effort. He left the tree-forest and, trusting to his endurance and speed, headed straight across the open country to the refuge where he intended to stand at bay. The pack too broke up, only two dogs remaining on the trail, the others slinking away to the right of the course taken by the stag, and so the hunt disappeared from view.

In the cool and digestive morning hours the tiger lay on the summit of a high bank overlooking the river bed ; he was lazily making his toilet and was annoyed when disturbed by the distant yapping of hateful dogs. Still far away



a "sambhar" stag was crossing the wide watershed, with ears laid back, with heaving flanks, his hide spotted with moisture and the foam flecks showing on his dark muzzle. He was moving fast with a laboured gallop towards the spot where the tiger lay, where flowed a wider stream which still showed a depth of several inches of swift current. Some fifty yards behind were two red dogs, baying as they ran ; from time to time the one or the



other swerved to right or left and with gathering speed raced towards the stag, who in his turn winced from the threatened attack ; it was evident that he was being driven towards some known point. But the stag, with attention fixed on the water where he would stand to bay and so end the torture of the last few hours, clattered heavily across a stretch of boulders and sand, and, before he could reach the vantage of the stream, was suddenly attacked by the waiting pack

which rushed upon him with discordant yappings. In an instant his haunches, his belly, his sides, were covered with blood from many tearing bites; he stumbled into the stream, dragging with him his enemies, who would risk no frontal attack, stamping some with his broad hoofs as he laboured up the opposite bank, and then fell on its crest overpowered by numbers. Once or twice he uttered a piteous scream, as a protest against the cruelty of nature, and then lay silent, till at last the heaving flanks became quiescent in death.

The tiger looked with rage upon this tragedy but did not move to interfere, for well he knew that though he could drive off the dogs he could not prevent their return, and that it would be wiser to follow the example of all the jungle folk and leave the forest for as long as the dogs had their hunting grounds in that locality. They had still to wean the puppies, and so long as these could not accompany the pack the neighbourhood would be polluted with their presence. The tiger

therefore slunk silently away, leaving the dogs to their repast; they tore at the carcase of the stag, growling and fighting amongst each other till night fell, when they too trotted quietly away in the direction of their earths.

In the stillness of the night the babbling of the stream became more audible, its sound rose and fell with the coming and passing of the night breezes. A troupe of otters came fishing up the rapids, driving their prey before them, and snapping up each fish which tried to pass through their ranks. They scented the dead stag and the odour of the wild dogs;



one otter landed and sat upright twitching his nostrils to the unsavoury scent, then all left the water and hurried along the bank in single file to

resume their sport in less tainted air. A hyena came upwind, cautiously approaching the scene, then recognising the work of a nearly allied tribe fell to his meal with hurried relish, tearing off mouthfuls of flesh and soiling more than he could possibly eat.

And when engaged in this stolen repast he became aware that some animal was watching him from a distance of a few yards, he saw the green light in the eyes of one of the cat tribe, and the long hair on crest and back stood erect with

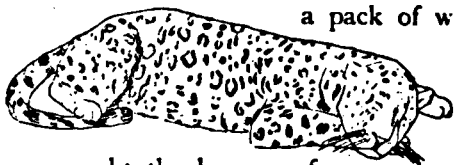


dread. As he turned to flee he heard the sound of hasty feet and yelped in terror, but before he could get up speed he was struck from behind and rolled over in the sand and at the same instant he was seized by the throat and held fast. One great effort he made to free himself, its suddenness took his attacker off his guard, and the hyena fled with the fear of death in his heart.

The panther did not pursue but returned growling towards the stag, his long tail lashing from side to side. He lay down and commenced to feed and then fell into a deep sleep beside the carcass. Dawn was in the sky when he awoke; the distant forest was clothed in mist and looked, as ever, mysterious to those standing under the open sky. From its edge

The Life of a Tiger

came many animals running hastily towards the stag, and the panther at once recognized a pack of wild dogs, and

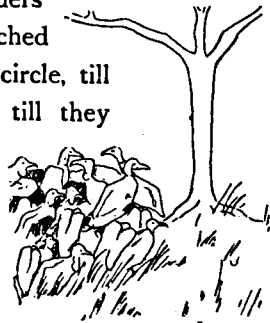


knew that he was caught as he had

caught the hyena a few hours ago. He had a long run to gain the shelter of a tall tree, and the instant he started on a race for life the pack detected their hated foe, who had so often lain in wait and killed some laggard, or some one of their number when on a solitary hunt. They too raced for the panther with the speed of hunting dogs in good condition and light from a night's fasting, and they gained at every stride upon him. Had the dogs caught him in the open there would have been a lengthy fight, a worry in which the panther was bound ultimately to forfeit his own life, though he might first have wounded to the death several of his attackers. But it was not to be, the dogs were but a few paces distant when the panther reached a welcome tree and sprang high

against its trunk ; for one second it seemed as if the furious dogs would yet tear him from his hold as they jumped and bit savagely at his haunches, but the panther drew himself quickly out of their reach and lay exhausted on a short branch above their heads, the blood dripping from his wounds down the rugged bark.

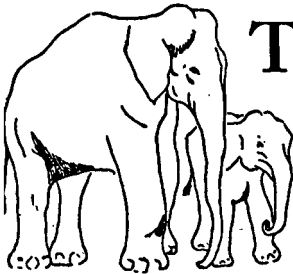
The dogs lay around the tree panting, nor did they make any attempt to return to their kill until the vultures were about to rob them of their meal. The sky was dotted with flying birds descending to earth in rapid spirals and alighting on the sands with extended wings. The rush of air through the wide-spaced wing-feathers was continuous. Then the dogs arose and drove off the intruders who scattered and perched or sat round in a wide circle, till the pack, having gorged till they could gorge no more, drew off and the vultures at once commenced their repast. They came



hopping and flying from all sides, covering the carcase and fighting for a place at the banquet, until, as evening fell, there remained by the side of the polluted water only the bare skeleton of what had once been a noble stag.

CHAPTER IX

Powerful Neighbours



THE tiger had turned towards the narrow spur which led steeply to the summit of the mountain range, but as he passed slowly through the dense "sal" forest a sound of breaking branches brought him to a standstill; the air was full of the scent of elephants, yet another of the jungle tribes which showed him no subservience, for they would not move from his path and would even resent too near an approach. At the foot of a slope a herd of elephants were grazing lazily, as if to pass the time. There were several cows, some calves and young immature males; the mothers

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were overturning the bamboo clumps, pushing against them with their foreheads; then, as the shallow roots yielded, bringing a fore-foot to aid in the overthrow. The calves clustered round feeding on the tender shoots; the young males were playfully thrusting their tusks into



soft banks of earth, or rubbing their dusky sides against the trunks of swaying saplings, or wantonly tearing down branches; from time to time they picked up a handful of soil and threw it over their bodies, or flapped away the flies with a leafy twig. No lookout was kept and the herd seemed oblivious of any possible danger.

The tiger approached and lay on the rising ground, on the alert, ready to retreat at an instant's notice; but beyond the waving of a trunk from time to time in his direction the elephants appeared ignorant of his presence, though he would have gladly killed any very young calf that came his way, flying at once from the wrath of the parent

but returning later to make a meal. No such chance offered itself; on the contrary he it was who was seized with sudden terror as he looked up and met the gaze of the herd bull standing motionless a few yards away in the deep shadows cast by the bamboo clumps. All the tiger's trained senses of sight and scent had played him false in the neighbourhood of this moving throng, which filled the air with overwhelming noise and odour. The elephant stood nearly ten feet high at the withers and the bulky body was supported on short legs; the head was massive and the forehead broad; two tusks, each fully three and a half feet in length, curved symmetrically below the eyes, and between was a powerful trunk, so long that when at rest many inches lay loosely on the ground. The line of the back was straight and the edges of the pink-flecked ears were but slightly uneven, showing that the animal



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was still in the prime of life. Such an elephant could with one kick of his fore-leg send the tiger rolling away with broken bones, then transfix him with the pointed tusks ere he could rise to his feet, and finally stamp the carcase to pulp, to make sure that the enemy would give no further trouble; and the tiger was naturally extremely nervous in the position he now found himself. He lay watching the elephant's little hazel eyes, which regarded him with interest; on the alert to flee should that look turn to one of anger, yet unwilling to make any movement that might precipitate a crisis. Then the elephant raised its trunk and waved it towards the tiger, inhaling gently but blowing out the breath with force. The scent seemed to arouse a slumbering animosity, for suddenly the eyes grew fierce and the trunk was drawn up and curled tightly between the tusks, then uttering a little squeal of rage the tusker charged, the ground shaking under his feet. But the tiger was no longer there; he was fifty yards away, running for his life across a steep slope where his pursuer could

follow but slowly. The elephant gave up the chase and stood screaming with rage so that the startled herd drew together in alarm; then after venting his wrath upon the forest trees, battering the saplings with his forehead and stamping on them as they lay broken on the ground, finally wandered off to the river below to throw water over his heated body; and, when cool enough, stood quietly in the shade, until the sun sank and hunger brought recollection of the tall, succulent grasses that grew in some neighbouring ravine.



The herd of elephants did not soon regain its previous tranquillity; the mothers were nervous of an unseen danger which had been real enough to rouse the wrath of the tusker; they stood with waving trunks, inhaling the air from every quarter, while the calves effaced themselves and waited quietly for instructions. Then suddenly the herd disappeared; its leader stole away through the forest without

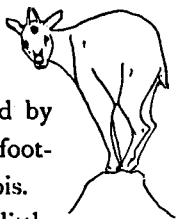
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breaking a branch or causing a rustle, so carefully was each step tested with the trunk, so accurately did each hind-foot replace the lifted fore-foot. Each elephant followed exactly in the track of the leader, so that, seen from above, the herd assumed the appearance of a huge, black snake moving rapidly through the underwood. Silence now reigned where so shortly before there had been joyful grazing in perfect confidence; only broken branches, overturned bamboo-clumps and trampled grasses recorded the visit of the herd. The bamboo stems, torn and split, showed white against the grey of the tree trunks, and against the dark circles where the footprints had sunk deep into the rich soil.

The tiger reappeared from the direction he had taken and lay breathing heavily as he looked around; he had hoped that some weakling calf might have been left behind at the retreat of the herd, but no such good fortune awaited him, and there remained but to resume his journey. Walking slowly, frequently lying down to enjoy the cooler breezes, he gained by

evening the summit of the mountain range. The forest lay like a map at his feet, each watercourse clearly marked, each precipitous bank defined. In the soft light the darker green of the foliage merged into the brighter verdure of the distant, irrigated wheat-fields, which cut the orange sky with a straight line. There was no sound save the moaning of the light breeze through the

pinetrees. Below, the precipices fell sheer for many hundred feet, and these were buttressed by rocky ridges which afforded foothold for the Himalayan chamois.



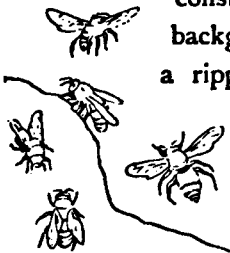
A family of three of these little goats appeared below, the buck on a pinnacle of rock with all four feet closely gathered together, turning his head from side to side or gazing into the depths below, as if balancing over an abyss afforded him special satisfaction; his shapely body was silhouetted against the distant background and the short, curved horns lent a distinguished look to the lean head. The mother was passing along the face of

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the cliff in short leaps from one vantage ground to another; sometimes landing on a ledge too small even for her powers of balance, and passing almost without pause to the next. The kid, nervous over the lesson it was learning, copied its mother's movements with a most faithful accuracy; yet, when she halted on a wider space, it pressed to her side with evident entreaty that the painful training might cease.

Further down, a colony of bees had established itself, and the comb, a yard in length and nearly two feet deep, hung suspended over the precipice, safe from the attack of predatory bears, and almost secure from that more dangerous foe, the honey-buzzard. The comb was black with bees and their wings glistened in the evening glow, causing a

constant flickering on the dark background; from time to time a ripple of light passed over the swarm as if, by word of command, a feu-de-joie had been fired with shimmering



wings. Quiet and innocent the colony looked, yet all the workers were armed and ready to use their weapons in concerted action. Let them once be aroused by assault on the hive or even by the concussion of air, answering to a gunshot or other vibrant noise, and swarms of vindictive insects would fall on any moving thing in the vicinity, indifferent as to the guilt of those they attacked, but ready to sacrifice their lives in the protection of their home or in the satisfaction of their revenge.

The community possessed, besides intense patriotism, a fellow-feeling for others of their family, though settled may be in distant colonies. Should a bee be killed by design or accident it would fare ill with the slayer should he be recognized as such by means of the peculiar power these insects possess. Not that the whole swarm would attack him as he passed, as would have been the case if the home-hive were in danger, but outposts and advance-guards would threaten, and even do more, until the intruder removed his hateful presence.

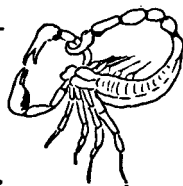
It was well that the more powerful jungle tribes failed in such perfect organization, that with them each individual lived for the most part for himself, only profiting by the presence of his fellows to the extent of the timely detection of danger; otherwise the forest and its inhabitants would hardly have been conquered by human beings, who possessed but small means of offence and defence, until mutual help in time of need gave them the required superiority over their rivals.

Few animals could resist the attack of the wild bees when this was fiercely pushed. Man easily succumbed, and from the smallest bird to the largest elephant all fled from the contest. The thick coat of the sloth-bear, however, protected him from the assault; entangled in the long hair the insects became confused; from his face the bear would brush the swarms away with protesting paws, without pausing in the sweet repast which engulfed honey, wax, grub and pollen cells as well as any bees which happened to be within range of the greedy mouth. For an animal which relishes

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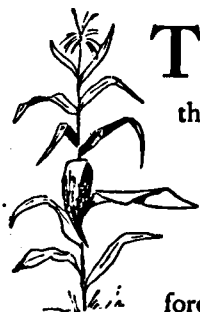
scorpions, and appears unconscious of that formidable sting, would not dwell upon the fact that a few bees were in the comb as of any importance.



But now as evening fell the bees became harmless for evil; they clustered with overlapping wings, waiting patiently till dawn should break on another working day.

CHAPTER X

In the Himalaya



THE tiger still directed his steps to the north. There the rosy peaks of the Himalaya stood clear out of a purple haze which was barred by straight-cut clouds of grey, and below these the black forests of fir seemed to join the ethereal beauties of the mountain heights to the solid earth. For some days he continued his restless journey; passing the cultivated lands which lay between the forests of the plains and the mountain wastes; warily avoiding the little villages where the fields were green with young millet and maize, and where, through the terraces of stone which changed hillsides into broad staircases,

water trickled to nourish the rice fields on the lower levels. During the day the tiger lay quietly in some deep ravine whence he could hear the call of the herd-boys as they drove the cattle to pasture; and in the evening he stole forth stealthily to gaze over the peaceful landscape and to watch the blue smoke rising from the flat-roofed houses; for this was the time when, unobserved, he might slink away on his quest of the unknown.

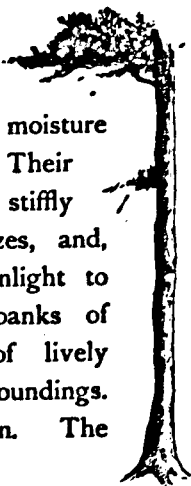
Food was scarce, for of wild animal life there was little; but he managed to secure from time to time a barking-deer or even a goat which had strayed from the village enclosure. Such small prey he could carry away to a distance, and so avoid a tell-tale trail, and then devour without leaving any residue to excite the suspicions of man. And so his passing aroused but little comment. The village ancients, with their wider experience, might mumble of tracks they had seen during the evening stroll, and connect them with the absence of one of the



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village herd, but they received but slight attention; and so the tiger at last reached the upland meadows with his muscles hardened by the lengthy journey, and with his frame fortified by the cooling breezes.

Here the turf was covered with spring flowers which daily crowded on the receding snows, so that one stepped from the weird dimness of the gaunt silver-firs into a blaze of coloured light. The trees rose straight and branchless some hundred and fifty feet towards the sky, the lower part of the rough grey boles festooned with dark foliaged climbers, their feet embedded in deep moss which was saturated with moisture from the melting snow. Their crowns of black-green needles stiffly resisted the passing breezes, and, where they allowed the sunlight to fleck the firmer ground, banks of primulas formed patches of lively colour amid the sombre surroundings. Here silence was unknown. The



slightest eddy in the night air and the forest sighed loudly in response ; or it moaned when the breezes of morning awoke with the sun ; and, when a gale blew from the heights and long snow-banners streamed from the lofty peaks, there was a sound of rushing in the tree-tops which made all else inaudible. Even when the air was still there were other mysterious noises ; the rumble of avalanches and the rattle of falling stones ; the sharp crack as some rock split, or the echo of rushing waters ; in fact all those sounds which accompany the slow and certain crumbling away of the hills and the continuous supply of fertile soil to the plains below.



Against the background of firs a column of scented smoke rose to the sky ; it issued from the flat roof of a hut constructed of massive timbers laid the one upon the other, the crevices stopped with moss and earth.

Stout doors of rough planks stood open, showing within a smouldering fire of fir-cones, burning on an open hearth. At a short distance were cattle-sheds with heavy roofs and fenced in with stout palings; and on these hung wooden buckets and churns, all the simple utensils of a pastoral people in the East. Men and women moved about, the dull-red and deep-blue drapery of the women making the black blankets and high wooden sandals of the men appear a severe, almost a monastic costume. In the distance the



buffaloes, sleek and black from the plenteous pasturage, moved heavily homewards, their bells chiming in the evening air. The sound recalled past memories to the watching tiger; his previous meeting with "gujars" and buffaloes had been far from happy, and he had no desire for buffalo flesh, for it was associated with defeat and danger.

At these altitudes night hunting was unnecessary, for it was during the warmth of

the day that the jungle-folk sought their food; and at sunset, when the sharp frosts set in, they retreated to the snugest lairs, out of reach of the bitter winds that sometimes whistled over the hills. The tiger had also found a safe resting place in a cave in the banks of a ravine. In the morning when the sun was up he started on a stroll through the forest, across the steep slopes that seemed always to end in running water, through the thick oak coppices, under lofty groves of pine, or on narrow footways which skirted the precipices. He rejoiced in the absence of the popularity which attended his movements in the plains' country. Here indeed the jays, seeing him, uttered excited cries, and the nut-hatches and tree-climbers chirruped the news to their kind; sometimes he roused a "monál" pheasant which hurled itself into space on glittering wings, or disturbed a "koklás" pheasant when crowing his morning challenge. But monkeys there were not; and



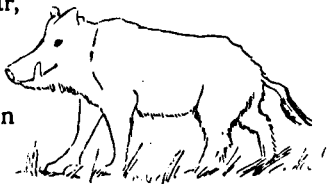
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the crows, few in number, had no leisure to spare from the labour of procuring a livelihood in this difficult country ; while the ravens and eagles greeted him as an ally.

And so, with an appetite whetted by the morning air, he arrived on the borders of a little meadow surrounded by gloomy fir trees, where water from a bubbling spring flowed in a transparent stream down the gentle slope, and where, on either side of the watercourse, were impressed the footsteps of the forest-folk, of pig and sambhar, of bear and barking-deer. The tiger lay long in the shadow of the trees and dozed and watched patiently for hours as was his habit ; and the sunny afternoon was almost past before pattering feet were heard and a sounder of pig appeared at the edge of the forest. First arrived the joyous little ones tumbling over each other in playful gambols, their striped bodies plump and well fed ; then followed others of all ages, sows and boars, thick-coated against the cold of the mountain nights. They spread abroad and dug in the soft soil, seeking roots or

insects, or grazing on the longer herbage which lined the watercourse. The patriarch of the tribe was left alone; he had not quitted the shelter of the forest trees, and stood beneath the straight and lofty stems, the sun shining on him in brilliant, slanting rays, as through the pillared aisle of some vast cathedral. At

a distance the boar, so shaggy was his brindled coat, might have been mistaken for a brown bear, save



for his firm and slender legs and for the great ears that pointed to the front. His moist muzzle twitched in every direction as he inhaled the air, suspicious with the experience of age, and his little eyes twinkled with intelligence under the shaggy eyebrows.

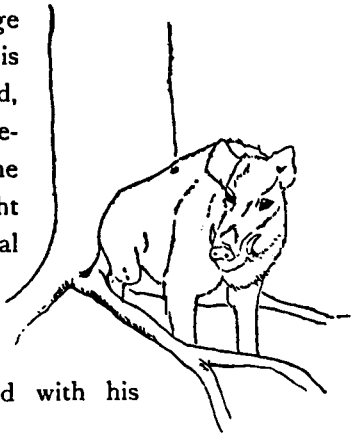
As the boar watched the sounder which looked to him for protection, an eddy in the roving mountain breezes brought him information; he recalled the panther that had

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frequently harried his charge and had by his cunning sometimes even succeeded in capturing a straggling youngster; but this odour was still more insistent and repugnant. His snout turned instantly to the direction from whence the message came, and every instinct was at once on the alert; and then he uttered a warning cry twice repeated, not unlike that the tiger himself gives when surprised or disturbed. The sounder scattered with answering grunts and for an instant the meadow was vacant, till the tiger, disappointed in his ambush, rose and walked into the open. The boar had no desire to meddle with his enemy but his superb courage forbade flight as long as the herd remained open to assault; he stepped lightly aside and began to whet his great tusks on the trunk of a neighbouring tree, after the habit of his tribe when battle is neither offered or refused.

The tiger glanced with astonishment at this proceeding. Of pigs he had killed many when at home in the plains, and had sometimes encountered a tough resistance, but that a

boar should stand his ground when flight was possible, had not before happened in his experience. But the tiger was out on the hunt, and had no objection to what seemed to be a willing victim, so he trotted quickly across the meadow, half expecting that the boar would fly rather than come to close quarters, and that in such case the struggle would soon be ended. But the boar still stood facing the foe, and was now gently champing his jaws that were flecked with foam; and after the final rush designed to overpower his adversary, the tiger found to his astonishment and rage that, not only had his attack been evaded, but that he had received a gash on the hind-leg which might have well proved fatal had it been planted some inches forward in the stomach. The boar stood unscathed with his



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back to a tree and his flanks protected by the roots which stretched to either side, and the tiger, now red hot with fury, made repeated dashes at this citadel, inflicting on each occasion some flesh wound, and receiving in return vicious digs from the curving tushes.

Night fell when this strange duel was proceeding, and both combatants, red with blood, held their ground, though resting repeatedly for long intervals after each encounter. But the boar was weak from loss of blood, and confused from the stunning blows which he had so often received. As the day broke after the short period of darkness his breath was coming in painful gasps, which rose in mist in the cold air, and the trampled earth showed crimson at his feet. He was stupid with exhaustion and despair, and at the next assault rushed to meet the tiger, and so end the fight. But directly he left the protection of the tree and exposed himself he had no chance of success; his sortie was met by a blow which sent him staggering, and, before he could recover his balance, the tiger's fangs and claws

were buried in his body ; and so he yielded up his life without a sound, having fought for it with cool courage against tremendous odds. As the sun rose on another brilliant day the sounder of pig were far away in the safety of the forest.

CHAPTER XI

Family Life

FOR months the tiger remained in the hills and only descended little by little as the monsoon died away. He was now in the prime of life, not too bulky for his size, and of immense strength. His




training had been hard and he had profited fully by it, so

that, while not avoiding the risks which always attended his mode of life, his experience made him equally alive to any advantage which presented itself. When he reached the plains at the commencement of the winter months he was magnificent in his coat of deep tawny-red with its symmetrical black stripes, his head was fringed with a ruff several inches


in width, and the white markings on face and chest were conspicuous by their purity. He measured over ten feet from the tip of his pink nose to the extremity of his short tail and stood forty-two inches at the shoulder, weighing nearly five hundred pounds; in length he would grow no more, though he might add to his bulk with advancing years. Now he was still agile, he could negotiate the most precipitous ground; standing on his hind legs he could reach as high as the full length of his body, and, when aided by a running jump, nothing under eighteen feet high was safe from the grip of his strong claws; he could drag a bull easily through the level forest and by exerting his strength would bring the carcase up steep-sided ravines or across rivers, where his forceful swimming was put to the test. On such occasions he would seize his prey by the neck and walk away with head erect, leaving a broad trail through the grass. In spite of his size he could move noiselessly through the forest, passing without difficulty wherever his sensitive whiskers gave no notice of obstruction.

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So soon as the tiger reached his old quarters he became aware of an intruder in his domain, and was at once on the alert for defence or


 defiance, as occasion should demand. On the sandy bed of the

 stream which flowed close by one

 of his favourite resorts were foot-prints of other tigers, and his

 senses at once informed him that

 these were of recent date. They

 aroused feelings both of curiosity and anger as he stood deeply inhaling the

scent, and he was still intent on investigation when round a bend in the watercourse two

tigers came in view. The leader appeared beautiful to his eyes, she was brightly coloured

and her slim body undulated as she walked; her companion was a strongly built tiger, but

inferior both in size and strength to him whose hunting grounds were being trespassed on. As

the visitors approached the tigress stepped aside and lay down on the glistening sand to watch

the proceedings, while the two tigers halted to take stock of each other and weigh the

chances of a conflict. With ears laid back, tips of tails twitching, and fur erect on back and flanks, they stood for some instants, uttering the while a continuous muffled growl.

The visitor was extremely loth to forego his courtship, but he felt he had no chance against so formidable a foe; the owner of the forest was exasperated at the intrusion, and was, moreover, ready to fight for the prize which was so evidently to be the spoil of the victor, for had not that been the case the tigress would have retreated at the first sign of opposition. Then the larger tiger advanced slowly, keeping his gaze on his foe until he should arrive within striking distance; for when each combatant was armed with such deadly weapons the issue could not be left to a chance blow. But there was no need for these careful preparations, a bold declaration of war was sufficient to terrify the weaker antagonist, who turned and fled for his life; spurred by his fears he easily outstripped his pursuer and vanished in the depths of the forest. The tiger returned to find the tigress following her

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defeated companion, but so slowly as to invite interference; he cut off her retreat, and prevented a repetition of her simulated flight by threats, even by gentle blows, which gave promise of severer measures in case of necessity; and, having thus vindicated herself against a charge of fickleness, she yielded to persuasion, and retired in company with the conqueror.

For the next few months the couple were inseparable; they roamed the jungle and hunted together and led a peaceful life in the midst of plenty, till the summer drew on when the forest seemed full of the new life of trees and insects, of beasts and birds.



Then one morning when the tiger reached the lair which had been so carefully selected for comfort and safety, he was confronted by the tigress, forbidding his approach with ruffled coat and bared fangs. He retreated dismayed by the change in her attitude, but

refrained from remonstrance, nor did he again see her for several days ; if she left the lair to eat or drink it must have been during his absence, for always during his presence she blocked the entrance to the den with her body. He was accustoming himself to this change in his life when he was astounded one evening to find the tigress lying in the cool shade of a tree with four furry kittens rolling helplessly around her. He was not at first allowed to approach, the warning retraction of the lips clearly defined a limit which might not be passed, and it was not till many days had elapsed that he was permitted to form one of the family party. The tiger enjoyed the playfulness of the cubs when in a good temper, but when irritated by the heat or by hunger he withdrew to a distance to escape the tactless caresses of his family.

For the next two years the tiger's life was a repetition of that which his parents had endured ; the tigress seemed possessed by an insatiable appetite which necessitated perpetual hunting ; the pair continued to share their kills, but once

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the tiger had relinquished possession of deer or pig he was seldom allowed to regain it, and so it was that, instead of hunting once in eight days, he was on the trail two or three times a week. Distant roaming became inevitable as game became scarcer, so that he was absent for days at a time, more especially when the cubs took to a flesh diet, and were themselves unable to secure it.

Matters were at that pass when no chance of adding to the larder could be overlooked and

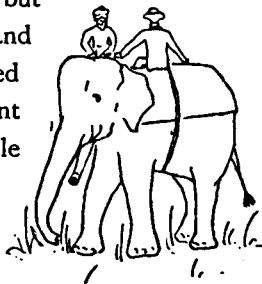


then it was that one night the tiger observed a young buffalo by the side of a forest path and he at once killed and dragged it into cover; then after satisfying his own hunger relinquished the carcass to

the expectant tigress. She ate and wandered away to the nearest water, and slept heavily through the daylight hours; then, as evening fell, she returned to the kill without any suspicion of danger. But as she drew near she became aware of signs which caused uneasiness,

footprints of elephant and man, trampled grass and torn foliage, and as she advanced cautiously to learn if the kill was still there a loud report was followed by acute pain from a wound in the body. She turned, savagely biting at the place, and then rushed through the forest uttering growls of rage and agony, and did not cease her flight till exhausted by fatigue and loss of blood. During that interminable night she lay in the shelter of heavy grass, moaning and restless with pain, and with the sunlight came the added tortures of heat and thirst; mild by nature the tigress was now the incarnation of hate and fury.

She was still in hiding when the sound of approaching footsteps was heard, and with difficulty she restrained herself from leaping into the midst of her foes; but she lay with heaving flanks and reddened eyes, with hatred in her heart. An elephant was slowly advancing, while two men on foot were laboriously following the



trail of the wounded animal, and had nearly reached the edge of the high grass. It was then, no longer able to control herself, that the tigress bounded forth upon the unprepared hunters. There was shouting and firing as the infuriated animal struck to right and left in passing, and when she paused under the shelter of a clump of bamboos, one of the men lay on



the ground and the elephant was bleeding from a wound received in the scuffle. The tigress was not unscathed, another bullet had passed through her body, but pain was swallowed up in rage. Again the elephant approached, and again she charged, getting home on head and trunk, then rolled back shot through the chest. Staggering with vain efforts to rise, she was only able to lift head and neck and, still facing the hunter, received the last shot and sank lifeless to the earth.

The tiger wandered through the forest for days calling on his mate, and the cubs added to the pathetic chorus which received no response, and these the sooner gave up the

weary search, for they had no leisure from the labour of appeasing their hunger. They separated and hunted in couples, and found that nature provided subsistence as if in answer to their complaining cries. Small game, such as birds, porcupines, young pig and deer, frogs and fish, even insects and jungle fruits, were all laid under tribute during the next few months, until their strength and their weapons of attack had so increased and grown, that a more suitable place could be taken in the wild life around them; and thus they escaped death by slow starvation, which most certainly would have befallen them had the tigress been killed a few months previously. The tiger did not molest his offspring, perhaps because they instinctively avoided any close encounter with him. In those days he was often morose and even cruel, for he suffered from the unaccustomed solitude, and moreover, was more and more fearful of the intrusion of man on his hunting grounds.

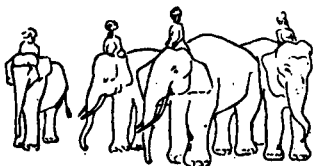


CHAPTER XII

The Oppression of Man

AS time went on the solitude which at first had been so marked a feature in the tiger's domain was broken by the ever-increasing number of human beings who found occupation or amusement therein. Formerly, only herds of cattle and their attendants roamed the forest, paying no attention to the jungle-folk, and hardly noticed by them; later on came those who felled timber and cut bamboos, their camps were numerous all over the area; and last of all came hunting parties of varying size, from the solitary sportsman who wandered afoot amongst the wild animals, to the large company, well organized to slay, who boasted of the number of their victims, and were proud of their stud of elephants and of their army of trackers and huntsmen. Not only peace but

safety had departed, for though the graziers might not tell of the tiger's whereabouts, there were others, cartmen, sawyers and carpenters, who for the sake of a



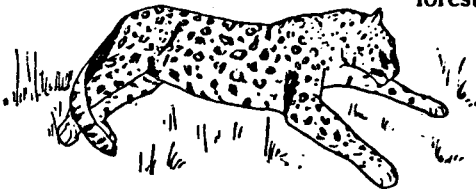
small reward, indeed often as a remedy for their own fears, would report all that they saw or heard to those who were able to make use of the information.

The tiger, now well experienced and cautious, gifted moreover with a most intimate acquaintance with the forest, yet found difficulty in evading all of these human beings, and their repeated invasions so seriously reduced the head of game in his hunting grounds, and forced the remainder to be so constantly on the alert that he lived in a perpetual state of anxiety, and was often put to great trouble before he could obtain a meal. Even when he had succeeded in capturing his prey he feared to return to the kill lest during his absence some ambush should have been laid; so that, unless he could drag his victim close to some

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water supply, he derived but one day's food from even the largest animal. For tigers must drink after a heavy meal of flesh, and particularly in the hot weather when hunting parties were abroad, he suffered torments if forced to remain thirsty for many hours.

He dreaded the approach of human beings and the loud reports of the weapons they carried; and so while eager to slink away if this were possible, yet, if by chance his retreat was cut off, his natural courage asserted itself, and was indeed fortified by his hatred of his persecutors. He had seen others fall victims to the dangers he had so far escaped; the stag with mortal wound rushing blindly through the



forest only to fall dead when breasting the stony slopes; or the panther lying harmless after hours of agony; he had followed the trail of others, doomed to a lingering death but for his swift interference;

and the increasing difficulties of his existence rendered him more cautious and also more morose. For to live always in fear of death results in a change of habits and characteristics, and induces a strain of unaccustomed cruelty. He had been driven by gangs of beaters, and had learned that the less risk lay in escaping through the advancing line ; for, though there might be guns there, yet, in the confusion of his onslaught, these had hitherto been ineffective ; while the very caution necessary to steal away through the hidden sportsmen in front afforded to these an easy shot from their posts of vantage. He had been fired at from "macháns," and now was reluctant to take the risk of appropriating the baits of young buffaloes which he frequently came across ; and, whereas formerly he expected no danger to lurk in the trees above him, now the need for circumspection was doubled by the possibility of a hunter being hidden in any leafy tree.

The tiger lay one night on the borders of a jungle clearing where the unfertile soil was covered with a growth of thorny bushes, which

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assumed strange shapes in the transparent gloom of the night. He had come for miles through the darker forest, moving slowly with the greatest circumspection; at each footstep the soft-padded paws seemed to feel the earth before any weight was allowed to bear on them; mechanically in their descent they pushed softly aside any dry leaf or twig which might, by their crackling, give notice of movement in the jungle, and now, tired from the constant nervous strain, he was resting before resuming his solitary way. A movement in the fantastic outlines of the bushes caught his attention, and he shrank still further into the friendly earth, all his fears at once aroused. A family of sloth-bears were feeding on the wild berries, embracing the bushes with shaggy arms, tearing off the fruit, intermingled with leaves and twigs, in the rough manner common to these beasts. The tiger was glad even of this companionship, for it suffered him to relax his attention, for bears have the keenest power of scent, relying on this rather than on hearing or

sight, so that timely warning would be given of any intruder.

The bears roamed round the little clearing, leaving no bush till despoiled of the fruit it bore, then commenced digging for roots and snuffing at the anthills to discover whether or not these were in occupation. The male bear soon found one to his liking, and commenced digging with his powerful claws to force an entry to the main passage, while the mother and her cubs sat around regarding the proceedings, though they could not possibly expect any share in the spoils. By dint of hard labour the bear had dug some three feet below the surface of the soil, and now inserting his muzzle in the tunnel drew deep inhalations which dragged with them crowds of unwilling insects into the moist mouth which was ready to receive them. The bear presented a ludicrous sight with his head buried in the



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earth and his hindquarters raised high towards the sky, and the noise of his breathing sounded

loud through the still forest. After a time he commenced again to dig till he reached the nest, with its paper-like combs full of helpless maggots, and this he devoured

in great mouthfuls. Then, while enjoying this selfish meal, he suddenly caught the scent of the tiger in the night air, and as quickly turned to fly. In his clumsy way he stumbled against the she-bear, and she, with the prompt retaliation of her tribe, at once struck and bit at her mate. Immediately the forest re-echoed with loud discordant cries, and the whole family disappeared into the forest, biting and scratching, in the belief that some enemy was amongst them seeking their lives.

The tiger wandered onwards through the jungle. He was now a different animal to what he had been in the days of his youth, when food was plentiful and danger not incessant. Now, for no fault of his own, he was proscribed: a price was set on his head,



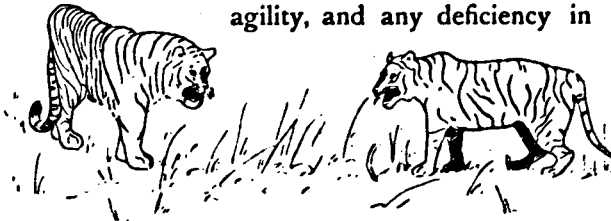
he was fired at on sight, and the very scarcity of food was used as a means to lure him to destruction. He was forced to satisfy his hunger by means he had formerly despised. He would lie by the drinking pools in the hot weather and ambush the jungle tribes while they were quenching an intolerable thirst; he would follow the females encumbered by the care of their young and profit by their maternal instincts to slay them; and would drive less powerful animals off their "kills" and appropriate the spoil. Domestic cattle he killed without mercy, so that he was known and dreaded throughout the countryside; he was always fierce and morose because he was at war with mankind, who had robbed him of his hunting grounds and with them of his means of living and of his contentment.



It was in these unhappy circumstances that his second courtship began, but on this occasion he forced a fight on his rival; for in the first place he was more savage than of old, and

in the second it could not be tolerated that another should hunt in a forest where food was already but too scarce. Thus ill-temper and fear of dispossession urged him more than passion and in result there was a combat that was probably unique in its ferocity. There was no interruption from human beings, as these had mostly left the forest at the commencement of the malarial season, and the few foresters who remained were careful not to approach the spot whence the sound of the struggle proceeded.

The opponents were well matched, for what the stranger yielded in weight he gained in agility, and any deficiency in



experience was outweighed by his impetuosity. The two rushed furiously at each other, meeting with a shock that seemed to compel them to stand upright, and in that position each tried to

grip the other's throat and was repulsed by the powerful claws which scratched deep into the flesh. They retreated breathless, again and again to renew the attack after lengthening intervals; meanwhile the earth was trodden down and became slippery with moisture, though scored by the sharp claws of the hind-feet of the combatants. It was after many rounds had been fought, without marked advantage to either side, though both had received painful wounds, that the tiger slipped as he was repelling a specially violent onslaught by the stranger, and, over-borne, was hurled on to his back. In an instant the other rushed in to end the fray with teeth buried in the chest or throat of his foe; and here he made the mistake which cost him his life. He should have waited for the defenceless moment when the other was attempting to rise, instead of attacking him when in a position assumed by all the cat-tribe in moments of difficulty. And so it was that, before a grip could be secured, the stranger's head and neck were seized in a vice and at the same time his belly was ripped

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open by the hind-claws of his prostrate foe. His only wish was to be free of this deadly embrace, and at last he was allowed to stagger away mortally wounded. The crushing blow which followed seemed to drive the life out of him, and he had no feeling for the fangs which penetrated heart and lungs. The tiger lay long by his defeated rival; he was marked with scars which lasted to his dying day, he was sore with bruises and bites, and weak in everything but ill-temper and ferocity. It might have been better for him if he had ended his life at this time, if he had assumed no fresh domestic responsibilities, for the future was to bring even more bitterness than the past.

CHAPTER XIII

Retaliation

THE retaliation was not so much for revenge but of necessity. The tiger's new family life began in trouble which was to become more pronounced as time went on, for where it was difficult for one to live in comfort, the food supply for two was often seriously deficient, and when the cubs were born hardships became almost unbearable. The presence of a family of tigers in the forest was of course known to all the inhabitants, and when the tigress, driven thereto by stress of circumstances, took to hunting men, the family circle was soon broken up, for this was a pursuit that might not be successfully followed for long, even by a solitary hunter endowed with great cunning and agility. It is true that with practice, and as soon as the instinctive fear of

man had worn off, little difficulty was experienced in securing a meal off those human beings who possess in such inferior a degree the senses of sight, hearing and scent, and withal are not provided by nature with any weapons of defence. But the assistance mutually afforded by the survivors was effective out of all proportion to the abilities of the individual.

The tigress would lie in wait near some frequented path, not daring to attack the passers-by should they proceed in groups; it was the solitary traveller who never reached his destination, and whose disappearance was often never explained. She would lurk in the vicinity of a village, and follow the women as they went to work in forest or field, hoping that one might lag on the return journey. On such occasions the frightened and enraged search-party would find by the side of the narrow track the bundle of grass, the iron-handled



sickle, and a sinister-looking trail leading into the jungle, where scanty shreds of bright-

coloured clothing hung from the bushes.



She would stalk the sound of the axe in the forest and slay the solitary

workman ; or follow the sound

of the human voice, always

eager for blood. She became

acquainted with the habits of her

human prey ; before she had

always avoided their habitations, but now

she did not fear to pass down the narrow

village street at nights, in the hope

of finding some sleeper on the open

verandah, nor was she always dis-

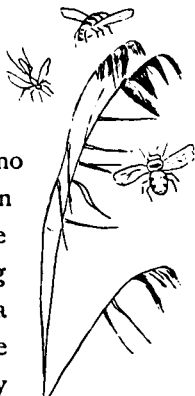
appointed.

When successful in her onslaught, whether by day or night, she would carry or drag the body away and hurriedly feed, ready to leave at the first sound of pursuit, or in any case so soon as she had satisfied her hunger. By the time men had roused themselves, and were reluctantly prepared to follow on the trail, the tigress was miles away in the direction of some

other helpless and unsuspecting village. And so matters went from bad to worse ; for the cubs, now growing rapidly, were learning their mother's evil habits, so that a reign of terror set in ; all who could do so left the neighbourhood, while those who remained went with caution and well armed. Miserable from constant hunger and ever present fear, this family, which could not rest, presented a wretched appearance, and though they harried the district there was no peace or enjoyment for them. The tiger alone was more contented, he was glad to find himself alone, and was now better able to provide his own livelihood in more quiet and security.

The time at length arrived when the whole countryside revolted against the tyranny of tigress and cubs, and an organized attempt was made to get rid of them. The family was hiding one day in a long, narrow belt of dense grass that stretched through the forest, marking the bed of a former watercourse. The tall, timber trees grew up to the edge of the low banks and stretched their arms widely to each

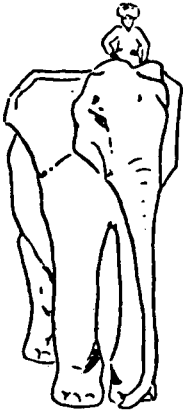
other, so that, between the flickering shade of the foliage, the clear sky above looked deeply blue. A soft breeze was blowing, carrying the humming of busy insects and the twittering of birds, and everything seemed peaceful and serene; there was no trace of the tragedy concealed in the recesses of the grass. The tigress had in the early morning killed a woman, helpless under a heavy load of firewood, and the cubs had joined her in what they considered was a safe retreat during the daylight hours. Now, in the midst of their gruesome repast, from a distance rose the sound of the voices of men and of the beating of rude drums. The tigers pricked up their ears and listened; they well knew what these sounds meant and, filled with alarm, waited in the hope that they might again die away. But the men continued to advance steadily; there must have been hundreds of them encouraging each other with wild shouts, and beating the



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stems of the trees with heavy bamboos. The tigers moved cautiously forward through the dense cover, the cubs eager to fly from danger, the tigress more careful and pausing on each footstep as she advanced. Ahead the grass

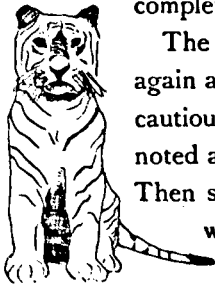
seemed to grow lighter and finally to cease in the open plain, and, as the cubs pressed into the full daylight which the mother would not face, there was a double report and one of their number lay writhing on the ground, while another rushed wildly through the forest with lashing tail, showing that he too had received a mortal wound.



Through the tall, green stems from the edge of the thick cover the tigress saw that an elephant, motionless save for the switching of her tail, barred the way to safety. She turned and went back into shelter.

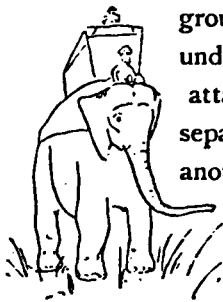
Only a bare hundred yards now separated them from the army of beaters as the tigress

and her cub in despair moved towards them ; an attempt to break out at the sides of the beat was foiled, for here were stationed men in trees who shouted at and threatened them. With a snarl the tigress sneaked back into the grass and hid silently, while the cub made a dash for freedom through the line of men. But they, rendered courageous with suffering, barred his progress ; he was disabled by heavy blows from clubs, and despatched with repeated thrusts from spears, by sword cuts, by wounds inflicted by any weapon which was ready to hand. And now the tigress was alone ; in front was certain death, escape to either side was barred, and behind was the line of beaters, triumphant with the success already attained, and ready to risk much to make the victory complete.



The tigress lay still till the line again advanced, this time slowly and cautiously, in the silence which denoted an appreciation of the danger. Then she rose from beneath the rock where she had been crouching

and leaped to its summit, in the hope that there might be yet some escape from this relentless pursuit. There were men all around ; on both sides of the narrow strip of grass were men in trees who shouted as she appeared ; in the grass were men standing shoulder to shoulder, and the elephant stood sentinel where the cover ceased, still motionless yet alert. And, as the tigress paused, a shot was fired and a stinging pain passed through her lungs. With a roar of rage she sprang from the rock and rushed at the beaters, who scattered and fled. She pursued, the blood frothing from mouth and nostrils, surprised that she could catch none, astonished at the feebleness of her own movements. Finally she left the grass and staggered through the forest in the endeavour to reach a



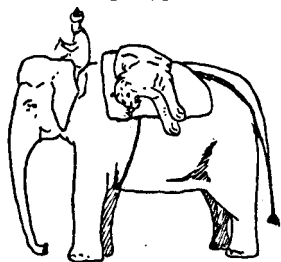
group of men who stood motionless under some trees. She had almost attained her object, only a few yards separated her from vengeance, when another shot was fired, and she fell as if struck by lightning. Her claws dug great furrows

in the yielding soil, and her fangs met in the stem of a sapling as her breath passed from her.

The men gathered round the body and congratulated each other on the success of the hunt, on the freedom of the country from the terror which had for so long oppressed it ;

the elephant arrived and learning in one wave of the sensitive trunk that the foe was dead, uttered contented rumblings.

But none recognized that the oppression of man had driven this once harmless creature to desperation, and that it was the force of maternal instinct which had impelled her to retaliation which could have but one result. They regretted only that the tiger had not been with the family, and promised themselves that he too should soon meet the same fate. And therewith departed in joyous mood with the bodies of their victims carried in triumph before them.



CHAPTER XIV

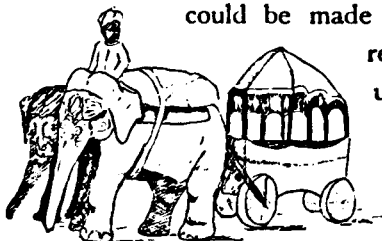
Captivity

THE tiger was once more alone in his domain, but now oppressed by the ill-fame which clung to him for no fault of his own. Save during the four or five months of the monsoon, when the forest was impassable except to the aboriginal inhabitants, his life appeared to be passed in evading the hunters who so busily followed on his trail. At the best of times a thoughtless Government offered a small reward for his destruction, sufficient to cover the expenses of any "shikari" who might have a few weeks of idleness at his disposal; but now this reward was increased to meet the cost which might be incurred by other hunters, provided with more deadly weapons and with a trained establishment of trackers and elephants.

The tiger became too cautious to permit himself to be driven up to concealed guns; he was on the alert to leave the forest before the beating of drums and the yelling of men gave notice of the start of an organized drive; and when he found himself entrapped in a circle of his enemies he would turn on the line of beaters and rush through them with angry roars. If elephants were placed in the line of advance such tactics were too dangerous; then he would lie concealed till their near approach, and charge with an unexpected suddenness, which discomfited the staunchest, and so make his escape, often amidst a hail of mis-directed bullets. But as time went on such experiences became rarer, for he now sought his resting place for the day amongst the hills, selecting some steep ridge from whose summit he had early notice of approaching danger, and then his intimate knowledge of the forest enabled him to evade it with ease.

But he was not always thus to escape the ill-will of man. His size, as well as his reputation, had excited the curiosity and inflamed

the desire of many. There were hunters whose sporting instincts were fully satisfied if they were allowed to press the trigger at that supreme moment which the skill and patience of others had contrived; there were others who deemed it a greater personal distinction if by the aid of their vassals such an animal could be made captive while they

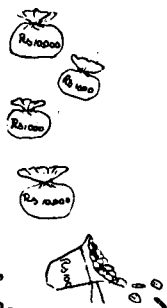


remained quietly in urban luxury. And amongst the latter was a Raja who most ardently desired to see the

tiger in his pleasure-grounds, and to hear the compliments on his own prowess in overcoming the strength and cunning of a so notorious, and yet so sorely harassed, animal.

The order therefore went forth that no expense was to be spared in his capture, and soon an army of workmen, under the orders of the most experienced trackers, entered the forest. By small parties specially detached for the purpose the tiger was carefully watched

so that each morning his movements of the night before were reported to headquarters, together with information regarding his hiding place for the day. In the hills, during daylight, he was safe, but during the night he must roam the plains in search of food, and here pitfalls were hastily constructed on every path leading from the strongholds above to the hunting grounds below.



These traps were all of one pattern, and consisted of a pit some seven feet square, and about fifteen feet deep: the straight sides and the narrow space available prevented any captured animal of large size from exerting its full strength and agility. The pits were covered with slender saplings supporting a layer of grass, on which earth was slightly sprinkled, so that even during the daytime any startled or rapidly moving animal would scarce detect the hidden danger, while during the night, when colours are not, and scent alone

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served to warn, only good fortune could save the unsuspecting passer-by if the trap had been unvisited for a few days so as to allow the odour of man to die away.

Indeed many of the jungle-folk fell victims

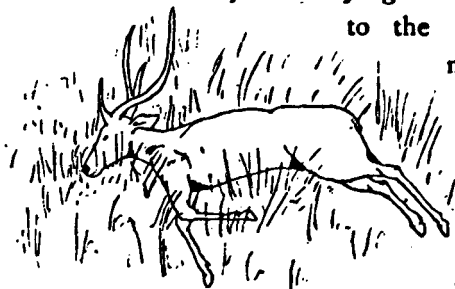
to the ingenuity of man. Often

when the trackers visited their pitfalls in the early

morning, and de-

tected from a distance the broken coverings, they cautiously advanced to discover some unfortunate deer or pig dying below them. Some with broken limbs, others which for many hours had suffered tortures from heat and thirst, and all thankful for the merciful bullet which ended hours of fear, of hatred and of misery. Then the coverings were replaced, the marks of human footsteps effaced, and the hunters waited for better fortune in the future.

The tiger had descended one night from the



hills by a path which he had not travelled for some days, when suddenly the earth gave way under his feet. Cat-like he lurched forward to save a fall, and clutched the edge of the pit with powerful claws. The soft earth could not sustain his great weight, and yielded in deep furrows to the strain, and he fell back amid a shower of sticks and grass, huddled at the bottom of the trap, stunned and bruised. From his prison he could see the waving branches of the forest trees, and beyond them the stars twinkling in a ceiling of ebony. He stood upright and reached with his paws, but the mouth of the pit was several feet above them; repeatedly he tried to spring, but the space was too narrow to get any purchase, and at each attempt he was thrown backwards, breathless. Then a frenzy seized him, and he dug at the earth until his claws were worn and bleeding; and finally, exhausted, he relinquished all effort and lay quiet, abandoning all hope, and awaiting the future in silence.

So the night passed, and with the rising day the birds awoke, at first softly twittering, and

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then more loudly voluble as they scattered in search of food.

The jungle-cocks were crowing incessant challenges to distant rivals, while the hens were busy scratching in the fallen leaves now limp with dew, before the jungle tribes passed

on the news of the approach of man. First the birds gave notice of the intrusion, and next the deer took up the alarm; lastly, the monkeys, from their high perches, verified by sight what the others had already noted by scent. The vibration of footsteps did not arouse the tiger, nor did he move when the hunters stood around the pit's mouth and congratulated each other on the capture. Some hurried away to bring the necessary implements to secure the prisoner, and others sat around to punish with death any determined effort to escape. All through that day the tiger lay motionless, though for a few hours when the sun's rays reached him he suffered

almost unbearable torture, and he was glad when by nightfall his captors left him, after securing a stout net over the mouth of the pit, so as to make escape still more impossible.

The next two days were spent in digging from outside a tunnel sloping towards the bottom of the pit. The men worked in a stout wooden cage, long and low, pushing it forward as the removal of earth in front afforded room, till at last but a few inches of soil remained between them and the prisoner. Then, arranging a strong door which opened inwards, they retired from the cage, closing the back entrance securely with a similar door. Lastly, standing in the tunnel, with the aid of a long bamboo passed through the cage, they began to break away the intervening earth. But as soon as the bamboo penetrated to the pit the tiger fell on it with fury, and with one blow demolished the frail remaining wall of earth. Through the tunnel light shone on a path to freedom, guarded by but a few human beings, and the tiger rushed wildly towards them. The further door arrested his onslaught, and the entrance

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door was pulled to with ropes, and thus he was a prisoner in a cage so narrow that he could not turn, and so low that he could barely stand upright, so that, rage as he might at this close confinement, no strength which he might exert could break the bars.

The hunters stood at the entrance of the tunnel with loaded rifles, watching the struggle which tested their handiwork, knowing that if



it withstood the first furious attack no subsequent chance of escape remained for their weakening captive. Then, when the tiger again lay still in the quiet of despair, they attached strong ropes

to the cage, and with many yokes of buffaloes drew it up the slope to the surface of the ground. Now the captive enjoyed the free breezes of the forest after the suffocating heat of the last few days, and in the first enjoyment of this change he almost forgot the thirst which was turning his courage and

strength to weakness and dread. A great longing possessed him to be free of his prison bars, and rid of these human beings who, themselves ever on the watch, kept him also on the alert. Accustomed to wake at the slightest sound, he got no sleep while men were within a few paces of him, and had no rest in the publicity to which he was condemned. His sufferings did not appeal to his captors, who desired nothing more than that he should become weak from hunger and thirst; and so it was that, not until there was fear of losing the reward through the death of their captive, he received water to cool his parched tongue, and a few pieces of goat's flesh grudgingly thrown to him.

It was at this stage that opportunity was taken to load the cage on a strong timber-cart, which was drawn, creaking and jolting, through the familiar forest where the tiger had once reigned supreme. For two or three days the procession travelled slowly, scarcely halting, save to feed the men and cattle, and as it approached the Raja's residence it was met by

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the inhabitants of the town, pressing round so as to shut out even the dust-laden air, and



talking loudly in abuse of the captive, or in praise of his captors.

Bewildered, the tiger lay still, his yellow eyes staring into the

unseen, taking no notice of his surroundings, till the cart was backed against the open door of his future prison, and, crouching low, he left his wooden cage, and the iron grating fell with a clang behind him.

CHAPTER XV

Escape

THE den which had been provided for the tiger had been prepared by those who respected his strength but were ignorant of his requirements, and the same want of knowledge was apparent in the treatment of the prisoner. There was a hard cement floor, unyielding to the sensitive pads of his feet; a hard, wooden shelf on which he might lay his aching limbs, and a small, dark recess which was shut off during the day-time, when he would have most desired to escape from the glare of the sun. Three strides took him from one end of his abode to the other, and the want of exercise, combined with the peculiarity of his diet, soon rendered him miserably unhappy. In his wild state he was accustomed to feed heartily at long intervals, and to devour

The Life of a Tiger

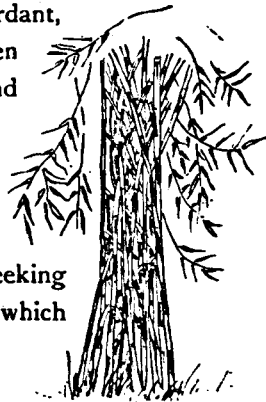
skin, hair and bones as aids to digestion; now he received daily a pittance of a few pounds of flesh, so that, while never satisfied, he also was never hungry. His prison cell was daily sluiced out with water, so that, while never enjoying the luxury of a bath, he was yet always damp; and after a few months he was seized with rheumatism which racked his dwindling muscles and made life still more unbearable.



All day and every day the front of his cage was besieged by a crowd of curious human beings who gave him no rest, and who, as their courage rose at the sight of his helplessness, strove to stir him to anger by cowardly teasing and abuse. After a time such efforts were in vain, and the tiger lay in the quietude of despair, regarding from unseeing eyes, and unmoved by his surroundings.

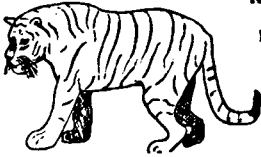
But the nights brought even more severe suffering. As the sun sank on the horizon the

old spirit of restlessness seized him, and with it the longing to return to the wild life, to the freedom of the forest, and to its changing seasons. The dull, misty mornings with their soft colouring of dying foliage, the life-giving spring-time with the tender verdure of the young shoots, and the summer, heavy foliaged to withstand the droughts until the arrival of the monsoon rains, were now replaced by the bare walls of the cell and the outlook upon a hard gravel path. The swishing of the tall grasses as they bent to a passing breeze, the creaking of the swaying bamboos and the lapping of the falling leaves were heard no more; instead, the discordant, high-pitched voices of men were there to unnerve and annoy. Then the tiger would pace up and down his den till the sensitive feet were sore, or stand upright against the bars seeking for some loophole of escape which was never found. Daylight



The Life of a Tiger

saw him again watching in silence, storing up in his heart fear and hatred against man-



kind; sometimes almost roused to frenzy by the brutality of his keeper, but showing it only in the sudden flashes

which passed over his darkened eyes.

And so matters continued, not improving as time went on. He had changed from a powerful tiger, whose coat shone with health and vigour, to a slouching brute with a roughened hide, which hung loosely on an emaciated body, and, moreover, he was fast losing control over the frequent fits of fury which now besieged him; till at last, happily before all strength and courage had faded away, the end came unexpectedly. All day he had suffered from heat and dust, from the noise and the intrusion of human beings, and at last the sun was sinking slowly over the town amid a haze of smoke which heralded the approach of the evening meal. It was, in fact, the time when he was most morose after the sufferings of the

long day ; when also the call of the jungle was most insistent, and it was just this time, when the gardens were as a rule in solitude, which was selected by the keeper to show off his prisoner to his intimate friends.

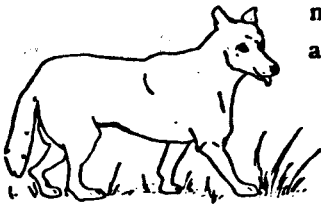
Save for the keeper and these two friends there was no one present when the former once more brought his iron-shod pole into requisition to rouse the temper of the tiger and show him at his best. The prisoner retreated to the back of the cage, and stood on the defensive, pushing aside the pole with his fore-paws as he frequently was wont to do, till at last a savage thrust on his side served as a spark to fire the train of his long-pent passions. With the purchase afforded by the wall of his den, he flung his weight with his full remaining strength against the iron bars facing him, all indifferent to the injuries he might receive. There was a crash of falling iron and bricks, as the front of the den gave way, and, in a cloud of dust, the tiger was free.

One of the men lay motionless beneath the

The Life of a Tiger

heavy bars, his hand still grasping the broken pole which he had used to torture his prisoner ; the others had not gone many paces before sudden death overtook them, and, still raging with fury, the tiger strode away in the falling gloom, heading naturally and without thought to the north. He met with no further opposition ; before he had reached the town his instinct had reasserted itself ; avoiding the abodes of men, he made a wide detour through the open fields, unmarked save by the wandering jackals who, seeing him, raised their weird cry of alarm, and, striking the sandy bed of a watercourse, now dry in the summer heats, he started on a rapid trot to safety in the hills.

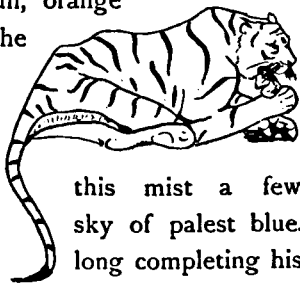
All night he travelled at as quick a pace as his diminished strength and unaccustomed



muscles would permit, and when day was breaking he found himself once more in a known country. On the banks of a running

stream he stopped, and, for the first time in months, drank his fill of clear sparkling water, waded into the ripples, and let them flow through his draggled fur; then rolled in the dry sand repeatedly, standing and shaking his hide till it felt purified from the scent of man, and from the smell of the prison. As the sun was rising he climbed still higher, and, finding a shady spot, where the wind murmured through the foliage overhead, he lay down and slept as he had not slept since that fateful evening when he had fallen a victim to the cunning of man.

When he awoke it was evening. The world was quiet save for the soft sounds of the forest, which caused him no alarm. On the distant horizon a dull, orange glow showed where the sun had sunk, and below it lay the dark band of dust and heat; above stars twinkled in a



The tiger lay for

this mist a few
sky of palest blue.
long completing his

neglected toilet, and licking clean the sores of his prison home, then rose, and with a new air of alertness took the downward path, first to water and then to hunt, if so be that his cunning and agility had not wholly deserted him.

CHAPTER XVI

Closing Scenes

IN the closing scenes of the life of any wild animal, if it dies a so-called natural death, there must be always sadness ; but the gradual failure of the vital forces which have hitherto sufficed to overcome the constant difficulties in the struggle for existence, the inability through weakness or disease to perform the task which Nature has imposed, find no sympathy in a society where each one is self-supporting, and where might is the only right.

The tiger had much aged during the last few years of anxiety, and had, during his imprisonment, lost much of the strength and agility of his prime. His coat had become of a lighter colour and his ruff was no longer so thick and long ; his teeth were blunted and his body was covered with many scars,

British Subjects.—(Continued.)

- May be authorized by the Board of Control to proceed to and reside in India, except within certain limits, 103.
- And may reside within certain limits without any license or authority whatever, 105.
- Are to reside within ten miles of a principal settlement, unless licensed by the Company, or by the governor-general, or the governor of the presidency to reside beyond that distance, 101, 105.
- If residing, trading, or occupying immovable property beyond ten miles, then to be subject to the local civil judicature, with power of appeal to the Supreme Court of Judicature, 101, 106.
- May be sued, at the election of the plaintiff, either in the supreme courts, or in the provincial courts, 101, 106.
- If resident more than ten miles from the presidency, they are to procure and register the certificate of permission in the court of the district, 107.
- Licenses and certificates of, may be declared void by the Indian governments, 101, 108.
- Liablc, after the expiration of two months from the notification of the license having been withdrawn, to prosecution as for being in India without license, 109.
- To what forfeitures and penalties subject, when found unlicensed or trading within the Company's exclusive limits, 109, 110, 111, 507.*
- Dismissed, or who have voluntarily resigned the service, or free merchants, mariners, or others, found within such exclusive limits, are deemed to have unlawfully traded, and subject to the said forfeitures and penalties, 111, 112.
- Or if found in India without license, or exceeding the terms of such license, may be summarily convicted, on information, and fined and imprisoned, 113.
- Or may be arrested and sent home to the United Kingdom, 113, 114.

British Subjects.—(Continued.)

- Committing assault or trespass on the natives of India, are subject to the jurisdiction of the justices of the peace in the provinces, 115, 116.
- Indebted in any sum not exceeding fifty rupees to natives, to be subject to a like jurisdiction, 117.
- Committing misdemeanors beyond one hundred miles from a presidency, may be proceeded against by information ex officio, and prosecuted in the court of King's Bench in England, 118.
- Counterfeiting licenses, certificate, or attested copy thereof, 119.
- If accused of a capital crime beyond the distance of one hundred and twenty-five miles from the presidency, to be tried by a court-martial, 118.
- Are to enter in the provincial office the name and place of abode of their native stewards, agents, or partners, on pain of forfeiture, 118, 119.
- May be justices of the peace, 118.
- Not to lend any money or be concerned in raising any for native princes, without consent of the Court of Directors or governor in council, 118.
- While in India not to lend any money to foreign companies or foreign European merchants; 118.
- Not to take on the loan of money above twelve per cent., 118.

By-Laws.

- Power of making and constituting, vested in the majority of the General Court of Proprietors, 120, 121.
- Framed by a committee of fifteen members, chosen annually by shew of hands, and who meet twice a year for the purpose, 120, 121, 122.
- To be read in the first Court of Directors, and first General Court after every election, 121, 122.
- Not valid if they alter the constitution of the Company, or are contrary to the statutes regulating the Company's affairs, 121.

part feeding on domestic cattle, and pleased when he secured pig or deer after an easy hunt; becoming less and less formidable as courage and strength declined.

It was a hot day in May; from the furnace in the south-west a heated blast was pouring over the land, carrying with it clouds of dust from which every living creature hid. The earth seemed to be deserted before this pitiless wind; the grasslands lay black and bare save for the dead stems quivering in the breeze. Alone the forest trees stood proudly with rustling crowns, drawing moisture from the water supplies far below, pumping it through many yards of stem and branch, to release it in invisible vapour from millions of cool leaves.

In a small lake where the tall, flowering grasses had escaped the fires of spring, the tiger lay panting in the shallows. On three sides the level plains extended, and on the fourth the forest came in a narrow strip nearly to the water's edge. The sound of the rushing wind deadened all other sounds. From time to time

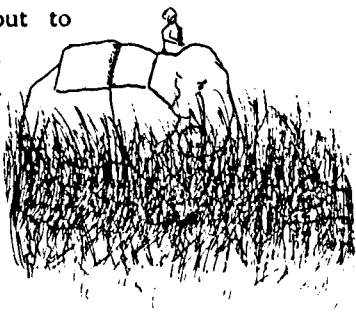
The Life of a Tiger

a dry branch would snap and fall with a crash into the grass which still stood beneath the trees; for the rest there was no movement of bird or beast in the jungle; even the insects could not withstand the fiery gale. Towards evening the wind subsided and blew in fitful gusts. The tiger felt that the weary day was drawing to a close and that in a short time he might in safety leave the dense cover and go into more open country. He rose and passed quietly through the tall grass towards the forest, and at once became aware that his human enemies were again on his trail. Two men were on the ground examining his tracks, a third sat on an elephant; but none spoke, they were working in absolute silence.

The tiger noiselessly withdrew and awaited events. His only line of retreat was cut off, for escape across the open country was impossible, nor could he hope to pass the watchful foe unscathed. He lay in silence

till the sound of a heavy animal moving through the reeds informed him that the attack was about to

commence ; he remained crouching till the next step of the elephant might have crushed him, and then sprang with a



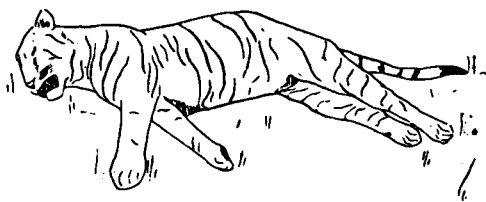
roar towards the safety of the forest. But ere he could reach its shelter the report of a rifle rang out and the bullet struck home. The tiger turned, snarling with rage, and re-entered the grass he had left.

And now all his fighting instincts were aroused, and his blood once more pulsed with the courage of his prime. He lay, gently switching his tail from side to side, listening to the movements of his adversaries. They had again cut off his line of retreat, and were advancing slowly along the strip of forest which led up to his fortress ; then they too halted to

see what would happen. The growing pain of the wound was making itself felt, and found expression in the continuous growling, which did but afford information as to his whereabouts. This growling seemed momentarily to increase in volume till it merged into a hoarse roar of defiance as the tiger bounded out to meet his death. The injustice of many years was behind him to add an impetus to his charge, and he succeeded in driving it home in spite of a further wound received in the *mêlée*. At one time it seemed as if in this final fight he would get the better of the forces arrayed against him, but at the supreme moment his strength fell from him, and he loosed his hold, staggering away in the direction of the forest he loved so well. He failed to reach it, falling prone on the short grass which marked its borders, and lay dead, stretched out at full length, his troubles at last at an end.

The sportsmen arrived and surveyed their prize, the elephant red from more than one wound. Now that the fight was over there

was no feeling of triumph, rather of regret that the history of so well-known a monarch of the forest had closed.



THE LIFE OF AN ELEPHANT

INTRODUCTION

THERE are three animals which have responded in a superlative degree to attempts to make them the servants and friends of man—the horse, the dog and the elephant; the two former are found in more or less domestic intimacy all over the world; the dog having the advantage that his size enables him in all climates to be companionable; while, in those countries only where it is possible to live a life in the open, the horse has an almost equal chance in this respect. The bulk of the elephant, on the other hand, is destructive of familiarity; it is not everyone who can maintain a stud, or even one of these animals, so that those who have passed many years in their company are few compared with the owners of dogs and horses. All the more reason, then, that the elephant in his aspect

of servant and friend to man should receive due recognition before the spread of civilisation, absorbing the waste lands and primeval forests of the East, shall result in finding for him no more use and therefore no more room.

The record of the elephant is in no way inferior to that of the horse or dog. In agriculture and commerce he has, like them, been used in tilling the soil and in transporting merchandise; and, like them, also has carried out this work in conditions which have made him almost indispensable.

In the field of sport he has proved his value; and in real warfare, from the period when, covered with chain armour, he bore the castellated howdah into battle, or battered in the great gates of a citadel, to the time when he dragged the siege guns into position, he has never, when ridden by a trusty driver, flinched from wounds or death in the service of man. Of the horse and dog as well as of the elephant it may be said that they have failed at times in moments of difficulty. So

also has man, and perhaps chiefly for the same reason,—that the leader or rider was not trusted, that he has communicated his fear or indecision by voice, by pressure of knees or hands, and that, in this absence of authority, each was free to follow natural instincts which before were under control.

It is a common saying in India that an elephant once mauled by a tiger is ever after useless for sport; it is also the fashion to assert that the sporting elephant has nothing to fear from a tiger. Both of these statements are far from the truth. When man, with the aid of a line of elephants, is engaged in putting a tiger to death, retaliation on his part is practically out of the question; but it is another matter when a single elephant proposes to drive a wounded tiger out of high grass where he lies invisible and can choose his own opportunity for assault. In such cases a female elephant has no weapons of defence, and the male only in cases where a frontal attack is delivered; while both are prevented by careful training from taking any initiative whatever

either in self-defence or flight. In these circumstances, when an elephant has been so torn and mangled by a tiger that recovery is not completed till after three or four months of careful attention, and at the time has shown no fear, and later on has shown no disinclination to carry its rider into similar danger, it may be inferred that this forest tribe does not fail in courage such as would be considered specially worthy of praise in the dog and quite extraordinary in the horse. Cases are known where a dog has attacked a tiger, and a horse has been used even to drive him off his kill, but it is probable that careful search would have to be made in the annals of sport before many authentic cases could be produced to show that either of these animals, after being wounded well nigh to death, has cheerfully taken a similar risk after recovery.

As to sagacity, the elephant need fear no rival in horse or dog. Here he has the advantage of possessing a hand, which they have not. With it he can pick up by suction the smallest object, or carry a log weighing

many hundredweights; with it he can either caress or slay; and with it he can break down stout trees or extract the stone from a peach without losing a particle of the pulp. A well-trained horse will lie down at the word of command and afford shelter to his master; a well-trained dog will retrieve his master's property and deliver it when ordered; an elephant will do both, and more. He will assist his rider to mount and dismount either by raising and lowering him on his trunk, or by bending fore or hind-leg to form a step. He will pass under an obstacle "on all fours" if it be too low to permit of his standing upright; he will suffer severe operations without being chloroformed or bound, when a blow from foot or trunk would put a summary end to surgical interference. Those who have witnessed the extraction of an elephant's molar tooth by means of a crow-bar and mallet, who have assisted at the opening of a deep-seated ulcer, and have seen the suffering of the animal expressed only in tears and groans, will place him for sagacity and forbearance in a

class above that which any other domesticated animal can hope to reach.

But while the elephant has one thing in common with other domestic animals, namely, that his obedience and affection can be won only with kindness, he also possesses the characteristic of long-remembered resentment for any wanton injury or insult. It is almost as if the attitude of this animal towards man were that of gratitude, expressed in willing service, for kindness received, and intolerance of injustice. The natural ferocity inborn in all wild animals, with whom self-preservation must be the first law, is with him only latent. It may, and sometimes does burst forth on occasions, which on enquiry are often found to be almost justifiable; for here it is not a case of long descent from domesticated forefathers, but, as a rule, a sudden change in the individual from independence to slavery, which makes the results attained even more astounding.

There are vicious elephants, as there are vicious horses and dogs. Such can never be trained to the use of mankind. They are

instances of a perverted nature, often perhaps the result of brain or other hidden troubles; and their removal is indicated for the welfare of those around them. Thus it was in former years that the country-bred horse of India deserved a bad name for kicking and biting whenever opportunity occurred; that the dog of the East was a treacherous and snarling beast, an outcast from the homes of men; and thus it is that now, when the example of the West has shown what can be done in the alteration of these evil traits, the animals concerned are losing their vicious attributes and thereby increasing their value as servants of man.

The sportsman in the East is happy when he can add to two faithful friends—the horse and the dog—a third in the elephant. As he emerges from his tent with his favourite terrier bounding by his side and his favourite horse whinnying at his approach, he is proud of the affection and confidence shown him. There is perhaps a still deeper feeling when his elephant gurgles with pleasure as he comes

closer, and without word of command at once commences to kneel down so that he may mount; for here is an animal who has tasted of the pleasures of a free life, whose strength and sagacity are such that obedience cannot be compelled, and who yet places himself entirely at the disposal of man, content with fair treatment, and instantly responsive to kindness in word or deed.

CHAPTER I

The Arrival of the Herd

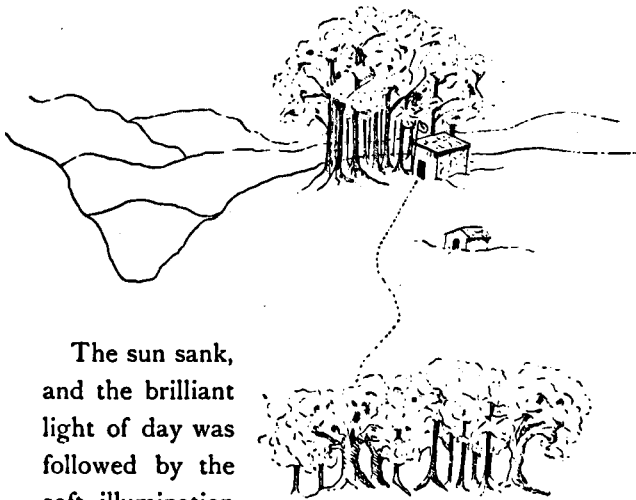
THE summit of the hill was crowned with a grove of lofty trees. They had stood thus for centuries, opposing their columned strength against wind and storms, against the onslaught of tropical rainfall, even in spite of earth tremors that made them shiver with apprehension. Their crowns were interlaced, so that they must stand or fall together; it was an effective alliance against the forces of nature, which no single tree could hope to withstand.

Within the grove, where the buttressed trunks rose suddenly from the soft earth, stood an ancient shrine, a hermit's cell with rough stone walls, and a little temple in whose dim recesses might be seen vaguely some



symbol of a demon or god, unknown perhaps to the outside world, but appealing to the hearts of the jungle folk, who, suffering patiently as the animals suffer, like them also blindly sought relief. That rugged track, which led from the hill-top into the depth of the forest below, had been marked out by the feet of the votaries of the shrine, who each, as he left after supplication, cast a stone on the slowly growing mounds at the entrance to the grove.

From the hill-top the forest spread on all sides as far as the eye could reach, and it lost itself in the distant horizon where the purple outline of the hills faded into the azure of the evening sky. There was wave upon wave of hills covered with trees, so that the earth lay hidden, and down in the valleys one saw nothing but the crowns of trees forming an impenetrable carpet of foliage; only along the ridges the light filtered in vertical streaks through the closed-up ranks of tree trunks. If there were villages they were hidden in masses of trees; the forest engulfed them and reigned supreme in this lonely corner of the earth.



The sun sank,
and the brilliant
light of day was
followed by the
soft illumination

of the stars. The forest became dim and indefinite amid an intense and motionless silence. There was no sound of wind, or of animal life; the dew had not begun to drip from the foliage, and each leaf was still as if arrested in its task. Yet there was no sense of fear or oppression: rather the atmosphere was charged with the vitality of countless millions of plants rejoicing in their growth, struggling against the competition of their

neighbours, and seizing every chance which offered to reach towards the life-giving light.

At such a time there came upon any human being dwelling in the forest, first, a conviction of nature's absolute indifference to his proceedings, and next, the peace conferred by personal irresponsibility, to which, if a man succumbs, he joins the vast army of hermits, religious mendicants, and other parasites; while, if he resists, he is left to work out a strenuous existence in conflict with the wild beasts and against the pressure of overwhelming vegetation.

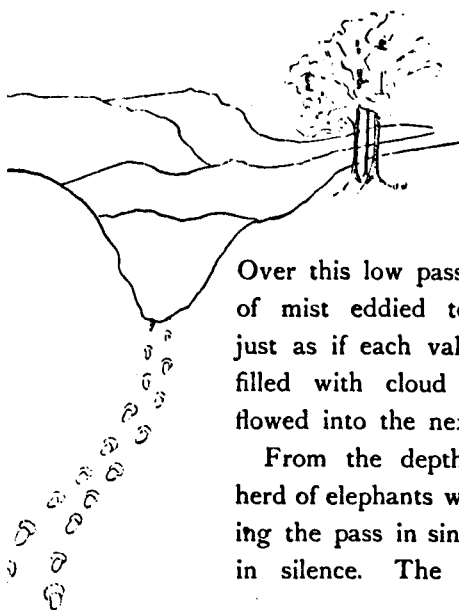
As night drew on the cooler air became charged with moisture and wrapped itself in mist. The leaves of the forest trees were weighted with the dampness they exuded; it no longer passed away in invisible vapour, but trickled earthwards in heavy splashes, like the sullen sound of windless rain. From hundreds of miles of forest came the sound of dripping water in a ceaseless murmur, which increased the weirdness of the scene, and even served to

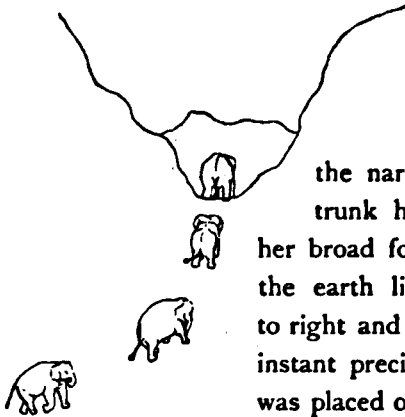
make any other sound more distinct. Thus it was that a movement became audible in the distance, at first so slight as to be indistinguishable; it was as if foliage was being quietly brushed aside, as if the dew-laden grass was being crushed by a gentle yet irresistible force. Standing on the summit of the hill, one looked down on a pass between the mountains,

a curved saddle that invited to an easier passage from valley to valley.

Over this low pass the waves of mist eddied to and fro, just as if each valley in turn filled with cloud and overflowed into the next.

From the depths below a herd of elephants were ascending the pass in single file and in silence. The leader, an



The Life of an Elephant

old female, first appeared in sight, walking quickly along the narrow trail. Her trunk hung limply from her broad forehead, touching the earth lightly alternately to right and to left, and with instant precision the forefoot was placed on the spot which had been tested, and the

oval print of the hind foot immediately overlapped the rounder track. She passed through the eddies of fog, which at times seemed to swallow her up, at others allowed but the glistening outline of her back to become visible; or again hid all but the ponderous legs which moved with regularity through the dim air.



Following, came others who seemed careless of danger through confidence in their leader. Each set foot in the trail of

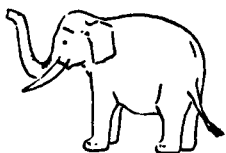
The Arrival of the Herd

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its predecessor, so that soon there was but one track sunk deep in the soft earth, as if some old-time mammoth of enormous size had passed that way. Females, young calves, youthful tuskers, all passed in succession, each rising into sight and disappearing over the narrow pass, plunged into obscurity on the further side. There was silence in the ranks, for the animals were on the march, intent on changing their quarters ere dawn should break. They might have been so travelling for hours, and might continue their resistless way for many more ere they halted thirty or forty miles from their starting point.



Some hours later there was promise of daylight in the sky. The mist now lay thicker over the forest, it had sunk into impenetrable strata which rested heavily on the land. Above its sharp upper line the tops of hills stood out like islands in a sea of white; along the ridges the crowns of trees appeared as if floating in the waves, their stems were

The Life of an Elephant

hidden in the fog. Again a movement was heard, and from below a single elephant approached, carelessly following in the trail of the herd. As he gained the top of the pass he stood motionless, save for the twitching of the extended trunk, which sucked up the air and brought him such information as he required as to his surroundings. He stood, black as ebony against the white of the mist, on short stout legs with heavy bulk of body and straight back. His forehead was broad, and the huge trunk tapered away so that its fingered end lay on the ground at his feet. Two sharp and thick tusks gleamed below the intelligent hazel eyes that looked calmly from between the shaggy eyelashes.

With body glistening with moisture and reflecting the growing light in undulating patches, the tusker turned and disappeared over the pass into the mist below, and as he went the sun rose over the distant horizon and changed the calm sea of snow into ripples of

rose and pearl, agitated by the breath of dawn and stirred by the growing warmth. Here and there columns of fog rose, to be dissipated in the clearer air; on all sides, as when the tide ebbs on a summer day, the mist receded; the islands became mountains once more, the floating tree-tops were again anchored to the solid ground, and before long, save in hidden depths of the forest, the heated air had absorbed all visible moisture, the leaves of countless plants again began to draw up water from the soil and to give out vapour.

It was while this change was proceeding that a man emerged from the darkness of the hermit's cell and stood blinking at the dawn. Belated, he had evidently passed the night in the security of stone walls in the absence of their usual tenant. The man was of small stature but heavily built; his dress consisted of a short cotton jacket and a loin-cloth tightly drawn. Arms and legs were bare, showing the firm muscles and the bronze-coloured skin: his long hair was collected in a twist at the back of the head, and secured by a silver pin. For

weapons he carried in his hand an ancient single-barrel musket; while, thrust into the loin-cloth at his back, was a heavy, but sheathless, knife whose handle protruded conveniently to the grasp of his right hand. As to beauty of features this being possessed none: but his eyes were wide-set and clear, and in demeanour and movement he gave the instantaneous impression of physical endurance and courage. Turning to the east, he saluted the rising sun, as if to give thanks that the hours of darkness were past, then, making obeisance to the woodland shrine, he strode with easy, elastic tread to the pass below.

Long before he had reached its summit he was aware that elephants had passed in the night; instinctively he had estimated the number of the herd and of its various members, and he knew that the herd-bull had followed but lately on the trail of his harem. For a few moments he also stood looking into the valley from whence the fogs of night had now retreated, and then, following the trail, he was swallowed up in the mass of vegetation below,

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just as an emmet might disappear in a sea of grass. Above, a breeze began to blow from the north-east, and fleecy clouds were forming on the horizon. An eagle swung over the forest, searching the open spaces for unsuspecting prey. Insects passed humming in busiest flight, but the forest beneath lay dark and unmoved, save that the upper foliage was ruffled with the wind.





CHAPTER II

Birth of the Calf

THERE was no difficulty in following the trail. It stretched away through the forest in a curving line, the brown earth showing darkly against the green of the herbage, avoiding the stems of the tall trees which reached one hundred feet and more towards the sky, forming a lane through the rank vegetation, and marked here and there by overturned bamboo clumps or splintered saplings. The man kept to one side of the deeply indented footmarks, for

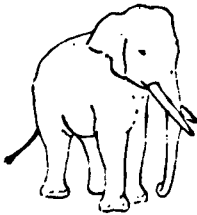
these were so widely spaced that over them it was impossible to maintain the easy stride with which he passed through the forest; his only care was to observe in time any deviation from the trail by some member of the herd, so that he might not find himself suddenly ambuscaded, or taken unawares. The trees were still dripping with moisture though the sun was half-way to the zenith; the buttressed and fluted stems stood singly or in small groups, with broad-leaved crowns enjoying the light, while below them a mass of lesser stems of bamboos, of bushes and of grass all strove as far as they might towards the source of life.

Around the stems giant climbers had worked their spirals upwards, deeply indenting the tender bark and in some cases suffocating the tree with luxuriant foliage; or epiphytic fig-trees had encased their hosts with tight-fitting jackets of wood, from which there was no escape. It was piteous to picture the struggles of these forest giants against the parasites, to contemplate the helplessness of

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these fine examples of the noblest form of vegetation.

It was when the heat of the sun was making itself felt that the trail seemed to disappear, to break up into branches too numerous to follow. The man cast around for the foot-marks of the herd-bull, and followed in these

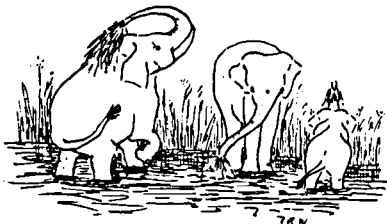


with the greatest caution and stealth. He had not far to go. At a few hundred yards he detected the elephant standing motionless in the shade of a clump of bamboos, and returning,

followed the general direction taken by the herd with an easier mind. They were resting in a small clearing in the forest by a pool of stagnant water, throwing the wet, cool earth over head and back, the while plucking up the grasses, brushing away the clinging soil by beating the stems against the forefoot and then biting off the succulent roots and casting to one side the withered stalks.

All told, there must have been some forty

animals in the herd, consisting of half-grown elephants of both sexes, of mature females and of quite young calves. Of these latter some were lying down as if weary after the long march,

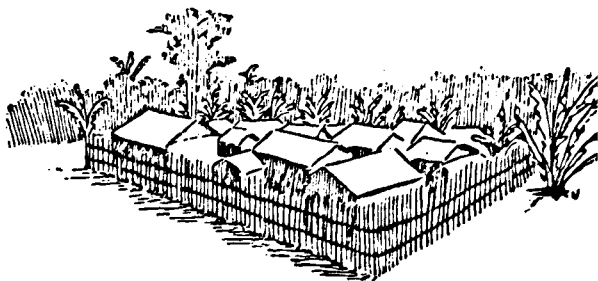


others were tormenting their mothers for food, but nowhere did there seem to be any apprehension of evil, and the man, from a distance of some fifty yards, was able to make his observations undisturbed. Without alarming the herd, he also withdrew to a safe distance, then, with one enquiring glance towards the sky, which seemed to afford him instantaneous information as to his whereabouts, he struck into the forest, taking a bee-line for his home.

His progress at first was but slow ; he was impeded by the luxuriance of the vegetation, and had to stoop to avoid overhanging boughs, or to climb over, fallen stems ; but after an hour or so of this work he emerged on a

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narrow footway, a beaten track between the scattered villages, and started running with pattering feet and with that renewal of confidence which evidence of the neighbourhood of fellow men seems to give to human beings, sometimes quite unjustifiably. The sun was well on the downward path before the man,



hungry and weary, observed smoke, the proof of the dominance of man over beast, rise in the clear sky. He crossed a stream on a narrow bridge of bamboo, and before him stood the fence of a stockaded village.

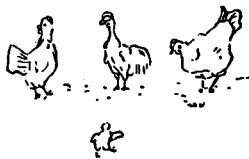
From the inside of the fence proceeded the barking of dogs and the lowing of cattle, the laughter and talking of those engaged in

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cooking the evening meal; from the outside was visible nothing but a wall of interlaced bamboos whose sharpened ends would make an attempt at escalade extremely unpleasant. The man turned and followed the fence till he reached a gateway, flanked on either side by a small watch tower, while between these a massive door, now open, hung on primitive hinges. He entered, and before him stretched the main street of the village, muddy and uncared for; on each side were small huts raised on piles some five feet from the ground, with wide verandahs and walls and roofs of bamboo matting. Beneath

these huts lay heaps of refuse amongst which dogs and fowls hunted for appetising morsels. Above, the women



sat at small hand-loom or otherwise employed in domestic labour, while children, stark naked, rolled or gambolled on the slippery floors.

In these days of civilization, when man has become dependent for his comfort, even for his existence, upon the exertions of others, it

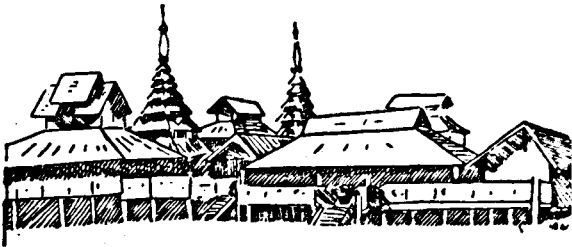
was interesting to wander through the abode of a self-supporting community such as this. There was not a man amongst them who could not have wrested a living from nature ; the village fields and the wide forests supplied the raw material for every necessity of life ; the conversion of this material into products fit for use was carried out more or less in each household. Of domestic animals there were few. The buffaloes, but half-tamed and with horns so enormous that heads were held sideways when secured under one yoke, dragged the ploughs through the muddy rice-fields or drew the carts along the jungle tracks. Their coming was heralded with the most appalling and discordant sounds, intentionally caused by the grinding of wooden axles in wooden wheels, and designed to drive off hostile beasts or spirits. When the light work of a few months was over, the buffaloes were driven into the forest, to be rounded up when wanted, often to the danger of the limbs or even lives of the owners.

The rice, when harvested, was husked by the

women, who were also experts in preparing condiments of fish or vegetables to savour their monotonous food. It was the women also who wove the cloths of cotton or silk, who cured the tobacco on the bamboo frames, who rolled the big cigars in the tender sheath of the growing bamboo. For the men remained the more arduous tasks of building and repairing the homestead, and of defending the village from man or beast. Each carried the heavy knife of the country, so balanced in its handle that it seemed to guide the hand that swung it in its deadly work. Yet with it at one moment the owner would be felling bamboos of a foot circumference at one blow, or at the next be opening a green coco-nut to drink the cooling milk, or peeling with care a pineapple as with a silver knife. The ever-present bamboo was put to a hundred uses; they wove it into baskets to hold many bushels of grain, or into others so fine that they might be folded flat without injury; from the bamboo they constructed matting cool and polished to the feet, vessels for storing drinking water, even

into receptacles in which rice could be cooked on emergency.

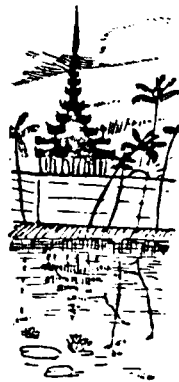
Where civilized man would go naked and hungry, these people lived in comfort, alert and deeply versed in these matters which were of immediate importance to their existence, for it was only through their intimate acquaintance with wild nature around them that they



could hope to overcome the forces arrayed against them. And yet, in the midst of what some might consider ignorance and savagery, there were ample signs of discipline and charity. To one side of the village stood the monastery, built of teak-wood and adorned with artistic carvings, the labour of love of the charitable. Around its courts of well-beaten clay stood fruit-trees carefully tended and

generous in their return of fruit and shade ; and here a few monks led a life of retirement and introspection. Each morning they passed through the village clad in robes of saffron, holding the bowls which were eagerly filled with choice morsels for the midday meal ; every day the boys of the village sat in rows on the polished floors of the dim hall, and learnt to read and write, imbibing at the same time the ancient precepts of hospitality and goodwill to mankind.

The monastery was never silent. During the day there was the chatter of the children or the sing-song reading from the old books ; during the evening the gongs were sending ripples of sound through the warm air. Even at night, when all slept, the tinkling of the pagoda bells rose and fell with the passing breezes ; and when the day broke and the sun suddenly leaped from the horizon the gilded peepul leaves, which struck



the tiny notes, flashed with every eddy in the breeze.

The house of the headman of the village was noticeable for its superior size and cleanliness. It stood towards the centre of the village, and near the travellers' shelter, where all who journeyed were welcome to rest and break their fast. To one side, under



a small open shed, stood the war drum, a vast metal bowl covered with skin, whose sonorous booming in olden times re-echoed through the hills when the clans were called to battle, but which was now used chiefly as an alarm in case of fire or of attack from midnight robbers. At its sound every able-bodied man would seize his arms and rally to the call, while women and children would take whatever weapon came to hand, spear or knife, and, pulling up the ladder affording access to the homestead, would defend themselves as best they might against intruders. Here, too, the

man made his report of elephants in the neighbourhood, and here we may leave him to food and rest in his home.

Meanwhile the herd of elephants, finding food, shade and water in the vicinity, spread themselves at ease over the country with no intention of travelling during the ensuing night. One amongst them there was who had roamed uneasily during the day, avoiding her fellows, seeking vaguely for retirement in some spot sheltered and secure. Annoyed by the busy idleness of the herd, she wandered to a distance, and as evening fell found herself alone; at her back a perpendicular rock, still festooned with moss and ferns, before her a tangle of bamboos from which issued stems of straight trees whose leafy crowns gave promise of shelter from the midday sun.

As morning dawned with tropical haste a bear came sauntering past the spot, self-absorbed, as is the custom of his tribe, thinking solely of the good fortune of the past night when he had found abundance of fruit, longing for his lair where he might doze and drowse

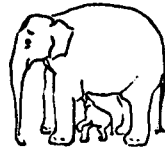
through the daylight hours. To him came suddenly a loud hissing sound, followed by the thud of a heavy blow on the earth. He leapt to one side with an agility remarkable in one so clumsily built, and saw within a few yards an elephant standing with its back to a rock, at its feet a huddled mass which he suspected to be a new-born calf. He did not stay to investigate. With a bound he hurled himself into the underwood, and, as the noise of his headlong flight died away in the forest, the elephant commenced to rumble deeply with a sound like the purrings of some gigantic cat, undecided whether to be pleased or angry.

The calf lay extended at his mother's feet, under the shelter of her head and trunk, as yet too weak to rise ; from time to time she waved the flies away with her trunk or gently kicked the soft earth so that it fell in light showers on his body. On such occasions her foot struck the ground so near to the reclining calf that one could not but wonder at the extreme accuracy of her movements, an accuracy which in the human race is only acquired by the

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constant application to some one handicraft. She had stood thus for some hours and would so stand for many more, without food save such as she might reach from her post of sentinel; not until the calf was able to take nourishment would she move from the spot, lest harm should befall the helpless young. It was not, in fact, till the commencement of the second day that the calf uttered grunts and murmurs of discontent, and then his mother raised him to his feet by aid of trunk and forefoot, and so guided his trembling limbs and supported him till he found the udders pendent from the breast and gained strength as he satisfied his hunger.

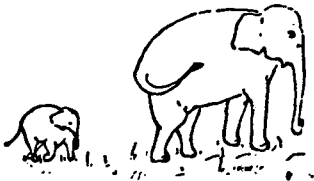


And so the days passed in feeding and sleeping, the mother always within sight or hearing of her young, always ready to face any odds in its protection, returning to its side whenever any suspicious sound reached her ears, or when the wind brought notice of the approach of any man or any beast that might

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be harmful, till, at the end of ten days, the calf was able to walk, to follow his mother for short distances at a time, then lie down to sleep while she satisfied her hunger. She, still full of maternal care, moved persistently, yet slowly, in the direction followed by the herd, hoping soon to overtake them and so profit by the protection their numbers afforded, and she had indeed nearly attained her object without mishap when an adventure occurred which might have altered the whole course of this narrative.

One morning, aware of the proximity of the herd, and intending to join them during the day, the elephant was grazing on the bamboo shoots and grass, not far from the spot where her calf was lying, when her sensitive nostrils gave notice of danger. She waved her trunk in the direction of the wind, inhaling deeply, then strode hurriedly to where her calf was hidden, standing over him, as he lay. The next moment a tigress



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appeared on the scene, lean and anxious looking, seemingly pressed by hunger, evidently, too, the mother of young cubs whose increasing demands for food had to be satisfied. In point of fact the animal was starving: for



days she had been unsuccessful in the hunt, and she must eat or die, and with her her helpless family. She had scented the presence of the young calf, and thus it was that nature in its cruelty had ordained that the love of these mothers for their offspring should lead up to a struggle which must end in the slaying of one family, yet resulting in no apparent good.

The tigress walked slowly round the elephant, continually decreasing the distance between them, her object being to drive off the mother and then kill the defenceless calf. The elephant also turned slowly, keeping her head to the foe. Soon the tigress made a rush towards the calf, and was met by a kick from the elephant's hind leg, which staggered her for the moment and made her resume her prowl in the

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hope of finding some better opening for attack. The duel proceeded in silence, and gradually an arena was formed in the forest, a circle of trampled grass where no concealment was possible. Several times the tigress made onslaughts, only to be repulsed, and, at the last, savage at her ill-success, she bounded at the elephant's head, clasping her with armed fore-paws, burying her fangs in the soft flesh at the base of the trunk ; scratching wildly at fore-legs with her hind claws, hoping that she could drag the elephant to earth and inflict such painful injuries that she would desert her young. The elephant flinched under the attack, and then stood firm. Maddened with pain and fear she knelt and tried to crush the adversary with her weight, but the tigress held firmly, and, with the purchase gained, pulled violently to one side in the attempt to throw the elephant. She, despairing, rose to her feet, rushed blindly forward in the desire to get rid of this rending, biting torment, and so by good fortune hurled herself full against the stem of a stout tree. She felt the tigress crushed against her bony

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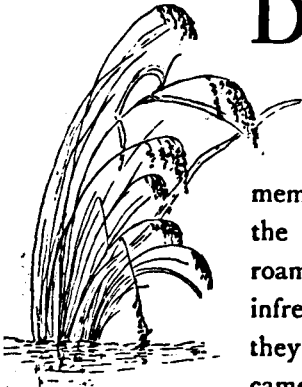
forehead, and the grip relaxed; again she butted with her full strength, and the enemy fell limply at her feet. Then, possessed solely by the fury of battle and of pain, she stamped on the still writhing body, crushing it to a pulp, kicking it till but a muddy mass remained to show her victory. At last, streaming with blood, trembling with excitement, she returned to her calf, feeling it over with her wounded trunk, satisfying herself that it had suffered no harm.

That evening, the elephant, scarred with many wounds, now plastered with clay to keep off the attacks of flies, rejoined her tribe after many days of danger and tribulation, and felt once more in the safety of home. But the tigress's cubs were calling for their mother, till their feeble cries died away in a whimpering protest as the weakness and pain of starvation gradually overcame them.



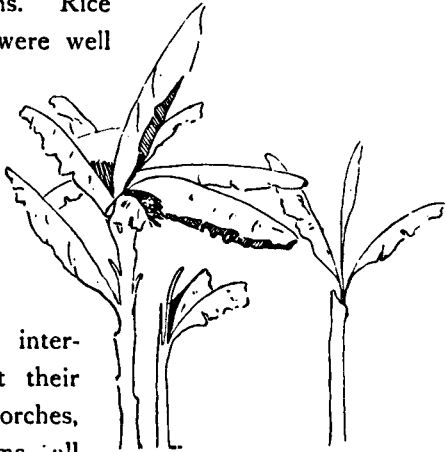
CHAPTER III

Early Experiences



DURING the absence of the elephant and her calf the herd had not remained unmolested. Beyond the intrusion of man, its members had little to fear in the vast jungles in which they roamed: and man was such an infrequent visitor that of him they felt little dread. They came, indeed, most often into contact with him when they entered his special domain: the level, fruitful lands around the villages, where the rice rose from the stagnant water in golden ranks, each ear gracefully bending with the weight of grain; where the plantain groves reared ragged leaves

against the sky, and the tender green of the young shoots sheltered in the protection of the juicy stems. Rice and plantains were well worth the risk of a midnight foray in the hopes that the owners would not wake during the spoliation and interfere to protect their property with torches, guns and drums, all



more disagreeable than terrible to the robbers. In their own domain in the primeval forest, the elephants took little notice of human beings; certainly some morose tusker, or mother with calf at foot, might resent too near an approach, or, if stumbled upon inadvertently, would brush the intruder away with a brusqueness that meant death; otherwise, in the forest, man was not a force to be seriously reckoned with;

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and this fact, perhaps, rendered it easier for man to take toll of the herd from time to time.

For in this country the elephant was valuable as a slave; in his youth he could convey his master across the pathless swamps, and as he



became stronger he could carry loads of unhusked rice from the homestead to the waterways; when mature he could assist in dragging timber to the streams, and in relieving the jams of floating logs caused by the violence of the monsoon floods; and, if he developed into a heavy animal with perfect tusks, he could be employed in the timber yards to carry or move logs of tons in weight, and might even later on be selected to bear in procession or on shooting trips those whom men permit to be rulers over them. And all this service was exacted in return for simple board and lodging, which in youth cost nothing, and later on a sum, if insignificant, yet given grudgingly, solely for the purpose of maintaining the health and physique of

a valuable servant. When young the elephant, after a day's work, was turned loose in a forest with a heavy iron chain attached to one leg, whereby his movements left a trail easily followed by his owner. As his labour and time became more valuable, food of the cheapest would be brought to him, and when older he would probably be given a weekly ration of wheaten cakes, of sugar or butter to assist in appeasing his growing appetite.



Thus it was that one morning before the sudden dawn had sprung into the sky, at the stillest hour, when man is yet asleep, and when animals are seeking their rest, the village gate was opened, and a tiny party of two elephants and four men passed out into the dimness of the forest and disappeared from sight. On the narrow path the feet of the elephants made no sound; from time to time in passing under the arched bamboos a stem was struck and instantly responded with a shower of dew,

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drenching both the elephants and their riders ;
or grass, whose flowering tops were weighted



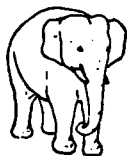
with moisture, was
brushed aside as
the party made its
way through the
dripping forest.

The sun was well
up when a halt was
made at the edge
of a forest glade,
and the simple
equipment of the
hunters could be
observed. Each

man carried a heavy knife whose handle protruded from the tightly-drawn loin-cloth within ready reach of his right hand. Other weapons or clothing they had none, now that the cotton coverlet had been thrown aside. For implements of the chase each elephant carried a stout and long rope of fibre, twisted from the inner bark of trees, and with this outfit the men proposed to capture some half-grown elephant

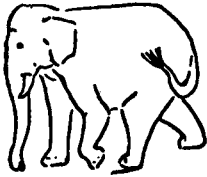
from the herd, and bring it to the village to be trained for use and subsequent sale.

Leaving one man on each elephant, the other two commenced searching the soft soil for fresh tracks, and after a few minutes started away at a quick walk, followed at a distance by their companions. For miles they proceeded in a series of twists and turns, passing as they went evidence of the grazing of the herd in broken branches, uprooted grasses, and overturned bamboos, and it was not until they were within a hundred yards of the elephants that they halted to reconnoitre the ground and to ascertain if any of the animals were of size suitable for their purpose. A decision seemed soon to be arrived at, and, the trackers mounting, the tame elephants were urged in the direction of a half-grown animal which stood on the outskirts of the tree forest. Little suspecting the attempt to be made on his liberty, the victim moved away as the intruders approached him ; he was nervous but not apprehensive ; but on being



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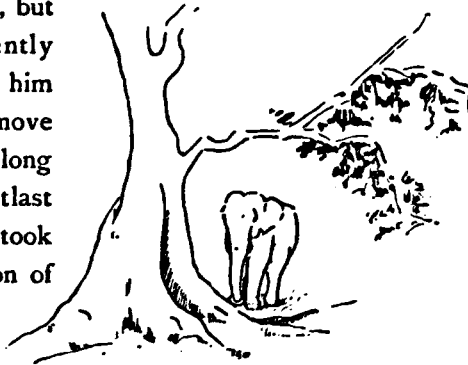
followed and disturbed time after time he became alarmed, and commenced to run



through the forest to shake off his pursuers. They followed with the ease of animals who were in hard training through years of labour and scanty food; in-

crease the speed as he would they were still pressing on him; if he threatened to charge they evaded him to right and left, only to close up again behind him; and so, separated from the herd, with terror in his heart and trembling with exhaustion and thirst, he still plodded along in front, with the hunt inexorably following his footsteps, permitting no halt to rest or drink, but

persistently keeping him on the move through long hours. At last despair took possession of



the hunted ; he turned and stood silent in the shade of a large tree, indifferent to a fate he felt powerless to escape from.

The hunters approached softly on either side of him, and in silence allowed the hunting elephants to caress the captive and soothe his fears ; he made no response, either of anger or impatience, till the ropes were secured round his neck and he was invited to proceed with his captors. Then once more, when too late, he made an effort for freedom, rushing wildly to every side, to be checked each time by the ropes attached to the elephants, finally throwing himself on the ground and lying there immovable, irresponsive to the pricks of sharp knives, to shouts and exhortations, not yielding till the last weapon of man, in the shape of a burning torch of dried grass, was brought close to his body. Then with instinctive dread he rose suddenly to his feet and dragged his captors away with him in hasty flight, till, breathless, he again surrendered and moved quietly in whichever direction the party proceeded.

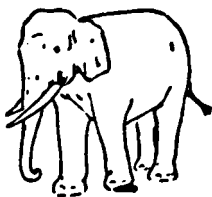
They had no wish to meet the startled herd, least of all to come within reach of the herd-bull, who might annihilate without difficulty the whole of the encumbered procession. By devious routes, carefully prospecting the ground, they arrived at the footpath leading to the village, and in single file and in silence proceeded on their way. It was sunset by the time they entered the gate, and, passing up the main street, arrived at a curious cage-like construction whose wide-eaved roof rested on stout piles strengthened by cross beams. Into this they persuaded their captive to enter, using force when he proposed to resist, and behind him were dropped two cross beams, so that he stood as in a narrow horse box, barely longer than his length or broader than his width, where there was no chance of exerting his strength for escape, and where he would remain, the observed of the village, the plaything of the children, until such time as he became accustomed to the sight of man, patient under handling and docile to the word of command.⁴ Now water was given him to drink, fodder was placed within reach, the

rough ropes were slackened from his neck, and he was left in peace to recover his nerve and temper during the hours of darkness.

Meanwhile the herd of elephants, and with them the young calf and his mother, disturbed by the intrusion of man, uneasy as if some unknown danger had been near them, gathered together for safety ; the young sheltered behind their bulkier companions, all testing the air to learn from which side this danger threatened. It was only gradually that their misgivings were removed and that they recommenced grazing, though still nervously. As night fell, however, at some silent signal from an old and experienced female, they set out on the march, and in single file moved quietly away from their recent halting place. The line was not unbroken, for the calves frequently fell out ; theirs was the difficult task of stepping between the footmarks of the longer-paced adults, and they were easily fatigued by the roughness of the road. So that, while the mothers lingered to encourage and assist their young, the main herd gradually disappeared from view, not to

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be again rejoined till some hours had elapsed. The herd-bull remained for some time behind the retreating elephants, as if to show his independence of his harem: but ultimately he too sauntered in the same direction, careless as to any possible danger of attack, but most careful in every stride that his vast weight should rest on firm soil.



The young calf's training had now commenced to fit him for the life which might, under favourable circumstances, extend over a century. At present he gave little promise of a great future. His soft wrinkled skin was covered with a rufous down, and his forehead with long black hair, the inheritance from primeval ancestors in the north; his trunk was to grow with use, but was now small and short; from his eyes glanced wickedness rather than serenity, and his shaggy eyelashes gave them a guileful look which, indeed, was fully in accordance with his character. On the march he



plodded along methodically, his whole strength absorbed in the struggle not to be left behind ; but on halting days, when neither feeding nor sleeping, he was occupied in tricks which were far from sedate. To raise a sudden shriek of alarm, which would bring his mother red-hot with rage to his side, appeared to him to be a pleasant pastime ; to butt and harry the youngsters less strong than himself was also amusing ; and to filch some delicacy from another, even though he was yet unable to eat it, afforded him much pleasure.

Thus, during his calfhood and youth he was more or less privileged ; to his mother he clung till, after some years, others took his place ; to the herd he remained faithful because unable yet to fend for himself alone. He grew up in the fear of the herd-bull and with a wholesome respect for the young males, instinctively aware that the thrust of a sharp tusk was extremely painful, and might be fatal ; ignorant of his own strength, but alert and quick, even agile when due consideration is given to his bulk and build. Perhaps the most difficult accomplishment was

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to acquire the ability to walk with ease and safety on precipitous ground, but even this was learnt with practice. A perpendicular bank, if unyielding, even if only five feet high, remained always insurmountable, for he could not raise a hind-foot sufficiently to give a purchase in bringing his body



to follow trunk and fore-feet. But if the soil could be broken away the difficulty ceased to exist, for he would trample on the displaced earth and in a few seconds surmount the obstacle. To descend a steep, almost vertical slope he would break away the brink with his fore-feet and lower himself over the edge, then, bending his hind-legs, let himself go, leaving two deep furrows to mark his course. On the narrow ridges between the valleys he would walk with circumspection, lest a false step should mean death. Indeed, he had

himself been witness to such an accident, when, the soil giving way, his companion had been precipitated into the valley below ; at first grasping with outstretched trunk at bamboos and saplings to stay her fall, and ultimately, as these were torn loose, as if refusing the assistance so urgently required, lying a huddled and inert mass some seventy feet below.

He had learnt how to ford the forest streams, testing in advance each footstep lest he should chance on quicksands from which there was no escape ; to swim the rivers, rejoicing in his strength, sinking, to strike the firm bottom and to rebound thence to the surface, ploughing the current with only his trunk above the surface, like the conning pole of some submarine vessel. He had been taught where to seek the food supplies of the various seasons. He knew when the bamboo foliage was at its best, when the grasses were in flower, what barks, roots, and fruits were wholesome and where to find them. He could detect



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the presence of water if close below the surface of the soil, and dig for it with his powerful fore-feet; and, as to forest fires, with one wave of his trunk he could locate the danger and strike across the wind so as to avoid this terror.

All this and much more was known to him, and in self-defence against other jungle tribes, he was fully armed. His fore-foot, gently swinging as a pendulum till the accurately timed instant when it shot forth with prodigious force, could dispose of any dangerous intruder; for the less important kind his trunk was ready to deal a shrewd blow just as easily as it could be used to blow away an objectionable insect or to give the softest of caresses.

And so, as he increased in size, he increased in knowledge, became gradually more independent of his fellows, and was able to find a living for himself, though the love of company still kept him with the herd where he had lived for so long in happiness and safety.

CHAPTER IV

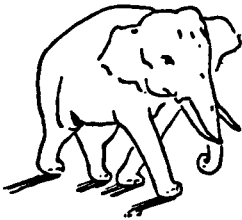
The Monarchs of the Herd

IN the forest, even among members of the same tribe, might is right, and those who cannot defend their place of pride must yield to those who dispute it. And in the struggle that thus goes on, one factor remains the most important, and that is youth, with its uncalculated courage and irresistible endurance. The monarch of the herd may maintain peace in the community for a score of years, so long as he has no serious rival, but there is always a certainty that a stronger than he will arise one day and secure the supremacy. The leading bull of this herd, though some sixty or seventy years of age, was in no way failing in strength, in wisdom, or in beauty. True, in agility he was inferior to his rivals, and his heavy bulk imposed a severe strain upon his lasting

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powers ; but up till now none had disputed his authority, none had dreamed of engaging in single combat with such a monster. Yet this happened at last without premeditation, as the result of passions suddenly roused, but, once kindled, not to be quenched save by a fight to a finish.

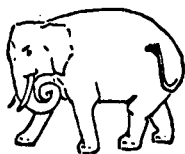
The leader of the herd, of which our elephant was still an insignificant member, was leaning carelessly against a tree watching his subjects as they grazed around him. In the outskirts two other bull elephants were wandering listlessly to and fro ; giving an impression as if they longed yet feared to



approach. Presently the one, attracted irresistibly by his desire for company, walked slowly towards the females. The herd-bull, from his post of careless observation, at once started to attention, and with ears extended strode towards the intruder, fully expecting to see him turn and fly, but in this instance the expected did not happen. The

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herd-bull then, in passing, pushed the younger bull to one side : and instantly the latter turned

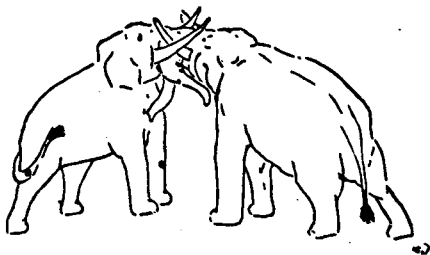


and stood facing his lord and master with lowered head, with tightly curled trunk and shining tusks. This mutinous challenge was not to be refused, and the animals met

with a mighty shock, trunk to trunk, each pushing with full strength in the attempt to overthrow the other, or at least to make him swerve or flee, so that the conqueror's tusks might be imbedded in side or hind-quarters, and, in favourable circumstances, the goring be continued till life became extinct.

To turn or fly would therefore probably result in a painful wound, while to fall was practically a sentence of death. And thus these

two animals which had lived peaceably together for so many years were



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forced to a duel, which in any case must separate them for the rest of their lives. Neither had entered into it with zest, but, once begun, the instinct of self-preservation compelled its continuance; while soon rage and fury swallowed up all other feelings, and all the brutality of animal life came into play. They pushed against each other in sullen silence, while the herd instinctively moved away lest they should experience the cruelty of the vanquished or the blind lust of the conqueror; while the second bull gladly accompanied the females to enjoy, at least for a time, the unusual feeling of supremacy.

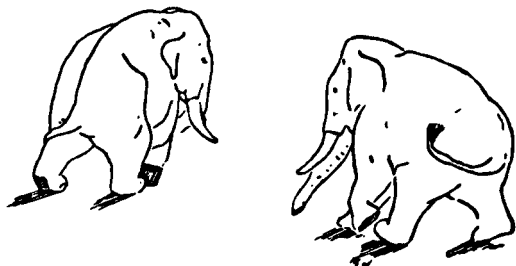
All through the tropical night the struggle proceeded with unabated fury. When the combatants separated and stood apart, eager though each might have been to turn aside and leave the struggle undecided, self-preservation insisted that the face should be kept to the foe, so that once again they met with lowered heads, with trunks curled out of harm's way. The immense muscles on fore-legs and quarters stood out under the thick hides, and the tusks,

weapons as yet useless in the fight, clashed together as the opponents met, their sharp points inflicting slight wounds on chest and shoulder, and from these blood slowly trickled, reddening the duellists, whose heated breath rose in mist in the air. There was an intolerable scent from the bodies of these animals, perceptible even to the gross senses of human beings, and most peculiarly obnoxious to the other jungle tribes; nor was there any friendly intervention to end the fight, as most usually occurs when deer, cattle, or even birds are engaged in savage warfare.

In the morning the elephants presented a sorry sight; the soft, black hides were encrusted with blood and dust; the roundness of body and limb had given place to the prominence of straining muscles, even the placid fulness of face and trunk was no longer evident; the bones of the forehead stood out through the tightened skin. The herd-bull was at his last gasp from fatigue, his adversary but in little better plight, but still sustained by the insistence of his hot-blooded youth. With a final

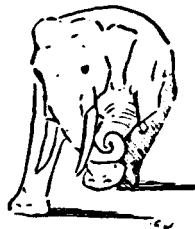
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effort the herd-bull pushed the other backwards for several paces, then suddenly turned and fled.



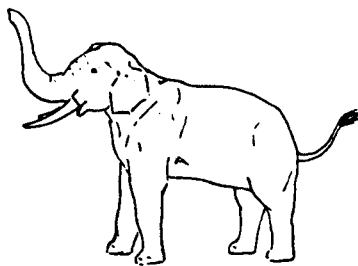
He crashed into the thickest jungle he could find, the bamboos and elastic branches recovering their position as they swished violently in the face of the pursuer. The latter could gain no ground on the vanquished, and after a time stopped to scream with rage and vent his fury on unoffending saplings and trees in his vicinity. Then, bruised and battered, he made his way to overtake the herd.

His triumph was not long-lived. In his haste he soon caught up his companions, and the females and young stood aside as he stormed



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through their midst. He went straight towards the tusker with whom he had been brought up, his companion in long servitude under the now vanquished herd-bull, and without pretext, save that of fully roused passions, attacked him on the instant. The other received the shock without a tremor, and in the contact the lust of fighting seemed to be communicated to him. He pushed, and felt his already exhausted antagonist yield ground; he redoubled his efforts, and the enemy first gave way, then suddenly slipped and fell. In a moment two sharp tusks were buried in his side; again and again till the soil was reddened and the victor stood with uplifted trunk, with crimson tusks, and glared around for any other adversary. There was none to withstand him, and he entered into his kingdom over the necks of his two defeated foes.



Meantime the vanquished herd-bull was

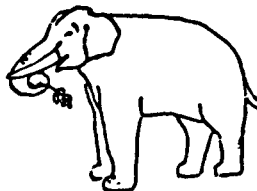
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recovering his equanimity. He betook himself to the nearest stream and spent some hours in bathing, in lying in the water, in cooling his heated blood. Then, spreading earth over his wounds to ward off the attacks of flies, he proceeded to graze his way in the direction opposite to that taken by the herd.



Before following further the fortunes of our elephant it will be interesting to sketch shortly the life of this solitary tusker when driven from the herd and condemned to a life of loneliness.

A long term of not unhappy years was before him. He possessed vast experience, and his wants were fully assured in the friendly forest. He could live a luxurious life, following the vegetation in its seasonal change; browsing on bamboos so long as their foliage remained green, entering the swampy land in the summer heats, returning to the savannahs when the new grass appeared,



and at all times finding leaves, roots and fruits of various species adapted to his use during the season of their ripeness ; while astringent barks served to keep him in health during the trying spring months. It was not often that he regretted his former gregarious life ; at times he felt lonely, and then, in evil temper, vented his rage on the trees around him. But these fits soon passed, and he proceeded on his placid way, harming no one, and content to be left to enjoy his own life.

Such was his lot during maturity, but as old age crept over him the difficulties increased, not of finding, but of utilizing the food which nature provided in such profusion around him. His tusks no longer grew fast enough to replace the wear and tear of forest life, they became worn and rough ; his teeth, too, could no longer crush the bamboo, the twigs and coarser grasses, so that the constant search for softer food became laborious. His forehead and trunk were now thickly mottled with white, and the edges of his great ears hung in tatters ; the bones showed through the grey hide, and

the roundness of youth was no longer visible. He wandered aimlessly through the forest, seeking those comforts which failing vitality alone denied him. And there were none of the jungle tribes who were able to relieve him from the burden of old age, and from a lingering death by gradual exhaustion from starvation, a fate which seemed certain to overtake him.

It was when in these straits that this aged bull commenced to live in the vicinity of the cultivated lands, and to rob the crops by night. But even this gave him but slight relief, for, once the villagers were alive to his predatory habits, they kept good watch and ward, and more often than not he was driven away long before he had satisfied his hunger. And so it fell out at last that in desperate mood he refused to fly from the yelling mob that threatened him, continuing to seize large bunches of ripening grain and stuff them greedily into his mouth, till the owners, gaining courage, approached so close that spears and arrows could be used with effect. Then the elephant

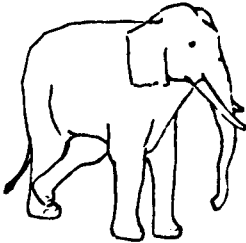
turned, smarting with pain, and headed for the safety of the forest; encountering on his way a human being, he brushed him aside in his hasty stride, and, from the moment a man had been killed, the fate of the animal was decided.



Could he have known that he was proscribed it is probable that he would have welcomed relief from the oppression of growing helplessness; for it is on record that one winter afternoon, when the sky was growing red in the west, and a great silence was creeping over the land, a hunter came on the fresh tracks of an elephant, and at once recognized from their size that he was on the trail of the outlaw. There was haste if the blood-money was to be earned ere darkness fell, but the trail was easy to follow, for the elephant was deliberately heading towards a favourite stand of his, where a pool of water glistened in the shade of high rocks, and the bamboo stood around in graceful groups. As the hunter crept along the track, and slowly

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emerged in the more open space around the pool, he saw the elephant standing motionless,



and watching him more with curiosity than with fear or anger. The man realized that there was no immediate danger, that there was no necessity for hurried aim, and no excuse for

bungling this execution. He raised his rifle slowly, and, as the head of the foresight passed the base of the trunk, the trigger was pressed, and the bullet sped upwards into the brain. The elephant sank to his knees without a sound; for an instant he seemed to be balanced in this attitude, then rolled over and lay on his side, dying with the calm dignity which had emphasized his life.

The villagers, who had known of him for two generations, and who asserted that he was in his prime when the oldest of them were young, believed that after a so long and harmless life in this world of toil and trouble the

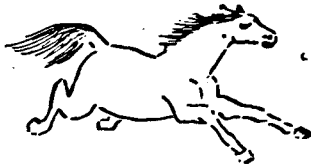
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elephant would be re-incarnated on a much higher plane ; they even suggested, as if that were a reward, that his spirit might be born again as one of themselves, forgetting that they were under the subjection of labour from birth to death, while this elephant had tasted the joys of independence for nearly a century.

CHAPTER V

Captivity

THE change in the leadership of the herd made but little difference to our elephant, who led an uneventful life till, at the age of thirty, he was well advanced towards maturity. He then stood over eight feet high at the withers, and his tusks protruded some two feet from his lips. The animal was still growing in height and bulk, but was already formidable either for attack or defence. In short sprints on level ground no man could hope to escape him, and a horse would have to be remarkably quick in getting away to avoid his charge; and, even after the first one hundred and fifty yards, the elephant could maintain a good pace



when hurried, though his usual gait was at about four miles to the hour. In fact, long continued speed was not necessary to his existence. If he charged an enemy, either he caught and slew him, or the enemy decamped and thus ceased to be harmful; if he himself fled on occasions of urgency, he had either avoided the danger, or was prepared to meet it calmly after a short distance had been traversed.

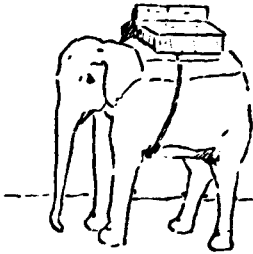
The difference between wild animals and those kept for show is perhaps never more pronounced than with the elephant. This one had a black, soft and pliant hide, warm to the touch, and so sensitive that it responded at once to the attack of a fly, while other insects, so powerfully armed as are the gad-flies, left drops of blood wherever they alighted. The grey coloured hides encrusted with dirt, such as are seen in the best managed Zoological Gardens in Europe, are evidently the consequence of the want of constant throwing of mud and dust on the body, to be subsequently washed away by forcible jets of water directed from the trunk, thereby creating the friction

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necessary to keep the hide clean and sensitive. So in India, even the domestic elephant is aided in such efforts towards cleanliness by being bathed and scrubbed daily with a hard brick. How important it is to keep the skin healthy by regular friction is known to the breeders of domestic cattle, but has apparently escaped the notice of curators of Zoological Gardens, who but rarely provide any means by which their captives can follow the dictates of nature as regards this form of health preservation.

Another difference between the wild and confined elephant, is that the former possesses a roundness of head and body, referable to that full formation of muscle which apparently can only be attained by suitable and varied food accompanied by sufficient exercise.

The monotony of stale buns and of slow promenades on gravelled paths must soon reduce even the finest specimens of elephant life to creatures of no vitality of brain

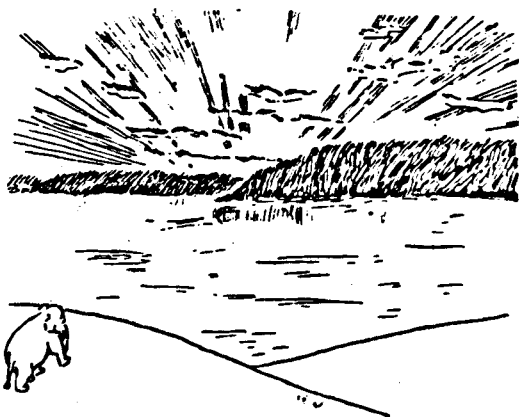


or muscle, while in those born in captivity there can be little resemblance, save perhaps in the skeleton, to the animal bred and brought up in the forest. One must, therefore, picture to one's self an alert and by no means clumsy beast; neither indolent nor greedy; fully equipped to support himself in a country where dangers are not infrequent: knowing how to ascend and descend the steepest mountain passes; able to ford the treacherous streams in safety, to swim for miles if necessary in the flooded rivers; and withal endowed with senses of sight and scent that could forewarn him in time to escape approaching dangers, whether threatened by man or by nature. With these qualities, combined with enormous strength, it was well that the elephant was favoured with a calmness of temper and with a kindness of disposition which prevented him from using his forces for evil.

As a rule the elephant began his day, as animals will, at sunset, when he moved towards water to bathe and drink. This hour of enjoyment was marked by cries of pleasure from

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the adults, who seemed to enjoy making the forest re-echo with their trumpeting. Then could be heard also the shrill voices of the young calves and the contented purring of the mothers,



culminating in blows on earth or water with the trunk. They stood knee-deep, throwing water over their bodies, or, if there was depth enough, swimming and diving in the stream or lake; then when hunger called they either came ashore wet and shiny, or struck out for the opposite bank, the mothers encouraging the young calves or aiding them with their trunks. The secrets

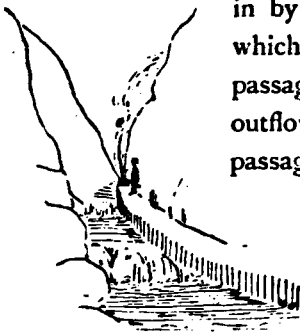
of the earth, air and water were theirs. With one tap of the trunk they passed without pausing if the foothold were sound, or stopped short to avoid some danger imperceptible to man; they knew in the same way if the sand beneath the water was firm or treacherous, if the current was too swift to allow of safe passage; and with one wave of the trunk they both detected danger and located it. And so it is that in times of flood or fire, or, worst of all, of earthquake, the distress of these animals, should they be prevented from utilizing their powers for escape, is so marked as to be almost pathetic.

The herd in which our elephant still found himself consisted of individuals all more or less experienced, all amply endowed by nature with the means to pass a happy and long life, but each differing in strength and in characteristics as much as is found to be the case in communities of human beings. Only, amongst the elephants, there was blind confidence in one leader, for the reason that discussion and forethought were denied them. It was a republic

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in which unreserved obedience was given to the wisest: and amongst the forest tribes the wisest is generally of the weaker sex; for that sex, because of its weakness, becomes of necessity the best qualified by nature to detect a coming danger, and to devise means of escape.

The herd had been grazing in one part of the country for some time; food and water were plentiful, and, though they more than once started on the march to new ground, yet they had somewhat listlessly given up the attempt on finding human beings busy in their path. In fact, though they did not know it, they were surrounded by a wide circle of men, whose endeavour was to keep them within certain boundaries. The broad valley was shut



in by precipitous hills, through which were only two easy passages marking the inlet and outflow of a stream, and these passages were well guarded by men armed with guns, who, moreover, kept fires blazing night and day.

Other watchers were on the slopes of the hills, ready at all times to dispute a passage in that direction, and within this circumference the elephants lived unmolested while a stout stockade,

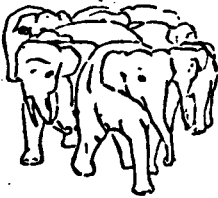


approached through wide wings which spread V-shaped into the forest, was being constructed in all haste. Work was pressed on day and night lest the herd, now becoming uneasy, should attempt to force a passage ere the arrangements were complete; but at last all was ready and the order was given that tomorrow the herd was to be driven to captivity.

The morning shone bright and clear over the forest; it was a season when nights were cold and the days hot; when the vegetation was preparing for the coming drought, the deciduous trees shedding their leaves, the evergreens showing a more brilliant foliage as if rejoicing in their superiority over the seasons. Looking down on the valley, there seemed no sign of

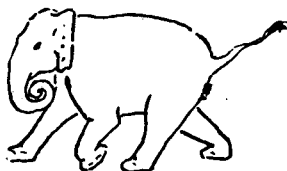
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man or beast, even the columns of smoke which for weeks had marked the position of the passes into the valley were no longer visible; the forest was wrapped in silence. Suddenly, fired from far away, the report of a gun echoed through the hills, and simultaneously a roar of sound arose, shouts, beating of drums and firing of guns, as some hundreds of men descended from the hillsides and converged on the pass leading out of the valley.



The elephants gathered in a body and followed the old female, who at once took command; they moved slowly in front of the gathering crowd, at first not doubting that it might be avoided; then, as the circle constricted, they suddenly realized that they were being driven, and, with the instinct of all wild animals, endeavoured to make a way of escape to one side. They pushed up the slopes of the hill at a quick walk, trunks waving and tails whipping from side to side, and were suddenly confronted with a volley of blank

cartridges fired in their faces, with shouts and with fire-brands. In the suddenness of this attack, all courage and dignity vanished, and in a disordered mass, with curled trunks and tails raised high above their backs, they fled, helter-skelter down the hill, and entering the valley, once more found themselves with men behind, and on each side, and with but one apparent way of escape open to them.

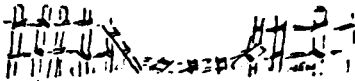


Along that way they proceeded, no longer cautious of sudden danger, unnerved by their terrifying experience, each eager to be foremost in the flight, till the path narrowed, and they discovered on each side of them not many yards distant, rows of stout piles with interlaced tree trunks, held together with climbers and ropes of fibre, which told of the work of man, and warned them of the loss of liberty or life. They halted in indecision, and at that moment pandemonium seemed to be again let loose close behind them; guns were fired, crackers

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exploded, burning torches were flung, and the shouts of men and the booming of drums became unbearable. The elephants pressed forward in a wild attempt at escape, and forced themselves through the narrow gateway.

There was here no space to receive this torrent of frightened animals, and so it was

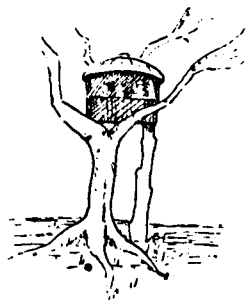


that the herd-bull was left outside, and attacked the palisade with the fury born of fear. It gave way to

the impact, and he rushed through, followed by a few

of those who had, like him, been delayed at the fatal gateway; and at the same moment the ropes holding up the huge portcullis were cut, and the way to freedom, for the rest of the herd, was barred. Then it was that scores of men arrived to hurriedly strengthen the stockade, and to prevent any systematic attempt at its destruction; firing with blank cartridges at any elephant which crossed the boundary ditch with the object of tearing down

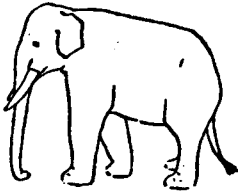
the fence, repulsing with spear thrusts the more venturesome who were not overawed with threats ; and then, too, it was that the great men of the earth, from the secure advantage of towers built into strong trees, could watch the captives, as they moved restlessly to and fro, avoiding each other, as if ashamed of their predicament, and looking with wondering and terrified eyes on the antics of their captors.



CHAPTER VI

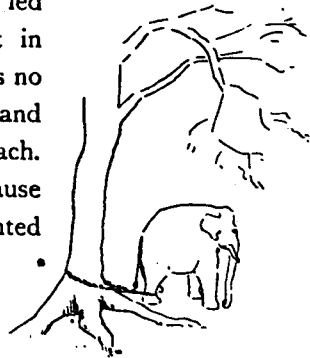
In Training for Work

THERE were some twenty-five captives in the enclosure, of whom our elephant was the largest: and it was well for him that he made no determined efforts to escape, for in order to avoid any risk of loss of the catch, his life would have been sacrificed at once; a well-directed bullet at close quarters would have ended his history.



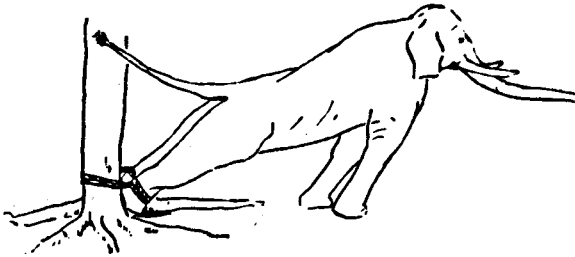
But, with the patient equanimity of his kind, when faced with unavoidable misfortunes, he remained placidly standing, awaiting his fate. In a few hours most of the captives grew accustomed to the sight and scent of human beings; they raised no objections when men seated on tame

elephants moved amongst them; they even submitted when, huddled between two trained animals, ropes were passed over their necks; and, most dangerous task to those so employed, when other ropes were secured to their hind-legs. Thus, one by one, they were led out through the narrow doorway in the direction of the camp, to be tied to stout trees by the heel ropes. Against these bonds they strained with all their weight, desisting only when the ropes cut deep into the flesh and imprinted on them the brand of slavery, always to be found on an elephant if born and bred in the forest and then captured and trained to the service of man. The very young calves followed the females as they were led from the enclosure, but in many cases their mothers no longer recognized them, and resented their approach. Whether this was because their young were tainted with the scent of man, or whether the terror



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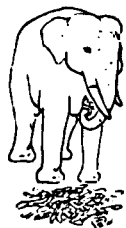
and anxiety of the pursuit and capture had stayed the flow of milk and so destroyed the maternal instincts, it is difficult to assert. At all events the calves wandered round the fettered elephants, finding scant encouragement, save from men who fed them with buffalo milk, hoping to keep them alive, or from the tame



elephants, which treated them with kindness and affection, so that, if not quite dependent on a nursery diet, there was good chance of their survival.

Our elephant remained the last to be removed from the enclosure, and while there, he had been constantly attended by two tame elephants, who gently frustrated any attempt at restiveness. When the ropes had been

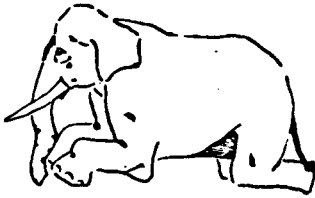
attached to neck and leg, an imposing array of tame elephants was ready to overcome any resistance. He made none, but walked silently to his allotted place, where he was left to himself. Even then there was no unseemly struggle. He tested his weight against the strength of his fetters with one long, even pull, till the blood spurted from the wounds; the ropes held firm, and he made no subsequent attempt, suffering himself to be led to water morning and evening, eating the food provided for him with an aloofness which made mere man seem insignificant. For weeks before it was considered safe for him to take the road, he was, in reality, just as indifferent to his fate as on the day they started to leave for ever the forests he knew so well.



First the long weary march in chains, and then the months of training which followed, seemed to rob him of all the joy of living and alter, with altered habits, many of his natural characteristics. His patience remained, but it

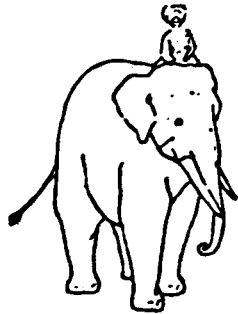
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was the patience of despair, and though he still deeply resented ill-treatment, he became



obedient to the wishes of his masters so far as he understood them. The first lesson was that he should kneel at

command, so that the pigmies who owned him should be able the more readily to climb on his back; the next, that he should lie on his side, so that he might be duly cleaned by his attendant; then that he should follow when led by the ear, and turn to right and left, or halt when ordered to do so. Finally, that all these movements should be carried out under the orders of a man seated on his neck, who emphasized his commands with a goad or with a pointed iron hook. During the whole of this schooling the shackles were never off the fore-feet, or the

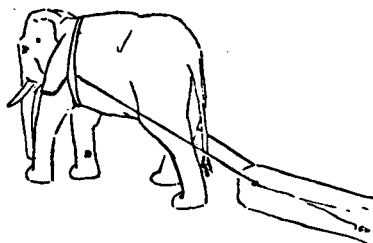


tethering chain from the hind-leg, and it was only when he had earned a name for docility that these restrictions were removed, and he found his limbs free once more, though still, on either side, a tame elephant accompanied him for fear of a sudden outbreak of fury.

And so at last he was ready for work, and was sold into slavery to the first comer who could command his price: his only safeguards against cruel treatment being the capital invested in his purchase, and the fear of his vengeance should his attendants purposely annoy him.

First, then, he was called upon to work his own passage from the forest to the timber yard, where ultimately he was to be employed in moving and arranging the heaviest logs; and this trip of some five hundred miles took nearly two years to complete.

He would be harnessed to a log, and by brute strength drag it through the soft soil to the banks



of a neighbouring stream ; then, turning, roll it over till it lay in the waterway, to be carried down by the next flood. During the whole of the dry season he was thus employed from dawn till dark, spending his nights in the forest, tethered by a heavy chain, to pick up what subsistence he might find. When the monsoon began to blow, the dragging came to an end, and his duty was to push each stranded log into the current ; or, more dangerous still, to release a jam that blocked up the waterway. This labour was not so incessantly strenuous as the dry season dragging, and more opportunities occurred of grazing during the day. He had next to aid in the construction of the huge rafts which were to float away in the sluggish current, and for this purpose some quiet backwater was selected, each log being guided into place and firmly-secured by ropes of cane, first through the drag holes at either end and then to cross-bars lashed with the same material. When complete, the raft might be sixty yards or more in length ; it undulated with the waves of the river, or lay like some gigantic marine creature just

awash. The men who proposed to guide it in its course of hundreds of miles appear pigmies as they pressed against the huge sweeps which serve as rudders at either end, or attempted to avoid sandbanks by the aid of long bamboos. In practice, they could do little to influence the course of the raft: should it ground badly in a falling stream they were powerless to relaunch it, and if a storm arose and lashed the broad waterway into foam, they thought only of seeking safety on the nearest firm land they could find.

In such times of stress assistance from others could not be reckoned on, for the river banks were infested with pirates whose livelihood was gained by stealing timber in transit to the sea coast. These men would cut the lashings of the raft as it lay alongside the bank in calm weather, and then follow the single logs as they floated away, and tow them into hiding before morning. But in times of stress their opportunities were still greater, for with luck they might overpower the crew and disperse several hundred logs over the waterway where

they were at the mercy of all the predatory bands in the neighbourhood. It was but a small number of such logs that the owner retrieved. All had the ownership marks at once removed, some were buried deep in the sand, to be recovered at some convenient occasion, others were hurriedly sawn up in concealed saw-pits, so that identification became even more difficult.

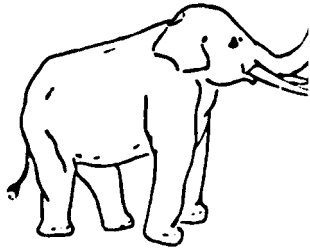
On the way down stream other rafts were encountered, made up of thousands of bamboos which floated more buoyantly than the timber; so that on these thatched cottages could be erected, and children played joyously in the railed-in decks. In the centre of these floating villages were mounds of rice, covered with bamboo matting, the harvest from villages far away in the north, its ultimate destination first the husking mills of Rangoon, and then the markets of Europe and England.

After the rafts had been despatched, there followed for our elephant a period of comparative rest from labour till the monotonous march to the timber depot was completed; but during those two strenuous years he had become

thoroughly accustomed to the presence of man, and tolerated, but did not love him. The elephant was still regarded as a slave, for whom the lash was ready as a punishment, but to whom no reward was offered as an incentive to greater exertions. The other elephants with whom he was associated provided him with no interests; he could not respond to their advances made with caressing trunk or with loud purrings; truth to say, he wanted nothing but food and sleep after a hard day's work, for he was still growing both in height and bulk, and his masters seemed to have but small idea of his requirements in food and rest. In the short hours allotted to him for feeding and sleeping he was obliged to swallow hastily whatever came within reach, instead of, as in the days of freedom, taking time to select, cleanse, and carefully masticate every mouthful. Often his tethering chain prevented him from reaching a convenient bathing place, and thus frequently he was recalled to another day's work unrefreshed by bathing, or sleep, and with unsatisfied hunger.

The Life of an Elephant

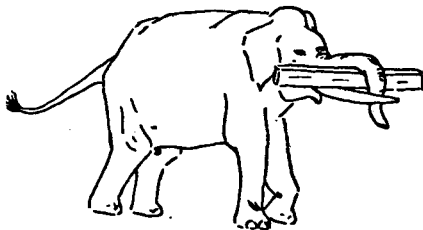
It was rather a gaunt elephant which ultimately reached the timber yard, and viewed the broad estuary and inhaled the scent of the sea air. To him at first all was repugnant, the brackish water, the slimy mud, the fodder impregnated with brine from the salt breezes; but here, as before, he



adapted himself to his surroundings, but in reality possessed no one thing that made life enjoyable to him. His work, too, was the more arduous that it had to be accomplished under the burning sun. For the elephant is particularly sensitive to heat; when wild, he rarely moves when the sun is hot, but stands in the deepest shade available, and often seeks further protection by piling grass on head and neck, and throwing earth over his body. Those human beings who have lived in intimacy amongst this forest tribe will truly relate, how at times they have unwittingly approached

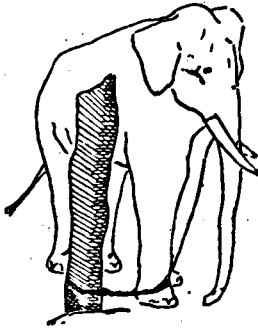
close to an elephant thus concealed, and have fled in cold terror when a movement of a grass-covered mound disclosed the presence of a hidden danger.

Here in the timber yard were creeks of shiny mud, which the tide filled with foul water; into these creeks the logs, detached from the timber rafts, were floated at high water, and later were dragged by the elephant on to firmer soil. A broad breast-plate, ending on either side with a chain, was all his harness and, struggling and slipping in the slime, he did his best to satisfy his masters. From time to time, especially as the tide ebbed, he was forced to enter the creeks and work in five or six feet of mud and water, so that he could not do justice to his weight and strength. Once the logs were on firm ground his next duty was to arrange them in rows as ordered by his driver. The smaller logs he would lift bodily with his tusks,



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carrying them where required with the aid of his trunk; those too heavy to carry he would roll along the ground or, raising first one end, and then the other, bring them ultimately to the desired position. The elephant presented



a sorry sight when his day's work was done; he was then covered with black river-mud, and felt weary and indifferent to his surroundings, being sore from the chafing of his rough harness, and irritated by the scolding and ill-temper of his

driver. During the night he stood under a shed, chained to a post, and ate what was put before him and what remained over from his rations after the rapacity of his driver had been satisfied. There is no need to dwell on this monotonous and weary time, for this elephant came through it with his life, though many of his companions had succumbed, from sunstroke, from internal strains, from sudden

unknown sickness; yet it seems but justice that in these days when sentimentality is rife, some comparison should be suggested between the treatment of a criminal, who perhaps has been for years a terror to his fellow-men and that meted out to an animal which has done no harm; and that the attitude of either towards their gaolers may be noted when condemned to loss of liberty and to penal servitude. Perhaps, if a useful life is to be commended, an animal may show to advantage over many human beings.

Mention has been made of sudden unknown sickness, and it may be remarked that cases of poisoning of elephants, even by their own mahouts, are not of such rarity as to cause surprise. Nothing is easier than to administer a fatal dose to an animal which places such implicit trust in man; arsenic concealed in a banana is readily swallowed, and proof of the crime is difficult. A mahout who had abused his authority, and went in consequence in fear of his life, has been known to take this way of escape; while another, jealous of the promotion

of a fellow-servant, adopted this means of getting him into trouble. It will be recalled that some wild animals will refuse, when in confinement, to eat from the hand of their keeper, even when on affectionate terms with him. The wild dog, especially, insists on this suspicious attitude, and it is also sometimes assumed by monkeys. An old Langur monkey, which had been in confinement for years, would to the last insist on washing any food handed to her, with a view to removing the disagreeable scent of the human hand. This animal was extremely fond of loaf sugar, and would chatter with rage as each lump disappeared under the cleansing to which she subjected it, leaving no trace, save in sticky paws, which were greedily sucked. But the elephant, though refusing distasteful food, may sometimes be persuaded to swallow it, though at others he will close the argument by dropping it from his mouth and covering it with a massive fore-foot.

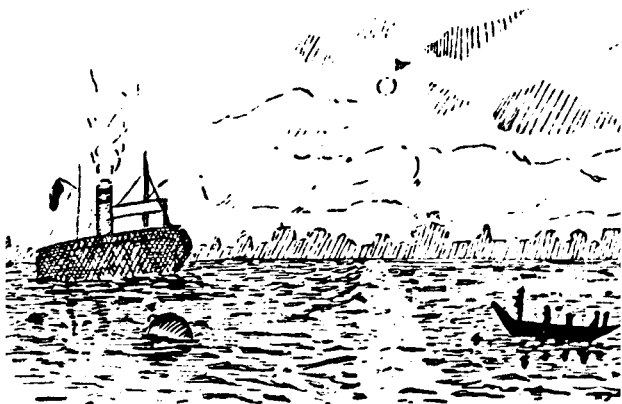
The end came at last, when a broker from India saw the elephant toiling wearily in the

timber yard, admired his shape, noted his youth, and decided that here was an animal which, with proper care, was suited for a better fate than that of a living traction-engine ; and that a profit could be made if it were possible to purchase at a reasonable price. Hence it was that, one breezy morning when the tide was running up against the wind, and the muddy water of the estuary was white with breaking wavelets, the elephant was stripped of his harness and led down to a wharf overlooking the wider stream. All around him were men bustling and shouting, rolling or carrying bales into the ship which lay alongside, and after some hours of waiting strong broad girths were fastened round his body, there was a clanking of machinery, and the elephant felt himself lifted from his feet and swaying in mid-air. The sensation was terrifying, and never before had he felt so helpless ; he waved his trunk in all directions in the hope of finding some firm hold for it, but without success ; then he felt himself being lowered till his feet touched the main-deck below, and here, once

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more confined, he listened to the soothing words of his new owner.

The next few days he passed in miserable anxiety, for to an animal of this bulk there can be no peace on swaying and heaving decks,



which he imagined were unable to carry his weight; but even this trial came to an end, and at last the ship moved on an even keel against the stream of a broad river. On either side, the banks, raised only a few feet above the tide, were covered with rice-fields or grass-lands which stretched away to the horizon, without

a break in the dull monotony of the landscape. Between them the muddy stream flowed, treacherous and uninviting ; the shallows marked with white breakers, with whirlpools forming at the tail of the hidden sandbanks. In the distance was a haze of smoke, and as the ship proceeded, feeling her way amongst currents and shoals, the signs of human beings became more in evidence in the whirring of machinery, the clanging of hammers, and the smoke from furnaces, till at length they came to rest on the crowded and busy waters. Such was the entry to the City of Palaces, a title surely appropriated by those who knew not of the real palaces in marble and stone, erected by the inhabitants of the country who possessed clearer conceptions of truth and art. Here the brick buildings were faced with stucco ; they stood four-square on the few feet of firm soil that overlay morass and quicksand, with square porticoes, square windows, and square rooms, and with only one oriental attribute, and that tending to accentuate the bad taste of the west ; namely, that servants, whether man or

beast, were lodged in the closest proximity to those who enjoyed residence in these buildings, palatial only in their size.

Slung from the ship like any bale of goods, our elephant found himself standing on the jetty at dead of night, suffering still from the effects of the sea voyage, reeling slightly as he walked. He passed through the sleeping town, where the daylight traffic was too congested to allow the risk of frightening horses and bullocks, and set his face to the north-west on his long march up-country to the market where he was to be sold. As he followed the broad road with its avenues hundreds of miles in length he passed into a cooler and drier atmosphere at each march. Strolling twenty to thirty miles each day during the freshness of the early morning and late evening, fed and looked after with every care, he found life for the next month or two pleasanter than he had experienced since his capture. The countries he passed through were different in all respects to those in which the elephant's youth had been passed. There the forest was supreme

and scattered villages nestled in its folds ; here the land was populated and cultivated. One left a village only to enter another, each with its groves of palms, bamboos and mangroves ; each with its water-tank which served as bathing place to man and beast ; each with its shallow well and its small and tawdry temple. There were no monasteries built of dark-toned timbers heavily carved, and no sound of sonorous gongs and tinkling bells. Of waste lands and jungles there were few, and men were everywhere, not armed and alert, but residing in open villages, seemingly with no fear of man or beast, incessantly talking and incessantly eating food of strange savour. And yet, in spite of this easy existence, there was little joyousness in the land, no brightness of colour or daintiness in the dresses, and more scolding and quarrelling in a day than would be heard in a month in the Further East.

Yet, in spite of these differences, which, indeed, affected the elephant but little ; he passed his days in contentment, regained some

of his vigour, and arrived at his destination handsome and healthy to await with good humour any further adventures that might befall him.

CHAPTER VII

A Change of Masters

THE site of the fair was on a broad expanse of white sand along the bank of a river flowing with clear and strong waters to the east. There was room for thousands of human beings, as well as for the hundreds of animals who were made the pretext for this gathering. On the far side of the river, the forest stretched away over the broken hills; on the other, the view was obstructed by precipices of gravel and sandstone, in whose crevices a scanty vegetation found shelter. Along the edge of the stream, under the overhanging rocks, were crowded temples, bathing ghâts, and pilgrims' rest-houses, and amongst these, at every turn, sat the members of an hereditary priesthood at the receipt of custom, confident of an easy hereafter, while making every arrangement for a

luxurious present. Here, too, the pilgrims, weary and sore-footed, offered adoration in the dark temples, entered the sacred pools where great fish jostled amongst the bathers, submitted to the loss of cherished locks by the barbers' razors, and then, clean from all impurities of body and soul, paid largesse to the priests and started on the homeward journey, laboriously bearing jars of sacred water for use in the rites and ceremonies of domestic worship. In one way this water was miraculous, for it appeared never to diminish in quantity, either by evaporation or even by sale on the lengthy march.

On the sand thousands of human beings were encamped in the open, some sheltered behind flimsy screens of grass, others, more



wealthy, under tattered huts, but the majority without shelter of any kind. During the day they roamed

through the fair, visiting the side-shows, staring at the religious mendicants now in full costume of skins and paint, or passing remarks on the animals exposed for sale. As the night drew on, thousands of tiny fires sparkled in the darkness, and were reflected in the broad waterway as each little encampment prepared the evening meal, and then sank to rest after the excitement of the past hours. For most of these visitors were men who rarely left their distant villages, to whom all was novel; even the sight of clear water flowing over boulders aroused their curiosity, accustomed as they were to the murky floods and sandbanks of the rivers of the country of the plains.



On the army of parasites who, with well-advertised claims to sanctity and to charity, swarmed over the fair, they looked with mixed feelings. They might revere the village priest

who stood sponsor at the introduction into caste and manhood, who assisted at their marriage and funeral rites ; but here were men who, at least outwardly, abjured all companionship, and who purposely crippled their own bodies so that, while becoming a burden in the community, they might save their own souls. Covered with ashes and vermin, and often of the most revolting habits, they commanded fees even if they inspired no respect. A fierce glance from under shaggy eyebrows or a muttered curse was sufficient to compel a hurried obeisance and a gift of hard-earned pence from the simple villagers as they passed by.

Much more exciting was it when several hundreds of these miscreants, forming procession, and with frenzied cries on their gods leaped into the swiftly flowing waters of the sacred river ; for then followed the strange spectacle of men, white and black, risking their lives to save those who deliberately sought a quick road to Paradise, but who had lost all ardour at the unwonted contact with cold pure water. The unsophisticated onlookers, inhabitants of a

country where life on earth is held, in reality, to be merely one stage of existence, may well have regarded such interference as unpardonable; but they expressed no opinion, and wandered on in the hope of witnessing other soul-stirring incidents whose recital would while away the long evenings in the distant village.

Along the lines of tethered elephants a man came sauntering, inspecting the animals with a well assumed air of indifference. He was slight and thin, with legs widely bowed, and was clad in white cotton, with an embroidered cap on his well-combed hair. His dress, his short, curly beard, and his speech as he passed the time of day with the attendants on the animals exposed for sale, proclaimed him to be a Mussulman from the north. He glanced shrewdly at our elephant, but continued without halting on his way, and it was not until an hour or so later that he returned, greeted the owner and accepted the long snake-like tube of the hookah when handed to him.

Kareem was the descendant of a long line of "Mahouts," men who, in the service of the state

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or of rajahs, had spent their lives in the charge of elephants and, dying, bequeathed their knowledge and their duties to their sons. Such men formed a clan, almost a race apart, now fast dying out under the pressure of veterinary science from the west—men who possessed special knowledge of the habits and manners of this forest tribe, who had accumulated vast stores of legendary and practical information as to their treatment in disease or health, and who could judge at a glance of the good and bad points of an elephant, and decide instantly as to the temperament of each individual, and whether it was trustworthy or dangerous; who had even invented a special language for freer intercourse with the animals they lived with. To these men the elephant seems to give a special allegiance, and often a most marked affection.

Kareem was no better or worse than those of his class. He would treat those he respected or loved, whether master or elephant, with fidelity; he was courageous, hot-tempered, and, in physique, well suited to his profession. To

place on the neck of an elephant a driver of the figure of a well-fed family coachman would be impossible, not only on account of the depressing weight to be carried, but because agility is required to mount to the saddle by aid of trunk and tusk, or to scramble up from behind, by the help of the crupper ropes. At the present time this mahout was with his master on the look-out for a good "shikari" elephant; one which, while docile, would be courageous; young enough to be agile, and tall enough to force a way through dense forest, or seas of grass, in pursuit of game.

Thus, after he had spent some time in belittling the elephant, and had received from his owner the incontrovertible reply that the animal was "as God had made him," he rose to his feet and approached the elephant without fear, stroked his trunk, tickled him under the jaw, offered him a banana from his pocket, and then proceeded to examine him thoroughly. First the eyes, which were in colour hazel, bright and clear, without speck or film; then the inside of the mouth, which was pink and healthy; next

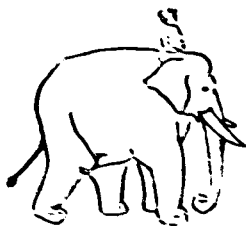
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the nails and soles of the feet, to detect any wound or scar; finally climbing on his back and searching for old scars, knowing that harness galls, though healed, have a way of breaking out, especially in the moisture of the rainy season. He found nothing amiss, though he continued to pretend to be dissatisfied, and then, with the final remark that the price was excessive, he retired.

Half an hour later Kareem stood in the door of a tent, and was speaking to a khaki-clad figure within. His language had altered considerably during this short time. "Sahib," he said, "there is a tusker standing in the fair who is fit for a king to ride now; in the future, with good fortune, he will be perfection. In height he is six cubits, his head and trunk are massive, his back straight as a line, his tail almost touches the ground, and his feet and nails are as they should be. He has no scar or blemish, and as to docility, he allowed me to handle him freely, and we are already as brothers."

The subsequent haggling over price would be too tedious to follow, it is sufficient to say

that, a few days later, Kareem left the fair mounted on his "brother's" back, ignoring the admiration of passers-by, guiding the new purchase with a little stick, instead of the heavy iron hook, and delighted with himself, with his master, and with all mankind.



And to make the change from slavery to friendship the more complete, he called the elephant *Maula Bux*, which in our language is equal to *Theodore*, and addressed him, when using confidential language, as "my brother."

It might be supposed that *Maula Bux* would respond to this change in his circumstances: for, of all the jungle tribes, perhaps the wild dog is the only one without any sense of gratitude, remaining suspicious in the face of any kindness, and, without remorse, biting the hand stretched forth to caress. The elephant found it good to be looked after day and night, to have it seen, to that he was clean and well kept, that there were no wounds or scratches

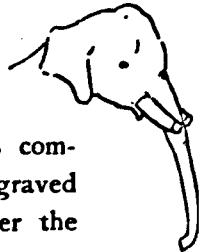
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which might be slow to heal if neglected ; and in return for such attention, he strove to carry out all that was required of him. He knelt,



and submitted to have his forehead painted with fantastic coloured designs, he even permitted that his tusks should be shortened, though this was a serious trial to his temper.

It was one day decided, as the elephant was no longer to be used for timber work, that his long and sharp tusks had become unnecessary, and might, indeed, restrict his usefulness, and prove a danger to his companions. Maula Bux was requested to lie on his side, which he obediently did, his mahout then measured from eye to lip, and marking the same length on his tusks, proceeded to saw off the ends of either, thus avoiding the hollow and sensitive portion above the cut. When this operation was completed, two thick brass rings, engraved and embossed, were slipped over the



ends of the tusks, and tightly wedged in place, and the elephant arose, shorn of a portion of his weapons for which he would have no use in the future, though still possessing implements of the greatest value to himself and his master. The last test of his obedience was, that he should carry lighted lamps on his tusks through the encampment, and this he did with a placidity which delighted his mahout, though inwardly the elephant was far from easy, and carefully kept his trunk out of harm's way.

There came a day when the stud of elephants was to proceed to the jungles, and there be allowed to graze during the winter and spring of the year. They set out on their march in single file, each elephant carrying a load made up of his own fetters and clothing, of his driver's and driver's assistant's kit, of a small tent for shelter for the men, and of a few days' rations, the whole amounting to a weight of some three to four hundred pounds. Under this light burden the elephants tramped gaily



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along the road, their soft feet making little noise, but raising a cloud of dust which passed away with the breeze. Where the



path led through cultivated fields the travellers stretched out greedy trunks to seize mouthfuls of young wheat or cane-sugar, until ordered to desist from robbery. When vil-

lages were reached and the little naked children rushed out with cries of joy, the elephants went warily; when the dogs barked, they curled up their trunks in alarm, as if they knew that in this country the chance of hydrophobia following on a bite was no imaginary danger. They regained the open country, carrying the spoils they had looted; some waving a bush whose yellow flowers had given promise of a heavy crop of lentils, another with a trunkful of grain snatched from the threshing floor; and Maula Bux, perhaps most successful



of all, with a bundle of straw packed beneath each tusk, and a third held in his trunk for gradual consumption on the way.

As the winter afternoon drew on, there was the arrival in camp, where, under the shelter of the evergreen mango trees, loads were taken off, elephants tethered, fires lighted to cook the evening rations, while some elephants were despatched to bring in leaf fodder from fig trees, or long grass from the



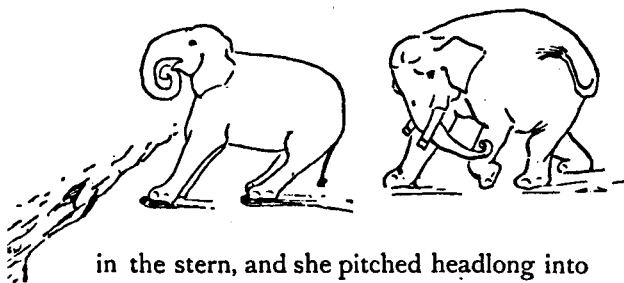
banks of stream or lake for the night's feed. Then, under the stars throughout the long night, men slept while the elephants fed and rested, lying down for two or three hours at the most in the early morning hours. When dawn came to light up the misty landscape, fires were again lit to cook the morning meal, the elephants were ridden to drink and bathe at the nearest water, their loads were readjusted and the easy march began once more.

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It ended one day on the banks of a broad river, where a strong stream flowed some hundred of yards in width through a broad expanse of sand which marked the limit of the summer floods. Here the baggage was loaded into boats which crossed amid the shouting of the oarsmen, while the elephants first waded and then swam to the opposite shore. To some of these animals the occasion was one of joyful play. Their naked drivers stood erect, supporting themselves by a rope round the neck of the elephant. These reared high out of the water and wallowed back into the depths, disappearing from view like gigantic porpoises; then returning to the surface, blowing out the air from curved trunks, screaming to each other in gaiety of heart, neglectful of the cries and abuse of the mahouts.

Others there were who feared to enter the current, standing with feet firmly set to the sand, refusing to move in spite of entreaties and chastisement. To such mutineers stronger persuasion was necessary; their drivers dismounted and stood by them, and then it was

that the wisdom of shortening Maula Bux's tusks became apparent. He was told to advance upon the stubborn elephants, and, when within three or four paces, to charge. His lowered forehead caught the first waverer full



in the stern, and she pitched headlong into the water, whence return was barred by threatening tusks. The choice now lay between being butted into deep water or entering it voluntarily, and the haste with which a decision was taken as the big tusker approached the next victim was almost ludicrous.

Last of all, Maula Bux himself entered the stream. There was some eight feet of strong swirling water around him ere he lost his foothold, then, with powerful strokes he made his way across, standing in the shallows, curling

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his trunk at the right angle to help his driver to the ground, throwing water over his body till thoroughly cleansed, then again making a pathway for the mahout with curved trunk, and giving the final toss calculated with the utmost nicety to bring him well into his seat.

CHAPTER VIII

In Training for Sport

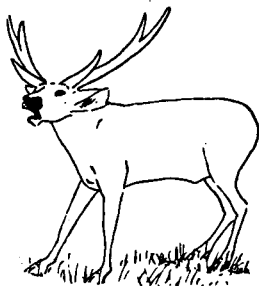
CONTENTMENT in captivity was now the portion of the elephant Maula Bux, for by this time the uniform kindness he experienced had deadened the longing for a wild life, and where there was no toil, there also the desire for liberty did not oppress him. Throughout the day he roamed through the forest, grazing as he went ; at times stopping to pluck some succulent grass or reed, at others breaking off the foliage of such trees as he desired ; gathering here a trunkful of bamboo, and there some fruit fallen in its ripeness. He was scarcely conscious that the mahout sat sleepily on his back, save when, forgetting, he threw dust over his body to keep off the flies, or proposed to pass under some bough, hardly high enough for the comfort of his rider. On

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such occasions he was reminded by a peremptory order in elephant language, intelligible to himself and to the clan of mahouts, but conveying no meaning whatever to those outside this close corporation. As the afternoon wore on, he would find himself on the banks of river or lake and, wading in, would take a prolonged bath, emerging with soft, black skin, cleansed from all impurities, then stride away back to camp, knowing far too well to again soil himself with dust or mud and so provoke the displeasure of his driver.

Then followed the long, calm night, when the moon shone in misty brilliance over the forest, and the jungle tribes came out to feed and play. The elephant knew each one by sight or sound. When the tigress roared for her cubs to rejoin her, or the tiger growled with rage after unsuccessful hunting the elephant understood what was in their thoughts. When the deer gave their alarm cry, the bell of sambhar, the whistle of spotted deer, the baying of barking-deer were as if the difficulties and dangers of the jungle life were being related to him ; he stood

unmoved when the wild dogs passed by in full pursuit of some luckless hind, and it was only when in the distance the screaming and purring of a herd of wild elephants startled the silence of the night that he tested the tethering chain, in the hope that he was free to join them. At the sound of the rattling links the mahout,



aroused at once by the cries of the distant herd, would come from his tent and speak to, and soothe his "brother," at the same time seeing that the fetters were firmly in place; and then, with the happy ease of the uncivilized, who eat when hungry and sleep when weary, would sit down beside his charge, smoking his "hookah" and from time to time speaking in short sentences which required no reply.

In this way the weeks passed, and the elephants were all fat and well as summer approached. Then came a day when the grasslands were burnt, when water had ceased

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to be abundant, and when man, the hunter, was better able to come to terms with the forest tribes. The elephants were caparisoned for a shooting party in simple and workmanlike harness, and thus stood, some twenty strong, before the rows of white tents, awaiting the pleasure of the hunters. These came eager and interested in their mounts; asking innumerable questions as to the steadiness of each elephant, and its staunchness in danger. The drivers replied, each praising his own particular charge, save only Kareem, who was content to remark that Maula Bux had not taken part in the hunt before that day.

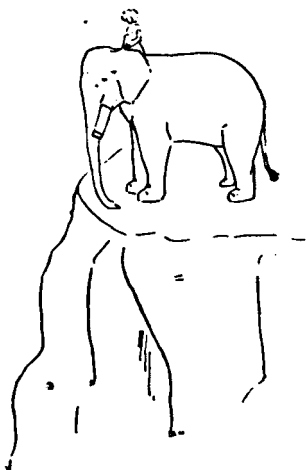
At the foot of a perpendicular bank, scored here and there with narrow ravines cut by the



monsoon storms, was a strip of grass so high that its flowering tops reached above the tallest elephant. It merged into the forest of "shisham"

saplings that stretched away to where the river ran swiftly between smooth boulders, and at one end of this patch of jungle, which lay unburnt and green across the blackened plain, stood a line of elephants waiting the word of command to sweep through the cover and drive out every living thing. Maula Bux was not in this line of attack; until he had been proved, it was not expedient that he should be in a position to disorganize the beat either by a show of cowardice or by a frenzy of rage. He had been sent by a circuitous route to the top of the cliff to guard the exits from the grass-land to the hills above, and stood, a few feet from the edge of the precipice, looking down on the dense cover below.

The line of elephants advanced, and as they came the jungle tribes retreated before them;



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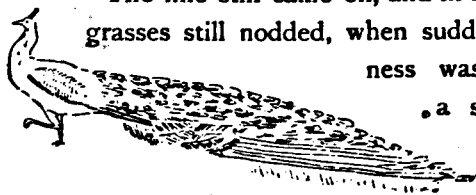
the deer rushed out to one side, clattering over the stones and splashing through the water; the pigs dashed blindly forward or broke through the line, causing the more timid elephants



to scream with fear; the black-partridges towered above the trees and soared away with outspread wings; and the peafowl, running to the edge of the forest, sped away uttering frightened cries. The only sign of life remaining in front of the inexorable line of elephants was that some yards ahead the tops of the highest stalks of grass quivered as if slightly touched from below. The more experienced elephants raised their trunks, not to point in that direction, but to assure themselves by scent what this movement was; the more experienced of the hunters laid hand on rifle and kept it ready for use.

The line still came on, and in front of it the grasses still nodded, when suddenly the still-

ness was broken by
a shot and an
answering



roar from the hunted tiger. Unscathed, he bounded away in the direction of a narrow watercourse which seamed the face of the precipice, and the next instant Maula Bux was confronted by an angry tiger which appeared to have arisen from the ground at his feet. To the elephant, accustomed in wild life to due deference even from tigers, this was a startling occurrence; but the thought of flight did not pass through his brain. Instantaneously, almost mechanically, he had swung out his fore-foot and felt the resistance of a heavy body. The tiger fell backwards, and half slipping, half leaping, reached the foot of the precipice and disappeared in the heavy grass. From above it was easy to follow the subsequent events. Escape was impossible from the semicircle of elephants and from the hail of rifle bullets, and the tiger, fighting to the last, was soon overpowered.



From that day the elephant Maula Bux was

classed as a staunch shooting elephant, and was almost expected to do the impossible as well as the possible. He found it natural to defend himself, and even to act on the offensive if he were in danger from man or beast; in such cases his courage and quick temper lent a zest to combat. But it was a different matter when in cold blood to advance upon a concealed tiger, savage with his wounds and awaiting only a favourable opportunity to tear and destroy. On these occasions he did advance, but it was only by order of his mahout or rider, to whom, through affection, he had given obedience; and often he obeyed in spite of the refusal and even ignominious flight of others of his tribe, whose courage was not so high or training so efficacious, thereby proving that even the tendency, so marked in most animals, to follow a lead, had been overcome in his case. But what appeared to be most difficult to this elephant was, that he was permitted no participation in the combat that so frequently followed. He could have understood if, when the tiger charged, he too might charge and slay his

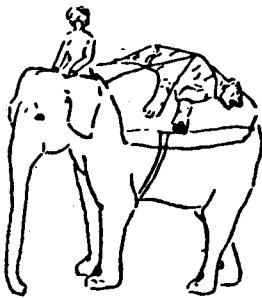
opponent with tusk, or crush him underfoot ; but to stand without movement, trusting to his rider to stop the onslaught, was almost too much for his endurance. Indeed, on one occasion he had met his adversary with tusks held horizontally, and before the tiger could get his hold, had hurled him to the ground and stamped him to a pulp, only to be scolded, even chastised for following his own instincts and not reposing perfect confidence in his master. The elephant had witnessed some accidents happen in the early period of his hunting life ; he had seen a tiger, seemingly fixed to the head of a defenceless elephant, pulling it to earth or clinging to its hind-quarters, biting and scratching through some supreme seconds of satisfying vengeance. He was on such occasions always eager to rush into the fray, to force his blunted tusks through the attacker until his grip relaxed : but here also he was prevented from interfering, and by degrees became so obedient that even in moments of the greatest urgency he would await the word of command.

Thus he gradually attained to the highest pitch

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of training, when he would stand absolutely still in the midst of confusion and uproar, advance or retreat without hesitation, in short, sacrifice his identity to his master, and become but a dirigible tower which could follow the jungle tribes into their fastnesses and attack them in places where man would be helpless before them.

From one indignity his size and value preserved him. He was not made to carry home the spoils of the chase ; the intense repugnance



of wild herbivorous animals to blood and death is most marked in the elephant, and it is a sore trial to them to be laden with the carcasses of the slain, to have their hides crimson with

blood, to be followed by swarms of eager insects. And even when washed clean from the taint, the harness yet remains unpurified, and forever to these sensitive nostrils is

obnoxious. The smaller and less valuable of the stud were therefore used for this purpose, although the nervous and timid ones were not suitable. Such animals would at times be roused to frenzy by their own imagination; they would use every endeavour to get rid of their burdens, and the disgusted sportsmen had to look on helpless, while a prized trophy was being dragged through the forest, or a foolish elephant, entangled in the ropes, would be executing a frantic dance on the most cherished spoils of the chase.

Fear and anger are the predominating passions of the forest tribes. Probably in most cases the former is the most engrossing, but its force may be overcome by pain, hunger, parental affection and similar feelings, and then rage takes command, and what is known as courage comes into play. In fact, therefore, the varying degrees of courage in wild animals, but marks the limit where rage becomes superior to fear. As with animals such as the hyena, no pain, hunger or affection would compass this end, we call the animal cowardly; so with the tiger and

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elephant, the transition is easily reached, and we call them courageous. Though there is among wild animals little of the calm, calculating courage we know as bravery in man, and though, when it occurs, it is most generally among the gentlest and most harmless of the forest tribes, yet that such bravery can be taught is evident. When a dog, a horse or an elephant can be induced to face danger at the word of command without the impetus of anger, it is surely proof of training of the very highest order.

CHAPTER IX

The Kheddah

THE broad valley lay silent in the dawn of a February morning. On every side the forest-clad hills encircled the landscape, brilliant with the tender green of the young foliage, accentuated here and there by masses of white blossom where some tree, more eager than its fellows, had prematurely responded to the call of spring. The scattered clumps of bamboo had lost the vivid colouring of the winter months, and their leaves showed a yellow tinge which told of the approaching heat. Through the valley a river flowed



noisily over the rounded pebbles ; its murmur rose and fell in obedience to some air-current hardly perceptible ; it was rather as if waves of sound followed one on another with rhythmic precision. The wide water-course of bleached stones and sand, which would be covered in the monsoon with a turbid torrent, now lay peaceful and solitary ; it was bounded by dense thickets of young trees, which gave place to grassy plains stretching up to the foot of the hills. From clefts in these flowed other minor streams with rippling waters eager to join the main river. On the grassy plains a few cattle and buffaloes wandered ; their deep-toned bells clanging as they moved.

As daylight appeared over the hills, and the sun's rays struck in slanting lines on one side of the valley, the other seemed to grow more dark and indefinite. Some peafowl planed with

extended wings from their lofty roosting places to warm themselves by the river's brink ; the grazing



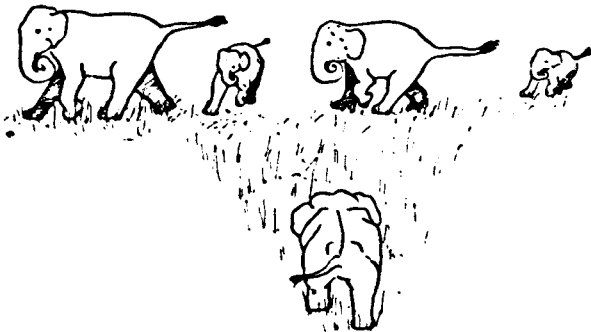
deer drew off towards the shelter of the forest; the vultures spread their wings to the daylight, but with no intention of quitting their perches to seek the cooler air of the higher altitudes till the sun was hot; and lastly, man awoke and set about the business of the day.

It was some hours later when all was ready for the hunt, for here the purpose was not to drive a herd of wild elephants into a stockade, but to run them down in the open forest, to lasso them, and bring them captive to the camp. It was a more sporting proceeding, where the fate of the individual would be decided by the speed, endurance, cleverness and courage both of pursuer and pursued. When at last the hunters moved in single file from the deserted camp there were some forty elephants prepared for the task before them. On each were mounted two men; the one sitting on the neck of his elephant, armed with heavy iron hook to urge and direct during the pursuit; the other squatting over the crupper ropes, holding in his hand a short wooden club faced with iron spikes which acted as a spur in time of need. Between

these two men was neatly coiled a stout rope, of which the free end terminated in a slip-knot and the other was firmly secured to the elephant's girths. The party crossed the river and disappeared in a deep cleft between the hills; following a foot-track they undulated, still in single file, towards a fixed goal; sometimes descending into steep ravines and laboriously climbing the further bank, at others proceeding cautiously along narrow ridges, where foothold for such ponderous animals as elephants seemed most precarious; now passing through level tracts of dense tree forest, and again following the winding course of some mountain rivulet, till at last they halted at the invitation of a man who had evidently been awaiting their approach.

There was a whispered consultation, and the march was resumed, until the hunters entered a narrow valley in the hills, and here in safe places were deposited those who came to see without risk, and those who were content with the excitement of witnessing the courage and dexterity of the hunters. Along the slopes of the valley a herd of wild elephants were moving

uneasily to and fro. The silent approach of others of their kind was viewed without much alarm, save that the scent of human beings was repugnant to their sensitive nostrils. But as they wandered in indecision towards the further end of the valley, the air seemed suddenly to be



filled with the shouts of men, with the rushing of many elephants, and with the trampling of grass and the breaking of saplings. A panic seized the herd, and it fled in confusion with uplifted tails and curling trunks; and the next moment the strangers were amongst them, each of the forty mahouts singling out a victim and devoting entire attention to its capture. Those

pursued ran for their lives, overcoming obstacles which ordinarily would have been deemed insurmountable, hurling themselves down the steepest slopes, but always refusing to ascend towards the higher hills, so that the direction of flight was towards the main river and to the standing camp. As each wild elephant was run to a standstill, the men attempted to pass the running noose over its neck, but only after many failures could this be accomplished; always there was a ready trunk to divert the impending danger, or to throw off the rope when it had reached its mark. Often, after a duel of this kind, the hunted one recovered its wind and the wild chase recommenced, hampered this time by a trailing length of rope, which had to be re-coiled while rushing through the jungle. At last, however, the fatal noose would be jerked tight, and then the captive would strain against it, dragging his captor through the forest till suffocated by his own exertions, and thus again brought to a standstill.

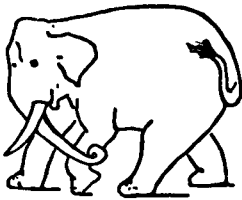
Then commenced the hurried task of loosening the slip-knot so that strangulation should

not follow, and of securing it with a strand of hemp, so that the same danger should not again occur; and when this was completed, there remained nothing but to shout for help, for amongst the densely grown trees it would be impossible, without entanglement, which would mean breakage of the rope, to lead the captive into the open. In the first hour or so some twenty of the wild elephants had been noosed, and those mahouts who had been unsuccessful in the chase, were now ordered to give assistance to their more fortunate companions. It was comparatively easy to fit a second rope, and to lead away the wild elephant, which was kept in position between the two tame ones, by the ropes strained to front and rear by these latter. Thus, after some delay the vanquished and conquerors were all assembled in the little valley to be inspected, and then marshalled on the road to prison.

It was at this moment that a diversion was created by the appearance of the herd-bull. This animal, as usual, at some little distance from the herd, had become excited by the

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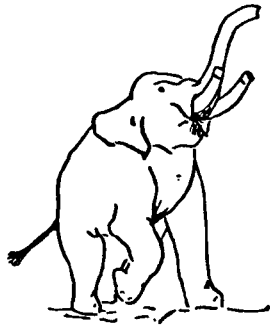
noise of the hunt, by the cries of men and elephants, by the blind rush or flight of his companions. He arrived in no mild humour, at a quick walk, his trunk swinging from side



to side, and with fury in his eyes, taking his stand some fifty yards distant from the helpless mob of men and elephants. There was at once a cry for

Maula Bux to drive away the intruder, and our elephant, whose bulk unfitted him for the chase, now stepped slowly into the arena, seeming with a glance to take in the position, and with one wave of his trunk to learn what manner of animal this was who proposed to withstand him. He turned, under the pressure of his mahout's knees, towards the foe, who also advanced to the combat; at a word from Kareem, Maula Bux quickened his pace to a charge, and the two elephants met with a shock that forced each backwards. But not for long. The superior weight of the tame

elephant soon became evident, and the wild tusker turned to flee. With a scream of rage Maula Bux pursued and butted the flying foe with his blunted tusks. Had these been of full length and sharp, they would certainly have sunk deep into the hind-quarters of the adversary, but as it was, the defeated elephant pitched forward on to trunk and knees, then recovered himself and fled into the shelter of the forest. Maula Bux was prevented by his mahout from following up his victory; he stood to receive the compliments and endearments of his driver, and after giving a scream of triumph with uplifted trunk, resumed his position on one side of the troop of elephants.

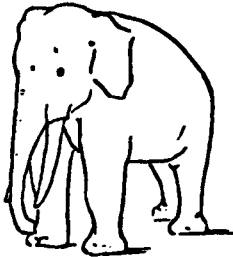


These now started for camp in single file, a captive between every two tame elephants; they seemed dejected at their fate, and made but little effort to escape. From time to time

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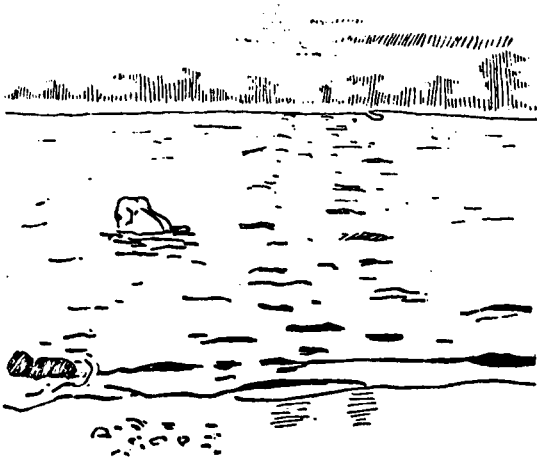
an elephant would try to break away, but was held by the tightening ropes; or another would throw itself on the ground, blocking the way and causing a halt along the line. But these delays were not serious; the elephants continued their journey followed by the young calves whose mothers had been captured and, not long after sundown, were all secured in the camp.

It was rather a pitiable scene that was disclosed as the silence of a moonlight night fell on the weary camp. The prisoners struggling at their fetters, often with blood streaming from



the wounds where the ropes bit into the flesh; the young calves wandering around seeking for protection and for nourishment which was denied them; and in the outskirts of the camp where the shadows were densest, the restless form of the herd-bull who had followed the trail of his captured harem, yet, having arrived, knew not how to assist them, nor to what use

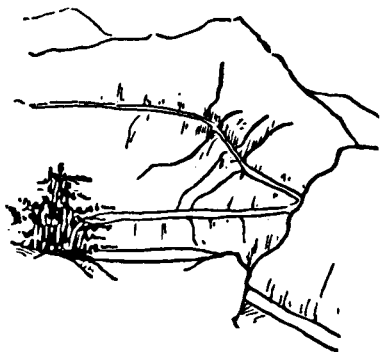
to put his strength and courage. As the day dawned he turned away, and, slowly crossing the river, disappeared in the depths of the forest, doubtless with a view to overtake and bring together the remnants of the scattered herd.



But even this solace was denied him; his attempt to rescue the herd on the previous day, his presence during the night in the vicinity of the camp had resulted in his classification as an animal dangerous to human life, or at least to human interests. The order came with the break

of day that he was to be followed and destroyed.

His tracks were easy to distinguish, and



soon a khaki-clad figure accompanied by two Indians was on the trail; this followed the beaten path left by forty elephants bringing in the twenty captives of yesterday; it overlay the broad

footmarks of the herd-bull as he too had brought up the rear of that sad procession. Then entering the scene of the conflict it had passed towards the higher hills and ultimately joined a fresher track where the remainder of the herd had met and hurried away in single file to some haven of fancied security.

The huntsmen followed on the trail now some hours old. They hoped that during the heat of the day the frightened animals might rest; but such was not the case. Unhampered by young calves and with a known goal before

them, they pressed on in the vain hope of escaping from the tyranny of man. And so it was that when darkness fell and the trail became invisible, the three men halted to pass the night in the forest. They had but a rough blanket apiece to protect them from dew and frost, a few unleavened cakes and a little parched pulse to satisfy their hunger, and soon they lay by the camp fire to await the dawn of another day. There were few sounds in the forest save the ceaseless drip from the trees, and occasionally the rustling of passing breezes. From time to time nightjars passed,



sounding monotonous notes as of sonorous blows upon firm ice, or little owlets sat on the branches above uttering curious cries reminiscent of water slowly dropping from a height. The hours passed slowly. From time to time one of the men rose and replenished the fire and drew a few whiffs of smoke from the gurgling hookah. But at last there were signs of returning day. The eastern sky was lit

with a white light which turned to yellow, then to orange and crimson, and the sun peered above the horizon as if curious to see what had happened in his absence. The men took up the trail in silence; they were cold and hungry.

Towards midday they arrived on the edge of a plain covered with grass which waved high



above their heads.

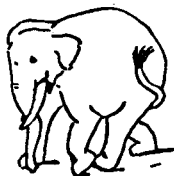
In the centre of this sea stood an island raised slightly above the swampy soil, and on this island

beneath a low-crowned tree stood the object of their search. Evidently the herd were not far distant, the grass might well conceal many more elephants than those now left in freedom.

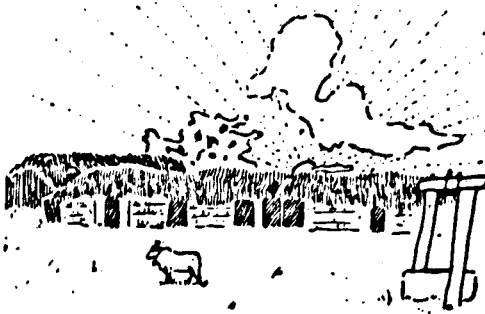
The men sat down and considered the case. To approach the elephant through the grass without noise was a hopeless task, while from its depths to see, much less to shoot, was impossible. They determined to wait, hoping against hope that the bull would move from his post of vantage on to firmer ground, into

more open country. But as evening approached it became evident that the animal had no such intention; it also became certain that another night without food could not be spent in the forest, and so it was that after a heated discussion the khaki-clad hunter disappeared in the grass on the chance of being able to disable the bull while daylight lasted. On his tracks after a few minutes' hesitation one of the Indians also silently crept; the third man remained to signal information to his companions should opportunity arise.

There was for a long time silence over the scene; the passage of the hunters made no stir in the tall grasses. Then suddenly the elephant swung round and stood with uplifted trunk facing some hidden danger. It was a moment of anxious fear for the solitary watchman, till from the top of the grasses a puff of white smoke burst forth and a muffled report reached his ears. The elephant seemed to stagger, and turning, plunged into the grass and disappeared; a ripple



seemed to mark his course till he emerged on the further side of the swamp and entered the forest at a swinging trot. The watcher rejoined his companions, and together they inspected the ground; then, as the sun was sinking, they struck off in another direction



and reached a village where much needed food and warmth were found.

The elephant soon subsided into a rapid walk, which became slower as weakness followed the loss of blood; he seemed astonished at what had befallen him and frightened at his growing weakness. No rage was in his heart as he pursued his weary way, leaving a trail which required no care or cunning to follow.

Till at last he felt that he could do no more and stood leaning against the trunk of a huge tree on the banks of a rivulet which flowed gently through the forest. He had stood thus for hours, till around him was gathered a dark pool of blood, when suddenly his sensitive trunk brought him news of the presence of man. And now at last his heart was filled with fury. He waited till from his post of vantage he could locate his pursuers with accuracy, then with a scream of fury he charged down upon them. In those wild moments he hardly knew what happened. In his headlong rush he caught and trampled on at least one of his enemies. There were shots fired, and somehow he found himself dizzy and feeble, trying to support himself by the aid of his massive trunk. But without avail; he tottered and fell with a crash, while those of his pursuers who were still alive were bemoaning the fate of their comrade and their own injuries, and at the same time congratulating themselves on having escaped with their lives from the onslaught of a beast which had become dangerous only when hunted to its death.

CHAPTER X

Hunting Scenes

THOROUGHLY tested in the field in the company of his kind the elephant, Maula Bux, was now to be used in a more trying yet more interesting form of sport. Relieved of the heavy howdah which swayed at each stride and seriously incommoded him, the elephant had now to carry nothing but a light frame-work on which his master sat immediately behind the driver. Thus caparisoned he could pass readily through the densest jungle, nor did the overhanging boughs present so constant an impediment to him. The animal loved these silent roamings through the forest, when no word was spoken lest the jungle tribes might become aware of the presence of man: when he was guided by pressure of knee or touch of hand: when he could as he passed graze on the

various delicacies that the forest provided, and so obtain that constant change of diet so essential to his health.

He too was able to participate in the sport that his master sought. The keenness of his sense of scent would often detect some animal invisible owing to the denseness of the forest growth, and, especially when some animal obnoxious to him, such as pig, bear, panther or tiger was in the vicinity, his sensitive trunk would be waved in its direction merely in order to assure himself of its whereabouts, but thus, all unwittingly, giving notice to his companions. The sportsman who proposes to make acquaintance with the jungle tribes and neglects the two important advantages of silence and of gaining information by watching the elephant he rides, a being much more gifted than himself in forest lore, will have but little success in his attempts. The human voice is audible at great distances amongst the silent trees, and at its sound every animal, aware of the presence of man, either removes to a distance or crouches in concealment till the danger is past. Then,

too, in a country where wild elephants abound the passage of an elephant grazing as he goes creates no alarm: the scent of human beings seated high above the ground is carried upward and forward by the breezes, so that good opportunity is given to study the forest tribes while at their ease. To do this to perfection the early morning hours or those before nightfall, sometimes even the bright moonlit nights of India, are most suitable, and for success in a pursuit so interesting to the naturalist as well as to the sportsmen, the elephant is a most useful coadjutor.

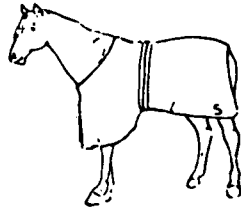
Long before the sun rose one morning, when the stars were twinkling through the frosty dew and the sky seemed of inky blackness Maula Bux strode, with his companions, away from the little encampment where shrouded forms still lay around the camp fires.

A dog had barked in protest at being left behind and his appeal had been

heard; he was now sitting, shivering with happiness,



beside his master. A horse whinnied, and the watchful grooms stirred to find the cause of the disturbance; then the darkness of the night shut out all further movement. The elephant, on whom this darkness had little



effect, though he used his trunk constantly as a blind man will use his stick on an unknown road, moved steadily away towards the hills, the intention being to intercept the forest tribes as they moved, heavy with food, to their resting places for the day. From time to time their presence could be heard, but nothing could be seen by human eyes. There would be the belling of the sambhar, or the sharp alarm of the swamp deer, followed by a rustling through the grass: or from the distance would come the grunting of some tiger disappointed in the chase, or the trumpeting of a herd of elephants.

When daylight broke Maula Bux had reached the foot of a range of hills which barred the view to the north, while to the south extended

the level grasslands from whence arose here and there little clouds of white mist denoting the presence of stagnant water. He climbed to the top of a small eminence and in the distance his riders saw a sight which compensated them for the chilly ride in the silent darkness, and even for such further exertions as might fall to their lot during the day. A herd of bison were scattered over the plain below moving in full security towards some plateau in the hills where they proposed to pass the day. In the dim morning light they gave the impression of a herd of enormous black cattle grazing its way homeward. The calves ran by their mothers' sides or gambolled aimlessly in their neighbourhood; the cows moved stolidly along browsing on some tender branch as they passed, or pulling mouthfuls of the wet grass. And last of all came two bulls whose massive forms seemed to dwarf the other members of the herd.

And now the sun shot suddenly into the horizon, and the scene changed. Blacks and greys disappeared from the landscape and vivid colours took their place, in the greens of grass

and foliage, in the orange and reds of the flowering trees. The herd of bison was also transformed; they passed a few yards below the hunters in all their pride of graceful strength. The bulls were of a deep chocolate colour, turning to black in the shadows; the head was held high, as if the weight of the curved horns, green and polished like clouded jade, was hardly felt; the light-blue eyes gazed serenely and confidently around, and the golden yellow of the slender lower limbs contributed to the effect of agility in spite of the ponderous bulk of an animal some eighteen hands in height. The herd passed slowly by without suspicion or alarm, imprinting on the minds of the hunters an indelible picture seldom seen save by those who pass their lives in the forest; and, as they grazed, a slant of the fickle morning breeze brought to the herd the taint of man. They swung round facing the path in which they had come, inhaling the air with suspicion, and then the signal for flight came in a sharp whistle from one of the cows. The herd turned and fled, galloping over the broken ground with the

agility of startled deer, earth and gravel flying as they passed, so that in a few seconds only a cloud of dust remained as proof of their presence.

The party wandered on skirting the line of hills, entering from time to time some deep-cut ravine and crossing its steep watershed into the next. Often when slowly mounting to the summit of these little hills a sambhar or swamp-deer would be seen passing along the further ridge, where, later on, selecting some leafy tree, he would lie on its northern side so as to be in the shade during the heat of the day. Here chewing the cud reflectively, with ears constantly twitching to and fro, and with sensitive nostrils testing the air, he would rest till the evening shadows lengthened.

These animals passed unmolested, and it was not till the broad track of a buffalo-bull was found that the sportsmen seemed at last to be in earnest. They descended from the elephant and took up the trail, following it with ease on the softer ground, losing it frequently as the animal passed over stones and rocks, recovering it again after much search. The sun was

now getting hot, and it was certain that the buffalo must soon be overtaken ; the men went cautiously, when suddenly from behind a crashing in the jungle, the thudding of heavy feet was heard. The buffalo, with the cunning of his tribe, had returned upon his trail and then struck off at right angles to it before lying down for the day. He had heard the trackers and suffered them to pass, but the sight of the elephant, which was following some three hundred yards behind, was too much for him. He rose to his feet and bounded heavily away.

The buffalo, with head held horizontally, tore through the dense forest ; it seemed impossible that his vast bulk and wide-spread horns should find a way without colliding with some tree, or that his foothold on broken and stony ground should be so secure. The impression produced on the eye was that one saw the whole of the massive head and body at one time ; the fact was, that always at least one half was covered by the thick vegetation.

In his hasty flight from an' imaginary danger the buffalo took no thought of the men who

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had passed him. A shot rang out dully, muffled in the interlaced crown of the trees, but no sign was given by the frightened animal. The hunters followed, and some yards ahead found blood on the trail. They followed eagerly until the gallop of the hunted was reduced to a walk, and then they too acted with circumspection.

To a wounded animal comes after the first flurry a determination to reach some place of fancied security, and as long as self-control lasts the line of retreat will be straight towards a fixed point. Zig-zagging in the track denotes growing weakness and inability to persist in any given direction. But this trail led almost



straight through the forest, and disappeared at last in a sea of high grass, wherein man was of himself helpless. Here, then, the elephant was called

upon to assist, and slowly the party entered the stronghold of the wounded buffalo. Not

a sign of the great beast was visible. The sun shone brightly on the green grass, now unruffled by any breeze; no track could be discerned, for the vegetation had closed over the passage of the jungle tribes who below had formed little tunnels for their use. It was on the elephant that the hunters must depend for information as to the whereabouts of the hunted. And this was soon given. Maula Bux halted and waved his trunk above the grasses, then for one second it remained poised pointing to the source whence came the tainted air.

At the same moment there was a rush through the grass, and the ready rifle again was fired. The rush subsided to a walk, and behind the elephant the grass nodded and trembled as a way was forced through it by some invisible animal. Some twenty yards behind followed the hunters, till the end of the savannah land was reached, and then a heavy head armed with spreading horns protruded. The buffalo,



wounded to death, still retained the instinct to avoid the open ground. Almost reeling with weakness, he turned to regain the shelter of the grass, and fell with a last merciful shot through the brain. In the evening light the hunters returned slowly to camp. Ere they reached it, the jungle tribes were again alert on their way to grazing or to hunt. From the slopes on the hills and from its deep-cut ravines they stole quietly forth, testing the air at each footstep, listening for any suspicious sound, till satisfied of safety, they rushed with quick bounds from the edge of the forest, where lurking foes might lie in wait, to the open country, where keenness of sight came to the aid of scent and hearing.

CHAPTER XI

Some Dangers of the Forest

THE inborn instincts of an animal are difficult to eradicate, yet it is to be expected that constant association with man, his greatest enemy, would result in a considerable relaxation of the usual suspicion and caution which are shown in a wild state. And this is no doubt the case. Thus, for instance, when pitfalls are dug in localities frequented by elephants, it is probably the scent of human beings which often provides a safeguard to the intended victim, but this scent would convey no warning of danger to the domesticated animal. In the same way, wild elephants are rarely, if ever, entangled in quicksands, while the tame elephant, deferring instinct to obedience, is not infrequently engulfed.

In the course of many years' wandering in

the jungles, it was impossible but that mishaps should occur to the elephant, Maula Bux. When he crossed over wide stretches of burnt grasslands, the stout, charred spikes protruding six inches or more from the surface were especially dangerous to the soft, broad soles of his feet. At times one would penetrate deeply and break off in the wound, when the elephant would halt and endeavour to withdraw it with his trunk, or to get rid of it by violent rubbing on the ground. Frequently these attempts at relief were futile, and the mahout would descend and remove the splinter with his knife, cleansing and anointing the wound on arrival in camp. Or again, the ill-fitting harness would fret the withers or back of the animal, more especially if the skin were allowed to become dusty or dirty ; and the greatest care had then to be taken that deep-seated ulcers were not formed. Or, as the elephant became older, there would be trouble with his teeth, the new growth perhaps not being strong enough to push aside the old. For, in consequence of the unnatural life in confinement, slight injuries might produce vastly

different results to those which would follow when the animal was in a normal condition.

The recuperative powers of the forest tribes will appear amazing to those whose acquaintance is only with domestic animals, though these may be of allied species. In the same way, uncivilized man shows a fortitude, even an indifference to injuries which would incapacitate one born and bred in more artificial surroundings. Nature may indeed be cruel in order to prevent racial deterioration in her creatures; she may promptly destroy the unfit and diseased; but she aids in the recovery of those who through accident are thrown for a time on her mercy. Nature, in short, takes or saves life in a beneficent effort for the common welfare, while mankind assumes the same responsibility for the benefit of the individual.

The naturalist will not have many opportunities of watching the behaviour of animals when suffering from severe injuries unless these are inflicted intentionally by man or beast; for only in the latter cases does the hunter follow up his advantage at once and so prevent

that immediate concealment which is the first instinct of the wounded. The object of this concealment is no doubt to secure refuge from the attacks of flies, which if successful are certain to prevent rapid healing, and in many cases result in a lingering death. Another reason for hiding is found in the necessity of avoiding the presence of other forest tribes, who all resent rather than pity the distress of the lame and suffering, probably because such unfortunates become a source of danger to the community by attracting the attacks of the great or small carnivora. Finally, it is only in complete rest that bones can reunite and lacerated muscles heal, while the pain of the wound and the fever which follows destroy the appetite which is the sole incentive that drives animals to roam.

Instances have been observed of the disappearance of wounded tigers in spite of days devoted to skilful tracking; yet after the search had been abandoned the animal has been known, even seen, to leave some dense cover which had been specially watched, and at once to proceed on a lengthy march to some more retired and

therefore safer locality. With elephants injuries have been under observation which were followed by a good recovery, though this would certainly have proved fatal in the case of domestic animals. And this fact is interesting, because an elephant is prevented from rest in concealment, first, because of his large bulk, and second, because he cannot go without food for long periods, as carnivorous animals can. On the other hand he can protect every part of his body against the attacks of flies by means of his trunk or tail, and so is in a particularly favourable position in this regard. Should one of these members be absent, however, he is no better off than his neighbours, as was proved by the fact that a noted and dangerous rogue elephant when killed was found to have lost his tail, probably when flying from a victorious opponent, and the attack of flies had resulted in a deep and wide cavity, which was probably the reason of his evil temper, and would certainly have ultimately resulted in his death.

A panther, whose tail had dropped off in consequence of a bullet wound, found means,

with the cunning of his tribe, to avoid the attacks of the winged torments of the forest. When examination became possible, some weeks after the infliction of this wound, the bullet was found flattened at the base of the spine, and externally there was no mark whatever to be observed on his denuded hind-quarters. In the same way, on more than one occasion deer have been observed who, disappearing with shattered hind-legs, have been shot weeks after in their old haunts in excellent condition, though a healed stump replaced what might have been considered to have been a limb almost necessary to their existence. From wounds of the internal organs an animal will rarely recover, but from those of trunk or limb which do not prevent it from taking a share in the life of the jungle, it will recover, provided it is allowed to follow its instincts of concealment, rest, and starvation.

A narrow rivulet flowed sluggishly from the hills between steep-cut banks of clay. Along its borders were scattered willow trees, and here and there it formed wide morasses

where flourished high grasses densely grown, forming impenetrable cover to those animals, such as the tiger and swamp deer, whose wide feet bore them safely over the ooze. To cross this rivulet at its narrowest part was the task set to Maula Bux by his driver, and, although in his wisdom the animal at first refused the passage, yet, urged once and again, his fore-feet slid reluctantly down the steep bank and he at once sank up to his shoulders in the quicksand. Immediately water seemed to pour from the soil and a miniature lake was formed around the struggling elephant, while efforts to withdraw his feet seemed to make matters worse. As he sank yet deeper into the liquid sand, his hind-feet were dragged from the bank, and now only his body was visible above the water. His companions quickly dismounted, but could give but little aid. For the elephant lay first on one side and withdrew two legs from the swamp, then rolled heavily over on the other



The Life of an Elephant

in a vain effort to free his limbs. He seemed for the first time in his life to be in an agony of apprehension: at one moment to lose all courage and lie quiescent, the next to be filled with a fury which led to speedy exhaustion.

Meanwhile he sank deeper and deeper, till only the top of his back and head were above water, while



his trunk waved frantically to and fro seeking for some hold, or for some object, living or inanimate, that might aid him in his struggle. While the elephant was in these extremities, Kareem, aware that he ran the danger of being seized and thrust under the body of the frightened animal, at the risk of his life slashed the girths of the harness and the heavy grass-stuffed saddle fell loose, and was immediately seized and disappeared, the waving trunk seeming to implore for further aid. Then in all haste, saplings, brushwood, anything that could be collected, were thrown to the elephant, and with such good effect that at last there seemed to be no further fear from

drowning. With his eyes below the surface of the water the trunk still continued to grope on all sides for something to grasp, till in a lucky movement it encountered the stem of a willow tree. Instantly the powerful member was coiled around it, and it was evident that if the tree held there was a chance of escape from the terrible position. The tree indeed bent and cracked, and the roots were strained to the utmost, but at last with a mighty effort Maula Bux hauled himself up the bank and stood, covered with mud, on the further side of the stream. Then glancing round with blood-shot eyes, he seemed to search for the enemy that had done him this wrong. The men stood silently watching, afraid to interfere. They passed unnoticed, but there were trees and grasses on which to vent his fury, and these he proceeded to overthrow and trample on, till around him was a wide space cleared of every living thing. This senseless rage wore itself out at last, and it was a fatigued elephant that later submitted to be led quietly away. Yet both he and the mahout had learnt their lesson ; the one in future would

got obey when instinct told that there was danger, while the other would wisely refrain from enforcing an order which the elephant showed continued reluctance to carry out.

Of the method of capture of elephants by pitfalls much has been written, but perhaps the facts remain unaltered, that it is a method economical in initial outlay and expensive ultimately in the loss of animal life. A considerable proportion of elephants are permanently maimed or injured by the fall, while there is no possibility of selecting animals suitable for subsequent training. This system of hunting is perhaps the most ancient in existence, and is adapted to the capture of all the jungle tribes; to that of the hare, which steps on a cunningly contrived door which opens only downwards; of the deer or pig, which springs across an inviting gap in the hedge surrounding the wheat fields, to find itself impaled on a bamboo spike in the concealed pit beyond; to the tiger, bison, or elephant, which quietly passing along well-known paths is suddenly hurled into the dark depths prepared for them; but it is better

adapted to the taking of animal life, than to procuring living specimens for the subsequent service of man.

Moreover, when many pits are dug it may be impossible to visit each daily, and the entrapped animals may suffer the torments of suspense and of thirst for many hours; and ultimately, when the pits are no longer required and are carelessly left covered, they present a deadly danger to man and beast, in that in case of accident there is little chance that help will be forthcoming, and death by starvation is almost inevitable.

It was into one of these abandoned pits that our elephant fell when passing through the forest. The fabric of the solid earth giving way under foot, the short rush through space, the shock of sudden arrest amid showers of falling earth and stones were sensations which, though instantaneous, yet produced a feeling of indescribable horror. It was experienced both by the elephant and his



siders, one of whom was in the fall thrown violently forward, and found himself lying on the further edge of a chasm in which his companions had disappeared. And it was fortunate that this was so, and that by the aid of a rope hastily thrown he was able to rescue his fellow-man from the rage of the imprisoned elephant.

The animal stood firmly wedged in between the narrow walls of his prison, but already he had commenced to dig with tusks and fore feet in the endeavour to make a way to freedom. It was a task which might in hours or days have been accomplished without assistance had the earth been of a soft and yielding nature. But here the hard clay rendered the attempt almost hopeless. At length the elephant became calmer, and was willing to listen to the exhortations of his mahout, who sat on the edge of the pit and spoke soothingly to him, who offered him dainties of leaves and jungle fruit, nor left him till many men appeared on the scene with axes and shovels. Then from all sides, earth, brushwood, bundles of grass were

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thrown into the pit to be trampled down by the willing elephant, till after long labour his head and shoulders appeared above the surface and with an effort he was once again on firm land.

Far different would have been the fate of any wild animal with none to help ; for, though there may have been no witness of their struggles, a record remains imprinted on the surroundings even when only a few bones are left to tell the



piteous tale. In the midst of a forest which had stood for centuries were once found the ruins of a populous town ; of the houses and temples only the foundations remained, level with or hidden by the leaf-mould of years. The area covered by these ruins, unsuspected by the passer-by, in itself indicated the existence of a

Well-to-do people, and this surmise was confirmed by the discovery of two wells of large diameter not very far apart, which had evidently been filled in at a time when the inhabitants were put to the sword and their dwellings destroyed.

One of these wells it was proposed to open out for the supply of water to a new generation of workers in the forest that now flourished on what was once a more prosperous landscape. Some forty feet from the surface and yet twenty feet above water level lay the bones of a tiger blackened with age; the claws of both fore and hind-feet were worn to stumps, and, looking up towards the light, one could see the reason in the masonry torn from the walls of the shaft, and the deep indentations on every side of it. One could measure the height to which the animal had leapt in the first few hours before his strength fell from him, and the ever-increasing distance from freedom that marked his failing vitality: the lowest marks were scarce three feet from where the skeleton lay, and this long drawn-out death took perhaps fifteen or twenty days to complete. Below the remains of the

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tiger other relics came to light, household utensils, such as ancient flour-mills ; carved tiles which once adorned wealthy houses ; bricks from demolished walls, and lastly, weapons of iron, spear-heads and swords, rusty and brittle, and some poor relics of the slain.

And when the work was completed and pure water once again flowed into the well from subterranean stores, the natives, perhaps descendants of the conquerors or of the vanquished, refused to drink lest they should be defiled by the deeds of their predecessors.

CHAPTER XII

Processional Duties

IT was amongst scenes similar to those depicted that the elephant Maula Bux spent many years of his life, till advancing age impaired his agility and increasing bulk interfered with his speed. He had grown in imposing beauty with good treatment and with the comparative freedom of a sporting life, and his value was now so great that they hesitated to expose him further to the chances of a forest life. He was sold to an Indian Prince to enhance the dignity of the State, to carry the ruler in procession, to be lent to those guests whom his owner wished to honour by affording sport with absolute safety amongst the more dangerous of the jungle tribes.

His driver, of course, accompanied him into this change of life ; for probably without his old friend, the elephant would have become useless

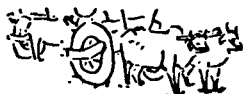
for his work. He would first have fretted at the absence of his companion, and then have vented his annoyance on his successor. A record of many years' successful care of Maula Bux went with Kareem ; the presence of the mahout was equivalent to the sale of goodwill with the business. But neither man nor beast appreciated the change. To stand day by day under the shelter of a roof, on a cemented floor, to be fed monotonously with fodder, stale or even contaminated on its way to the stables ; to be stuffed with artificial food prepared by man ; and for all exercise, to walk sedately along the level roads was not to the tastes of the beast ; while the man regretted, as all sportsmen would, the wild jungle, the rugged hills, the hardships of the summer heats, and perhaps most of all, the silent and mysterious nights. In enforced retirement, the thoughts of both often went back to the forests and recalled events, each with



some background, whose beauty had, all unknown to themselves at the time, permanently impressed itself on their memories.



At rare intervals both man and elephant were given the chance of revisiting the scenes they loved so well. There would be bustle and hurry at headquarters in preparation for the visit of some potentate. Harness and howdahs were being burnished; tents standing in rows of snowy whiteness were being repaired; strings of bullock carts were tailing along the road with stores of furniture and provisions. In the forest for leagues around, pit-falls were being dug to entrap the tigers and panthers, so that the local supply within reach of a central camp might not fall short; for it is in the nature of things that those animals which require a large supply of living food must

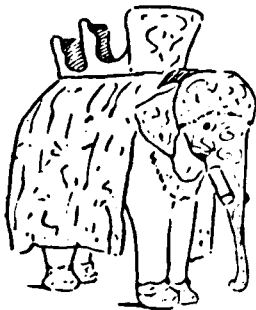


also enjoy a large area in which they may satisfy their hunger without exhausting the existing head of game. At last the day would arrive when the shoot was to commence. Maula Bux on such occasions was, indeed, but one of some two hundred elephants, but, bearing as he did, the principal guest, he was the centre of attraction. His work was easy. When the tiger or other animal had been located, when it had been surrounded so that there was little chance of flight, it was then his duty to stride into the arena, to find the quarry, to stand as firm as a tower when the shot was fired, and to remain so, in spite of attack until the affair was over. There was nothing to disturb his equanimity; his rider was probably trained to the use of gun and rifle from infancy and never made a mistake; and, even if this were not the case, there were ready rifles in his vicinity to complete the work which on occasion may have been unskillfully commenced.

To the elephant such trips were joyful occurrences, for he was once more in the wilds with all their fascination of running water and

growing vegetation, living under the open sky with all the sounds of an exuberant nature around him. For Kareem, the mahout, the change was also welcome, for besides observing and criticising the woodcraft of others, he was in a responsible position in driving princes to their pastime, while he returned rich in presents to resume once more a monotonous life.

On the occasion of State processions there was little pleasure or profit to be won. In fact,



the mahout secretly resented the order to deck his charge in heavy embroidered cloths which almost swept the ground on either side; to secure in its place the heavy gilded howdah, to seat himself on cloth-of-gold so that little was visible of his elephant save a forehead fantastically painted in brilliant colours, and a pair of golden tusks. Still more, he objected to be accompanied on either side by spearmen,

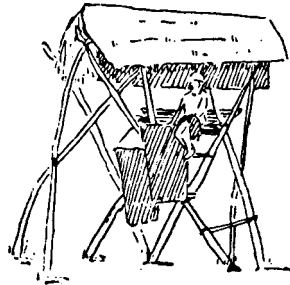
as if his elephant ever required more restraint, than he could bring to bear. And so it was that on such occasions, the distasteful work over, he would hurriedly remove the trappings of State, and they two would resort to some quiet pool in the river, and most thoroughly remove, not only the dust of the road, but also every sign of the adornment prescribed. During such operation, Kareem would converse with his "brother" freely, expressing his opinion on the folly of such shows, and comparing the present with the old days in the forest, when they were one in pleasure and in danger; and moreover, enjoyed plentiful rations, for the man good venison, and for the elephant, all that the forest could yield of succulent fodder.

In every elephant's life comes a time when he is possessed of an evil spirit, when the world seems black before him, when good nature is replaced by a petulant and savage disposition. In the wild state this indisposition rapidly passes away: the animal feeds on astringent herbs and roots, or eats earth in large quantities

go scour himself out; he expends his superfluous energies in destroying trees and uprooting bamboos, and soon regains his evenness of temper. In confinement none of these remedies are available, and he often goes from bad to worse, ultimately to be butchered with volleys of bullets, when one well-directed shot would have ended his career.

Kareem, the mahout, in daily intercourse with his charge, noticed an unevenness of temper, a loss of appetite, a repugnance for the three hours' sleep which the healthy elephant permits to himself; and lastly, the discharge from the temporal gland which is a certain, though not constant, sign of this distemper. He strengthened the shackles of his charge and gave him cooling medicines; but even he had never seen the strength of Maula Bux exerted to the full. In the early morning hours, when all slept, the devil entered into the body of Maula Bux, who with one mighty wrench burst the chains that held his hind-legs in tether, and then placing his hind-foot on the shackles between his fore-legs tore them asunder as if made of whipcord

instead of iron. Then, once more free, he strode away in the direction of the forest, leaving behind him a trail of destruction. It was well that the world was asleep and that not many human beings crossed his path, for long familiarity had resulted in contempt of man, and he would gladly have satisfied his unreasoning rage in slaughter. Once indeed when crashing through the fields and trampling the ripening crops, he was annoyed by the cries of a man who, seated high on a platform, was watching for nocturnal robbers. In an instant Maula Bux had demolished



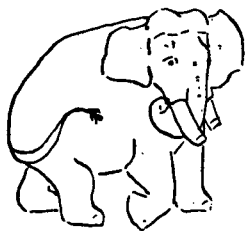
the platform and trampled its occupant in the dust; and then, yet further excited by wanton bloodshed, he had raged onwards till he reached the forest. Here he gave vent to his passions by butting the trees and breaking off saplings, until his forehead was covered with blood and he stood in sullen exhaustion.

The Life of an Elephant

It was not long before he was missed by Kareem and the alarm was raised; an alarm which grew as the broad trail was followed and the extent of the mischief done proved the violent temper of the runaway. The men followed mounted on many female elephants and bearing ropes and shackles to lead away their captive. But it was not till nightfall that they found him, and it was then too late to make any attempt on his liberty. With break of day they were again on the trail, and discovered Maula Bux standing in the vantage ground of a small lake in the heart of the forest. They surrounded the lake, but were disappointed that the tusker would not fly from them, but stood awaiting their pleasure. They, losing courage, waited around discussing the safest method of approach. But a safe way was hard to find. As the female elephants approached within striking distance Maula Bux charged down upon them with a shrill scream of rage. Those that he encountered were violently thrown to the ground, the others scattered and fled, and the victor watched with sullen eye the removal

of the wounded nor made any attempt to follow the flying foe.

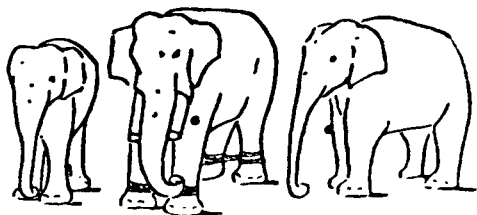
The word went forth that the elephant must be shot, and, while some returned to headquarters to obtain the necessary permission, the others kept the fugitive in view as he listlessly roamed through the forest. It was then that Kareem, with bitter grief in his heart, came to the conclusion that life without his brother would be of no use to him, and determined to recapture him single-handed or die in the attempt. Preparing some balls of sweetmeat in which large doses of opium were concealed he walked slowly up to the maddened elephant, and, as soon as he was detected, stood and spoke to him in terms of endearment. The crowd of natives watched the scene with breathless interest. They saw the great elephant double up his trunk and cock his ears on the point of charging down upon this insignificant intruder; then, as the man



The Life of an Elephant

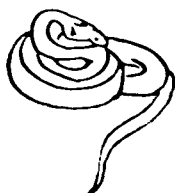
continued to advance talking the while, they saw the trunk fall listlessly to the ground and the elephant stand as if undecided what to do.

Now the man, barely more than half the height of the elephant, was alongside him, was stroking his trunk and rubbing his eyes and chin: he was offering him sweetmeats, which the elephant was devouring; and now, sitting down in front of his brother, seemed as unconcerned as if the beast was at home in his stable. It was not long before the opium took effect and Maula Bux became too dazed to carry out any further mischief; and there for some days he stood, again securely tethered, guarded on each side by a female elephant, with his driver constantly on the watch until the time arrived when he could without fear be permitted to be taken back to his place and to resume his wonted life of good health and good humour.



CHAPTER XIII

The End

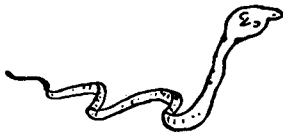


A COBRA was coiled in the sunshine on the dusty plain, each curve making a point of light: near by lay a ghostly replica of himself, a transparent tissue reproducing every scale and every marking of his body: and now, resplendent in a new coat of mail, at ease after long days of inconvenience, with poison glands full and stomach empty, the snake awaited what the future should bring.

The birds twittered overhead and the rays of the sun struck with agreeable warmth; and then a hot wind



•awoke in the south raising small whirls of dust, giving warning to all living animals that it was



time to seek shelter from heat and light. The snake uncoiled himself and his black length undulated

over the plain, leaving a furrow in the dust transversely marked by the large scales of his belly. He continued his journey till he arrived at a stack of green-leaved branches which offered a cool and safe retreat, and, entering, disappeared from view.

It was sunset when the elephant, Maula Bux, returned from the labours of the day. For long hours he had borne the heavy trappings of state, which entirely enveloped his body and prevented the cooling breeze from reaching his sensitive skin. On the top of these heavy cloths of gold and silk he had carried the state howdah, itself no mean weight, wherein sat those whom the people delighted to honour. Preceded, surrounded, and followed by spearmen, by bearers of "Chaunries" and umbrellas, he had paced the processional path, unalarmed

by the shouts of the populace, by the reports of guns and explosions of fireworks, all alike naturally repugnant to him. He had carefully picked his way through the crowd, harming none; lightly with his trunk setting aside those who intruded in his path; and now, another day of painful duty passed, he had been relieved of his load, had poured water on his heated body and cooled himself in the evaporation of the evening breeze; he had disposed of his rations and stood at rest watching his mahout, who in a neighbouring hut was preparing his evening meal.



The sun set and soon the moon was shining over the plain; one by one the lights were extinguished and the noise from the bazaar ceased. At such times one could comprehend the dreamy attitude of this huge beast; doubtless his memory turned to similar glorious nights passed in the peace of the forest, when absolute contentment made for happiness; or to

The Life of an Elephant

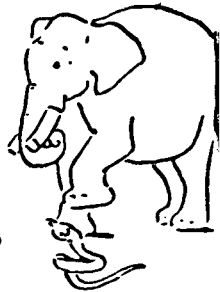
those other times, when, though subject to man, he roamed the jungles in sympathy with him.

The elephant had leaned forward to draw a branch of the green fodder from the pile before him, and was instantly aware of a sharp blow on the end of his extended trunk. A black snake was rearing its head from amongst the wilted foliage, hissing gently as it waved

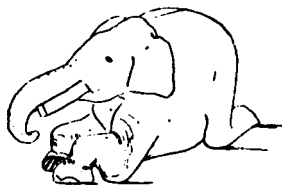


to and fro. The elephant raised his massive fore-foot, and without haste crushed the reptile as a man might crush any noxious insect. Then he stood as if considering the matter.

The pain from the bite flowed in a stream of fire up his trunk, and he commenced to rock from side to side in agony; now it reached his brain and seemed to numb it with its force; it poured like red hot lava through his veins, so that his legs trembled and refused to



support his heavy bulk. The elephant knelt down as he had done thousands of times in the service of man, but even so there was no relief; dizzy he rolled over on his side and groaned aloud.



At once from the hut came the watchful mahout with the cry of, "What ails you, oh! my brother?" but the elephant was unable to respond to the exhortation to rise; he now lay as if insensible, breathing heavily. The mahout quickly despatched a messenger for aid, but it was long before the "sahib" in charge of the stud arrived. He found nothing but an elephant extended tranquilly on the earth, at his side squatted the mahout, weeping bitterly with cries of, "My brother, my brother!"





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