THE

EASTERN HUNTERS

BY

CAPTN J.T. NEWALL

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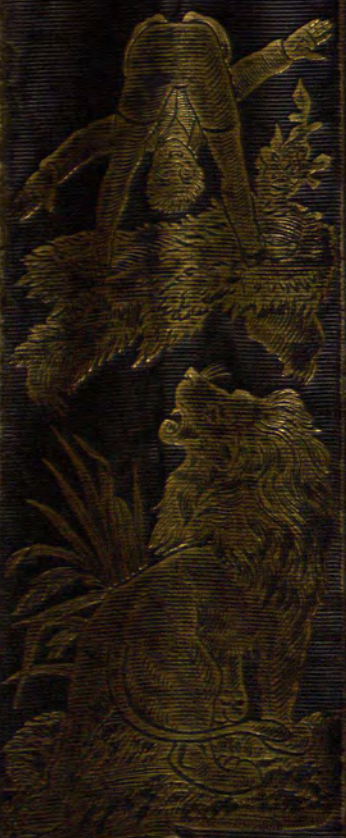

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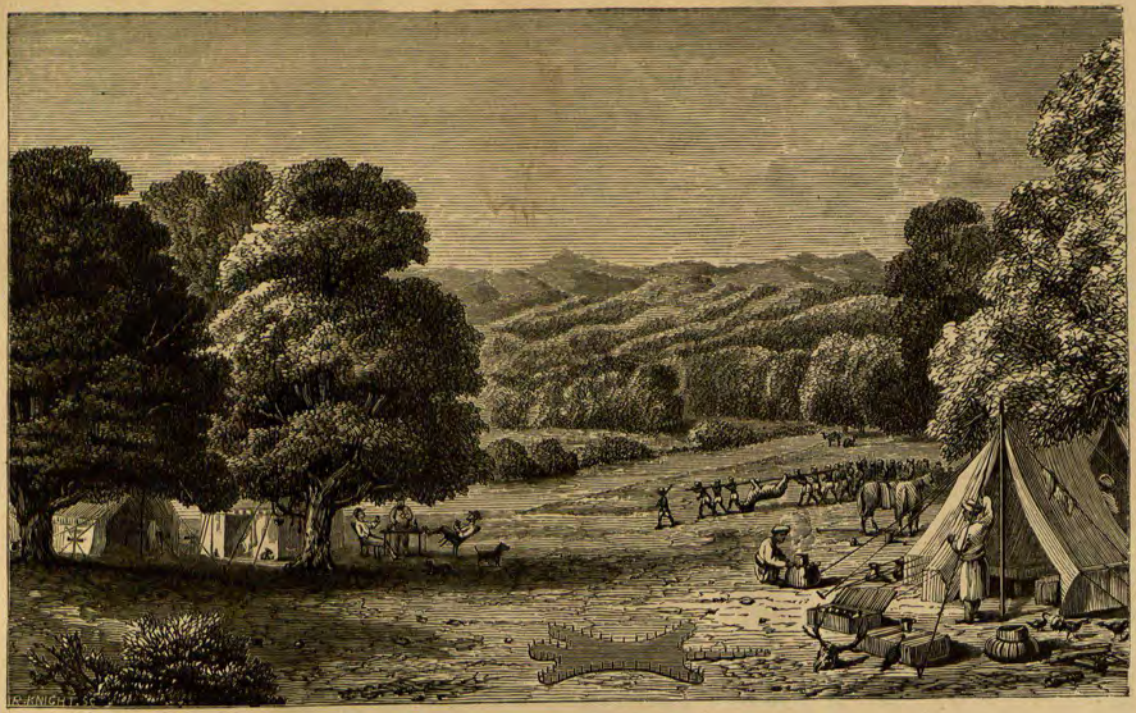


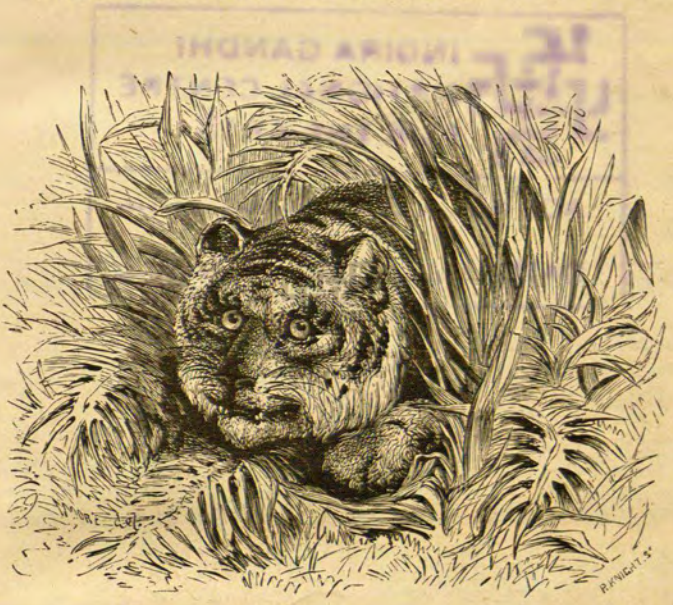
THE CAMP. [*Frontispiece.*

THE

EASTERN HUNTERS.

By CAPTAIN J. T. NEWALL,

AUTHOR OF "JOHN NEVILLE: SOLDIER, SPORTSMAN, AND GENTLEMAN."



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

THE following narrative of sport and adventure is mainly a compilation of actual occurrences. Many —indeed, most—of the sporting incidents recorded in the body of the work are derived from my own journals and note-books; and, in general, are stated much as they took place under my own observation.

For a few, I am indebted to the experiences of others; some of these I have filled in to suit my plan of rendering the accounts as varied as possible, compatible with reality and fact.

The account of one sporting feat—that of the successful right and left shot at tigers—I have preferred giving exactly as it was originally written. It is an extract, word for word, from the journal, now in my possession, of a lamented brother; and, I

need hardly say, was never written with a view to publication.

From the same source I have derived the details attending the engagement with the last tiger whose death is recorded in these pages.

It is not professed that all the note-worthy incidents narrated took place during one expedition. I have included the most remarkable of several by making selections from my various journals.

With regard to the anecdotes related by one or other of the hunters themselves, it will be readily discerned that a few must be taken *cum grano*. I have, however, endeavoured to distinguish between the latter and those which, from my personal knowledge, I know to be true; or which, having been related to me as such by others, I believe to be so.

Such little incidents as "Tiger leg-mutton," "stewed-eel soup," &c., are facts.

I trust, therefore, that being as it is, for the most part, a narrative of adventure, it will be deemed not only of interest to the sportsman, but worthy of perusal by the general reader; though I

have certainly failed in describing the scenes as graphically as I could wish.

Let it not be supposed that the bag of the Eastern Hunters is immoderately large.

Captain Rice has given an idea of the abundance of game in Rajpootana. In the remote parts of that country and throughout Central India, the jungles teem with wild animals.

In less favoured places also, or those better known, or more easily reached by the sportsman, game increased during the year of, and after, the mutiny in an extraordinary degree. Officers were too much engaged in more important affairs during those years to make up the usual hot weather hunting-parties, by which the wild beasts of a district are in a measure kept down.

In the early part of 1859 it was my fortune to travel by myself through a wild part of Rajpootana. During the march, hearing that game was to be found in the vicinity of my camp, I, on two occasions, took out a few beaters without having made any preliminary arrangements. During the first, I

saw two tigers and two bears; and two tigers and one bear were aroused in the second beat. Indeed, it was on the former occasion that the laughable scene with the bears—the first described in the following pages—took place. I was assured by some of the men that if I could wait and visit a river some miles distant, they would engage to show me four or five tigers in a beat. Unfortunately this I was unable to do.

I mention this in proof of the abundance of wild animals to be found in the wilder districts.

In the following narrative I have endeavoured to give an idea of the systems both of "pugging" and "marking." These, one or both, are necessarily the means by which an animal is traced to his lair, though the actual mode of operating may somewhat vary in different districts. The Mahrattas of the hill country of the Deccan are especially clever at marking in the way I have described, but are inferior as "trackers" to the shikarees of some other provinces. I have therefore combined the characteristic features of different districts.

The use of a few Hindustanee words I have found unavoidable ; but they are very few, and in each instance followed by the translation.

Such phrases as "your excellency," "your worship," "your honour," though not strictly and literally correct, will serve to represent the exaggerated terms in which natives are in the habit of addressing their superiors.

The illustrations are from drawings of my own, which, being without any pretension to merit, are merely intended to assist the reader in realising some of the scenes described. The regular established feature of Indian scenery—the cocoa-nut or palm—will be looked for in vain. I have not introduced them, because they do not prevail in the parts of the country depicted.

It has been my endeavour to describe the adventures naturally, and without investing the hunters with any attributes of mock heroism. They are not pourtrayed as heroes of romance, but simply as hearty English sportsmen—in fact, men, of which Her Majesty's forces in India afford numerous specimens.

I have appended a few observations on the various animals referred to in this work. It will be at once perceived that they are more those of a sportsman than a naturalist, to which title, I regret to say, I can make no claim.

With these preliminary observations I launch the book to sink or swim on its own merits.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE EASTERN HUNTERS.

CHAPTER I.

Astray in the Jungles—The art of "pugging"—The Hunter's Camp.

"WELL, I'm fairly bothered! Here's a path straight on, and one to the right, and another to the left, but not a sign to show which is the likeliest to lead to our camp; and after wandering over these interminable, monotonous, brown, jungle-covered hills, I confess I have not the faintest conception as to the points of the compass. What say you, Norman?"

The above was addressed by a large, powerful-looking man, riding a great country-bred mare, to the nearest of two companions, who, following in his immediate wake, had been riding in single file along the narrow track, which enabled them, with some difficulty, to thread their way through the thick, entangled jungle. It was but a mere rent

through the thickets, by means of which the wood-cutters from the adjacent villages found access to their neighbours, and to the denser portions of the well-wooded hills; and frequently had the travellers been obliged to dismount, to remove some intruding branch or other obstacle which blocked up the passage to horsemen.

It was at a point where the path they had been pursuing branched off in three directions, leading probably to as many villages, that the leader of the party had now pulled up, undecided in which to continue.

"Hereaway must be the east, of course. Mark how the shadows fall," responded the individual addressed, a small but actively made man, mounted on a clever looking little Arab horse. "The sun is only some three hours high, so we can't well mistake in that respect. But where the tents may be is quite another thing. I should be inclined, though, to take the right-hand path, Mac. Remember the natives at the village before we entered these hills said the river there was the same as that at Mungaum, where our camp is supposed to be, and that we should have to cross it. I think our best plan will be to strike it as soon as possible. We can then follow its course, or hit the road."

"I agree with you, Norman," said Hawkes, the

rearmost rider. "Let us get out of these infernal hills by all means. These short cuts are sure to prove long rounds. We should have been at the tents by this, if we had only stuck to the cart track, —bad though that was."

"All you say is as plain as that my old mare has an intense objection to the thorns of this pleasant rural path; or her master either, for matter of that," replied Mackenzie. "But in the name of all the jungle gods, whoever they are, which road am I to take?"

"As we left the river on our right, I suppose it must be there still," said Norman. "I vote for the right-hand path. Whether the proper one or not, it will bring us quickest to the plain."

"So be it, then;" and Mackenzie turned into that inclining to the right. "A mile saved is certainly not necessarily time gained. The old mare, too, seems to approve of your selection, Norman, and she has a wonderful nose for water."

Another quarter of an hour's riding fortunately brought our three travellers to a ridge overlooking what they took to be the stream referred to. This they forded, and getting on more level ground on the other side, shortly came upon an almost disused cart track.

"We are all right," said Norman, decisively, after

examining intently for a few seconds some footprints which here and there appeared in the sand or looser portion of the soil. "This is the road."

"How do you know that for certain?" inquired Hawkes, whose appearance, less bronzed and more boyish than that of his companions, proclaimed his Indian experience to be some few years less than theirs. "I see a lot of camel footprints; but how do you know they are ours?"

"Mark, learn, and inwardly digest," was the reply. "Do you see this horse's footprint or 'pug,' as we usually call an animal's track?"

"Yes, I see it. But what about it?"

"What about it? Look at it. Don't you see the impression of the shoe?" questioned the instructor.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know. It all looks like one flat mark to me. Ah, yes! here I think I can make out the edge of the shoe," continued Hawkes, as he looked more attentively. "It seems to have that appearance, though I could not be certain."

"That's right; it is so. An English one, is it not?"

"I suppose so. But what then, Norman?"

"I know by that our horses have passed here," was the reply. "The natives, you know, do not use shoes like ours. They are much broader and

flatter, covering a great deal more of the hoof; and such ponies as the villagers about here possess, are probably unshod. Certainly on the hind feet, even though belonging to some native chief or dignitary of the neighbouring towns."

"I don't think I could tell the difference generally," said Hawkes.

"You'll learn that in time. Take every opportunity of examining the pugs as you go along, and you'll soon acquire an eye for distinguishing them; and also if the impression is recent or the reverse. But see, there are other signs of our people. Here are the prints of two small dogs, evidently not those of the country curs, but Terry's or Mug's. And again, look here. This is not the mark left by the usual native shoe; it is more of our fashion, and must belong to your Portuguese servant."

"Well, when you have finished your instruction," growled Mackenzie, who was getting a little impatient at the length the lesson in tracking seemed likely to last, "I vote we move on. At present I consider breakfast decidedly more important than the acquisition of knowledge by your promising pupil, Norman. Let him mark now, and learn, and inwardly digest after—yes, after breakfast. You are satisfied we are on the road; suppose at present we make the best use of that scrap of knowledge."

"Ah, Mac!" retorted Norman, reproachfully, "you never would take the trouble to learn pugging, though it is so essential an acquirement in woodcraft. If you had not me to look after your erring ways sometimes, you would be a lost man. Be thankful, you graceless giant, for all your mercies, and let Hawkes improve his youthful mind in learning what is so desirable. However, shove along. We can't be very far from the tents, I should say, if miles are computed at less than double their proper length in these parts. For I certainly make this last stage to be near about twice as many coss as it was stated to be."

Thus encouraged, Mackenzie again led off at a good round canter, followed at respectful distances, to avoid the full flavour of the dust, by the other two. Another mile and a half did in fact bring the party in view of the tents; and the ready syces rushed from their quarters near the horse-pickets to seize the bridles of their charges.

Well pleased indeed were all three to dismount from their wearied sweating hacks, and seek the pleasant shade of the tents. For the month was May, and the sun, though but a few hours high, intensely hot. The riders had been in their saddles for many hours, having accomplished, on horses previously posted for the purpose, about fifty miles

since they started, a couple of hours before dawn.

All three were officers of one of the regiments stationed at that flourishing station, Jehangeerpore, and had obtained a month's leave of absence, which space of time they intended to devote to the destruction of as many tigers, bears, and other game as they could possibly manage to annihilate. The first stage of their proceedings was, as we have seen, completed by their arrival at the camp whence they purposed commencing operations.

Though it must be acknowledged that the natives of India are not usually gifted with a keen perception of the beauties of natural scenery, or imbued with any particular appreciation of the picturesque, yet there are certain requirements connected with camp life, which not unfrequently cause them to select decidedly pretty spots for the encampment. This happens without any pre-arranged intention on their part of so doing, or after consciousness of having done it. Situations tolerably elevated or airy, shade of trees, and vicinity of water, are the agents by which this—to the masters—desirable end is accomplished. A spot combining these necessaries is sought; and hence the most eligible in those respects is, at the same time, usually picturesque.

On the present occasion it had been selected with great judgment. A small grove of mangoes, with several isolated trees of the same kind scattered in the immediate vicinity, offered a fine amount of shade. They stood on open ground near the bank of the river, and thus water and free circulation of air were also secured. About twenty yards from the grove, the bank sloped down towards the water —in that part a long deep pool. This was belted by a narrow strip of brilliant green, contrasting strongly with the parched appearance of the yellow grass above.

On the opposite side of the pool small trees and shrubs, jutting out or depending from above, bathed their hanging branches in the water, while behind them the bank rose to some height. Some open land separated the river from a belt of forest-trees which extended to the foot of a range of jungle-covered, ravine-cleft hills. Beyond these again rose others, all well wooded with low brush and occasional trees. Range on range, spliced one into the other, thus filled up the background : in some places rising abruptly into points or peaks ; in others flat, with sheer descents at either end of the table-land.

The neighbouring village was situated lower down on a salient angle, round which the river swept, about two hundred yards from the little camp.

The huts of which it was composed were well sheltered by tamarind, mango, and peepul trees, which grew thickly in and around it. It was on the same side of the river as the camp, the intervening space being cleared and cultivated. Fields, now mostly fallow, also extended for a considerable distance around, and these were dotted with trees and wells, the latter used for purposes of irrigation.

At this season, the very middle of the hot weather, the rivers attain their smallest dimensions. The one I am describing now consisted of a succession of pools connected by mere rivulets of running water. A few hundred yards above the camp, where cultivation ceased, its banks were fringed by narrow broken strips of trees and low jungle, and its bed filled with large boulders of rock, partly hidden by the bastard cypress and high tiger grass which there grew plentiful and thick. A few bushes and stunted trees were also scattered amongst the rocks. It was the excellent cover this afforded for tigers, which, in the hot season, delight in such cool retreats in the beds of rivers, that had induced the native Shikarees to select Mungaum as a favourable starting-point for the campaign.

Nor was the expected presence of tigers the only attraction which existed for the sportsman. The neighbouring hills were, as I have said, thickly

wooded with low jungle; but, in the numerous ravines, or, more correctly speaking, basin-like clefts which seamed the rocky front of the first range, there grew every here and there fine forest-trees. Dispersed among these somewhat plentifully was the mowar tree, on the sweet, fleshy, and flower-like fruit of which bears delight to feed. From it also is distilled a spirit, regarding which it may briefly be said that it is alike potent and detestable.

The masses of overturned rock and caves which girt in many places the precipitous sides of these jungle fastnesses, afforded secure and pleasant retreat to those animals. They afforded shelter from the noon-day sun, whilst their chosen food was close at hand for nightly depredation. Water, too, was in the vicinity; so that it formed altogether a small terrestrial ursine paradise. Tigers also would not unfrequently lie in these secluded spots. The cattle of the villagers, it is true, often fell victims to a tigrish appetite for beef; but samber, neilghye, and cheetul—all of which abounded in the hills—formed perhaps the larger portion of their bill of fare.

It will thus be seen that the district was well adapted for the successful prosecution of a campaign against the larger wild beasts, or, as it is usually called, "big game." The country being favourable,

it only remained for the sportsman to develop its resources. Conducted by keen and active Nimrods, with good weapons, a tolerably fair command of, and nerve to use, them rightly when meeting in conflict their more dangerous foes, moderate success could hardly fail to crown their efforts.

Having described the position and local surroundings of the camp, let me briefly endeavour to convey an idea of the little camp itself, before narrating the adventures of its occupants.

The half dozen mango trees of which the grove was composed stood almost in a line due east and west. Within their shade were pitched two small tents; one of the sort known as a "Bechoba" (literally without pole), and the other a "Hill Rowtie." Both are of a description the smallest and lightest, and the latter especially,—the most portable in use in India. Having but one thin covering, without any "outer fly" or second roof, they were not calculated to resist the full fervour of the mid-day sun; but, when pitched in the shade of trees, afforded all the shelter our sportsmen required during the day. During the night they usually slept outside, for the sake of the greater degree of freshness obtainable in the freer current of air away from the trees.

The bechoba, as its name implies, is without any

centre pole, and is square. Its roof, stiffened with slips of bamboo, is supported on four sticks of the same, and to it are fastened the walls. The rowtie is formed of a cloth suspended from a cross bar resting on two poles at the opposite ends. When stretched by the ropes attached, it covers a space of ground oblong in shape. Both kinds are quickly and easily pitched or struck.

In addition to these little habitations for the masters, there were pitched under some of the neighbouring trees a couple of rowties, of a somewhat different form, but similar construction to that described. These were for the use of the servants and for cooking purposes. Within, around, and about them lay in seeming confusion oddly-shaped old boxes, baskets, earthen pots for water, firewood, cooking utensils, and various other camp requisites. Fowls, too, wandered about at will or nestled in the shade, and a sheep was tied to a tent-peg close by. Servants moved to and fro, and a few villagers were squatted on their hams near at hand.

Under other trees were picketed horses and ponies, six in number, with piles of hay in front of each. It only required a glance at some of them to show that hunting, and that over rough ground, was a sport with which they were well acquainted.

Those recently arrived were being rubbed down by the syces. Grain-bags, horse-clothing, and other stable necessaries depended from the boughs of the neighbouring trees.

A common country tattoo, cow-hocked, ragged, and bare ribbed, with a fore pastern tied to the hind one on the same side, wandered uneasily and with great effort in search of such scraps of the parched roots of grass and digestible mould as he could manage to discover, and with difficulty stow away. This attenuated specimen of horse-flesh had the distinguished honour of bearing on the march the portly form of old Sheik Hussein, Mackenzie's head servant.

To the baggage camels, or rather their drivers, were allotted two or three trees about a couple of hundred yards away. The unpleasant odour peculiar to those most useful beasts of burden, renders distance desirable to the olfactory organs of those not perfectly acclimatised; and none but natives ever can become so. They were at present away feeding on the tender shoots and leaves of certain jungle trees and bushes. This was their daily occupation, going every morning and returning in the evening, when not required for other purposes. They were few in number—as could be seen by the pack-saddles left behind—for our sportsmen disdained

the use of large tents, and travelled with as little impedimenta as the nature of an Indian climate and of the country permitted.

The furniture within the tents consisted of a small folding camp table of two pieces, which were joined together for meals. This was common to all, while each had for his own use a chair, a light four-legged thing by courtesy called a bed, and a folding three-footed stand for the metal washing-basin. The latter stood outside, as being more convenient for ablutionary purposes than in the limited dimensions of the tent. A small folding looking-glass, too, with much of the silvering erased, was suspended in each tent, dangling to and fro with every flap of the tent wall. For the rest, boxes, guns, and clothing—the latter hung around in convenient disarray—completed the picture of the interior. Mackenzie inhabited the bechoba, which was also the public meal-room, and the other two chummed together in the rowtie.

A few hunting spears fastened against the tents, water choguls, and wetted cloth-covered bottles, depending from the ropes, and large chatty pots on the ground, were the only features peculiar to the exterior which are deserving of notice.

This, in India, would be considered light equipment; but it was sufficient for the hardy energetic

sportsmen, who derided the luxurious fashion in which it pleaseth some to follow sport. They had plenty of beer, however, brandy, and a very little wine for great occasions. A few potted meats, too, and other articles hermetically sealed in tins, were contained in the cooking boxes. They were kept as a stand-by, should neither game nor meat be at any time procurable.

I have reserved to the last the description of the most important portion of their equipment—the batteries. Mackenzie's consisted of a double gun and a heavy double rifle, the latter throwing a spherical bullet twelve to the pound. The bore of the gun was 14, and both had been made to order by an Edinburgh maker. He had also another double gun, borrowed from a friend for the occasion.

Norman possessed a short double rifle—what he called a "plobby," one—made by W. & C. Smith, a very useful implement for jungle work; also a long single rifle, throwing an ounce ball, very finely sighted, and with a hair trigger. It was best adapted for the nicety and correctness required in antelope shooting, but was still a useful tool for a long quiet shot, even in jungle. Lastly, he owned a double shot gun—No. 14 gauge—made by a country maker, and which had formed part of his

outfit when first his father started him from the shores of old England.

Hawkes' battery was composed of a Westley Richards' double gun and rifle, of bore 14 and 16 respectively. Like Mackenzie, he, too, had borrowed a gun from a friend in the garrison. I should observe that all the double rifles were made with sights to lower flush with the barrels, such being more convenient for close jungle shooting.

I have now, as I hope, given to the uninitiated reader some general idea of a sporting encampment on a small scale; sufficiently so, at least, to enable him with the help of his imagination to fill in the picture. But I beg him to remember, that I am not describing one of those magnificent battues with elephants, handsome suites of tents, and other expensive accessories; but the humble camp of a workman-like little party, with more sporting resolution and energy than money to spare. But such as it was, they deemed it ample for the purpose they had in view; nor would they willingly have encumbered themselves with mere luxuries. They were bent on sport, and esteemed that paramount to other considerations.

CHAPTER II.

How Tigers are marked down—A new method of catching Fish—A beat for a Tiger—Viewed—The first Shot—A swimming Shot—The last Shot—The Death—The Beaters—How to treat them—The Evening of the first Kill—Tiger Leg-Mutton—Other native Luxuries.

THE middle of the day—at least, not before nine or ten o'clock—is the time when, after his nightly wanderings, a tiger is considered to have definitively taken up his residence in some selected spot, till darkness again calls him forth on his errand of death. Before that hour he is restless, uncertain, and easily disturbed; and, in consequence, the trackers or markers (men placed on the look-out in the neighbourhood of favourite haunts to mark them down) do not feel any confidence that the beast may not move before they can inform the sportsmen of his whereabouts.

A hungry tiger will often seek his food at any time; but, as he is very susceptible of heat, unless urged by unusual past abstemiousness, chooses his lair before the sun has attained great height. After the heat of the day sets in, he may generally be

expected to remain in the cover he has entered, unless much disturbed.

When I speak of the trackers, I do not mean that they trace an animal right up to his place of repose, but merely to the confines of the patch of jungle or other cover; and then circle round. Should no fresh marks be discovered leaving it, they are of course aware the beast is couched within its recesses. In fact, to use a northern term, they "ring" him.

Our sportsmen had reached their camp at an hour sufficiently early to leave them plenty of time for breakfast before the expected "khubber" (intelligence or report) should arrive.

They were much refreshed by a bath; and the dusty, perspiring travellers, of some half an hour before, looked comfortable, clean, and fresh, as they sat down to breakfast in the loose, light habiliments so agreeable to the sojourner in tropical climates—the simple deshabille of shirt and "paijamas," or light, baggy, Turkish trousers.

Young Hawkes had wished to take a plunge in the tempting pool so close at hand; but his more experienced friends had dissuaded him from doing so, knowing how dangerous it was after the sun had got so high. But they promised themselves the daily pleasure of a swim after the day's work was over; and, if not too lazy, of one in the early

morning also. That quiet roll and lounge in the water, after a hard day's sport in the hot season, is surely to be numbered among the greatest of animal pleasures. But it requires to be enjoyed in a tropical climate to be thoroughly appreciated.

Breakfast was laid in Mackenzie's little tent. That gentleman, who was the senior of the three, and had attained to the rank of Captain, was also treasurer and general finance minister and manager of the expenses of the expedition. A certain sum had been lodged in his hands by each of the others, which, with his own contribution, formed a fund for the payment of beaters, rewards, messing, and other public expenses, in which all equally shared.

"Sahib," said Mackenzie's grey-headed, paunchy old butler, as, with a jerk, he whisked the cover off a dish placed before his master—"Sahib, the head man of the village sent a good fish for the gentlemen's eating. I have had some cooked for breakfast."

"And a very fine fish too, to judge by these slices," said Mackenzie. "What sort is it, Sheik Hassein?"

"It is the murrel, your honour; they say they are very large in the river," was the reply, in Hindustani.

"And how do they catch them? We might,

perhaps, manage to do something in that way, eh! Norman? You have some tackle, haven't you?"

"A reel, about twenty yards of sound line, and a few hooks, with some strands of gut, is about all that white ants, moths, and the other destructive and delightful vermin of this country have left me out of a well-stocked case," answered Norman. "My rod was smashed long ago."

"I dare say we can manage with a long bamboo," Hawkes remarked. "But how did you say they caught the fish, Sheik Hassein?"

"They are not caught, Sahib. Those poor creatures the Bheels shoot them with bows and arrows; ignorant jungle men that they are!"

"With bows and arrows! How can that be? If the arrow struck, the fish would swim away with it."

This the pompous old butler was unable to explain, and his dignity was much hurt, both at his master's incredulity, and at his being told the jungle people had been chaffing him. What did it signify? He had been told the fact as stated by him, and was contented to know that by means of bows and arrows the fish was captured. Enough. What other interest could it have for him? It was beneath the position and dignity of so solemn and orthodox a Mussulman to learn anything from those jungle

fellows, the wild Bheels. They had bows and arrows. They brought fish. What more?

But no such train of reasoning passed through the mind of the worthy old fellow's master, or those of his friends. They were not so easily satisfied. So, on further inquiry being instituted, it appeared that Norman's dressing boy, or valet—a young imp, who had imbibed some of his master's predilections for sport—had watched the capture of this very fish. He described that the Bheel fixed a string to the iron head of the arrow, which was made with large barbs. Sneaking to the bank, among the bushes overhanging a pool, one or two fish were observed to be basking, a portion of their backs being above water. The arrow was fixed, and projected with an accurate aim, and the string enabled the bowman to drag his prey, despite his struggles, forcibly from the water. This was, indeed, the manner of its capture, as the sportsmen had themselves opportunities afterwards of seeing.

A bowl of mangoe-fool—called *mangoful* by Sheik Hassein—made from the fruit growing on the trees above them, was another delicacy provided by the careful old butler. This disposed of, and the pleasant after-breakfast Manilla smoked, the hunters considered it time to prepare for business, and accordingly exchanged their light, cool costume for

one more adapted to jungle work. The suits of all, from puggree to shoes, were dyed a russet-brown, of a shade to match, as nearly as possible, the colour of dried jungle. There was not much difference in the cut of the coats, fashioned by native tailors; but while Mackenzie wore long gaiters, reaching well upon the thigh, Norman affected the same useful protection, but contented himself with shorter ones, buttoning up to just below the knee only; and Hawkes wore simple trousers. Each had buckled round his waist, within his coat, a broad yellow leather belt, made from the soft, pliable skin of the samber. To these were affixed little pouches, containing bullets and patches. A short hunting-knife also hung in its sheath, on the left side.

As the morning waxed old, the comparison and handling of the batteries, all prepared for action, afforded less satisfaction than had been the case when they were first brought from their cases and put together. Bullets had been counted, greased patches and caps stowed away, and all preparations made for an immediate start, directly the "khubber" should arrive. The spare gun-carriers, too, were at hand; but yet no messenger came from the shikarees. Young Hawkes had for some time past been in a state of fidgety excitement, and even his older companions were beginning to feel a little anxious,

as it dawned upon them that news was late in coming.

But just as they began to consider it really becoming a serious matter, a party of three or four men, striding rapidly along, made their appearance; not from the direction of the cover up the river as expected, but by a road which led across the open ground. Breaking into a trot as they approached, probably on seeing that they were observed by the Sahibs, the men were soon salaaming low before them.

In reply to the hunters' interrogatories, they stated that Rugonauth had marked down a tiger, "and has sent us to call your quick, Sahib people," they added.

"Is it in the Mungaum jungle?" asked Mackenzie.

"No, Sahib. There were no fresh pugs there this morning. Two or three days have gone since any tiger has couched there. This tiger is seated in the Loonee river, near a Bheel village, about five miles off. Rugonauth says we are to bring lots of fireworks."

The ponies were already being saddled, and the party was soon in motion, with men carrying their guns, leather choguls of water, and a packet of fireworks. Nor, though the riders moved at a jog-trot,

did the fleshless natives find any difficulty in keeping up with them.

It should be mentioned, that fireworks are most useful auxiliaries in forcing a tiger from thick patches of jungle, rocks, and other lairs, to approach which very closely would be dangerous for the beaters. If his whereabouts is tolerably accurately guessed, and a firework or two pitched near him, there are few possessed of equanimity sufficient to withstand the influence of the spitting, fizzing fire of a well-made *flower-pot* or *rocket*, or the lively jumps of a good cracker. But of the three, commend me to the flower-pot. This is an earthen case shaped somewhat like an elongated beehive, with a hole at the top through which, when lighted, a fine spluttering fire issues with force. The rockets are hollow tubes of bamboo, about eight or twelve inches long, but are not, I think, so certain as the flower-pots; the latter, moreover, appear to be the more manageable of the two in the hands of beaters.

The road, crossing here and there several patches of cultivated land, led for the most part through thickish jungle in nearly an opposite direction to the hills.

An hour's ride brought them to a little village, composed indeed of not more than ten or a dozen low huts. Hewers of wood, and cutters of grass,

some of the outcast tribes are not permitted to mingle with the superior castes, however poor, and are, therefore, forced to isolate their habitations, and live in communities of their own.

Well acquainted with the jungles into which their avocations lead them, and with the habits of its denizens, these men become well-trained shikarees. Their knowledge of the haunts of game, and skill in tracking, render them, therefore, useful assistants to the regular professional shikarees employed by officers, many of whom, indeed, have originally sprung from the same class.

Under some trees near the rude Pariah village, were collected about forty or fifty men. To these were now added the ten or a dozen who had accompanied the riders.

Directly the hunters pulled up in front of the group, and dismounting, gave their ponies in charge to the syces, the hum of voices ceased, and old Rugonauth, with a mien full of the dignity and importance befitting the occasion and his own exalted position as head shikaree, approached and made his salaam. This was marked by a self-conscious bearing of satisfaction, which was not lost on two of the experienced men whom he addressed. They had learnt, from the detection of frequent false reports, to distinguish generally be-

tween the demeanour of him who brought true and certain information, and the bearing of him whose khubber was suspicious or doubtful. They both felt that in this instance game had actually been seen and marked down, and that it was not a beat on speculation or chance they had been summoned to undertake.

It was with a grunt of assent and approval from several of the bystanders—most of whom were staring open-mouthed at the Englishmen, but rarely seen in those remote regions—that Rugonauth made his report, and detailed how a tiger was then lying in a thick patch of jow (Bastard cypress), which grew plentifully in the bed of the neighbouring river. Before he had concluded, several of the most prominent chimed in with excited exclamations; being probably those who had themselves seen, or assisted in tracking, the tiger.

But they were vigorously suppressed by Rugonauth, who did not approve of his duties being thus interfered with, or possibly, his share of credit diminished.

When, however, he had finished his statement, he called one or two of the local shikarees, and in conjunction with them discussed the plan of operations.

Before signifying their approval of the plan, the

sportsmen determined to judge for themselves of its feasibility, as this could easily be managed. On this announcement the beaters were ordered to betake themselves silently, and by circuitous paths, to the further extremity of the patch of jungle, while the hunters, their gun carriers, and Rugonauth, proceeded to inspect the position.

This was found to be in the bend of the river, which, here widening, may have been some hundred-and-fifty yards from bank to bank. But of this, only a very small portion was actually occupied by the channel of the stream. About twenty yards across, it swept under one bank, the bend of which it followed. The space between the water and the further bank was thickly grown with jow in patches of irregular density, with a few openings. Boulders of rock peeped here and there above the cover, and a few stunted dak trees and corinda bushes also broke the monotonous colour of the jow.

Cover of this description prevailed more or less in many portions of the river's bed, or what had probably once been such; but the strip in this part did not exceed three or four hundred yards in length.

Having satisfied themselves by personal inspection of the fitness of the shikarees' proposed plan of proceedings, the hunters intimated their intention

of acting on it, after a few telegraphic signals had passed between Rugonauth and two or three markers placed in the dak trees I have mentioned.

As the fairest plan, the positions were assigned by lot. Three blades of grass of different lengths quickly determined this.

To Hawkes it fell to occupy a tree which overlooked the jungle, about midway between the two ends. While commanding its breadth, it also guarded a nullah leading to the dense thicket not far from the river bank. Mackenzie and Norman were stationed about thirty yards apart, on the high bank above the water. Mackenzie was nearest to that end of the cover which was opposite to the one at which the beaters were assembled. He was distant from it about a hundred yards. Each, as in Hawkes' case, also held guard over a wooded nullah, which ran from the jungle behind, to the river.

All were thus stationed on one and the same side of the river, and between it and the thick jungle behind. The other side was open, and presented no inducement for the tiger to break in that direction, —indeed the village and its surrounding plot of cleared land lay there.

Having seen the sportsmen properly posted, Rugonauth went off to get the beaters into line at their

end, and entrust the fireworks to the charge of reliable men.

In a short time a prolonged yell broke on the previous stillness. This was accompanied by the beating of tom-toms—or, as they are called in those parts, tim-tims—and the banging of other discordant instruments. A dropping fire too was kept up from several old matchlocks, to the carriers of which, coarse-grained native powder had been distributed beforehand for blank firing. Altogether, it would be a very sound-sleeping tiger whose repose could continue with so much noise abroad; and the hunters, with straining senses, watched anxiously for some intimation of his presence. Peafowl and partridges every now and then came whirring past, as the beaters advanced; but yet there were no signs to show that the animal sought had been aroused from his mid-day rest. Still the line came nearer and nearer, and could be discerned moving in little knots of four or five; both for the sake of mutual protection, and also to take advantage of the open ways which intersected the tangled labyrinth of jungle. They beat up to the level of the position occupied by Hawkes, passed it, and reached a particularly thick patch, nearly opposite Norman's station. This, too, was beaten round without success; but whether old Rugonauth smelt tiger, or

some other sense, for which we have no name, conveyed to his practised intelligence—as frequently appears to be the case—an impression that the tiger was there, I cannot say; but he was evidently not satisfied, and ordered the patch to be beaten through more closely.

Violent gesticulations, and only partially suppressed howls of excitement from one of the look-outs in the trees, announced that Rugonauth's acuteness had not deceived him. Though the man elongated his skinny arm and finger to the utmost, and pointed to a certain part of the cover, the game remained invisible to the hunters; and it shortly appeared to have passed from the fellow's observation, as he ceased his movements, and contented himself with peering through the leaves of the tree in which he was posted. In about half a minute, however, Norman's quick eye lighted for a single second on a rufous coloured mass, stealthily sneaking along through the jungle; but almost as soon as seen, it disappeared. Another brief space, and again he caught a glimpse of it right in front of him, and distant about a hundred yards. It stopped for a moment to listen, but its meditations were quickly brought to an end by the crack of Norman's rifle. It was a rapid snap shot, but the bullet if ineffectual must have whizzed pretty close, for, with

a loud roar, a fine tiger started into full view, and went bounding down the jungle, clearing large patches of bushes at every spring.

"Missed, I believe!" shouted Norman, as he began to reload. "Keep a good look-out at the end of the jungle, Mac."

Mac did so, for the animal was only in sight for a few tremendous leaps, and he did not think it worth while to fire. But nothing broke from the end.

At the first roar, some of the beaters had scrambled into low trees, but most of them huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep; and in this form they were now led by old Rugonauth out of the jungle on the side opposite to the sportsmen, with the object of beating from the remote end and driving the tiger from the thick patch in which he had disappeared.

Advancing in a compact body, and not scattered as heretofore in parties or singly, they approached the place, throwing stones and an occasional rocket or flower-pot as skirmishers in front.

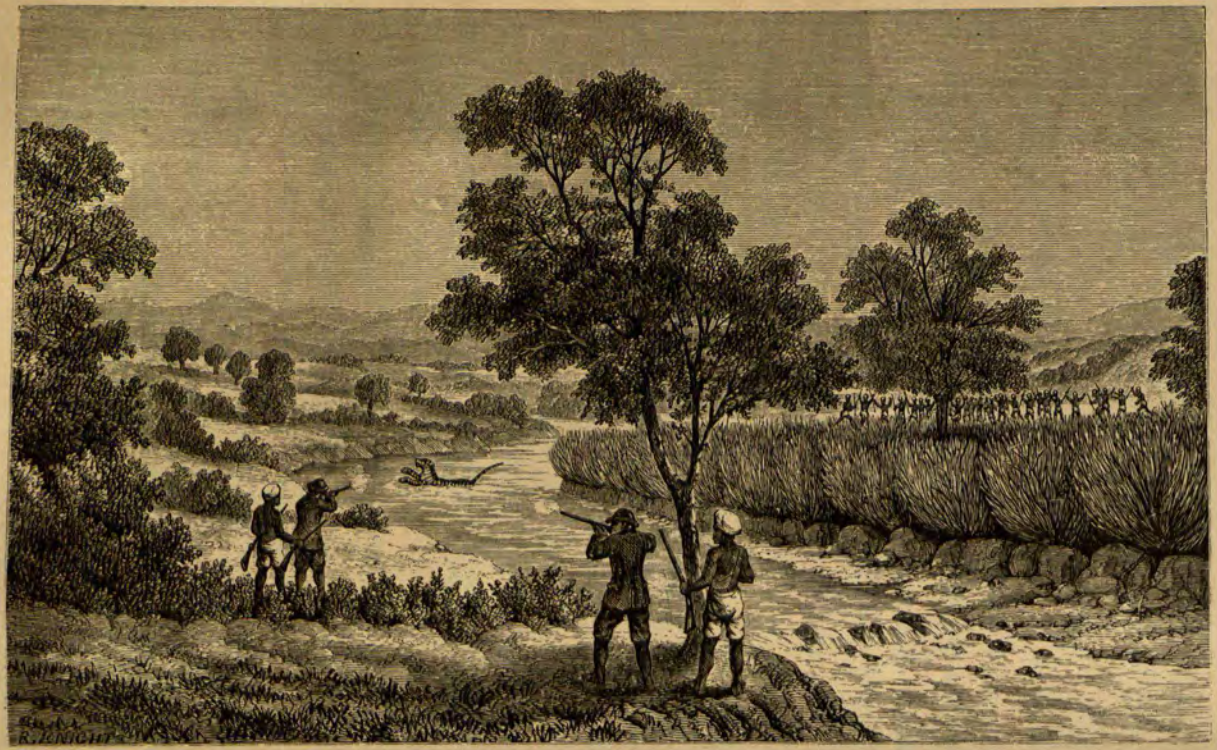
This was evidently not to the tiger's taste, for he slipped down a few feet of bank into the river, and partly in water, partly on the shingly shore, galloped back down the river side in a direction almost straight towards Mackenzie. Having a good

command from his position on the bank, Mac let him come on; and, when within some thirty or forty yards, let drive. The bullet told, evidently behind, for the beast, pulling up in his headlong career, performed a regular waltz, partly rose on his hind legs, springing round several times as if to get at the wound, roaring with full tiger power during this gymnastic performance. But Mac's left barrel warned him of the propinquity of danger; so he abruptly re-ascended the bank and turned into the jungle, receiving right and left from Norman before he became concealed in the friendly cover.

The beaters were again withdrawn to the outside of the jungle, opposite to the place in which he was now supposed to be lying. A lucky and well-directed flower-pot stirred him up however, and again he sneaked to the end; but this time quietly glided down the bank into the deep water, and commenced swimming directly across.

Once on the other side, the same as that on which the hunters were stationed, the dense jungle in their rear, which extended for miles, afforded a secure retreat. That attained, there would be small chance of recovering him, wounded though he was. The effort was a bold one, but it was not fated to be successful.

The distance was over a hundred yards, but



THE FIRST TIGER—A SWIMMING SHOT. [P. 33.

Mac's deadly heavy rifle was quickly brought up, and, after a momentary steadying, growled forth its anathema. Swimming as the beast was, with only the head, line of back and the tail visible, it was a good shot to strike it. But the aim was true. Rearing half out of the water, he pawed at the air, receiving from Norman also a well-planted bullet. Turning round, he gave up his intention of forcing the passage of the river, and again retreated to the dense cover of the bushes at the end of the jungle.

"Well done, Mac, old fellow, well shot!" Norman had shouted as the first bullet told; "just stopped him in time."

"Same to you," was the reply, as Norman followed suit, "that's another for his nob."

"He got it severely there," said Norman, as he joined his friend when the tiger disappeared. "I don't like allowing the men to go in again."

"I don't think there will be any danger, if they'll only stick together and shout from the end of the patch, and be liberal with the crackers and flower-pots. But let us hear what Rugonauth says. I see Hawkes has gone round to the other side too."

It was soon ascertained that the tiger was lying about a dozen yards from a small tree, in which one of the markers was standing, whitey-brown with funk; for although he had crept as high as the

branches would bear him, he was not more than twelve feet from the ground.

"We can't get the marker to speak, Sahib," shouted Rugonauth, "but he is pointing towards the tiger; and on this side we can see the bushes moving where he is tearing them in pain." And in effect, the two friends also saw from their place, the tops of some of the larger jow bushes swaying to and fro.

After a brief colloquy, it was determined that all three of the hunters should join on the other side; and, should the beast not prove amenable to all their persuasive efforts to rouse him, advance directly on the place of his retreat. But before performing this dangerous manœuvre, they decided to exhaust all possible means of inducing him to show.

It occurred to Norman, that if the marker could be induced to get the brute to charge up to his tree, they might roll him over as he crossed an intervening open space. At any rate, the man was safe, covered as he was by the three sportsmen then standing not more than twenty yards from him.

The man was appealed to in affecting terms by Rugonauth; but, shivering with fright, he steadily declined to hold any verbal communication whatsoever.

"He is ready to drop out of the tree with funk, Sahib," said the old shikaree; "there is no getting anything out of him, but I'll try and get him to break off a bit of branch and throw it towards the tiger, while you be prepared in case he gets up."

Sending the beaters to a distance, and standing shoulder to shoulder, the hunters advanced to the nearest spot attainable, at the same time covering the opening I have spoken of, and Rugonauth commenced exhorting the marker in the most moving and feeling manner. "Why look here!" he said, "do you think you can be in any danger with these three tiger-slaying lords to defend you? What animal dare show itself before them without being made to eat their invincible bullets? Arree! wah! You are like a miserable crow in a tree. Bind courage, you poor wretch, and then you will receive much honour and *baksheesh* for being the means of causing that infidel tiger to die."

Several of his fellow-villagers also chimed in from a distance, entreating him to do as desired.

Whether it was owing to the moving eloquence of Rugonauth, the exhortations of his brethren, or the magic name of '*Baksheesh*,' the wretched man did at last, hesitatingly, snap off a large twig and throw it at the tiger.

The brute immediately started up and made

towards the tree; but ere he had covered half the intervening space, three rifle bullets crashed into his body, and he rolled over into a dip in the ground where the bushes concealed him.

"Is he dead?" was shouted to the marker; and that individual plucking up spirit as he saw the dreaded beast lying prostrate before him, managed to find a husky voice and answered, that "he thought it was, though still gasping."

"I'll go and see, and make sure," Mackenzie said, "while you be ready here to cover me in case of need." Accordingly he went to the tree, climbed into it, fired a shot to make certain, and then proclaimed the tiger to be dead.

It proved to be a splendid tigress; and loud was the chattering among the beaters as they gathered round, and the boasts of what each had done towards bringing the affair to a successful conclusion.

One had stirred him up with a flower-pot, and took great credit to himself for performing that feat of valour from a safe position in the midst of his fellows. Another had seen him first; and expended a deal of breath in describing, again and again, to nobody in particular, how the beast moved, and how he saw it; and how it moved again, and he didn't see it. A third had been nearest when it took to the river, and with violent gesticulations,

attempted to enlist the wonder of a few of the group in describing the animal's movements, especially when he reared out of the water. A fourth had been most advanced when he first broke.

But it would be endless to enumerate what each had done. Indeed, speaking, as they mostly did, all at once, whether with listeners or not, it would have required an ear of no common power to separate one vaunt from another. The only one among them, who really seemed to have an audience, was the hero of the tree, as he narrated, with great volubility, and many repetitions, a very exaggerated history of his danger and his escape.

The professional shikarees, however, the men on whom the real business devolved, and who were capable of most plucky deeds, took the matter much more quietly. They discussed it in its various bearings, and especially extolled the fine shooting displayed when the tigress was stopped in the passage of the river. Pointing to the different bullet-holes, too, they tried to account for each; where and at what period of the fray it was made, and by whom.

The better to consider these momentous questions, while the Sahibs rested under a tree and produced their brandy-flasks and a cool chogul of water, the shika-

rees retired to a few yards' distance, and in turn inhaled the fumes of coarse native tobacco, drawn through a hollow bone. Each clasped his hands firmly round one end, thus forming a smoke-tight medium through which to inhale. He then applied his lips to a small aperture left between the thumbs, and in this way had his smoke without polluting the bone with his mouth. A very few whiffs revive them wonderfully. It is only in the absence of their better pipes, that so primitive a method of smoking is resorted to.

The hunters were much pleased at this auspicious commencement of the sporting campaign. Rugonauth, too, gravely and sedately rejoiced over the death of the first tiger he had shown; and predicted great subsequent sport, and consequent emolument to himself. Nor did he object to a glass of brandy, which his masters offered him, to drink to their continued success.

It must not be supposed that the encounter from first to last occupied but a brief half-hour. From the time the beaters were first put in, to the death, it may have lasted two or three hours.

Neither must it be supposed that any very unusual number of bullets were expended before the final one was fired. It is not often that a close shot is obtained under such favourable circumstances as

to make it reasonably sure of killing. There are several reasons for this. There is the excitement. The beast, too, is usually moving in thick jungle, or, if in the open, at a gallop. Snap-shots—and those very frequently, when only a portion of the body is visible—are rather the rule than the exception. All these circumstances conduce to missing; and almost fabulous would be considered by the inexperienced the amount of ammunition sometimes expended, and but few wounds to show how much had been expended in vain. Besides, a large powerful animal like a tiger or bear requires not only to be struck vitally, but in a part exercising an immediate influence over the motive power. Though mortally wounded, a beast will often strive and fight, perhaps for hours; and not unfrequently escape altogether, to die in some secluded spot, a feast for jackals, but yielding no trophies to his victors.

At the long and difficult shots which had distinguished the affray, our hunters may be considered as fortunate in having been so successful in their shooting.

After giving the necessary directions, the three sent for their ponies and cantered off to the tents.

It was nearly sunset, however, before the beaters, who, in relays, staggered under the weight of the

tigress, which had been tied by its legs to a long branch, reached the camp. Having deposited their burden with much grunting and rubbing of shoulders, they were, under the orders of Mackenzie, marshalled into line, and then desired to sit down in a ring. This accomplished, Mackenzie, with a bag of money in his hand, briefly addressed them:

"You have all done well," he said. "The other Sahibs and myself are pleased. You shall always be fairly paid by myself, or one of the other gentlemen, and have your day's pay without deduction. Place that in mind. To-day I shall give you an extra half-day's pay; and so I will always do when we kill. After I have paid you, each man make for himself a cup, and I will give him a drink of Mourah."

There were some pleasant murmurings after this brief speech; but as it was probably unintelligible to many, though spoken in Hindustani, Rugonauth was desired to translate it into their dialect. A buzz of approval, and various ejaculations, in which "cherisher of the poor" was clearly and generally distinguishable, followed the announcement of the Sahib's intentions.

The money paid, the party dispersed in search of cups. These were soon found. The Peepul, or other broad-leaved tree, furnished the material.

The leaf, neatly twisted, was pinned together with baubel, or other thorns, seldom wanting in India. When thus prepared by hands well used to the operation, an efficient cup was in the possession of each man, and a wine-glassful, or thereabouts, of the potent spirit was poured by one of the servants into each. Nor was much time allowed for leakage it being, in most cases, turned immediately down the throat of the recipient.

This concluded, the poor simple creatures went on their way rejoicing, declaring that "they were always ready with their families—man, woman, and child—to beat the jungles for such kind and just lords. Never had better Sahib people come to those parts."

I hope it will not be taken amiss by those young Indian sportsmen, who do me the honour of reading this little book, if I venture to suggest to them, that in any future trip, they should act as we have seen Mackenzie do, and pay the beaters themselves. To allow the shikarees, or servants, to do so without being personally superintended by one of the hunters themselves, is tantamount to fleecing them of a per-centage of their hardly-earned wages. If this duty is entrusted to some native go-between, he is almost certain to pay himself at the expense of the wretched creatures who have done a fair day's

work for the pittance their due. And the gentlemen get the credit of this. Should they be disposed to clamour, the villagers are told it is the Sahib's order, and threatened with his dire displeasure if they profess to be discontented. Not only is the Englishman's name thus brought into disrepute, and associated with what is niggardly and unjust, but the consequence not unfrequently is, that when again required, beaters are not to be procured. Independently of the justice of the case, it therefore becomes sound policy to satisfy oneself that all have their rights. It is very tantalising to find sometimes that no beaters are forthcoming when game is marked down. And not only does it affect the careless paymasters themselves, but also any other party who may at some future time visit the place. It is surely but right and honourable to see that no deductions, on any account, are made from the usual pay. Those who permit it, either by inattention or carelessness, deserve to lose their game from want of that assistance which would otherwise be willingly afforded.

The three hunters, whose exploits I have undertaken to describe, were men kindly and humane. They were too good sportsmen not to be reasonably considerate towards those on whom much of their success depended. And the men very quickly found

this out, and in consequence yielded a ready and willing obedience. A kindly word or joke, any little notice indeed, when combined with the necessary determination to enforce attention to their orders, goes a great deal further than an oath, or anathema, against those "infernal niggers." And such I recommend to those young sportsmen whose lot it may be to follow in the footsteps of the "Eastern hunters."

As the sun went down the three friends strolled down to the pool, and found they had not deceived themselves as to the delight afforded by a plunge after the hard day's work. A swim and roll about in the water invigorated them immensely, and they shortly sat down to dinner in a state of mind and body it is rarely given to the dyspeptic shunner of air and exercise, or the contemner of energetic inuring sport to enjoy.

Before and during dinner the noise of many voices indicated where the process of skinning the dead tigress was being effected by the choomars (tanners), who had been summoned from a large village about three miles off. A spot had been selected for this purpose a little to the leeward of the camp, and to this, after dinner—much refreshed by copious libations of that most grateful compound "mug,"—the hunters betook themselves personally to super-

intend the stretching and pegging down of the skin.

When the hide is taken off, and the pieces of flesh and fat still adhering carefully scraped away, it is pegged to the ground by means of a number of little wooden pegs, two or three inches long, driven through the skin at intervals, just within its outer edge, all round. This is done with the hairy side of the skin downwards, so that, after being well washed and scraped, the interior may dry from the exposure, and thus the hide retain, without shrinking, the dimensions it has been stretched to. It therefore follows that a skin is somewhat longer in measurement than the animal who at one time actually wore it.

Cheroot in mouth, and lolling in their chairs in the loose undress I have before described, the hunters sat and superintended, smoking and chatting over the incidents of the day, in the pleasant light of a young tropical moon. The hum of many insects was around, seeming to pervade the air. Bats fluttered to and fro, and fireflies glittered in the shady nooks about the pool. A hungry impatient family or two of jackals set up their clamorous demands for supper, having already scented death on the still air. And more than once the ghost-like form of one more daring than the rest would

approach, only, however, to glide away, followed by a stone or stick from one of the village watchmen, or other detector of the intruder. An owl, flitting about, hooted its low wailing notes, like some ubiquitous demon; and all listened as, once or twice, the distant roar, or rather grunt, of a tiger came borne on the gentle night air. The hot sirocco wind which had blown strongly during the day had given place to one, not cool certainly, but now in comparison fresh, gentle, and balmy, though even yet puffs came laden with the furnace heat of the parched and desiccated soil. Occasionally a thump would be heard, causing a general rush and scramble among some of the followers, as a ripe mango fell to earth.

"How awfully jolly this is," observed young Hawkes, as he mixed a little cold weak "brandy pawnee" which his servant brought him. "It's astonishing to me how fellows stick in cantonments, when they can get out to the jungles and have a nice evening after such a glorious day's sport."

"And anticipations of other days as good," said Norman. "The mug, too, is better, the cheroots burn better, the air is better and fresher, and a man himself feels better in the jungles. 'Oh, a life in the woods for me!' Yes, it's very jolly, Hawkes. I am precious glad to see you taking so kindly to it.

Old Mac, here, and I have had many an enjoyable trip like this, and I hope we shall have many more. Eh, old fellow?"

"I believe you, me boy," answered the Scotchman in popular phrase. "The after-dinner cheroot of a successful day is about as jolly a thing as I know of, with good fellows to chat to and talk it over with."

"And what a lovely night it is," Norman remarked. "I declare, after the heat and excitement of the day, it makes a man feel at peace with himself and with the world, to sit out and hear the wind sighing through the trees. Were you ever in love, Hawkes?" he asked, as he turned abruptly to that individual. "This is a nice night for spooning, isn't it? I believe I can see you blushing in the moonlight. Were you thinking of Miss Verney just now, when you looked at the moon?"

Hawkes laughed as he answered with some slight confusion, "Come, Norman, no chaff. I think it was you who were inclined to be sentimental."

"Oh, hang the sentiment," said Mackenzie. "As leader of the expedition, I positively forbid it."

"Hark to the unromantic Highlander! But I say, Mac, we had better order the tiger's body to be taken away: I see they have cut off the head."

Mackenzie accordingly gave orders to that effect.

"Very well, Sahib," said the man to whom they had been given; "but some of the horse-keepers have a petition to make."

"What, about the tiger?" Mackenzie inquired.

"Yes, Sahib. They are low-caste fellows, and say they would like some of the meat."

"What? Do you mean to eat? Call them here. I should like to know what flavour it has."

"Rather rankish sort of food to indulge in, I should think," Norman observed.

"Regular cannibalism, or worse," said Hawkes. "What stomachs they must have."

On being summoned, two or three of the horse-keepers made their appearance, and in reply to the questions of their masters, declared they wished to be allowed to have a cut from the skinless body.

"But what does it taste like?" inquired Norman. "It must be very hard and strong in taste."

"Sahib, the meat is very hot meat. It is highly tasted and strength-giving. It is not good to eat too much of it."

"I can fancy it must indeed be stimulating flesh, and decidedly high-flavoured. Which is the best part? What piece do you wish to have?"

"If it be the Sahib's order, I should like to have that part they call the 'leg mutton,'" said the man,

using the English specific term, in a general sense comprehending the hind-quarters of all animals.

"The leg mutton! Tiger leg mutton!" laughed Norman. "Why, Mac, this is something new. We have often heard in the hunting-field of the pork 'muttony chops' served up for breakfast; but hang it,—defaming that homely joint is a delightful novelty."

After a hearty laugh at the queer confusion of terms, the men were allowed to depart, with permission to select the choicest bits from the body.

"Upon my word," said Mackenzie, "some of these low-caste natives will eat anything. Flesh is flesh to them; though tiger is better, I think, than cattle that have died of disease."

"What, will they eat that?" Hawkes asked.

"The outcasts will, and glad to get it, though it has been known to breed fearful disorders."

"Yes," said Norman. "We are very apt to be horrified at these disgusting tastes; but after all, the 'braxy mutton' of you Highlanders, Mac, is not much better."

"Good sound tiger is no end preferable, I should think," replied Mackenzie.

"Ay, and I bet," said Hawkes, "these fellows would sooner have their slice of tiger than the half-putrid flesh which it is sometimes fashionable for

epicures to indulge in, under the shape of what once was sound venison meat."

"True, and I agree with them," Norman said. "Theirs is mere natural craving for animal food; the epicure's a vitiated gastronomic taste; at least in those instances where the meat is eaten when nearly ready to walk away."

"I am told crocodile is fine tender food," Mackenzie observed; "and I know these big lizards, ichneumons, or whatever they call themselves, are capital grub in the native estimation. But these are subjects which require a little ballast, so I shall have a night-cap and turn in."

By the early hour of half-past nine the three sportsmen sought their cots, drawn outside the tents for the sake of the greater freshness. "Turning in" was slightly a misnomer, and hardly suggestive of Indian hot-weather repose; for it could only figuratively be applied to the prostration of the figure on the cot, unincumbered with sheets or blankets.

It is to be hoped that the digestions of the biped partakers of the tiger's flesh were not more incommoded than the troop of jackals, which, noisily banqueting on the same food, gave audible intimation of their vicinity, but without disturbing the wearied hunters.

CHAPTER III.

No "khubber"—Waiting for a Shot—Patience rewarded—Death of a buck Cheetul—Samber stalking—An affair with the Bears—Narrow escape—Distribution of the Meat—Greediness.

BEFORE sunrise on the following morning, the hunters took their dip in the pool. Nor were they deterred from doing so regularly by the appearance of a water-snake, which wriggled away in a shallow part from between Hawkes' legs, sending that gentleman flying out of the water.

Neither did a report that muggurs (alligators) inhabited the river have the effect of limiting their swim. The natives bathed there with impunity, and they saw no reason why they should not do so likewise.

The shikarees made their appearance soon after breakfast, saying that they had only attempted to ring the Mungaum jungle, as the men were too tired to try those more distant; and it was found to contain no tiger.

And truly old Rugonauth looked as if something had knocked him up. Norman, who knew the old

sinner well, judged that it was not altogether attributable to the fatigues of the previous day; but, in part at least, to the copious libations which had, in all probability, signalised the fall of the first tiger.

Under these circumstances, it was determined to try for samber and cheetul in the afternoon, in the range of hills which rose from the plain on the opposite side of the river. As a regular beat was not contemplated, orders were issued for a couple of experienced men only, belonging to the locality, to be in attendance on each hunter at the hour of four. Under the guidance of the village shikarees,—well acquainted with the neighbouring country,—the sportsmen hoped by stalking to secure a skin or two, and some meat, both for themselves and the people.

Very tedious sometimes on shikar excursions are the mid-day hours when unemployed in the chace; and weary seems the time till the approach of evening enables the sportsman to stroll out with his rifle or shot-gun,—as taste dictates,—in search of game, for which it is hardly worth while to brave the full fervour of the summer sun.

The early morning and evening, too, is the time, when the forest deer leave the thick and tangled coverts in which they have sought rest and shelter, and feed in the open pastures and glades in and

around ; thus affording to the hunter opportunities of stalking them.

Our party had with them a small selection of books,—some, anything but light reading. Many a man can trace to the long unemployed hours of the day, the knowledge of authors who, in all probability, would otherwise have remained unread. An Indian up-country station was not always, in former days, particularly well supplied with books, or at any rate, offered no extensive choice ; so that what might be deemed heavy literature, not unfrequently formed a portion of the hunter's equipment. As space was limited also, the burden of a large number of books was not to be thought of ; something which would last was usually sought in preference to novels, only to be galloped through and thrown aside.

A little before the hour I have named, the three friends had flung down whatever had occupied them, and stood prepared for the evening's sport.

To reach the hunting ground, they had to cross the river, and traverse the belt of jungle which intervened between it and the hills.

Separating at the camp itself, each took a direction, so as to strike the hills at spots about a mile apart, with the view of interfering as little as might be, one with the other.

I shall follow Norman, to whom it fell to take the central beat, which of course was that the nearest to and opposite the encampment.

A walk of a mile or so brought him to the foot of the first range of hills, and his conductor assured him that samber would certainly be on the feed somewhere among the dry yellow grass, which in patches studded the table-land on the top.

Girding their loins for the ascent, Norman and his two attendants accordingly made their way by a meandering track, originally worn from the thicket by wild animals themselves, and developed by the wood or grass-cutters of the village, in the pursuit of their avocations, into a rough path.

As they approached the top, they cautiously advanced, sheltered by the jungle, hoping to find some deer on the feed in the open pastures above. But none were to be seen. The village shikaree, however, who seemed well up to his work, pointed to some freshly-broken twigs and indented grass; and further on, a few hoof-prints showed that a herd of samber had passed; and, as the man asserted, but very recently.

"They cannot be very far off, Sahib," he said in a whisper. "There is a favourite feeding-ground a little to our right-hand; if it please the Sahib, I will go and see if there are any there."

"Very good, do so," replied Norman. "I will keep watch here till you return; and take you care of the wind." Saying this, he tossed a few blades of grass into the air, and pointed to the quarter whence they were blown.

The shikaree nodded his head and moved stealthily and silently away, making a slight detour, so as to gain a position from which he might approach up wind, the spot he wished to examine. Taking off as he went, the dirty ragged little roll of cloth which did duty for a pugree, and which might possibly, in some far-off period, have claimed to be white, he twisted twigs and leaves within its folds, and bending them so as to conceal both it and a portion of his face, replaced it.

Norman was not sorry to have a few minutes to regain the wind and steadiness which the climb up the hill had somewhat impaired. Sitting, rifle in hand, with his attendant perfectly still in the shade of a small tree, he awaited the man's return, or such chance as Diana might previously send one of her keenest votaries.

A brace of green pigeons came and settled in a neighbouring tree, and Norman watched them, thinking they would be very palatable for dinner. In the absence of other employment, he brought up his rifle and endeavoured to cover one after the

other successively. "A pretty rifle shot," he thought, as he aimed, without, of course, the intention of firing. He was thus employed, when the stillness was disturbed by a crackling sound, such as an animal might make in stepping on a dried twig or patch of shrivelled leaves. He instantly brought down his rifle and listened. Apparently the noise came from amidst the jungle on the slope of the hill, some two hundred yards below, and to one side of the place he occupied. The native caught the sound at the same time, and pointed in the direction whence it proceeded. Norman nodded his head, and motioned to the man to lie down behind an adjacent bush. This was quickly done; and he himself, with rifle at the ready, concealed his person behind the stem of the tree, listening intently to catch any further sound as an indication of the animal's progress, and in what direction.

Ere long, another crackle showed that whatever animal it might be, it was advancing in a line which, if continued in, would bring it within eighty or a hundred yards of his place of ambush.

The narrow track by which they had ascended the hill, seemed to afford, at about that distance, the opening he sought as offering a chance of a shot. With cocked rifle, the hunter kept his eye more particularly on this break in the density of the cover,

but at the same time cast, ever and anon, a glance over the intervening jungle. Again the sounds were heard; and Norman thought he caught a glimpse of a shadowy form passing amongst the brushwood.

The stillness now remained for some time unbroken, save by the whispering of the leaves as they rustled in the hot and dry wind, or the occasional note of some forest bird awakened into life as the cooler hours advanced. All at once a prolonged noise among the fallen leaves, seemingly not more than twenty or thirty yards distant, distracted the hunter's attention from the path; and even the native raised his head, and looked earnestly through the bush which sheltered him. But Norman soon satisfied himself that it proceeded from the scratching of jungle or spur-fowl, and not from the tread of a heavy animal. He turned once more to watch the open glade, and there standing broadside on, at about eighty yards' distance, was a doe cheetul. It seemed as if the creature must have risen out of the ground, so sudden was the apparition, and so brief the space of time during which his attention had wandered. Carefully he brought up his rifle, but paused with his finger on the trigger, as he became aware of a movement in the cover just behind the doe, and the horns of a buck appeared above a bush. The doe, quite unconscious of its narrow escape,

after looking suspiciously up and down the path, crossed it with deliberation and disappeared in the jungle on the other side, and its place was almost immediately taken by the owner of the horns. One moment was sufficient to draw the bead upon his shoulder; in another the "thud" of the rifle bullet announced the trueness of the aim, and the gallant buck cheetul, with a bullet through his heart, was lying dead in his tracks.

As the sharp rifle-crack echoed through the wood, two or three does bounded across the path like mere flashes, and were quickly lost in the dense cover on the other side.

As Norman and his attendant stood examining the beautiful creature, and admiring its fine proportions, the other villager added himself to the group with a movement so stealthy as scarcely to attract attention.

"Very good, Sahib!" was his first exclamation. "That bullet was well sent. I hope the sound of the gun has not disturbed the samber."

"Then you have seen some?" was Norman's quick demand, as he reloaded his empty rifle. "Where are they?"

"There are seven feeding on the grass land I mentioned, Sahib. Your slave has seen them, but they may have heard the noise and made off."

"That remains to be proved. I'll send this man to fetch some villagers to carry in the cheetul; and here, tie a piece of rag to this branch and drag the body underneath it. It will scare away anything till he returns. Now lead the way."

The two accordingly went off at a fast walk, and another ten minutes brought them to a dip in the table-land. A watercourse intersected the hollow, and although not at this season a running stream, had, from its monsoon abundance, left in its deepest clefts one or two pools of water, the resort during the night of numerous deer.

From ridge to ridge the intervening hollow was covered with yellow grass, tinged with green in those parts near the water. Patches of jungle fringed the ridges and also the whole undulating space, affording good stalking ground to an active man.

Peering through one of these patches, the villager pointed with exultation to the samber, still unconsciously feeding on the further side of the watercourse, but far out of shot from the spot from which the hunters were observing them. Norman nodded, and carefully examined the ground towards them, both with his own unassisted eyes and by the aid of a good binocular.

The deer were about a hundred yards from that

part of the watercourse which nearest approached them. Could the nullah be attained, it appeared sufficiently stony and rugged to afford cover to the stalker, who might then, with some difficulty, be able to make his way up it till he reached a point within fair shot.

Norman thought it quite practicable, as the wind was from the deer; so, telling his companion to sit where he was for the present, he waited till the samber had become hidden by one patch, and then stealthily and swiftly glided towards it. That reached, he had again to wait till the herd passed on and were lost behind another. In this way, making rushes from clump to clump, he managed to gain the nullah, but at a point still too far to risk a shot. The game had been slowly feeding parallel with the water-course, and away from the spot he had reached. He easily made his way for the next fifty yards, but after that the nullah turned partly towards the deer, and it was only by crouching very low, and availing himself of every boulder of rock or bush, or rise in the bank, that he managed at last to get within about a hundred yards of the nearest of the herd—a hind. The big stag was some twenty yards further away.

As he watched them through an aperture between two boulders of rock in the middle of the water-

course, the animal fed directly up the slope, and hence only presented his hind quarters. To fire at him in such a position would be useless; for if struck the wound could hardly stop the beast, who would quickly be lost in the neighbouring jungle. He waited a brief half-minute, but finding that the stag still persistently fed directly away, and was at every step increasing the distance between them, Norman seized a pebble and grated it harshly against the granite boulder.

The nearest hind turned rapidly round to look at the place from which the unaccustomed noise had issued. The stag himself ceased feeding; but less curious than his female relative, or deeming it perhaps her duty to detect danger, he only raised his head and lazily turned it to observe her motions. The movement, however, brought his body partially round, and presented a slanting shot to the ready-prepared hunter.

Pointing his rifle through the crevice, he put on the hair-trigger and fired, and was glad to hear the answering "thud" of the bullet striking flesh. The stag reeled and fell to his knees, but recovered himself and broke into a lumbering canter.

Norman had left his double rifle with the shikaree, preferring to use his fine-sighted hair trigger for the stalking shot, and now he half regretted it.

The whole of the hinds, with two half-grown young ones, went away at a gallop; but, after proceeding a short distance, decreased their pace as they found their lord and master lingering far in the rear. More than one turned to look at him, wondering no doubt at his unusual laziness in the presence of danger. However, they disappeared over the ridge, but before he reached that point of safety, his uneasy trot had subsided to a walk. Once the beast stopped, but it was only for a moment; and he followed in the wake of the hinds and also passed over the ridge in the same track.

Norman had, meanwhile, kept perfectly still, earnestly watching every movement through his glass. No sooner had the stag vanished than he started up, reloaded as quickly as possible, and turned round to signal his assistant. That worthy, however, was already making the best of his way down the slope to join him.

"Sahib," said he, as he came up; "the samber will not go very far. He was hard hit."

"I know it," was the answer, as Norman exchanged his single for the double rifle. "We must get on his track, though. He will be lying down, I expect. What sort of country is it over the ridge?"

"Much like this, Sahib. There is jungle a little beyond. He will perhaps lie down in that."

"Then we shall have a good view from that rock, shall we not?" asked Norman, pointing to an elevated portion of the ridge.

The man replied in the affirmative. So to the rock in question they at once made their way. This reached, they cautiously and carefully peered over, but after a lengthened examination, could discover no samber.

"He will have entered that patch," said Norman, who was still scanning the ground about. "You see those trees," he continued after a while. "Good! I will get to their shelter; and when you see me safely there, go round, concealed by the ridge, and cross it about that green bush; then walk down into the open. The wind is from there. The beast may scent you and break within shot of me. If he won't move, we must track him."

The man replied with a "very good, Sahib," and after seeing Norman reach the trees indicated, proceeded to perform his portion of the manœuvre, and carry into effect the orders he had received.

This was judiciously done, but without its producing the result desired. So, seeing that the animal, if there, was not inclined to break, Norman beckoned to the man, and they sought the pug or slot. There was no blood on it, but the experienced hunter rather argued favourably than the reverse

from that circumstance. Internal bleeding, he knew, was usually indicative of a more dangerous wound than one with copious external effusion, and he was perfectly satisfied the beast had been hard hit.

The track took them right up to the thicket, as anticipated; Norman with cocked rifle leading the way. As they approached it, the samber, who was lying down, just within its skirts, jumped up, but only to fall to the bullet which greeted his appearance.

It proved to be a large stag, but not carrying so fine a head as it would have done some months later. The horns are not nearly so handsome as those of the red deer, being only three tyned; but still, when in maturity, are fine sylvan trophies.

The first bullet, it was found, had passed between the ribs and lodged in the chest, whence it was afterwards extracted.

In anticipation of a good supper of meat that evening, the villager was enthusiastic in his admiration, both of the beast and of the shot which had laid him low. But, while bestowing his encomiums on Norman's abilities, he was not forgetful of his own surpassing merits as a shikaree, or his intimate acquaintance with the haunts of the forest game.

"The Sahib's hand is heavy on the game," he said. "His gun deals death. And his slave, Manajee, is a great shikaree—the greatest in these parts. I will show your worship any quantity of game, for I—sit—sit—down, Sahib," he suddenly ejaculated in the midst of his vaunts; "here are some samber coming!"

And true enough, three or four came cantering leisurely past, within sixty or seventy yards, without having as yet perceived the two men. As Norman, however, raised his weapon, the flashing of the barrels or some other circumstance attracted their attention, and their easy pace was quickly changed into one of the most headlong speed. They rushed past at full stretch, Norman singling out a young stag, at which he let drive with his left barrel. But the beast continued its flight uninterruptedly, the bullet striking slightly behind it, and careering through the air after ricocheting, with a shrill "pinging" noise.

As evening was drawing on, Norman decided on returning towards the camp by a slight *détour*. They reached the foot of the hills without seeing anything more, and made for the path by which they had come, so as to meet the men who had been sent for from the village. This they shortly did, and leaving the shikaree to conduct them to the

spot where the samber was concealed, and disembowel the game, Norman transferred his rifles to another; but before he left them, he heard Manajee declare, in reply to one of his fellow villagers, that the Sahib was a mighty hunter; and that he—Manajee to wit—"was the best shikaree in those parts, an unerring puggee, and a tree-to-tree guide through the country." He reached the camp a little before dark, about the same time as Hawkes. The latter had been also successful, having killed a samber hind, missed another, and also a Neilgye.

It was quite dark before Mackenzie came in; and late though he had tarried, he returned empty-handed.

"What sport, Mac?" was the inquiry which saluted him as he arrived.

A hoarse sound, between a growl and a chuckle, was the only answer vouchsafed until he had taken a long pull at some brandy-and-water, with which his experienced servant met him on his dismounting from his horse. Thus invigorated, he spoke. "Confounded luck! Blown myself till I couldn't speak; half sprained my ancle; turned myself into a regular wet sponge; and all for nothing." Unsatisfactory as this might reasonably be deemed to Mackenzie, it appeared to be fraught with some-

thing exceedingly ludicrous, for he burst out laughing. He shortly, however, continued: "I didn't know I had such a turn of speed; but running in this weather, though internally dry work, is the very reverse externally. Just let me get rid of these wet things, and this brandy-and-water, and I will tell you my adventures. But oh, Lord! my speed was child's play to the little chap's."

"What little chap's? what is the joke?" asked Norman. "It doesn't seem a very dry one; but let's have it. What have you been up to?"

"Come, out with it, Mac," echoed Hawkes. "It is evidently too good to keep all to yourself."

"Now you two fellows are as curious as a couple of women. However, I have compassion on you. Oh, Lord! Norman, it was the most ridiculous thing you ever saw. Gad! How they ran! and how the little fellow danced! I shall never forget his face afterwards, and his look of reproach at my laughter. Oh dear! oh dear! He will be the death of me; and the fellow with the tim-tim, too." Saying which, the Scotchman burst into a prolonged roar.

The intense merriment of the worthy fellow was contagious. Without a bit knowing what he was laughing at, the two others joined in; much to the discomfiture of the grave Sheik Hussein, who came

in to say that, if the Sahibs were prepared, dinner was ready to be served.

After awhile Mackenzie became calmer; and, drawing a face of unnatural gravity, began his narrative, which was, however, interrupted by another fit, as he feebly ejaculated, "The little dancing fellow will kill me."

"Don't be so selfish, Mac," said Norman. "Here are Hawkes and myself quite prepared to be good listeners, and you won't indulge us. Control your feelings, and get safely delivered of your joke, or we won't wait to hear it."

"Well, so I want to. It's very inhuman my laughing so, for it was no joke at all for the poor little devil. But I can't help it, and I believe he will have his revenge in making me break a blood-vessel. But I am quite exhausted. Do, Hawkes, like a good fellow, brew a mug."

The mug was brewed; and Mac, having at length prepared himself, ordered dinner. During the meal, he found himself sufficiently recovered to narrate his adventures, though not without some relapses.

"Isn't it a nuisance," he said, "I lost such a whopping bear?"

"A bear? What, is he the cause of the laughter?"

"Ay! I'm just going to tell you. You know I had to strike the hills, about a mile on your left, Norman. Well, just as I approached them, I met a couple of men running to our camp. They told me a wood-cutter had seen two bears, and marked them down among some rocks, and that they were on their way to fetch us. I knew it was no use hunting for you two fellows, even had there been time; so I determined to have a shy at them by myself. I found about twenty or thirty men had assembled from a village not far distant; so I took them off with me at once. The place in which the bears were reported to be lying, was a big ravine, a sort of winding cleft, which, cut from the hill front, ran in a slanting direction. Some parts of the sides rose almost precipitously from the ravine to the table-land on the hill-top. I left it to the men entirely to conduct our plan of action. It was arranged that I should stand guard over a wooded nullah which ran into the ravine on one side, while they should go round by the other side to the head of the gorge, and tumble rocks and stones into it. I had just reached my station, and the men, in small separate parties of threes and fours, were moving along on the opposite side, about three hundred yards from where I stood, when a clattering of stones down the rocky side of the

ravine attracted my attention. This was immediately succeeded by loud shouting. I looked across, and saw a party of four or five men pelting something lower down. Presently a couple of bears scrambled up the rocks, and charged right at them. Of course they bolted for their lives, and I think I never before saw such a display of gymnastics. There were a few stunted trees, almost leafless, near the spot, and standing on open ground apart from the jungle. They were little more than bushes; but into these two or three of the men threw themselves with a monkey-like activity, which utterly passeth my understanding. The others fled in different directions towards the thicker jungle in the background. One of the bears selected one of the latter, and went his best pace along the level in pursuit. Notwithstanding the most desperate and extraordinary exertions of the long-legged fellow in front, the bear gained rapidly on him. But, fortunately, as it proved, it was the tim-tim-wallah. He had no time to fling himself into one of the trees, and, I confess, I was most anxious as to the result of the race. Preferring, however, his own skin to that of his drum, when he found there was no way of avoiding his enraged pursuer, he, as a last resource, dropped his tim-tim. Bruin at once pulled up to examine his prize, and was soon engaged in

wreaking vengeance on the hollow sounding article. Doubtless many a marriage and other native ceremony had been enlivened with the banging of that most cherished instrument; but never again, alas! was it destined to delight and charm the native ear. The enraged bear seized it with his claws; bit at it; and very soon reduced it to a state quite incompatible with any future drumming. However, the bear's attention being thus distracted, and his fury spent in the demolition of the tim-tim, its owner was enabled to make good use of his long legs, and effected his escape; while the beast, apparently satisfied with the destruction he had accomplished, lumbered away, and disappeared in the jungle.

"The other bear had fixed his special attention on a little fellow, who declined to place his speed in competition with that of his antagonist,—at least he only ran for about a dozen yards, and then scrambled with amazing rapidity into one of the small trees. It was hardly sufficient to bear his weight, but he managed to fix one foot in a cleft, and the other widely separate on a different branch, and as high above the ground as he could get. It was only about six or seven feet though, and the bear dashed up to the foot of the tree, evidently thinking he had secured his victim.

"It's a great shame to laugh," said Mac, as he recovered from the fresh burst his recital induced. "It sounds very hard-hearted; but though I felt very funky for the poor little chap, I couldn't for the life of me help it at the time.

"The bear rose on his hind legs and made a pat with the claws of one fore-foot, as if to seize one of the man's. Hanging on like grim death by the thin boughs and twigs, the little fellow had his legs stretched with his feet far apart, clutching the boughs most tenaciously with his toes, which were just about on a line with the bear's paws. When the man raised the foot aimed at out of reach, the brute made a dab with his other paw at the other foot, and so he had alternately to raise each foot as it became the object of attack. This continuing for some time, gave to both the man and his assailant the appearance of dancing. But it was varied by the poor little beggar making occasional kicks at the bear's nose as he shifted his position. The distance was too far for my rifle to tell with any certainty, though I brought it up once or twice, but was afraid to fire, as the two were so close to each other.

"We shouted, and the rest of the beaters who had huddled together shouted and yelled vigorously, and at last the bear left his active little enemy,

fortunately scathless, and came rattling down into the ravine from which he had just ascended, and right up the wooded nullah over which I was holding guard.

"It became my turn now to prepare for action, for I heard, without seeing, him scrambling amongst the stones and bushes. Presently I caught sight of him, and drove a brace of bullets into his body. He staggered, hard hit, but went off at an undiminished pace, growling like fury. I had only my double rifle with me, so as soon as I could load I posted off after him at a double, under the guidance of my shikaree. What a run I had! The very thought of it makes me thirsty."

After a brief pause, during which the narrator was engaged in temporarily satisfying a most unquenchable thirst, he continued :—

"The man thought we might intercept the beast by making a cut across to a neighbouring ravine. We did this at a pace which would have astonished your weak minds. But all the pumping and perspiring I underwent was of no use, for we saw nothing of our active friend, though I am certain I drilled a couple of holes into his fur jacket. I got the men together afterwards and beat the ravine, but nothing turned up; so, as it was getting dark, I was obliged to give up the search.

"But oh! you should have seen the faces of the tim-tim-wallah and the little dancing chap, and the forlorn expression with which the former showed me the remains of his cherished drum. However, his was an ailment capable of a consolatory salve; and I dare say most of his fellows, who chaffed him unmercifully, would willingly have exchanged places with either of them, now that the danger was over. There now, that's my adventure. I know what you fellows killed, but let me have the particulars."

Norman gave a brief account of what we already know. Hawkes also described his performances;—how he had stalked the samber which was feeding with a few others just outside some jungle, and getting a close shot, disposed of it at once; missing another with his left barrel as they galloped away.

They all decided that the hills appeared good sporting ground, and well worthy of being hunted, in event of tigers being scarce in the beds of the rivers in the plain.

The game was brought in and skinned. As on the previous evening, the three friends combined duty with pleasure; and, while enjoying the post-prandial cheroot, superintended the stretching and pegging of the skins. The choice bits of the venison, too, were selected and laid aside for their

own use. These consisted of some chops and a haunch of the cheetul, and a steak or two cut from the samber hind, together with the tongues and marrow-bones of both.

Cheetul venison is good, that of the samber coarse; but the marrow bones of the latter are incomparable. The meat, too, was most welcome as a change from a diet of the tough goat and half-fed fowls which usually form the principal part of the bill of fare of the Indian sportsman or traveller. "Sudden death" is the term by which the spatchcock of the traveller is known, and not inappropriately; for within the space of an hour the weary man may see his dinner walking about, as well as served broiled before him.

After the choice pieces had been cut from the carcases and laid aside, the latter were carried away to the village, there to be cut into shares and distributed. Nor was this operation effected in a noiseless manner. An incessant sound of many tongues had, from the first, accompanied the important business of division and allotment. The distant murmur, however, after a time swelled into such a Babel of noise as to indicate, the hunters thought, a disposition to strife. Fearing lest some of their own servants or followers might be attempting to exercise an undue influence in the distribution, or

otherwise using their masters' names in their own behoof, they proceeded to the spot, easily guided by the clamour. Under the wide-spreading branches of a fine peepul-tree, perhaps for centuries the evening resort of the village elders, they found gathered the whole population, male and female. All were speaking at once, and it was some time before the public attention was attracted to the visitors. When, however, this took place, exclamations of "The Sahibs! the Sahibs!" caused the speedy exit from the scene of some of the women, and quickly tended to allay the uproar.

The flesh of the game, cut up into blocks of meat, was lying arranged in rows on the bare ground. The contention was going on, at the end of one of these rows, over a pile of meat of imposing magnitude, and far larger than any of the others. Rugonauth stood forward as the gentlemen approached, and, amid a dead silence, replied to their interrogatories.

"What is all this row about?" asked Mackenzie. "Can't you divide the meat in peace, without quarreling over it like a pack of hungry jackals?"

"Sahib," the man said, "it is the greediness of the Patell (the village head-man). It is not our fault. The meat has been cut into portions for each house of the village; but the Patell is not satisfied,

although he has got a treble share, and has only a few mouths in his house to feed;" and he pointed to the unusually large share beside him.

"Patell, how is this?" Mackenzie demanded of a lean hungry-looking old man. "Your share seems a very ample one."

The Patell looked rather ashamed, and would willingly have now contented himself with the portion assigned him. Thus directly appealed to, however, he deemed it incumbent on him to defend his covetousness, and commenced therefore a voluble statement. Other standers-by were at once set off, moved by their desire to refute the Patell's line of argument, and the controversy seemed likely to rage as loudly as before. But Mackenzie, in a stentorian voice, commanded silence. It was his object to keep on good terms with the village head-man, whose influence it was desirable to retain in their behalf, as he might throw many obstructions in the way of procuring supplies and beaters, if rendered sulky. In a tone, therefore, of gravity, becoming the importance of the subject, Mac addressed the assembly: "As the portions of the meat," he said, "appear to be so well divided, one lot could only be increased by cutting little strips from each of the others, and that would spoil good flesh. So my advice is, that all should be now accepted without

any further dispute. On the next occasion of a kill, these gentlemen and myself will send, as a special mark of favour to the Patell, one of the steaks set apart for us, in acknowledgment of his services in assisting us. Enough. As I have spoken I will do."

This judicious decision was hailed with acclamation. The dignity of the Patell was satisfied, and the dispute at an end. Indeed, so much did the village chief esteem the gratifying condescension of the Sahib people, that he intimated his perfect readiness there and then, to do anything or go anywhere for such generous cherishers of the humble.

Having wrought the disputants to this wholesome frame of mind, the friends retired to their tents; and the whole village was shortly engaged in the delightful occupation of removing the meat.

CHAPTER IV.

A Tiger sups on Beef—Preparations made for Revenge—His first Appearance—His second—His last—Charms and Witchcraft.

AFTER a plunge in the river on the following morning, the hunters were sitting enjoying the early cup of tea outside their tents. They were chatting over the adventures of the previous day, and speculating on what the current one would produce in the shape of sport, when a native was discerned running towards them at full speed, shouting and gesticulating wildly as he did so.

"Tiger! tiger! tiger! He has killed my cow! He has killed my cow! He has half-eaten my cow!" Such were his exclamations as he approached; and when he reached the tea-drinkers, such still continued the burden of his wailing. Apparently he considered it sufficiently explanatory to induce the sportsmen to start off at once to the rescue of the yet undemolished remains of the unfortunate cow; for it was some little time before they could obtain from him any coherent account of what had taken place.

Their first impulse, indeed, had been to jump up and get out their guns; and young Hawkes, deeming that immediate action must necessarily ensue, was already getting into his sporting costume with praiseworthy alacrity. A few questions, however, from his more experienced companions after awhile elicited the fact, that the man had not himself seen the tiger, but only the mangled body of the defunct cow. It had, he said, strayed during the night, and following its track, he had come upon it dead and partly eaten, and hastened at once to apprise the hunters of the circumstance.

"Rugonauth or some of the puggees will be sure to come across it, or, at any rate, find traces of the tiger," said Mackenzie.

"Yes," replied Norman. "There has been a tiger hovering about this jungle for some time past; and though he has not visited it for the last three or four days, they will hardly leave it unexamined. But suppose we go and have a look at the cow!"

"Don't you think it might disturb the brute? He is sure to be lying somewhere near, and might sneak off," observed the cautious Scotchman.

"Hardly. He is very likely gorged; and besides, this fellow says the cow is half a field away from the jungle."

"All right, come along then. But we had better

take our rifles in case of accident. Never mind your trowsers, Hawkes. We are not going to look for the tiger now. I shall go as I am ;" and Mackenzie led the way in drawers and slippers.

After leaving orders for the instant preparation of breakfast, and sending a summons to the village for the collection of the beaters, the three started off in their light and easy morning costume to inspect the scene of the kill.

This proved to be not more than a quarter of a mile from the camp. Conducted by the unlucky owner of the cow, accordingly, they soon reached it, and found the animal as described. It had been struck down almost without a struggle, as the ground on examination proved. After sucking the blood, the slayer had commenced his feeding operations on the body—as is usually the case—from the hinder part, a considerable portion of which had been disposed of.

The carcase lay about a hundred yards from the outskirts of the jungle ; and as the hunters were casting about for the returning track of the tiger, old Rugonauth himself was seen approaching with another man.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, *sotto voce*, as he joined the little party, "it's all right, Sahibs. The tiger is in the jungle. See, here is his pug right for it. We

came on his track on the other side; and Manajee went one way while I came this. If you will go and eat your breakfasts, I will look along the rest of this side and make certain he has not left. He is a very large tiger, Sahibs; look at the pug. It will be great shikar."

Thus advised, the three returned to camp, accompanied by the lamenting villager, whose cow had furnished the tiger's ample meal. Arraying themselves in their sporting garb, they sat down to breakfast. By the time it was finished, Rugonauth and Manajee had returned, reporting that no tracks led from the jungle, consequently that the beast was safely ringed. The beaters were rapidly assembling, and before long all were prepared for the beat.

The cover, which was in the bed of the river, was divided into three distinct parts by open spaces of considerable extent. A large pool of water, with its bank free from brushwood, but garnished with a few trees, occupied the flank of one of these. It was deemed best to beat the section thus divided from the rest of the jungle first; the hunters being stationed in occupancy of the open space. For the tiger was believed to be sleeping off the effects of his hearty meal in the section alluded to, which was that nearest to the dead cow.

The beaters were accordingly assembled at the

end nearest to the village, and not beyond two or three hundred yards from the camp; and the hunters went on to the place indicated.

Lots decided that Mackenzie should take the near side, Norman the other, and Hawkes occupy a central position. By this arrangement the tiger would have to pass within twenty or thirty yards of one of them, most probaby much nearer; and, it was hoped, in fair shot of all. The whole width of the river's bed did not there exceed one hundred yards.

Unfortunately, the situation of the trees did not permit of all three being in line, but in échelon; Norman, the most advanced, and Mackenzie the most retired—the latter, indeed, stationed within the second section of the cover. Each sportsman with a spare-gun-bearer, climbed into a tree, and made himself as comfortable as he could; not, though, without some suppressed swearing on the part of Mackenzie, whose heavy person was not so easily accommodated as those of his lighter and more active comrades.

Norman's perch was on a stunted tree,—little more than a stump indeed,—which, being on the top of the sloping bank, gave him sufficient command, and enabled him to overlook several bushes which were scattered about; though it was not

high enough to have served as a protection from a tiger's spring in event of his making so determined an assault on the position. The others were at a sufficient elevation to ensure safety in any case.

In a short while, the yelling chorus of the beaters announced that they had commenced operations; and the fizzing and spluttering of some flower-pots and bamboo-rockets, which heralded their advance, proclaimed that such light skirmishers were deemed desirable to clear the way; and they were doubtless right, for it was naturally more than usually repugnant to the tiger's feelings to have his repose disturbed, when the satisfactory nature of his midnight or morning meal rendered him unwilling to be discourteously intruded on.

Not a sign had he yet given of his presence; and, as the beaters approached the end of the patch, the hunters were beginning to think he must be lying elsewhere. Norman had just come to this conclusion, when he saw a majestic tiger walk calmly out of the jungle, and stand gazing straight before him, evidently not quite decided about making a rush over the open space in front. Norman brought up his rifle and covered him; but waited for a nearer shot, if possible. His patience was rewarded. The beast advanced another twenty yards at a walk directly towards Norman, and again

stopped, anxiously trying to make out if any enemy waited near the dreaded ground in front, in traversing which he must be fully exposed. He was distant not more than thirty yards, and the next step would take him from the shelter of the last of the scattered bushes which dotted the extremity of the jungle. The trigger was touched, and the rifle crack was the first intimation the beaters had of the proximity of the game. This was instantaneously followed by a succession of roars, which sent them flying out of the jungle, and into all the available trees near. The tiger answered to the bullet-blow by reeling; but immediately recovering himself, dashed away, tail on end, up the bank, and close by the position occupied by Norman. But the disadvantage of firing from trees is that, from being in a fixed position, it is difficult to adapt one's movements so as to aim except in certain directions. Norman had not anticipated the beast passing behind him, and was unable, therefore, so to screw himself round as to bring his rifle to bear. The beast rushed by, and receiving, without apparent harm, a bullet each from Hawkes and Mackenzie, effected his object, gained the second jungle, and disappeared within its tangled cover.

Rugonauth and Manajee soon came up, and, after a hurried consultation, it was decided to make as

fast as possible to the furthest end of the jungle, in hopes of anticipating the tiger's exit, should he break at once after skulking through it.'

So, under Manajee's guidance, they set off at a double, passing by the open ground and a few cleared fields which skirted the cover. To Manajee was entrusted this duty, as his local knowledge enabled him to judge of the probable points at which the tiger might be expected to show or break away. Rugonauth remained in command of the beaters.

After a sharp trot, the shikaree pointed to two trees, intimating that two Sahibs should occupy them; and that the position in which he proposed to place the third was at the very extremity of the jungle.

Without wasting words, Norman and Hawkes remained to take possession of these two points, and Mackenzie continued on to reach the other. Norman was soon engaged in climbing into a large tree on the slope of the river bank, and just within the jungle; and unfortunate would it have been for him, if the tiger at that moment had made his appearance along the path which passed under it. In addition to this track, he commanded from his position a break in the thick cover which filled the river-bed. Hawkes was stationed in a smaller tree,

just outside the cover, and held guard over a path which there gave egress from it.

The beaters soon began, almost, indeed, before Mackenzie could reach his station, for Rugonauth lost no time in getting them into line at the place just vacated by the hunters. Norman had only time to fix himself well, and to adapt his position so as to cover the most likely places at which a tiger would be visible to him, when a suppressed "chuck" of the tongue against the teeth from his gun-bearer called for his attention. The man had climbed a good deal higher than himself, and consequently had a greater command. He was pointing with suppressed excitement in the direction of the path's course. For a few seconds Norman saw nothing; but presently the tiger came into view, walking slowly along. He let him come on, reserving his fire till he should reach a spot which would give him a clear, uninterrupted view, and allow him to aim in a convenient position. But just before he reached it the beast turned abruptly to the right, and moved directly towards Hawkes and the outside of the cover. Norman could have fired; but he thought Hawkes' shot would be more certain, as from its course the tiger would, in all probability, pass underneath him. Hawkes saw the beast advancing, let him come close, and rolled

him over with a shot. With a low growl, instead of a roar, this time, however, he again recovered himself, and slipped back into the denser part of the cover.

"Did you hit him?" asked Norman of Hawkes, who, though so near, was invisible.

"Yes, he came right under my tree. He seems awfully done. Can you make anything of his whereabouts?"

"No, I can't get a sight of—but—oh! confound it! Ah! Hoo! Chugh!—help here, you gun-fellow."

"Why, what are you up to, Norman?" demanded Hawkes, anxiously. "Is the tiger trying to get at you?"

"No, no. Botheration! Oh Lord! how they nip! I have been sitting in a red-ant's nest, or on their public highway, or some other favourite resort. Oh! the vindictive little wretches. They are all over me."

From sundry slappings and flappings, Hawkes rightly conjectured that Norman and his attendant were endeavouring to overcome the onslaught of the ants. But as they were brushed off in one part, they seemed to swarm to the attack in another. In the very midst of his exertions to shake off his tormenters, Norman's eye fell on the break in the

jungle he had before remarked in the bottom of the river bed; and there, staring towards the tree as if endeavouring to make out his concealed enemy and the cause of the disturbance, was the tiger, looking very sick. Norman could just make out the head and shoulders in the deep shade; and, notwithstanding the irritation caused by his pertinacious assailants, steadied himself for a shot, and the tiger responded to it by disappearing in the bushes.

Meanwhile some of the men had come round with the fireworks, a few of which were lighted and pitched into the jungle, but it was not deemed advisable to let the men enter. They stood near the outskirts, however, and shouted; but none discovered the whereabouts of the tiger. After a considerable time had been ineffectually consumed in endeavouring to ascertain this, and old Rugonauth had satisfied himself that the beast had not gone towards Mackenzie's end of the jungle, that gentleman was sent for, and with Manajee shortly made his appearance.

After a brief discussion, they determined to advance on the spot where Norman had last seen and fired at the animal.

This they did shoulder to shoulder, with rifles on full cock, and men with the spare guns behind them. There was much blood about, and some

rejected masses of his partly-digested supper, but no tiger.

"He will have gone to the nearest water," whispered Rugonauth. "Look! here is his track along this path."

"Where is the water?" quickly interrogated Mackenzie.

Rugonauth looked to Manajee, and the latter, pointing along the path, said, "The track leads to it. The water is about fifty paces off."

"He is evidently very bad," Norman observed. "I suppose we had better follow. Is the jungle more open about the water, Manajee?"

"Yes, Sahib, it is clearer there."

"Then come along," Mackenzie said. "There is only room for two of us to squeeze along abreast. Norman and I will do so; and you, Hawkes, keep close behind us with Rugonauth, and join our front whenever you find room. We must all keep a sharp look-out. He may be lying anywhere to right or left, and be down on us like a shot."

The advance was silently, slowly, and cautiously conducted. Rugonauth peered between the two leaders with the object of giving immediate notice if the animal's pug entered the jungle on either flank, while all the others remained on the

alert to catch the slightest glimpse or the smallest sound.

"He's lame, Sahib," whispered Rugonauth, after a few yards. "His right leg is going lame."

After a little, the open passage through the jungle somewhat widened, it being one evidently used by animals to conduct them to the drinking-place, and also for the purpose of enabling them to avoid the intricacies of the cover when moving from one place to another. Large boulders of rock here and there rose above the low brushwood, and the path in many places wound among and around them.

Two or three men, who were following in the wake for that purpose, climbed into trees, which the hunters passed, to obtain a look-out over the jungle in the front and flanks of the still advancing party, and give warning of any movement they might observe. As each boulder was reached too, before being rounded, the leaders, with fingers on trigger, carefully examined the other side to see that no enemy lay there in ambush.

Presently glimpses of the water were obtained through the bushes, and Hawkes managed to take his place in the front rank, though with some difficulty, the branches of jungle having frequently to be thrust aside to enable him to remain there. Moving thus compactly in line, they reached the

more open space about the pool; and almost simultaneously detected the tiger lying at its very edge, with his head and paws in the water.

Mackenzie, who from his position on the right, had the clearest view, perhaps was the first by a second to catch sight of the game, and quickly ejaculated: "Look out! there he is. Dead, though, I believe. I'll fire to make sure."

This he did; while the other two brought up their rifles and stood prepared. The only response to Mackenzie's shot was the dull sound the bullet made as it entered the body. The beast was quite dead; and a few steps in advance showed them that it was lying with the face and paws in the water, having evidently died in the act of taking its last drink.

It proved to be a magnificent male tiger; and the body showed that three bullets had entered it, besides the last shot of Mackenzie's. One had struck the chest; another almost penetrated the depth of his body, entering near the spine; and a third had broken the bone of the shoulder.

A triumphant death-yell soon brought the beaters swarming down into the cover, chattering incessantly as they did so.

A couple of boughs were soon cut from the trees and shaped into long poles by the ready axes of the

men, many of whom carried those useful implements wherever they went. Strips of jow or other withe-like jungle shrub, or the bark of trees, served as lashings; and the tiger's paws were soon bound to the poles, and the latter raised on the shoulders of half a dozen men, three in front and the same number behind. With constant relief from the rest, they carried the tiger, thus slung, in triumph to the camp.

All the servants were on the look-out as the procession approached, eager to inspect the formidable creature, whose extraordinary dimensions and destructive habits had long been themes of village gossip, and given rise to many highly embellished stories of his power and voracity.

Not a few were the congratulations of those whose cattle had furnished meals to the destroyer; and it was amid exclamations of satisfaction, and much abuse of the tiger itself, and all its female relatives, that old Rugonauth applied a lighted brand to the noble whiskers with which its face was well garnished.

"What are you doing that for, Rugonauth?" asked Hawkes.

"Ah, Sahib!" he said; "it would be wrong to leave them. Much harm might come."

"How do you mean much harm?" inquired the

young sportsman. "What is bad about them? They look very nice on the skin."

"I do it, Sahib, to prevent any one getting hold of them. Much mischief might be the consequence. He might haunt us. Any one, too, getting possession of these hairs might commit Jado (sorcery) on his enemy, or mix them with his food and poison him."

"Bewitch him! Poison him!" Hawkes exclaimed. "What, are the hairs poisonous?"

"Well, Sahib, I do not know that they are altogether like poison; but if chopped up and given with the food, they would have an evil influence. So I take good care no one shall cut them off for his own use. There now, you old rascal," he added, addressing the dead tiger, "now you can do no harm."

"Is it only the whiskers from which harm comes?" asked Hawkes.

"It is all that is hurtful," was the reply. "But the claws are capital charms, and some other parts are very good for rheumatism."

"He speaks the words of truth," observed Sheik Hussein, who had been an attentive and gratified listener to the foregoing conversation. "The Sahibs have had great luck. May it ever be great! I shall be much rejoiced if the Sahibs will allow me

to have two claws, to fasten round the arm of my child."

"When they are cut out, you shall have two," said Mackenzie, who just then joined the party round the tiger. "But see that they are all collected, and none pilfered by the villagers."

"I will obey your honour's commands," was the respectful reply of the old servant. But when his master had retired, he deputed Norman's young, scampish, dressing-boy, Baloo, to undertake that important duty, greatly to the latter's satisfaction. Mr. Baloo proclaimed aloud that *he* should permit no purloining, and was very imperious and exacting in demanding the surrender to him of every individual claw. The process of skinning, too, was one in which he took infinite delight, having received some private instructions from his master.

The day was yet young; so after a light tiffin of cold cheetul and thin, unleavened cakes—called locally, in some parts of Bombay, "apps," and elsewhere "chupatties"—washed down with some brandy-and-water, the sportsmen resolved to try the plain country in the immediate neighbourhood, for peafowl, partridges, or any other small game they might meet, with which to replenish the exhausted larder.

As they intended to beat the hills for bears, when tigers should no longer be procurable in the rivers, they thought it best not again to disturb by a few hours' desultory sporting and chance of a shot, the ground, where, with good early morning arrangements, bears might be marked down.

To the English sportsman, it may appear strange that partridges should be shot in May. But in India there are no game-laws, nor is there restriction as to season. As the whole country is open to be shot over at the will of the sportsman, and probably no limited preservation would lead to the increase of game birds, he destroys them wherever or whenever he desires. Nor does the breeding-season often deter him; though, as the cold weather is the most convenient and pleasant for the pursuit of small game, the use of his shot-gun is usually limited to that time, and to a portion of the monsoon.

I have used the term "breeding-season;" but whether, after all, that is confined to a certain period, I should think extremely doubtful. There are one or two species of wild-duck which visit the tanks during the monsoon, as well as in the cold weather; and I have seen young progenies of one particular species at both seasons. The grey partridge, too, with its young brood, I have observed

in many various months, and found the eggs of the painted partridge in August.

However this may be, the hunters were not deterred by any scruples on the score of season from adding to their bill of fare; regarding the destruction at any time of eatable fowls of the air as quite legitimate when they were required for food. So they returned soon after sunset with one or two peafowl, a hare, a grey partridge or two, and some green pigeons; some of which were converted into a stew, while they were enjoying their usual evening swim, and soon after appeared on the dinner-table.

"Are all these people as superstitious as old Rugonauth describes them?" asked Hawkes after dinner, as they sat discussing the day's events. "Do they really believe so profoundly in 'Jado'?"

"Yes," replied Norman. "The power to bewitch is attributed to many; and strange to say,—notwithstanding the punishment which too often falls to their lot,—those believed to possess the power very frequently admit it."

"It gives them consideration among their people, and attracts a respect they certainly wouldn't get without," observed Mackenzie. "But, on the whole, I should think it was rather a dangerous accomplishment. Frightful atrocities are committed under

guise of ascertaining the truth, and punishing the perpetrator of some supposed bewitchment."

"And," continued Norman, "often the slightest, most puerile reason is quite sufficient to induce a man to bring the accusation. Anything which will give a colouring to the enmity one person may entertain for another—any pretext—is sufficient to make others agree with him that he is under an evil influence. If a man gets some ache or pain for which he can't account, or which will not succumb to the nostrums of the village barber, he very frequently sets it down to 'Jado,' or some spell which has been worked on him. And if he has any grudge against some poor, harmless old woman, she has every chance of being accused of having bewitched him."

"Is it always the old women who get the credit?" inquired Hawkes.

"Not always. Any one who is an enemy of the sufferer, old or young, of either sex, may be suspected; but it is usually the old women who are supposed to be gifted with the power. And as long as they can sway others through fear of its being exercised on them, it's all right, and they reap the benefit of it. But when they are believed to have really done so, it sometimes goes hard with them."

"Ah! then," exclaimed Hawkes, "I suppose there

are not often Indian witches of the Tam o'Shanter stamp. The lively young lady in the 'cutty sark' is not of a species prevalent in the tropics."

"No. But *she* was an exceptional one, even in Tam's day. Remember, all her companions were old and ugly. I suppose her youth was the reason why she is represented as outflying the rest, and capturing the mare's tail, and so nearly bringing her rider to grief."

"How do they try or punish them? As of old, by ducking?"

"By all sorts of ways. Tying the head in a bag of powdered chillies and hanging the accused up by the heels, is an unpleasant way of arriving at truth not uncommonly practised. But, after all, some of our English boors are not much better. I read an account the other day of an old Frenchman who died from the effects of a ducking administered by some bold Britons, who chose to fancy the poor creature a sorcerer."

CHAPTER V.

A speculative Beat—Its results—Contemplated change of Camp—Manajee's Day—Bear-shooting—A double Death—Bears' Grease—Striking the Camp.

It was late next morning before any emissary arrived from Rugonauth. Indeed, noon was already past, when a man came in to say that a tiger had been marked down in some jow jungle near that in which the tigress was killed, and in the same river. It had moved about in an unsettled manner; and hence, the man stated, the delay in sending information.

The hunters were speedily on the move, and in due time joined Rugonauth. It was soon evident to Mackenzie and Norman that some doubt existed in the old man's mind as to the exact whereabouts of the tiger, though he professed to be satisfied that it was lying in the jungle he proposed beating. But his hesitating manner, and his repeated cautions not to make the slightest noise for fear of disturbing the beast; his lack of excited energy also; and altogether an inexplicable something about him,

led the two older and more practised hunters to conjecture that the beat was one on speculation. That *hope* of a find, rather than the certainty, was at present influencing the acute and experienced shikaree. They had too much confidence in his sincerity, as well as in his woodcraft, to think that the old fellow meant either to deceive those whom his jungle science had so often assisted, or that he was himself deceived. They had little doubt a tiger had been about; but where he then might be, they believed to be a matter of uncertainty; and the result justified their apprehensions.

The strip of jungle was beaten, and two other patches also, including the one memorable as the scene of the tigress' death; but nothing was discovered by any one. And, at last, Rugonauth was obliged to confess that the animal's retreat had from the first been uncertain, and that he must have eluded them.

"He has been wandering about," he said, "a good deal, Sahib, during the night and early morning, and his pugs cross so much as to render it difficult to find out the latest. I was in hopes he might have been in that jungle we first beat; but now I have no confidence about finding him. I do not know where he has gone, but think he must have returned to the hills."

"Then you do not propose beating any more?" asked Mackenzie.

"No, Sahib. It will only be bothering the Sahibs for nothing. The tigers have not come well down from the hills yet. The season has not been hot enough, and the water is not dried up there."

"Then don't you expect to find any more at present about the rivers down here in the plains?"

"No, Sahib," replied Rugonauth. "In a few days more, with this heat, they will seek the rivers. Those we have killed, and others which come about, have wandered a great deal. If it suits the Sahibs, they might try the hills for a few days, and then come back here."

"But where do you propose going?" inquired Norman.

"I met a man yesterday," was the reply, "who told me that right amongst the hills, near the village of Oonge, from which he had come, several cattle had been killed by tigers, and it is a good country for bears. If your honour orders, I will go and see what truth there is in the report. I sent off a man yesterday to make inquiries."

"I should certainly like a good beat among those ravines in the first range before we leave Mungaum, Mac. Don't you think so?" asked Norman, in English, of his friend.

"Most certainly," was the reply. "Old Rugonauth thinks far more about tigers, because his rewards for them are so much larger. But I confess I like bear-shooting hugely, and vote we pay some attention to the hairy ones."

"And get some grease, eh!" suggested Hawkes.

"Get grease, too, and keep our engagements to the ladies. I suppose you have promised no end of bottles!"

"Well, we are agreed then," said Norman, "as to a beat in the hills. So now let us have Rugonauth's views."

The proposal was then explained to him, and he was good enough to express his approval of it. It was further arranged that he should start that evening for Oonge, and leave the management of the morrow's beat to Manajee.

This matter settled, the party rode off to the tents.

Invested with the dignity of manager of the day's proceedings, Manajee was naturally anxious that they should be successful; and thus produce éclat and emolument for himself, and satisfaction to his employers. By the first streak of dawn, accordingly, he had placed men on several elevated spots among the hills and ravines to watch for, and mark down, any bears moving about. Tracking was of little

use, where the rugged nature of the ground presented difficulties which even the most expert could hardly overcome. He knew the ground well, and had selected the several positions assigned to his assistants with judgment.

Consequently, when it was fairly light, a couple of bears were discovered, and, by eight o'clock, a messenger arrived in the camp to summon the sportsmen to the scene of their retreat.

The breakfast, already in process of consumption, was hastily finished, the ponies saddled, and the party soon under way with the beaters in company. It did not take them long to reach the foot of the hills; but as it was yet some distance from the place where the bears were supposed to be reposing, they, with considerable difficulty, managed to ride up the ascent. Another mile or so brought them to a group of trees, under which Manajee and a couple of men were waiting for them. The remaining markers were posted round the jungle, and there kept watch and ward over the unsuspicious game.

This was lying in a considerable tract of jungle situated in a hollow surrounded by hills, with three principal approaches to its dense recesses.

It was determined to beat from the direction of one of these, leaving the other two to be guarded

by the hunters. To Mac's lot it fell to occupy the side of a nullah, over which, and a portion of the bare hill-side it seamed, he had full command. The other two were stationed together on the side of a slope, towards a hollow in which converged several wild-beast tracks, after intersecting the jungle in various directions. The slope was covered with disconnected patches of jungle, but just in their front, and between them and the main thicket, stretched an open space of some fifteen yards in breadth. This they covered, ensconcing themselves behind a bush to conceal themselves from any beast breaking across it.

"Well," said Norman, in a whisper, "if they break here, we ought to give a good account of them. But it looks doubtful, with so much jungle about the sides of the hills; I have great faith in old Manajee, though. He seems to know both the haunts and the habits of the game well, and if his bundobust (a term implying the arrangements for the beat, and all the previsional preparations connected with it) is good, we may have the luck to get our friends here."

"I am sure, I hope so," was the reply in the same low tone of voice. "I long to get a shot at a bear. It would be glorious to bag both. There's the grease, too.'

"Are your engagements deep in the matter of that article?" asked Norman.

"Why, yes, I confess I have been rash enough to pledge myself pretty heavily," the young fellow admitted, with a bit of a blush showing even through the brick-dusty complexion sun and exposure had produced.

"Are your promised favours general? or is the principal portion to be reserved for one fair individual? Ah! I suspect Miss Verney will benefit most by your success."

"Now, don't chaff! If I have promised that young lady, it is only reasonable. She has the prettiest and softest hair in the station."

"And therefore the less requires the addition of grease," said Norman. "I will take your word for its being soft, as I cannot speak from actual experience—tangible experience. Now, if you had only promised old Mrs. Jenkins a bottle or two, it would have been real charity. *I* have done so."

"Because you couldn't help yourself," retorted Hawkes. "I heard all about the old woman bullying you at dinner, the last time you dined with the Brigadier. But hang it, she might have been contented with one bottle. I hear she asked for six. Is that true?"

Norman laughed as he replied, "Quite true. But

I was equal to the occasion, and promised three bottles from the animals which I shot. What do you think of tiger's fat? I don't see why it should not be as provocative of hair as that of bears; and then it might possibly impart the ruddy tinge so much the fashion. You fellows are not half wide-awake. I bottled off both the tigers."

"Bottled them off?" inquired Hawkes with surprise.

"Yes. I set that young imp, Baloo, to secure all the fat and melt it. I have several old beer bottles full. I shall just pour in a suspicion of bear's grease as a salve to my conscience, and there you have a nice present for the old woman."

"No end of a dodge!" exclaimed his companion, applaudingly. "But then I wouldn't like to deceive Miss Verney."

"Miss Verney! I should think not. It would be downright sacrilege to make her apply essence of tiger to her 'bonnie brown hair.' But if the old woman's becomes striped, it won't much signify. Like you, I have disposed of most of what we are likely to obtain of the genuine. The little Penrose, with her winning ways, has been almost as urgent an applicant as the General's wife; but then she has more reason, with her beautiful sunny curls."

"Just now," returned Hawkes, "the beauty of

the hair was a reason for there being no necessity for the grease. I don't suppose you intend profaning her 'sunny curls' with balm of tiger, do you?"

"Certainly not," was the decided rejoinder. "But we must keep quiet, for I see the beaters have got round. Keep a sharp look-out; we must first catch our bears, and then bottle them off."

The line of beaters being formed, and parties detached with matchlocks to make a noise at those places from which, if unoccupied, Manajee considered there was a chance of the game breaking, the word was given, and the first yell arose.

"There they are!" ejaculated Hawkes, after the beaters had advanced a little. "Shall I fire?"

"No, no; don't be in a hurry," Norman quickly said. "I see them; but on no account fire; it will only make them break back. They are listening;" and he anxiously watched the two dark objects, which loomed black and indistinct in the deep shade of the thicket. While he spoke, however, they moved out of sight; but again appeared, going in a direction far to their flank, and on the side opposite to that occupied by Mackenzie.

"Ah! that's all right; they have turned," Norman continued, after a brief exciting interval of suspense. "It is fortunate Manajee thought of placing men

on that path. They evidently didn't like to face them."

For a time nothing more was seen of them; but, as the beaters approached, a tremendous din every now and then announced that some one had viewed the game; and shortly the bears, one closely following in the wake of the other, broke at a lobbing gallop directly in front of the position of the two expectant sportsmen, and straight across the open ground towards them.

Norman was quickest, and dropped the leading bear with his first bullet, the second receiving the contents of his left barrel. Hawkes also brought his rifle to bear on the second one, and almost in the same instant with Norman, fired on the beast. Directly he was struck, the latter rose on his hind legs, and roaring with rage and pain, threw himself savagely on his prostrate companion, furiously striking and tearing at him with his claws. It may have been but the impulse of pain urging him to rend anything within his reach, but it appeared as if he, in some manner, connected his sufferings with his friend, and for some ursine reason attributed them to him. If such was the case, Hawkes' left barrel corrected the erroneous impression under which he laboured; for on receiving it when in the full fury of his unnatural attack, he imme-

diately desisted, turned tail, and re-entered the jungle.

"Take care," shouted Norman to the beaters; "one has gone back badly wounded."

At this intimation the men, who were much scattered, congregated into groups at different open spots; indeed, had done so at the first warning of the shots and growling of the bear; but now they stood prepared with their axes in readiness, for the jungle was too extensive for those in the centre to attempt to gain the outside.

Seizing their second guns, Norman and Hawkes quickly went up to the first bear which was lying dead. It had fallen to one bullet well and truly delivered at the junction of the neck and chest. Without anything more than a cursory glance, and a pull at the body to satisfy themselves that life was extinct, they advanced without delay to the spot at which number two had disappeared. It was a very narrow track along which they now found it necessary to thread their way through the bushes, which obliged them to do so in Indian file. To Norman, as the older and more wary, it naturally fell to lead, but Hawkes remained close behind him prompt and ready.

Though a bear will charge home,—and indeed is frequently more dreaded by the natives than a tiger,

for he will often attack without the slightest provocation where a tiger would slip away,—yet in following a wounded animal there can be no comparison between the danger attending the pursuit of the two. The lightning rush of a tiger, giving barely time to discharge one barrel, is very different from the slower movements of a bear. To follow the former through thick jungle is, when his whereabouts is unknown, foolhardy; and I fear our hunters were not quite free from that imputation when they sought the one they had last killed.

Norman knew that even a bear was an ugly customer at close quarters, so he made his progress with caution. He had not advanced, however, many yards, when he detected the black mass of hair lying in front, and immediately fired into it. But it was unnecessary; for number two had also succumbed to the force and correctness of the fire with which he had been received by the masked battery on the hill-side.

"I call that a sharp piece of work, and well performed," Norman exclaimed, as they stood examining the defunct bear. "You are certain, Hawkes, of some of the genuine now. But we must warn Mac and Manajee." And the speaker howled forth an intimation of the success which had befallen them.

Mackenzie soon appeared, and, while inspecting

the dead, growled "Ha! Hum! Lucky beggars! I should like to have had a finger in the pie. Did the first fall dead?"

"As a herring," replied Norman. "It was as neatly polished off as could be with a single bullet. The second one pitched into it like fun directly it was struck; but whether it conceived the pain to be administered by its friend, or just tackled the first thing it could lay paws on, I don't know."

"Ah!" said Mackenzie, "I have heard of them doing that, but never myself saw it. These are both females too—evidently mother and daughter. Observe, the first killed is barely full-grown, while the other, by her bare teats and ragged look about the sides and belly, is decidedly a motherly old party."

"Most unnatural treatment on her part of her daughter, then," observed Hawkes. "But, Mac, do you think we shall get much grease from them?"

"How confoundedly anxious you appear about the grease, Hawkes!" Mackenzie rejoined. "But, yes, I should say we should get a fair supply; they are in very fair condition for the season. You will be able to keep some of your fat engagements."

"That's all right," said Hawkes. "But what do you think, Mac? Norman has already secured several bottles of grease."

"Eh! how's that? You don't mean to say any natives have brought in bears of their own killing?"

"No," answered Norman; "but my horsekeeper spoke of 'tiger leg-mutton.' Why shouldn't we have tiger bear's-grease also?"

"Oh, you villain!" shouted the huge fellow, in great merriment. "You don't really mean to say you intend palming it off?"

"Don't I, though?" was the reply. "If old Mrs. Jenkins doesn't apply some tiger-fat to her old scalp, it won't be my fault. I hope she won't come out in stripes."

"It would be a most gratifying thing if she did, I think; for then she would have to make a clean shave, and take to wigs, which would be a decided improvement on her exceedingly scanty *coiffure*."

"Well, well! Let the poor old lady do as she likes," observed Norman, compassionately. "Only mind, neither of you fellows destroy her innocent belief in the efficacy of the oleaginous compound with which I shall present her. After all, it exists in the imagination. That will do just as much as a plaster of bear-fat on her head. But what are we to do now? Here comes Manajee. Let's hear what he has to say."

Manajee joined them, and, after being compli-

mented on the good arrangements he had made, and the success attending his "bundobust," replied,

"Yes; and your honour and the young Sahib fed the bears well with bullets. I was directing the beaters from yonder rock, and my heart swelled when I saw the first fall as it eat the Sahib's bullet. Your lordship is a great sportsman; and I am the best shikaree in these parts, and know every bush and stone, and am a tree-to-tree guide." Having delivered himself with much satisfaction of his usual vaunt, he politely requested to know what the Sahibs purposed doing.

"Do you think there will be any use in beating the ravines along the front of the hills on chance?" inquired Norman.

"The Sahib's luck is great!" was the reply. "If it be destined that he shall kill any more to-day, he will kill. What will be, will be!"

There was no disputing this self-evident proposition. But, as it was not completely satisfactory in respect of the opinion entertained by Manajee as to the likelihood of success, Norman varied his question.

"Did you see any bears' tracks about? A good many of the trees appeared to be scratched by their climbing, I observed as I came along."

"There is another bear about, Sahib. I saw his

fresh pug this morning. If it be pleasing to the Sahibs, then, we will beat the ravines. Perhaps he will come into our hands."

"Very well," said Mackenzie. "But these dead bears had better be taken to the camp at once, and skinned."

"And take great care of the fat, mind," enjoined Hawkes.

"The fat!" repeated Manajee. And he looked to Mackenzie for explanation, thinking the "chota Sahib" (literally "little gentleman"—the diminutive term being applicable here to age and position, and not to stature) had made a mistake.

"Yes, we wish to keep the fat," said the individual appealed to. "You must have it all cut off and carefully preserved. The Sahib people use it."

"Ah! I understand, Sahib," Manajee replied, with a knowing look. "The Doctor Sahibs use it for rheumatism, and to keep away evil spirits. I will send my brother to see that it is taken care of."

Without enlightening the shikaree as to the use to which it was destined to be applied, Mackenzie merely reiterated his orders for its careful preservation; and young Hawkes made promises of largess if the supply proved abundant.

A neighbouring pool of very dirty water fur-

nished a drink, somewhat unpleasantly thick, to the beaters. Indeed, so soupy was its character, that many used the soiled and ragged ends of their puggrees as strainers before imbibing it; and not, as far as the hunters could observe, with any very marked purifying effect.

The choguls supplied the gentlemen themselves with a purer draught; though frequently had they been forced, on other occasions, to rest contented with water as bad as, or worse than, that now satisfying the craving thirst of the beaters. Strong exercise under an Indian sun is wonderfully efficacious in banishing extreme nicety on the score of drink.

After all were satisfied, and a little rest and smoke and chat over the brief affair had refreshed the whole party, they started to beat one or two of the most likely ravines which indented the hills. One was beaten without effect; but out of the second a samber or two broke back through the beaters, without, however, the hunters getting a chance at them. After this, they returned to camp.

Before dinner was over, an emissary from Rugonauth was announced, and informed them that the shikaree had in the morning found the fresh pugs of one or two tigers near Oonge. From the

inquiries he had made, too, he had satisfied himself they might find tigers, perhaps, and certainly bears there, and therefore considered the Sahibs should at once change their camp.

As they coincided in this opinion, orders were immediately issued to pack up, and prepare for a night march; warning of the probability of such having previously been given.

Ere long, with the jabbering of many voices—the possessor of each thinking more of instructing his neighbour than working himself—was mingled the sound of hammering tent-pegs to loosen them from the ground. But above all arose the gurgling growling of the camels, as they were brought up and made to sit previous to being loaded. The noise they emit, as they open their capacious jaws and make as if to seize, with their fearful-looking teeth, any tangible unprotected portion of the person loading them, is alarming in the extreme to the unaccustomed.

Before the preparations were complete, the young moon had sunk, and all the horse litter and other rubbish was thrown on the fires—which were lighted in several spots to aid the people in their labours—causing them to burn up bright and throw a lurid glare on all objects within their irradiation. Some of the camels appeared defined strongly against the

light; others, more removed and less distinct in the gloom, like dim unearthly spectres. Boxes and packages of various shapes and sizes, fallen tents, beds, baskets with fowls cackling in them, horses, and, among all, many people flitting to and fro, completed the picture of the little camp in course of removal.

By nine o'clock the last package had been stowed, and the last pull given at the ropes which bound the various articles to the pack-saddles of the camels. The latter were standing in irregular fashion, but in two bodies, with the nose of one tied to the tail of its immediate predecessor on the line of march—a man in charge of each party—waiting for the signal to move off. The led-horses were ready, and old Sheik Hussein's pony was tied to a tree, prepared to receive, on its bone-protruding frame, the well-cased carcase of the portly Mussulman. Terry and Boxer too, in charge of a very dirty attendant, were duly paraded with chains attached to their collars.

The word was given, and the little procession, soon dropping into order, moved off into the darkness. But its position could be distinguished for some distance from the blazing oil-fed torch carried by the guide.

Sheik Hussein was the last to leave, as he lin-

gered to fortify himself with a whiff at the cheery hubble-bubble, before committing the safety of his person to the ill-fed, raw-boned creature which was by courtesy called his "horse." Soon, however, he, too, was on the move; for he had a wholesome dread of the perils of the jungle and the spirits of darkness, and cared not to loiter far behind his companions, to brave them singly.

As the fires smouldered and burnt out, darkness again fell on the spot so lately the scene of noise and movement. But it was not quite deserted, for the three hunters remained behind. Their beds, guns, washing-stands, and the materials for an early breakfast were all that it was considered necessary to retain; one servant to look after these, and one camel to convey them, with their three ponies, being also left behind.

Intending to hunt, on their way, in the morning, they now slept the sleep of the just under one tree.

CHAPTER VI.

False "khubber"—Buried Cities—The stronghold of a Bear—Its impregnability—The Terrors of the Jungle—A native Sportsman—Snipe in a Bush—An old Story retold.

THEY arose betimes next morning, and after a very early meal, packed off the remaining camel, while they themselves awaited news from Manajee, who had again gone out in search of bears. An hour or two later news arrived, but not from Manajee. A man came in from a village three or four miles away, bringing tidings of a tiger having been near it during the night, and that some men had marked it down.

Mackenzie and Norman were not very sanguine, as they knew how unreliable very frequently is the "khubber" thus casually furnished. However, they would not run the risk of missing a chance, and so accompanied the villager to the place indicated, which, unfortunately, was far from the line of their intended operations on the route towards the new camp.

The Mungaum beaters were left where they were, as the strange villager assured them that his "gaum" could supply enough for the occasion.

But the whole affair appeared to be a "plant," for the sake of extracting from the pockets of the hunters a few rupees. At least, it was very evident the men who professed to have seen the tiger, knew very little about the beast; and Norman declared the pug, when shown to him, was two or three days old. It was probably hoped the tiger might be found, and thus the handsome "Inam" (reward) find its way to the head man of the village, while the beaters received the usual daily pay.

But after beating one or two places in vain, Mackenzie, with much profanity of language, spoke his mind freely to the leader of the beat. He informed him he was fortunate in having so placable a person to deal with, otherwise he would certainly not have escaped, after so great an imposition, in a sound skin. The beaters were probably in the secret; but as they could hardly be considered much to blame in obeying the summons of their village chief, each received a half-day's pay, very much to their delight; for, after seeing that the Sahib people had not been imposed on, they looked for more kicks than halfpence.

The sportsmen were much chagrined to find, on

returning to Mungaum, that a messenger from Manajee had long been waiting their arrival, with the information that a female bear and cub had been marked down into a cave. The afternoon was well advanced, and as they had still twelve or fourteen miles of a hilly jungle road to ride to reach Oonge, they feared that the bear, unless killed without any delay, might escape them.

Accompanied by the Mungaum beaters accordingly, they lost no time in following their guide to the place where Manajee had appointed to meet them. This was said to be near a fine spring of water, about four miles up a valley on the road to Oonge. In due course this was reached; and Manajee, greatly deploring the loss of time, inveighed in no measured terms against the village and all it contained, whose false reports had thus been the cause of delaying the Sahibs.

Man, woman, and child, he gave over to perdition; with many most uncomplimentary remarks, reflecting on the chastity of the female population, past, present, and future. It appeared that there was some rivalry between the two villages; and the delinquents, jealous of the emolument derived from the Sahibs by those with whom they were at enmity, had taken advantage of the absence of the shikarees, and endeavoured to attract a portion of the good

things going to themselves, with what result we have seen.

As they sat under some splendid forest trees to allow the beaters to refresh before proceeding to attack the stronghold of Bruin, Hawkes remarked—

"Where is the spring? I don't see any signs of water. The nullah is as dry as a stick."

"I don't know," said Norman, looking round. "Here, Manajee, fill our choguls, if the water is clear, before the beaters dirty it; and see if there are any pugs around the edge."

"It is not a pool of water, Sahib," was the reply; "it is a well."

"A well?" asked Mackenzie, incredulously. "How did that get here? Let me see it." And, accordingly, he was conducted to a deep stone-built well, overhung by ancient trees of large growth, which shadowed the adjacent ground for some extent, and contrasted strongly with the wild and desolate aspect of the surrounding jungle.

"Who would have imagined finding such traces of man in this howling wilderness?" said Hawkes to Norman. "And look, too, at these blocks of stone. Several of them bear traces of carving."

"And very fine carving too," was the reply. "Some of this is coarse marble. This must be the

site of some one of those ancient towns which lie buried in the jungle waste."

Observing the attention the remains excited, and in answer to their inquiries, Manajee remarked: "There are many similar spots, Sahibs, in the most lonely and unfrequented places in these hills. Towns and villages were here before our day."

"But there are no traces of cultivation, or even many mounds, to show where old habitations have stood," observed Hawkes.

"No, Sahib," the native replied. "They were not in the time of my father or my father's father. But the report of them has been handed down from father to son for numbers of generations."

"The jungle indeed seems to have obliterated most traces of man," said Norman. "I suppose the houses, being mostly built of unburnt brick, have crumbled to dust, and left no sign where overgrown by the bush. How completely nature resumes its sway where man has, for some reason or other, retired from his contest with the luxuriance of tropical growth! It brings forcibly home to one the mere impotence of the miserable puny creature man, when in the space of a few generations all traces of his existence are swept from the earth. The tiger or bear rears its cubs in undisturbed solitude, perhaps on the very spot, where a mother

dandled her babes in the midst of a thriving city. All these old trees have seen generations pass away, and still live to look down on the waste which has succeeded the thriving haunts of a dead race."

"Hear, hear!" said the unsentimental Mackenzie, with mock applause. "Not so bad that, Norman. We must get you to give a lecture on the subject when we return to Jehangeerpore. That touch about the mother dandling her unborn babe—no, I don't mean unborn," he said, correcting himself, "her babes—would bring down a round of plaudits from the women. But it's all nonsense, you know!"

"Mac," retorted Norman, "you are incorrigible. You are about as susceptible of sentiment or romance as a hyæna. What a confoundedly tough-minded chap you are, breaking in on my fancies with your unpleasantly material way of viewing things! I don't believe you have an atom of imagination."

"Haven't I? Now I strongly imagine just at present that we had better be moving, or we shan't have time to stir up our friend in the cave, and reach camp by dinner time. And I must confess that the substantial merits of mug have more charms for me than any amount of ancient towns which have disappeared."

As there could be no denying that the practical Mackenzie was correct in his estimate of the limited

time which remained before dark, the party continued on their way towards the bear's resting place. But as it was yet distant, the subject of the old jungle-buried towns was discussed by Norman and Hawkes.

The latter considered that the fact of there being only one well was indicative of the smallness of the place which it had furnished with water. But his companion reminded him that many more might be concealed in the tangled brushwood ; this one alone having been preserved to satisfy the requirements of those who occasionally trod the wild path, which, little used though it was, was the most direct means of communication between some of the villages lying in the heart of the hills and those in the plain.

They had heard of the existence of such extensive remains as are to be seen at Chunderwattee or Chundrautee, near the foot of mount Aboo, in Rajpootana, with its white marble temples still partly standing, rearing their ruined heads midst the undergrowth. Other deserted cities they had seen, too, and read of ; so that it seemed by no means improbable that many towns, as Manajee had asserted, lay buried in the jungle.

They reminded them of the deserted cities of Central America, the sole relics of an extinct or

migrated race, and the only record of the magnificence in which they had passed away.

Though far less attractive in point of size and splendour of their buildings, these ruined cities of Hindostan are sufficiently so to render an examination of them by the experienced, possibly both pleasant and profitable. However, neither of the conversers being archæologists, their surmises are not worthy of record.

After they had proceeded about a mile, a rocky eminence was pointed out as the bear's stronghold.

On the summit of a hill was strewn a confused mass of boulders of rock scattered irregularly about; some tossed—as if by a former convulsive throe of the hill itself—one on the other in a jumbled chaotic heap. Amongst them existed many crevices, holes, and dark apertures; but only one apparently extensive enough to admit the entrance of so large an animal as a bear.

Against the rock here, stones had been piled so as to block up the passage. The cavern—for it extended far among the rocks, and probably into the heart of the hill itself—was doubtless a favourite resort of wild beasts, as was evident from the signs plentifully scattered about. The recent traces of an animal showed that it had entered the cave that day, and the look-outs, who had been patiently waiting

there on the watch since early morning, declared that no effort had been made by it to force a passage through the stones which they had piled up.

"He is evidently safe in there," said Norman, after examining with Manajee a sandy spot just outside. "His traces are recent, and do not return. But how to get him out is the question."

There was no time, however, to be lost; so the three hunters having taken up positions,—one above, and the other two at the side of the aperture,—the men soon cleared away the stones in front. They then began to howl about the rocks, and in at the various fissures and cracks, hoping to startle the sleeping game into an abrupt exit.

Guns were fired off, too, the sound reverberating sharply among the rocks. Flower-pots and crackers were next resorted to; some of the latter being dropped into those holes which seemed to have some connection with the main cavern. They were then thrown in from the mouth, as far as was practicable; but without producing any sign of Bruin's presence within.

A long stick, some twelve or fifteen feet in length, was next cut from a neighbouring branch of bamboos, and a rocket affixed to the end and lighted. This was thrust in as far as it would go, and the

operation repeated with crackers; but all of no avail in inducing the beast to show.

As a last resource, it was determined to try and smoke him out. A heap of dead leaves and dry wood was soon collected, pushed in some distance, and then lighted. But the escape of the smoke through various crevices showed, too surely, that enough would not reach the beast to force him to make a bolt of it. And as no growl had even been heard, he probably lay far out of reach of all that could be done from the mouth of the cave. After ineffectually trying every device which occurred to them, and spending much time, the hunters were at last obliged to confess that all attempts to dislodge the wary animal were useless. So as the case was hopeless they reluctantly desisted from all further efforts. Sunset, too, was drawing on, and as they had yet a considerable distance to traverse ere they could satisfy Mackenzie's great craving for "mug," they all prepared to descend the hill.

But before doing so, Norman, who had a keen eye for the picturesque, called the attention of his companions to the wild but somewhat monotonous character of the scenery, which their elevated position gave them good means of viewing to advantage.

Looking in the direction they were about to ride

—towards the most distant range of hills, which were, at the same time, the highest—it appeared as if the whole country was one wide wilderness of jungle; except where, in various places, rose from amidst it the broken, irregular summits of the hills, or massive boulders, and bare cliffs and rocky gorges presented themselves. The prevailing colour of the underwood was a dusky brown; but this was enlivened by groups of bright-green korinda bushes; and the more brilliant foliage of the trees, massed in pleasant relief in the dells and valleys, also afforded a contrast with the arid hue of the jungle, and one on which the eye delighted to dwell.

The most distant hills were indistinct, and the outline subdued and softened under the glow of the declining sun, which shed a yellow haze upon them. The grey, steamy mists, and occasional volumes of smoke from burnt jungle, too, were rising from the valleys, and lent their influence to obscure the distance. The villages, but few in number, lay hidden among the sinuosities of the hills; so that nature seemed to reign supreme in one of its wildest and most desolate aspects.

But as the hour admitted no very lengthened contemplation of the scenery, the hunters were soon *en route* to the spot where their ponies had been left.

Manajee was there gratified with a liberal reward, and the beaters were paid, and, with the exception of those required to carry the guns, dismissed to their homes. But before the shikaree left, he promised to inform the gentlemen directly any tigers reappeared in his part of the country. And good pay and good treatment combined to render him perfectly sincere in his promise. As the parties separated, each to pursue its own path, Manajee was heard to give utterance to his usual vaunt.

The path to the camp lay almost entirely through jungle; and it was not till they reached the vicinity of the village that any artificially-cleared space of land presented itself. It was some time after nightfall before they arrived, glad enough to dismount; for that jog-jog, at a shuffling walking pace, for many miles, through thick underwood, after a hard, hot day's work in the sun, is as tedious as fatiguing. Fortunately here also was a small river, or rather nullah, which after winding amongst the hills, slightly expanded. A plunge into a neighbouring pool, though in the dark, refreshed the wearied sportsmen; and they sat down to dinner with a very keen appreciation of the intrinsic merits of that grateful compound, "mug."

Rugonauth's report was generally favourable. Two or three tigers, he said, were about, but wan-

dering and difficult to mark down. He pronounced it, however, to be a capital bear country ; and on the whole, thought they should remain there for two or three days.

Old Sheik Hussein averred that the country must be swarming with wild beasts of every description.

"They were roaring all the night, Sahib, as we came along," he said. "If we had not had torches with us, I will eat an oath that they would have attacked us. Norman Sahib's boy, Baloo, declared to me, he saw tigers and panthers and bears constantly. Praise to Allah and Mahomed his prophet, that we all escaped!"

"That young imp has been frightening the old fellow all along the march, I bet anything," said Sheik Hussein's master, as the worthy servant left the tent. "Didn't he, Manuel?"

"Yes, sar," replied Hawkes' Indo-Portuguese servant, who understood English, and had evidently enjoyed the joke. "He very much fright Mr. Sheik Hussein. He tell him many time that one big tiger be in the bushes all ready for to jomp. Mr. Butler very much him shake, and get off tattoo, and get on back one camel. He no likee shikar trip, he say."

"Well, Manuel," said Hawkes; "but weren't you afraid? I suppose there are wild beasts about."

"Yes, sar. In the jungles, jungly creatures live. But I not fear. If master please, then I go out shooting with him. My master, before I come in Sahib's service, great shikaree, and sometimes lend gun."

"Well done, Manuel," exclaimed Norman. "You are breaking out in a new light. Did you ever see a tiger killed?"

"I no see tiger kill, Sahib. But I shoot plenty much ducks and eshnaffs and teturs and leetly pijuns. If master order, that time I shoot peacock for dinner. I see two, three, twenty this morning. Baloo nearly kill one with stone.'

"Do you mean to say, Manuel,' asked that redoubtable person's master, that you ever shot a snipe?" (for by eshnaff Mr. Manuel intended to signify that bird.) "If you can shoot a flying snipe you must be a good shot."

"He no fly, sar. I wait; then see three, four, running in water, and make good shot. Two kill him."

"Snipes or sandpipers. All's fish that comes to your net. Eh, Manuel?"

"Master please make fun. No shoot fish. Real eshnaffs; leetly birds with long mouths."

"What, running in the open water?"

"Yes, sar, in the thin water. They no swim,

where plenty much water, like the duck; but run along near shore."

"By no means an unusual circumstance in the open shallows," said Norman. "In reeds and rushes, of course, they are seldom seen till flushed; but here, in India, we often detect them running when feeding away from cover. But what do you think of snipe sitting in bushes?"

"Well, I know partridges roost in trees sometimes in this country. But draw it mild, Norman. Remember a snipe is a wading bird."

"Yet, strange as it may appear, I have actually seen them sitting in a bush, not a tree."

"How could they hang on?" was the natural inquiry.

"I'll tell you how it happened," said Norman. "At a tank, a favourite shooting-place of mine, in Cutch—Mac knows it well—Rhoda! Eh, Mac?" An affirmative nod and grunt from the person appealed to, replied to this interrogation, and the speaker continued—"I was out there once early in the season. The rains had been heavy, and the water had inundated the land adjacent on one side, which was very flat. Several bushes grew about, and many of these were now right out in the water, far from land. I had beaten a small patch of rushes and grass at the margin, killing a snipe or two, and

stopped to mark down one that I had flushed when loading. To my astonishment, I saw it settle in one of these bushes far out in the water, with not a weed or blade of grass about it. I waded in after it, and, when pretty close, looking attentively at the bush to try and discover my friend, I detected, against the light back-ground of water, not only the bird I was seeking, but three or four companions squatted close together. As the water had subsided from its highest elevation, the scum, particles of dead grass, bits of stick, and other small things floating on the surface, had been washed against the branches of the bush and adhered to it, and formed little nests, now high above the water. It was one of these deposits on which the snipe were squatted. It would have been a fine pot for Manuel, as they were close together; but of course I gave them a fair chance, and turned them up; with what effect I don't remember."

"Ah! that sounds all right now," Hawkes said. "But you must confess, to hear of snipe sitting in trees or bushes, is likely to excite incredulity. Why, even the man, you recollect, couldn't induce his friends to believe that partridges roosted in trees in India."

"How was that?" asked Mackenzie.

"It's as old as the hills," answered Hawkes. "Do you mean to say you never heard the story?"

"No; not that I remember. Let us have it," was the reply.

"Well. At a dinner party in London, some Indian officer—I forget who—happened to mention that partridges roosted in trees; and, observing the incredulity of his auditors, appealed to an Indian friend at the same table. The friend positively denied all knowledge of such a circumstance; which, of course, only added to the disbelief of the party, who put it down as a regular 'Traveller's tale.' The officer who had related the fact was naturally annoyed at his word being doubted; and especially angry with his friend who, he was aware, was as cognisant as himself of the truth of his statement. Consequently, he took him to task afterwards. 'My dear fellow,' was the satisfactory reply he received to his remonstrances, 'I know it is perfectly true; but not a man round the table believed you; and do you think I was such a fool as to place myself in the same predicament? They looked upon you already as effective at the long-bow; in fact, not to mince matters, as a liar; and would have considered me a *damned* liar."

"Ay, travellers and sportsmen have to be particular," said Mackenzie, reflectively. "It's so easy

for a man, a mere book-worm, to sit down at his desk, and take a traveller's book to pieces. A few discrepancies and mistakes are easily found. They don't think, by Jove, of the time and work it has taken to accumulate the materials for the book. I know, Norman, you always keep a sort of journal on your shikar trips. Perhaps, some fine day, you may wish to enlighten the world as to your adventures. If you ever do so, I recommend you to bear Hawkes' story in mind.

CHAPTER VII.

Sunday in the Jungles—The new Camp—An escape from a Cobra —Snakes—Poison—Mad dogs—Anecdotes of both.

THE next day was Sunday. Intimation was accordingly given to the shikarees and people, that the gentlemen would on that day take a rest; and, therefore, it was not necessary for the trackers and markers to go out in the morning.

Had a tiger been actually marked down, or had any report reached the sportsmen of a bullock fresh killed, I will not affirm that they would not have immediately sallied forth. A tiger is not a beast to have salt thrown on his tail. Here to-day, he is miles away to-morrow; and an opportunity of meeting him, once lost, may not again occur. But, imbued with the lessons of their childhood, they were unwilling voluntarily to disturb the sanctity of the day by any active initiatory efforts of their own.

But though, in this respect, they adhered to traditionary custom, advantage was taken of the long day of leisure to polish up the guns, give them a slight oiling, cast bullets, cut patches, and make all

the petty repairs necessary. It may be that the day did not pass away without some quiet thought and reading; but no one of them paraded his reflections, or considered it necessary to obtrude them on his companions.

The tents were pitched under a magnificent peepul, sufficiently wide-spreading and umbrageous to give shelter to the servants' tents, as well as their own; and the small canvas dwellings looked dwarfed, under the huge limbs and against the downward shoots and vast trunk of the noble tree. It stood in solitary majesty on a rising ground in a little hill-encircled valley, which was cleared and cultivated. The nullah, a couple of hundred yards away, washed the base of a range of hills, and followed their contour. It was in the upper parts of this nullah, where it clove its way through the hills and was fed by the numerous ravines which seamed them, that tigers were looked for. All the neighbouring hills were reported to be the resort of bears; and samber and cheetul were also obtainable in places, especially, it was said, down the valley. The horses were picketed under a smaller tree, and the camels were sent to the vicinity of the village, a third of a mile off. Towards evening the three friends took a walk, and ascended one of the nearest eminences, with the object of obtaining a partial view

of the surrounding country, and getting some general idea of its aspect. Leisurely they strolled along, and several times rested, partly in mere indolence, partly to contemplate the different views, or throw a stone at a pea-fowl as it ran off into the thicker underwood. On the whole they considered the features of the country presented an appearance decidedly gamey.

In returning towards the pool in which they intended to take their evening swim, Mackenzie had out-paced his companions, and was walking some distance ahead of them. Suddenly they saw him stop and commence stamping hard with one foot, at the same time calling to them hurriedly.

They ran up to him; and Norman, who had a stick in his hand, was preparing to attack a large black cobra, which was twisted round Mackenzie's left leg, when the latter exclaimed, "Never mind. It's all right; he's dead. Lucky I didn't tread on him further back." And, as he spoke, he raised his right heel and showed the snake's head, quite crushed, beneath it.

"Are you sure you are not touched?" they anxiously inquired. "How was it?"

"Unwind him, and I'll tell you. It was a near shave."

Having uncoiled the venomous creature, which,

though dead, still retained Mackenzie's leg in its folds, he said, "I was walking quietly along, thinking how jolly a swim would be, when suddenly I felt something writhe under my foot, and in a second the brute had twisted itself round my leg. My first impulse was to lift my foot, and I believe I actually did so for a single second, but, luckily, saw that its head was fixed. I had trodden on the snake just about an inch or two behind the head, so that it could not get at me to strike. Of course, I pressed my foot down harder still, and brought my right heel as hard as I could on its head, and crushed it as you see."

"Lucky, indeed, old fellow, you had presence of mind to do so," said Norman, heartily. "You could hardly have raised your foot. If you had done so, you must have been bitten."

"I am sure I should have thought of nothing but kicking out, or running off," Hawkes observed. "I funk snakes and mad dogs more than any other earthly creatures, and should most assuredly have acted on my first impulse to bolt."

"Those ponderous limbs and heavy shooting-shoes did you good service, Mac," Norman said. "Even supposing I had been free from Hawkes' desire to cut away, which I much doubt, the brute would probably have writhed itself away from beneath

my light weight, and then my thin shoes would scarcely have been hard enough to crush his head. So, Mac, old boy,"—and Norman gave his friend a hearty smack on the shoulder,—"you ought to be very grateful that the danger befell you, and not either Hawkes or myself."

"That's one way of putting it, certainly," laughed the good-natured fellow; "and now it's over, I don't mind."

The circumstance led that evening to a conversation on the subject of snakes, and the many narrow escapes men had from them.

The two seniors had several incidents to relate; and even young Hawkes was not without his experience of the reptile so inimical to the race of man.

"It is wonderful how comparatively few get bitten," said Mackenzie. "Considering the number of venomous snakes that are to be found in some parts, and that the natives' legs and feet are generally undefended, it seems marvellous that so few should suffer."

"In Scinde and some other districts, the list of deaths from snake-bites is anything but scanty," Norman replied.

"And they do not go out of the way to attack, do they?" inquired Hawkes.

"No. They will nearly always avoid man if possible. The danger is, when one comes upon them unexpectedly, or when they are asleep, and they have no time to get out of the way. Mac, I imagine, must have done so to-day. I doubt if they ever attack man in pure unreasoning anger."

"I don't know that," said Mac. "It is said the female, with eggs or young, will do so. I once saw a cobra dart out of a bush at a man, miss him, and wriggle back again. It is true he was beating, or—if I remember right—just going to beat, the bush for a quail, which had flown into the grass at its roots, and was yet a little distant from it. The snake seemed to come out of his way to attack, instead of slipping quietly off."

"At certain seasons they do appear more irritable than at others," Norman remarked. "But speaking of narrow escapes, I can recall to mind four different occasions when snakes have wriggled from between my legs, or I have stepped over them. Twice it was dusk, and each time a whip-snake, I believe, glided away as if from my very feet. A hiss from the creature, immediately behind me in the grass, was the first intimation I had of having stept over one once, while out shooting."

"I have not yet experienced them so close to my

legs," said Hawkes; "but too near my hand to be pleasant. I went into my bath-room one day, and was on the point of dipping a mug into one of the earthen chatty-pots for some water, when a snake's head bobbed up from within it. I started back, and the head disappeared. I then got hold of a towel and threw it over the mouth of the chatty; the head again bobbed up against the towel as I hit the pot with a short stick I seized. This happened two or three times, like a Jack-in-the-box. At last I managed to land a good whack on the side of the head, and finished it."

"Only the other day, in my bungalow at Jehangeerpore," said Mackenzie, "I went into the verandah to get a bottle of soda-water, which was cooling there under a wet cloth. I raised the cloth, and was just about to seize the bottle, which was lying along with some others, when I espied a carpet-snake comfortably nestled under it, and evidently enjoying its cool retreat. I withdrew my hand sharp, without the snake moving; and there it remained till I got hold of a stick and polished it off."

"I have read somewhere," Hawkes said, "that only a small proportion of snakes are venomous."

"I don't know how they are classed; but the natives generally make out every species to be more

or less venomous, with few exceptions. They don't include, however, rock-snakes, which are, I believe, of the boa kind. I suppose they like to exaggerate the terrors of the beasts."

"The black cobra is the worst;—the most deadly, I mean, is it not?" asked Hawkes.

"It is generally thought so. But there is a small snake in Scinde called, I think, the "kuppur," which is said to cause death much more quickly. I have even heard it reported that it attacks and destroys the cobra. Many deaths among the natives are attributed to it."

"Yes," remarked Mackenzie; "and I daresay sometimes with but little foundation. Where poison is so easily procured, I imagine the snakes sometimes get the credit of the deeds performed by more human means. I have seen one case of tolerable wholesale poisoning in my time; though certainly not in this instance attributed to other cause than that of the agency of man. You remember, Norman, that case at Sukkur."

"Well," was the reply. "It was about as horrible a one as I can recollect."

In reply to Hawkes' inquiries, Mackenzie related that a family consisting of fourteen persons, of all ages and both sexes, had been, with two exceptions, destroyed by the administration of poison.

The substance of his story was as follows:—The family had been employed at a distance from their homes during the harvest season, and were on their return, with the few rupees they had been able to save out of their scanty earnings. The only two of the party who escaped were an old woman and a child in arms, and but little could be extracted from the former. A fukeer had joined them at some part of their journey, and it is supposed that he mixed the poison with their food; but whether from recent ill-will, or on account of any ancient grudge, or from motives of revenge, or for the mere sake of the paltry sum of money which they carried, did not appear. The old woman seemed unable to give any coherent account of the transaction. She had escaped in consequence of sickness having prevented her from being a partaker of the meal on that day; and the child in arms, of course, was provided for otherwise. The rest were brought into the hospital at Sukkur, in Scinde—one or two yet living—and it was a horrible sight to see them, for all must have died in great agony. The clenched hands, full of earth and grass, and the faces, showed this.

"And was it never found out who did it?" asked Hawkes.

"I believe not," Mackenzie replied; "at least while I was there. The fukeer had disappeared,

and there seemed no reason to suspect anyone else. Natives will commit the most awful crimes for the sake of a rupee or two. They really seem to regard life as an article of but the very smallest value."

"But to return to our sheep, or rather snakes," said Hawkes. "I suppose you two have shot numbers?"

"Why, yes. A man cannot knock about the country much without doing a little in that line," answered Norman. "I remember cutting a cobra in two. He passed just in front, without taking any notice of me. I fired into him, and he was so close that the charge had hardly spread, and cut him clean in two. On another occasion I gave chase to a cobra close to the servants' outhouses, got a snap-shot in a hedge, and cut several inches off the creature's tail; this I picked up, but the principal portion of the snake managed to escape."

"Now, Hawkes," observed Mackenzie, "I think you have done pretty well in the snake line. Perhaps you would like a little of your other special aversion, 'mad dogs.'"

"Yes," exclaimed Hawkes, eagerly; "I should. Tell me, did you ever see any one die of hydrophobia?"

"Only one, and that was a poor native boy who was brought to our camp on one occasion, when I

was travelling with a large party with whom was a doctor. The lad had been bitten some months before by one of the village curs. The disease showed itself, I think, only the day before our arrival, and he died in an hour or two after he was brought to us."

"Was he violent?" Hawkes inquired.

"No, quite passive. He made no attempt to bite his relatives, who supported him in their arms and frequently wiped away the saliva from his mouth. The spasmodic twitching was very painful to witness. That, and the foam at the mouth, were the only symptoms I observed. There was no barking, such as is popularly supposed to be the case. The lad seemed to suffer frightfully, but showed no inclination to be violent."

"Did you ever know of any Englishman bitten in India?"

"Yes; several officers have died from hydrophobia since I entered the service. One poor fellow, I remember hearing, was bitten by a favourite dog when he was playing at quoits. His friend at once heated the pointed iron spud and cauterised the wound; but it was of no use on that occasion, as the man died two or three weeks afterwards. But I have known several men bitten without suffering. One was said to have been bitten twice; first by a

mad jackal which ran into his house, and another time by a dog, and yet he is alive to this day. He was an awfully fat fellow; perhaps that had something to do with the immunity he enjoyed."

"Gad! if I thought that," said Hawkes, laughingly, "I should cultivate obesity at once, as an armour of proof. One wouldn't mind the inconvenience of an external layer of fat, if it acted as a preserver from madness. But do you fancy all dogs which get the credit of it are mad?"

"No, decidedly not," was the reply. "But besides that, some veterinary surgeons consider that only a small proportion of those bitten by rabid dogs go mad and die. I forget the proportion; on that, however, I believe there is much difference of opinion."

"I have had to shoot two dogs of my own," said Norman, "from both of which, if they were really mad, I had narrow escapes. But I am very doubtful about their being so. I was one day playing with one of them, not having observed any symptoms of madness, and at the time had my hand actually in the little beast's mouth, when she—for it was a terrier bitch—left me, and, without any apparent cause, ran at the tailor, who chanced just then to come into my room, and bit him. He was working in the house, and she knew him quite well. How-

ever, my servants soon after ran in to say that she had been seen tearing along the road snapping at everything that came in her way, a goat among others having, I remember, been bitten. The poor little beast showed no symptoms of hydrophobia that I could discern, except redness of the eyes; but by the advice of friends I had it destroyed to prevent further accidents. Another bitch of the same litter I was also obliged to have shot. My people told me they thought it was going mad, so I had it chained up. Before long it commenced howling in a peculiar manner. Two of my brother officers came to look at it; but as I still thought it was under the influence of some other disease than madness, I approached to pat it, with the object of showing its quietness. I was just about to do so, when it sprang at my arm and attempted to snap. I was fortunately just out of reach, and didn't trust myself within length of its chain again. Of course I was obliged to admit that, mad or not, the animal was in a dangerous state. So one of my friends got out my gun, and put an end to any further risk on the part of myself or others."

"But isn't a horror of water a sure sign?" demanded Hawkes.

"Yes," was the reply, "when exhibited; but

at some stages of the disease excessive thirst is common, and is, I believe, considered by skilled vets. a premonitory symptom. Unusually great fondness for the master, I have also heard described as another sign; but these naturally escape one unless on the look-out for them."

"Very likely here in India there are some irritable diseases which pass for hydrophobia," Mackenzie said. "But after all it is better to be on the safe side, and destroy the dog where there is any suspicion. The chance of saving a dog's life hardly balances the risk of a man being bitten. When skilled advice can be obtained, and the animal is well secured, of course it is different."

"Have you ever had any narrow escapes, Mac?" asked Hawkes, after a pause.

"Why, yes. One can hardly be many years in India without, at some time or other, having some incidents to relate. I remember once bayoneting a mad dog. Norman was with me. The beast came into my verandah. I seized a musket and bayonet which happened to be resting against the wall, charged the beast, and pinned it against the ground. Norman got hold of a stick, and whacked it about the head while I held it, and so we polished it off. But I once had a really narrow escape. I was lying in bed one morning, when a mad pariah

dog rushed in at the open door, through my room, and, without noticing me, dashed into the bath-room, where it threw itself down panting, and with the tongue lolling out. I jumped out of bed and darted at the bath-room door. I was only just in time; for the beast turned round, saw me, jumped up, and made in my direction. I just managed, however, to close the door in its face. Of course I soon had my gun loaded, broke a pane from the outside in the bath-room window, and shot the brute. Now, Hawkes, if you are not inclined for roost, I am; so I hope you are contented for to-night."

CHAPTER VIII.

Trying weather and trying work—A smoked-out Bear—Saved from a Charge—Activity of hill men—In pursuit—The last Charge—The Death.

No tigers were marked down on Monday; but a huge bear was reported to have taken up his quarters in a patch of jungle in a nullah near one of the highest peaks of the surrounding hills, and distant three or four miles. The first part of the way lay up a neighbouring narrow valley; and the road, as long as it continued there, was practicable for the horses. But when less than half the distance had been traversed, the sportsmen were obliged to dismount, and, leaving their steeds, perform the rest on foot.

The last two or three days had been intensely hot, with but little wind stirring; so that in the ravines, and amidst the thick jungle, where there was no free circulation, the atmosphere was stifling. The path was steep and rugged, and those who know what a rough climb is on a hot summer day in India, will readily understand that the hunters had, more than once, to throw themselves on the ground and

endeavour to recover breath and strength. Even the hot sirocco would have been preferable to no movement of the air. Its evaporating effect on the perspiring body cools and refreshes; though rash exposure to its desiccating influence when resting is to be guarded against, as fever and rheumatism may be the consequence. But on this day there was none of it; and the lurid oppressive atmosphere rendered climbing the hills additionally trying. The hunters were not sorry, therefore, when, after a couple of hours' severe, exhausting toil, they reached a shoulder of the hill near bruin's resting-place. A little coolish air here just gently fanned their bared heads, as they rested under a tree for the purpose of regaining wind and nerve, and having a little weak brandy-and-water.

Thus refreshed, they examined the place; and, as usual, took up their respective positions by lot. Norman was stationed on the hill-side, above the thickly-wooded, winding dell into which the game had been viewed. From the spot he selected, he covered one or two paths where the jungle was somewhat thinner, and was altogether the best situation for commanding that flank. Mackenzie was opposite to him on a swell of the hill a little lower down, and between them the thicket was at its greatest width. Hawkes held guard on the same

side as Mackenzie, still lower down, and covered the nullah which gave exit from the dell to the slopes below, and which acted as a drainer to the rough hill side.

The beaters commenced above, and passed down between Mackenzie and Norman towards Hawkes, without anything making its appearance, though the beast was said by some to be on foot. They reached Hawkes' position, and still no one could say he had actually seen the animal. Suddenly, however, there was a shout that the bear was moving far in the rear of the line of beaters, and somewhere between Mackenzie and Norman. Hawkes now rushed along the outside of the jungle and joined his neighbour; and the two descended into the nullah which threaded the centre of the cover. Mackenzie here caught a momentary glimpse of the bear just below Norman, and fired a snap shot at it. This was responded to by a deep growl, which seemed to Norman to proceed from a part of the thicket quite close; but he could see nothing of the beast which had emitted it. He changed his place, but was still unable to get a view. A few lighted rockets were now thrown into the jungle, as the beast was evidently sulky and would not break; and they set fire to a quantity of rank dry grass and brushwood. After crackling for about a quarter

of an hour the flames began to leap about, and Norman was driven from his position by the density of the smoke which rolled up towards him. Bruin's retreat now became too hot to be tenable, for, with a grunting sort of growl, he broke down the nullah not twenty yards from Mackenzie and Hawkes, both of whom had returned to the edge of the cover, and were watching the progress and effect of the fire. Though so close, neither of them caught even a momentary glimpse of the bear, who was soon after tally-ho'd as breaking down the hill by some of the look-outs on the surrounding eminences. In a wonderfully short time, considering the ungainly pace of the animal, the bear had placed a mile between himself and the hunters, but the scouts had held him in view nearly all the way, and now declared he had entered a thick cover in the bed of another nullah. Thither, accordingly, the sportsmen proceeded as quickly as possible.

They were hesitating what next to do after reaching the place, and Rugonauth, with some men on the opposite side, was endeavouring to ascertain the whereabouts of the game; when repeated growls a little below the hunters gave indubitable signs that the bear was yet there. Mackenzie ran forward along the path they stood on, and which

wound round the side of the hill, the other two remaining where they were. Presently a cry was raised that a man was seized, and the two were on the point of rushing down into the nullah to his assistance, when, for a single second, they caught sight of the bear slipping down into the bottom of the nullah, after making a charge at the men on the other side.

"Stand where you are, Sahibs!" shouted Rugonauth. "The man is all safe. He threw his cumley (coarse native cloth or blanket, serving as a wrapper) in the bear's face."

"Was he seized?" asked Norman, in reply.

"No, Sahib. The bear came at our bodies, but the cumley stopped him. He has torn it to pieces. Look out! Take care! There he goes, straight at you."

As Rugonauth spoke, the bear broke from the thick jungle within ten or a dozen yards of the spot where the friends were standing, and charged, growling viciously, right at them. Hawkes, in taking a step back, tripped and fell, but managed to fire from a sitting posture. A couple of bullets from Norman also staggered and turned the beast, but without dropping him. He went away to the left before the spare guns could be got hold of, for the men had retreated.

"Keep lower down, Mac, and you may get a shot," shouted Norman.

Mac did as directed, and managed to get a long running shot; but the bear still kept on his way.

It was next seen rounding a spur of the hill, some distance off. They were on the point of following as quickly as they could, with their second guns, when a little man ran up to them, uttered the single word, "water," and, pointing in a direction to the flank and front of the bear, proceeded to constitute himself their guide.

Without any unnecessary expenditure of words, they at once adopted the implied suggestion, and followed the man. He conducted them, as fast as they could go, to a pool of water, but not in time to intercept the bear, who they found had reached the place, gone through the water, and passed on, having probably refreshed himself with a drink. They, however, pushed on in his track, and got a sight of him as he was making over the spur of the hill. A snap shot or two, at a distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, only seemed to accelerate his movements; and he shortly made good his object, crossed the ridge, and was soon making rapid way down the hill on the other side.

The active little hill-men were skipping about from height to height, intent on keeping the beast

in sight, and, at the same time, shouting a running fire of observations one to the other. Directions, too, both by voice and gesture, were frequently given to the gun-bearers and others with the hunters, who communicated to the latter the purport of the shouts and telegraphic signals.

Mackenzie now joined the other two, and all proceeded more leisurely in the track of the bear. By the time they had reached the top of the spur, the bear was said to have entered a thickly-wooded ravine far down the slope.

"How those little hill-fellows scuttle along!" said Mackenzie, as they topped the ridge, and took a minute or two's rest. "Why, hanged! if some of them are not already established on commanding points near the ravine!"

"Yes," answered Norman, "they are certainly first-rate hands at marking. It is wonderful how they manage to trace the beast's line by catching occasional glimpses of it. They seem to communicate one to the other who has last seen it, and where, and so they combine their sight from different points."

"I wish to goodness I had their wind and condition!" sighed the stalwart and somewhat fleshy Scotchman, as he mopped away at his face. "This is killing work!"

"Yes, by Jove! it takes it out of one!" agreed Hawkes. "My mouth is as dry as dust. I can't go any further without a drink."

"Take this bit of sugar-candy," said Norman, offering him a small piece of that sweet. "Better not drink till positively obliged. The more one takes, the more one requires; and we shall have a good stride yet before we reach that ravine."

Norman was, however, over-ruled, and, perhaps, not unwillingly so; for he followed their example, and took a long pull at the chogul of water which was now brought up.

Rugonauth, also, now joined them, and urged an immediate advance.

"Oh, Lord!" said Mackenzie, as he prepared to act on the shikaree's advice, "I feel as if I was melting! What a thundering hot day it is! I hope the bear will have the grace to be killed comfortably and quietly when next we see him, without any more bother."

"Well, *en avant, mes braves!* we must lose no time," said Norman, who was a trifle fresher than the others; and again they moved on, crossing several spurs and many nullahs before they reached the place they were making for.

It was some little time before a sufficient number of men to beat could be collected; and ere the line,

or rather the parties—for they were ordered not to go singly—could be arranged, the bear was again on the move. Norman saw it in the jungle, and fired a long shot in the vain hope of endeavouring to make it break towards Hawkes; but it sneaked away below him, and gave no chance. Some of the men next viewed it as it turned into a nullah which fed the ravine, and make up it as if with the intention of crossing another ridge.

This gave Mackenzie a chance of intercepting it, as he had taken up a position on the other side of the ravine to that occupied by Norman and Hawkes.

The hard work had told on all, Mackenzie especially, but still he persevered, while the others rested where they were till they could hear something certain of the beast's new line.

Mackenzie managed to get some way up the hill, and, as he thought, considerably above the game. He then sat down, while some of the shikarees endeavoured to ascertain the present position of the bear.

He was seated on a rock enjoying his rest, and by chance took up a stone and tossed it into a little clump of bushes lower down the hill-side, in front of him. To his astonishment, out dashed

the bear, and before he could get hold of his gun, which was lying behind him, had got some distance away. He, however, then delivered a broadside with telling effect, though at longish range, and seizing his second gun, ran by a short cut to a place he thought the beast would pass under.

The bear was closer than he expected; for, as he came up to the spot, it charged at him from a distance of only a few paces on his right. Turning round to meet it, he fired his gun before it reached his shoulder, and fortunately dropped the bear with a bullet in its mouth. A final pill was soon administered, and this finished him.

On hearing the first shots, Norman and Hawkes had made a fresh start; but the death-shout proclaimed that the game had at last succumbed, after a running fight of five or six hours.

The sun was just sinking as this desirable result was attained; and the tired sportsmen had still a rough, weary trudge of some four miles before them —happily, however, nearly all down-hill—ere they could reach their tents. The whole of it was necessarily performed on foot, as the changes and vicissitudes of the chase had led them into a part of the country far away from the place where the horses had been left.

Through the rapidly deepening gloom of the brief tropical twilight, the hunters stumbled over the numerous obstacles which strewed the wild jungle path; and Hawkes, more than once, imagined that a snake wriggled away in front. Camp was, however, reached at last; and at dinner something more than the usual allowance of "mug" was consumed. The meal over, and a single cheroot smoked, they all turned in.

CHAPTER IX.

A Banquet for the fowls of the air—Preparations for a storm—The storm—Its results.

THE hunters were too much done up to attempt a hunt at any distance on the following day, even had the shikarees been able to mark anything down. But the latter were just as much fatigued, and equally incapable of going out in the morning.

Mackenzie's feet were greatly swollen and blistered, and remained so for some days. His lighter companions, however, escaped this effect of their unusual exertions, but were nevertheless glad of a day's rest. This enabled Hawkes to superintend personally, to his exceeding satisfaction, the collection of all the fat after the skin of the bear had been removed.

It proved to be a particularly large and heavy male, and yielded a fine supply of grease. It was only brought into camp in the course of the morning, when it was found that, out of nearly double the number of bullets fired from first to last of the engagement, nine had taken effect in various parts of the body.

So careful was Hawkes in collecting every scrap of fat, that but little was left to anoint the strips and lumps of riven flesh over which a flock of vultures were shortly screaming and fighting and flapping their broad wings. They appeared directly after the carcase was removed to a distance from the camp, and were soon engaged in banqueting noisily over it. Kites, too, assisted at the revels, and added to the noise with their shrill cries. A pair or two of ravens also, and a number of crows strutted about close at hand, not daring to compete with the more powerful birds in their struggle for food, but making up for their lack of strength by their audacity and quickness. Hovering continually around, by occasional little rapid dashes, one would manage frequently to seize a piece of flesh and escape with it, followed by numbers of his own kind. Long ere nightfall, many of the vultures were sitting gorged and in lazy contemplation on the neighbouring trees. The bones of the bear were scattered about, but on them was not left enough to afford a meal to one of the hungry troop of jackalls, who at dusk came howling round the place in expectation of supper.

Day had, on this occasion, given the advantage to the feathered race. Whence the vultures had come, or whither they went after digesting their

food, was a problem the hunters were unable to solve.

The heat continued intense. The previous night had been most close and oppressive; and even the toil-worn hunters could not sleep for any continued length of time without having recourse to the water chogul.

But as the day advanced, the breathless state of the atmosphere, and the pile of clouds gathering behind the hills, warned the experienced of the party to make preparations to receive a storm of rain or dust, perhaps both; but in either case, most certainly accompanied by a hurricane of wind.

Not unfrequently have the lax, or lazy, or inexperienced, to rue the neglect of those precautions, which should ever precede the arrival of the expected storm. It is too late when once it has burst. Tents blown down, poles smashed, stores destroyed and numerous other inconveniences may result from a want of due preparation. Of course no amount of foresight will at all times prove sufficient to avoid those disasters; but it is usually the careless who suffer.

The signs of the weather were not lost on the hunters, who summoned all hands to make the necessary preparations to enable them to meet, with the minimum of risk, one of those wild and angry,

but usually brief fits of the elements, such as occasionally occur during the hot season in the interior of India.

Early in the afternoon, and while the vultures were yet busily employed in completing their banquet, the camp was alive with the movements of all its inhabitants, and several outsiders from the village. The tent-pegs to leeward were driven deep into the ground; all those towards the quarter from which the storm was expected, and those at all the corners, were *bushed*. A bough of a tree or bush was cut and embedded in the soil, the thick end only appearing above it, thus affording a securer hold to the rope than that afforded by the peg alone, which becomes loosened when the earth is first saturated. Advantage was taken also of such depending branches, the shoots from the parent tree's limbs, as had struck root. Little trenches were cut just outside the base of the tent-walls all round, and the débris heaped against them; thus forming a small embankment to prevent the entrance underneath of either wind or water. A deeper and larger cut was made towards the lower ground, so as to carry off the accumulation of water in the trenches. The boxes inside the tents were already raised on stones to prevent the inroads of that pest of India, the white ant; but larger stones were now

procured and placed under them, so that in the event of any irruption of water they should be secure. All small articles were stowed away, and everything, as far as possible, got under cover. The guns were carefully put to bed as the safest place, and there covered up. The horses were secured in the most sheltered position ; and saddles and bridles, till now hanging on the branches of the trees, taken into the tents.

When all was made snug, and every device which occurred to them resorted to, the hunters sat quietly in the shade outside their tents, calmly awaiting, in the stagnant atmosphere, the approach of the storm, now slowly rolling up over the heavens.

For a long time its approach was perceptible, as dense clouds and columns of dust obscured, one by one, the more distant hill peaks. Range after range gradually sank invisible behind the lurid rolls and pillars which were surmounted by a dark indigo canopy. Onwards they came, streaks of lightning flashing above them, followed by the low rumbling of still distant thunder. A scorching hot puff or two, the first heralds or skirmishers of the storm, just stirred the lethargic leaves, then died away. Again they came hotter and with greater force, and the vegetation rustled louder under their influence. Soon the fitful gusts merged into one continued

sweep of wind; and, a few hundred yards distant, the trees could be seen bending low before the full fury of the blast. From tree to tree, its progress could be traced as each became lost in the murky atmosphere. Ere long, it rushed up to the little camp, laden with the heat of a furnace, and accompanied by dense clouds of dust and sand and minute particles of substances, which struck like pins against the unprotected face. It raged through the stubborn giant tree, with a violence which threatened to dismember it, for its grasp of the earth, both by its own massive roots, and those of its parasite shoots, rendered entire destruction unlikely. All around was quickly enveloped. Things a few yards distant could not be discerned, and the sun was so obscured as to render it difficult to decipher the characters of fair sized print. The first fierce gust settled into a steady hurricane, gradually becoming cooler as it rather increased than diminished in strength. A few heavy drops of rain fell, and the air became delightfully chill; and then in a few minutes the rolling dust gave place to a falling sheet of water, which pelted against all obstructions with tremendous violence.

The most vivid flashes of lightning followed each other in rapid succession, and were almost contemporaneous with sharp cracks of deafening thunder,

whose peals were heard far above the roaring of the wind, or the groaning and creaking of the trees. They appeared to issue from a height but little above the earth, so sudden and startling were the thunder volleys. Presently, there was a comparative pause, but only for a few seconds; for the elements, gaining strength by their momentary rest, burst out with renewed fury. A globe of fire seemed to fall within a short distance, and rush along the ground. This was instantaneously succeeded by a roar of thunder, which shook the earth. The power of the storm was redoubled, and the hurricane attained its greatest violence.

All three hunters were seated in Mackenzie's tent, which now gave symptoms of succumbing to the fury of the blast. One corner rope had given way, and as others threatened to do so, it became necessary to avert, if possible, the impending catastrophe of its downfall. By shouting into each other's ears, and making signals, the three, with some of the servants, managed to act in combination, and, securing the flapping rope, had it soon again fixed to a buried bush, and themselves clung on to the remaining ones.

The storm, having once attained its climax, subsided as quickly as it had arisen. The rain lessened, then the wind abated, and in less than an hour the

clouds had passed, the sky was blue overhead, and the leaves and grass were glittering with the raindrops, in the full glare of the tropical sun, while they danced in the breath of a cool and pleasant breeze.

The inmates of the little camp had now leisure to look around and ascertain the damage wrought by the brief elemental shock. One of the servants' rowties, it was found, had come down, and, with one of its poles broken, lay a confused mass of canvass, with boxes, baskets, and other articles sticking up like great bumps from beneath it. Two of the horses, also, had broken loose from their pickets, and, with heel-ropes dangling behind, were careering over the open ground, evincing a strong disposition to fight. One or two boughs of trees lay scattered about, and it was found the lightning had struck the root of a small isolated tree on a neighbouring rocky knoll, and, passing through it, furrowed the ground for a space of several yards before it became lost. A part of the embankment, which protected the tent of Norman and Hawkes, had given way, and a stream of water was flowing through it. Many things within the tents were, of course, more or less wetted; and there was shortly a great display of light clothing, blankets, horses' jules (clothing), and other articles stretched on the

neighbouring bushes or suspended from the branches of the trees. Soon, however, as all went to work with a will, damages were repaired. The horses were caught with the alluring assistance of the gram-bag, the broken pole spliced and the tent re-pitched, water ejected, and all made as snug and comfortable as under the circumstances could be managed.

Streams and nullahs were running in every direction; but these quickly diminished, and, ere long, ran entirely out, or subsided into mere trickling rills of water.

The cooling effect of the storm on the atmosphere almost repaid them, the hunters thought, for its inconveniences. How pleasant and fresh and invigorating the feeling of the air after the late relaxing heat! And they thoroughly enjoyed it, as they sat and compared notes; for not even the unsusceptible Mackenzie had been left entirely unimpressed with the dark beauty and grandeur and power of the elements in their wrath.

The river had risen considerably, and a good-sized stream was now flowing into the hitherto sluggish pool which had served them as a bathing-place.

As the sun approached the horizon, the pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, and other feathered denizens of the hills and woods, set up their many and oft-repeated cries

and notes. They all seemed as refreshed and invigorated as the trees and thickets which sheltered them, and woke up, making the jungle resound with their choruses of joy.

The hum of myriads of flying insects, too, and the bum of the earth and tree crickets arose as night fell.

When dinner was ready, and lights placed on the table, thousands of flying creatures, attracted by the glare, came trooping towards them, and hovered round. The cloth was soon covered with the wings discarded by the flying white ants and other insects. And when the table was moved outside, and the friends sat down to dinner, excessive caution was necessary, and much examination required, before each mouthful was committed to its destination. Covers, too, were obliged to be kept on the tumblers, to protect their contents from the inroads of creeping things.

This was the most unpleasant effect of the rain, and certainly was one of no mean magnitude. But the air was fresh, and the diners in good spirits, and the other two only laughed as either Mackenzie or Norman, both men of hair, like Esau, extracted some creeping animal from amidst the recesses of his whiskers, and—oh, horror!—proclaimed it to be a flying bug—a fact soon verified by olfactory evidence.

As each wore a light cap as a protective measure, the whiskerless Hawkes had, on the whole, rather the best of the joke.

In consequence of this nuisance, dinner was hurried over; and, sending away the lights, the hunters inhaled the fragrant manilla—a measure both pleasant and protective. As a treat after their ducking, Mackenzie ordered a bottle of mulled port.

The air was delightfully fresh—its dust-laden oppressiveness removed; and when, some time later, they sought their respective charpoys (beds), they luxuriated in a continuity of repose which the intense heat of the few preceding nights had rendered unobtainable.

CHAPTER X.

A Gosein's hut—No escape for Bruin—A long beat—Monkeys and Tigers—A critical position—A Spread Eagle shot—Its happy effects—Stewed-eel soup—An "Old Female."

WHILE they were yet at breakfast on the following morning, a man came in to say that a bear was marked down, and, luckily, at no great distance.

Mackenzie's feet were so blistered as not to admit of his wearing his usual heavy shooting-shoes. These were replaced by a pair of easy worsted-worked slippers, the manufacture and gift of some fair lady. The bear had fortunately condescended to take up his quarters in a place, the immediate neighbourhood of which was attainable on horseback. A fine group of trees, shadowing a welling spring, also gave shelter to the hut of a gosein, or Hindoo devotee, and the rudely-carved specimens of red-painted stones which did duty for gods.

The gosein was not so absorbed in holy contemplation, nor his mind so withdrawn from the current affairs of this lower world, as to be ignorant of the

arrival and presence of three white faces, or free from a certain itching to handle the current coin of the realm.

Most of the beaters, who addressed him as "Sahib," and stood in considerable awe of his sanctity and supernatural merits, were, nevertheless, not so dumbfounded by his presence as to prevent their asking and obtaining from him lights for their pipes. Though acceding to their requests, he hardly appeared to notice them, and treated them with a negligent air of superiority. But, as the gentlemen rode up, the instinct generated by a desire for the acquisition of rupees, and which he yet possessed in common with the inferior beings by whom he was surrounded, induced him to present his ash-covered body, and make obeisance, and an offer of his services. Indeed, they afterwards discovered that he had been of no little use in pointing out to the shikarees the usual haunts of the bear, which information had led to its being marked down.

It was a noble tope of trees at which they rested, far up one of the lateral glens of the hills. But here, again, the desire for seclusion, shade, and water, and not the picturesqueness of its position, had been the motive which urged him to select a pretty spot, from which a fine view was obtainable.

The sportsmen dismounted, and with Rugonauth held a brief council of war.

The bear was lying in a position not dissimilar to that of the last killed. A densely wooded nullah, from which, on one side, rose the face of the hill less thickly covered with jungle; on the other, a hill also, but more rugged and precipitous. This latter part it was not deemed necessary to occupy.

To Hawkes it fell to be stationed highest up. Norman came next; and Mackenzie was lowest down on the opposite side. He was stationed there, as the nullah narrowed and afforded a likely place whence to get a view of the beast, should he not break towards either of the other two, or escape past them unobserved.

The beaters commenced from above; and owing, probably, to the unusual coolness, at once disturbed the bear, who was seen by Hawkes advancing along a narrow path in his direction. He patiently waited, occasionally losing sight of it, till at last the beast appeared at a distance of not more than twenty yards, and Hawkes considered it time to fire. Before it could again become screened by the jungle, he was able to pour in a rapid broadside of four barrels, two of which rolled him over. As luck would have it, he only vacated the quarters he found so hot, to rush into others equally so; for,

breaking away from Hawkes, after a disappearance of a few minutes, he was detected by Norman listening, and evidently very sick, about forty yards off. Having a clear view, Norman fired, and knocked the beast off his legs. It lay for some time motionless, and Norman advanced towards it. But not yet did the tough-hided creature give in. The hunter's approach seemed to have a wonderfully revivifying effect, for again it rose, and struggled on into the thick jungle, receiving a couple more bullets as it departed. But all three hunters were destined on this occasion each to have a chance. From Norman, the dying bear crawled down into the nullah, and passed right under Mackenzie's position, and was there finally disposed of.

The whole affair did not occupy a quarter of an hour, and many were the congratulations on the brevity of the engagement, obviating, as it did, a renewal of the toils of the former day, to which Mackenzie, at any rate, was quite unequal.

On their return to the group of trees a consultation was held with Rugonauth, who brought to the notice of the hunters the able assistance rendered by the man of the ash-covered body and dishevelled locks, much to the gratification of that worthy individual, and a small addition to his pecuniary resources. He was profuse in his expression of

thanks, and volunteered much information regarding the immediate locality of his lonely dwelling.

It was yet so early that the hunters were unwilling to return to their tents, should there be a chance of obtaining anything by a beat on speculation; provided it could be made without any great demand on the physical exertions of Mackenzie, for the beaters had had little to do and were quite fresh.

"It must be in some place," said Mackenzie, when suggesting this to Rugonauth, "to the vicinity of which I can ride; for I am quite unable to go stumping about the rocks and stones, and over hills and nullahs."

"I know, Sahib," was the reply made by the shikaree, to whom the existence of such a thing as blistered feet was but vaguely known. "I heard the Sahib had got swelled feet, and therefore only examined the country this morning within an easy distance of the tents. There is a large ravine not far from this which I visited early this morning. I heard either a tiger or a panther roar there; but it was a long way off, and I could not make out which. I did not see it, so did not call the Sahibs there when I heard a bear was marked down. But if the gentlemen please, we can drive the ravine now."

"Where is it? Can I get there without climbing?" inquired Mackenzie.

"Sahib, its mouth is just round the shoulder of that hill," and Rugonauth pointed to one which sloped down to the valley about two miles off. "You might go up as far as you can, and take up a position. The upper part is the most likely; but if the Sahib can't go there he can't. Numun" (so he pronounced it) Sahib and the Chota Sahib can go there."

It was soon arranged that Rugonauth should pilot the two latter on foot over the hill, and establish them in favourable places; while a couple of the village shikarees were deputed to convoy Mackenzie round it, with strict directions as to his lodgment. The beaters were ordered to proceed to the head of the ravine in question, also away up the hill, but in a direction diverging from that of the two hunters.

Mackenzie and the ponies of the others proceeded down the glen they had ascended, and turned the shoulder of the hill which the others crossed. The latter, after a somewhat weary climb and a brief descent on the other side, came to an extensive gorge which severed one spur of the mountain from another like a large Titan-inflicted gash. Its sides were rugged, in many parts quite precipitous, and

various water-courses—the drainers of the spurs on either flank—helped to swell the torrent which, during the monsoon, swept furiously down its rocky bed, and fed the river in the valley below. Indeed, it might be considered as its principal source.

The storm of the day before had left water lying in various parts, and a trickling rill still, here and there, found its way over and among the huge boulders with which its bottom was plentifully strewn, but hidden by the foliage, which was thick, and in some parts impervious.

"Why, Rugonauth," said Norman, as he inspected the place from the top of a cliff, "I am afraid the chances are much against our getting a beast to break favourably out of so extensive a place. There might be a dozen, and yet we not see one."

"True word, Sahib," was the reply. "But what is to be done? I have watched this place every morning, and have been unable to mark anything down in it. But there are several fresh pugs about, and perhaps a beast may show himself. The Sahib's luck is great. I have much faith in it. If it be destined that a tiger will eat your worship's bullets, he will do so."

"How do you intend to beat it?" asked Norman.

"I have sent one party of beaters to the top and

one to the other side. Most of the matchlockmen, with some blank powder, are with the latter. There are numbers of paths up the different nullahs which join the ravine, but only two or three that are much frequented, and they will fire continually at those places."

"And will they join the beaters as the line comes up with them?" inquired Hawkes.

"Sahib, I have ordered them, when the beaters in the ravine come near, to keep along the top of the cliffs and shout rather in front of them, so that a beast will be made to try and escape by this side. The two most likely places the Sahibs can occupy on this side."

"The plan seems good, Rugonauth," said Norman. "I hope it will be successful."

"What will be, will be," the old man oracularly observed. "With good fortune all will come right. In my thought something will be killed, and there will be more than one animal skinned at the tents to-night."

With this hopeful intimation the shikaree proceeded to station the two sportsmen. "Now, Sahib," he said, as he reached a point which commanded the gorge itself and a nullah which ran into it, "this is one place, and the other is there," and he pointed to another similar position a couple of

hundred yards further on. "If there is a tiger above this, he will very likely either come up one of these two nullahs, or sneak down the ravine itself. If neither of you should see him do that, then Mackenzie Sahib, who is nearly half a mile lower down, may have a chance. But my hope is the two nullahs."

Saying this, he left Norman where he was, and took Hawkes on to establish him in his assigned position. That effected, he moved on to take personal command of the beaters, and see that his directions were acted on.

The wary and self-reliant old shikaree, fatalist though he was, appeared himself so sanguine, that he impressed the two sportsmen with strong hopes, that, in spite of the adverse chances attending so extensive and speculative a beat, it might after all prove a successful one.

Before half-an-hour was past, distant shouts reverberated among the crags and rocks, and were bandied from side to side, announcing the commencement of the beat. Soon a blank shot or two was fired at intervals, and was caught up sharply by the echoes and repeated, with a progressive diminution of rattle and hardness, till lost in a soft, undefined murmur. The beating of the tom-tom occasionally swelled into a deeper cadence, as some

opening allowed its freer egress, or a favourable puff of wind wafted it down to the listeners.

Hawkes, who, as I have said, was furthest up, could now see the men on the opposite side moving along, and by their position guess at that of the beaters below.

His attention was shortly after attracted to a troop of monkeys in the bottom of the ravine, somewhat higher than his station. Their movements evinced some unusual excitement, as they skipped from tree to tree, gesticulating, chattering, and screeching, as if in great anger. He had heard that these creatures do, for some reason of their own, hold tigers in great aversion, which they never fail to display when they happen to discover the object of their wrath, by some such exhibition as he was now witnessing. In his boyish days he had seen the movements of magpies give a clue to the line of the fox; and he presumed that he was, perhaps, now observing a similar natural instinct on a larger scale. There was evidently some special cause for the commotion which prevailed, so unusual in the heat of the day. As he was pondering this, and wondering if a tiger was really a-foot, his gun-bearer whispered the word "Bagh" (tiger).

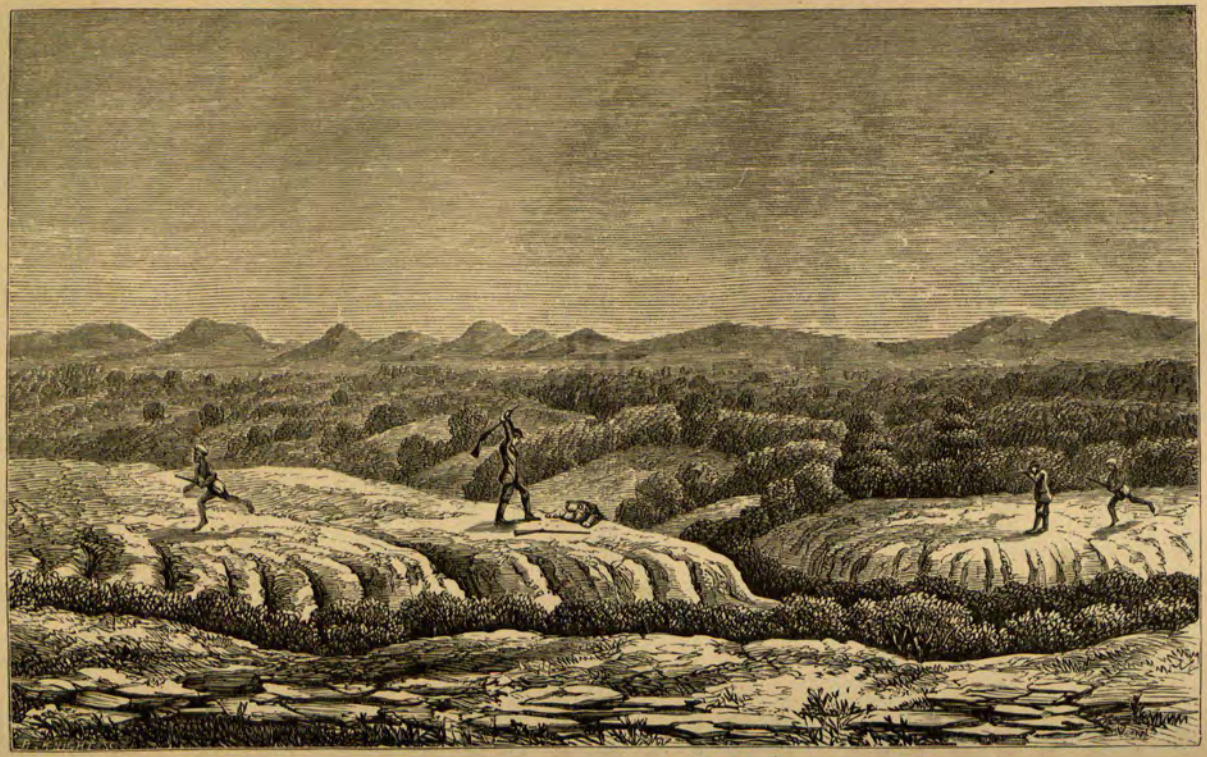
"Where? Where is he?" he ejaculated quickly, making ready at the same time. "I don't see him."

"No, Sahib," replied the attendant. "I only spoke for you to be prepared. I have not seen him, but the monkeys must have done so."

The chattering soon diminished. Hawkes, however, kept a vigilant look-out near the spot where the monkeys were still moving about the trees, but in an undecided sort of way. He was beginning to think there must have existed some other cause for their excitement, when he felt a twitch at his coat.

He turned sharply, and his gun-bearer pointed down into the nullah, which entered the ravine nearly at right-angles, and which formed a portion of his watch and ward. He followed the direction of the man's finger, and peered into the thick undergrowth at the foot of the trees which grew plentiful at the spot, without, for a few seconds, discerning anything. Quickly, however, he caught sight of an object moving in the shade; and, as it passed across a more open space, saw it was a tiger sneaking along with the head and body low; its whole back, from the snout to the setting on of the tail, appeared to form one straight line, the latter appendage being carried in a drooping state.

His rifle was quickly brought to bear, and he let drive both barrels in rapid succession, rolling the tiger over; but it immediately recovered itself,



A TICKLISH POSITION. [P. 185.

sprang up roaring with rage and pain, and, catching a sight of his adversary on the rock-faced bank above, came bounding towards him over the boulders and stones at the foot of the low cliff on which Hawkes stood. The hunter seized his second gun, and poured in its contents as the tiger came on, but without the effect of stopping his headlong charge. The beast reached the base of the rocky height, and, making a desperate spring, managed to gain a hold with his fore-paws on its top, but its flat and slippery face presented nothing on which to fix his hind-feet, or give it purchase to assist in dragging itself bodily to the top. As Hawkes turned to seize his third gun from the attendant, he perceived that individual some distance in the rear, racing with full power on towards the nearest tree. It was too late for him to follow suit: retreat was now out of the question; so he clubbed his gun and brought it down with force on the head of the tiger as it rested snarling between its paws within a few feet of the striker. The beast winced, but did not let go its hold; indeed, appeared to redouble its efforts to effect a lodgment. The stock flew into splinters as it came in contact with the hard skull of the tiger; but Hawkes continued to belabour him with the barrels. He laid on with a will, but the result was yet doubtful. Despite the desperate blows, the beast

maintained his position; and, had he not been weakened by his wounds, would probably have made good his object.

All this time it had been growling, with rage depicted in every line of its countenance. Suddenly it emitted a short low roar, a quiver seemed to run through it, its jaws relaxed, its eyes lost their fire, its hold of the rock gave way, and it fell back crashing among the boulders of rock and bushes into the nullah below, a distant rifle crack accompanying its downfall.

"Hurrah!" Hawkes shouted in mad excitement, brandishing his gun-barrels. "Hurrah! He's cooned. Yoicks! Tally ho!"

"Run for it. For God's sake, get into a tree!" shouted Norman from the other side of the nullah, in eager, anxious tones. "He may get up, and be at you again by some path."

"No, no, it's all right. He's cooned. Tul-lul-lul-laietee!" and Hawkes continued to make excited demonstrations as he stood on the rock and looked over.

"Get back, man, get back. Are you mad?" Norman again shouted, with much anxiety. "Perhaps he's only stunned. I can't answer for hitting him again. Run off, confound you; run away, will you!"

"It's all serene, old fellow," was the reply. "I see him lying quite still, and dead as a door-nail. There he is under the tree."

"Ah! I twig him," ejaculated Norman, and again the rifle spoke. But this time there was no responsive roar. "Dead, I believe," he said. "Quick there, gun-bearer, the other gun," and he seized his second gun from the man, who now came running up.

It now occurred to Hawkes that he too might as well provide himself with another weapon. So, while Norman was reloading his rifle, with his gun lying cocked before him all ready for use, in case the tiger showed any signs of life, he looked about for his attendant.

"If you have quite recovered from your mad fit of dancing and howling," said Norman, "I recommend you, Hawkes, to get hold of another gun, and we can then go down to the beast."

This Hawkes was soon able to do; for the gun-bearer, seeing that the danger was past, descended from his perch in a neighbouring tree, and approached his master with considerable misgivings as to the nature of his reception.

With a hearty cuff, and an anathema on the poor wretch's want of nerve, Hawkes took his gun, and both the sportsmen descended, each from his side,

to the prostrate tiger, which they found lying quite dead.

"I say, Hawkes, that was a narrowish shave," observed Norman. "It might have been an awkward scrape."

"Ay, indeed," was the reply. "And many thanks to you, old fellow, for getting me out of it so well. How came you to be there just in the nick of time?"

"Well, when I saw the movements of the monkeys, I made sure a tiger was on foot, and I just caught a glimpse of him as he turned up your nullah. While I was running forward towards it, I heard your shots; then the roaring; and, lastly, saw the brute trying to get at you. It was a longish and rather ticklish shot, but there was no help for it; so I pulled up and fired, and I see have broken the tiger's spine. You have left your marks on him also, for here are two—three bullet-holes."

"Yes, I knocked him over with the first shot near this very place," said Hawkes. "I wonder at his charging when I was so much above him. I thought it was an understood thing that tigers seldom look up."

"It is certainly a theoretical opinion. As a rule, tigers do sneak along without looking up. But, practically, it would never do to rely entirely on it.

If they detect an adversary, their rage naturally leads them to attack him. You mustn't suppose that because you are above a beast he may not perceive whence his wounds are received. Any slight noise or movement will attract his attention. But, I say, what made you so frantic after I rolled the brute over?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the young fellow. "I was awfully excited, I suppose; and it was deuced jolly to see the beast disappear from his perch in so sudden a manner. His snarling mouth and tremendous ivories had an awkward, unpleasant look about them, I can assure you. But I saw it was all up with him by his face when you struck him; and so, I imagine, sang my pæan of triumph."

"The gun-bearer had bolted, I suppose, hadn't he?" inquired Norman.

"Yes, and that reminds me I have not properly rewarded him. He ought to get a good licking, shouldn't he? He left the empty rifle lying on the ground, and bolted with my loaded third gun. And you see it has cost me this unfortunate weapon," and Hawkes dolefully regarded the remains of his much-cherished "Westley Richards."

"It's a nuisance, certainly," Norman replied; "but I must confess if I had been in the poor devil's place, I should have felt a strong itching to

bolt too. I don't wonder at his nerves proving unequal to so close an acquaintance. He might certainly have had the grace to leave the loaded gun behind; only, unfortunately, on these occasions the correct thing is not remembered till afterwards."

"Come here, you scoundrel," said Hawkes to the man. "Look here! do you see this gun, or rather what was once a gun? It is all through you that it is smashed. Why, if you and all your family were to be sold, it would not bring enough to buy one like it. What do you think ought to be done to you?"

The wretched creature averred with many protestations that he would never run away again as long as he lived. If the Sahib would only forgive him this time, he would show how faithful he would be in future.

Rugonauth now made his appearance, having stopped the beaters when he heard the shots, and hastened to ascertain the result, and if his services were required.

"Sahib," he said, "I knew it. I told you there would be more than one dead beast taken to the tents to-day."

When told, however, that at one time it looked very much as if one of the hunters themselves might prove to be the second beast he referred to, he railed

in vigorous terms at the unfortunate gun-bearer, who put his hands together in an attitude of supplication, without speaking a word. But the beat was not yet over; so he returned to set the line once more in motion, advising the sportsmen to keep about a hundred yards a-head of them when they reached the vicinity of their present position. This they did, but without seeing anything except a brace of hyænas, at which they did not consider it worth while to fire.

"Eh!" said Mackenzie, when they reached him, and related the particulars of the affair. "Nearly boned! Thick-skulled tiger! Gun smashed! By Jove! you have all the luck. Here have I been cooling my heels over this rock for a good three hours, and seen nothing but a hyæna and a wild cat."

"Luck do you call it!" exclaimed Hawkes. "It is rather an expensive kind of luck, and one I shouldn't appreciate many opportunities of enjoying. It is rather damaging to one's battery; and I cannot say the sensation is altogether pleasant when you find a snarling devil within a few feet and longing to crunch you. It is a sort of luck, Mac, where a little goes a precious long way. At the time I would very willingly have changed positions with you: I give you my word I would."

"Ha! hum! Well, perhaps you would! I don't mean to say that I should particularly wish to make quite so close an acquaintance with a wounded tiger. But why didn't you bolt?"

"No time. He was clinging on to the rock in a flash after I fired. If I had once knocked him off his perch down below, I should have made short tracks of it and no mistake."

"And yet, Mac," said Norman, "would you believe it? When I dropped the brute, he made no attempt to leg it; but brandished his gun-barrels and danced about like an Indian."

"Well," said Mackenzie, "I heartily congratulate you on getting so well out of the scrape. I say! won't Miss Verney be all in a tremor when you tell her of it, eh? We must let the skin fall to your lot in the division of the spoils. Pretty present for her."

"Thanks. I should like it, I confess," the young fellow laughingly replied, "but not for her. The poor old governor at home," he continued, more seriously, "will like to possess it, I know; and every time he looks at it, will remember the trump of a fellow who saved his son."

"Save! nonsense!" ejaculated Norman. "It would have been just the same whether you were there or not. But come along; Rugonauth says

there is nothing more to be done, so we had better be moving homewards."

"Yes," replied Mackenzie, "let us be jogging, for I intend to produce a tin of stewed eels at dinner, in honour of Hawkes' escape."

"Hear, hear!" said Norman, applauding the unwonted liberality with regard to the hermetically sealed supplies of the cautious caterer.

Young Hawkes said nothing; and his friends pretended not to see that the lad's eyes glistened and his heart was full, as he thought of the old man in his distant home, and the bright smiles of a sister's sunny face, and the effect the news of his death—if such had been—would have had on them. But with the buoyancy of youth, his face soon cleared, and he was chatting with his wonted gaiety long ere they reached the camp.

"Well, this is a day of luxury," said Mackenzie, as some soup in tea-cups was placed before each of the party, when they sat down to dinner the same evening. "Smells rather strong though, does it not? Gad! that's the queerest soup I ever tasted," he continued, as he took a large spoonful. "What is it made of, Sheik Hussein? Not the bear, I hope."

"Bear-soup? No, your honour. I have been a butler since many years, but I never saw bear-soup."

"Then what the devil is it?" asked Norman. "Why, here is a great long bit of stuff like a man's finger in it."

"Sahib, it is the European soup which my master gave out."

"Why, I am damned," ejaculated Mackenzie profanely, "if he hasn't gone and made soup out of our stewed eels. Why, Sheik Hussein, you old rascal, those were fish—eels—to be served up in a dish."

"Sahib," replied the servant, with solemnity, "it makes very good rich soup. Perhaps your honour does not understand how to cook the English articles in the tins. I have seen many cooked; and Manuel read out from the cover on another tin, that they should be mixed with boiling water. That is what I have done before."

"Those were the soup-tins, you donkey, you! This is to eat—not to drink. What a bore, isn't it, you fellows?" continued Mackenzie, turning to his friends, and sniffing irresolutely at his tea-cup. "Such a piece of stupidity. And I was looking forward to the eels. Of course this is only fit to be thrown away." But still he sniffed and tasted without sending it from the table.

After several experiments, each agreed that, after all, it was not so bad. It would be a pity to

waste it. It was a little change. And in effect each eventually consumed his portion, and that without any violent effort to overcome repugnance to it.

After the eel-soup was disposed of, another surprise was in store for two of the party. Manuel, the Portuguese servant, brought in and placed on the table, with much complacency, a fine roasted peafowl, about twice the size of the little dish on which it was cunningly balanced. As he retreated behind his master's chair, he looked fondly at the bird, and then with much satisfaction round the table.

"Halloo! where did this come from?" inquired Hawkes. "We seem to be in luck to-day."

"Manuel shot it," replied Mackenzie. "I knew this fellow, Norman, would be objecting to our shooting any small game about, if I proposed it, for fear of frightening away tigers and bears, so I left one of my guns behind to-day for Manuel to try his luck. Now, don't grumble, Norman, the deed is done now."

"Yes, sar," observed Manuel, who had been evidently waiting in expectation of being questioned. "Captain Sahib lend gun. I tell master I littly good shot; so go to the jungle with Baloo, and shoot two peacock and six fine pijuns. This one I

shoot. Master, please eat; then it very good and soft. All same as young lady peacock."

"Mac," said Norman, reproachfully addressing that individual, "what an old belly-worshipper you are! To think that, with all the advantages you have so often derived from my improving society, you should still remain unimpressed with the necessity of extreme caution in the conduct of such an important affair as sport. I am afraid all my lessons have been quite lost on you."

"Then, of course, as you decline to appear to sanction the deed, you will be consistent enough to prefer a bit of that tough old fowl to a slice from the breast of this bird,—a nice young plump one it is."

"No, hang it. As you say, 'the deed is done;' so I don't see why I should not reap the benefit of it. But, Manuel, you must be quite a shikaree."

"I not very great shikaree like master," modestly replied the individual last addressed, "but I pretty much good for poor servant-man. Mr. Sheik Hussein, he not think I can shoot, and smile and make fun; but when Baloo show the peacocks and pijuns, then he ask me for to shoot more for 'hullal karo'" (to be rendered lawful by having a brief invocation

pronounced before life is quite extinct; and without which no Mussulman will eat any slaughtered animal).

Sheik Hussein looked doubly solemn as his name occurred in the conversation; which being carried on in English, he did not understand, but at the nature of which he easily guessed.

"Why do you call it the same as a young lady peacock?" asked Norman. "Is it so tender, Manuel, as to be fit for young ladies?"

"No, sar, I not mean that; but it all same as one young missee baba. It no old and hard like Brigadier Mem Sahib."

"Oh! I see. You mean it is tender, and young in age, and a female."

"Yes, master, please, young female."

"Did you see plenty of them?" inquired Hawkes.

"Yes, sar," was the reply. "I see plenty much, but not all young female. The other I shoot, she very much old, like the burree (literally, big; meaning here, socially so) Mem Sahib. What master call, old female."

"Manuel," said Mackenzie, as he subdued his laughter, "are you aware that you have called a distinguished lady by the term 'old female?' If it ever comes to her ears, you will catch it."

Poor Manuel had a very wholesome dread of the

lady in question, who was known by common report to be a desperate tartar; and he was by no means gratified with the chaff he received, or the references to "a dozen" occasionally made; so he took an early opportunity of escaping.

CHAPTER XI.

Caution and Foolhardiness—Anecdotes—A raging Lion—An ingenious Ruse—Knotted Snakes—A Bear and Soda-Water—Shooting Panther flying—Shooting "in arrest"—Bear *versus* Bayonet.

THE circumstance of Hawkes' narrow escape, as narrated in the last chapter, led the hunters to converse on the subject of escapes in general from tigers and other wild beasts; and also of the many who had fallen victims.

The two elder had heard of numerous instances where the sportsman had not been so fortunate as Hawkes; but, though escaping death, had been sadly mauled. And, alas! the Indian newspapers are unhappily also numerous, which contain accounts of some promising young fellow's death, owing to a want of caution, or to extreme foolhardiness in following the sports of the field. Peril, to some extent, there must be, with such powerful and dangerous beasts to fight and slay. But prudence and caution greatly diminish this, and vastly reduce the risk both to sportsmen and beaters. Some

degree of danger naturally lends attraction to sport in the eyes of enterprising men of sound nerves and healthy organisation. But to court it unnecessarily, implies a want of those qualities which characterise the accomplished shikaree. With him, care and caution signify no want of pluck; but judgment controls its abuse. He is just as daring, just as keen—perhaps more so—than the headstrong young fellow who, scorning the advice of the more experienced, rushes into danger where no advantage is to be gained by it. Therefore, young sportsmen of India, do not imagine that a foolhardy contempt of precaution is simply an exhibition of superior pluck; or the reverse, that of its want.

The three friends discussed the circumstances attending the accidents related by each; and many valuable maxims, as to future careful conduct in the field, were laid down; some, perhaps, to be observed; others to be broken without the slightest compunction in the excitement of the moment.

From grave stories, however, they turned to those of a gayer nature—sporting and otherwise.

"I remember," said Norman, "a story told me some time ago, relating to an acquaintance of my own. He is a queer fellow, full of fun, and always ready for a joke; and has a ludicrous way of making faces and emitting curious howls, which I

defy the most solemn Methodist to witness unmoved. The nature of the man renders what I am going to tell you appear more absurd than the real narrative itself justifies; but as I can't convey a proper idea of that, I will just tell you what was told to me. I must state first though, that the poor fellow got a bad fall with his horse some years ago, by which his leg was broken, and he has been obliged ever since to wear some iron apparatus to assist it, for the broken leg is considerably shorter than the other. But though this necessarily obliges him to hobble, he can scuttle over the ground at a wonderful pace. In other respects he is a tall, good-looking man.

"He was out once lion-shooting in Kattiawar. In some parts of the district, where it is tolerably open, the sportsmen used to follow the game on horseback, ride up within range, and then dismount to get a shot, unless their beasts were steady enough to stand fire from their backs. After the shot, they quickly remounted and galloped off. In fact, something in the manner that the African way of conducting the sport is described.

"On one occasion, my friend had turned up a couple of full-grown lions, and was following them on the plain. He managed to get within range, and, as his horse would not stand quiet enough for

him to fire from its back, jumped off, and threw the bridle over his arm; by some chance, however, omitting to slip his hand through it. Well, he got a fair shot, and hit one of the lions hard; but the noise startled the horse, and, as there was nothing to check it, away it galloped, leaving my friend standing. He fired his second barrel, and then had the horror of seeing the wounded lion come charging down towards him, all head, tail, and legs, and roaring tremendously. His rifle was empty and useless, and of course there was no time to load. His first impulse was naturally to bolt as hard as he could; and, accordingly, away he stumped for the nearest tree. But long before he could reach it, the roars came closer and closer behind him; and he felt that he had not the slightest chance of reaching the tree before being overtaken by the angry brute. Still he sped on with the instinct of self-preservation; but the lion was fast closing with him. What could he do? There was no time to be lost. In a few more bounds his head might be crushed in by the blow of a paw, or his mangled limbs be quivering in the animal's relentless jaws. It suddenly occurred to him to try and startle the beast by some unusual combination of form and sounds. His resolve was immediately taken, and acted on without delay. Stopping short

suddenly in his race, with his back still towards the charging lion, now drawing very close, he ducked his head and body till he looked at it reversedly from between his legs, and in that position made some of his most hideous faces, and gave utterance to some of his most appalling yells, and, at the same time, gesticulated wildly with his arms.

"This was a metamorphosis for which the savage beast was quite unprepared. Just before, there had been a runaway man, legging it as hard as he could go in front; but now there was a fearful, shapeless creature stationary and unyielding, and howling in the most awful way, quite beyond all lion experience. The brute was staggered, and hesitated in his headlong career; then pulled up and looked; advanced a step, and looked more closely; heard a frantic yell of extra power, the last despairing effort of the hunter; turned, and with lowered tail, trotted off to join his companion, now disappearing in the distance. After a short space, my friend arose, almost purple in the face from the violence of his exertions, and the unpleasantly low position of his head; but much gratified, and chuckling greatly at the success of his ingenious ruse."

"Oh, come, Norman!" said Hawkes, laughing; "that is a good one."

"I tell you what," observed Mackenzie, "if you

have got many more like that, you might edit a new edition of Munchhausen with much interesting and additional matter never heretofore made public, as the advertisements would say. Where on earth did you pick that story up?"

"Well, gentlemen," returned Norman, "you may have a want of faith in the credibility of the story, and I must confess, that I have myself—to use an expression of Mac's countrymen—"a vera shrewd suspeecion" it is, speaking mildly, slightly embellished; but I assure you, as far as the main facts are concerned, I tell the tale as it was told to me some years ago."

"Then all I can say is," retorted Mackenzie, "that your informant must have had very free and liberal ideas on the subject of *facts*. But let me see," he continued, reflectively, "I think I remember one, certainly not equal in dramatic effect to yours, but still curious enough to excite astonishment among the weak-minded."

"That's right, Mac," said Hawkes. "Let us see if we are weak-minded by your power of astonishing us."

"Well, since you are so pressing, here goes. It was told at a dinner-party a good long time ago. I remember a parson had started the subject of uncommon occurrences, by telling an anecdote, of

which all I can recollect is, that it was something about a friend of his who, while out shooting, had fired at a rabbit and skinned it with the shot. It seemed queer; as the details, however, have altogether gone from my memory, I shall say nothing more about it. After that and one or two others, our host related that a friend of his was sitting one morning early in the verandah of his house enjoying his usual morning cup of tea. He was lolling about, as is usual, with his legs up and his chair tilted back, when his attention was attracted by the singular movements of a number of his poultry, which were running about the compound. Some of them were scuttling about under the hedge, and running to and fro in great excitement. Every now and then, one would rush out into the open, evidently bolting, or trying to bolt, something it had picked up. The officer watched them for a short time, but without being able to make out what they were up to; so he went towards them to ascertain the cause of their extraordinary movements. There he found a number of very small snakes jumping about in a state of great liveliness, and trying to avoid the fowls—guinea-fowls, I think, they were said to be—who were pecking at them, and seizing them, and making desperate efforts to swallow them, evidently considering they had found a great prize. But after

many futile efforts, the fowls were always obliged to eject them. They were very minute, possibly only just hatched: so, as the officer saw no cause for their being invariably returned when the fowls were so anxious to swallow them, he made a closer investigation. He found that, immediately they were seized,—fearful, doubtless, of slipping too easily down the gullets of their assailants,—the cunning little snakes tied themselves into knots, and thus rendered themselves too bulky to be swallowable."

"Good, Mac, very good. Not one of your own, is it?" inquired Norman.

"No, by Jove; my imagination is not so fertile," was the reply.

"I'll tell you how to improve the story," said Norman. "Just add, that after one or two had actually been swallowed in their usual state of natural attenuation; the rest, taking warning by the fate of their companions, resorted to the highly cute and satisfactory dodge you have described."

"Thanks. Yes, I'll make that improvement next time. But after all, instinct may really have taught the snakes to coil themselves up into balls, and in that form prove too large for the fowls."

"Yes; there usually is some foundation for most travellers' tales. Indeed, many that appear the

most unlikely, are really truer than others received with faith. But I will give you another *apropos* of the subject we started with,—narrow escapes from animals,—though I will not vouch for its having any substantial foundation at all. The relater of it said that he was out bear shooting one day, and had been engaged in following one he had wounded. His people, however, lost the track, and while they were searching for it, or trying to find out something certain regarding the beast's line of retreat, he determined to rest under a tree, and have a sandwich and a glass of brandy and soda-water. He was rather a luxurious sort of fellow, and generally had a bottle or two of soda-water with him cooling in wet cloths.

"He got hold of his pewter, poured a little brandy into it, and revelled in the anticipation of the cold grateful effervescing drink,—and you know how delicious and reviving it is during a hot day's work. Seated, with his pewter mug between his legs, after carefully untwisting the wires which bound the cork, he was gently easing the cork itself out, so as not to lose a drop of the precious liquid. With great care, and with a mouth watering for the drink, he was eyeing the upward progress of the cork, when he was startled by the growling—oogh—oogh—of an angry bear. He was a short fat fellow,

and by no means active, so I should not be correct in saying he 'jumped up,' for that with him was an impossibility—but he started, and looked up; and there, bearing down on him along the jungle path, was his wounded friend, and not more than four or five yards off. He was perfectly aghast; he had no time to bolt, or even to seize his gun, which was resting against another tree; so, in the desperation of the moment he raised his bottle to hit the bear over the head or nose, for he remembered their peculiar sensitiveness in that prominent feature. At that very moment the cork flew out with a sharp bang, hit bruin, as luck would have it, right on the nose itself, and the contents of the bottle, being well up, flew fizzing and sputtering over his face and eyes. This was a reception he had not calculated on. Instead of seizing my friend, he hastily turned aside in terror, and made the best of his way into the jungle; while my friend hastened his exit with the bottle, which, truly and correctly aimed, and yet half full of soda-water, hit him on the stern, and scattering its cold contents over him caused him to redouble his speed. Now, you see, that story rests on my *bare* assertion, so I don't often tell it."

"Rather *bare-faced* if you did, I think," responded Hawkes.

"Come, come, none of that exchange of wit. As

commander of the expedition I won't stand it," interposed Mackenzie.

"If you had only said won't *bear* it, Mac; or that it was *unbearable*, or asked us to *forbear*," said Norman, "you would have immortalised yourself. Come, it's your turn now for another story."

"Well, to turn from fiction to fact. You remember poor L——, Norman. He died, Hawkes, long before you joined the regiment. He was very keen for sport in his young days, and I remember was out once when I was quite a youngster, before I was out of my griffinage even. He was rather a careless sportsman, and didn't think much of caution. On the occasion I refer to, he had wounded a panther; and deuced awkward customers they are sometimes. I think, as a rule, they charge more home, and are more difficult to stop or turn, than tigers. However, rather foolishly he allowed the beaters to go into the jungle, in twos and threes, to beat the beast up, instead of keeping them in a compact body. And he himself, with a couple of men, also advanced in the direction of where he believed the beast to be lying. Presently, there was a tremendous roar; a few bounds towards a little party of two or three beaters; a spring; an impression left on the beholders of a spotted mass cleaving through the air; a gun shot; and a heavy

fall. Then arose a yell of wonder and delight. At the very feet of the terror-stricken men the panther had fallen, stone dead, shot in the air like a quail. Poor L——'s snap shot had fortunately taken instant effect; the bullet passing through the brain. After he went up to the beast, and was congratulating himself on the narrow escape of the men, he observed that all, as they came up, prostrated themselves before him, muttering brief invocations as they did so. In fact, the quickness and precision of the shot, so wonderful to them, and the sudden preservation of their comrades from death, made them look upon him as a god; and they made reverence to him accordingly."

"Ay, I recollect hearing something of that soon after I joined," observed Norman. "But do you remember that other panther affair which happened somewhere about the same time,—that of S—— and the colonel?"

"I never heard it," said Hawkes. "What was it?"

"S—— had only been with the regiment a short time then, and went out one day with the colonel after a panther which they had heard of. They had a few sepoys with them, I believe, with their muskets. Well, the beast got wounded, and the old colonel impressed on his young subaltern the

necessity of extreme caution. He was not much of a sportsman, and had no idea of rushing into danger himself, or of allowing the youngster to do so either. They were obliged to separate, however; so, with strict injunctions to the lad to be very careful, and get into a tree which he pointed out, he established himself in a safe position on a rock overlooking the whole place, in some part of which the panther was lying.

"S——, as directed, went towards the tree; but he had only just got into it, when a sepoy came up to him, and said he knew the very spot in which the beast was, and could take him up to it. The lad was greatly excited, and without the slightest hesitation got out of his tree, and accompanied the sepoy through the thick jungle. This was seen by the colonel from his elevated position, and he immediately shouted to S—— to know what he was doing, and ordered him to return to the tree immediately.

"The youngster replied, without heeding the order to return, that he was going to kill the panther.

"The old colonel, in great trepidation, and really anxious for his young friend's safety, again shouted to him.

"'Don't advance another step, sir,' he cried. 'Return to your tree, or I will put you under arrest.

Do your hear, S——?' he continued, as not the slightest attention was paid to his orders. Still no reply, or the smallest attempt at stopping in his onward progress.

"The old fellow was now really alarmed at the boy's temerity, and with angry and vehement gesticulations threatened all sorts of pains and penalties, and at last there and then placed him in arrest.

"'It's as much as your commission is worth, sir, to advance a single step,' he said. 'I place you in arrest now, sir. You are to return here to me, sir, this moment. I, your commanding officer, order you to do so at once. It is breaking your arrest to disobey me.'

"But no heed whatever was paid to these remonstrances and orders. Indeed, it is doubtful if, in his excited state, the boy fully realised his colonel's threats. However that may be, at that moment the mere trivial fact of being placed in arrest would have been regarded with the greatest unconcern, when weighed with the death of a panther—the first he had ever seen. So he continued on, without vouchsafing a reply to his excited commandant; was conducted to a spot whence he obtained a good view of the beast, and there and then shot him dead, to his no small gratification and delight.

"'It's all right, colonel,' he shouted, in gleeful

tones and in great triumph, and quite regardless of his position as an officer in arrest. 'It's all serene. I've polished him off. Come and have a look at him, he's such a beauty.'

"Of course the colonel thought it necessary to administer a mild whig to his insubordinate ensign; but there was no special allusion made to the fact that, properly speaking, he ought to be in 'durance vile.'"

After the two listeners had sufficiently applauded this story, Mackenzie related how, "on one occasion, three officers of his regiment, on detachment duty, had gone after a bear. They had no guns with them, but two provided themselves with the muskets and bayonets of their men, and the third with a very blunt sword. One of the musketeers got a shot; but whether he missed or wounded was never properly ascertained. However, the bear charged, and was received on the point of the bayonet. The blunt weapon failed to penetrate, but was bent by the force of the shock, and its holder, luckily for him, sent sprawling down the hill. The swordsman now came to the rescue, attacked the astonished beast 'en arrière,' and, either taking it by surprise, or astounding it with the suddenness and velocity of his onset, caused its abrupt retreat, while the victor chased it, and belaboured it with his blunt sword as

long as he could keep up. However, I need hardly say that was not for long; so the beast got away, probably scathless."

There was no game marked down the next day; so the three hunters went out early in the afternoon to try their luck after samber and cheetul, at a place some miles off, and said to be a favourite resort; and none of them returned empty-handed.

Hawkes made a neat shot at a cheetul-buck, which he stalked, and knocked it over. On going up to give it the *coup de grâce*—or rather, entrusting that duty to his attendant, for he was hardly yet sufficiently practised enough to cut a deer's throat himself without much reluctance—he attempted to seize the animal's legs while the man, knife in hand, tried to get a firm hold of its head. Objecting, however, to the intended operation, he,—to use Hawkes' expression, as he afterwards recounted the adventure,—"fought like blazes to prevent having his throat cut." Though he was unable to rise from the ground, he struck out and struggled vigorously with his captors; sent the shikaree, knife and all, flying, and kicked a piece clean out of Hawkes' jacket and shirt. Fortunately the blow was just short of the arm, or he might have had to rue the day he so unwarily seized the legs of the prostrate buck. The

shikaree got up, rubbing his shins, from which a good-sized piece of skin had been peeled; and it was some time before he could be prevailed on again to approach the deer. Its relaxing strength, however, soon gave them a more favourable opportunity, and the finishing stroke was administered without further mishap. Hawkes brought home also a doe-cheetul, which was killed without any special circumstances attending its death.

Norman made a very scientific stalk. He observed a buck-cheetul feeding on a distant hill, and immediately set about to circumvent him. There was a rising ground in the vicinity of the animal which, he considered, could he attain, would bring him within a very easy shot. So nicely had he calculated indeed, that when—after a rapid stalk and creeping up the hill—he peered over its top he saw the buck's horns within ten yards of him. He waited till the body came into view, and then shot it.

As he was returning towards home, having killed a samber in addition to the cheetul, he came unexpectedly upon a large herd of the latter, and obtained a good shot at another fine buck. It evidently told, but the cheetul went off, though in a direction different to that the rest of the herd had taken. Norman followed for awhile, and then ran on to a nullah, into which he thought it probable it

had gone; but after looking about for some time, and finding no trace of it, he returned to the place where it had been wounded, with the object of taking up its pugs. He was by himself, as his spare gun-bearer had gone to fetch men to carry home the game already slain; and now he found, as he had often before done, the advantage of being able to track.

There was no blood on the trail; and many, from that fact alone, would have given up further pursuit as useless. But he came to one place where the pugs were quite irregular, as if the deer had staggered, or stumbled badly; and continuing on for about three hundred yards further, found the creature lying dead.

After tearing a piece off his puggree, and tying it to a wand which he stuck upright over the body, he carefully retraced his steps, breaking branches off the bushes as he passed along. This plan he pursued as far as a tall tree, which was a prominent object, and to which he thought he could direct the men from the village, knowing that if they once reached it, his marks would be a sufficient guide for them to find the deer. And when the deer was subsequently brought in, he improved the occasion by again reading a lesson to Mackenzie on the advantage of knowing how to track, and lamenting

his friend's deficient knowledge in that important branch of woodcraft. As for young Hawkes, he eagerly took every opportunity of perfecting himself in so desirable a part of his sporting education; indeed, he would criticise the pugs even of the dogs wandering among the tents, with the view of ascertaining if the impressions were two days, one day, or only a few hours old.

Mackenzie also returned with a good bag—indeed the heaviest of the three—for he had killed a blue-bull or neilghye, and a brace of samber. One of the samber had given him a good deal of trouble to kill. He had at first obtained a broadside shot at about eighty yards, but hit rather far back. He again, however, came up with it, but it took four bullets before it was finally disposed of. The other he had shot dead when running at full gallop through the jungle. He was the more fortunate, for, his feet being yet somewhat blistered, he could not work very much, and was still in slippers.

They were all surprised at the quantity of game about in the valley, down which all three had been shooting, each having seen many more than he killed; and between them, also, several unsuccessful shots had been fired.

There was great rejoicing both in the little camp

and village that evening at the abundance of meat; and men even came over from some villages miles distant to secure a portion of the unusual supply. So there was none wasted.

CHAPTER XII.

She-bear and Cub—Motherly Instinct—Sporting Compunction—Manajee.

EARLY the next morning, men came in to report that a she-bear and cub had been marked down, but at a considerable distance from the camp.

The hunters descended the valley for about three miles, and then struck up one of the lateral glens which debouched into it. These were of frequent occurrence, and the upper and more rugged parts of them appeared to be the favourite resorts of the bears, who rather avoided the flat country in the valley. Mackenzie rode his pony as far up the glen as he could manage to screw it along, but was obliged at last to leave it, and trust himself to his tender feet.

A thick tract of jungle entirely covered one side of a spur running down into the valley, the ridge of which was in some parts tolerably bare. It was in the heart of this that the bear was supposed to be lying, and it was decided to try and drive her up

some one of the numerous wild-beast tracks which led over the ridge. Two of the hunters were accordingly detailed to guard that important line, the third being stationed low down amidst the jungle on the face of the hill, to prevent escape down into the glen. Mackenzie and Norman undertook the first-named duty—a couple of hundred yards separating them—Hawkes the latter. Men were placed at intervals in the upper part, while the bulk of the beaters were thrown into the side opposite Mackenzie and Norman.

Bruin was soon disturbed, and sighted by a man placed high up on the hill. It was telegraphed to Hawkes that it was afoot pretty close to him, but, owing to the thickness of the jungle, he was unable to see it, and it soon made its way up the hill, and rather bending from its original course, so as to run parallel with the ridge; but, before reaching it, took one of the paths which led to the upper part of the hill. Owing to the precautions taken of having men placed there, however, the bears turned and made towards Mackenzie, who was highest on the ridge. Norman had been gradually moving up towards him, as he was informed by the look-outs on the neighbouring eminences that the beasts had passed him, and were travelling up. The shouting in so many different directions now seemed to con-

fuse them, for they moved to and fro in an undecided manner, as if not knowing which direction to take. At last, they seemed resolved to cross the ridge; and this fact was announced with incessant shouting from the men above, though as yet neither of the hunters had caught a single glimpse of the game. Directed, however, by the vociferous warnings of the men, they each, from different spots, watched a part of the jungle where it was somewhat scantier, and almost at the same moment discerned a dark object moving through the bushes. It might have been forty yards from Mackenzie, and double that distance from Norman.

The view was not very clear; nevertheless, the opening of both batteries was responded to by roars, and the dusky object rolled over. Quickly recovering itself, however, it again essayed to move on, and was immediately lost to view. It was next seen crossing the ridge high up, but only for a moment. Having forced the line of the ridge, it made away on the other side. But there was, in the direction of its retreat, a considerable space unencumbered with jungle, and across this it was obliged to pass. Both of the hunters had run forward, in the hope of obtaining shots, though longish ones, as it re-appeared. When it did so, the cub was seen making strenuous efforts to climb on to its

mother's back. It had probably originally been there, but, when the old one was knocked over, lost its hold. Norman fired, but apparently without effect. Mackenzie almost immediately after let drive also; missed the old one, but hit the little beast, knocking it off its legs, summarily putting a stop to its exertions to mount on its mother's back. The old one continued on; but either missing its young one, or having its attention attracted to the squeaking growls it continued to utter, now some distance in the rear, she turned in her tracks, and came right back into the jaws of danger to look after it.

She was soon beside, and assisting it as best she could, and doubtless at the same time encouraging and advising it. At any rate, protected and escorted by the mother, the cub managed to hobble away alongside, and both soon after disappeared. The old one, as she returned, had been received with a couple of shots from the hunters; but when they saw her object, and how, regardless of danger, true motherly instinct prompted her to come to the assistance of her offspring, they had not the heart to interfere with her, and accordingly refrained from again firing.

I am not prepared to say that, had she been close enough for them to make pretty sure, they would

have been so considerate. The excitement of close quarters might have proved too strong for their feelings of sympathy; but as the circumstance happened, they did find that a disinclination to pull upon the poor beast, which had shown such tender regard for its young, overcame for a moment their thirst for slaughter. Wounded as it was, the kinder course to pursue would have been to endeavour to put an end to its pain; but this did not immediately occur to them. So, growling and squeaking in concert, the two made good their escape.

The active look-outs were soon darting from eminence to eminence, intent on distinguishing the line of flight of the game; and, if possible, again marking them down.

After a considerable time, it was announced to the hunters, that they had been seen to enter a ravine a mile or two off, and had not emerged from it.

With some grunting and grumbling on the part of Mackenzie, the three were soon threading their tortuous way up and down the steep ravines, and among the rocks and jungle which were thickly scattered over the other side of the range of hills; for in that direction the bears had ultimately gone. The ravine was at last reached; but the bears had moved, and a distant glimpse or two was obtained of them labouring slowly along towards a vast unin-

terrupted tract of dense jungle, whence it would be impossible to drive, or into which it would be useless to follow them.

After a while, too, there were conflicting statements. Some asserted these were not the wounded bears; they had, it was said, turned into another ravine which came down from the upper hills. Then another report reached them. It was declared that they had been marked into a nullah near the ridge they had left. As it was very possible there were others afoot, and as these last seen were distinctly stated to be wounded, the sportsmen decided to retrace their steps, after holding a short council of war on the subject. Certainly, it appeared strange that animals so badly wounded should journey so far as those they were following; and they consequently inclined to the belief that some others had been roused by the shouting, and been mistaken for those of which they were in pursuit.

A portion of the beaters were with some trouble collected, and returning to the upper hills, the hunters prepared to beat the nullah spoken of, and not very far from the position first assailed. But if, indeed, they had really been seen there, they must have slipped away or concealed themselves in some cavity of the rocks, for nothing turned up.

After many fruitless efforts to trace the lost game,

the hunters were reluctantly obliged to confess that the case was hopeless. The hills were so thickly covered with jungle that marking down was almost impossible.

Vast quantities of wild figs and other jungle fruit rendered it probable that this part of the country was a favourite resort of bears; indeed, this was fully attested by the "signs" in every direction, as well as by the long gashes in the higher fruit-trees made by their claws, and marking those they were in the habit of climbing. But the underwood was so dense, and extended almost unbroken over so large a tract of country, that beating was out of the question, except in parts isolated from the main jungle.

"I am really put out by our ill-luck to-day," observed Mackenzie that evening. "I declare I would far rather have had a blank day altogether than lose the game wounded, and especially under the circumstances of the poor old she-bear's motherly conduct, as shown to-day."

"You are a tender-hearted old muff, Mac, for a six-foot-fourer," Norman said. "But I agree with you. I hope the old lady was not so very much hurt after all."

"What, you suppose you little chaps are the only ones with any bowels of compassion, do you?

Now I consider we big ones have more room for it. Don't you think so, Hawkes?"

"I have not given the subject a very earnest consideration," replied the individual addressed. "But it strikes me there may be a happy medium, such as myself for instance."

"Go to, you young scamp," replied Mackenzie. "You are worse than Norman. Now I contend that——"

"There are a great number of tigers, Sahib, about Mungaum," exclaimed the imp Baloo, who abruptly came up, delighted to be the first to communicate such valuable sporting information.

"Eh! What! How do you know, you child of Satan?" inquired the Highlander, thus interrupted in his argument.

"Sahib, Manajee is——" but here he too was interrupted by Sheik Hussein, who, regarding the more active Baloo with a severe expression, formally announced that Manajee the Bheel had arrived with khubber for their lordships, and was at that very moment seated outside. He ended by saying, that if it should be the Sahib's orders he would call him.

"By all means," was the reply; "fetch him at once." And the scantily-clothed shikaree was brought forward, salaaming as he approached.

He was a short, square-built little fellow in body, mounted on a good stout pair of legs, and altogether was a remarkable contrast to Rugonauth, who was long and thin.

A few folds of dirty cloth answered the purpose of a puggree; but so scantily, that his long hair stuck up in the centre, and escaped from between its twists. His small black eyes were deep set in his head, and appeared to shine from the roots of his hair. His arms were, for a native's, brawny, and their muscles singularly well-developed, though the bone was small. His bare chest stood prominently out, garnished with an abundance of hair. He seemed to carry his wardrobe round his waist, for that was girt with a thick roll of cloth which must have rendered his head envious of the greater attention paid to the protection of the stomach and loins from sun or storm. This, too, was now swelled in size by the addition of his upper garment; at least, to judge by the ends of some foreign piece of dress which dangled from it. Perhaps he had brought with him his holiday robe to do honour to the Sahibs. His blanket had, very possibly, also formed a part of his appointments, but laid aside when ordered to enter the presence of the hunters. His shoes, however, yet stuck up from his waistcloth, balanced on the other side by

the head of a small axe, whose handle was thrust through the folds of the cloth. With nothing very particular to speak of in the way of trousers, according to Western notions of that article of dress, the free movement of his limbs was unimpeded.

Such was Manajee—"a tree to tree guide," as he delighted to call himself; and, as the sportsmen had found him, an experienced and indefatigable shikaree.

"Well, Manajee, what has brought you here?" inquired Mackenzie. "Good news, I hope."

"Good news, cherisher of the poor," was the reply.

"Have any animals come down into the rivers?" next demanded Mackenzie.

"They have, your honour. Two or three striped ones are wandering about."

"Is this from hearsay, or have you seen them?"

"With my own eyes, one I have seen. The others' pugs I have come across. I tell no lie. This is my khubber. Sahib, I am the best shikaree in the country, and know every——"

"Yes—yes, I know," interrupted Mackenzie. "But have you tracked the animals?"

"Yesterday morning, Sahib. I tracked the one I saw, and seated him in a piece of jungle near

where the tigress met her fate. I am truthful. I have not tracked the others.

"Well, Manajee, I place faith in what you say."

A deep sepulchral voice from out of the surrounding darkness was here understood to intimate that another man had come in from a village near Mungaum, and corroborated this information.

"Who speaks there? Is that you, Rugonauth?" inquired Mackenzie of the dimly visible owner of the voice.

"Yes, Sahib, it is Rugonauth," answered that individual, as, thus directly addressed, he stood forward.

"You have heard what Manajee says. Do you think we should change our camp at once to Mungaum?"

"It is the Sahib's pleasure."

"Yes; but will it be well? Will the plan be good? Speak your advice."

"Sahib," returned the old man, who was dressed in an old shooting coat, and otherwise more fully and fashionably arrayed than his comrade, "if the tigers have come down into the rivers, they will remain if undisturbed. They will wait to eat of your worship's bullets. I have heard to-day that there are some animals near Bhilgaum; should it

please the Sahib's to try that place, then perhaps, if they escaped, they would go towards Mungaum."

"Where is Bhilgaum?" asked Norman.

"Right in the midst of the hills, Sahib. The camels could not get there, except by going a very long round; but a few coolies could take what was necessary for one night, if the Sahibs could do without a tent."

After a considerable discussion it was arranged that Manajee should return to Mungaum, and, with his fellow villagers, make more particular inquiries after the visitors to his district. On the morrow, should any bear be marked down, as it was confidently predicted there would be, the sportsmen would remain to beat for it. The day after would be Sunday, and on that day they could have a rest, and allow Rugonauth to precede them to Bhilgaum.

This arranged, the shikarees were dismissed to the pipe of friendship, and doubtless held long and pleasant discourse regarding past sporting events and those hoped for in the future, with their accompanying rewards.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Man seized—Another Spread Eagle shot—At close Quarters—Anecdotes—Determined Hostility of Bears—An Officer saved by the Natives—A Bear rampant—Narrow Escape of a Lady—A "dour" from Camp—A Bullock drove—Preparations for a Night Sitting.

THE hopes for the morrow did not prove delusive. A bear was viewed into some jungle considerably beyond the devotee's hut, past which the path took the hunters. The gosein was there, and with his scholar, or disciple, whom he was instructing in the rudiments of his devotional exercises, came forward to salute the gentlemen as they passed. But they did not linger there, for they had yet a long way to go.

To each sportsman was assigned a separate spot overlooking a large tract of jungle; but either the beat was not so well arranged as usual or they were less fortunate, for the bear broke away through the beaters at a place unguarded by any of them, and, unfortunately, not without some damage to one man, who with a few fellows endeavoured to turn