



Painted for OUTING by Hermann Simon.

See "An Adventure with a Tigress." (p. 565.)

ROYAL BENGAL.

which we saw in our live days of Avignon, this was far and away the most beautiful. The most amusing was the little stone man-at-arms in the old clock-tower, who flirts all day long with a little stone maiden, and only interrupts his wooing once in every hour to strike solemnly upon a deep-toned bell with his little stone hammer.

Here upon the morning of the sixth day of our stay we sold St. Martin, the faithful companion of our wanderings, and brought our brief but delightful trip to a close.

Dear little St. Martin! he had been an affectionate and faithful servant. We

were sorry to part with him; but, having to part, we were glad that he should fall into the hands of a fat and kindly old priest. Now, once a week, no more, no less, he conveys the cure and the curé's equally fat and kindly sister out into the smiling country to the great stone *masse* where they were born, and where I like to fancy a very old but still fat and kindly mother always waiting to receive them. The remainder of St. Martin's time is spent in rolling upon his back in the cathedral close, in browsing the rich sacerdotal herbage, and in kicking up his heels under the tall cathedral windows.



AN  
ADVENTURE  
WITH A  
TIGRESS.

By C. E. Ashburner.

ONE very hot season, in the month of March, I was lying ill in my house on the top of a high hill, called Supt Sring, in the district of Nassick, in India, when my native shikari brought me news of a tigress with four cubs having killed a cow near the village of Soopa, in the Dang. This is one of the most unhealthy districts in India, and is looked upon by the natives with great dread.

This village of Soopa is only about twenty-five or thirty miles from where I was living, but being ill, I did not wish to run the risk of making myself worse by going out in the sun, so I declined to avail myself of the news, much to the disgust of the two friends who were staying with me for shooting. These friends were Colonel Heyland of the 1st Bombay Lancers (since killed, most gallantly trying to arrest one of his troopers who was running amuck with a rifle and a supply of cartridges, and who had already killed two other men of

the regiment), and Mr. R——, a youngster waiting for his commission. They distinctly declined to go unless I would go with them. So I was forced to get out of bed and make arrangements for the hunt by sending off my tents, provisions, guns, etc., in charge of my servants and shikaris.

Early next morning we mounted our horses and rode out to the village nearest to where the cow had been killed and where the tigress had been last seen. The natives in this district are Bheels, who are most wonderful trackers and thoroughly understand the ways of wild animals.

On our arrival I called the local village shikari, and instructed him to go with my men at daylight, in the morning, and ascertain whether the tigress was still in the jungle where she had killed the cow, and then come and report to me. In the event of the tigress being there, he was to leave some men, in trees, to see that she did not leave

the jungle without our knowledge. After making all our plans, and ordering beaters to be ready next day, if our shikari reported favorably, we dined and went to bed about ten o'clock.

About noon next day our men returned, reporting that the tigress was still in the jungle; and, as proof, brought in the bodies of the cubs, which they had killed with clubs, as they were only the size of spaniels. It was most fortunate for the men that the mother was absent on a foraging expedition.

As soon as we could, we set off with about seventy-five or eighty men, with our guns and rifles, for a walk of about four miles, over very rough and hilly ground, to where the cubs had been killed. But by the time I had walked a mile in the hot sun I was quite done up, and had to call a halt until I recovered; we then went on, with short periods of rest every half mile, to enable me to regain my strength. At last we got to the jungle where the tigress was supposed to be, when we refreshed ourselves with lunch.

I then placed Col. H— on a large boulder, about fifteen feet high and thirty feet in diameter, which commanded a good view on one side of the jungle, and I placed R— in a tree, out of danger, on another side of the cover, taking up a position myself in a tree near the corner on the third side. As soon as we had taken up our stations I ordered our shikaris and beaters to go round on the fourth side, and, by tapping the trees with sticks and by shouts as they walked along, to try and drive the tigress ahead of them, trusting to the chance of one of us getting a shot.

When climbing into my tree I gave my rifle—a single-shot express by Henry, with the falling-block system—to one of my men to hold; but he, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, opened the action, letting the cartridge fall out, and being afraid of correction for his interference, when I called to him to hand me the rifle, did so without replacing the cartridge or telling me it was empty. I was so ill that I neglected to open the action to see if the rifle was loaded, as I was quite aware that I had loaded it on entering the jungle. Trivial as this incident appears it resulted in the death of one of my men, and serves to show how careful sportsmen should be when after dangerous game.

I had not been in my tree—about ten feet from the ground—and this, let me tell you, is none too high for safety—more than ten minutes, when I saw the tigress walking toward me, turning her head every now and then to listen to the beaters. She evidently had no idea that I was anywhere near her, and was passing my station within about fifteen yards when I gave a slight click with my tongue; then she immediately stopped and looked up at me, showing her teeth and snarling. I took deliberate aim at her shoulder and pulled the trigger, but the rifle being empty, away she went with a "wouf," passing not very far from Colonel Heyland, who fired at her and struck her, blowing one of her hind feet off with an explosive shell. She did not appear to know where the shot came from, as she turned and made for the big boulder, on which Heyland was standing, evidently looking for shelter. In Heyland's excitement, he missed his footing, and slipped off the boulder, and there he was on one side of the boulder with an empty rifle in his hand, and the wounded tigress on the other. She walked around it once with Heyland following her tail, as I was able to direct his movements from my position. This was one of the most peculiar incidents I have seen. When she found there was no shelter to be had there, she went off into the jungle, much to his relief.

We were now in the very unpleasant position of having a wounded tigress to beat out of a thick jungle, as it is a point of honor amongst sportsmen not to leave a wounded and dangerous animal where it can do damage to passers-by. This tigress was not only dangerous from her painful wound, but was savage from not finding her cubs where she had left them in the morning.

As soon as my beaters came up we held a council of war, and after consulting the trackers, who knew the ground and the most likely cover for the tigress to make for, Colonel Heyland and R— were told off to cross over a certain hill, so as to cut the tigress off if she tried to get round to a ravine on the other side. With them I sent fifteen of our men. I had now the very unenviable task of following up the tracks of the wounded tigress, through a very thick jungle, to try to protect the trackers if she charged, which she was certain to do as soon as we came up to her. The cover

was so thick that it was a foolhardy thing to do; but the men were so excited that they said that they would go in by themselves and drive her out whether I went or not, so go I did, to protect them, as I was sure that there would be mischief.

Colonel Heyland and R—— both did their best to persuade me not to go, on account of the density of the jungle. I had about sixty men of all sorts with me, as besides those I sent with Heyland I had placed some men in trees in commanding positions to give us notice if she broke out of the ravine she was making for. After going about two hundred yards we came upon her tracks and found numerous patches of blood from her wounded foot. I warned the men to keep together and not allow any stragglers, as a tiger will seldom make good his charge on a compact body of men, when he would not hesitate to kill a straggler, or even two.

We soon came to where the tigress had been lying down licking her foot in a small ravine, and we were so close to her that we found the ground quite wet with her saliva. She had then climbed the bank and gone on. The trackers now became so excited that no warnings from me were of any avail, and one of them ran ahead on her tracks, getting about sixty yards in front of the party. Immediately I heard a roar and saw the poor devil running toward me, with the tigress on three legs after him. He ran straight toward me, so I was powerless to do anything to help him. When he got within about ten yards the tigress caught him and shook him as a dog would shake a cat. In shaking the man she gave me a chance of a shot at her side, and I placed two bullets (twelve to the pound) in her shoulder, killing her instantly.

It was fortunate that I had changed my single rifle for a double-barreled ball gun when I began to track her up, for had I not been fortunate enough to kill her instantly it would have gone hard with me, as all my gun-bearers had taken refuge in trees, leaving me alone within a few yards of the tigress. I called to the nearest man to hand me a gun, but instead of doing so he threw it down, exploding the charge and denting the barrels.

All this fiasco was caused by neglecting to detect the absence of a cartridge

in my express rifle in the early part of the hunt, as with that I could not have failed to drop the tigress in her tracks.

I was soon joined by Colonel Heyland and R—— who in crossing the crest of the hill on their way to take up their positions, had heard the roar of the tigress and my shots, and ran down to see the results. In the meantime the natives had come out of their trees and covered me with abuse for the loss of their companion, saying that they would not let me out of the jungle until I had paid large compensation for his death, and threatening to kill me.

I was naturally somewhat annoyed at their conduct, but succeeded in keeping them quiet until my friends arrived, when I was able to take a more commanding hand, and ordered them to take the bodies of the man and the tigress to our tents, promising that I would then do justice to them.

We then walked to our tents, followed by the procession of natives, and on our arrival I ordered them to go and sit in a semi-circle about eighty yards in front of the tents; after that we laid our guns and rifles on a table which I placed outside, and behind which my friends took up a position with rifles in their hands.

These Bheels all carry bows and arrows, with which they can kill a man at from fifty to sixty yards, the arrows having steel tips to them some six to eight inches long and about an inch wide and very sharp. They use them, not only for shooting wild beasts and birds, but to cut away small jungle when passing through thick cover.

When all were quietly seated I walked out protected by the rides of my friends, and called out that any man placing his arrow on the string would be at once shot. I then went and secured the ringleaders, tied them up, and sent them in charge of some policemen from the village to the magistrate of the district, who punished them for threatening my life.

The tigress measured 9ft. 7in. from the end of nose to tip of tail before being skinned.

The skin after being stripped from the body can very easily be stretched a foot or more, which accounts for the abnormally large tigers so frequently read about, the skins being measured after being stretched.