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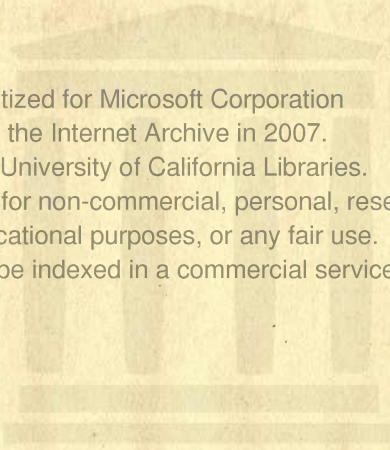
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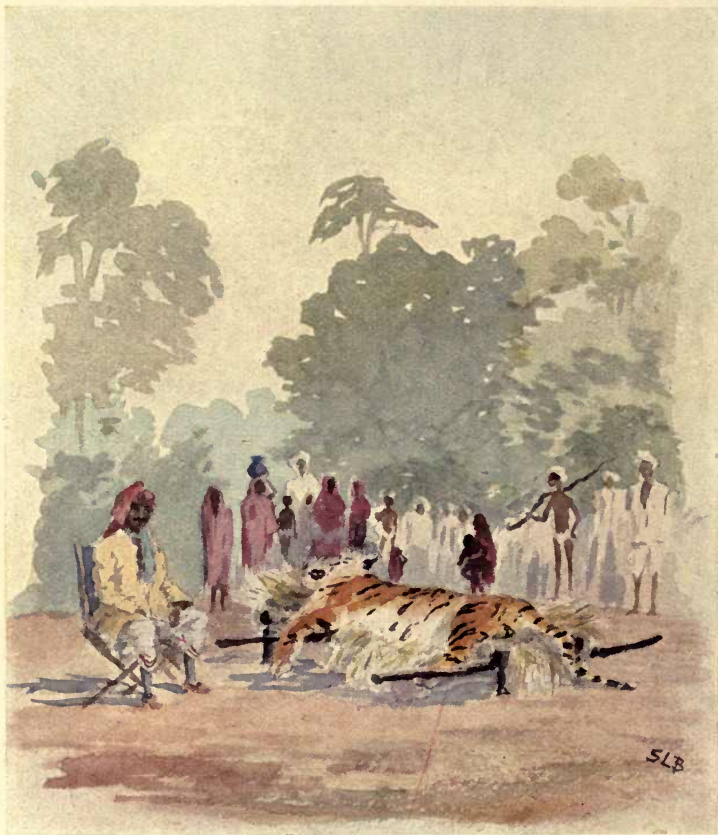


**DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SHIKAR**

DATE AND NIGHT OF BIRTH







A SUCCESSFUL DAY

*From a water-colour sketch by the Author*

**DAYS AND NIGHTS  
OF SHIKAR**

**BY MRS. W. W. BAILLIE**

**WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY THE AUTHOR**

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of said County at [illegible] this [illegible] day of [illegible] 19[illegible].

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**DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SHIKAR**



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## I

### THE FIRST PANTHER

**F**OR the first few years that my husband and I were in India I had most extraordinary bad luck in every way in shooting. I sat up night after night over kills to try and get a leopard. I never saw or heard one. I went out with parties tiger-beating, under really favourable circumstances, the beat sometimes arranged by an Indian prince, sometimes by a sahib, and I was generally given the most likely place. But though I heard an occasional bang to right or left, nothing ever came my way. I was beginning to grow rather despondent about it.

There were several thieving panthers at Mount Abu. At that time we were taking care of a little brown spaniel, Flirt, for a friend. One night when we were at dinner she ran round to the back of our quarters and stood in the veranda where the light from the cookhouse fell on her. Servants were going backwards and forwards with dinner and the butler was bringing something from the cookhouse when he saw a panther spring into the veranda, snap up poor little Flirt and go off with her. I tied up a goat outside and sat hidden in the veranda night after night, as long as the moon endured; but the panther was too wary for me.

B

Some weeks afterwards, when we were packing up to leave the hill, a friend put us up for the night. My husband and I chained up our dog, Banjo, a fat, smiling thing who called himself a terrier, to the heavy zinc tub in the bathroom and closed the outside door. In the morning he was gone. We found the chain broken and the door ajar. The panther must have pushed his way in. As we were leaving for Deesa that day, we could not try for our revenge. But a friend next door tied up a goat that evening and went out to dine. When he returned late at night, the goat had just been killed, and he saw the panther glide away. He sat up for a few minutes watching, from his window, when back came the animal for his feed, and we were delighted to hear afterwards that he was slain.

I wasted many more good nights, that I might have spent better in sleep, in vain attempts. I did manage to shoot one tiger in a beat. He came slowly, creeping on, dragging himself along the ground and trying to look as if he were not there. I was up in a *machan* and, as I put up my rifle and shifted my position, a branch of the tree caught my big pith helmet and knocked it off my head. It went rattling down with a clatter among the dry leaves. The tiger stopped and looked and then glanced up and saw me. His stopping gave me a good chance of a shot. He rolled over, got up, and only went a few yards further, when he died. I was with my brother, Herbert, and he had very nobly, I think, given me the shot.

This was very nice, but I did not feel the joy of



triumph that the first panther gave me when I began to go out altogether on my own account. And another thing was, I dare say, that he took so much getting.

We were stationed in a much cultivated part of the Deccan, with no jungle anywhere round worth speaking of. A poor place for big or small game.

A village man, who called himself a shikari, came in one day in May with the news that a panther had been doing much damage among the villagers' flocks, and would I go out and shoot him. There had been a goat killed that morning, and I must go out at once. I asked him where the place was and how far away.

"Near," he said.

"Three miles, six miles?"

It was farther than that. I brought the map and looked it up, and suggested thirty miles. (It was nearer forty I found afterwards.) He thought it might be, but it was still "near."

"You must have done very quick time to come in thirty miles by midday, after finding the dead goat."

He had to admit the goat was killed the day before, but was very insistent about the necessity of coming out soon; so I settled to go, told him to go back again and make arrangements, ordered a cart to send out the small tent and a servant, and went out myself in a hired tonga with two little ponies.

It was in the middle of the hot weather and we did not travel very fast. After about thirty miles the tonga man said that he had orders to turn off

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the road at that point. So we drove on some distance over bare fields. Then he pulled up and said, as well as I could understand, that he had lost his way and could go no farther. He talked Marathi, and I knew only a word or two of that language, but I made him understand that he was to go to the shikari's village.

There was no village to be seen and he did not know even in which direction it was : besides, the ponies had done enough.

By this time the sun had set, out got the driver, unharnessed his ponies and said he was going to find them water. Of course they must have a drink after that long hot march, so I told him to go, thinking he and his ponies would be back soon. But he never did come back, that is, not until the next morning.

I sat and waited for some time, then darkness came on, and beautiful stars shone out, but there was no moon.

I ate some sandwiches and drank some claret, which was very soothing ! and when that was over, I thought it seemed a pity my night's rest should be spoiled by any *tonga wala*, so took the cushions out of the cart, put my guns under my head so that they should not be stolen, and soon was fast asleep.

In the middle of the night I was awakened by a bright light shining in my eyes, and three men were standing round me with a lantern. It was the *patel* of the village for which I was bound, and his servants. He said he had heard that I was there and came to see that I was all right, as there was a party of dacoits on the other side of some small hills near, and I had

much better come back with him to the village, where I could have a charpoy to sleep on.

I thanked him for coming, and said I was very comfortable where I was, and would come in the morning.

He squatted down on his heels and began to talk :

“ I have not seen many white sahibs, but I knew one very well, sahib.” As a rule, I found the Indians in the country parts do not call a woman “ mem-sahib,” as our servants always do. “ He was a missionary and was a very good man. He used to give us medicine, or dress our wounds at any time, day or night. Whenever any one went to him for help he was always ready and kind and in a good temper. And we talked among ourselves and said, ‘ If this is the Christian religion, then it *is* a good and great religion, better than ours.’ And we thought and wondered about it, whether we should join him.

“ Then he had to go away and another sahib came. He was very different. He often lost his temper and got very angry. He was a *gussa wala*. Then we said, ‘ No, this is no religion for *us*, no better than ours.’ ”

It was very amusing to hear his ideas on the subject. He went on and told me a good deal about his religion which was very interesting. They had a holy man of their own a long time ago. He was so good that when he died both Mussulmans and Hindus built a temple to him on a hill, and both worshipped there, and did so still.

I got rather sleepy at last, and said we would finish our talk next day, so he went away leaving



two of his men to keep watch over me. Next morning the *patel*, pony man and shikari came early and I drove to the village, where my servant had already arrived.

The shikari was disappointed that I had been too late to sit up over the goat and so missed a good chance. However, I sat and watched until dark that evening. Nothing happened and I began to think there was no panther there and that I had been "had," just to bring a little baksheesh to the village. I drove home, but, before starting, the shikari said he should not give up the hope of killing the panther and would come and tell me when he saw his tracks again.

About a week after this he came. Another goat had been killed. Would I come out? I thought not. He begged me to come as the panther was causing them so much loss among their flocks.

I thought I had been rather a fool to go on the previous occasion, as I was told in the Station by those who knew that it was most unlikely I should find any panther in this district. I was lazy, and it was grilling out in camp. So I hedged, and said, "Go to every sahib in the Regiment and Indian Regiment, and if no one will go, I will." Two days afterwards he came back. "Some sahibs won't go; some sahibs can't get leave; and mem-sahib said she would go if no sahib would come."

I did not start in quite such a hurry this time, but sent the servants and kit and a horse on over night. Then I drove out in the early morning, found the horse waiting half-way and cantered on. The tent

was pitched in a grove of mango trees; it was a beautiful camp with lovely shade not far from the village.

Bumps and Bristler, the spaniel and terrier, had been brought with the cart, and after the sun had risen had been allowed to run alongside. I was playing with them and was rubbing Bumps down the back, when he wrenched himself free and screamed with pain. I looked, and could see nothing to account for it, so asked the boy what was the matter. He said that when the spaniel was running with the cart, the sun was very hot and that the dog dropped down unconscious as if he had had a fit. He was put back in the cart and gradually recovered. Afterwards, a long deep blister appeared down the length of his back, and all the hair came off, leaving a scar for life. The veterinary surgeon told me it was a case of sunstroke and he thought that the dog would certainly have died, had it not been for the healing relief of the blister.

At night both dogs seemed uneasy. The horse was stamping, and I woke up hearing the servants talking. They said there were some terrible animals crawling all over their legs and biting them, and that no one could sleep. I, being off the ground, in my camp-bed, was free. There was no help for it until morning, except that the dogs were called on to the tent carpet, where they seemed fairly content; but the servants and horse suffered badly.

When dawn came, we searched about to find out what these insects were. We had not far to look. The ground was simply alive with them—things



that looked like wood-lice, almost covering the ground under the mango trees. Beyond in the open there were none. I have never seen or heard of the ground wood-lice anywhere else.

The friendly *patel* was called and I told him it was impossible to stay in this spot; we *must* have shade, and the only shade to be had was in this mango tope. The servants could not bear themselves; the horse was stamp, stamping all night long, and sleep was impossible.

He thought for a time, and then said :

“ Will the sahib come and live in the temple? ”

“ *May* I live in the temple? ”

He thought I might, but the several heads of the Hindus and Mohammedans would have to be consulted; he was one among them and would give his sanction. There was a hasty conclave and there were one or two small points to which I was asked to agree, and then, in a few minutes, the whole camp was shifting up to the temple.

The temple was a big building with enormously thick walls, standing on a hill with a long flight of steps to climb up to it—easy steps, but many of them. Shelters were made for the horse and servants below, close to the village. My bedroom had open archways and carved ornamental window frames; and the dining-room was anywhere in the spacious, open, centre court where the shade happened to fall.

And so it was that ground wood-lice obtained lodgings for me, and the dogs too, in a combined Hindu-Mussulman temple!

When all things were settled, we turned our

attention to the panther and I sat up till dark over a goat. He came after I had left, and killed. We had a beat next day and he was seen for a second in some prickly pear and then disappeared into a cave.

The same thing happened again on the following day. The beaters were very bad, they huddled all together in a pack so that the panther could go where he liked. I called them up and gave them a short harangue.

“Those who are afraid can go, and need not come again as long as I stay here. Those who want to stay must obey orders and beat as I tell them. They will receive baksheesh if they beat the panther to me.”

All the Marathi people melted away, and there was only left one family, a big one, of people belonging to the Bhil tribe, whom I had noticed before as being very staunch. There was a very old man who looked the great-grandfather of the family, very thin, almost a skeleton, aged, I should think, about eighty; some men, women and children of all ages, and one woman with a small baby carried on her hip. They were ready for anything, and determined at once to try and drive the panther out of his cave. It took a long time to make a start and I found it fearfully hot standing out on burning rocks with absolutely no shade. I tried sitting down, but jumped up again very quickly, the ground being like hot bricks. The shikari tied an old bit of cloth he was wearing on to a cactus bush to give me shelter from the sun, and I squatted down under it

and poured water from my drinking bottle over my head and down my back; but it was grilling all the same.

The Bhils started off from different points towards the cave, creeping through cactus and prickly pear scrub where they could. The panther was lying outside the cave and, from my point of vantage on the opposite side of a wide deep ravine, I saw him for the first time, creeping along, but only for a second, and then he disappeared under bushes making for his cave. A Bhil woman went up a tangled narrow path, the only one that led to the mouth of the cave. She took with her a bundle of dry grass which she placed inside the mouth of the cave and then set fire to it in order to smoke the panther out. I did not at first realize what she was doing, but when I understood, I shouted to her to come back from her dangerous position; she would not stir, however, until she had got the grass well alight. She was enveloped in smoke which blew the wrong way, towards us, so did not do much good, but not till then did she come away.

The panther may have had another outlet, or he may not have liked the smoke, for next morning the Bhils discovered, by some tracks, that he had gone off to another nullah in the bare hill where there was no place for him to hide. They said that this time we should surely get him. I was posted on a small stone a foot or two high (for safety!) on the side of the hill. The Bhil family climbed to the top, and then beat the nullah down towards me. The panther was at home. He tried to climb



the hill, so they told me afterwards, and get away over the top, but was driven back by shouts and showers of stones.

When I first saw him, he was some distance below me, galloping round a slope, off towards his cave again. I waited for a space clear from undulating ground and rocks and took my shot. He spoke, but galloped on, untouched as I thought. I was on the point of turning round on the shikari and telling him that his *bandobast* was rotten, for how could I hit a thing travelling at that pace so far away? Then it struck me that I was still more rotten not to fire again. During this small space of time the panther had done another twenty yards or so. I raised my rifle, but before I could fire again over he went, head over heels, rolling down the hill, stone dead.

I was never, I think, so pleased at anything before. And what a fluke! We measured and found that he was over 120 yards away, and I might have shot another forty times and never have hit him once.

The shikari and Bhils salaamed to the ground and laid their heads on my feet. Then, as I tried to walk down, they lifted and moved my feet for me, which made progression rather difficult. Several of them ran on ahead up to the panther, not staying to throw stones at him from a distance to make sure that he was really dead. I told them how well they had beaten—so they had—and what a good *bandobast* it was to have managed to beat an animal over that difficult lie of country anywhere near me. We

measured him—7 ft. 2 in.—and they carried him back to the village to be skinned.

That evening we had a village concert in the courtyard of the temple. The schoolmaster asked if the villagers might come up to hear my music! I had a banjo which always comes out camping with me, as often after dinner the flies and insects are so troublesome, swarming round a light, that one has perforce to sit in darkness. Then I strum on in the dark till bedtime.

Of course I said that the schoolmaster and the villagers could come up, and quite a little gathering of men and children assembled; the children stood in the archway. The men did not think much of my performances, however, and soon suggested that they should give me some of their own music. The schoolmaster said he would sing an English song. I believe he did not know any English at all excepting the words of his song, which were as follows :

“ God made the sun that shines so bright ;  
 God made the moon that shines at night ;  
 God made the stars to give us light——”

I forget the last line : but he sang sufficiently in tune for me to gather that he started on the top key-note and descended the scale to the octave below, which was repeated for each line. He burst into loud fits of laughing at the end of each line, and I joined in. I encored him and we had it several times over. He was the *primo donno*, as it were, the other performers not doing great things.

He asked as a favour if I would spare him a bottle

of soda-water, so some was ordered and was brought in a glass. "No, not like that," he said. "I want to take it home." So it was poured into a black bottle, and next day he told me that he had drunk ten drops and had given two to his small daughter and that they both felt much better. He said that he intended to continue this treatment daily!



## II

### CHAMBA

**M**Y husband had three months leave due to him, and we decided to spend the time in Chamba, in the Himalayas, provided we could get permission from the Raja. He kindly gave us leave and his brother lent us a pony and a *dandi*, to help us along to Kukti, where he advised us to go.

At first all went well, for the road was good. It ran alongside the Ravi river, between very steep hills, and we had a couple of days marching in ease and comfort. Then it grew worse, and was washed away in places. At last we came to a bridge totally wrecked by a torrent, and after that there was no road at all. The pony could go no farther, and the *dandi*-men could go only with difficulty, even with the *dandi* relieved of my weight.

The pony was sent back and we began to climb fearfully stiff hills, or rather, mountains and precipices: up one, down another. There was hardly a flat spot on which to set one's foot for miles, and the Bunker dog, our terrier, had often to be carried. At last, very late in the day, we reached a village called Chitrari, and the Chitrari-ites advised us to pitch our tents in a cow-yard as it was the only level place—about 9 ft. by 3 ft.—on the hill! It did

not strike us as being very clean or sweet, and we walked on a few steps through a gateway which led into a temple. We were told that we might pitch a tent in the courtyard; there was only room for one, and it was put up close by a large image of Devi. He was a handsome god, made in brass, and he wore a red petticoat. At sundown the villagers saluted him with lights and bells and wild blasts from a big horn. The worshippers arrived *before* the musical sounds began, and did not need to be called by the sometimes pitiable ding-dak of two cracked bells, such as one often hears in England—which makes one pause and think. Theatres or the Sunday Queen's Hall Concert do not need bells to call *their* congregations.

We asked the *lambardar*, the village squire, how far it was to our next camping ground, and if it was a bad road. He said it was near and the road fairly level. It *was* near—about a mile as the crow flies—and level for about ten or twelve yards. Then down we went, twisting and turning about, another almost perpendicular hill, and we struggled along from seven o'clock until four. When, dead beat, we reached our destination and turned round, there was the village of Chitrari on the opposite mountain, looking so close that we might almost have chucked a stone on it.

On our arrival it began to rain, and Will, my husband, and I took refuge in a gentleman's veranda and sat on a muck-heap—I can call it nothing else—in which Bunker at once rolled.

The kit came in very late, and no wonder, but our

marvellous cook, wet through, arrived smiling and at once began his preparations for dinner. Rum John—his name is Ramzān Khān, but he says that sahibs always call him Rum John—is really a remarkable man: however long or trying the march, or whatever the weather, he came in smiling, set to, did everybody's work and got work out of the coolies as well. He was quite a lesson to us as we grouched at the difficulties of the road: and we had been advised to go to Chamba, "as you can get some shooting and also have a perfect loaf if you want." But, as Will remarked, "Half a loaf is better than no bread."

Dinner came, and our best chair—which had a *cushion* on it too—went down with a crash, and Will sat on the floor. He had to sit on his photograph camera after that. Then we found that the coolie who carried my bed had broken one end off it: it was not very safe, but carried me that night. Another march and yet another and at last we reached our permanent camp, Kukti. We calculated roughly that if we had never unclimbed all the hills that we had climbed, we should then have been at a height of 340,000 feet. But, as a matter of fact, the pocket barometer only registered 7850 feet.

It began to snow, but Rum John still smiled and showed his face at the tent door. His face had been flattened and his nose broken by a kick from a horse when he was a syce—he had been everything, I think. He came to say that he had bought a sheep, but that he could not buy any fowls now, as the



people in the village were Hindus and it was against their principles to keep fowls. He mentioned also that he was unable to get eggs! And were we ready for dinner? We were.

We had heard something frizzling and sputtering on the fire, and judged it to be mutton; but, when dinner came, it turned out to be a fowl that we had brought along with us. We had noticed it the day before. It was a black fowl with pink eyes and red about the gills, and we thought it must be an oldish and knowing bird, as it waited until no one was looking, and then started off and dashed down the hill. Some one noticed it, however, as it sped away, and the cook and some coolies dashed off in pursuit and captured it, after a stern chase, some few hundred feet down. We did not realize how very old he was until we began to eat him!

At Kukti we found our two shikaris, Fuffia and Punchi, waiting for us, and we also found some lovely violets and asked the *lambardar* to send a boy to pick a few for us. He said that if we could wait until the next morning, he would send three or four men out for the day to gather some, so great was his desire to please the sahibs.

After reaching our shooting ground, we spent eight or ten days making long tramps over the hills after black and red bears and *kart*, as the wild goat is called in Chamba. We saw several at a long distance but never anything within range.

Rum John, ever mindful of our comfort, came to us with the suggestion that we should tell the shikaris whether we wanted skins or horns, give them the

guns and send them out at 3.0 a.m. Then we could get up and have our breakfast comfortably and stroll out to meet them about midday and see what they had shot! This was quite a new idea and one that had never occurred to us, and we asked him if he had just thought of this scheme. But he said quite simply, "No, some sahibs do it."

We had a good deal of bad weather, rain, snow and mist at first, and then, at last, came a beautiful fine morning and we were up before dawn. We always went shooting in different directions, and on this occasion Will went off with Punchi ibex-wards, and Fuffia took me to a place where he said that *kart* were always to be found.

We climbed for some hours, and then I sat down for a rest and ate some snow while Fuffia and his coolie went on to look over one or two spurs. I had never seen a *kart*, and as I sat there I noticed an animal, that I can best describe by saying that it had golden hair and four woolly legs, run along the hillside. I saw the coolie far away running in my direction, so I started to meet him. Fuffia had told him to say I must come at once, and quickly, as there were forty *kart* in sight.

I joined Fuffia, and we crept along very cautiously on tiptoe, peeping over rocks and round corners. I expected to see something a mile away, as I knew Fuffia's methods, but he was trembling with excitement and his voice was shaking. He pointed suddenly and pulled up. There were a dozen or more *kart* feeding about four hundred yards below us on a grass slope.



We were standing on a very steep hillside, where some young pine trees were growing, and it was covered with long, extraordinarily slippery grass. It was a fine place for a stalk, as all we had to do was simply to sit down and slither. And slither we did, down that grass, at about twenty miles an hour, hidden by the trees, and stopping ourselves when we could by catching hold of branches. All the same we did it fairly quietly.

When we were about a hundred yards from the flock, we pulled up, though with difficulty, and Fuffia gave me the rifle. He pointed out the biggest male, and as there was no place to stand level, he held my leg so that I should not slip. I felt him still shaking with excitement, so, to try and get steadier, I rested the rifle against a tree, had a nice broadside shot—and missed. I thought at first that the *kart* was hit, as he half sat down (I had grazed his back), but he gave me time for a second shot, gave a jump, then fell and rolled several hundred feet down the hill. The other *kart* began to move off and I missed one, but managed to hit another who reared up and fell head over heels backwards, bumping and rolling over rocks, until he was brought up in a *nullah*, five hundred feet below.

We scrambled and slithered down to the *nullah*, and all the way Fuffia was salaaming, bowing his head till it touched the ground and saying a good deal about Kismet. He had that morning exchanged the coolie that he took with him previously for another, and he said the reason was, "It may be ruled by Kismet that we shall have no luck with Baja."

The first *kart* that I had hit had very good horns, fourteen inches, and he was a big, heavy animal, though the horns of the *kart* look rather poor for the size of their bodies: the other one was a small animal with horns of about ten inches. The skinning and cutting up occupied several hours. Fuffia was obliged to prop up the *kart* with stones, or they would have rolled to the bottom of the hill, about another thousand feet down. I went to windward and tried to sit on a bank of violets, but it was too steep to sit anywhere with comfort.

Fuffia's skinning knife was a piece of blunt iron, and I had not brought one, so the job would have taken still longer if I had not remembered my little picnic set. The knife was a sharp one and the men were very glad of it, but they said they had no use for the fork and spoon, so I ate my bit of mutton with them.

When the skinning was over and the carving up began, there seemed to be innumerable little tit-bits inside, great treasures of which I had no idea. These were put aside and afterwards carefully packed round the coolie's waist and tied by his rope, a thing always worn by coolies in readiness for carrying their loads.

By this time the men were rather thirsty, so a few yards of intestines were cut off, slightly cleaned out and given to the coolie, who was sent off a long way down the hill to find water and bring it back as soon as possible. A knot was tied at one end of this primitive water vessel, the other end was used for drinking, and it held a fair quantity. I was offered

first drink, but thought I would be satisfied with my little sketching water-bottle.

Fuffia managed to joint the animal very well with the small knife, and all the meat, except the titbits and the hind legs, was hidden under stones. The skins and horns, with the hind legs, we took along with us, and they were a pretty heavy load for the coolie, but, with the expectation of the coming feast, he did not seem to mind the weight.

We looked out for red bear on the homeward road, but did not see any.

After dinner we celebrated first blood of the expedition by drinking ginger brandy. This was kept for great occasions, as we had decided that fresh bubbling spring water was quite good enough for us at ordinary times.

More rain and snow fell, but the forest officer, who was travelling our way and came in and dined one evening, cheered us up by saying that it didn't *always* rain in these parts. Another fine day came at last. I went out and sketched while the shikaris looked about for game. The flies were very troublesome, and, as a very small boy was standing watching me, I employed him to wave a leafy twig over my head to keep them off. He was at first more interested in keeping them off my paint-box than off me, poking at them with a stick. But when he learnt that he might really flick hard on flies that settled on my face, he began to enjoy himself and my nose suffered more than the flies.

Will went out and saw a brown bear on some rocks above him. He watched the animal sauntering along



until it was hidden behind them. Then he and Punchi waited and watched until the bear, out of pure curiosity, stood up on his hind legs and peeped over a rock at them. Will could just see his head and that was all; but he got a bullet into that, and there was again cause for ginger brandy.

Some weeks of our leave passed during which we had bad weather and no luck. Several times we saw bear, and once ibex, in the far distance, and each of us fired a shot or two with no result. A bear was badly wounded, but got away in the forest and could not be found. Rum John was very sympathetic, and one day, when we were talking matters over with him, he said :

“ If the sahib will let me come out with him, he will certainly shoot something : good luck comes with me.”

The sahib said doubtfully :

“ But shall I get my dinner all the same when I get back? ”

Ramzān Khān smiled rather scornfully at the sahib's extraordinary want of knowledge of his character.

“ I am not an *idle* man.”

Nor was he.

They started off together and Will brought home rather a fine bear.

Another day, when we were going out together to look for ibex, Rum John asked if he might come too. So, armed with his black umbrella, water-bottle and bag, that went with him everywhere, he started with us.

After a long tramp we separated. Will made his way to the top of a snowy nullah, and I waited while the men went on a short distance to look about and report. There had been much miserable snowy and dull weather, but on this particular day there was a clear blue sky, and it was delightful to sit down in the sun to eat my breakfast. Even the butter on the hot, sunny plate ran about for joy. Rum John noticed this, and fixed up his black umbrella over me on a rock and brought me some icy cold spring water, and a bunch of rhododendrons and a green lily, which he laid down beside me and then went off to eat his midday meal.

Quite early in the afternoon the coolie came to say there was a bear with two cubs on the opposite slope. I went with him and we found Fuffia watching. The bear was a long way above us with her cubs, that were well-grown ones and quite able to do without their mother.

It was a very long climb up the mountain, but excellent ground for a stalk, a ridge of ground all the way hiding us completely from the bear. Fuffia was a terrible man to go with on a stalk; he always raced on ahead and never looked round to see if one was following. All he seemed to want was to get close to the animal himself, though I am sure that he would never have dared to go close enough to a bear to put salt on its tail. I had often told him that there was no sense in this, but that never stopped him from doing the same thing again. This time he was off as usual. He had disturbed several bears before in this fashion, so I sat down and made the



coolie wait too until Fuffia *did* look round. After watching him climb several hundred feet more, he chanced to turn—of course we dare not try to attract his attention by any sound—and then I signalled to him to come back. I made him hold one end of my *khud* stick, which answered two purposes, it kept him within range and helped to give me a pull up the mountain. We climbed at a good pace all the same, and when we reached what Fuffia supposed was the bear's level we crept on and looked over the ridge. The bear was feeding quietly about fifty yards away with the cubs playing round her.

I had panted along behind Fuffia all the way up, was very much out of breath, and simply had to wait to recover it. He, all excitability as usual, kept up a running fire of rather audible whispers:

“Now shoot; now wait; now he is coming nearer; don't shoot; now he is moving; shoot, shoot quickly; now he is behind a rock; don't shoot,” and so on, which was very distracting and a thing of which he never could be cured. It was in his nature, part of him.

While I was waiting, the bears all disappeared behind some rocks, the old one still quietly feeding. I had found my breath again by the time she reappeared from the shelter of stones and turned with her head straight towards me. I hit her in the neck and sent her over, rolling down. She got up and I shot her in the shoulder, which knocked her down again. She tried to get up and come for us, which made Fuffia run, but she was too badly hit to come more than a few yards. The young ones ran round

her, growled for a short time and then raced off into the rhododendron bushes. I went up close to finish her off, and just before she died, she turned her head and looked round for her cubs, her face puckered up and her mouth twitching in an absolutely human way, as if she was just going to cry; I have never seen anything so sad and pitiful. I can see it now, and I never shall forget it; ~~and~~ I *did* feel a brute. I settled to leave a mother with cubs alone in future: when I have shot one since, it was unknowingly.

I have on one other occasion seen an animal cry, and then it was not from sorrow or despair.

We had left two terriers, Bunker and Blaze, in the kind care of friends while we were in England on leave. Poor Bunker died, but Blaze survived and was brought along to meet us, when we got back, by our returning cook. She did not remember me at once, but kept close to Jeronimo, and I did not speak to or take any notice of her, just to see how soon she would know me. At last I spoke and she looked at me wistfully with shining eyes. I picked her up and her little body began to heave with long sobs, and tears rained down her face: she was so happy.

This little dog was with us at Mahableshwar, where there are generally prowling panthers to be found. It is a good place for them, as there is so much jungle on the hill and round the bungalows. We knew that there was a thieving panther going the rounds of all the houses near and we were very careful about shutting up the dogs at night.

Blaze was very much excited one evening as she had nearly caught a rat in the veranda, and she kept

on hunting about after it until bedtime. Eventually, she came into my room with the others and settled down into her basket—the sort of round open basket that cooks always use to take to the bazaar—and went to sleep. The door was nearly shut and there was a lamp, half turned down, in the room. I woke to see Blaze, with her eyes fixed on mine, looking over the edge of her basket. Of course the dogs often woke when I did and looked up with half an eye for a second; but this time Blaze was wide awake, and with her eyes steadily fixed on mine, she looked and looked. I rolled over to try and sleep, but was kept awake some time, as I could not help turning to look at her, and her eyes were always on me. Something seemed to be wrong, so I got up and looked to see what it was, but could find nothing. Then I spoke to her, and she understood that it was “Good-night”; but she did not seem to be satisfied, and her eyes were still fixed anxiously on me when I went to sleep.

I never saw her again. In the morning there was no trace of her. I do not know whether she went out after the rat again and was snapped up by the hill leopard, or if the creature pushed his way through the front veranda door and quietly took her off, or whether he got her at all, and it was most improbable that she should be stolen up there. We searched everywhere outside for her collar and *jhūl*—rugs the dogs wear on cold nights—but never found a trace of them nor of her, and the ground was too hard and rocky outside the bungalow to be able to see any panther footmarks.



Several years afterwards I was staying in the same house as a lady who was, I think, a spirit medium, and on one occasion she happened to be writing automatically. I might mention that she had never been in India. I said suddenly, apropos of nothing :

“ What happened to Blaze ? ”

Her hand tore along the paper and wrote : “ Taken away by a panther.” She lifted her hand from the paper rather angrily, and said :

“ Look here ! if you are going to write such stuff as this, I won't go on any more. Write sense or not at all.”

“ Oh, do go on just for a minute and see what is written,” I said.

Rather unwillingly, she put her hand down again, and I asked *where* Blaze was taken, in my own mind picturing the front veranda by the steps.

The pencil scribbled the answer : “ From the back of the bungalow, close to the window where the padre always sits.”

There was a tiny room at the back that my husband used for his office and he always sat there.

Then I asked the writer :

“ What do you think Blaze is ? ”

“ Oh, I don't know ; I thought it was a racehorse, if I did think at all.”

As well as I remember there was a racehorse called St. Blaise who won the Derby, so I suppose she was thinking of that.

To go back to the bear after this long digression. In a very short time Fuffia and the coolie reappeared from I don't know where. Then I heard some one



panting up the hill, and there was Rum John with his black umbrella, looking very warm, but smiling as usual. He made salaam and said, by God's great goodness we had secured a bear.

"Thanks to Devi, we have killed our bear," Fuffia said.

The cook said it was Kismet. Fuffia said that the night before he had promised a sheep to Devi if he gave us sport.

"Perhaps God in his goodness will give us another one, on the way home," said Rum John.

"If Devi sees fit, we shall surely get one," retorted Fuffia.

Of course the *khansamah*, Rum John, is a Moham-medan and the shikari a Hindu, but on whatever other points they might differ, they both talked about Kismet.

Fuffia and the coolie could not skin or even touch a bear on account of caste, so I thought that perhaps the cook and I could give the carcass a start and let it roll down the hill; or we might send for low caste men from the village. But the *khansamah*, as usual, was prepared for any emergency; he opened his bag, took out a carving knife and set to work skinning. In about an hour it was all finished, and we started back with the skin, which, in that condition, the coolie was permitted to handle.

Devi did not see fit to give us another bear, and it was a sad homecoming, as I found Will, sitting in his tent door, with his foot up and Punchi and the servant bathing it. He had sprained his ankle badly. He and Punchi and Dass had gone to the top of the

snowy nullah and had seen two lots of *tringol*, which in Chamba language signifies ibex, and in starting after one lot, Will had trodden on a loose stone that rolled over with him. He walked a little farther, but soon found it impossible to get along, as his foot was so painful. He was carried home, over very difficult ground, terribly steep, with no path, on the backs of Punchi and Dass by turns. It was a wonder that they reached camp safely and before dark.

Will's foot was very painful all night and he had to stay in bed next day. Ramzān Khān was very busy; he borrowed some of our tools and soon came in bringing a crutch he had made out of the broken pole of the camp bed and a cross block of wood. It was nearly six feet high, but he cut it down to a more suitable length. Then he prepared what we thought was soup, in a pot. It was made of salt, opium and a small hot seed he called "sapine." He brought all these things with him from his own country, in case of accidents, he said. The soup he made was really a cure for sprained ankle. He dipped woollen stockings into it and fomented the ankle several times during the course of the day. He called the mixture "Brumtracy," said it was an English word and wondered that we had never heard it. We talked it over and asked him if it could be "fomentation." He thought it was!

After a few days the treatment was changed and Rum John brought in a dish of chocolate-looking stuff that smelt rather good. He used to make us marvellous things to eat with wonderful names, and

he looked so pleased with this one that I said I would taste it. He stopped me, saying it was a plaster for the sahib's foot. So the sahib had to sit in a chair with his foot in the sun and have the stuff laid on, and then sit quiet until it dried on.

All these cures had such good effect that in about a week's time Will had sufficiently recovered to be able to walk about again, do a march and make a very stupid joke about there being nothing Ramzān Khān't do!

I had a long shot at a black bear late one evening and he went roaring away into some jungle. The men were sure that we should find him the next day, as he seemed so badly hit. When we got back to camp, Punshi, who is an artist at tableaux vivants, acted, for the sahib's benefit, the events of the day—how the mem-sahib sat, how the rifle went off, how the bear jumped, what the bear said, and then he pretended to plunge away into cover—all in the most graphic manner; and he really roared thrillingly.

We had had no luck with ibex, so I went out to try for one, though we could not hear of any good heads in these nullahs. I sat down for a rest after some hours of stiff climb and Fuffia went off to one of his look-out spots. I could see him far away very busy, climbing from rock to rock. He whistled, then signalled to me to come up while he came clambering down.

There was a rugged hill running out in a point separating two nullahs, and I worked my way to this sort of bowsprit, where I met Fuffia, and he pointed



out a herd of about a dozen ibex moving slowly uphill towards us. We wanted to get to the spot where the nullahs joined before the ibex could reach it, as then, whichever way they turned, we might have a chance at them.

We scrambled down queer places and my feet hurried on much faster than the rest of me wanted to go. I kept on tumbling, couldn't keep my feet a minute, hung on to juniper trees to try and pull myself up, at the same time racing after the flying Fuffia, who, with the coolie, kept on tumbling down too.

We tried to work to the end of the bowsprit, but a precipice stopped us and we had to go some way round. The wind was right, but no doubt our mad career had disturbed the *tringol*. Two of the females saw us and warned the rest, and they began to make off, wending their way amongst rocks about 150 or 200 yards away from us. I fired at the biggest male I could see, and missed. Another stood for a moment and I hit him in the neck. I shot a second through the heart, and they both tumbled and rolled and bumped a long way down and landed close together. They were small horns, and, if I had known more about ibex then, I should never have fired at all.

It was a funny climb down. At every step we started avalanches of stones, and, if one clung on to one of these, it was almost sure to give way and go clattering below. Both the ibex were, of course, stone dead, but as Fuffia was cutting the head off the biggest one, it gave a loud baa, which so startled him and the coolie that they dropped it quickly



and jumped away. Clouds and mist soon rolled up, and it was difficult to find our way back.

The shikaris now proposed that we should go up to some very good *kart* ground, taking with us two days' supplies and travelling very light; they said that the place was very high up and difficult of access, and that we must leave our tents behind. We thought this a good scheme, but the weather was so uncertain that we did not like the idea of going tentless. They told us the road—there *was* no road, only a sketchy path at times—was so bad that the coolies could only carry half loads and that tents were too heavy to take. Fortunately, however, we insisted on taking our two sleeping tents with us, and the cook's *chuldari*, and they were divided up into light loads; but we took as few things as we could possibly do with.

The shikaris knew of one spot where we might find enough level ground to pitch the tents, so we made a start on a nice fine day, leaving servants, with most of our belongings, to march some miles along by the river and wait for us to join them after our shoot.

We reached our camp in time to settle ourselves before night came on. It was a curious place to choose for a camp. There was just space, and only just space, enough for the tents on a bit of sloping ground; behind and above us was a big high rock, and in front and below was a precipice cut by a waterfall—a sheer drop for hundreds of feet. There were high cliffs on each side, and when we were encamped we had to look about to make out *how*

we ever got there. We saw a good many *kart*, big and small, feeding on the slopes above the cliffs, and we looked forward to the morrow.

But the morrow never came, that is, not the morrow we wanted. After dinner it came on to rain in torrents and it poured all night. It was pouring in the morning when we got up and everywhere around us was enveloped in thick clouds, and we could only see for about ten yards. The rain continued all day. In the evening the clouds broke for a few minutes and we could still see the *kart* feeding; then gloom again.

It rained for 94 hours without a break. The shikaris and coolies had a miserable time. They tried to creep under the big rock where there was a little shelter, but water was streaming down the face of it and dripped on to them; they were drenched and cold and wretched. Will said that they might sleep in the bathroom of his tent, but as streams of water were rushing through our tents, besides a continual dripping inside, they thought they were better off where they were. Even Rum John looked serious after the second day of it, when he told us there was very little left to eat. He, too, was wet through and the *chuldart* soaked and dripping, and how he managed to make a bit of fire with wet sticks and give us hot tea, and other things, we never knew.

We called in the men next day and asked if we should give up the expedition and move down, or what was best to be done. They said it was impossible to move: the streams were swollen, the water-



fall a roaring torrent, and the track we should have to follow impassable. They dared not venture on it, especially with a load on their backs; and this, although they had finished the last mouthful of food they had brought with them. So we decided to wait.

The first night Rum John had given us roast leg of ibex for dinner. Will thought it tasted something like pheasant; I thought it was like veal. The next night we had réchaufféed leg; on the third, a hash was made; and on the fourth, what little remains there were went into a potato pie. The bit of soap we had brought with us had melted away and the cigarettes had run out. There was nothing for it but starvation.

Next morning the cook and the shikaris settled that, come what might, we must get out of our present quarters, and they decided that we must leave the tents standing and take only a little of our bedding, and perhaps a toothbrush. When the poor, starved, wet coolies heard this, they cheered up a little and each offered to take some light thing. Rum John packed up the most necessary of his cooking pots and the men were willing to take his tiny tent, soaked though it was.

The wooden hut belonging to the forest officer was below us on the far side of the river, and we intended to stay there for the night. We waited until midday in hopes of finer weather, but the rain was as heavy as ever; so we made a start, walking on a very slippery ledge, over long rank grass and undergrowth, which made the falling soft and pleasant; and we all slipped and fell many times.

The falling was wet too, but, as we were soaked through in the first five minutes, that made very little difference. Crossing a stream, one of the coolies fell with his load on the brink of a precipice, but was just saved by the next man, who caught him and pulled him up. He cut his foot badly.

After an hour or two of marching the mist cleared away, the rain kept on, but it became "beautifully fine"—for Chamba! As we crossed over a spur of hill, Fuffia dropped down on all fours and pointed, and we looked, and saw a *kart* standing out on a rock, perhaps eighty or a hundred yards away. Will, who had his rifle, knocked him over. The shot startled seven or eight others which seemed to have been taking shelter under the rocks. We shot four more, and they all fell about a thousand feet below. The rest ran off, down the face of the cliff to all appearance. It was marvellous to see the pace at which they got along and the jumps they made, for it seemed to us that there was no room for foothold anywhere.

None of the *kart* were good ones, but on this occasion we were only shooting for the pot, and we were glad of the chance of getting a good feed for the men, after their hardships, and also for ourselves. Next morning the coolies went out to look for the *kart* and bring them in. They found four of them, and of course there were broken horns and bones among them after having fallen from such a height.

As we marched down, we saw a tremendous waterfall which shot out from a cliff and fell across to the opposite hill, near the bottom of it, splashing up from the ground below and above the tops of the trees.



The flood was bringing over great rocks and trees with it and there was a sort of boom, boom, like the noise of big guns, going on all the time. The water was very brown and dirty, but it was a grand sight—and sound as well—and we stood and watched it for a long time.

Arrived at the bottom of the mountain, we made for the hut, but we found the river a rushing torrent and the bridge swept away; so the hut was no good to us under those circumstances. We camped a short distance away on grass, and Rum John had the greatest difficulty in starting a camp fire with wet sticks, wet matches, wet everything. He got a fine one going at last, and we took off our clothes, one garment at a time, to try and get them dry. The rain stopped at six o'clock that evening and we had a curious meal, called dinner, about ten.

The next morning the sun really did come out once more, and we sat in it and tried to dry our things. Some of the men went off to bring in the tents and others the *kart*. The *kart* expedition was the most fancied; but every one had a great feast that night.

Word was now brought in that it was no use waiting for the servants with the kit that we had left behind, as all the bridges for miles had been washed away and they could not get to us. We marched farther down stream and could see them quite close on the opposite bank, though that was not much satisfaction to any of us. I shot two gurrals on the way. One we retrieved; the other went roll, bump, tumble, down the hill, until it bounded over into the rushing Ravi river.

The next day's march was the worst we had ever done. We had ordered coolies to come: none arrived, so Will went on ahead, with Punchi, to Chobia, to send them back at once. About four o'clock in the afternoon an old man and two small boys appeared. The old man said that the coolies had all been sent off early, but had run away and hidden in the hills, as they would not face that road with loads.

Rum John waited to look after the loads and I went on. The road was a little narrow path at such an angle that one had to walk on the edge of one's foot all the way. There were also overhanging rocks to climb round, and the old man held my foot in cracks and safe places for fear I should tumble off, and where he himself found a footing, I don't know. We reached Chobia at last and found Will, who said that he had got there *somehow*!

The nice old man who had brought me safely to Chobia made us welcome to his cowshed (he would have given us his whole house if we had wanted it), lit a large fire in the yard, made us some black flour *chapattles*, and gave us some really nice milk. Then Rum John came in with the two small boys and the beds and a little bedding, which were put under the eaves of the cowshed, and we went to bed dinnerless.

We both spent a horrible night, as we were bitten to death by a sort of whity transparent midge that flew about and hovered like a butterfly. They were worse than mosquitoes, as they not only bit our hands and faces, but got down inside the sheets and bit us all over. They were poisonous little things—a sort



of sandfly, I suppose—they bit me on the eyelids, and in the morning they were so swollen that I could not see. There was also one flea. Moreover, in the middle of the night it rained heavily and dripped down from the eaves, so that we had to get up frequently and shake the water off the top rugs before it had time to soak through. It was not a very restful night, but still we could lie and think of our mosquito curtains so near—only on the other side of the Ravi.

At last, after some days' waiting, our kit was brought in, and the *khidmatgar*, with the heavier loads, managed to find a bridge and join us. He brought some flour too, and other food, also eight large yellow puff-balls wrapped in a dirty duster. He seemed so proud of them we thought it might hurt his feelings if we did not eat them; so we tried them and really found them quite good.

We had now to begin our marches back to Chamba, as leave was drawing to a close. We stayed for a few days at a place called Bassu. The day we arrived there it was raining hard and the chief man of the place asked us to use part of his house to put up in—a big wooden building with a large courtyard in the middle. It had an upper storey, and there my tent was pitched, in a large room open to the air on two sides: and Will's was pitched outside. It seemed funny to go upstairs to one's tent, but a good roof overhead was rather a comfort and so was dry ground underfoot. The entrance hall we used as a dining-room, and the village people took the greatest interest in watching us and seeing what we did and



how we fed, as the place was rather off the beaten track and sahibs very seldom came that way. One man asked Will if he might bring his wife and family from a distant village to *look* at him, as they had never seen a white sahib.

The village shikari came to us one day late in the afternoon and said that there was a black bear up a *jammu* tree, eating the black-coloured fruit, which was now ripe, and he had left a man to watch the bear and had come on quickly to let us know. I went out with him for about two miles and it was then growing dark. The bear had shifted his quarters, but we found him busily eating away up in another tree. It seemed funny to me then to shoot a bear at the top of a tree, as it was the first one I had ever seen up so high in that position. He was about sixty yards away, and he fell down as I fired, roaring loudly. We found him dead not far from the spot, and I said that he was not a very big one. The village people assured me that he was indeed a *very* large and old bear. I said that he might be five feet, but I thought not more. They did not agree with me, and the shikari said it was one of the sort that grows to be very old without increasing much in size ! I was not able to contradict that statement, as my experience of Chamba bears was limited.

The next bear gave us more excitement. Both Will and I went out on the following evening to the same jungle, which was covered with the fruit trees called by the villagers *jammu*. Will saw two bears and went after them, but could not get a shot, and

I waited with Nurrud, the shikari, who said that our best plan was to watch and listen for any crackling of branches or noise that the bear might make in climbing these trees. We heard one at a distance and crept along among wet bushes as noiselessly as we could. Suddenly Nurrud pointed to a tree only fifteen yards away, and there was a black bear, who had already seen us, climbing down as fast as he could, without making a sound. He was half hidden by leaves and I could not see him very clearly, but just had time for a hasty shot; he fell with a roar, and we heard him scuffling and grunting in the bushes below. As we heard nothing more, the men said that he was dead. So we went cautiously on and came on great pools and almost continuous spurts of blood on the ground and quite high on the long grass and bushes. An artery must have been severed, but one would not have believed that a bear had so much blood to lose.

We followed this track down-hill for some little way and met Will and his men, who joined in the search. The track led us to the mouth of a cave which was too dark inside for us to see anything. The men said that there was another outlet a few yards higher up, and Will and his coolie climbed up to watch that and to try and get a shot from that point. I was standing in front of the entrance and Nurrud was beside me with the second rifle. The men above heard a grunting and some one shouted that the bear was coming: and out he charged, straight for me. I hit him in the shoulder with a bullet from the 20-bore gun—which I find a handy



weapon on such occasions—when he was about a yard from me. That turned him, and he rushed past Nurrud, nearly knocking the rifle out of his hand as he brushed against it. He was so close when I fired, nearly touching the muzzle of the gun, yet he gave no sign of being hit—we found the bullet afterwards in the shoulder—but rushed on down-hill. Then I heard a loud report in my ear, and found that one of the coolies, who knew absolutely nothing about firearms of any sort, had fidgeted with bolts and safeties until he had managed to let off a spare gun he was carrying. It was a wonder that he had not killed some one.

We followed for perhaps a hundred yards to some more rocks, where Nurrud said he could see the bear lying, and that he still moved. It was now almost dark, and I could only see what I thought was a black stone. Will advised me to shoot at this, which I did. It turned out to be the bear, and he rolled over dead.

Next morning about two hundred people from all the surrounding villages came in to see and hear about the bears and to look at us! They were kept at a distance from our wooden palace, but still I think they had a good view and they were deeply interested in the way we ate our food. They were delighted to hear of the killing of the bears, since they did so much harm to their Indian corn before it was ripe enough to cut.

More rain fell and there were more thunderstorms as we marched back to Chamba. On the way poor Rum John fell forty feet from the path to the river,



down a very steep though grassy place. He said that he was there for three or four hours before any one found him. He hurt his leg badly, but in a few days he was all right again and as cheery as ever.

When I first went shooting in India, I used a D.B. '360 Express rifle, but this was said to be not heavy enough for my purpose, so I got rid of it and bought a D.B. '500 Express, black-powder rifle, and have done nearly all my shooting ever since with that. I am so used to it, though it is old-fashioned now, that I never want to change it, and it is light, only weighing a fraction over eight pounds—I used this rifle first in Chamba.

### III

#### A BELGAUM TIGER

I WAS staying with some friends—a Forest Officer and his wife—in camp, in the Belgaum districts, and having a very good time, but we could not succeed in bagging a tiger that was killing our buffaloes, and for whom we had tried several times in vain. The men all said he was a very big one and had lived in these jungles for years, but was far too wary ever to give a chance of a shot at him. Laximan, a forest guard, and a very keen shikari, said he had seen him, and his head was “so big,” measuring off about eighteen inches between his hands to show us the size. Another man spread his hands farther apart and told us *that* was more the size, and another still wider, so that the tiger grew every minute and his head was well over a yard across before they had finished with him.

Laximan said we should have a better chance of getting him in the hot weather, and if he could get his leave then he would go with me, if his sahib approved. When the time came my friend most kindly arranged matters about Laximan's leave, and also lent me his own tent, which was much larger than mine, for my sister, who had come out to visit us in India.

When she and I were leaving the railway to start for our little camp, I remember there was rather a difficulty in finding enough coolies to carry out our kit, one or two important loads being left behind for some hours; so that when we reached the place we were tea-less and dinner was very late. While we were waiting and hungering some coolies brought us in a dozen peahen's eggs that they had found as they were coming along. Unfortunately they turned out to be very much sat on; too much so to eat as eggs, and not enough to eat as boiled chicken: so we were no better off.

The men said they could not find the nest again to put them all back.

The march out had been very hot and poor spaniel Bumps felt the heat terribly. He ran from one bit of shade to another—and there was not much—and lay down under it with his tongue hanging out. I wondered what I could do for him to shield him from the sun's rays, till I thought of the pony's thin cloth, which I rolled up, laid along his back and then tied round him. It was a great success, and after that he trotted along in the sun quite happily.

After our very late dinner, which we got eventually, it was time for bed. May had the big tent with her camp bed put right in the middle of it, and I had my ordinary little six-foot tent. Bumps was chained to my tent pole for safety, to keep him away from any panther there might be prowling around, and lay under my bed. In the middle of the still hot night there was a crash, and down came the tent



over my head, and I was mixed up and weighted down with canvas and sheets and mosquito curtains, and had some difficulty in rolling on to the ground and burrowing my way out from under the ruins. As I did so I heard Bump's chain chinking as it dragged along the ground.

When I crawled out I saw, to my relief, in the bright moonlight and at a little distance, Bumps nosing along the ground and much interested in a trail he seemed to be following. I ran up and caught him, and then looked to see the tent. All the back part was standing and only the front pole knocked down, a peg or two pulled out with loose ropes hanging to them. I went into May's tent; she was sleeping soundly, so I woke her up and asked if she had heard anything.

"No, I haven't heard anything, but I think I woke and saw a dog or something," she said.

"What sort of dog?"

"A big dog; it walked through the tent and then all round my bed. Yes, it was a *very* big dog, I've never seen such a big one. I could only see a large sort of shadow in the dark; but I thought perhaps it might be the custom in India for big dogs to walk round one's tent at night, so I didn't bother and went off to sleep again!"

The ground was very hard and covered with short dry grass round the tents and so we could find no panther tracks close by when we looked next day. The only way that the village men could account for this was that a panther had made a spring at Bumps under my bed, knocked against the pole,

which fell, and of course released the dog's chain, and was so much surprised at the tent falling about his ears that he bolted.

Laximan came with news, a day or two afterwards, that a goat had been killed near the village, so there *was* a leopard about; we had a beat for him which was successful.

Reports came in from the village that the whole of the Kanara jungles were closed for five days and all shooting was to be stopped, as the then Governor of Bombay was marching through on a shoot. Now I was shooting mostly in Belgaum, although the camp happened to be in Kanara, so I knew I should be all right if I kept to the Belgaum side. Following on these reports came a Police Inspector and with him several sepoy; he brought a written order to say that no one was permitted to shoot in the Kanara district, within certain dates. I had seen in the papers the list of villages the shooting party would pass through, and as I was thirty miles from the nearest point, knew that I should not spoil the sport, and said so. The Inspector salaamed and pointed to the paper. I said I had a permit, but that did not seem to be of any use for the five days. Then I said, though my tent was pitched on Kanara soil, I was shooting in Belgaum district, and that I would shoot on that side for the time. The Inspector had done his duty, had no authority beyond his own district, so went away more or less satisfied; and left me hoping that the tiger with the face "so big" would not think fit to cross the boundary into Kanara until His Excellency's shoot was over.



There *was* a tiger kill : one of our buffaloes was taken and dragged away, and it happened to be on the Belgaum side, a few miles off. Laximan collected a hundred beaters and we started off. My shooting ladder was put up on rising ground that ran down to a nullah, and stood against a tree in the forest line—a clearing cut straight through the jungle, eight or ten yards wide—so that I could see right or left for a good distance. This cutting, funnily enough, was the boundary line of the two districts, and the ladder stood at a slant on it, though it was leaning against and tied to a Kanara tree. But I think I was within my rights by about a yard and a half !

The local shikari, Krishna, asked to have my gun to let off occasionally in the beat—which was a long one—there were awkward rocky places in it and patches of thick jungle, where a tiger might lie up, and he wanted to make sure of driving him out and forward. I gave it to him with some blank cartridges, and he and Laximan went off to start the beat.

I must have sat on my ladder and waited for two hours before I heard anything, and then there was a double report from the gun, and it was a long time again before there were sounds of shouting beaters. They were still a good distance away when I heard one or two soft crackles among the dry leaves ; and things began to grow interesting when one of the stops tapped a tree gently on my left, and soon after there was more discreet tapping on the right. Another crackle, and I saw a glimmer



of white through the bamboos; a few seconds more I waited with the rifle up to my shoulder, and a tiger's head, *the* head, appeared directly in front of me, from under some leaves at the very edge of the forest line. He stopped, and the very first thing he did was to raise his head and take a sweeping look up into the trees facing him. Almost before I saw him he saw me. He gave a snort and threw round his head: as he did this I fired, and he turned and galloped back into the beat, without a sound.

I felt quite sure that I had missed him, and was very sick about it: his head was the only part of him that I saw, and a bullet in that must surely stun him at least. The beaters all stopped, and the men in trees near me shouted to them to tell them what had happened, and of course they were all safely up trees by then, from where they could see ahead. Laximan and Krishna, when they saw all was clear, came on cautiously, running from tree to tree. Then came great hollaing and shouting from them all, and the bang of a gun, and I pictured how the unwounded tiger had broken back through them and gone off. Some of the men still crept on, but were quickly up trees when they heard an angry snarl and a rush: the tiger charged, but only for a very few yards. He had been lying about fifty yards from me, very badly hit, and then I believe he fell again. Laximan and Krishna, by some very circuitous route, came round to the back of my tree. They asked me if this was *the* tiger, the very big one. I told them that I had only seen his head, and I had missed *that*, and thought that he had

got out of the beat. They looked rather astonished and said they were quite sure he had not gone through the beaters or even tried to go through; that they had seen him lying very sick under a bamboo, and they thought not able to move. This was cheering news, very different from what I expected. They had come to beg for the rifle, as Krishna could see the tiger from the top of a high tree and he would climb up and finish him from there. I said I most certainly would *not* give them the rifle, as I was coming myself; and I told them to take away the branches that were fixed up to hide the ladder, so that I could get down. Laximan said :

“ If the mem-sahib comes it will put us all in great danger : we shall have to help her into a tree first, before we can climb, and if the *bagh* comes at us then we shall have no chance. If we try and put up the ladder, then we shall make more noise and it will be more dangerous still.”

This was quite true; I certainly could not run up a tree as they could, but still I wanted to go, and said I would go on foot.

Laximan said, his sahib had told him not to let me get into danger, and I was in his charge and he would get all the blame if anything happened; and also “ no promotion ” I knew he *meant*, though he did not say so.

So I gave them the rifle and some cartridges and after a time I heard them banging away. They came back for more cartridges : more bangs ! Then again they came; this time they said they thought



one bullet had hit the tiger, he had shifted his position and gone on a hundred yards. I absolutely refused to give them any more cartridges, and said I was going myself, so they pulled away the boughs hiding the ladder as I climbed down. I felt in my pockets and there was only *one* cartridge left. The men who were up trees shouted to say whereabouts the tiger was, and I went towards the place at which they pointed. When I got near I went down on my hands and knees and crawled up a small bank at the side of a nullah to look over. The tiger was so much the colour of the leaves and the yellow ground that for a moment I could not see him; but there he lay, at a few yards distance, with his back towards me. There was a moment of suspense, and I lay down and tried to take a very steady aim with my one cartridge, into the back of his neck, and fired. I suppose the bullet got the right spot, as he never stirred after it.

Laximan and Krishna, whom I had told to stay behind, came up, and after a short wait we all threw stones at the tiger and found he was quite dead. The men came swarming down from their trees, and we were really able to measure now, and find out the size of this wonderful head at last. He was indeed a fine tiger, very heavy and thick, and just over ten feet. He had clawed and bitten savagely at the tree above him and there were long deep scores torn down it, and teeth-marks, which he must have done in his fury, standing up on his hind legs and tearing down the bark; as the scores started from nine or ten feet high, and two of his



big teeth were broken too. Curiously enough, he lay within a few yards of the dead buffalo he had killed and dragged to that spot. Very little of it had been eaten, but its body was one living, crawling mass of rather long-legged, red spiders that were eating it, and that covered it an inch or two in depth.

The coolies cut down poles, which they tied together, to carry the tiger back to camp, and all these preparations took some time. As it was nearly dark I rode back to camp and sent out a lantern. About ten o'clock the tiger was brought in on his stretcher by ten or twelve men amid great shouting and yelling, while the remainder carried flaming torches which they waved round him. A goat had to be given to the village to be sacrificed to Devi.

When the tiger was skinned in the morning we found an old bullet wound below the elbow, quite healed up and healthy, which probably accounted for his looking up into all the trees the moment he arrived at the clearing.

The first shot had hit him slightly above the eye; and it seemed to me amazing that the blow did not even stun him and that he was able to canter back.

In the hot weather, another time, in the Dharwar districts, I spent some time trying for a tiger. He had killed a village cow and news had come in too late for a beat, as the place was a good many miles away. Mahomed, the keen forest guard, had put up a *machan* ready, and wanted me to sit up all night, which was a very hopeless thing to do for

a tiger, I always found. But as everything was ready I tried it, with no result. At dawn, when Mahomed and the Ranger came, they said they had ordered men for a beat, as they thought the tiger was still lying up in that jungle. He was; but during the beat a stop, to turn him, had clapped his hands loudly, and waved his pugaree at him, and the consequence was that he gruffled angrily several times and then came galloping past me. He fell head over heels like a rabbit when I fired, and I made a bad shot with the second barrel as he picked himself up and cantered off. We waited for a time, though Mahomed wanted to start after him at once; and the Ranger sent a man to the village to try and get another gun or two, but there were none to be had.

We started to track up and had a long hunt on the blood trail that we found, and we worked hard at it until dusk, when we saw no more blood, so had to give it up, and sad to say we never found our tiger or heard anything of him again. When I got back I was very glad of a bath, after a night in the tree and a hard day's work after the tiger, although the water was so thick with brown mud that it looked as if I had no feet, and I was certainly dirtier after it than before. All the grass was so dried up the cows gave no milk, and the patels of different villages near were very good in bringing in what they had of it in the mornings: tiny supplies, at the bottom of small brass bowls, which, all mixed together, would make about a cupful; and they had to bring it some miles too.



Another time in those jungles I wounded and lost a tiger. I followed him up to some big rocks where, from a pool of blood and the marks we saw, I judged he must have lain down. So it was with great caution that we approached, but the noise of our coming must have disturbed him and driven him on again and we lost his tracks. I had a most horrible cold, and fits of sneezing, when the beat was coming along, so probably the tiger heard me and it drove him away, as he gave me a difficult shot though he was within fair range.

The local shikari, Yellapa, brought in news that a buffalo had been killed and dragged a long distance, and there his murderer had had a good feed; close by was a pool where the tiger had gone to drink. Yellapa said he thought he could locate the tiger; and the jungle he was in was a possible one to beat, but a difficult one. We got seventy beaters and went out. There were not many good trees to which a hammock could be tied, as it required spreading branches to stretch it out. They tied it with the corner ropes all close together, so that it formed a tight sort of bag in which I could neither sit nor stand with any degree of freedom, comfort or steadiness. I felt as if I was in a pill-box with an unsound bottom.

Three chital deer were beaten close by my tree: one quite nice stag, one with horns in velvet and a hind. There was a long pause after they passed by, then I heard a very soft clap of hands, then very decided clapping on my right, so I had time to screw myself round in my pill-box, which I did



as quickly as I could, as a tiger came cantering past about sixty yards away. When he came to a fairly open place I took my shot, but he seemed to take no notice whatever of it, except that after two strides he gave a grunt, then he disappeared behind trees before there was time for a second shot. Mahomed and Yellapa came up with the beat and wanted to know what had happened. I said it was no good; I had missed; the *bagh* was too far away; it was an awkward shot; I couldn't shoot from that bag as I was not able to stand up, and so on—any excuse for my blundering when they had tried so hard to show sport. One of the stops then came up. He said the tiger had carried on for several strides after I fired, then he had nearly fallen, recovered himself and cantered on.

I had a youth with me, a police sepoy named Gopal, who was not learned in the ways of shikar: if I went out after small game, with the gun, he would point to a crow or a sparrow and say, "Shikar, sahib!" He had been told to climb up into a tree, which was behind me as I faced the beat, so as to see the tiger if he went by and mark where he went. He came up looking rather scared: he said the *bagh* had passed him within a yard or two, went on a hundred yards and fell just below a bank. We went first to the spot where I had fired at him and there were deep marks of his claws in the ground—a thing one never sees in the ordinary footmark, when he goes along with the claws drawn in. Then we went on to the place from which Gopal had seen him, and I said:

"Were you up this tree?"

"No, sahib, I was on the ground."

"What were you doing on the ground?"

"I didn't want to get into a tree: I wanted to see all that was going on, so stayed below and looked about to see what I could."

"Then where were you when the *bagh* came?"

"I jumped behind this bamboo as he came."

"And the tiger, where was he?"

"Oh, sahib, he was a very big *bagh*, and he went here," and Gopal touched the ground close to us, where we saw tracks.

"And what did you do as he passed?"

"I was very much frightened and trembled a great deal, and crouched down under the bamboo."

"Did the *bagh* see you?"

He was in much too great a fright to know anything more, he said, but as soon as the tiger had gone by he had certainly watched it all, and he was sure that he saw him fall near the bank of the nullah. I thought this was all his fancy and that he was far too much frightened to watch anything; but he knew so little about shooting generally that I am sure he never realized the danger he had been in. Yellapa and Mahomed were immensely amused.

We began the hunt. It was an open piece of jungle that we were coming to and the shikaris and I rather spread out so that we could see on all sides as one of us followed up the tracks. It is always an exciting job this following up, and one of hope and expectancy. Suddenly Mahomed turned tail



and ran back to me with a broad grin on his face, saying, "There's the *bagh*": and he pointed out a striped back just at the place where Gopal said he had fallen—at the top of the nullah bank. He was lying down eighty or a hundred yards distant.

I fired and he rolled over, but came back again to his first position, when I shot again. He tried to get up, and I saw a big head raised, with the mouth, a great red mouth, very wide open. I managed to get a bullet into his head, which rolled him over, below the bank. We went rather wide of him, crossed the nullah and came up from the far side. Yellapa did not wait a single minute to make sure that he was dead: he rushed up and pulled him by the tail.

It was a good tigress, but with a very short tail, and measured 8 ft. 8 in. and was enormously fat. The first shot had gone into her chest and lungs. Then with joy and shoutings she was carried home on the ladder.

Just before I had to leave these jungles a chital stag came tearing across a field in front of my tent, and dropped down a very steep-sided dry nullah, with a crash. As he did not appear again "Bumps Raja," as they call him, and I rushed up to see what had happened. The chital had fallen fifteen feet or more, had not broken a leg, as I had rather expected, and was running about in an aimless way at the bottom of this deep nullah, seeming rather dazed and unable to make his way out. He looked anxiously at Bumps, who was ready to go in at



him; and then five or six pi dogs (village dogs, any breed or no breed) joined in and tried to tackle him, but he kept them more or less at bay. The men came and we drove the dogs off, and found that the chital had been shot through the back, below the spine; he was quite knocked out by that and his fall. The men caught him and cut his throat very speedily, and they thought they were in luck's way, getting a good dinner so easily, and the dinner belonging to some one else too!—the man who had shot him.

I have often taken measurements of animals and afterwards of their skins to find out the difference between them, and if many inches are gained or lost.

I have found, say, a 10 ft. tiger skin will measure 12 ft., if stretched fairly in proportion to its width. But after being through the curer's and dresser's hands the length of the skin will be practically the same as the tiger when the first peg-to-peg measurement was made.

I found that a panther, which measured 7 ft. 5 in. immediately after it was shot, only came out at 7 ft. after it had been brought home and stiffness had set in.

We several times employed a Hindu taxidermist, living in the Bombay Presidency, for setting up heads, which, by the way, he did remarkably well. He sent us one or two of his advertisement booklets describing the kind of work he undertook, from which I give some samples. They are of rather

ancient date, and since Education Acts, and so on, have come in, he may have *altered* his style, though I do not think he can have improved on it. After his name, at the head of the page, came :

“ Undertaking works of Shotted by Sportsmen and Gentlemen the large and small games of all kinds of wild Animals Birds Reptiles, Fishes, etc.

#### CURING AND DRESSING SKINS.

Tiger, Lion, Lion-cub, Figor-Cub, Hyeana wolf, Senagle, Koklo, orix, Wallers. Black-buck, Tohe, wild-cat, fishing-cat.

Tigdig, badger, Managoss, rabbit, croker, Monkey, Kangano, Jackol . . . or any kind of small lovely animals' skins made into rugs.

DIRECTIONS.—The shot animal to be skinned well :—remove superfluous flesh and preserve the fresh skin with Preserving Powder, rubbing both sides, but mostly the flesh side. . . .

#### ANIMALS MOUNTED AND SET UP, WITH WHOLE BODY.

Tiger, Lion, Panther, etc., shot by sportsman and native Rajas, set up in natural posture, life-like in every artistic style as under : (1) Sitting, (2) Standing upright, (3) laying down, (4) jumping, (5) Playing, (6) Waring with a simultaneous furious stare, (7) walking into jungle, to search for prey, staying at once, expecting about into great rage, at fierce open mouth, (8) putting up a music instrument (into stomach) to produce a grouling sound from open mouth at extra charges, (9) with or without

the protector of glass case, (10) With or without gungle views into case. As per terms required.

Par. IV.—Heads set up at closed mouth, with full face, inserting eyes as tropical connecting skin or neck cut to hang on wall or to spread on ground.”



## IV

### IN THE KANARA JUNGLES

**I**N sitting up over live goats used as decoys, I was always greatly interested in watching them to see their behaviour when tied up and left to themselves; and I often pictured to myself how I should feel in their position. I used to attract their attention by voice or movement directly the men who tethered them had gone away, in order to try and ease their minds! But I came to the conclusion that they were not troubled by feelings of fear. A goat would bleat a little at first, nibble at leaves and any suitable green food that could be found for him, and then lie down to slumber. If a panther did come, the goat's death was practically instantaneous, that is, if the panther were not smitten down by a bullet before he had time to get a fair hold and finish his work.

On the occasion of which I am writing, the goat was tied up at only a short distance from the rest bungalow and within fifty yards of the high-road where bullock carts and shouting men were constantly passing. I had a hammock rigged up in a tree to sit in. It was a piece of sacking about five feet square, with ropes stitched along each side, and strong ropes at each corner which were tied taut to

branches to prevent sagging. It was light and handy, and also, given a suitable tree, easy to fix up. It was most useful and comfortable, either to shoot from or to roll over in and get a good sleep, as one was often glad to do after the moon had set. In this instance the hammock was fixed up and I climbed in, expecting to have a long wait, as the jungle was rather open and the place public, and I could see all the passers-by. But quite soon a monkey gave the warning, beginning to swear when he saw his enemy, the panther; several more joined in, and a red squirrel chattered angrily. They all had a great deal to say, so I was on the alert, especially when I heard stealthy movements among the dead leaves.

This time the goat was not asleep; he sneezed violently several times, stamped his foot as a challenge and ran back to the end of his tether. Some animal made a rush of a few yards and stopped dead—then another, and I saw a panther's head appear behind one of the big branches of my tree. One more rush and he was seizing the goat under the throat. The goat was standing, and the panther, almost lying flat, curled and wriggled his body like a snake as he made his attack. Before he had time to get his grip, I shot him in the back, between the two shoulders, and he only gave a gasp or two, opening and shutting his mouth.

The goat had not fallen, and after gazing at his dead enemy for a few seconds, he made a terrific rush and butted at him with sounding thuds. It was a long lean panther and measured 7 ft. 3 in.

Another time, in thick bamboo jungle, I tied up a lantern with a shade over the top, which reflected the light in a circle on to the ground and the goat. It bleated for a time, then lay down and went to sleep. It was a dark night and the panther came very late. I heard nothing until he sprang from under the ladder I was sitting on, and landed with a soft thud on to the goat, who that moment jumped to its feet. I heard a roar and a gurgle and saw a confused dark mass below as they rolled on the ground together.

By the light cast by the lantern, I could see well enough to get my shot, and killed him. To my surprise, the goat got up, looking, with its head funnily cocked on one side, the picture of amazement and satisfaction. It stood over the body with its nose on the panther, sniffing at it.

I climbed quickly down from the ladder and ran up to feel if the goat was trembling or if its heart was beating fast. Not a bit of it! It was quite normal and self-contained, so to speak, and it trotted along home seeming perfectly content. Its wounds were syringed and disinfected, but the next day it could not swallow properly and it died a day or two later.

In the Kanara jungles there were very few tigers compared with the number of leopards, but there can be some excitement with leopards at times.

I was camping in a place called Lakoli, where the patel of the village was a very sporting old man and quite a character. One morning word was brought to me that a pig had been killed by a tiger



in the jungle, and would I make arrangements to tie up there. I thought it was better to beat straight away, so the *patel*, quite keen, sent on at once to collect coolies. He drove me out in his bullock cart as soon as I had had my breakfast.

On the way out, a man came to meet us with fresh *khubber*, which was that the pig had been killed the previous day, but that only about an hour before a cow had been killed in a field, in broad daylight. The cowman saw the whole thing. It was a panther and not a tiger; he had drunk the blood from the cow's throat, then left her and seized her half-grown calf and had bitten through its shoulder, but it had somehow managed to escape.

Nevertheless, we beat. It was quite a small stretch of jungle and had been burnt, all the grass and undergrowth being in ashes. The *patel* and I settled we would have a silent beat, as the ground was so clear and open, and I did not want the panther frightened and made to come galloping by.

The beaters were not long in coming. In the distance I saw, from my *machan*, something yellow slip by which the man said afterwards was a chital stag. Then the monkeys swore and chattered and I soon saw a big panther appear from behind a burnt bamboo clump, stealing along the far side of a nullah very quietly about forty yards away. He stopped for a second to look about him, and was just moving on again when I shot. He fell over all right, but then sat up like a dog and was starting to crawl off when I gave him the second barrel. He went away as fast as he could, one hind leg dragging

on the ground behind him and he was soon hidden by bamboos. The *patel* and some men had come up, and I got down and followed him up at once, thinking he was so badly hit I could safely finish him off, but I had made bad shots and had hit him too far behind. We could plainly see the panther's track and the long continuous mark of his broken leg dragging in the black ashes. I said we would all go up in a body, and I told the men to have their axes ready but to keep behind me. They did keep behind, a very long way, and small blame to them; but the *patel* wanted no urging, and was at my elbow all the time.

We had not far to go and suddenly came on the panther about ten yards away, lying down under a bamboo, tail towards us, looking round. I aimed rather quickly, tried to get his spine, missed it and got him close to the hip. He whipped round and snaked along the ground straight for me. It was the matter of an instant. I never would have believed that a crippled animal could come at that pace: he was at my feet, practically on them, as I remember quite well running backwards two steps, to avoid him before I got my aim. I fired the second barrel and he rolled over on his back, biting fiercely at one of his paws that he had put in his mouth. I loaded and put a finisher in his neck to make sure, and then looked round. The staunch *patel* was still at my elbow, but not another man to be seen. However, they all soon swarmed round and there was tremendous excitement: everybody talked at once, shook hands! salaamed; went through the



whole scene over and over again, pointing and gesticulating.

The *patel* said: "You see, I did not leave you, sahib." I told him I knew that well enough and that he had a big heart; and the men clustered round and said, "We will not be afraid of going out with the mem-sahib again."

He was a fine big panther—7 ft. 10 in.; and I have just walked tenderly over his skin, stretched on the floor, as I have a great respect for him.

After the beat I went to see the dead cow and the poor little calf with the broken, crushed forearm. It had tooth-marks in its throat as well and long scratches, and tears on its back. It was limping on three legs and they began to drive it home, poor little beast. I asked them to let me shoot it and end its misery, for I knew that soon the wounds would be full of maggots. No, it was against their religion and they would not let me do so. I said it would never be of any use to them and I would give "plenty baksheesh." But it was not to be allowed. I tried to buy it, offering a good price, but had reluctantly to give it up.

We started for home in a triumphal procession. We had to stop at three villages to exhibit the panther, and all the people ran out, forming large circles round us. At one place they brought me a small brass *lota* of very good warm milk.

All this made me very late and, on reaching camp, I found Sadu, my boy, and the sweeper in tears. They said a man had come back to fetch my hammock—I had meant to sit up over the cow if the panther



was not in the beat—and they knew I had no dinner and no rugs; and there was a big tiger and there might be danger, and they didn't know what might happen to me. They had got my food and things ready to go out, but daren't send them till orders came. But the excitement of the *bagh* being brought in soon cheered them up.

Sadu told me I had had nothing to eat all day, and he got me some hot milk with whisky in it and it *was* good, and the patel sent me some sweet *chapatti* things for dinner.

The next morning I was sitting with a sketch-book in my hand and something ran up my coat sleeve, outside happily. I looked to see what it was and found it was a scorpion. I tried to knock it off with the book, missed it and lost sight of it, so called to the servants, who did not hear. I lifted my arm and just managed to see it under the arm-pit, so caught it by its tail and flung it down, when it was easily killed.

Another time I was emptying out my cartridge bag and felt along the bottom to see if anything was left inside. I found, as I thought, a little bit of stick, so pinched it rather tight and took it out. It gave a kick and jumped out of my hand and a scorpion fell on the bed. Lucky not to have been stung either time.

At this camp, too, I came home one evening and found Bumps, the spaniel, in a terrible state. He was wandering about in an aimless way, then throwing himself on the ground writhing and foaming at the mouth, then wandering again. He came

up to me once or twice, but took no notice of me. I felt quite sure he was mad. He tore along and got on my bed, a thing he never did, would not come off and lay and rolled about. I asked Sadu and the others about him and they said they could not understand it, he had been like that for an hour or more.

I wondered if I ought to shoot him. *Shoot him!* my brown Bumps! I thought of the gun and a No. 6 cartridge and the wound there would have to be in his velvet head. Yet for the good of every one I supposed I ought to do it.

I couldn't bring myself to it, so chained him up in my tent and let him lie on the lower shelf of my clothes stand, where he was rather quieter, while I dined and thought about it.

Sadu was acting cook as well as doing his other duties as boy; he was not a "blue ribbon" *chef*, and I noted in my diary: "Funny dinner, hoping for better things—but he means well."

I determined to let matters be till the morning, undressed to go to bed, pulled off my stockings and *then* I knew! Colonies of little black ants, streets of them, were racing over my feet and up my legs, sticking their horrid sharp little nippers in. Oh, my feet! and *oh*, my Bumps! whom I had so nearly shot!

Bumps was at once released and sent far away. The servants came and we had the tent down and straw was strewn about and burnt, leaving a large ashy patch which soon cleared off all the ants.

I changed my camp to Mundgod, a few miles off,

and started early, leaving the servants to follow. I found a very nice place for the tent, under a big mango tree. Some former sahib had found it a nice spot and had camped there too, his servants having left little heaps of straw and feathers and rubbish, though these were swept up quite tidily.

While I was waiting for the servants I thought it would be both useful and amusing to make bonfires of the heaps of rubbish. The first heap took a good deal of lighting and many matches, but it flared away eventually and burnt out. I set fire to one or two more, and then a strong breeze sprang up and the rough grass around caught fire. I tried to beat out the flames, which ran along in a long line, but as soon as I had got one end of the fire under, the other end got ahead. The man who drove my tonga came to my help and we tried to beat it out with sticks. An old village man arrived next and showed us that leafy branches were much better to use than sticks. By this time the fire was well ahead and we could only try and keep down one end of it. It raced along in the wind down the field boundaries up to the road on one side and to the jungle on the other.

When the servants came in, they set to work too. It was a warm job, what with the hot blazing April sun and the fire and the hard work. Eventually we thought we had got the flames under, but while I was having an afternoon sleep a big roaring woke me and I saw a new strip of grass was flaring up towards the tent, which we struck very quickly and beat out the flames over again. The jungle



was burnt for miles, everything was black and smoking on two sides, and I felt very guilty of setting fire to the world.

In the evening we had another fight with the flames, just after I had changed my dripping clothes and had had a bath too !

In the middle of the night there was a lot of shouting and loud cracks of burning sticks; we could see from the camp bright high flames in the village. It was the Forest Guard's hut which stood in the middle of the village, and nearly all his possessions were burnt. How they saved the other huts within three or four yards I don't know—as not a drop of water was to be had.

I was greatly relieved to find out that I was not the cause of this last disaster, and that *my* fire had not gone near the village, but that an enemy had done this thing.

## V

### BISON JUNGLES

WE were stationed in Dharwar, and as there were said to be some good bison in the Kanara jungles, which were handy to get to from there, I took my tent and went out for a week. To help me, I was allowed to have a fireman belonging to the railway. He was called Jungli Billi (wild cat) on account of his wonderfully stealthy and noiseless movements and his knowledge of the jungle and all that was in it. He never seemed to tread on a stick or crush a leaf under his foot, and when he was walking behind me I often looked round to see if he was really there.

I was using steel-tipped bullets in the Express rifle, and, before I started, a friend told me that bison were dangerous things and that my rifle was not heavy enough for them, and that he would lend me his own 12-bore rifle. He added that I might have a little difficulty with the hammer of the right barrel, as it was broken, and to cock it one had to tie a bit of string round it and pull it up; also the left barrel often jammed after one had fired! Needless to say, I never ventured on anything so dangerous as letting it off, though I made a point of taking it with me, for fear of seeming too ungrateful.

The name of the camp was Atli, and I think that Atli consisted of two tiny huts, for I do not remember seeing anything else approaching a village; and the tent was put up in the middle of thick jungle, with no clearing of any sort. It was a most picturesque spot, though rather a dangerous one for the pony at night, as any prowling creature could have taken him off so easily.

Jungli Billi said that we must start out very early to look for bison, certainly not later than 2 a.m. I did not know how far he intended going, so we set off in darkness and stumbled along for two hours, up to our shoulders in long grass dripping with dew, and very cold dew too, in December. When he stopped, I asked him what we were to do next. He said, "Sit and wait!" It still wanted several hours to dawn, and there we sat, shivering and soaked to the skin.

When dawn came we looked about in what he said were likely spots, but found no tracks. We repeated this procedure every day for a week, though after the first day's experience I refused to get up till five o'clock. I shot a bison one day, but he was small, and there was no incident connected with him worthy of note.

Jungli Billi was disappointed. He said if I would come out in three months' time, when there had been a few thunderstorms, the grass would have begun to grow and we should be sure to find the bison feeding in the clearings.

I went out to the same place again in March, but Jungli Billi could not get leave this time. I took



Subrao, whom we had trained as our shikari, and he became a very good one and especially keen and, wonderful to say, he always spoke the truth. I had, besides, Mahadeo and Ganpat, two local men.

I was sitting writing in camp one morning, when I felt small soft things falling on my helmet. I thought that they were bits of leaf and stuff from the big trees overhead, so took no notice for some time. But the pattering on my topi continued, and then I noticed that the ground all round me was thickly dotted with sweet-smelling white flowers, like little tassels. I looked up and saw several small monkeys peeping down, pulling off the blossoms of the tree and having shots at me. They ran away and hid behind branches when they found I was watching them, but as soon as I began to write again they came back and started pelting me. They kept at it for an hour or more, so that there was a continual pattering on my topi and a carpet of flowers strewn around me. They were delighted when they hit me and chattered loudly, and it was most amusing to watch them, which I could do by looking through my fingers; and they seemed to be as much amused as I was.

We went out each morning long before dawn, and the men took a torch and lantern, as it was almost impossible to make our way in the dark. The lights were put out before we reached the clearing in the forest where we were to sit and watch, and where we hoped the bison would come to feed.

When it was light enough to see, we walked on to a small and dirty pool of water to search for tracks.

One day, Mahadeo, who was looking about, came back to say he could see a very big *khulgaur*, with horns "so long," spreading out his arms as wide as they would go. I went with him and he pointed out a small bull that I would not shoot at.

Subrao suggested that we should look over the rise in the ground beyond, and Mahadeo and Ganpat went first to show the way. When we had climbed the rise, I saw the backs of a big herd of *khulgaur* over some scrub, about sixty yards off. The two men were tramping along, not having noticed anything. They were small men and I could see over their heads, and was afraid they would go walking along on to the top of the herd and frighten them. So I ran on quickly and kicked them on the calves. That rather astonished, but effectually stopped them, and they dropped down. The place was all in the open, no trees at all, and only a few low bushes growing here and there.

I crept on a few yards and picked out the biggest and thickest horns I could see and aimed behind the animal's shoulder. It was a thick misty morning and for a few seconds there was nothing to be seen but smoke. When it cleared away I saw the bison sinking to his knees and I fired the second barrel into his back, which I found afterwards had paralysed him behind. There was again smoke which hid everything, and then there came a mighty trampling of animals all round me, and a herd of bison, looming through the cloud, stampeded by. The herd had split up and half passed in front of me and the others behind.

I turned for my second rifle, a .500 Fraser. Subrao was standing close to me and handed it at once; the other two men had disappeared. About half a dozen bison galloped off into the thick jungle ahead and the rest turned and raced past us again at about fifteen yards. I fired at what I thought was the biggest one, but they all went off and were soon lost to sight.

It was time to turn our attention to the fallen one. He was watching us and in a fury; he was not able to use his hind-quarters, but rose from his knees and stood, his head down, ploughing the ground with his great horns, sending up clouds of dust and grass and pebbles all round him. He would raise his head again and again and look at us, furious at not being able to come at us or defend himself. He looked a grand beast as he stood tossing his great head at us and then battering the ground again in his rage. One realized what his onslaught might have been if he had only had the use of his hind legs too. I fired once more as soon as I could load. Then, when I saw that he could not move, I went close up to him, and Subrao with me, to finish him. He fell over, but still occasionally tried to beat the ground with his head, and it was difficult even then to find the real vital spot and end it all.

About this time the two local shikaris reappeared. The *khulgaur's* off foreleg was sticking out stiffly as he lay, and we measured with a bamboo from the withers to the heel, and made his height 18 hands 2 inches. The outside measurement of the horns, including across the head, was 82 inches.



We went back to the "bungalow," as Ganpat called the little tent, and had to send eight miles for coolies to skin the bison and bring in the head. The servants asked permission to go and look at him and said they thought it was an elephant! The head was not brought in until next day. Four men carried it tied on to a pole, like the pictures of Canaan grapes, and they said it was a big load. None of the men knew how to skin it and it was already smelling rather high, but the Portuguese cook, Jeronimo, said he would try, and he and I did it between us. The skin at the back of the head and neck was enormously thick, and I asked Jeronimo why he was cutting off so many beefsteaks, as we only wanted the skin, but he showed me that all he was doing *was* skinning and as thinly as possible.

We went out again another day early—too early—and walked right into a herd of bison that were sleeping peacefully. They seemed to be getting up all round us and made off in the darkness. I stupidly fired at one that I thought I could make out on the skyline as looking very big, and found afterwards that I had killed a cow, which was a very grievous thing.

This is a terrible jungle for the small Kanara tick. In walking through dry grass one gets literally covered with them, from head to foot. They are tiny things, about the size of grains of pepper, *ground* pepper, and one looks as if one had shaken the pepper pot over one's body. Each little beast gets his head well in under the skin and is very difficult to get off. Nothing seems to keep them off;

they seem to thrive on Scrubbs's ammonia, vaseline and soap. I counted three hundred of them one day on my arm between wrist and elbow. The irritation is unendurable, especially at night, and one tosses and rolls about, and scratches continuously. They sometimes become poisonous, and a friend of ours was once sent home on sick leave owing to their bites. They infest bison, and sometimes leopards, in Kanara.

The first time that I went out to Atli I was unprepared for these pests, but the next time I wore "next to nothings" that I had invented myself and which I think I ought to patent. The garment was an oblong bag, slit up below into two bags, literal bags, for my legs, loose enough for me to move in them. It had sleeves and was made of one piece of very thin silk so that it went under everything, socks included. It tied round the neck and wrists like a bag, and, to make the ticks dislike me more, I rubbed kerosene oil and tobacco juice on my neck and wrists. No trouble was too great to take, no evil smell too strong to endure in order to keep off these insects, whose ravages lasted, I found, for at least three weeks and sometimes for three months. It was a great satisfaction to me, when I got back from shooting and pulled my clothes off, to see hundreds of ticks wandering about *outside* my bug-proof bag, unable to find an entrance. I threw all my clothes outside, bag included, and Kundi put them in a bucket of boiling water.

The next time I went into bison jungles was after the rains, and then it was the open season for leeches.



They sat on every blade of grass with their heads outstretched, ready to cling to anything eatable that came their way. The Indians were so much afraid of them that they would never travel alone along jungle paths : so the shikari said. They were afraid, if they sat down to rest, that they might fall asleep and be blood-sucked to death.

The evening I arrived I went out with Laximan, the shikari. Later, when Kundi was pulling off my gaiters, he gave a cry of dismay and I saw my socks covered with blood and several long fat leeches lying on the ground. There were several more on my feet. I asked how I was to get them off. Hussein, who was a real jungle man, said it was quite easy, "like this." He put some very black tobacco in his mouth, chewed it up and pointed to his foot, saying, "Suppose the *jonk* is on this place." And then he spit at his raised foot and got the very spot ! I was not so expert as this, so Kundi applied tobacco juice, otherwise distilled, and salt, and they soon dropped off. But dealing with leeches was child's play after ticks.

Wandering through the jungle one afternoon, we heard something moving, and Hussein made out a bison—he called them *kulga*—behind some bamboos. He said that he could not see his horns well, but that as he was solitary he must be a big one. I went on alone a little way, and the animal heard me, for he snorted and stamped. I thought I could see his horns and that he was standing facing me, so I crawled on to where I could get a clear shot at his breast. He bellowed angrily at the shot. I



went back to get the men to bring the second rifle, and they said, by the noise he made, they were sure it was a tiger. We waited and heard snorting and hard breathing. Laximan went on and said he could see the *kulga* waving his head slowly from side to side and looking very sick. Then he said the *jungli kulga* was coming, and as we heard a stamping we all ran for trees, the men very nobly giving me a leg up to a branch before they climbed their own trees.

Nothing happened, so I got down, fired another shot, and then bolted for my tree. The bison did not come on and I began to climb down again. There was a very sharp thorny briar growing up the trunk of my tree. My foot slipped. I tried to cling on to the trunk, but clutched the thorns and tore the palm of my hand as I slithered down and tumbled out of the tree. It was difficult to shoot after this, as I could scarcely grip the rifle; however, I managed to fire another shot or two where I imagined the body belonging to a white leg that I saw kicking to be lying. Laximan went rather nearer and said he could see the bison lying dead. And all this fuss about a smallish bull whose horns were not big at all!

In the mornings, in this jungle one saw a great many very handsome, striped, black and yellow spiders that spin enormous webs from bush to bush, six or seven feet wide and equally high. The webs are very sticky and very strong and one felt quite a perceptible but passive resistance from them when walking into them unawares.

One day I had a tiger beat, which was blank; and at the same time that we were beating, so the stationmaster told me, our tiger was standing close beside the line, looking through the wire fence watching a goods train as it passed.

On another morning, after a heavy thunderstorm, when it was possible to move along silently among the fallen leaves, I was out tracking up bison. We found the marks of several hoofs and one big track that we thought must be that of a good bull. We followed the trail for some way, and then, unseen, came up with a small herd, and we stood watching them browsing, and looking for the big bull, but there were only one or two fair-sized bulls and some cows among them, and nothing worth shooting. So I unloaded the rifles and gave them to the shikari and coolie to carry. The click of shutting the guns made the bison look up, and at that moment I saw two tigers among the trees stealthily approaching the herd. *They* were stalking the herd too and were totally unaware of our presence. When the bison lifted their heads, the tigers stopped, and the herd saw them and clustered together, facing the enemy. The tigers, seeing the game was up, turned to go, and began to walk slowly away, pausing now and then to look round.

I had run up to the coolie, who was some yards away, to get my rifle, and should have had time for a nice shot, but the man lost his head, shouted, "*Bagh, bagh,*" and tore after the tigers with the empty rifle. I don't think he had a notion of what he was doing. I called to the shikari to give me the other rifle, but

he started to run after the coolie, whistling and signalling to him to stop. The man stopped and came back almost at once, but too late for the rifle to be of any use. The tigers, seeing the men's wild rush after them, cantered heavily away and were soon lost to sight in the jungle. I was too busy watching them to take any notice of the bison or to see what they were doing, and, when I did look, they had all disappeared in another direction.

The shikari told that coolie off when he came back and I helped.

One day, in a beat, the men caught a tiny bison, only a few days old. The poor little thing was screaming with fear, and I thought it would be sure to die in captivity; so I told them to let it go and hunted it off into the jungle myself, for fear that they should kill it to eat. I hoped that its mother would come back and find it, but I am not at all sure that it was not eventually captured again, after my back was turned.



## VI

### IN THE HIMALAYAS

**M**Y brother Ned (Col. E. P. Smith, R.A., who was killed in Gallipoli) and I went for some months into the mountains, starting through Kashmir and going on eventually up the Wardwan nullah to Suru and Zanskar. It was really a wonder that we ever met. We had settled to go shooting somewhere together, either in Kashmir or Mysore—places a long way apart! and he was stationed up North and my husband and I in Dharwar. He was always lazy about letter-writing and left all arrangements on this occasion till the last minute. I knew when his leave began and the day I was to set off for *somewhere* to join him. The day before I started Ned sent this rather ambiguous telegram: "You tak the high road and I'll tak the low road and I'll be in Scotland afore ye," but he never said *which* Scotland! However, I started all the same, not knowing in which direction he might be travelling; but we *did* meet by some extraordinary chance, and I found him waiting for me on the platform at Rawal Pindi, and he *was* there first! Though this was lucky, misfortune dogged our steps in other ways. We were prevented going to places we had intended by falls of snow that had, that year, been very much heavier than usual, and later in the season as well.

Rivers held us up which in ordinary years could be forded, but were now in too flooded a condition to cross; our coolies, in fact, refused to do so, as several hill people had lately been drowned in attempting it. It was one of those exceptional seasons that so constantly occur, and *nasty* exceptional, not *nice* exceptional, at that.

We climbed after ibex and after bear, but they always seemed to elude us. Then when we got far away from Kashmir after many marches, the head shikari hurt his leg badly and was unable to walk, and the second man was taken ill, suffering from his heart, which Ned said was all owing to undue strain in carrying me several times on his back over streams and bad places; and it was nearly impossible to get any sport without their help.

We crossed the Woolar Lake by boat and meant to tie up to the bank for the night, but the water was too shallow and there were too many weeds to get close in, so the boatmen drove down stakes at some distance from the shore, to which we tied up. In the middle of dinner a violent wind storm came on, and we had to leave our oldish chicken very suddenly to fly and hold on to everything we could. The *chiks* were blown inside out; I saw the whole of my bedding swept overboard. My boy gave a groan of dismay as we both rushed towards it and caught hold of the pillow and the last corner of sheet and dragged them back; but rugs, dressing-gown and other things floated away on the waves. Ned had meanwhile to tie down and secure the tablecloth, and try and save the table too, with the cold

remains of our dinner, from being swept away by these tremendous gusts. The boatmen gave no practical help whatever, but, in a panic, sat and recited loud prayers at the top of their voices.

This violent wind raged for, perhaps, fifteen minutes and then dropped as suddenly as it had started. The cook boat had been blown from its moorings and was tied up again a long way off, and the cook sent word that the pudding had gone overboard, so had his fire and the remaining sticks were so drenched with spray he was not able to light them, and there would be no more dinner! My wet rugs were at last brought back by a man on the shore where they had been blown.

We travelled up the Jhelum river in boats and then started on our march.

At one place on the road we were crossing, by a small wooden bridge, a stream that overflowed its banks; both ends of the bridge were flooded and rather difficult of access. Our baggage ponies did not like the look of it, but most of them, after some urging, got over safely. One pony who refused to go was pushed through the water up to the bridge, went too near the edge, put his foot in a hole and fell into the stream. He scrambled to his legs over rough boulders, fell over into the water again and swam across with his load. He tried his best to get his footing, but on landing he fell again and his load slipped, four guns, all the cartridges, the tiffin basket and Ned's bedding all disappearing under the water. It took some time to fish the things out, and we opened the guns and cartridges at once to



try and dry them in the sun. The pony was the easiest to dry and suffered the least harm.

The paths, too, were very wet and slippery, as I found when riding a little country pony up a steep bit of hill. He gathered himself together to make an effort, digging his fore toes into the ground, but slipped, sat down on his hind quarters—when I slid off—and went completely head over heels backwards. Then he rolled over and over on his side some long distance down the grassy slope and was brought up by a bit of level ground. The little Dobbin got up, shook himself and then came back to be mounted. He was allowed to climb unloaded for a time until we reached more level going. Then Ned's heels slipped up on a very greasy place and he sat down suddenly in a dirty puddle. He was very angry and said something about Providence having far less consideration for *his* feelings than for those of the spectators! Some of the huts we passed were built into the side of the hills, with flat grassy roofs supported by posts and rafters. One of the huts was on the lower side of, and the roof just level with, the road, and we were amused to see our coolies walk on to it, sit down and hold a long conversation with the family inside, down the chimney.

Such heavy rain fell that we could neither march nor pitch our tents—the rain had begun after we had started—so we stopped at the first village we came to and took refuge in a large wooden house, part of which the headman put at our disposal. He turned out four tiny dark rooms for us on the first floor, the best he had; they were over a steamy

cowshed, but we were very glad of them, and we could have a fire lighted to dry ourselves, though there was no proper outlet for the wood smoke, which made our eyes smart. My bedroom was very dark and the frame of the glassless window was only about six inches square; the servants had a room as well, and we all thought we were in luxury.

Two of the servants wished to leave on account of all the bad weather we were having. One man gave of course the usual reason for wanting to go: his mother was just dead and he must go and bury her—we *have* had a servant whose mother died seven times and his father thirteen—the other man, Ganga Din, said he was going to die, and if we did not give him more coats and blankets and clothes generally he certainly would die. We had given him and all of them the usual supply at starting, but he continued to warn us daily about his approaching end, till at last Ned told him that he caused us so much anxiety by his constant deaths that he had better go, but if the worst came to the worst, and he died before he could start for home, we would make all suitable arrangements for his decent burial. The weather improved and Ganga Din thought better of it.

We went over the Bhot Kol pass and down to Suru and Parkatze and camped, after a fortnight's marching, under the Gonpa, the monastery of Rangdum. The Gonpa stood on a hill, and the hill on an island, as just above it the river branched into two and then joined again below. To reach mainland one had to wade or go on pony-back.

The Gonpa was in the middle of a wide flat valley far above tree level, and near the foot of Nun Kun, which was a gloriously bold and rugged mountain.

As soon as we arrived the monks came down to see us. They wore long red robes and red caps that they could turn down over their ears, made of rough cloth. They talked in a language that not even the shikaris could understand, and sat round and laughed and held their red blankets up to keep off the wind as they helped us to light a fire. They took great interest in us and our preparations for boiling a kettle for tea. Most of them were rather old, rather dirty and not very handsome, but they were all very friendly. Their cook was the youngest of them, and he had a donkey that carried bags on his back for taking supplies up and down the hill.

In the morning Ned and I went up to return the Lamas' call. They took us inside the Gonpa and then on to see their holy place, which had several prayer-wheels outside. The Lamas made signs that we might go inside if we took off our leather sandals. It was dark and damp and the stone floor deadly cold to our stockinged feet. Some of the gods were rather pretty we thought, and they all had bowls of water to drink, in front of them. The monks turned the prayer-wheels as we went in and out, and I was allowed to turn one, but stupidly began by turning it the wrong way; so as much as I had turned had to be quickly undone and then I made up for it by turning a good deal more the proper way. That



quite put matters right, especially when I repeated after them, "Om Mani Mani."

I wanted to make a sketch of the ugliest one, but he ran away and hid in his cell and could not be got out, much to the amusement of his brother monks. I made a sketch of him afterwards from memory, and some of the others sat for me and did not seem to mind for how long they sat. We tried to buy from them different little relics that we saw, but they were quite determined against that, on no account might we take anything away with us. We offered more rupees, but it was of no use. To our surprise after dark one after another of them came stealing into the mess tent: they came singly and each brought some treasure with him. The cook brought a short whip, the one he used for his donkey, mounted in brass, and with a bunch of small leather thongs on it. I bought a very much dented holy water bottle and a copper spoon, and Ned some other things; but the greatest treasure was a small copper box with a glass window in front of it, and clips to pass a strap through so that it could be worn on the arm. This contained the ashes of a Lama made up into the form of a Buddha, and wrapped round most carefully in a dirty piece of yellow cloth and tied with a long silk string. We both wanted this, of course, and Ned was bidding for the image while I bid for the box. After the deal was over and all the monks gone, Ned said it was stupid of the red monk to sell the image without the box. I thought it was still more stupid to sell the box without the image. We settled that they

could not be separated and that the image must certainly be put back in its box. Then whose was it to be? So to make it fair we tossed and I won, and I have the curious little relic now; but some one told me it was wrong to keep it and that it ought by rights to go back to Rangdum. If it is of real value to the Lamas, and they come and ask for it they may have it back.

Both the shikaris were ill here, and Ned had a bad foot, so we had to sit quiet for some days. There was nothing to do but shoot a few marmots, as we wanted some of their skins. I had to go rather far away for my shooting, as Ned could only hobble about near camp, and spent his time in sketching and going about with his small rifle into his "preserves"; he preserved marmots for a distance of two hundred yards round the camp, where I might not shoot. I shot a goose one day which fell into the river, but we had not come all these long marches, on to ibex ground, to shoot marmots and a bit of poultry, and we were really disappointed at everything going so wrong.

As soon as every one had sufficiently recovered to march again we went over the Pense La. Many more coolies than were required came to take the loads and we were going to send some of them away, when Aziz Khan, our cook, told us that the people were so unaccustomed to any sahib stopping there, it was a great treat for them to have loads to carry! The whole village seemed to have turned out, so each load was divided into as many small ones as possible and men and women started off with

them, and tiny children carried the gun cases along.

Aziz Khan had caught somebody's little pony for me to ride; he was very clever in knowing what was safe snow to cross and what not. We had crossed several snow bridges, and then came to one that he quite refused to go over. He stopped, put his nose down to it and smelt about. I stupidly tried to force him on, but he still refused it, put his head down and nosed it again until I pushed him at it. He went on one step and then the whole thing broke through with him and he fell over on to some rocks below, which luckily were not far down. His fore legs were high up against the rocks and he was standing on his hind legs almost upright. I tumbled off and rolled against his hind legs, that I had to pull myself up by. He stood absolutely still till I had got clear of him and then he scrambled up the rocks. He was very much frightened, but he behaved wonderfully well; and after that I left everything to his better judgment.

We crossed the Bhot Kol pass again on the way back; it had been covered with snow when we came and was straightforward marching, but now that was melted and all the walking was on the glacier. It was a very rough road and there were any amount of crevasses that we had to circumvent or jump over. On the top, as we were sitting down for a rest, a long string of men with their half-bred Yaks, carrying loads, passed us. They stopped to talk to our men, all except one of them who went on alone a



short way. We heard a muffled cry and then indistinct shouts for help, and when we looked the man had disappeared. All the men jumped up and ran in the direction of the cries, stopping and peering down every crevasse that they passed. They found the missing man had fallen down a crack in the ice, and the big load that he had strapped on to his back, prevented his going more than a few feet down; without this, they said, he must have fallen to the bottom. Some of the men knelt down holding on to each other, and one man, lying down, was just able to reach him and hold on while his load was unfastened, and they pulled that up first and then himself. It was a relief to every one when he stood on firm ground once more.

After that they continued their journey and we noticed how extremely carefully they went. It certainly made us more cautious in avoiding rotten snow and not skipping over so many crevasses as we had been doing. Bunker, too, was tied with a stout strap.

Then there came bad weather again and more bad weather, and so much thick cloud and mist that we could see nothing, and this went on until the leave was up. We had scarcely fired a shot and the only things in the bag were, I think, one red bear and a barah singh stag.

We were once in the Himalayas after that; my husband, sister and I went into Tilail one hot weather. They were both very busy with their cameras, and I must say they made better shooting with them than I did with my rifle. They made

some extremely pretty snapshots, with flocks of sheep and goats in the foreground, but then, after all, they were shooting into the brown!

The shikaris had seen some ibex one evening and said there were some big ones among the herd—though I never happened to see a good head in Tilail—and I settled to go after them. Nebra, the shikari, two coolies and I started next morning soon after four, and walked for a long way up the Gujrind nullah. After we had climbed for some hours Nebra saw a distant herd of ibex feeding quietly above us on a far hill. He said he thought they were too far away to go after, and we certainly should never arrive at them that day—he did not add at *my* pace, but he looked it! In the middle of the herd there was a very noticeable white *kael* who stood out among his khaki-coloured brethren. This rather stirred us up to try, as the coolies said it would bring us all enormous luck, if we could shoot a white *kael*, no one having seen such a thing before. We determined to have a try for him anyhow, and climbed up and up, over very rough ground, running whenever we got a chance and creeping along when we had to cross an open place where we might be seen, and wearing out our grass shoes, which soon got cut through and we had to change for others.

When we arrived above the level of the herd we saw them on the snow and among the rocks preparing to lie down, and Nebra said we must wait too, and watch. It was one o'clock and I was very glad to sit down and have a rest; I ate my breakfast

and several helpings of snow, as the long climb had been thirsty work and we had not come across any water on the way up. I went to sleep and Nebra said he would wake me up as soon as the herd moved on again and there seemed a favourable chance for beginning the stalk. I hoped the ibex would all lie down and keep on lying down for several hours, so that I might have a good rest, but the demons were all up and feeding again in half an hour, and as soon as they had disappeared over the next ridge on we had to go again.

We were getting nearer and we all were growing keen. The going was rather easier, as there was more downhill than up, and we followed, climbing ridge after ridge, running or creeping along or lying down according to the accidents of the ground—anything to avoid being seen. We followed until we came to what was almost a precipice; there was nothing in the way of cover between us and the *kael*, and we could not move another yard without being seen. They were loafing or lying about below; sometimes two of the rams would have a sham fight and batter each other's heads: we could hear their horns rattle together. They were over two hundred yards away, though it is very difficult to judge distance across a valley, and when I put up the rifle the white ibex looked smaller than the bead. We saw no chance of getting any nearer and, as evening was coming on, we had to think of getting back or staying there for the night.

I told Nebra I would shoot; he looked rather doubtful and did not seem to think I should make



much of it. He said, after the manner of the East, "If it's hit it's hit, if it's not hit it's not hit; a matter of luck!"

I tried to sit on a bit of precipice to steady myself; one coolie held my feet and Nebra propped me up as I fired the .303 rifle. The white ibex and another one were lying close together with their noses nearly touching, and the bullet splashed up the dust between them. I fired another shot or two at the white *kael* as he moved off, with no apparent result, and they all disappeared round rocks.

We all thought I had made clean misses and we started at once to find a path and scramble down, making for camp, when we heard a stone falling from above us; the white ibex stood looking at us five or six hundred yards away. Nebra said he would never stay there alone when the others had all gone if he had not been hit. I fired again and he took no notice of the shot, which of course did not hit him, but struck a rock near. He soon afterwards lay down.

I felt as if I could not climb another yard, at any rate uphill, so Nebra took the rifle to go up and finish him, and I started for home, down a nasty steep side of hill, taking the coolie Ahmedu with me. Soon after starting I found my grass shoes had worn completely through, and the spare ones that we had brought with us had been taken off by the man that Nebra had with him. It was poor consolation to think that they were all dangling to his waist, not far distant. The two or three pairs of socks I was wearing gradually wore themselves into large

holes, which made walking rather painful. We had nearly reached the bottom of the valley when we came to some slippery rocks over which water was trickling; Ahmedu said it was impossible to get up or down to avoid them, and they were also impossible to cross. It was now getting so dark there was no time to retrace our steps and find out a new road. He sat down, burst into tears and sobbed in despair. I thought I could see a way down, but he would not move from the spot; he said he was afraid of what Nebra would say to him, and if anything happened to me his eyes would burst and be washed away in his tears!

So we sat down and prepared to stay there for the night, which would have been very chilly and uncomfortable, but by great luck we caught sight, in the dusk, of the pony man below us bringing the pony up the main nullah to fetch me. We made plenty of noise then, whistling and shouting to attract his attention. He tied the pony to a bush and ran up to us with as much ease as if he were running along a high-road, and showed us another way down which was quite simple, and where he only thought it necessary to hold my feet in a few places, though he said it was worse climbing down than going up.

I did look forward to getting a mount and saving the last remnants of sock and skin left under my feet, but the rascally pony had jerked his reins free and gone off. It was now quite dark and there was still some distance to go. We fell in with Nebra and Mirza Khan with the grass shoes; they had got

into difficulties too and twice had to turn back on their road, but they would go and bring the *kael* in next day. And then came my husband to meet me, with a lantern and brandy, and also the pony, that they had found on the way, grazing by the roadside and enjoying himself, and the troubles were over. I know I slept without winking from 10 p.m. to 10.45 a.m. next day, which wasn't so bad, but I was not able to walk for some days.

Nebra brought back the head and skin of the white ibex. He only had one horn, so he must have lost it in a fall or Nebra may have shot it off; to which he did not own, however, but the *kael* certainly had two horns when I saw him last.

The skin was made into quite a handsome carriage rug: a panther skin in the middle with borders of long woolly white *kael* outside. It was said, by some faddy people, to smell very strong, and had to be discarded, as no one would get into the car with it but me, and I liked it.

I shot one or two ibex and bear on this expedition, and then our leave was up. On the way back, when we were in boats on the Woolar Lake, one day a very large fish was brought in by the cook, which he displayed with great pride; we said we would have it for dinner. But after our soup the meat was brought next, so we shouted to him to know what had happened to the fish.

"The fish, sahib? Why, the fish is such a big one, it is the joint dish to-day, so I have sent the sahibs the bif ishtek first."

We knew that no beef was killed where we were,



and we asked him where he got his beef from, for the steak?

He thought we were rather stupid.

"Bif ishtek? Oh, I cut them off the leg of mutton of course!"

## VII

### BUNKER

**T**HESE are only reminiscences of a dog and probably only of interest to my husband and me, who were so fond of him.

His mother was a large, fat, in fact, outsize fox terrier, very healthy, with superabundant spirits. She did not look very well bred—fat Betty—but what of that! she loved life just the same and she also loved everybody. Bunker was one of a litter of brothers and sisters, who had been given away, and I suppose he was last choice; but we would not have exchanged Bunker for anything in the world. He was given to us when he was a few months old, and Betty came too, to be taken care of when her master went on leave. Bunker was distinctly a better-looking class of dog than his mother and may have had an aristocrat for his father, but he never told us so.

Along the road just outside the bungalow there was a ditch which was daily flushed with water. In this Betty used to gambol and Bunker floundered after her. She used to rush at her little pup, knock him over, drench him, half punch the wind out of him and he would get up a pitiable little object. The first time that it happened he seemed thoroughly

amazed and stood gasping, but he soon began to understand it was a game and prepared for the onslaught. I suppose he learnt to enjoy it, for he always followed his mother when she went for her mud bath and they tumbled and splashed about together. We told Betty to be more gentle with him, but she was silly and did not understand. Some dogs don't.

They followed us when we went on the golf course, and of course Bunker was always in the way—I believe bunkers are—thence his name.

We never knew whether he liked music or not, but one evening some soldiers came in for a sing-song, and a friend had kindly promised to help. She opened her music and started a rather high-class sentimental song. Bunker was sitting thinking of nothing, alone, in the middle of a large circle of Tommies. Then the singer, who really sang very nicely, reached a high and rather loud note. The puppy came to attention, set his little head on one side, then raised it, and gave vent to a series of long, lugubrious howls. He brought down the house, he had the undivided attention of all the men and the singer was nowhere. I must say she was most good-natured about it.

Bunker was stung by a scorpion when he was rather older; he came and told me something was wrong with his foot, and as the scorpion was marked down, we soon guessed what was the matter. I put on ammonia to try and help him, and when the place was dressed and he put his poor nose to the foot he went nearly wild, tore about the room and did all he could to get away from himself and the



horrible sharp smell. The remedy was much worse than the disease, the pain of which soon eased off.

Bunker came up with my brother Ned and me to Kashmir and Suru. We went rather far afield, and some bits of the marches were so bad he had to be carried over dangerous places and up rickety short ladders which made the path passable. He was greatly interested in hunting marmots. We shot a few for their skins, and he retrieved several wounded ones from their holes. He would go down their burrows into the depths of the earth, and I have spent many anxious hours, on occasions, sitting at the mouth of a burrow whistling and calling, and hearing, when I put my ear down to the hole, muffled, far-distant barks. Once or twice I could hear nothing, and thought that Bunker must be buried for ever. But he always turned up in the end, generally with a scratched face, tail foremost, dragging a dead marmot after him.

He had ideas of his own, for one day we were preparing to start on a march, and Ned and I with the shikaris and guns were going on ahead. We soon found out there was no dog with us, which was surprising, as when Bunker saw a gun he simply must be with it. I went back and saw him sitting calmly watching the servants pack the loads. I called him, and he took not the slightest notice. I went up to him, scolded him, and dragged him by his collar a little way. Nothing would move him but force. I reasoned with him. No, he was quite determined he would *not* come. Then, as one must have obedience in dogs, I looked about for a stick,

a soft one, but we were above tree level and there were no sticks available. I found a coolie's load rope and pretended to beat him, but he did not care for me and my rope, only looked at me seriously and kindly, as it were—I am sure he was thinking I was rather a fool not to understand—so I gave it up as a bad job, went on, and left him to it. After my brother and I had gone a mile or two, he came racing along to catch us up, quite rejoicing, with his tail up, feeling sure he had done nothing wrong.

We asked Aziz Khan, our Pathan cook, what had happened, and he told us Bunker sat on until the last coolie had picked up the last load and started. *Then* he was satisfied, and tore away after us. This he continued to do daily, or whenever we changed camp. But he was *only* a dog, bless him!

Bunker's luggage consisted of two *jhūls* and a bit of rug to lie on. He certainly needed them all at night when we were up in the snows—and, by the way, the first time he ever saw snow on the ground he gazed at it in astonishment; picked up a forefoot and set it down in the snow most cautiously, bit at it, and then went mad for joy, racing round and round in circles and rolling over and over.

To come back to his *jhūls*, he was nearly drowned on account of one. We were on the Jhelum river, living in dungas, rather dirty boats which at eventide generally smelt very strongly of onions, a self-evident part of the crew's evening meal. They cooked it in the stern, and the wind invariably blew towards our part of the ship. We tied up at night to the bank with a plank to cross over to the shore.



Bunker slept in my boat, and I was wakened one night by sounds of splashing and sad little yelps of something in distress. I jumped out of bed and tried to look over the side, but could see nothing in the black darkness, but guided by the sound of splashing, I made out something struggling in the water, almost submerged. It was Bunker, tangled up in his *jhāl*, half drowning, and trying to claw at the slippery sides of the boat. I reached down over the low side and managed to drag up the dripping, shivering, gasping thing.

I suppose he had occasion to go ashore, and had missed his footing on the plank on his way. After striking a light, I took off his *jhāl* and rubbed him down; but it was a truly grievous thing to find that he had fallen in in his best *jhāl*, which had, for some nonsense of ours, his crest and monogram on it, worked in gold thread by my kind and skilful sister. I told him he must be more careful, but when he was rubbed dry, and had his second-best coat on, he did not seem to trouble much.

Once we came across a party of monkeys that greatly excited Bunker and he them. He drove them up trees at first, but they grew bolder, came down and went for him, until we managed to call him off. Then early one morning he stole away, and I suppose he had a great hunt and a scrap with the monkeys all to himself. We missed him and could find no trace of him anywhere for a whole day and night, and then he returned covered with wounds and scratches and with only a few old rags of his *jhāl* hanging round his neck. This time,



fortunately, it was his old *jhūl*. We never knew what had happened, but only supposed he had been attacked by the monkeys and had torn himself away.

Ned and I were held up in the Chota Zajnai nullah for five or six solid days and nights by incessant rain and low cloud and mist. The ground was soaking, the bedding damp and cold; our clothes were all clammy and we were thoroughly uncomfortable. Our little mess tent had to be nearly closed to keep out the weather. Bunker was not at his best and did not, I am sorry to say, smell of the sweetest, and Ned would persist in calling him "Vinolia."

One afternoon, after several days of such discomfort, we were trying to enjoy our tea, when a flutter was heard and something tumbled into the tent and fell with a bump at our feet, and we saw lying there a small hawk, drenched and incapacitated by weather, that had been driven in by a gust of wind. Of course Bunker was first in the field, but was cautioned not to touch it, and we picked up the bird and smoothed out his feathers. He showed no fight and only made futile pecks at our fingers after he had been fed with crumbs. Having no caste to forbid it, he did not show any disinclination to tea being spooned into his mouth by the hands of a white man. We packed him up warmly in a basket and the next day he seemed fairly recovered. We tied a string to his leg, but he did not try to get away. When the sun came out once more, it looked so funny to see him sitting outside gazing at

the dog and the dog a yard or two away gazing back. They did not quite know what to make of each other. He lived with us for three days and then, again at tea-time, Ned gave him an overdose of cake, and he died in the night. Next day Ned sat for a long time carving a memorial stone giving a history of the hawk's death, and this was set up over his grave. I wonder if it stands there still.

Bunker had a happy life, I think. He and the other dogs were very fond of coming out with us riding, but small game shooting was the thing, *par excellence*, in which he delighted. When he grew older, he would refuse to go riding when the sun was too hot for him; but when we went shooting and rode out, he invariably came. I could not make out how he understood whether it was just an ordinary ride or a shoot that we were starting on until I saw him go and smell my clothes, which were laid out overnight. Long boots were no good, but boots and putties or high-laced boots were all right; other details, too, in coats or skirts, were all known to him. Then he grew wiser still and would trot off with the shikari who went on long before dawn, when it was beautifully cool, with the guns, and Bunker would be sitting waiting for us when we arrived. The other dogs never thought that out, and would stay to run with us. Some of them were rather wild occasionally, and did as much harm as good, putting up many quail out of shot, but there were always plenty more; and, on the other hand, the dogs found us many birds lost in the long grass that the coolies never would have found.



Bunker was a real retriever, but Bumps, the spaniel, was not so good. One day we all saw a bird fall, and several men had a long hunt for it at the spot, but it could not be found. Bumps was busy working away at a small hole in a boundary hillock twenty yards or more distant. I suggested we should look there, but the coolies were certain that would be useless. However, I made them come and open out the hole with their sticks. After digging down, with Bumps (who would not stop scratching) very much in their way, they came on the quail. Their look of astonishment was amusing. *Shabash*, bravo! They had never seen such a wonderful dog in their lives!

When the dog-cart came to pick us up, there was a glorious scramble of dogs waiting to be lifted up to avoid the nasty hot run home in the sun.

Poor Bunker! I lost him one evening riding over open country with some low scrub, and, as often happened, we found a jackal and had a bit of a run, though jackal or fox would invariably get away. We lost our jack and I turned to come home, the dogs following. I soon noticed that Bunker was missing, so I turned again to look for him, whistling and calling. It was no use; there was no sign of him. It was growing quite dark and I gave it up, but expected him to turn up every minute. We went out over the same ground in the morning but could find no trace of him; and of course we told the police and made all inquiries and did everything in our power to find him.

He was missing for nearly a week. Then one of



the servants told us an old woman belonging to the Lomani tribe of gipsies had been seen taking him away, and that these gipsies were encamped in their funny ragged little tents eight or nine miles away. We went off to the D.S.P., who very kindly sent mounted police out at once. They found out nothing definite, but probably frightened the Lomani people, for shortly afterwards the servants, who were standing at the gates of the compound, saw a stupid-looking dog come trotting along the road, taking no notice of them or anything else. They brought him up to me seeming dazed and stupefied, and he lay down at my feet showing no sign of pleasure, and he did not respond when I spoke to him. His body was greatly distended as if he had been overfed on garbage. Also we supposed he had been severely drugged to prevent his running away. He had sense enough left to make his way home when he was loosed, and delighted we were to see him.

Bunker knew something bad was going to happen to him when we had to go home on leave. Some friends had very kindly promised to look after him and we knew he would have a happy home. I started in a train in advance of my husband and the little dog was brought to see me off. He jumped into the carriage and lay down in a far corner under the seat. We called to him, but nothing would induce him to come out. I crawled underneath and he set his feet firmly to resist me. I nearly, very nearly, brought him along. My husband took him away.

We afterwards heard that as soon as we left him he was ill and refused to eat, though he was grateful for all the attentions showered on him, and he died after a few weeks.

He has a small slab over him near the Soldiers' Hospital at Deolali, only they have carved his name "Bunklr"!

## VIII

### SOME BEARS IN SATARA

THERE was a shikari, a very old man, by name Esuf, who lived near Satara, and who came to me a good many times to persuade me to go out with him to shoot black bears. The time to shoot them, he said, was in the rains. It is not particularly pleasant being in camp then; and I was doubtful, too, about his *khubber* and put him off several times. But he was persistent and was quite pleased when at last I settled to go. He started off ahead with four mules loaded with kit, and I followed, riding where I could, and letting the horse climb after me where the path was too bad, up to a jungly place at the top of some hills.

I found my tent was pitched in front of a long, wide, three-mouthed cavern which gave capital shelter for horses and servants. The ground was mostly bare sheet rock, so the tent ropes had to be tied to large heavy stones that the coolies rolled up. The cavern belonged to Deo, and his image was carved inside, where it was rather cold and damp, as it was the rainy season; but when rain was falling heavily I found it convenient and sheltered to use one of the entrances as my dining-room.

Esuf's plan for getting bears was to take some



cowmen and villagers with him and go out before dawn to watch the hills; they would then see any bears there might be coming back from their night's feeding grounds, and could mark them down in the place they chose to lie up in to sleep for the day; and when marked down he would let me know where I was to join him. I went out at sunrise next morning and found Esuf coming back. He said they had found the pugs of a bear, though they had not seen the bear himself; he, Esuf, was just going down into some scrub to pug him up, and I was to wait at the top. The ground was very wet, so the men could see the tracks plainly on the grass; but it was an hour or two before they sent for me. They wanted to give him time to settle down fairly to sleep before he was disturbed.

When I got near the place Esuf said the bear was lying under some thick bushes, sound asleep, and he asked me if I should like the men to beat him out or if I would walk him up. They talked in such very loud whispers that if the bear had been as near as the men said he must have heard us. The scrub he was lying in was extremely thick and heavy and would have been very difficult to beat him out of, so I settled to walk him up, and told Esuf to take me above him if he could. That did not seem possible, as we had to follow closely in the pugs they had already tracked. Esuf, Nana—a big man in a bright red waistcoat—and I went a few hundred yards through dripping bushes which grew so thick and low we could no longer walk the bear up, so we crawled him up. Nana knew just where he lay, so

he crawled first and then stopped and pointed to a black mass about eight yards away and slightly above us. It lay so still I thought it was a log of wood I was looking at, but Nana pointed again at it. It was cloudy and extraordinarily dark under these thick bushes considering the time of day—ten o'clock or so. I whispered to know which way his head was, and Nana could not tell. I crawled about and tried to find a clear spot where I could see to shoot through any opening in the bushes. Esuf and Nana held some branches back out of the way as I held my rifle ready; I thought I had better not waste any more time trying to find out which way the bear was lying and I fancied I saw two green eyes looking at me, but they may have been green leaves. I shot off and the black mass roared, rolled over and then jumped up. I fired again and this time the bear went over for good, though as he tried once or twice to get up I put another bullet in him.

All the men came pushing their way through the bushes and there was much salaaming. One of the village *patels* held my hand to lead me out into the open—forcing a way for me through the undergrowth—which I found was a curious custom of theirs in these parts after any great event. Nana was very angry at this and sent the *patel* off with a good useful push: he had been the man to show me the bear; it was *his* place to lead me out, and he did this with much ceremony.

The bear was both heavy and fat and the cook boiled down some of the fat and made a fine lot of



bear's grease, which is very useful for cleaning and keeping the guns in order. The Collector had been good enough to send word to the local people to help me, and the Kulkani arrived with a small following. He was the spokesman of the party and made a speech in English which he must have prepared for the occasion.

He said he lived a mile or two away, but as long as I stayed there he would stay there too. We talked for some time and watched the skinning, and when I thought we had exhausted our conversation I said :

“ If you have anything of importance to do now at home you need not stay any longer.” He said, “ No, my only pleasure is to stay with you ! ” I felt sorry for him, as evidently he was very much bored at having to stay there according to orders, and life could not have contained many charms for him if this was all. But he fortunately added : “ But if your Majesty will allow I will go for one hour to take my food.” My Majesty let him.

We went out early next day for some miles along the hill-tops, but saw nothing. Esuf said that we had better stay there for the day, and then watch for the bears to come out in the evening ; so he sent back to camp for some food and hustled me into a cave to eat breakfast, as it came on to rain. He was rather pleased to see the rain, as he said the *aswol* would come out to feed all the sooner, and he stationed men to watch the hills from various points. Early in the afternoon a man signalled that there was a bear in the bushes close to the top of the hill, and



another man up a small tree waved his black blanket, which for a second I thought was the *aswol*. Esuf, with bare feet, and I, in cotton soles, crept along, up to our knees in long thick grass and overgrown weeds, and saw the bear facing us at a short distance, and I got him without trouble. I only mention all this because of the sequel. As we were going home, Esuf said I was wearing a ring on my finger as we went out and it was now gone. The men looked in the place I breakfasted as we passed, but it was not there. Esuf said that I must have flung it off as I threw away the empty cartridge cases, which I did in a hurry, to load up again quickly in case the bear might have life enough to come for us. One or two of the men went back to look, but it seemed a hopeless place in which to find such a small thing as a ring, in all that long grass and tangle, that I then thought no more about the matter, except that I said there would be some rupees for any one who found it.

Next morning the whole village was sitting round doing nothing but watch the skinning operations, when I happened to remember the ring, and said the men that were idle might as well look for it as sit there. Nobody stirred; and as the idea of rupees generally moves them they evidently thought there was no chance of finding it. However, at last the *chaprassi* took some men off with him to make a search and they came back with the ring. They had looked about in the grass near the spot where the bear was shot and were giving it up as a bad job, when one man happened to turn over a large

stone and out crawled two big snakes. On the ground between their two heads lay the ring. There was so much grass growing round, and the space between the stones was so small, that the *chaprassi* said it was impossible for me to have thrown the ring into this crack, and that the snakes must have taken their treasure there. Both the snakes were killed as soon as they were seen; but it was rather a curious incident.

Before we left that camp I went into the cavern, which was a place of worship, to examine the carved stones, of which there were a good many. Esuf said we certainly ought to give Deo something before leaving. I agreed, felt in my pockets, and was amused to hear him say :

“ Eight annas (about eightpence) will be enough ! ”

He called to the *patel* and gave instructions as to what he was to buy to lay at the Deo's feet : coco-nut, to the extent of one anna, and I forget the other things, but he looked inquiringly at me to see if I agreed to each separate item; and it seemed to be a matter of some importance although it was not costly.

Esuf often came with me shooting after that, though he could not always make such good arrangements. We tried for a tiger a good many times in the cold weather, but had no luck. One time a cow had been seized close to a village and the tiger had been driven off before much harm had been done to it; it had only a few claw-marks on the shoulder. Esuf sent a coolie in to Satara to tell me to come out at once : he thought the tiger would be sure to come

that night as he was hungry enough to venture so near the village, and as there was a full moon it was a good opportunity.

I rode out and got to the place about sundown. There were no preparations of any sort made where I could sit hidden, and there was no tree anywhere about, but Esuf was there waiting with the cow that had escaped the tiger and which her owners had given to be tied up again; I suppose they thought she would be sure to die and she might as well be of use first. I asked Esuf where I was to sit for the night, as the cow was tied up on a flat piece of open ground some little way from the village; he said he left that to my discretion. I looked about and, as I could see nothing better, chose a spot on the side of a hill thirty yards from the bait, wondering much from which direction the tiger might come and if I should suddenly find him behind me, looking over my shoulder. I was in shadow for some time, under a rock, though there *was* such a beautiful moon, and it was an interesting night as long as I could manage to keep awake, though the tiger never came near, to my knowledge.

I had many fruitless journeys from the top of the Mahableshwar hill to the bottom for a beat or a sit up, sometimes all night; and it was rather hard work and generally done in a great rush, as *khubber* was so late coming in. I spent ten days occasionally at the bottom of the hill and then the tiger would be sure to be at the top, which was rather tantalizing; but a panther came to the Government House grounds and killed one night, and another to the



home preserves, and they played the game, and were shot under the easiest circumstances imaginable.

They were both very thieving panthers and had stolen many of the cattle and goats on the hill. I received a note to say that a calf had been killed close to Government House and, as there was no one there at the time to shoot it, would I come? I went to see the place, which was close to the tennis grounds. A cow, in trying to save her calf, had been badly mauled by the panther and had escaped, but was so badly hurt she was now in a dying condition, and her calf had been killed and half eaten; the head and shoulders remaining were dragged some little way and hidden under bushes. I arranged where the *machan* was to be put, which was in a very small tree, there being no big ones near; they fixed it only a few feet from the ground and much lower than I intended.

I went out at four o'clock and took up my position in this rather lowly seat, where I could almost have touched a panther coming up to the kill with the end of the rifle, though I was fairly well hidden from anything below by leaves and thick bushes. There were a good many people, gardeners, coolies and water-carriers, working and walking to and fro only fifty yards away—they were talking loudly and calling to each other at their work; there was a creaking of carts and barrows and I was prepared to wait for a couple of hours when they would leave off work and things would quiet down. All this noise did not seem to worry the panther, however, for very soon, and to my surprise, he appeared

walking softly up to the kill below me. I heard some extra loud shouts, so did he, and he turned to listen. I shifted my position quietly as I put up the rifle. In doing so I knocked it against a small branch and made a slight noise, which he heard and looked up instantly. He saw me, started and jumped away and was turning to go off when I pulled the rifle on him and snapped. He disappeared with a big bound over a bush and into thick stuff where I could not see him, but there were sounds of snarling, and I thought I heard him rolling about. He tried to get up and I saw his spots through the leaves and fired at him again. The workpeople and a whole crowd from the bazaar all swarmed up and were running on to the top of him before they knew if he was alive or dead, and one man among them was holding up a tape measure, all ready to measure him on the spot! It was all I could do to keep them back, as they were making such a din and clamour they could not hear me shouting at them.

They got to within a yard or two of him while I was unable to see him, and he certainly would have been on them if there had been any life left in him. So I fired another shot at the spot where I thought he lay and jumped down with the rifle ready; but he was stone dead.

The man with the yard measure made him out a very fine panther of seven feet; and I ought to have left it at that, as I could not find the elastic part of his tape, which in my hands could not be made to stretch more than 6 ft. 5 in.

All this happened in brilliant sunshine and I was back in the bungalow by five o'clock. On the way home a large langur monkey saw the panther, his natural enemy, being carried along underneath the tree in which he was sitting. He got very much excited and angry and began to chatter and swear at him, and he kept pace with the procession, in which a lot of other monkeys joined; they came along swinging themselves overhead from tree to tree for quite half a mile, using violent language all the way home.

The second occasion was when on the way to church one Sunday morning the church servant met me with beaming smiles. He said that a calf, belonging to the baker, had been killed and dragged through the church compound and over a little wall, under which he now lay. He had the first news of it, so it was clearly our panther. I went to see, and a small half-eaten calf lay, as he said, just under the wall that divided the church compound from that of a bungalow. Servants' houses were within a few yards of the spot, and I went to ask leave from the owner of the bungalow to put up my *machan* in one of her trees. She allowed me to do it, but said it was no use going to sit up till ten o'clock as the servants would be going backwards and forwards bringing dinner, and continually passing with lights, besides there being a glow from the cook-house fire. I went in the evening to see if the *machan* was put up properly, and arranged and lighted a shaded lantern exactly over the kill. Two men were set to watch if the panther came, and keep him off



if he did come, until I arrived. They did *not* watch, and when I went about nine or ten o'clock, I found that he had already been and had moved the carcase from under the rays of the lantern. It was a great wonder that he had not taken it away altogether. We found it only a few yards away, and I told the men to drag it back under the lamp, making as much noise as possible, to show the panther there was no deception. They were glad to be able to talk loudly, and there was great shouting and clearing of throats too, as they thought the panther was probably in the near vicinity; it was a relief to me as well to talk, as I wished to use a little forcible language at once to the two coolies who were told to keep watch and had so nearly spoiled everything.

The remains of the calf being replaced, I climbed up into my tree and the men went noisily away, the cook-house fire was put out and the doors of the servants' houses were closed. Soon there was a rustle among the dead leaves on the ground, then there was stillness for an hour or more. The next thing I heard was the rattle of a loose stone on the wall and something sprang over. After a short pause the panther walked up to the kill. He looked round cautiously on all sides, then put his nose down on to the calf to begin his much-delayed dinner. The gun went up and he went down, sinking very slowly, like the dying hero on the stage. I was shooting with slugs out of the 20-bore gun, and fired both barrels almost simultaneously at his head.

Mrs. R. was hustled out of her bed to see the panther, and the baker, who claimed part ownership

in him—it was *his* calf that had been killed—asked to be allowed to drive it back in his victoria, which he had kept there ready, to the bungalow, where we arrived about midnight.

I believe there were all sorts of yarns going about the station after this, such as—“During evening service at about half-time, the padre paused and said, ‘We must now bring the service to a close. I see it is drawing near sunset and the panther may soon be expected; so it is requested that, under the circumstances, the congregation shall retire quietly and disperse as quickly as possible so as not to alarm the animal should he be near.’”

Sultan, an ex-policeman, who had often been out shooting with me in this district, came into the bungalow at Satara one day to see the skins. He was a very knowledgeable man in jungle matters and I was much interested in seeing him point out the differences at once in the leopard skins that were hanging on the walls, and giving histories of where each one lived. There were three sorts there, he said, of identically the same animal (panther and leopard being, of course, two names for the same animal), which only varied under the conditions in which they lived. “This,” pointing to a big one with short fine hair, “does not live in the forest at all: he is only to be found in hot open places where there is no shade, especially bare rocky hills, and he grows to a great size. He is called *kerkla*, or *kerka btboa*.” This was so, a panther shot in the Ahmednagar district. “That one”—another big one shot in Kanara—“is extraordinarily stealthy, he never

lets himself be seen and keeps hidden in the jungle. You can only see him when he moves. He is *asnt* or *asna biboa*, or *ashna bibta*. The others are all ordinary biboa, and are generally smallish, the kind that live about here."

Another shikari, Rama, of Mahan, told me their names but did not point out their differences; *ashna bibta*, *dutta bibta*, *karrt bibta*, and *ushla bagh*.

I was sitting over a kill one evening when two wild dogs came. The men told me afterwards that they were called *kultss* or *kultssra*, and that they were *not* wild dogs, but I am pretty sure they were. The shikari told me a curious story about them, which was, "All animals are afraid of *kultssra*, even tigers, which they can kill, and this is how they set about it. When they prepare to attack, first of all they stale, and wet and rub their bushy tails in this, then several of them go up together to a tiger or panther and swish their tails into his eyes: this smarts and blinds him, then all the *kultss* can go safely in and rend him." The Ranger said he had seen *kultssra* tearing up a panther who could not get away because he could not see which way he was going and seemed quite helpless.



## IX

### A CHAPTER OF NOTHINGS

I HAD left my little companion and friend, Fretful Fanny, in the care of Captain Short at Poona, who had promised to take care of her for me when we left India, and on coming out again after a year and a half I went there to take her back, and found she had changed hands and was at Kirki. I went up to her stable and stood looking at her for a minute to see if she would take any notice of me. She did not seem to know me, so I went into the box and spoke to her; she looked round at once and came up and licked my hand and then lifted a fore foot, holding it out for me to take: it was a trick that she had taught herself and a thing she always did whenever I went into her stable with lucerne grass or anything nice to eat. The syce had just come up and I said, "The mare still shakes hands then when you or the sahib goes up to her?" He said, No, that he had never seen her shake hands before and they had no notion that she ever did it. But I was very much pleased to get such a warm welcome from her.

She was a sensible pony; she called me back one day to the stable by her stampings and short little neighs; she was turning her head and looking round at me—clearly calling me. I had given her some

carrots and then left her eating one. I went back to see what was the matter; the last carrot had fallen from her mouth and her head was tied so short—she was just going to be groomed—she could not reach it. When I picked it up and gave it to her she was quite satisfied. She was one of those big-hearted horses, always ready to do more than she was asked, wanting to go off the moment she was mounted, and as much pleased to go away from home as when her head was turned towards her stable.

I used to see her fed, to make sure that Suki, the syce, gave her the right amount and that she got it all, and it often happened in camp that she and I fed together, as I dined and breakfasted outside, and she and her bucket of corn were brought up in front of me. Fanny always finished first and then Suki let go of her and she walked up to the table to see what I had got and if there was anything for her. She had very good table manners and stood waiting, often with her head over my shoulder, till I showed her what she might have on a plate on the table: and I tried her with all sorts of things. She always finished up my bread and potatoes for me and managed to lap up milk out of a saucer, without making much mess either; she had rather a fancy for macaroni cheese and licked the plate round very clean when she had eaten it all; then rather reluctantly would be taken away by the syce. It grew to be a regular thing for her to come in to dessert.

As we were riding one morning we went through a village where I saw some very curious and striking

designs on the wall of a house—frescoes they might be called—of most remarkable-looking animals. I stopped to have a look at them and ask what they were supposed to represent. I could not very well understand the mixed language the people spoke, so one ingenious man started to imitate the various noises that each animal made, and then a lot of them joined in. It afforded the greatest merriment to us all, except to Fanny, who could not make out what all the noise was about. She was tired of waiting and turned her head round to bite at my foot, as she playfully did sometimes, to ask what we were stopping for. She somehow got her teeth and the ring of the bit firmly entangled in the stirrup, which frightened her a good deal, and she waltzed round and round trying to free her head, her neck twisted against her side, which fixed the stirrup all the tighter in her mouth. I slipped off, while Lal Singh, the forest guard, got hold of her and she nearly threw herself down and got in such a panic that it was almost impossible to help her. Fortunately the stirrup strap, which must have been rather rotten, broke, and even then it was with some difficulty that we managed to disentangle the stirrup from her teeth and bit.

The first place I went to shoot was near Yeotmal, but the jungles were so infested with wild dogs, all the game was driven away and I could get no news of any tiger being about. Wild dogs killed one or two of my baits and it seemed no use tying up anywhere, the jungle seemed full of them. The forest guard found a litter of eleven puppies and



brought them in. Their wild dog mother must have been furious when she came home, probably with food that she had hunted for them, and found them all gone! They were about a month old—funny little cross things—and how nasty they did smell! I would have taken two of them if I could have borne having them in my tent.

The young cook I had with me, Shadrao, had very bad fever for some days, his temperature keeping up at 104, so that he was very ill and rather delirious. One night when he was at his worst, between twelve and two o'clock, he saw the devil. Shaitan came to him and began to beat him; he had hard hands and long fingers, and the fingers were all like black sticks; and he went on and on, beating him for a long time.

The servants told me this in the morning with solemn faces, and were very much frightened, even Govind thought very badly of it. Govind is my boy, but likes to be called "Butler." The servants said they had already called the village specialist and he said it was necessary for him to have a young chicken to exorcise the devil, so I ordered one to be brought. When all preparations were made for the cure of Shadrao, who was lying in a small hut, the doctor or priest came in with his chicken, which he gave some one to hold for him until the time came for its use. He took handfuls of rice and flour and came and stood in front of the cook; holding the flour and rice very carefully, he made passes with it close to the sick man's face for some minutes. When this was finished he called for the chicken. He

said he had to throw it up in the air; if the chicken dropped down, then it showed the devil was still there and the cook would die; if it was able to fly upwards it would drive Shaitan away, and the cook would recover. We all looked on with the deepest interest. The small fowl was thrown upwards and I must say it was a very close thing; it was just big enough to fly. It rose a very little in the air and then fluttered down. It seemed, however, that was sufficient to qualify. In a voice of relief—we were all relieved—the man said all was well and the boy would not die.

He didn't, but, as I rather callously, perhaps, seem to have written in my diary, "for all the good he is to me he might as well have done." He *was* rather a poor cook.

I managed to change cooks as I was stopping at a town on the way to my shoot near Balod, though it did not turn out to be much for the better. I had sent the new cook on ahead in a cart with my tent so as to be ready at the next camp when I arrived. As I followed, several men came up to me on the road and one of them showed a very much swollen arm, and they all had various bruises and marks about them. They said they were travelling and had several bottles of *arak* with them, and the cook and *chaprassi* had fought them to get it. My men had stolen and broken some of their things, drunk all the liquor and were now lying dead drunk on the top of the cart, which was only a mile or so in front, where I rode on and found them. As the local people were so angry about it, I thought some

punishment was indicated, so I had the two men hauled out of the cart and laid by the side of the road to do, when able, the rest of the march on foot; and I hoped that would *learn* them to get drunk!

I shot a few duck and snipe on a large tank on the march and, as I was not far from the railway then, sent them off by train to friends in Nagpur. The coolie who took them in to the station had plenty of time, if he travelled at night, to walk his fifteen miles and hand them over to the guard of the mail train passing in the morning. I suppose he loitered on his way and probably used the nice soft ducks as a pillow. He came back after five or six days bringing a dirty crumpled bit of paper with him that he handed to me. It was the railway receipt from the station-master, and on it was written, "Three dead birds received, ducks, stinking, bad smell!" I hope my friends appreciated them.

After a few marches we arrived at our standing camp; the ground for it was a good one, level and covered with nice short grass and there was a shady tree to put the tent under. I found that Fretful Fanny's shoes had to come off as her feet were getting long, and, as there were no shoemakers for her in those parts, the village *kotwal* sent for a blacksmith. The blacksmith ran away and hid as he said he was afraid of horses and did not know the work, but he sent some of his tools. The *kotwal* suggested a goldsmith if I thought he would do! The goldsmith did not mind coming and brought some funny tools with him. I showed him what to do and mostly how to do it, and between us, with help from the syce,



we took the shoes off—rather a lengthy business—and she went barefoot on the softish ground.

We went for a gentle ride one morning while her feet were hardening, and I felt something terribly prickly all round my neck. I put up my hand but could feel nothing. Then I touched my eyelid and that began to prick too. I touched different parts of my face to try to find out what it was, and everywhere my finger went pricks started: it was like a nightmare! I opened my collar and a large, black, hairy caterpillar fell out. He was an awful beast, as dangerous as a tiger though without the excitement. The itching was dreadful, and I had to turn and come back at once. I told Govind to try and take the hairs out of my neck. He found some, but most of them were too small to see or get hold of. He searched in boxes for a looking-glass so that I might try and take them out, but I had forgotten to bring one with me (I did not happen to see a reflection of my face for some months, and when I suddenly saw it in a glass, in the railway train, do not remember feeling very much elated), but he found a small broken bit that the cook had for shaving purposes, and gave it to me, but I could not find them either. He suggested soap and water and I scrubbed round hard with a nailbrush and rubbed in grease, but I was really miserable for some days with the wretched itching and burning, and then I suppose the hairs wore off.

To add to the discomforts, after being mauled by a caterpillar I was evicted by ants, the long red thin kind. I came home from seeing the baits next

morning and was undressing for my tub when I noticed ants running about in all directions, then they began to run over my feet and also to nip pretty hard. I flung on a dressing-gown—more ants in that! I rushed outside and shouted for all the available servants and coolies and they came running up. They tried to beat the ants off me and soon were covered with them themselves. We looked at the tent and the top of it was thick with them, hardly standing room. They were swarming down a branch that touched the tent roof, using it as a bridge, and another stream of them was coming in along the ground. The men tried to burn some grass round the tent, but that was no use at all, and we were all hopping and skipping about in our endeavours to avoid them. The tent had to come down, so some really valiant men ran inside and dragged out one thing after another, being badly bitten all the time. They pulled up the tent pegs, the tent fell with a crash and they dragged it off and spread it out in the sun. I stood at a distance trying to knock off the remaining ants, quite overcome with their bites and the swollen blotches left by the caterpillar that were now turning into thousands of little red marks. The ants happily did no permanent damage to any one. I sat homeless and bathless out in the middle of a field, while the servants burnt the place out where the tent had been standing. A sort of Punch and Judy show happened to come to enliven me while I was waiting. An Indian girl came up with a basket, out of which she took a doll whose head waggled by means of her hand; and she

talked to it and said a great many things for it in reply, which helped to pass the time. When the sun had driven the ants away from the tent the servants pitched it again under a carefully selected tree, and where no branch could come in contact with it.

I remember once being stung by a scorpion as I was changing my clothes before dinner, and on throwing a skirt over my head I felt a very severe sting on my arm. I flung off the skirt, searched it and found a scorpion in its folds. I had no remedy handy, but remembered a cure that an Indian had told me of shortly before. It was first to kill your scorpion, cut him up fine and apply him to the wound, as, the man said, every animal has an antidote for its poison in its own body. I did this, reducing the scorpion to a sort of potted meat with my knife and laying it on my arm like a poultice. I turned my sleeve up, so as not to interfere with the arm, expecting every minute to feel severe pain and anticipating a poor chance of enjoying my dinner or night's rest.

My brother Ned and I were out together and during dinner he asked me a good deal about my symptoms in a heartless and cold-blooded manner. Then for no apparent reason he changed the subject and talked about the view from our camp, how picturesque it all was, and the delightful rippling of the small stream that ran close by us. It was pitch dark and no view was to be had then, besides I was fully taken up with the importance of my sting. I told him I could see nothing beautiful and he could go and sketch all that he saw next morning if he liked.



“ I wasn't thinking of making a sketch, but there is a very pretty, cool place under that bamboo and near to the stream; I've never seen such a pretty or more suitable spot, do you think that is where you would like to be buried? ”

I had not yet thought so far into the future, and besides I have always set my heart on being cremated—in fact I have gone so far as to ask my husband to have it done if it is not too expensive, but he has a bad memory and I am sure will forget—so consequently Ned and I had a few words over the matter. We agreed, however, that his kind and thoughtful (he put in the “ kind and thoughtful ”) selection was quite passable.

Oddly enough I felt no pain, ate my dinner and slept as usual, and in the morning took off the remains of scorpion, underneath which there was left a dark red mark, rather swollen.

To return; we were starting to tie up a bait one evening when on passing a village some cowmen called out to us to come. They had been driving their cattle home, when the herd shied away from a clump of bushes and bolted off; when the men went to find out the cause they saw a dead panther lying stretched out. It was only just dead, almost warm and had not begun to stiffen, and it had a great many maggots about it; there were long wounds and many scars on the body also full of maggots. On skinning it we could find no bullet holes, and the shikari said it must have been attacked by a tiger. I told the Forest Officer afterwards about it and in a letter he said that it must have been a tiger that

mauled it, as he had several times come across the remains of a panther killed by one, and once shot a tiger over the remains of a panther.

The cowmen said that they had heard another panther roaring round about and he would probably come back to look for his mate, so I settled to sit up over a goat. There was no suitable tree near, so a small pit was dug for me to sit in and covered with a few branches, leaving a peep-hole in front. The goat that they brought had been killed—I forget how—but not so very recently, and I had to sit with my nose close to it; it was bad enough anyhow, but when the wind blew my way the smell was rather terrible. I was hoping to see a dark form come between me and the stars, but nothing came, and after a few hours' watching I gave it up as the smell simply drove me home.

Before we left this camp I shot a tigress; she was shot in the ear and the bullet made absolutely no mark on her skin anywhere, and there was no sign of blood. Lal Singh looked all over her body for the bullet hole and all the men were astonished not to be able to find it; they would not altogether believe me when I said she died from fright and they only found the broken bullet when they were cleaning the skull.

After the tigress was skinned the carcass was dragged away and left in an open field in front of the tent, and there was a great fight for the meat between the vultures and two village dogs. The pi dogs arrived first, then the vultures and *chills* came swooping down from the blue and sat round in a big circle,



not quite daring to go in and drive the dogs off. After a time the vultures could stand it no longer and half a dozen of them would make a rush in, and the dogs, half afraid of them too, would try their best to keep them off by snapping and jumping at them. Both sides were getting much annoyed with each other; the black pi dog charged a vulture who was venturing too close, and caught hold of, and held on to, a bunch of its feathers between his teeth, while the vulture seized him with its beak. They had a great tussle, the vulture trying to get away, which eventually it did minus many feathers. When the dogs had eaten their fill they retired to a short distance and the big birds were all round the carcass in a second, tearing and squealing and crowding in on each other, with their large wings half spread out. In about twenty minutes there was not a vestige of meat left, and nothing was to be seen but the backbone and ribs. The leg bones had been torn off and dragged away. The contented vultures sat about on the trees around while a few of the weaker ones, who had not been able to push their way in, still sat and pecked the bones.

Near our next camp a cow was killed while grazing in the middle of open fields; the owner was sure it was killed by a tiger and wanted me to sit up over it, but there were no convincing teeth-marks in the throat to prove that it *was* a tiger. However, I arranged to sit up that night in the only tree there was, which was really too far from the kill to be of much use for a night shot. There was a very good moon and after a long wait a hyena came and feasted,



then a second one came and, while one eat, the other one sat and watched. After they had finished what I should have considered several substantial meals they ran round and round the dead cow, and then had a glorious game in the bright moonlight, rolling about and tumbling over each other; they screamed and laughed and cantered away, circling round, and then began their games all over again. I dropped off to sleep in the middle of it, but their noises and screaming woke me up every time. Towards dawn they went off and a small animal that looked like a tiny leopard came to feed. It crept inside the carcass of the cow, but kept constantly popping its head out to look round and see if all was safe, and the moon lighted up its eyes, which shone out against the dark background. Lal Singh said, in the morning, it was what they call a *chitwa*, and not the *tendwa* of the large kind. I think I had seen its picture on the walls of the fresco house, but it did not make the beautiful noises the village people had done in imitating it.

I had only a few more days in those jungles and had no more luck with shikar there; the journey back was rather troublesome, Fanny went lame, the buffaloes that were drawing the carts took it in turn to run away or lie down and refuse to go, and on arrival at the last camping ground a violent thunder-storm came on and soaked everything through. And it was here, too, that after amusing myself with playing a game of chess, cut out of the *Field*, and putting the pieces away, the poor white queen was forgotten and dropped, and she lay out alone on

the ground all night long, an easy and helpless prey for any prowling beast that might come. Luckily I found her there before I left in the morning, soaked in perspiration, or it may possibly have been dew.

## X

### A CENTRAL PROVINCE TIGER

WE had been unsuccessfully tying up baits for tiger at several places round my camp, and I went round with the man selecting what we thought might be more likely spots. By the advice of the village *kotwal*, we had also sent to tie up about six miles away at Ranta, in a jungle which I had never been in.

We were coming home late in the evening, when two or three Ranta men came running up in a great state of excitement. It seems they had tied up the decoy bullock at the very edge of the jungle. The jungle covered a good-sized hill, a mile or two long, skirted by open fields. They had tied up securely by the side of a small dry nullah, and had then left the place and had hardly gone sixty yards when they heard a growl and a scuffle. From their account, I do not think they waited a moment to listen but took to their heels.

I asked what time of day this happened. They pointed, as is their custom, to the height the sun would be at about four o'clock. They added that, after a time, they plucked up courage, and collecting one or two more men, they ventured back to the edge of the jungle. But from a distance they could see



no sign of the *bail* and made out that he had disappeared. Then they came in quickly with the news.

"It's a panther," I said.

"No, sahib, we are certain it is a tiger."

"But it is much more likely to be a panther, to come so soon and to be so bold—when you had scarcely come away!"

But no, they were convinced it was certainly a tiger. Lal Singh, the forest guard, the village *kotwal* and I talked it over. They said it would be best to send the men back to the jungle, telling them to call at one or two villages on the way and arrange for coolies to beat and be in readiness early next morning. Meanwhile, we would bring along a contingent from a village near camp and our own men. So off the party went. I thought, perhaps, as every one knew of our plans the day before we might make an early start, about ten o'clock; but one knows the ways of the native, and I was not surprised when nobody turned up next morning.

I sent out again to tell the men to come at once and promised that they should be back for their dinner.

They were generally willing to beat in this district and they beat fairly well, but now they waited to eat their long, leisurely midday meal and then came straggling into camp.

In the cold weather the days are short and I was getting rather sad about the whole affair. With six miles to go, it began to seem a hopeless chance of arriving before sundown.

The headman hustled thirty men out of our

village, saying we should never get enough, and that we could not do with less than two hundred in such a big jungle. Eventually they moved off.

The syce had been taken ill with something of the nature of pleurisy, so I had sent him to a distant hospital in a cart. (Poor man! he hated going and the jolting gave him great pain.) So I saddled Fretful Fanny and soon caught up the beaters, and when we reached Ranta a small sprinkling of coolies had arrived.

While waiting for more men, I went to see the spot where the bullock had been tied. The place was practically in the open and I followed the track along which the animal had been dragged for a short distance. I rather wanted to see the kill in order to find out if a tiger or leopard had to be dealt with, as in my experience a tiger invariably begins to eat at the hind-quarters—the rump—and a panther at the stomach. If it was the latter, beating would probably be useless and I should have to sit up over the remains. The trail, however, went too far into the jungle and I did not wish to disturb that; nor had I time. I still held to the idea that it was a panther we were after; but I was wrong.

The *kotwal* asked me to choose a tree to sit in and to make arrangements for the beat.

As I had never ridden out in this particular direction, I knew nothing of the lie of the land, but I agreed to go and look at any place suggested. The local talent in shikar knowledge gathered together, decided matters, and we at once started up a steep rocky path, leaving the beaters behind. We took

with us a short ladder and a *khatiya*, or small string-laced bedstead, to be tied up in a tree for me to sit in.

At the top of the hill we dived silently into the forest some hundreds of yards, and arrived at a big tree which the head Ranta man said was the best place for my purpose. A more unlikely looking spot I never saw. In front, stretching for about a mile, was a wide rocky ravine running down towards me, thickly covered with trees and undergrowth. Then, below us, this nullah was cut at right angles by another running straight across our front. If the tiger was beaten down the long ravine, he would have to cross nullah number two and climb a long hundred yards up a steep, fairly open slope to my tree.

"No good, useless," I said; "go lower down and I'll sit where the nullahs join."

"No, this is the best place; where else could the sahib go?"

We compromised, and I found a tree more or less suitable, rather lower down, but still too far from the nullah to make certain of a shot.

Time was getting on, so up went the *khattya*, and it was firmly fixed with ropes some twelve feet up.

We settled where stops were to be placed, taking great care to have extra men to guard the exit by either end of the cross nullah. Then we hurried back to the village to collect the beaters and found that by that time a hundred and forty men had assembled. That was cheering, and they went off in parties under Lal Singh and the *kotwal*, while I returned and



clambered up my tree, taking the D.B. 500 Express rifle and 20-bore gun with ball.

There was absolutely no sound for a long time. The beat must have started a mile away, and I sat and *listened* to the silence, as it were! It was not until four o'clock, when the sun was getting very low, that I heard distant shouts. The yelling and shouting gradually became louder. The men got fairly near and I began to think the beat was blank till a stop tapping his tree on the right made my heart beat. I think the heart-beating time is the mystery of knowing or hearing something is afoot, before seeing, perhaps, a harmless peafowl. But the moment anything comes into sight, I forget myself and do not even remember that I have a heart.

The shouting of the beaters continued, growing louder each minute; then there was another tapping at the junction of the nullahs, and I heard a voice, very low and gentle, saying, "*Jao, jāo, chale jāo!*" "Go, go, get along!" It was the forester telling the *bagh* to come my way.

Another long pause and certain indications that the tiger was sulking in the hollow, and very angry that both his intended roads were cut off. But the beat still came on. Then suddenly there was a loud, furious, snarling growl and a great striped thing charged out of the bushes below, straight up towards me. He came bounding along, sixteen annas to the rupee, with back first arched up and then extended at each stride. There was no time for a steady aim. The rifle was at my shoulder, and as he passed to

my left, I fired. He took no notice and I gave him the second barrel. Had I missed? Oh, horror! But he carried on for only a few more strides and rolled over with a roar into some bushes. He lay there snarling for a short time and I could see nothing of him.

A stop up in a tree called out :

“The *bagh* has crawled away down the hill, back into the nullah, where he is lying.”

The beaters had stopped after hearing the shots, and it was a relief to see them all climbing up the handiest trees they could find. And they *did* climb, some of them thirty and forty feet out of harm's way. Lal Singh and the *kotwal* had made a detour and came up to me from behind and I climbed down.

“Where is the tiger now?” shouted Lal Singh.

“Gone into some very long grass close to thick jungle and I can't see him.”

We talked matters over in whispers. We could not follow a wounded tiger into long grass, and we could not wait for an hour to give him time to die or stiffen on account of the failing light. So I gave orders that all the men were to return to their homes, giving the *bagh* a wide berth (as they knew where he was lying up) and we would leave him till next day.

We found that they had nearly all gone already, not fancying a wounded animal in long grass. No more did I.

We were standing in a group and I was at the ready for a shot in case of need.

I turned to go, but there was a certain hesitation and whispering among them, and Lal Singh said :

“ But, sahib, how about Nur Singh ? ”

“ Who’s he, Nur Singh ? ”

“ He is one of our men, and he is up a tree exactly over the tiger and he dare not come down.” (Come down ! No, I should think *not* ! ) “ If he falls in the night, what then ! ”

“ Well, call to him and find out what the tiger is doing.”

“ He is not able to speak. He has lost his voice through fear.”

No, we certainly could not leave Nur Singh to his fate. What an awful night for him ! It was unthinkable. Something had to be done, and that soon. We must make the tiger *charge* if we could ! That was the only way out of it that I could see.

The men went up into trees again and shouted. No result. We called out to the poor man and told him he should not be left to the tiger and darkness, and eventually bucked him up so much that his voice began to return, though it was a very husky voice.

Meanwhile we were getting nearer the long grass, Lal Singh climbing trees to try and get a view, the *kotwal* lying down to peep under the bushes and a plucky little man in a black coat, only about five foot high and slight to match, and who climbed like a monkey, venturing nearer than any one until I called him back and then made them all get behind me.



“ I can see him, Huzur,” called Lal Singh from a tree, “ there he is in the grass under those red leaves.”

Another man said he could see the stripes and tried to point him out. I could see nothing, but the tiger happened to move, and then sat up. I had a clear view of his shoulder, fired, and down he went snarling, lost again in the grass and shifting his position.

Nur Singh now found his voice :

“ I can see him, right under me.” And then presently, “ Now he is lying down as if he was asleep. Now he has got up. Now he is saying, ‘ Gurr—gurr ’—very angry.”

I fired several shots at the grass I saw moving. Nothing happened.

“ What’s he doing now, Nur Singh? ”

“ Lying again, like sleep.”

We were now about thirty yards from him. One of the men said he could see him plainly from his tree. They were all in trees now, and I found I had come to the last two cartridges on me. How stupid and careless of me !

The little man in the black coat had the cartridge bag, so down he scrambled, replenished my stock and then helped to hoist me into a wretched little tree that swayed about, where I was only some five feet from the ground, but from which I could really get a clear view of the tiger. Black-coat had time to scramble back before I fired. There was an answering roar. The *bagh* was lying on the bank of the little nullah, on the far side. I shot again, and then, with fine courage, he came out at me with a

rush—such a bold charge—down the bank. His rush was stopped by his falling head over heels into the nullah.

I realized in a flash, and rather late in the day, my precarious position in the small swaying tree, clinging on by my legs. He was up again, but not before I had time to reload. I got in another right and left. Down he fell again and lay there, but this time only raised his grand head, and we looked each other in the face.

I managed to get a steady shot into his head. He was down and out.

What rejoicings there were, and salaamings and noise and yellings! The men came scrambling down from their trees, so did Nur Singh, and he had to be patted on the back and congratulated. He was grinning *then*, and I laughed to see the heights from which the men were climbing down. Our following had dwindled away to about forty. We made a hasty measurement with my tape, nose to tip of tail, stretched taut—9 ft. 6 in. There was no time for any peg-to-peg arrangement; and it was well into moonlight before we got him packed and tied on to a ladder. He was a heavy massive tiger, and the bearers found him a big load as they stumbled down the stony path under black shadows. I found that I had shot away eleven cartridges, and on skinning, we found six bullet holes behind the shoulders, three on each side (several rather too low), one in the thigh, one in the fleshy part of his neck, another had grazed his foot, and there was a slight wound on the

forearm. There was one in his ear, going into his head, which must have been the finishing shot. The heart had a shallow rip up the side, and lungs and liver were an absolute mush. One shoulder was broken to bits; that must have been after he fell in the nullah. And to think that he was able and plucky enough to charge on the top of all this! *Shame!*

As we walked down the hill I suddenly realized that it was a very cold night and then found that I was simply soaked in perspiration. On the way I tumbled over a rock, and was just scrambling up, when I was seized by many hands, dragged to my feet, and almost carried along to the village.

On our arrival there was more excitement, women and children of course all turning out. I went off to a shed to saddle my white pony and tried to start, but the road was blocked by many Indian women holding a rope across it, and with much laughter refusing to let me through till I had paid my way.

Some outrunners had gone on ahead with the news to the next village, a biggish one, and, on arrival there, our funeral procession was met by torch-bearers and the village orchestra. Such a din! horns blowing, drums beating and shouting on all sides. Fretful Fanny was beside herself with nerves and excitement, and when she found some more women and another rope blocking her path it was too much for her. A few plunges, and the women dropped their rope and fled, and Fanny bolted for home.

We pulled up when we got well away from the glare and noise, and I waited to be shown the road.



When the procession caught me up again, the band had about blown itself out. They did not play again until our moonlight entry into camp.

The servants came out salaaming and my boy, Govind, had tears in his eyes when he saw the big tiger stretched out.

## XI

### SOME BEES

**A** FRIEND of mine, whom I will call Louisa, came to stay with us for the purpose of seeing something of camp life. She and I started, out several marches from the railway, meaning to try for both big and small game. Sometimes my husband and I had got quite good bags of quail and partridge here, but this year they were rather few and far between.

Louisa and I were out one morning and had got as far as hitting one duck and missing a partridge when, in beating up a nice bushy fence, we had the misfortune to beat out a nest of bees. I was on the side of the fence away from them, and had not an idea of what had happened when I saw Louisa, Bumps Raja, with his friend Dial, the forest guard, and a coolie all flying for their lives. The coolie on my side started to run too in an opposite direction, calling to me to come. I followed for a little way, then told him to stop and tell me what in the world we were running away from! He shouted out that they were bees, and off he went; but I could only see one bee anywhere near him and there were none on me.

The other men had all disappeared, but I heard

Louisa's voice from a distance saying, "What *shall* I do!" and saw her in the middle of a field vainly beating the air. I could not leave her to her fate, so turned back and went to the rescue. She had a good swarm of bees round her and numbers in her hair and settling on her. I picked several bees out of her hair and a good many stings out of her face, and then half of her swarm left her and came and surrounded me. Several bees settled on my face: the first one I hit at to knock him off, but only drove the sting into my own cheek—quite my own fault. After that I left them severely alone and they wandered about just as they pleased, at the back of my head, on my face, in my hair, under the eaves of my helmet; and they rather wanted to crawl down my neck, but I tied my handkerchief inside my collar to prevent them. That one sting was the only one I got, but there was a booming, buzzing noise all round us.

When we were children we were always told if ever we happened to be attacked by bees to run and put our heads into the nearest bush, and I can remember quite well a small pistol I had, with tiny cartridges, that I used to take up to the beehives—old-fashioned skeps—and shoot in at the door to see what they would do! and then fly for the nearest bush, put my head in it and wait for the attack. I grew bolder afterwards and waited at the front door, but the bees never did come; one or two perhaps might come and look out of the hole. It was rather disappointing that they took no notice at all of me or my pistol and, long-suffering as they were, went on making our honey.



At any rate I remembered this and advised Louisa to throw herself down with her head in the biggest bush she could find. She tried it, but the bush was not a suitable one, and she jumped up and ran again. I could see no bush, so lay down with my head in the longest grass I could find. She followed suit, and there we lay at a little distance from each other. The bees grew quieter when we remained still, but if one of us spoke to ask "How are *you* getting on?" there was fury again, and they started off booming and buzzing round us as bad as ever; so we kept quiet and said nothing, and must have lain there for quite half an hour.

Poor old Bumps had been much agitated. He had come back to me and tried to lie down beside me, hitting at the bees with his fore-paws and rubbing his poor nose and eyes. I tried to put the ends of my coat over his head, but he could not keep still, and finally rushed off.

We heard a noise in the distance and then voices, and a whole army of men from the village came along beating drums and empty kerosene tins, shouting and making all the noise they could, looking for us—and we took some finding! They had brought bundles of dry grass with them, which we did not see till afterwards, and laid them to windward of us and set them alight to try and smoke the bees off. My coolie came up to me—and I fancy he thought I was dead—with a thick ragged old quilt thrown over his head and covering him all up, which he flung over me, caught me by the arm and pulled me on to my feet. We walked along under it and then collected

Louisa, and all three of us sat with our heads close together while another brave man lit another fire all round us and smoked the remainder of the bees off. Then we got up and made for the village where we had left the tonga. There we found poor Dial sitting in the middle of a circle of fire and smoke; he had been stung the worst of anybody, stung wherever they could get at him. As for Bumps Raja, he did look so funny, poor man, sitting up all ready to start, on the box seat of the tonga, his nose and eyes dreadfully swelled up and long stings sticking out in every direction.

The village people set to work and pulled out the stings left in Louisa's face and neck and all Dial's, while I attended to the "Raja."

No more partridge shooting for us that day; the ponies were put in and we started for camp and ammonia, and none of us were much the worse for the adventure.

We had a series of uneventful beats and unsuccessful nights sitting up; and things went wrong for us generally. We went to a fresh camp and my tent was pitched under a beautiful shady tamarind tree, where I was laid low with fever. One is always warned not to camp under tamarinds for fear of getting fever, but one never does heed any warning and only learns by experience, and the tent was moved next day. I have certainly camped under them since with no bad results, however. We changed camp altogether after a few days, and on arrival at the new ground, before anything could be unpacked, a most violent thunderstorm came on.

The cartmen ran away to the village for shelter, and the ponies were sent there too. Our servants did their best to get one tent up for us, we helping them, and then their own small one, and we sat soaked and shivering until dark, with water standing a couple of inches deep everywhere.

The rain began to fall less heavily and they managed to pitch another tent and open out our camp beds. The cook gave us one or two cold potatoes for dinner, and we soon waded to bed to get out of the floods. Bumps had found a low stool to keep himself out of the wet and off the ground, but it was much too small for his size and he overlapped it on all sides and looked very uncomfortable. Soon a cold wet nose was dabbed against my face and two forepaws were put on to the edge of the bed. Might he come up, or was this *too* much of a favour to ask? He climbed up with extraordinary care, trying not to wet me, and laid himself down at one side of the bed, near my feet, and at full length, so as to take as little room as possible, and he never tried to curl himself into a comfortable ball all night long. It rained all night, and the poor servants had a wretched time in their dripping single fly tent. Next morning everything was quickly packed and loaded on the carts again and we went on for shelter to a forest bungalow there happened to be a few miles away. Then one after another of the whole party fell ill with fever, and there we stayed until every one had recovered and the ground had dried up.

We were invited to go to a village to try and rid



them of a panther that had been committing great depredations among the flocks and herds. He had grown so bold that he had come into the middle of the village one night and stolen a calf. All the people would give every assistance if we would come, they were so anxious to be rid of him. We tied up for several nights before the goat was killed. I went to look early one morning and found the panther had only just left as I came up: the goat was still warm and had only a small fillet bitten out of its shoulder. A ladder was put over the kill at once to be ready for the evening, and I went down to sit up about five o'clock: the place was very close to the village, so he could not be expected to come very early. The sun set, silence settled down and everything was very still for an hour or more. Suddenly the silence was broken by a curious scream, something like a child's but not quite like, and some very sad cries followed by wailing—weird sounds they were. A monkey, not far away, too, said angry words. There was another long wait, and then I saw in the moonlight an indistinct shadow steal up to the goat: it was the panther, and without a moment's pause he began to tear away at the flesh. I did not give him time to finish his supper and he very soon lay dead. The whole village turned out to see him, and he was carried back to camp, a crowd surrounding and a long procession following him, all abusing him and calling him murderer, thief, rascal, *badmash*, every bad name they could think of.

This is quite an ordinary story, but what was curious about it was the cries I heard and that I

could not account for. I was surprised that the panther had been quite so long coming after dark, as she—it was a female—had no time to make a meal in the morning after killing the goat, so she ought to have been hungry. When the skinning was over I told them to cut open the stomach and see if there was anything in that. It was crammed with large pieces of undigested monkey: there was a forearm whole with its little black-palmed hand and nails intact, hairs on the back of the hand and arm all fresh and clean as a live monkey. There were large mouthfuls of legs, back, ribs, meat and bone, all clean; and however the panther could expect to crowd a good-sized goat on the top of all this monkey I don't know. It was a wonder she came back at all. The monkey was certainly not a big one, but I should much have liked to know how the tragedy occurred: did the monkey try to struggle away; had it time to make all those long-drawn cries before it was killed, a panther always being so quick over this work; or did the poor mother sit watching and wailing, all powerless to help? The bones could tell us nothing!

Bumps had been very stiff and lame after our wet camp, and one morning when we drove out to shoot quail I shut him in the high-sided bullock cart, to prevent him coming with us and using his bad leg. The sound of the guns was too much for him, he tried to jump out, and the next thing was that he lay on the hard road howling with pain: he had broken a bone near the elbow. I was preparing to take him in, a long journey, to see a veterinary



surgeon, when the forest ranger came in and said that living near was a very clever (and drunken) old rascal, who was a doctor, and who had cured his pony's dislocated hip! He belonged to the Lomani tribe; should he send for him?

I thought it would be better than jolting the poor dog along all those miles, so the Lomani came. He made a paste of small black seeds pounded up and mixed with a couple of eggs. This paste was laid on the bad leg and the leg tied in a sort of cradle of bamboos that he had cut into lengths and split down; outside the bamboos, to hold everything together, he bound oiled cotton rags. The Lomani came daily at first, to do the dressing, and then left it on permanently, but said on no account must the dog get it wet.

Bumps could get up and walk about on three legs, but was not able to lie down unassisted. When he got up to change his position at night he used to grunt for me to come and help him. I put my arms round him and pushed him into them with my chin, when he would let himself down very gently into the position he wanted. Soon he learnt to lie back against my arms without the chin drill, and then he got to throw himself into them almost before I was ready. After a few weeks he could use the leg a little and went off by himself to have a swim in a pond. At night I noticed there was a most horrible smell in my room, and it, of course, was the once hard plaster of the now rotten soft eggs: the plaster that Bumps was warned never to let get wet. I took the whole thing off, which was a very nasty



job; it was beginning to take the skin off the leg too, and I dressed it with sulphur and vaseline. Bumps went about quite happily on three legs for a time; then one day he saw a jackal, forgot all about the bad leg, put it down, started to chase the jackal and finished the hunt on all four legs. He was always a little tender on the broken one, however, when he remembered.

Near this place, another day, I shot a panther in a small beat, and he rolled over dead under a bush and into a narrow little pit there was in the ground. The beaters came up and stood close to him, asking where the panther was.

I told them I had missed and he had gone on. They looked rather disappointed, but the forest guard thought there was something mysterious about it and did not believe me. I said they were a fine lot of fools if they could not find him, at which they thought there was some joke somewhere, and began to hunt about. Two or three of them suddenly caught sight of him within a yard of them, and the startled look of horror on their faces, as they jumped aside, was most amusing to see, and the others were delighted and stood and laughed at them. They laughed and talked about it all the way home.

I remember that Louisa and I had a large supply of bananas sent us and we were eating some when we went round in the morning to see the horses. Fretful Fanny and Corkscrew were each given their usual *bonne bouche*, and then we thought we would try them with bananas. I did not expect they would like them, and I do not suppose they had ever tasted

them before, but they went quite wild about them, strained against their ropes and tried to get all that we had. The next morning they had not forgotten about them, and were all expectancy when we went out, whinnying and stamping in their impatience, and nearly tearing out the pegs of their head and heel ropes, so that the syces had to come and hold them. They had quite a feast of bananas as long as they lasted, but we threw away the skins for fear they might choke themselves in their excitement. Sugar-cane, of course, they always loved, but it was not a patch on bananas.

Louisa had a good deal of fever all this time, so could not enjoy the life as much as I hoped she would, and she had to go back for change of air and the shelter of a bungalow.

We were together once again for a few weeks in the Central Provinces. The forest ranger told us he had received word that some women, on several occasions, had been attacked by bears as they were gathering sticks, and one woman's face had been torn down by one and that they dare not go out into the jungle. The place, Kukrikone, was some miles away and the village men would be all ready to beat whenever we would come, being only too anxious that the bears should be killed.

We started off one morning for Kukrikone and, I remember, on the way there came on a very heavy shower, and a forest guard rushed up to me with an open umbrella, which very much disconcerted poor Fanny. I had to let it drop as quickly and quietly as I could. The beaters were all ready and waiting

for us, so we went straight on at once into the jungle. We had several beats and got several bears, but there was only one worth telling about, the first one that we got.

The place to beat was a widish valley covered with trees, and steep rocky hills or banks on each side : a ready-made and first-class place for beating. From the top of the rocks the men had an excellent view of any animal there might be there, and also were out of harm's way; while only a few would be required to keep along the bottom.

The places we were to sit in were arranged very quickly, and when I climbed up into my tree I had no notion of where Louisa was sitting, except that she was on my right-hand side. At first it seemed as if there was nothing in the beat, as the shouting coolies were getting near; but then appeared in front of me a fine big bear, trotting out from behind some trees. I waited to let him get nearer, as he was coming straight for my tree, and fired; he spun round and, at the second shot, fell over. He was not done for by any means, but jumped up quickly and went on through the bushes in Louisa's direction. I heard her fire two shots and the bear turned and went back towards the beaters. They made a tremendous noise all together and managed to turn him again, and he cantered heavily round in a circle, going back towards Louisa. I got a distant cross shot at him, but missed, I think, and saw nothing more for a few minutes. The bear had gone straight towards Louisa's tree, and then I heard a "click, click": she, in her excitement, had cocked her



hammer rifle, had forgotten to put in other cartridges and pulled the triggers. I heard Louisa's voice, a sound of exclamation, probably a bad word, though as I could not hear what she said this may have been only the fancy of my evil mind. I heard the shikari, who was up a tree further away, talking too. I looked through the trees to my right, and could just make out, about sixty yards away, between the leaves, the tiny little platform arrangement, high up in the tree where Louisa was sitting. Some black thing was moving, just below: the head and shoulders of a bear appeared, he was climbing the tree, his great paw was extended and he was in the act of clawing on to her *machan*, and the next moment would be clawing her. Of course she was helpless with her unloaded rifle.

Two upright branches, coming down to a fork, prevented my seeing more of the bear than his head and shoulder. There was no time to climb down and run to them, but there was just time to think that *sometimes* a rifle throws up, and remember that *sometimes* the patterns on a target go far afield of the bull, *and* above it; and that once a panther had escaped, the bullet mark being found in the rock just above him.

I pulled my knees up, rested the rifle on them, got the bead on the bear's shoulder as low as I possibly could do, avoiding the forked branches—and there was not much room to spare now between Louisa and the bear—and fired. The bear dropped, where I could not see, and Louisa, to my relief, was still sitting upright in her *machan*.

The men said the bear fell to the bottom and picked himself up slowly and went away behind us very sick. I then caught sight of him going away at some distance, and got another shot in, and he went down for the last time. I came down, climbed along some rocks rather above him, and as the men said he was not quite dead, finished him.

## XII

### WILD DOGS

I WENT to Baroda Territory to try for some small game shooting. My husband and I had shot before in those parts and sometimes had wonderful sport there. I remember one day riding out eight or nine miles to some fields that held immense numbers of grey quail, and I shot forty brace before breakfast, and then sent word to my husband to come, as the place was so good. I forget what the total bag for the day was, but we had to wear leather boots on the guns, as the barrels were too hot to hold. The quail were not wasted because we were sending them in for the use of a big guest camp.

I had no small game shooting for some time, and the next occasion was in Scotland, where I was disgusted to find I could not touch a feather, which did much more hurt to my vanity than to the birds.

The good shooting places often vary so much in India, in different years, that a good place one season may hold nothing the next. This year happened to be a very poor one, and though my shooting had come back to me a bit I never made a bag worth speaking of; and as usual the coolies were so much more intent on picking up the empty cartridge cases than the snipe or quail that often birds were lost that they should have marked down.



It was very pleasant, though, being out in India once more, and again in camp, and seeing the little striped squirrels, that Ned used to call "hairy lizards," running up and down the trees, chirruping, the seven sisters—birds, perhaps of the thrush persuasion, and about that size—squabbling away together in a bush, and the small lizards running up and down the wall catching flies and insects, and sometimes tumbling down on the ground with a smack, on their little stomachs. A rat, too, came at night: the sound of a tin soap-dish rattling and then a splashing woke me, and I got up to catch the burglar, which I found to be a wretched little rat swimming round and round in the washhand basin. It had very bright eyes and said so many little squeaky things, seeming so anxious to live, and as it had not eaten any of my soap I tipped it out and gave it a push or two with the candlestick to get it away. I thought I heard the same sort of noise again during the night when I was only half awake. I never thought, however, it could be fool enough to go back, but in the morning its foolish little body was in the basin again, and this time drowned.

I moved on and stayed in the camp of a young Raja and his brother who had kindly invited me to go to their shoot. I had to go some little way by rail, and went to a very wayside station to get the train. The station-master was very attentive indeed, quite officious, so much so that I began to wonder what he could want. He helped to move the luggage, and told me that as there was so much

it would cost a good deal to take it with me, but he thought he could arrange to make it cheap if he weighed it himself and then had it put in the van. He weighed it so well that it would have cost nothing at all if a stupid clerk had not interfered, and made out a bill for eightpence. The station-master went off to his office and stayed there for some little time, and when he came back with a paper and laid it before me asking me to sign it, I ceased wondering the cause of all this politeness. On the paper he had written in English—he knew a very little English—“ ———, Station-Master of ———, through the Almighty has the misfortune to meet such a lady gentleman and great good will accrue, but he is not man to want promotion. This man very good man and work very promptly, he is honest fellow and all othermen damn blackguards.”

I was very glad to sign the paper, certifying this was what the station-master said about himself; and I very much hope that he understood little enough English to show it to his superiors, as they might be amused.

After the train journey there was one or two hours' drive, in the state carriage, to the Raja's camp. He and his brother were there and their two wives. The Raja supplied me with everything I wanted, but I lived away from his camp in my own tent. He sent word each morning what they intended to do in the shooting way, and I went to sit with them in the evening round the camp fire. The Ranee had shot her first panther the day before I got there. She and the brother's wife lived in purdah, but they



came out shooting, starting in a closed carriage or in doolies, and after a few miles, when they were well away from the small town, all the purdahs were thrown aside; they would emerge dressed in khaki saris, and join in the sport and climb ladders and enjoy it all. The two Princes were wonderfully good riders, the Raja having won, I believe, several pig-sticking cups. They rode out to the shoots and lent me a very nice horse to ride with them. The first day I went with them I thought I had never been such a mad ride before, but soon looked upon it as the usual thing. The moment they were in the saddle they started off at full gallop, raced along for all they were worth, through little narrow paths in long grass, over ploughed land, up rocky hills and down the other side, down steep banks of nullahs with stony bottoms, splashed through the water, then scrambled out again, over sheet rock and through jungle, and never once drew rein until they arrived at their destination. Most of the way was a single path and we rode close on each other's heels. The Raja went first to lead the way, I came next in the cloud of dust his horse threw up, and what the last of the line did, when there was the dust of about six horses, I cannot imagine. The first ride was six or eight miles and the clever horses did not make a single mistake. We pulled up suddenly and jumped off. Able to speak for the first time since the start, I wanted to know what was the hurry. None, as we sat and waited for the Ranees an hour and more. The horses were streaming and looked as if they had had buckets of water thrown over them, and I said



so. The Raja only laughed and said they were used to it, and they often rode like that, all of them.

The Ranees arrived and we took up our positions for the beat. It was an enormously big one and covered a great extent of hilly country: it took over a thousand men, but it was almost impossible for them to keep in line over such uneven ground. We were to shoot at anything we saw; there was a leopard there but it broke back, some pigs and a few small deer came through, and a certain number of things were killed.

It was a pleasant time I had there; I tried to persuade the ladies to ride, but they thought it might be going rather far against the custom.

I went on to the Central Provinces and made a start from Chanda. After one or two marches I arrived, as it was getting dark, at the Weinganga river, and the cartmen said it was too late to cross as there was a good deal of water, so we waited on the bank until morning. It seemed natural to sleep in a cart travelling along, but it was a new experience to sleep in one standing still, with the bullocks munching away at their bundles of grass all round. It happened to be Christmas Eve and I felt like shepherds watching their flocks by night, all seated in a cart: however, it was very peaceful with no bumps and jolts.

Streams of mist were rising from the river in the early morning, and we had to wait a little to let the day get warm before the bullocks might go through the cold water. The river was several

hundred yards wide, deep in parts, with sandbanks here and there; there were two pairs of dug-outs near the shore, and as our carts went rumbling and tumbling down the steep sandy banks I wondered very much how these small boats were to get the carts and oxen across. Men hung on to the backs of the carts and wheels to prevent their weight pushing the little bullocks into the river. Then the drivers gently led the bullocks into the water about knee deep, they were unyoked, and one dug-out was pushed under the yoke-pole of a cart, the second boat was pushed under the back of it, the wheels taken off and the cart rested across the two boats and was lashed, and the two boats tied together. Another cart coming from the other side brought us its pair of dug-outs, and when our three lots were ready the bullocks were tied on behind, and the men poled across. Sometimes the bullocks were swimming, sometimes they floundered along, at other times they found their legs on the sand, but they were puffing and blowing before we landed. The wheels were replaced and we were soon under way again.

I camped at a place called Maleri under a sacred tree, and under which were arranged the village gods; soon after I arrived there was a procession to visit them. The men forming it were beating tom-toms and they walked several times round the tree; the centre of attraction in the procession was a man with a very large red and gold crinoline hung round his neck. He spun about in a wonderful way and danced round, salaaming all the time to the gods or, I think, to any one else he could see.



His black, thin, naked legs looked curious under the half-length red skirt. I had to promise, as I happened to be there on this grand occasion, to give their chief Devi a goat if he gave me a tiger. I was talking to a forest ranger, an educated man, and asking him about these carved wooden gods. He said, "Remember that these are jungle men. What do they know? What is the vague idea of a god to them? They must have a symbol, as is the case in every religion, and they do the best they can in carving one; and so they have something that they can really see and worship. Traditions are handed down to them and they are brought up to have great veneration for their gods : so there is nothing strange about it."

One night a panther came into the middle of the village, where there was a small house built of wattle and plaster. It had two rooms; in one a woman and child were sleeping, and in the other several goats were shut up with the door securely fastened. Some of the plaster had fallen off, leaving a few cracks and slits in the wattle; they looked about wide enough to let a small cat through. The panther squeezed through one of these, killed two goats and their two kids, and sucked their blood, but could not manage to take any of them away through the small hole. A sturdy little goat belonging to me was in the place too, and he was left untouched. The woman and child slept through it all and did not hear a sound, although on the wattle partition separating the two rooms there was no plaster at all. In the morning the woman found the goats dead. The



shikari said none of them had known a panther as bold as this before, and they were all very anxious to have him killed.

I had my *machan* put up in a tree directly over the house, in High Street, which was the one and only road through the village. The people said the panther would never be daring enough to come to the house again, and wanted me to sit somewhere outside the village, but that was because they did not like the idea of another visit from him, I fancy. The goat was tied up in the road near the house, and I did not go to my tree till ten o'clock at night, and then expected to wait a long time. The village was all excitement and the people would not quiet down, but shouted and talked till I called to them to be still and make no more noise. There was peace for a short time, and then one or two of them were so much terrified of the panther coming again that they lit a fire close to me and threw on great bundles of dry sticks, so that it was soon a blazing fire. That had to be put out, of course, and it took some time and a good deal of water before it was altogether extinguished. I did not expect any panther would come for hours after all this, but he was not to be put off. A dog began to bark outside the village, and quite soon there was a rush and a scuffle and the panther seized the goat. There was no moon, and I had a lantern to shine on the goat, so could see the sights of the rifle. The panther sank quietly down at my shot, as if he was just lying down to eat, but he let go the goat, who jumped up, ran to the end of its tether and stood looking on, a much

interested spectator. The panther dragged himself away along the road, and at the same time the whole crowd of villagers rushed out to see what had happened, and I fired one or two more shots quickly, for fear he should do them some harm. They seemed to be less afraid of a wounded panther than a sound one ! but they were delighted that the *tendwa* was killed.

The goat trotted down with me to the tent and I bathed its throat wounds with disinfectants, which it bore very well. In the morning the throat was rather swollen, but it nibbled some leaves. A little travelling shop came round, in a cart, and I bought some oil, *Tilli* oil, which Govind said was made from monkey nuts, and gave it a dose, and saw to the wounds. The following day the goat was much better, drank a good deal of water and was quite hungry for the leaves it was given, and it recovered. The men looked on in amazement at all this. They said to me, " The sahib ties up a goat as a bait for the *tendwa*, to be killed, and hopes it *will* be killed, and then takes all this trouble to save its life. We have talked about it and cannot understand. We have come to ask why the sahib does this." And I could not tell them. I allowed that it was most extraordinary, and the two things were incompatible ; but I *did* it, and it was more than I could explain to myself.

The goat had escaped twice, once in the hut, and once from the jaws of the panther, so I sent for the man who had owned it. I gave him a little medicine for it, and some baksheesh, and the goat trotted off



quite happily with its master, not ever to be tied up again.

The next camping place was close to the river Pranhita, and one heard a rushing noise of waters at night, where they ran down the rapids and then flowed gently along. There were islands in the river and otters lived on them. Two of them came and played close to me: they scrambled on to rocks and then plunged into the rapids, where one could see their shiny heads bobbing up. They climbed out, called to each other and did the same thing over and over again. As I walked along the bank several of them followed me, swimming along, then landing and plunging again; when I stopped they stopped, and it was very pretty and interesting to watch them, and I hope they thought the same about me.

There were a great many wild dogs in these jungles. One morning we had gone out to see if a calf had been taken; no tiger had come, the calf was standing there, but there were marks of dogs all round it, and a pack of them had been there. They had lain and sat round the big calf for hours, to judge by the marks on the ground, but they had not attempted to touch or go quite close up to him. We brought the calf back with us, and went out again in the evening to tie up in quite a different direction. We were walking along the Dena nullah, which, there, was about eighty yards wide, and the bed of soft loose sand with here and there a large pool of water. As we turned a bend in the nullah, Moka, the shikari, suddenly signed to me to stop: he pointed out a



sambur hind standing in one of the pools of water, about knee deep, at the far side of the nullah. She was stamping her foot and splashing, and a wild dog was sitting on the sandy shore near her and watching her. I had forgotten to take the rifle that day, and if I had had it should probably have fired a shot at the dog and seen no more; but, as it was, we sat down in the sand under the river bank so as to hide ourselves and to watch. After a time the sambur saw us and trotted off into the jungle opposite, and away from the dog. As soon as she had disappeared five more wild dogs came out of the jungle on our side, they went across the sandy nullah into the water and were following the hind, when one of them caught sight of our young buffaloes. They changed their minds and came up towards them and very near to us. They sat about and waited for some time and walked round one calf, at a little distance, but as we were so near they seemed to think it was no good, gave it up, and went off into the opposite jungle, where the sambur had gone. Very soon we heard some howling and screaming, and some terrified sambur calls, and back rushed the hind down the steep bank opposite, closely followed by her fawn with several wild dogs at its heels. The mother and fawn dashed into the pool only just in time, where the dogs could not attack them (the water being sufficiently deep) without being at a great disadvantage. In the water the sambur stopped suddenly, at once turned and stood at bay, with the fawn beside her. Two dogs stayed by the pool while the others went back to the top

of the bank and ranged themselves at equal distances along it, looking like sentries; they sat down to wait, watching carefully all the time. Another hind then appeared trotting down the bank, and she ranged herself up at the other side of the little fawn, giving it double protection.

One dog crossed below the water on to our side of the nullah; he sat down too, waiting and watching. He did the patrol work. After sitting for some minutes he walked the length of the pool, sat and waited, then slowly went back to the other end, waiting, watching. Every now and then as he passed them, one of the sambur charged him up to the water's edge, when he would just trot away a few yards, wait, and come back, beginning his patrol again. Up and down he walked, trying sometimes to drive the deer towards the pack—they had now hidden themselves in the jungle on the far side. When the dog tried to drive them the sambur faced him and stamped angrily, splashing up the water. The little fawn plucked up courage and stamped and splashed, imitating its mother, in a way that was beautiful to see. But the two deer were guarding it very carefully and kept it close between them.

This was all so interesting I had not noticed that it was growing dark: we must have been there for half an hour. One of the men who had been far behind us came walking along the middle of the nullah. This frightened the sentry dog, who went round the pool again into the opposite jungle. The deer took no notice whatever of the man: they never moved, kept to the water and fixed their eyes on

the dogs. It was time for us to go, but I wished to get the sambur into safety first. I made a long detour, crossed to the far side behind the pool, and quietly drove the hinds and their pretty little fawn out of the water, across the nullah and into the jungle on our side—the side we had been watching from, and away from the pack; and they trotted off and disappeared in the trees. And I did hope they would have plenty of time to get away after we had gone. But what of the wild dogs' point of view? perhaps they were desperately hungry!

We did not tie up that night, knowing there could be no tiger in a jungle full of wild dogs; besides, they would probably find the calf and kill it.

When I was leaving this shooting block I had rather an adventurous journey. To get to the new shooting ground the Ranger told me the best way to go was by bullock cart, eighty or ninety miles to Chanda, which was west, go by train north, change and go east, three sides of a square; and all this journey when I could see on the map I could travel north for about fifty miles and hit off the railway at a small station called Rajoli. The railway was in the course of making, and the trains ran as far as this station, so it seemed absurd to go the long roundabout way when there was this short cut. The Ranger warned me that the road was bad, that it would be difficult to get good bullocks, and there would probably be many other difficulties and no one to help. Whereas if I went by Chanda there was a high-road all the way, rest bungalows, and plenty of officials to help me to get changes of



bullocks. I had really no doubt that he was right, but it was shorter at any rate to go to Rajoli, so I said I would chance it.

It was cool weather, so we made a start after breakfast, one Wednesday, expecting to reach the Range head-quarters, that we had to pass, about sunset. However, one of the cart wheels broke, and we had to wait for hours; I sat and eat my dinner on the roadside, and we got in about eleven.

The Ranger was unfortunately away, but he had said his guards would help me. One of them was called to bring a fresh cart, but he sent word to say he was not coming, and I could report him if I liked! At this Govind and the cook went to fetch him. One of them took him by the arm, I believe, but he snatched up a burning brand and hit the cook over the head with it and burnt his hands too. Arjun stooped to avoid the blow, seizing the guard's legs, who turned a somersault over him. There were yells and screams from women and children, and men's angry voices, so I went to see what was happening. The servants were standing there, Arjun examining his wounds, and the guard was lying like a log on the ground by the side of an overturned bedstead, and to all appearance very tipsy. Happily at that minute the Ranger arrived, said the guard should be punished, and arranged another cart and oxen for us, and we made a fresh start something after midnight.

We travelled well for some hours and then there was a loud crack and crash, and one of the luggage carts broke in two and lay on the ground, the wheels

rolling away. This caused another long wait : the guard had to find first another village, then another cart. The unloading and loading up again took a considerable time as well, and we started once more. Before we had gone a hundred yards one of the wheels of the new cart slid off, and broke the iron pin that pegged it on. As we knew where to find the village this time, it did not take so long to fetch a new pin. The wheel was put in place and fastened on, and then, with the exception of stopping every ten minutes to hammer the peg into its place again, we did quite a long stretch without any mishaps, and got to a wide river about dawn. There was too much water for the loaded carts to get through, so the things were taken off, and some men who lived in a small but providential village on the other bank came over and helped to carry the luggage across, and the bullocks and empty carts followed. I ordered a rest in the village, but the servants, who had not brought enough food with them and could get nothing here, asked if we could not go on at once. So with some fresh bullocks we started again, for Nandgaon, where they had been told they could buy flour or what they wanted.

This time we travelled slowly and surely, and, after hammering our wheel-pin in about fifty times, reached Nandgaon in the afternoon, where every one had a good rest and food. I calculated, from what the people there said, that we had about ten more miles to do to get to Rajoli station, and I wanted to catch the train at eight in the morning of Friday : so I settled to start at ten o'clock that night. As we were

starting, Govind found out that the pin and wheel itself were now practically useless, so the *kotwal* of the place brought another cart for us. Our cartmen said their bullocks were quite fresh and could easily do the last ten miles. However, in the middle of the night they pulled up in a village and said the bullocks were tired and could go no farther, and they went to call the *kotwal* to give us a new relay. The *kotwal* took some waking but eventually came, and I asked him for three new pair of oxen. He said there were none in the village. As this did not sound very likely, I took a walk in the village and opened the gates of several cattle sheds, which seemed very well filled with cattle.

I looked in my pocket for a letter that a police inspector had given me, with orders to the *kotwals* in his district to give help in supplying transport. I could not find it, so went back to the cart, where I saw a copy of the *Field*. I tore a sheet out and held it up before the *kotwal*, in the bright moonlight, and told him to read the orders written there, and then let me have no more delay about the business. Of course he did not know a word of English, but the effect was magical: out came our three pair of bullocks, and, after some difficulty in starting them, away we went. Not very far though, they were absolutely raw; for some of them tried to run away, one turned round and looked into the cart, and another lay down and sulked, but, by dint of persuasion and occasional bolts, we reached the next village. Another change here, and after a mile, one of them went dead lame and another lay



down. We waited, and a passing cart was stopped and the driver said he would lend his bullocks to go the short distance if I gave him baksheesh. I gave up counting how often we changed the bullocks; and I wondered if they would ever get sorted right and given back to their respective owners on their homeward way.

At last we came out on the high-road and found there were only four more miles to do. We had to change raw bullocks for other raw bullocks even there, and travelled at the rate of something less than one mile an hour for those four miles. Of course we had missed the morning train. We at last arrived at the station at three in the afternoon. I looked forward to a bath in the waiting-room bathroom, forgetting that the railway was only just being made; the station was a small hut about as big as a match-box, just big enough to buy a ticket from; but there was a very good station-master, who helped to get up the small tent and got water from the engine for a bath. The train was in, and there were only third-class carriages on it, but he had one carriage swept out and said I could get in at once and sleep in it.

The train started at no particular time next day, but it did start, and travelled at the rate of ten miles an hour, which felt like the wildest express after the last four miles of cart. There was not far to go to the main line, perhaps a hundred miles. I had run out of food, so had the servants, and I hoped to arrive at the Gondia Refreshment Room in time for some dinner; everything seemed plain sailing, such

luxurious travelling, but then—well *then*, the train broke down ! It was after dark, and there we stuck at some lone spot for hours. It was the engine's fault, it refused to go up an incline, being too heavily loaded. It kept on trying to whistle, but was so husky it could hardly make a sound. After a time it began to puff and we ran back a few yards, and stopped again. They tinkered it up at last, and it tried to whistle again, and after various stoppages we ran back into the station we had left. The station-master said he was taking off some goods wagons, and that with luck we should get in to Gondia—some time ! We did get there. All was dark, it was cloudy, no moon, no lamps. The whole station was undergoing repairs, and I got out on to heaps of stones and mortar ; the Refreshment Room was shut up and in darkness. Govind hammered up the refreshment man and he came, looking very sleepy. He lit a lamp and said there was nothing to be got to eat at that hour, but showed me a dusty row of tins of soup. I chose Cocky-leekie, which he said was good, and he warmed it up : the leeky part was quite nice, but the cocky part of it was very tough and stringy. The mail train came in at some early a.m. time ; Govind and Arjun managed somehow, in the dark, to get all the luggage stowed in, then all was well.

## XIII

### A RICKETY HAMMOCK

THE next shoot was in the Bilaspur district, and I meant to do the first march out in a bullock cart and then ride, but the D.S. of Police was on the spot and helped me most kindly by ordering a tonga with fast-trotting bullocks to take me out. The consequence was that I arrived at my destination long before the servants and kit. It was evening when I got there and the driver set me down at the gates of the *thana*, the police station. The inspector came out to meet me, and when he heard the circumstances of the case he said that I had better stay and sleep inside the *thana*, and not wait about outside for the things to arrive. He had a bedstead brought and put into the courtyard, and alongside was a row of cells, behind the iron bars of which stood, looking on, gloomy-looking thieves and murderers, at least they looked gloomy in the dusk.

Before I could go to sleep the P.W. road surveyor came in; he said I should be more comfortable in his little hut, and so led me off to that and sent in a chair and bedstead. The servants came in at night, and next morning we started to cross the Mahanaddi, a river which in the rains is, I should think, a quarter of a mile or more wide at that place; but there was not



much water in it now; too much for the carts, however, and they stuck in the middle and we had to take buffaloes out of passing carts, and yoke them as extra ones, in front of ours, to help to drag the carts through. One luggage cart dropped into a hole, a foot or two deep, and the things on it were of course soaked, especially the banjo, all the cigarettes and a few books: the bed went under too, but that mattered least, as the canvas of it dried in a few minutes when it was opened out in the sun; but the other things were not improved. The loaded carts had an extremely stiff and rocky hill to climb over on the march, the servants had to send for more oxen, to help to draw, and they did not arrive till next day. I got in early myself, as I was riding, and a nice old Mussulman *munshi* prepared me some rice, a boiled egg and milk, when he found me starving.

When the camp was fixed up the Ranger helped to make arrangements for shikar, and a small buffalo was tied up some miles away. Early next day the village shikari and I went to see the place. We started along a broad grassy road and in the dusty ruts we soon came on the pugs of two tigers. We followed these up for a long way, beautiful, clear, fresh pugs; and we walked in their tracks so long and so far I felt as if I knew them both personally, and that they were *my* tigers. We lost the foot-marks at last, going into the jungle, and went on and found the tied buffalo was gone; we hurried back and ordered coolies for a beat.

On arrival in camp tidings were brought in by

the village people that one of their calves had been carried away by a panther and they had found the dead animal a very short distance away, and had covered it up with branches to hide it. I went off with them at once and we pulled the branches away to look. No calf! The panther had been back again, in broad daylight, pulled his calf out from under the leaves and dragged it away. We tracked up and found it half eaten, a hundred yards farther on. This time we moved the calf near to a suitable tree, tied it with many thicknesses of rope, to a stump, and covered it up again with boughs and leaves. We went back quickly to have the tiger beat, and it was a blank. It was very disappointing that my own tigers should fail me, and after I had given them a free dinner too, so I cantered back to be in time for the leopard, though I thought I did not much care whether he came or not.

We found the kill just as we had left it, so the panther had not had the impudence to take it away again. But he was a bold beast, for very soon after the men had cleared away the branches that hid the calf, and were gone, he came walking along at a good pace through the forest and came up to the place where he had left his dinner. He sniffed about and seemed rather surprised not to find it where he had left it. He then saw where it was, and without any delay came straight up to it. If it had been a small panther I would have waited to watch him eat, but he was a fine one, being over 7 ft. 10 in., so I did not give him any time for that. He fell over at the shot and as he struggled I fired

again; he jumped up and rushed, all doubled up, under my *machan*, where he fell dead.

There was a great *tamasha* when he was carried home in the dark. The women all came and took it in turn to wave a little, nasty smelling oil light three times round my face, and offered a coco-nut to the dead panther. The men had tom-toms and instruments of ten strings and danced all round and shouted for I do not know how long, but until I told them to stop.

The tiger killed again, in a jungle that the shikari said was too difficult to beat to one gun. I do not think that this was the real reason for not beating, as it seemed to me a very good lie of country to beat; but the year before two beaters had been killed and they were all very loath to do it. They made many excuses and I gave in, and arrangements were made for me to sit up all night over the kill.

I think I have said I generally used a hammock made of canvas, stretched and tied at the four corners by strong ropes to a branching tree, or two trees; it was long enough to lie down in crossways, was very comfortable, made no noise if one shifted about in it, and was good to shoot from.

The tree the hammock was tied up in was near the broad grass road, though some little way in the jungle, and there was a tiny half-open hut by the roadside. The moon was rising just before sunset when the men left and went back to the village, some miles away. They were not to come back again until after dawn. The ladder I had used was left standing by the tree, partly hidden with leaves



and small branches, the rifle was loaded and full cocked by my side.

It was growing chilly after several hours of watching, and I was just trying to put on an extra coat very quietly, when bang went one of the corner ropes, and down I came thump, landing on the back of my head and shoulders (my head seems to be about the toughest part of me—I've tested it before) on hard dry ground and roots of the tree. It was a funny feeling falling through the air, and there was just time enough to wonder what was happening as I fell: the ladder was fourteen feet long and the *machan* rather above it. I picked myself up and then the rifle, and neither of us seemed to be broken. I stood and wondered for a minute what to do next, when I heard the tiger roar at no great distance. I thought I should have to give it up, as I could not get hold of the broken rope to tie the hammock up again. It was too far to walk back to camp carrying the rifles, which I did not want to leave behind, and staying in the little hut did not appeal to me.

The tiger began roaring again, so I climbed the ladder, and then I thought I would look and see what could be done for the *machan*. After all there was no reason I should not continue my watch if I could only tie it up. There was a strong loop of rope at the broken corner, and I found the short end of a small branch that had been cut off a few inches from the tree-trunk. It was not in quite the right place, but it might do; the loop slipped over it and seemed fairly secure, if I did not move about too much. I climbed up and down the ladder, groping

in the darkness of the tree shadows to find the fallen things; the rifles, a rug or two, the water-bottle and the coat, and while I did this the tiger roared round about, only at rather a greater distance. When all the things were put back in the *machan* I climbed in myself in some trepidation, but it seemed firm and able to bear my weight. It hung in a sort of loose bag and was most cramped and uncomfortable all night, my shoulders were curved round and pressed together, making me a very round back. I hoped the tiger might come back soon, but he must have been scared away. He must also have been rather astonished if he had seen my fall, close beside his kill.

I dined precariously, but as well as I could, doubled up in this cramped position, then sat and watched. A sambur came near and, I think, a bison, but I could not see properly under the trees; there were sounds of stealthy movements several times but I do not think it was the tiger. I dropped off to sleep occasionally, but the night was very long, and I wished for either dawn or the tiger—the tiger for choice.

When morning did come I was so fearfully sore and stiff all over, but especially about the head and shoulders, that it was with difficulty I could creep out of my bag on to the ladder and climb down. When the men came they had to help me on to the pony, and I rode her home as quietly as she would let me.

The servants were much interested when I gave them a description of this curious little outing.

They looked very grave and solemn about it all and said, looking at each other, "*Han, beshak, Khuda ka bachcha,*" that I must certainly be God's "child."

It was the Holi festival that day, so shikaris, tigers and everybody else had a holiday. There was a great din, shouting and drum-beating all day, going on in the village; some of the performers came and gave me a turn, playing and dancing and splashing red paint about. They offered me a dish of paint, so I put a red spot on my forehead.

After my fall I had a pricking when I breathed, and was rather glad to keep quiet for a day or two till that and the stiffness wore off; otherwise I was none the worse, and I spent the time in putting fresh ropes on the hammock. I do not know what made the rope give way, as it was a very strong one, unless the men had cut a branch rather obliquely, and tied it round the sharp edge of it.

A new syce had come with the pony from Bilaspur; he was quite good at grooming her, but was very much puzzled over a double bridle. Fanny was brought round saddled and bridled after a fashion, but it took some time to get things right before I could make a start. One rein might be buckled on to the snaffle ring at one side and the curb on the other, besides several twists in the reins; the curb chain itself afforded him endless amusement, but he generally had to bring it to me in the long run. The water-carrier was both deaf and dumb, and worked as well or better than any one in camp; he was always smiling and in a good temper. He had come round with the Maraji troupe on Holi feast day, and beat



sticks and danced around with them all, and seemed to enjoy it as much as the rest.

We changed camp at Arjuni, and I rode there at night. Standing in the middle of the wide road, in front of me, I saw a big black thing, motionless, looking towards me. Fretful Fanny saw it too, and did not like the look of it, as she pulled up and trembled violently. We had come up quite close to it and I saw that it was a bison; we all stood and looked at each other in the darkness and then it quietly went off in the forest.

This was a very nice camp for the pony; there was a river close by, and Suki, the syce, could take her down to graze on any green thing they could find along the banks, this being a beautiful change of food in the hot weather, from the usual dry, dusty bundles of grass. On the way back there was a nice stretch of shallow river to cross, where she would splash about and lie down and have a roll. When I came back from my ride I often had to cross the river and used to jump off, unsaddle, and let her have a bath; we often rode into the water, but she never tried to lie down with me on her back, however hot it was.

The Forest Ranger had two little boys and they were sent in to ask for some quinine; one of them seemed very anxious to say something before he went, and too shy to say it, but at last he asked if they might come in to hear me play the banjo. So I gave a concert in the evening; the audience, who numbered about twenty, sat in a circle on the ground—free seats. I played a great many things, that is

to say, a few things a great many times over. I played two breakdowns and the Dead March in "Saul," as that was about the extent of my repertoire. They did not say they were tired of it and sat on; and when I asked whether they liked it they said, "Yes, better than our own music," and no wonder!

When I was camping once with my brother Herbert, we used to strum duets while we were waiting for dinner. Two young goats that belonged to the camp came trotting up when we began, and sat themselves down between us and the camp fire. We thought it was very friendly and nice of them and that they had probably come for the warmth. When we had finished playing they got up and ran off. We were very much surprised when they came again the next evening as soon as we began to play, and lay near our feet and waited till the end. We played the Dead March to them and probably the same old breakdowns; they seemed to like the classical music best, one goat nodded its head to it and shook its little tassels, and they came every evening as long as we stayed in that place.

A letter was sent from Maraji one evening to say that a tiger had just killed a horse close up to the forest bungalow—or hut would be a better name for it—and he was sitting there eating it and would not move, and I was to come over at once. That sounded quite useful, and I had visions of sitting hidden, looking out of the hut window and potting the tiger at about five yards. I sent off the rifle, hammock, rugs and a dinner of sorts with much

despatch, and galloped on ahead to try and find out for myself, while there was any daylight left, what had really happened. The Ranger, the *munshi* and a forest guard or two were waiting, and the dead pony was *not* lying anywhere near the hut. I said we would go at once to find out where it was. They seemed very uneasy and said we could not go until the guns arrived. However, they came with me and showed me where the pony had been dragged down some fields to the edge of the jungle, about half a mile, and after following among the trees a short way, we found where the pony was lying. The old *munshi* said the pony had belonged to him, and that they had all seen the tiger take it. They were sure they were right about its being a tiger because they had seen the stripes; besides, the pony was too big and heavy for a panther to take. The pony *was* quite a big one, but it was evidently the work of a panther: the stomach was cleaned out first and the ends of the ribs gnawed. If it had been a tiger we should have to wait until next day and have a beat, but as it was a panther I must make arrangements to sit up as soon as possible.

Poor pony mare! her little unborn foal was lying on the ground beside her, such a pretty little foal with short soft-looking hair, and no mark of tooth or claw on it. I felt sure that the pony had been killed by a panther, and said it would be no good beating for him next day, but that I would sit up as soon as the rifle and things came. It was now quite dark, and as we stood discussing the best way of getting the tiger or panther, the Ranger started, and said



he heard a snarl in the bushes close by, and there certainly was a crackle among the dead leaves. Panthers are generally so wonderfully stealthy in their movements they do not make a sound, but this one was so bold or so hungry he did not seem to mind treading on dead leaves. The Ranger said it would be much better to go at once to the village and wait there for the guns. I knew quite well what would happen if we did this: the panther would at once walk in, seize the pony and drag it away any distance, where we could not possibly find it at night-time, and that would be the end of the whole thing.

I told them they could go if they liked and hurry on the men with the guns, but I should stay where I was. They stayed too, and in the loudest of tones began to talk: they were quite sure it was a tiger, it was much better to go away and let him eat and we would have a beat next day—they were willing enough now to have a beat, or suggest having one, although the two men had been killed in one before—and we could go back at once. I said—and when it was my turn to speak they coughed, cleared their throats and made every noise they could think of—it was a panther kill—we heard another crackle among the leaves—and that I meant to stay and sit up—crackle, crackle, rather further away, great grunting and coughing from the men, a crackle now more behind us—and that I should wait on that spot until the guns came—crackle much nearer and on one side. It was pitch dark and we could not see each other. It was the men's turn to talk and they

all talked at once, saying that they had seen the stripes on the tiger, anything, so long as they could talk and give any excuse for returning to the village at once—crackle, crackle, now in front, the panther seemed to be walking round and round us. It was really extraordinarily interesting standing there and listening to hear from where the footfalls came. We made plenty of noise all this time, and I should think we had stood there an hour before we saw a lantern coming along, and heard voices approaching and loud shouts. My men were glad enough to shout in reply, and they shouted vigorously too, and in tones of relief. I dare say we were all rather glad to stand round the light when it came.

The ladder was put up in a large tree near and the men tied up the hammock they had just brought with them; I do not know how they managed to do it so quickly in the dark, and I tied the lantern up with the white shade reflecting down on to the pony. I climbed into the *machan* and told the men to talk loudly as they went away, but I need not have troubled to tell them that, it was a very noisy troop that walked away, and they went very fast, but there was more coughing than conversation.

The panther was in a precious hurry for his dinner. No sooner had the men gone than there was a crackling in the leaves again, perhaps thirty yards off, and long before the men's voices had died away, almost before I could load my rifle, he appeared walking slowly into the circle of light thrown by the lantern. I could see it was spots and not stripes he was wearing. He stopped and looked about him several

times, and then at the light, then he turned and looked straight up into my tree, though as he was in the rays of light and I in darkness I do not think he could possibly have seen me; but he must have heard or seen them tying up the *machan*. The night was absolutely still, not a breath of wind, and I could hear the panther breathe and I did not dare breathe myself. He turned to look towards the path down which the men had gone and stood listening to their voices, while I was able to cover him with the rifle. Then he came fairly into the light and I got my shot, which knocked him down; he gave one struggle to get up, but the next shot finished him.

I could still hear voices distinctly when I fired, but at the sound of the shot I think the men took to their heels and ran back to the village, which was perhaps the wisest thing they could do.

It was a long time before they came back and then they stood at a distance and waited until I called out that it was safe for them to come. They all had clubs or long sticks and beat at the trees and bushes as they came along, which they did noisily, they were also carrying torches with them. In the village the usual rites were performed, a coco-nut presented to the panther, a light waved three times round his head, and then three times round my foot. The men all began to disappear as orders were given for half a dozen of them to carry the big panther—he was 7 ft. 9 in.—back to the Arjuni camp. The Ranger, however, collected enough of them to do this and we all started. It was a beautiful starlight



ride through the jungle and we reached home about midnight.

On skinning the panther in the morning we found some large splinters of bone in the foreleg; it had been badly broken before by a bullet and was a good deal twisted, and the muscle was bunchy round the place. It was completely healed though badly mended; he appeared to walk quite sound on it, however.

A good many days passed without news of any sort of a tiger, then one morning we saw the pugs of one going very near one of the baits, and the next day the calf was gone. I sent the shikari out to two villages to collect coolies to beat. I have said how difficult it was to get beaters here and how much they disliked going through the jungles. The kotwal at one village sent back word to say all the men were going to the bazaar; at the other place, Kassundi, some one had taken a wife, therefore he and all his wedding guests could not come. I cantered over to Kassundi, and found the bride and bridegroom promenading in the village, dressed in bright yellow clothes, and each had a square of some loose coloured material over the head; one corner of each square was knotted, tying them loosely together. I said that I wanted beaters at once. They said that they were busy getting married that day and the next, and that they could not well come, and I noticed several of the wedding party slipping away to hide in their huts. Their excuse seemed to me a very frivolous one, so I said how unreasonable it was: they could get married *any* day, but a tiger

beat was a *most* important thing. The tiger was doing great havoc among their cattle, if we did not beat when we had our chance we might not have another, and I quoted their own words about him—"The tiger is the Raja Sahib, and obeys no one's orders." Besides this, the wedding feast would be greatly enhanced, looking at it from a money point of view, by the baksheesh resulting if we got our tiger, or the men's pay for beating in any case, and the happy couple would not be asked to join, they could stay behind. They saw my point—and we had the beat.

There was a hill on my left, and the tiger who was there tried to sneak away over it. The wedding party made a glorious noise, enough to turn him. He gave a loud angry roar and a rush, and passed me at top speed among the trees, at some little distance—and I missed him!

I sat up that night to try for the tiger. The calf had been half eaten and dragged under some thick bushes, where it would be impossible to see it at night. I wanted to find a place for the kill fairly near the spot the tiger had hidden it, where the moonlight would fall on it, and where there was a tree with sufficient leaves to hide me and enough branches to tie the *machan* in. The calf was pulled along from under the bushes for twenty yards or so, down into a stony nullah, where it was roped firmly to the stump of a tree, and the ropes camouflaged with dry leaves and grass. I was not at all satisfied with my place, it was too far from the kill and there were too many branches in the way for night shoot-

ing, but I could not better it. The moon was not good either, it was half moon and would set about midnight.

It was a most interesting night. I settled myself in the hammock before sunset, and the shikari and forest guard went off. At twilight all the various jungle noises began: sounds that every one accustomed to this sort of life knows so well. The frogs near a tiny pool in the nullah were croaking, and the nightjar making its curious call; the peafowl were saying a noisy good-night to each other, and there was a monotonous and melancholy owl also saying a good many things in a drowsy way, and in the same tone of voice. A few things came and wandered about below; it was almost too dark to see, but I think it was first a mongoose that came and then two deer. The outline of the kill grew fainter and fainter and the stars came out. By the time that I can count five stars on a moonless night I know it is time to give up and go home, as being no longer able to see anything. There was nothing but silence for a long time after this, and to go back to material, but perhaps necessary things, I was dining and my mouth was full of bread, a bit I had quietly broken off, when I heard soft velvet treading steps coming down the bank of the wide nullah opposite, and saw the faint shadow of some animal coming on into the moonlight, but only into the moonlight for a step or two, and then under the dark shadow of heavy trees, but it was in the moonlight long enough to see that it was the tiger. He went towards the place where he had hidden his



kill and must have stood there motionless for five minutes, then he came on, still in the shadow, to the spot where we had tied it. He had to cross a small strip of light and then stood again waiting several minutes, looking at the calf, although he did not go right up to it.

Now I had arranged for the tiger not to come till *ten* o'clock, as I judged that by that time the dead calf would be in full moonlight, and now he had come distinctly before he was due: the calf lay in deep shadow. As far as I could see the tiger advanced again a step or two, waited a minute, evidently thought something was wrong, and then quietly turned back on his tracks. Something had put him off; my only chance of a shot would probably be when he re-crossed that yard or two of light. When he was in the middle of it I shot, and he fell into darkness. I heard him give two bounds and he was under thick cover. He stopped and I think fell again. I tried my utmost to make out where he was; if I knew at all which dark bush he was under I might fire into it. He made another rush—only a few yards—then fell again, and another, but this time he lay for very much longer; he may have been thirty yards from me now. He wandered on very slowly next time and I heard him lie down, where he must have lain for an hour. Then he moved off slower than ever, and the occasional soft crackle of leaves grew fainter and fainter and I heard no more. A chital gave his call of warning, as did also a peafowl, so I knew that the tiger was still moving. All these calls tell one so much in the jungle.

After a time some animal came up from behind me, something of the cat tribe by the quiet steps, and made a big circle round; then began calling, calling; came towards me, back, off towards the river, round again; a tiger calling to its mate. Then it began to roar, sometimes very loudly, and called round about for an hour and more. At intervals there was more roaring farther away, until at last it died away in the distance.

I fell asleep and must have slept for a long time when I was awakened by a crunching of bones underneath: the moon was gone and all was darkness.

All I could do was to sit and listen, and I hoped the animal might still be eating there when dawn came. When grey light came, which it did soon, there was nothing, so whatever it was had quietly stolen away. Now the morning sounds began, the peafowl woke up and bird life generally. I climbed down and looked at the kill; it had been gnawed a good deal along the ribs. When the shikaris came we went to find the tracks the tiger had left. It was exactly as I had heard it all: first the place he had fallen in the bush and a spurt of blood there, drops of blood where he had crawled along, and pools of it on the ground at each place he had lain down; and he had stopped so many times. It was very open jungle where we followed and the men came on for a short way with me, then they stopped and clustered together and would not come any further. I wanted them to climb up trees and look well about, feeling sure that from above they would see the



tiger lying dead. But they all went back, saying they must have more men and buffaloes to drive before them, and dogs as well. I suppose it was no wonder they did not want to follow up when they remembered the two men that had been killed. I tracked up as long as I could see before me in the open, and called to the head shikari to help to track while I stood by him with the rifle ready, but it was no good : he came for a few yards, then slipped back to join the others. I followed blood-marks up to some long thick grass and then turned back as I could not go into this alone, both tracking and keeping a careful watch ahead. We went back to the village to collect a small herd of buffaloes to drive into the jungle in front of us. If they saw or smelt the tiger, they would form up and close together ready to attack him, or be prepared for his attack, and then one might be able to get a shot.

As bad luck had it for *me*, the Ranger was giving a feast that day to the whole village, and the feast had to be got through before I could get a single man to come with me. I was bidden to the feast too, and I asked Govind if he thought it was incumbent on me to go. He thought it would please the Ranger and the village generally. The festivities did not begin until three o'clock. The servants took over my camp table, chair, mug and plate, and I sat in the Ranger's veranda ; the Mohammedan *munshi* sat on the floor by me, the Ranger and his boys sat round the corner and all the village men sat round on the ground. The women did not eat until



afterwards, so I do not know what class I came under.

It was a very hospitable feast and I ate as much as I could; the *munshi* talked and told me the names of all the foods and what they were made of. There were split peas, and boiled curry and rice with two sorts of fresh-made chutney brought on a big leaf, a sort of pancake made with onions, sweet cakes and sugary things, and we finished up with a cup of sago. This all took a long time and I ought to have stayed to have a garland thrown round my neck, so Govind told me, and not go away in the middle of the feast, which was rather impolite and not the custom, but I did so want to get off to the tiger and could wait no longer.

There was very little time to lose, as the sun was low. The shikaris who had made arrangements about the buffaloes had them brought, and we went out to the place and drove them into the long grass, but when there the men left them, and they turned about and came back. I made them drive them in once more; this time we got some yards farther and we came on quite fresh blood where the tiger had been lying down: flies had collected and were buzzing over it. This frightened the men so much that they bolted. The buffaloes made no sign at all of the tiger's presence, so he must have moved on; they turned quietly back again, being no longer driven. The men huddled together behind and watched me, they were hopeless. It was dusk by now, so of course we had to give it up and come home. The shikaris said they were sure the tiger

was lying close to, within a few yards of us, and hiding, and they made no bones about it, they were afraid and would *not* go with me.

I went out on Fretful Fanny in broad daylight the next morning, to see what she and I could do together. We rode all round the big patch of long grass, and I could trust her to bolt if she saw or smelt a tiger; then we rode through it and came on the remains of a large pig of ancient date. We went to the spot where the last blood had been found and to where we had tracked before, and I got off and tried to track up. I could find no more blood and the grass had been trampled by the cattle so that it was difficult to make a fair start. I thought I would make a wide cast in the open jungle in front, so put my foot in the stirrup and jumped on to Fanny, who had got tired of standing still. She did wait till I was just on her back, but then started off under a bamboo, and a low, horizontal branch caught me across the chest and swept me off flat on my back. I had hold of the reins still, however, and she was kind to me and did not drag away, and we continued our search, but with no luck. I had another try or two after that, but never found him and could never even find a trace of him.

There were in this district the most violent storms that I have ever seen, and they were unexpected, it being the hot weather. The first one we had came on when I was dining outside the hut. I heard a noise like an enormous express train roaring up the valley, then came a tremendous wind bringing with it dust, leaves and bits of stick.



Govind seized the table, and everything else that he could see, and took it into the hut. I stood with my back against the door on the windy side, trying to keep it shut. There was no rain that time and it blew itself out in about half an hour. The next storm was worse: for one thing the post office at a place called Kadgi was blown away! I never heard where it was blown to or if it was ever found again, but I had to post my letters after that at another office. There was violent rain and thunder as well. I was in my tent going to bed when the storm burst. I held on to the tent pole and flapping canvas, and the servants came running and held on outside to ropes or whatever they could catch hold of. They called for the shikaris and extra men to help, as they could not manage alone. Then down came deluges of rain, and one extra big squall blew the whole tent down over me and would have blown it quite away if they had not hung on to it. It was pouring in torrents and I crawled out and splashed through a small flood to get into the friendly shelter of a hut near, soaked of course to the skin. The servants brought load after load of dripping things which they threw down in a sodden mass in the hut veranda. They *are* good, the Indian servants, on these occasions, never thinking of themselves and doing all they can for one's comfort. They were very cold, wet and miserable themselves, and I soon found quinine to give them. They had a rainproof place to go to, and I wrapped myself up in the shikar hammock which had been lying in the hut, and was, I think, the only dry thing I had. It rained all



night and I went down in the morning to look at the state of the river. I put an upright stick in the sand near the bank and was interested to see the water rising at the rate of an inch a minute. Fanny's bathing place was flooded and she had to find a new one, and mine too—I had a beautiful place where a side stream rippled along under bamboos, very shallow but away from any chance mugger, but I had to wait till the flood subsided.

All this wet and cloudy weather had made it very cool though it was the hot season; it seemed to be very unhealthy, as, from this or some other cause, illness broke out in the village; many of the people were suffering from a rash or pox of some description, all over their bodies. The cows had the disease too, breaking out under the stomach and the insides of the legs; goats had it and I think pigs as well; and even some bears that I shot looked pink and mangy underneath. The cook stopped taking any milk, as he said it was not safe to drink it, and our Indian supplies from the village we could not have. Clearly it was time to move, and the only thing to be done under the circumstances was to end the shoot and make for the railway.

The Ranger ordered some carts for me which were sent to my camp loaded with logs, and the cartmen had orders to unload the wood, and start back at once by night with the servants and luggage. There was a slight shower of rain and the cartmen went off to the village to wait till that was over and eat their food. I was called about one o'clock at night by Govind, who said they could not start as the men

refused to come: the *chaprassi* and *kotwal* had both been to fetch them and they all pretended to be asleep and would not be roused. Govind asked what was to be done next and would I come? It was a curious little expedition; I put on a dressing-gown and a pair of long boots, and Govind gave me a club to look more imposing, and we all went off to a house where, in darkness, about twenty cartmen lay asleep on the floor, and I really think, by their snores and grunts, they were sound asleep by then. The servants called to them and I stirred them up with the club and we eventually managed to rouse them, and when they were once awake they seemed quite willing to come. They threw off the logs, loaded up the tents and kit and started off. I waited to see it all done, as the servants thought the work would get on all the faster.

We arrived at the railway after several marches, where there was a rest house and a real stable for Fanny. When Suki woke next morning he found a snake curled up in a corner of the stable, close to the pony, but he killed it before any harm was done.

I was going to England and had to leave my Fretful Fanny again. The D.S.P. had been good enough to promise to take care of her for me until I came out to India again, and that she should never be sold, but put an end to if there was ever any occasion. There was occasion: the D.S.P. was ill and invalided home, and the pony developed, I think, asthma and bronchitis, so I never had her with me again, she was shot. I rode her that last day into Akaltara and she was as cheerful and happy

as ever, though she never pulled latterly as she did in the days of her youth. She started by road for Bilaspur that night, led along by the syce—a bright moonlight night—and I watched my white thing for a long time going down the straight road, till she faded away in the distance.



## XIV

### KURUKWAHI

IT is not often that one has to complain of too much shikar, but this day in February I saw really more bears than were healthy. I was camped in a place called Kurukwahi; Abdulla went out to visit the ties and I went out early with the local shikari, Mahadu, for a stroll through the jungle in search of anything we could see, the men hoping I should shoot them something to eat. Mahadu talked a sort of patois and I could not understand him well, though that was not strange: I was always stupid at languages, especially German, which was too much for my brain, as a lazy child, with a stupid governess: although I could say "ein glas Bier"—specially at Munich, and "komm hier Schwan"—there were some on a pond at Engelberg—quite fluently.

I *think* Mahadu said if I would go the way he directed we should be sure of finding *nilgat*, or blue bull, I should say, and I tried to make him understand I would not go far after *them*. We walked a round of several miles and saw nothing, then as we got to within a few yards of the edge of the forest and close to camp I handed him the rifle, put at safe, to carry. He was walking in front when, from under

a dark thick bush, we roused from sleep a big bear, only a few yards from us. He sprang out at us with a fearful roar. Old Mahadu fled with the rifle and the bear made a start to go after him. Then he saw me and pulled up, making nasty, angry noises and demonstrating; we both wondered what we should do next, and it seemed to be a question whether he should bolt or I should; we stood and looked at each other, then the bear did. I fancy if I had not stood firm he would have come on. Before I could get my rifle from the trembling Mahadu the bear had disappeared in the bushes: such a fine bear too!

There was no tiger kill that day, but Abdulla had given orders for beaters anyhow; if there was no kill we intended to beat a hill where they said a tiger and a bear had been driven out before.

On our way out we passed a village where we should have found coolies ready for us, but very few had assembled. At this place there was a gipsy encampment and the police *sepai* called for some of them to come. It was amusing to see how quickly they came. The gipsy chief came out of his ragged tent and beat a tom-tom to summon all his troop, and at once they came flocking in from all quarters.

The hill we were to beat was a longish one, but not extensive crosswise. The *machan* was fixed up in a tree at one end of it, on the level. Abdulla took the men to the far end and started them off. By and by a hyena came. I gave a soft whistle to see what effect it might have on him; he stopped and looked about him and quietly continued on his way.

The men came noisily along to the end of the hill-top where it sloped steeply down to my tree. To judge by a roar I heard, they had put up a bear. There was great shouting and much talking for some minutes, then complete silence and the beat stopped. I thought that some one must have been attacked or hurt.

After a long delay two coolies came up to say that they had seen three bears; one had gone on, one had disappeared and they did not know where he had gone, and the third was hiding among some rocks, and I was to go up with them to try and get a shot. We went up the steep hill, near the top of which were a lot of great boulders, awkward places to climb without noise. Abdulla was waiting and watching the entrance to a cave, and whispered that the bear was in it; we were close to it and stealthily advanced the last few yards. The mouth of the cave opened downwards and I peeped in and could just distinguish a black mass in the darkness below. I shot into the middle of it; there was a grunt, and what with dust and smoke and the echoing of the shot I could see or hear nothing more for a time, but stood at the ready if the bear should come out. When I could see I fired again and saw it was dead.

Then arose a great clamour and two poor cubs that I had not seen set up a tremendous yelling. I was starting to climb down and catch them, but Abdulla said they were too big for that, and would bite, so we climbed round the big rock to try and find another way in. As we went along Abdulla silently pointed out the paw of a bear in another low cave.



I thought it was the dead one and that this was the side entrance, and was just going to walk in when they shouted to me to stop. This was another bear altogether. I retired quickly! but they wanted me to shoot into the hole. As nothing was to be seen but a black paw, shooting was out of the question from where I stood. The men were all shouting at the top of their voices and I could not make myself heard for a minute. When there was silence I said I would climb over the rock above his lair, and they must throw stones in from high rocks opposite. I put my foot upon a stone to climb, found I wanted both hands to pull myself up, so handed the rifle for a second to a coolie.

I fancy the sudden silence and quiet made the bear think that now was his chance for escape. At that critical moment I saw his head and shoulders appear from his sheltering rock and heard a terrific, angry roar. There were two other ways open for him to get away, but he came straight for me. There was a small opening behind me that perhaps I might have jumped into backwards, but the thought flashed through me, "Don't go there, it is probably the cave he is making for." I was facing him and in an instant he had knocked me flat on my back, seized my thigh in his mouth and was shaking and worrying it as a terrier does a rat.

I had fallen between two rocks with my heels rather higher than my head, and I think that this knocked my topi right over my eyes, as I saw nothing. The bear dropped my leg, I felt that, and then came for my head—this a man told me afterwards—

seized the topi in his teeth, missing my head and face, and made off with it in his mouth, probably being amazed at the ease with which a human head comes off. All I knew was that there was daylight suddenly and the bear had gone. The whole of the affair took, I suppose, only a few seconds. There was no time to feel frightened and the mauling to my leg was absolutely painless.

I jumped up at once and my first thought, I remember, was thankfulness that he had not torn my eyes out; as jungle people tell one that bears always go for the eyes first, or else eat one's brain, and then "they know you are dead"!

The men, with looks of alarm, had crowded round by now and seemed greatly relieved when they saw me standing up and laughing, which I could not help doing—it all seemed such a funny thing to have happened, quite natural, and all in the day's work.

The man close to me, who was holding the rifle, was safe and had jumped aside behind a rock; besides, when he passed him, the bear's mouth was full of hat; he brought the rifle up to be unloaded. I was standing in the sun and told Abdulla to find my topi. The bear who had gone off with it in his mouth, they said, had carried it some distance before he dropped it. It was brought back rather mangled, with teeth-marks through it. I sat down feeling rather faint, supported by Abdulla, but soon felt better, and thought it was about time to look at my wounds. There was a scratch on my ear, but whether it was done by bear or rock I don't know. I ripped up my knickerbockers from the knee, with



a *katti*, a big, rough, sickle-shaped knife, made for cutting branches away, that had been given me by a friend as a mascot! The teeth had gone through the fleshy part of my leg, rather deep, half-way between the knee and hip, missing the bone, and I poured water into the wounds from my drinking bottle, to clean them out. Of course I lost a good deal of blood and felt rather faint again before I had finished.

The men carried me down those difficult rocks very carefully and well, handing me along from one to the other, holding me under the arms and knees without hurting; they fetched a light bedstead from somewhere and carried me to camp. There was a fine long procession before we got in, for one or two villages we passed joined in, and the forest guards also, and men from the police post. Arrived at camp, I syringed out the wounds with disinfectants and filled them with some blue cotton-wool. Then it seemed about time to lie down.

Two watchmen were told to sit up outside the tent at night, in case I wanted anything. They went to sleep—very sound sleep too—but Govind came in the middle of the night and said they were all very sad and wanted to send for a doctor; might they? I thought I should be healed up in a few days, but he insisted, and the *chaprassi* went off fourteen miles, to Garchiroli, to fetch him. I know I woke up very cold in the morning and the wounds began to be painful, but a hot-water bottle soon put that right.

There was a hospital at Garchiroli and the apothecary, Rattan Lal, came out during the day and did



some dressing. He said the treatment I had given was quite right, but the holes were deep; two long teeth had met and made a tunnel through. Those were easy to deal with, but the other two were long and deep and separate, and would take some time to heal, so he strongly advised that I should come in next day to his hospital, and he would go back and get a room ready for me.

I had such uncomfortable sheets that night, while my own were being washed: two very stiffly starched and thick table-cloths, borrowed from a rest house.

It was an easy journey in the next evening, in a bullock cart, on a nice bed of straw, and the doctor had his biggest room cleared out; a square high place with thick walls, and nice and cool. My camp things were put in and I was very comfortable there, thanks to Rattan Lal, who was most careful and attentive. He came in each day to do dressings, and brought his books of anatomy, with illustrations of arteries and sinews and muscle, to show what an excellent spot the bear had chosen, to do me the least possible damage. If he had bitten me on the knee I should have been lame for life; or an artery, I should have bled to death, and so on. It was all very interesting.

Govind did his best; he used to come in and put everything I wanted where I could not reach it, and the things I did not want close round the bed, and he meant so well. Abdulla, who was one of nature's gentlemen, was always on the spot when I called; and the lazy *chaprassi* brought me a present of a

walking-stick he had carved himself, to show his sympathy. I was rejoiced that I could have my bath, which Govind put alongside the bed, and I could manage to drop myself gently in, avoiding wetting the bad leg, and then drying myself in sections.

After some days Rattan Lal, who talked some English, said, "The cavities are beginning to fill in and growing up to the mar-r-r-r-gin; there is now no danger-r-r-r." But he told me afterwards he was still afraid of blood poisoning and only said this to cheer me up!

Two bears were heard fighting near, one night, but Abdulla remarked, we could not put up a *machan* for a beat, even in the veranda. The two little bears they had caught and brought in; one was soon ailing, though. They were brought into my room, with bits of rope round their necks, but were too fierce to handle; the ailing cub soon died, and after that his brother collapsed suddenly.

The better the wounds got the more they hurt during the dressing, the doctor kneading them rather violently with his thumb, to increase the circulation at the "margin," he said. It gave me fits, but I told him to carry on if it was for my good and I would keep quiet. One day I could stand it no longer, so he gave up that part of the business. He promised that I should get out in ten days; when the ten days were up he said seven more, and so on, which he said he did to keep me quiet.

One night a cart came creaking in very late; there were stifled cries and groans, and a poor woman



was carried into a back room. Two village buffaloes had been fighting, as they were driven home in the evening; one of them "fleddawaay," as the doctor put it, and the other turned on the woman and attacked and tossed her. One horn ran into her body. They picked her up and tried to fasten a bandage tightly round her, and so to bring her in, ten miles, in a jolting cart—the only thing available—to hospital. The bandage slipped and when she arrived the poor thing was in a terrible state. There was moaning, gentle moaning, all night long. The doctor tried to perform an operation, but found he could not do it alone, so sent for another apothecary, miles away, who could not arrive till late the next night.

When the doors were all opened in the morning I could hear the crying more distinctly and she seemed to be in such fearful agony; it all sounded so hopeless, poor thing! poor thing! She got so much worse and sinking towards evening, the doctor said he must try an operation at all costs. His compounder must give the chloroform, and he wanted two more hands besides his own to do anything to be of any good. I had naturally offered to come and try to help him, but he demurred, and said he would have his assistant ready first and then let me know. They started, but very soon Rattan Lal came to ask me if I had any brandy. Before we could pour any out the assistant came running, to say that she was dead.

Her relations were allowed in and stood round her, wailing. In another half-hour a sad little funeral



party started for the burning, four men carrying the dead woman on a stretcher, and one woman walking alongside, wailing and beating her breast. She looked so tiny and thin, lying there, wrapped in her red *sari*. Then the wailing died away in the distance.

I had been in hospital a month and it was settled that on the following Sunday I should be fit to get up and go into camp once more, but on the Friday the nice kind police inspector came to see me. He said :

“ Why don't you send on the shikari first to go out and tie up, and stay on here until there is a kill? The doctor says you should not go yet and he doesn't like to tell you so, and at the same time does not want to disappoint you. You would be much better for his care for some days longer. What good will it do going out? ”

I was about tired of bed, but he and the doctor had talked it over together, and what he said was such sound sense that I gave in. After a few days Rattan Lal came in, and said I might get up next day and walk round the bed, and see whether I felt any ill effects, or if I had a stiff leg. So quite early I got up and started on my journey round the room : I was lame, but that seemed to be all. It was dull work walking there, so I called to Govind and told him to have the pony saddled. He stared at me, looking quite scared. I said it would be all right, I was not going far and the pony boy was to come with me. I dressed, Joggins was brought round and I mounted from the veranda steps. It was quite delightful to be out again, in the fresh morning,

though I only rode for a mile or two at a walk. When the doctor came in I told him.

“ Yes, I saw the mem-sahib out of the window, and was very glad she did it on her own responsibility, as I dare not give permission.”

Soon after this in came Abdulla : a panther had killed a calf about ten miles away, and he had brought a cart ready to fetch me. The road was bad and we went slowly. I sat up till dark close to a small pool. Nothing came excepting some peafowl, and three chital stags, for a drink. I got home and found the doctor very kindly waiting up to bandage my leg—he said there was improvement, and the exercise had done me good—and I dined at 1 a.m.

I had not seen a white person for months, and two sahibs on their way to shoot called on me one day and asked me to dine. This I much wished to do, but I had just undergone the kneading process, which always left me in much pain for several hours, so I could not go.

News came of a tiger kill rather late one day, and several miles away; there was no time for a beat, so Abdulla tied up the hammock in a nice spreading tree over the kill. It was not exactly the place I should have chosen myself to sit up in. The tree was growing at the bottom of a nullah that had steep high banks: the nullah side was excellent, and all that could be desired, but on the other side the bank was just level with the *machan* and within a yard of it, so that all that one had to do to get in was to give one step off the bank and there you were. A narrow path ran along the top, the sort of nice



sheltered path a tiger might choose, should he chance to come from that side, and we should then meet at extremely close quarters, too near to be pleasant. I sat with my back to the path so that I might watch the kill in the nullah, and glanced rather furtively over my shoulder now and then. After all the nullah was his likeliest road, but one never knows.

After a time there was a rustling in the grass and leaves below, and I saw, on the ground among brushwood, a long black and yellow striped thing that, for the first moment, I felt sure was a tiger's tail. It moved, and I saw it was a large fat snake, about nine feet long, with a small head and biggish body, and it crawled along half into a hole, then out again : it was just a tiger's colour, black and yellow. I hoped it would not want to come and climb my tree ! However, neither snake nor tiger came my way ; nothing but a grey jackal, and I was rather relieved when darkness came on that it was time to whistle for the men and get away.

The tiger came after I had left and had a feed, so we beat next day. As I was rather lame I could not get about well enough to settle beforehand where I should sit, and when I had climbed into the tree that Abdulla had chosen, I noticed red ants running up it, and pointed them out to him. He said it was all right, there were only a very few, and they were going up side branches that did not matter. I took precautions, however, to have a coolie with me—a thing I never do—to beat them off if they were troublesome. They *were* ! They soon began to



run all over him and he was busily employed slashing them off with small branches. Then they extended their travels over me, down my neck, in my topi, sticking their nasty little sharp nippers into my hands and face. The coolie slashed at me too, but it was impossible for him to keep them off. The rifle was crawling with them, I could not touch it, and the water-bottle was a mass of red things. I could stand it no longer, no more could he, and we clambered down, he, valiantly, seizing the rifle. He ran and I limped for our lives, to get out of the tiger's way, and outside the jungle they were beating. The coolie ran on and called to Abdulla to stop the beat, but, after all this noise and commotion, of course there was no tiger.

There was a great fire in Garchiroli that night, bright flames and much shouting, and several huts were burnt down, but not much property lost.

At long last Rattan Lal said I might really go, provided my camp was within a few miles of hospital, so that he could come out occasionally to see if all was going on well; and he supplied me with bandages and dressings, and gave many instructions. I had spent over five weeks in hospital and I could not have found any one more painstaking and attentive than he was.

I had my camp at the place I had been trying for the tiger before, and rode out. It was a great pleasure to be really in camp once more, and sleeping under the stars, with Leo straight overhead. We tried time after time for this tiger, beating, sitting up, but he always evaded us. Abdulla tied in the

same place each evening, the *bagh* would dine at my expense and then effectually hide himself. So I gave orders that a new spot was to be found, and suggested it should be at the other side of the dry river bed. In the morning Abdulla brought the news that the calf had been taken again, and from the same place. I was very angry : it was an impossible jungle to beat with any chance of success, I thought, and sitting up for a tiger I had always found was a hopeless job. No beaters were available that day, all having gone off to some bazaar, nevertheless I sat up for some hours ; but after I had left he came back and had a square meal, and the vultures finished up the remains.

I was still in a bad temper next day when I ordered men to beat, being sure there was not the ghost of a chance of the tiger staying in that jungle. I rode Joggins out as far as he was allowed to go ; he was sent back for fear the sound of his hoofs should disturb the jungle. I was carried along the loose, deep sand of the river bed and, myself, chose quite a different place for the *machan*. The beaters had been left behind and the man who was carrying my second rifle had gone with them, rifle too ! I was crosser than ever then, and when he came back with it, trampling through the middle of the proposed beat, it was the limit, and I began to lose all interest in the proceedings, feeling sure no tiger would lie up through all this.

When the last of the men had gone, I noticed a big hanging swarm of bees in a tree close by : if, under such impossible circumstances, the rifle should



happen to be let off the noise might drive the bees out, and as they would probably come for me—what fun I should have with them! But as some one once said, "I have lived to be an old man, and have had many troubles, most of which never happened!"

The beat soon began, a short, easy one, and I caught sight of some animal through thick cover, that I thought was a grey monkey, moving very slowly well ahead of the beaters. Then it stopped, with a little grunt, that sounded more like a tiger after a good feed than a monkey, and angry at being disturbed. The next thing I saw was a tiger's head appearing from behind a large tree, about fifteen yards off. He waited there. I fired and he dropped dead. I kept the rifle up to my shoulder, ready to shoot if he stirred, when a second one came from behind the same tree, following close and at once in the tracks of the first, and it was he who fell to the second barrel. He opened his eyes once, and looked up at me—we looked at each other—and I felt quite sorry—quite sorry, only in one way, and in a way that is always unaccountable to myself—as they lay there close together, looking like the babes in the wood.

The first was a tigress and the other her cub, about as big as herself; neither was a big one. Abdulla said he had disobeyed my orders, as he felt sure that by far the best place to tie up the calf was in that same nullah that I so much disliked, in fact it was the only good spot about there; and it was also near to camp and easy for me to get to. It was quite time then to make my apologies to him, and tell him that he



was right after all, and I utterly wrong, which rather embarrassed but pleased him.

The flies in this camp were horrible; eye-flies and a nasty, nimble, sprightly sort of house-fly that never left one alone by day, though happily they wanted a time off at night, for rest. The mangoes were in full bloom then, which may have attracted them.

There were no signs of any tiger anywhere near, so I left there, staying for a night again at Garchiroli, as I passed through. Before I left, Rattan Lal asked me if I would mind coming to a pān supāri party he wished to give me. Then he wrote a note "requesting my company to tiffin, at 3.30." I went to his house when he said they were ready, and found, in the middle of the room, a large chair covered with a lovely brilliant green cloth, stitched in many colours; a small table in front of it, some sugar and a cup of milk on the table, and, incidentally, a dead fly in the milk, but that was soon fished out. The doctor had an untapestried chair in a far corner, and his mother, aunt, wife and a tiny child were standing in a row, besides a babe in arms, all looking on.

They gave me a very nice tea, and I asked if he and his family would not join. He said, if I would allow, he would have some tea in his corner, after I had begun, but the "females" would eat afterwards. The biscuits were quite good, but one sort was sweeter than I liked, and I had taken more of it than I could manage. I did not like to leave it, so shoved the last bit into the baby's mouth, which

I thought was rather resourceful, and I hoped might be taken for a polite attention. I carefully looked the other way after that, so that the mother could take it out if she thought well.

I left Garchiroli that evening and was very sorry to see the last of Abdulla, whose work was only in that district.

I did no good at the new camp : we could not find any tracks of tiger and the weather was getting very hot for a tent. There was a nice forest bungalow at one place that I stayed in. A great jungle fire was raging from the district of Ahiri northward, miles and miles of it, they said : and one of our buffaloes had been tied up in that direction. At night I saw the flames being blown along very fast by the wind, which had changed, towards the spot it was on. I was much afraid the calf would be burnt to death, so told the shikaris to go and loose it and bring it in. They were afraid of going into the forest at nine o'clock at night ; but they thought better of it when I prepared to go and they found one of them would have to go too, to show the road and carry the lantern. So they set off armed with spear and light and brought the little beast back. In the morning we found the fire had burnt right up to the spot on which it had been standing.

This was a pretty camp with a large pond in front, and big red water-lilies growing high out of the water and white ones lying on it. There was a *mugger* living in the pond, that the people were anxious to have killed, but it seldom showed itself. Joggins and I used often to ride down to the wide nullah,



which was mostly dry, but there were nice pools of water in it. It was refreshing and pleasant to sit and look at the cool water and the beautiful reflections of green trees in it—the few that had any leaves left on them. Jogjins seemed to take more interest in any blade of grass he might find than in the scenery.

A goat was killed one night in the jungle by a small panther, and the shikari chose the funniest place for me to sit in. I do not know how high up he had fixed the *machan*, but I thought I should never arrive at it. There was one fork of the tree about ten feet up and no other branches for ten feet more. They had brought a ladder and I reached the first landing-stage easily, and then asked what was to be done next. They pulled the ladder up and set it in the fork, nearly perpendicular, and I climbed the second storey, holding on very carefully to the tree as well as the ladder. There was a higher climb then among the branches, and this was not so difficult altogether, but when it came to descending, after dark, by the same route, it was rather precarious. And all this trouble for a small panther who never came back.

On a beautiful starlight night I lay outside the bungalow watching brilliant flashes of lightning playing continuously in the far-distant horizon; and the lightning was going on when I went to sleep. After a few hours came a fierce gust of wind which tore out the mosquito curtains, and they streamed away like a flag. Away went the top sheet, and I was nearly blown away with the under



one. Some heavy spots of rain followed and I held on to what belongings I could until the servants came running round. They carried the bed into the veranda with all speed, and I brought on anything I could find. Another enormous gust came, and a cloud of dust and straw was blown into our faces; there was a crash and half of the thatched roof of the bungalow was torn off, and that, with many pieces of wood and lath, landed on the very spot my bed had been standing. Then down streamed deluges of rain, and it was difficult to find a dry corner in the house anywhere, for shelter. The servants' houses remained standing, happily.

My shoot was coming to an end, and, as storms were beginning and a tent uncomfortable, I gave it up and started for Chanda, the nearest town, about eighty miles away, and several days' march. I travelled by cart at night and had to pass through a cutting, sheltered by dark, overhanging trees. My cart was in advance and the cartman pulled up and said we must wait for the other two carts to come up, as there had been a mail robbery there a day or two before; one man had his leg broken and the other was badly hurt in trying to save the mail-bags. The thieves, after securing their loot, got away. His voice was shaking and he seemed really frightened, but was cheered at the sight of my revolver, and the other carts and servants driving up. As we drove through the place they all talked very loudly and continued shouting and coughing for some time afterwards, though there were no highwaymen this time.

I was leaving for England, and on the ship were two cold and shivering little cassowaries, being sent home to the Zoo. They were rather unhappy at times, when we were rocked too violently in the cradle of the deep—more than was pleasant for anybody—but they grew so friendly they would come and sit close to me, with a bit of skirt over them, and seemed to enjoy the warmth.

## XV

### FAILURES

I WENT again a year or two later to shoot in the Central Provinces, or to try to shoot I should say, as everything I did went wrong and there was nothing but disappointments and disasters, though I *saw* some tigers; in fact, things went so badly for me that I wrote some sad verses on grief and disaster which I set to (banjo) music, in a very minor key and sang *Adagio, molto lamentoso, con-all-the-expression-I-could-put-into-it* when feeling at my lowest.

The ship going out to Bombay was terribly crowded, but that of course was the same misfortune for everybody. There were nearly five hundred children, and parents to match, and there was no room to sit on deck with any comfort. Being so crowded together should have kept us warm, but it was very cold the early part of the voyage.

On landing in Bombay neither of my servants was there to meet me as they had promised: Govind was too ill to come at all and Jiwan, the old cook, only met me a week later. I went to my agents to ask for my letters which were to tell me where I was to go and shoot, but by some mistake they had all been forwarded to England. After many quips



and quirks (whatever they may be) I fell on my feet, and some kind friends in Nagpur took pity on me, arranged everything for me and started me off on my shoot. I had had hinges put on my wooden boxes so that they might be handy for the servants to open and shut, as they often had to pack quickly for a march, but the customs people, after rummaging in them, had hammered many nails in, especially on the hinge side, instead of replacing the screws, so it was with difficulty that we could open them at all, and then with everlasting damage to the hinges.

The first camp I went to was on a high-road where roamed a tiger whose custom was to spring on a bullock being driven along in a passing cart, and drag it off. The tiger always chose a dark night, and of course the cartmen were able to do nothing to prevent it except to give up travelling on moonless nights on that part of the road that ran through jungle. I often had a try for him, but he was always too wary. I drove through his piece of hunting ground one night, but the cartmen were in such a panic of fear that they shouted and galloped their bullocks all the way, although I was ready with the loaded rifle, so the tiger had no chance of getting his dinner. I could not get beaters in this jungle, and as the tiger had killed a calf near a village I sat up, meaning only to wait a few hours, as there was a very poor moon. It was getting low in the sky and I could scarcely see, so I called for the shikaris, who were waiting at a distance, to come and put the ladder up for me to climb down. I called again; no answer but the eternal silence, the beautiful

starry silence of the Indian jungle at night, broken only occasionally by the cry of peafowl or deer or night birds. Then I whistled for the men, then I yelled—which broke the beautiful silence unpleasantly—but could not make them hear, so I lay down in the *machan* to sleep. I was soon awakened—after all this noise too—by the gentle rustle of a leaf, then the crackling of bones, and I suppose the tiger was there, but the moon was setting and some clouds—which had no business to be there at all at that time of the year—blew over and obscured what little moon there was, so there was no tiger for me that night, as he was away before dawn.

Then a much sadder thing happened: a very fine tiger came out one evening, to my amazement, in daylight, before the sun had set, a thing I had never seen before and probably never shall again, and I was not able to get a shot! That was *most* tantalizing. The place was quite lonely, far away in the jungle, and the bullock that had been killed was lying partly covered and hidden by bushes. There was a very convenient tree near it for the *machan*, and forest in front and on both sides of it, but behind was a wide open grass glade. We were rather late and hurried in putting up the *machan*, but I complained that the tree was very open behind me as there were no branches there and no leaves to hide me, so that from the rear I was very much exposed to the view of any animal coming from the open bit of grassland. The shikari said that the tiger was sure to come by way of the jungle in front, looked rather scornful at my poor ignorance and asked

*what* tiger would come walking out in the open when he could steal along hidden paths. Of course it was much more likely he should come through the trees and scrub, but I told him that all the same I must really have a few branches tied up behind me. He said there was very little time; chopping boughs and then fixing them up would make so much noise, and that the tiger who might be coming at that minute would be sure to see or hear and be frightened away. I found we were making more noise talking, though in whispers, and arguing about it all than perhaps it was worth, so, against my better judgment, I gave in and the men went off.

I had to keep a look-out on all sides at once and it was not so very long before the tiger appeared from the open, rather behind me on my right. He was forty yards away and walked along boldly, and if I had dared to move I should have had a beautiful shot at him, but I dared not wink an eye. I could see him over my shoulder as he came quite near; he stopped for a short time and then came and stood behind me, not venturing at once up to the kill in front. I could not see him at all now, as I did not dare to turn my head and only knew he was there by an occasional soft purring that he made. There we both were, within a few yards of each other, waiting, waiting, and he must have stood there for half an hour to judge by the sun. I sat deadly still, hoping every second to see him walk out in front from under my tree. At last, as I had heard no purring for a long time, I turned my head very slightly and quite silently I thought. The tiger



was away at a gallop long before I could swing round or bring the rifle up to my shoulder. I ought not to have stirred, so I dare say this was all my own fault, but he was frightened away and never came back to the place : such a chance as it was to miss !

Another time as I sat watching over a kill a tiger came but never showed himself. I knew of his presence by the swearing and chattering of many monkeys that were there. They had all been busy eating berries that grew on low bushes around, and some of them were on the ground, when I saw them suddenly starting to swing themselves up trees. I heard the tiger make a dash at something with a snarl and a low growl, and following this was the rush away of monkeys who were scolding and using abusive language. The tiger was certainly very angry about something, so were the monkeys, so was I : the monkeys swore, I swore (in undertones), and the tiger simply cursed. One baby monkey grew very much excited and chattered in a funny, shrill little voice, trying its hardest to imitate its parents. Perhaps the monkeys gave me away by making the tiger look up, as after prowling round for a long time he went away without my catching so much as a glimpse of him, and afterwards we saw the tracks of where he had been wandering about in the sandy nullah. He was supposed to be a man-eater that had killed a boy a short time before near this spot.

My tent had been pitched, unknowingly, in a hot-bed of scorpions, and the boy was constantly finding one or two as he swept it out in the morning. I found one in my slipper, but luckily dropped it before

I put my foot inside, when this beast ran out. When we changed camp there were still scorpions lying hidden in the folds of the tent and in my boxes, and it was a marvel that no one was stung.

After several more disappointments with the tigers in those jungles I went to another district to shoot, with hopes of better luck. The march out was very hilly and the road very bad, but I had a glorious pair of bullocks that tore along, shaving corners and bumping down into rocky streams. They did their twenty miles in about six hours and, as usual, I reached the place where we were to camp long before the servants and kit. A forest officer and his mother were in camp there and very kindly gave me tea and dinner. They had a fox terrier and a monkey, and on my arrival the monkey was told to make its salaam; it came up rather shyly and kissed my foot and then went and sat with its arms round the terrier's neck: they seemed to be great friends.

The next march took us to the shooting ground, so I gave up the sportive bullocks that had brought me along so well, and rode a good little chestnut pony that I had hired, called Thomas. There was a tiger kill one night and the calf was half eaten; the remainder was carefully and neatly covered up, and completely hidden, with dead bamboo leaves which the tiger had raked together so that it really looked as if he had every intention of coming back, but I had no luck that time. After some days he killed again in a different place which was a very good one to beat, *if* we could get enough coolies.



Nanur, the guard, had ordered men the day before to be ready to beat in case there should be a kill, as we should not have time to collect them in one morning. They came, I saw, but the tiger conquered, as he had a good dinner and escaped unharmed. It was an ideal place to beat, a valley with hills all round and a nullah running straight up to my tree, down which I could see a long way. There was an open stretch covered with thick high grass on my left, and it looked unlikely that the tiger would try to go through that, but men were placed in trees along the edge of it to stop him if he should want to break through there. After the beat began I saw the stops climbing down from their trees and moving about, and I watched them grouping together and going off to the top of a small hill, to be out of the tiger's way! I could not of course shout to them to stay where they were, on account of making any noise. There were two tigers in the beat; one broke away through the side at the start, so Nanur said afterwards, and the other came briskly trotting along in the nullah straight for me. This really looked hopeful. He came steadily on until within eighty yards, then suddenly turned, jumped up the nullah bank and disappeared into the long grass, towards the trees the stops should have been in. That was the last I saw of the tiger, and there was no movement in, or waving of, the grass as he passed through it to show his whereabouts. He went near the men in trees on the hill and they did not attempt to turn him, though they made plenty of noise and great demonstrations to try and turn a poor scared



deer that ran past them—this against orders of course!—there was a great difference between that and the stern silence with which the tiger was let by. It was most annoying, and one might as well beat for a tiger down Piccadilly as with these sort of men, though the remainder were doing their best.

When everything I tried went so wrong for me I began to feel that I really was "Champion, in this Scheme of Frustration," as I remember "Punch" once neatly put it. I must own, though rather against my will, as it tends to spoil the record for "Champion," that I had shot a good tiger in the first district, though without an incident worth recording, and now, soon after my unhappy beat, when sitting up over a calf that had been killed by these same two tigers, I shot the tigress that came out just at dusk.

The shikari and guards came with torches after hearing the shots, and I went back to camp with them, leaving the dead tigress lying there until next day. In the morning when we went to bring the tigress in we found that the tiger had come and had been feasting on the calf, only a few yards from his poor dead mate who lay stretched there. I decided on another night's sitting up; the remains of the two-days-old kill, as it was in the hot weather, were impossible to sit over for obvious reasons, so they were dragged away for the vultures to finish and a small buffalo calf was tied in its place. There was no moon, so I could only hope for a shot before dark or one at dawn. I saw or heard nothing in the

evening, and the calf, I think, spent a happy and peaceful night, lying down and sleeping. A little before dawn I heard a sambur give its warning call, and soon afterwards the sound of a short heavy rush of some animal and a roar. There was no sound of a struggle, no other noise of any kind, and the calf was killed—the whole thing took perhaps two seconds. It was quite dark and I could see nothing below, but by the sounds following I think the tiger was drinking the blood. He did not settle down to eat at once, but I could hear him wandering round, and he stood for a time in the place the dead tigress had been lying, which had been taken back to camp in the morning. There was a little swish, swish of the long grass as he came through it, back to the kill where he now began to feed. There seemed to be a faint shadow moving, but nothing that I could really distinguish; and which was tiger and which was the dead calf I could not make out. I waited and waited, longing for a streak of dawn which would *not* come. I thought I should be foolish to shoot in the dark when probably a few minutes more would give me a fair shot: I looked up at the sky and the stars were certainly fading. Come dawn! it never dawned so slowly before. There was just a faint streak of grey, my rifle was at my shoulder, but when I picked it up I found that a small fork of white paper I had fastened most carefully, as I thought, to the foresight to give me a guide for a night shot, had gone, torn away I suppose by a branch or something it must have brushed against. I gave one more glance up at the stars and then looked

down on the tiger. I saw a shadowy white thing, his face and whiskers, and I think he was looking up at me, but he was off and away before I could pull the trigger and I fired into the grass that he vanished into. I think I missed and we found no blood tracks when the men came, nor could we find the bullet mark in the ground.

When we got back to camp we found that the useful little pony, Thomas, had disappeared. He was always allowed to graze in the fields, watched over by a small boy who had the charge of him and my calves. The boy had let him graze away into the jungle out of his sight and was afraid, I think, to tell of it at once when he could not find him, so that some little time elapsed before a search was made. Men were sent out in all directions to look for him and he was tracked through the jungle for some miles in the direction of his home forty miles away—then all trace was lost. He had a rope round his neck with a long end dragging, and I was much afraid he might get entangled among trees and be starved to death. The police made all inquiries at the neighbouring villages and also at his home, but they could hear nothing of him, and they said it was not possible for him to have been stolen without their getting information. We never heard of the pony again; the shikaris said he must have been killed by a tiger, but I lived in hopes of hearing news of him for a long time. It was a sad, unsatisfactory end to poor Thomas and a great loss to me. The owner wrote to say that the pony had never come back, and he asked for the price of



him, plus ten rupees, which he charged "for the pony's death, on account of the fright it gave him!"

On leaving this camp we made a night march to a place where there was a small bungalow to put up in, which was cooler than a tent in these hot days. Jiwan came to say that everything was ready if I would come and get in my cart. I found there were no ropes for the luggage, and none of it had been tied on. The men in this part of the country make very strong ropes of thinly split bamboo which they twist up in their hands, and I had often sat and watched in admiration the making of them; so ropes were sent for from the village, the things tied on and then there was more delay: the cartmen had thought fit to go off to eat their food! After some time they came back and the bullocks were yoked. One of my pair jumped about, went off with a rush, nearly upset the cart and then broke away and bolted. It took an hour to find another, as the guard said we must not put the runaway *ball* in again, he was such a *badmash*. At last we started in bright moonlight and got along well for a time. We had to go down a long steep hill which led after a very sudden turn into the wide rocky bed of a dry nullah. I was in the leading cart and after many bumps and jolts got safe over and up the other side. Then there were sounds of a cart and oxen rushing down the steep road, great shouting among the men, and down raced the bullocks much too fast to be able to turn at the sudden bend; more shouts and yells at the bullocks, then a bump and a crash, and after that

dead silence. My cartman jumped out and ran back and I followed him. One of the carts lay upset on its side, wheels off, all the boxes and luggage strewn about, and two men lying as if they were dead, having been shot off the top of the loaded cart on which they had been perched, on to the rough rocks. Several other men were scrambling on to their legs and the oxen apparently were none the worse. The jumble of broken cart, overturned kit and disabled men made a sad weird picture among the black rocks and under the shadow of trees.

I went up to one man who was lying very still and saw that it was poor old Jiwan. I spoke to him and it was a great relief to hear him able to give an answer; he half tried to rise when I came, but could not move, and I told him to lie still. He said he had been thrown from the top of the cart on to his side and hip and that his back was broken. He looked desperately pale and ghastly in the moonlight that showed in flecks through the trees. The sepoy was the other man that was hurt, he was lying against a rock with a big box across his legs and was groaning now and then. None of the cartmen were much hurt, they had been running with the cart and trying to hold it back. We were fortunately near a village and the men went up to fetch a *charpai* to carry Jiwan there. We lifted him on to it; his back was not broken, but he could scarcely move. He was taken up and laid on a bed of straw in the veranda of the *kotwal's* house; and the *charpai* went back for the sepoy, as it was

the only one they had, so they said. There was nothing I could do for them after I had seen them (un)comfortably settled, and they did not want brandy or anything I could give them, so I went down to finish my night in the cart.

In the morning Jiwan and the sepoy were both terribly stiff and in great pain, though the cook was much the worse of the two : he said I could do him no good, the *kotwal* would look after them, and they would sooner be left to lie still and follow me when they were able if I would send a cart back for them, so I took the guard and my small boy and went on the last few miles to the bungalow. On the way I saw a tiger sitting lazily out in the open—a wide grassy glade several hundred yards away—sunning himself. He had not seen us and I let the driver go on a short distance to where we were hidden from him, meaning to stop and run up the hill above him to try and get a shot, but two of the men behind me had seen him too, and stood looking and pointing at him from where he could see them, so the tiger got up slowly, looked at them for some little time and then sauntered away through the grass and was finally lost to sight among the trees. I suppose that was the same tiger that eluded me in the early dawn ; I often tried for him again but never got him.

I rather wondered how I was to live after poor Jiwan's accident ; the boy knew nothing about cooking. I thought perhaps I could boil an egg (if I could get one), or porridge, or a potato, though the only time I had ever tried to cook a potato the



bottom of the saucepan fell out; anyway it was much worse for Jiwan than for me. A Mussulman overseer who lived a mile away heard about the accident and came to help me. He was very good and sent me cooked food for some days, and then sent his own cart, with a thick bed of straw in it, to bring the cook and sepoy when they were fit to travel. The boy and I unpacked the cracked and broken boxes and found that a bottle of chutney and also one of lime-juice had survived the disaster! But the chutney, I found next day, was a seething mass of drowned or struggling cockroaches that had found their way in through a hole in the cork.

Poor Jiwan *would* come the first minute that he was able, he had a miserable drive and had to be lifted out of the cart and laid on a *charpai*; I made him some tea and put something to eat near him which he might not touch, because of his caste, but I knew that when I had gone and no one was looking, he would not be able to resist the tea at any rate. He was a wonderful old man and managed to crawl about somehow and would persist in cooking my food however bad he felt. The sepoy was much better and able to walk.

There was no more sport after this: the Forest Guard, Nanur, who had been a soldier and fought and was wounded at Armentières, I think he said, was down with the fever; the shikari had a dreadfully swelled face and toothache and could do nothing; several of the village men were ill; and I damaged my foot and could not get about. For several weeks we had a very sad camp, one of the

calves, used as baits, died, and Jiwan grew thinner every day and had constant fever. I shot a peacock so that he might have some soup, but I think he was too ill to eat. The monotony was broken one evening by a bear visiting the camp; it came close up to the cook-house and Nanur came running to fetch me, but by the time I got there some clever man had lighted a flaring torch, to show me the bear! he said; in reality he was so much frightened he dare not wait in the dark until I came, so of course the glare had driven the bear away.

We managed to tie up for the tiger once more when the shikari was sufficiently recovered. I sat in a tree all night and a violent storm came on, so that I had to pull a rug over me and put a waterproof sheet on the top, quite covering me and a multitude of sins, and I slept. Invariably I wake at the first streak of dawn when sleeping under the sky, but because I had this wretched rug over my head I slept ten minutes too long. A distant noise woke me, I think it was the rumble of a cart on the road not far away. I sat up and *there* was the tiger, who seemed to have just come to the kill. He also, I think, had heard the cart, as he was standing looking in its direction; he was gone before I could get hold of the rifle, and it was all my own stupid fault.

When so many things went wrong I had to console myself with the thought of some philosopher's story—I forget who—of ancient days, which ran something like this: All the people in a certain country were suffering under so many troubles that

they could bear it no longer; so each one took his pack of sorrows on his back and went off to market to sell or exchange it. There was much bargaining and haggling and, as each found there was no one worse off than himself, every one went home again with his own burden!

We made all preparations to start back for the railway and home. Storms were beginning, and the rains expected, and we hurried our marches back, as we had a river to cross which the guard said might soon become flooded.

The first march we travelled straight on all one night and day and, as there was no other prospect of a wash, I bathed in the river when we came to it. The stretch of sand that had to be walked over was so hot and burning from the sun it nearly blistered my feet, and then there was deep black mud to wade through before getting into deep water, so for purposes of cleanliness I don't think the bath was an improvement! I tried to persuade Jiwan to go into hospital until he felt better, but he was anxious to go back to his home and friends, so went off at once by train, and I have heard since that he has quite recovered.

Another accident happened on the way down to Bombay when the mail train was pulled up rather suddenly. We had run over an Indian woman who was walking along the line carrying a big bundle of grass on her head. Her feet had been cut off, and she was just breathing when the guard picked her up and laid her at the side of the line with her grass bundle beside her. She died in a few minutes, and



when her friends had come to carry her away the train proceeded on its journey.

That was the end of disasters, I think, unless what happened on board ship could be called one. People were calling out for beef-tea one rough day, and there was none to be had : on inquiry it was found that some sufferer had sent a hot-water bottle to be filled, and by some mistake it was filled with all the available beef-tea ! Ship life for passengers, generally speaking, seems fairly dull with nothing much to do, so one takes amusement in small things. But I remember one time when we were to pass Messina, soon after the great earthquake, a friend and stable companion of mine, Mrs. Stevenson, and I were anxious to see what we could of the ruins, and as we were to pass the place about four o'clock in the morning the captain said he would give a shout to us through our deck cabin window when we came near. Major B., who also wanted to get up and see, asked us whether we should mind waking him, and he told Mrs. Stevenson where his cabin was and also his bunk, which was next to the door. About four in the a.m.'s we heard the captain's voice shouting, " Now then, girls, get up, here is Messina ! " We were by no means girls, though I should only speak for myself, but we got into our dressing-gowns quickly and went out to see all that we could, which wasn't very much. As we were going back to our beds we remembered that we had promised to wake Major B., and Mrs. Stevenson said all we had to do was to walk down the companion and say " Major B. " at the door of cabin No. so-and-so, when he said he would be

certain to wake immediately. So we groped our way in semi-darkness down the stairs and up to what we thought was his cabin. Mrs. Stevenson called "Major B." in gentle tones; no answer, but four snores, all in different voices, and we did not recognize any of them. We both tried again a little louder, with the same result and same snores. Mrs. Stevenson said, "He told me which was his berth, I'll give a tug at his sheet." The slight tug was no use at all, so she gave a harder one. Then came a very angry voice, "Who's there, and what the devil do *you* want?" The voice we certainly did not know, so we fled, and, on safely reaching our cabin again, we laughed so much that the inhabitants next door battered on the wall and told us very fiercely to "dry up" and let decent people go to sleep!

On the ship were two missionaries, who one day were having a deep religious discussion; I was sitting with my back to them and looked round once or twice as they waxed furious. They did not seem to agree with each other at all, and grew more and more earnest and vehement in the argument. They were standing some yards off when they began, but the missionary furthest away drove his adversary back and back, until he backed him up to my chair, where he had to stop. Without looking round he seized the woodwork of the chair in his hands, clutching and jerking it rather uncomfortably for me, and then, not knowing in the slightest what he was doing, he seized my head in his hands, behind his back, and rubbed my hair vigorously round and round, till I felt rather like a mop. I bore it for some little

time, as it seemed to amuse the onlookers, then I moved my head slightly and he looked round at me. He was the picture of horror and stupefaction, and when I asked him, quite civilly, if he had found my hair nice and soft, he simply vanished, without a word of apology, and I do not remember ever seeing him again during the voyage.



## GLOSSARY

- arak*, native liquor.  
*badmash*, rascal.  
*bagh*, tiger.  
*bail*, bullock.  
*bandobast*, plan, arrangement.  
*chapatti*, flat cakes of unleavened bread.  
*chik*, grass blind.  
*chil*, kite.  
*chaprassi*, messenger, orderly.  
*charpai*, rough bedstead.  
*chuldari*, small single fly tent.  
*dandi*, portable hammock.  
*gussa wala*, bad-tempered person.  
*jhul*, rug or coat for horse or dog.  
*jonk*, leech.  
*kael*, ibex.  
*kart* or *tahr*, wild goat.  
*katti*, rough iron knife.  
*khansamah*, cook.  
*khatiya*, bedstead.  
*khidmatgar*, table servant.  
*khubber*, news, information.  
*khud*, precipice.  
*khud* stick, alpenstock.  
*khulgaur* or *kulga*, bison.  
*kotwal*, village policeman.  
*lambardar*, village headman.  
*lota*, metal pot.  
*machan*, platform.  
*munshi*, teacher.  
*mugger*, crocodile.  
*nilgai*, blue bull.

*patel*, headman of village.

*sari*, long strip of cloth worn by Indian women hanging from the head.

*sepai* or *sepoy*, Indian soldier or policeman.

*tamasha*, show.

*tendwa*, panther, leopard.

*thana*, station (police).





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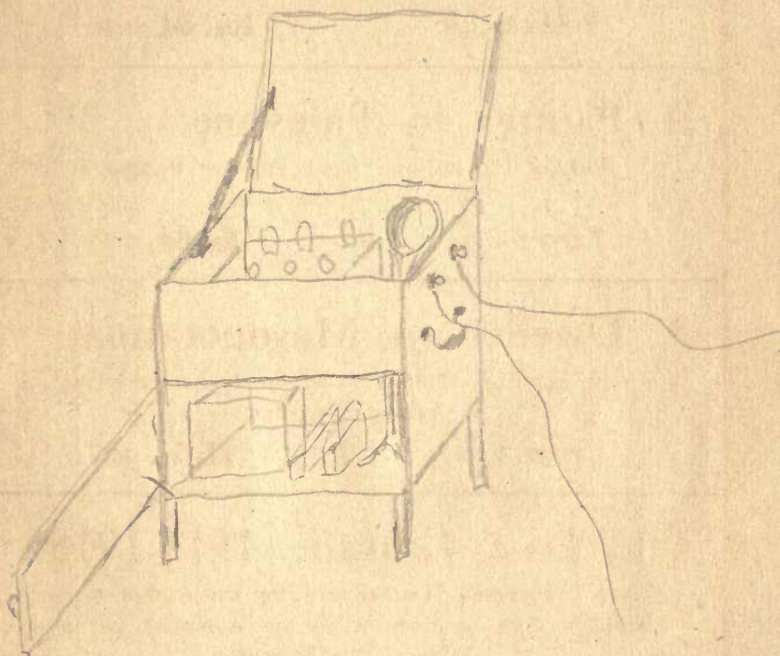
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