

"There was a time, Sir Conrad," she answered, with quiet dignity, "when I knew less what the world might say."

Had Monica felt the least suspicion of what her companion had tried to make it say, she would not now have been riding with him along the darkening streets, just as carriages were rolling by carrying people to dinner or to the theatres.

Twice she had imperatively dismissed him, but he had absolutely declined to leave her.

"I will not address another word to you if my presence is distasteful to you," he said; "but you are my sister's guest, and in the absence of her husband I stand in the place of your host. I will not leave you to ride home at this late hour alone. At the risk of incurring your displeasure I attend you to your own door."

Monica did not protest after that, but she hardly addressed a single word to her silent companion.

As she rode up to her own house she saw that the

door stood open. The groom was before it, with his horse. He was in earnest converse with a tall, broad-shouldered man, who held a hunting-whip in his hand, and appeared about to spring into the saddle.

Monica's heart gave a sudden leap. Who was it with his back to her, standing on the pavement? He turned quickly at the sound of her approach—it was her husband.

He looked at her and at her companion in perfect silence. Conrad took off his hat, murmured a few incoherent words, and rode quickly away. Randolph's hand closed like a vice upon his whip, but he only gave one glance at the retreating figure, and then turned quietly to his wife and helped her to dismount. The groom took the horse, and, without a word from any one, husband and wife passed together into the house. And this was the meeting to which Monica had looked forward with so much trembling joy.

END OF CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

SOME CATS OF A LARGER GROWTH.



There is an Oriental proverb, "He who has seen a cat has seen a tiger." What, then, is the good of going to the Zoological Gardens to look at the tigers, if the animal is to be seen without any exertion in

our kitchens or in our gardens? But the proverb, as usual, needs a little qualification. The person who has seen a tiger will be able to note the points in which the cat resembles it. But those who have only seen a cat will have a very imperfect idea of a tiger. It is something like the case of Virgil's peasant, who thought that a big town must be like a little town, as a puppy resembles a big dog. On the other hand, there are some Indian sportsmen who have become so familiar with tigers that, without any contemptuous intention, they write of them as "the big cats." Captain Baldwin, an experienced and scientific writer on the large and small game of India, not unfrequently writes of "the big cats, with their beautiful smooth, glossy coats," and very few people were better acquainted than Captain Baldwin was with all the savage qualities of the tiger in his natural haunts.

There is a very great difference between tigers in a state of captivity and tigers in their wild state. So much has been written about tiger-shooting, that it would be carrying coals to Newcastle to add to the numerous exciting tales which have been recorded by the famous shikaris of India. The wild tigers will, therefore, be left alone for the present. Our object will be to record some experiences in connection with the tigers, or big cats, in a state of captivity.

If any one wishes to study the big cats in captivity in England, let him go and inspect the animals in the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens. But he will find that they do not look happy; and their coats are not smooth and glossy. The English climate does not agree with them, although the temperature of the large Carnivora House is carefully adjusted to a suitable warmth. It is also very difficult to feed a tiger properly when it is in confinement. A daily ration of raw horse-flesh is a bad substitute for the food with which the animal would provide itself in its natural state; but the British public insists on seeing the tigers fed daily, and probably horse-flesh is given because it is economical. There is a certain brief excitement when the hungry animal sees its food being brought towards it; and the public appear to be gratified at watching the tiger seize upon the gory bones, and growl over them; but the big cat soon satisfies its appetite, and lies down heavily to sleep.

It was my good fortune to see more of tame tigers in India than falls to the lot of most persons. There are many men who have shot tigers, but my opportunities for taking care of them and observing them in a state of captivity were almost exceptional. My friend, the late Rajah of Burdwan, had a very good menagerie in the gardens of one of his summer palaces, and we used frequently to meet there and go round and inspect the animals. The Rajah had little difficulty in procuring tigers, leopards, and bears, which are to be found in many parts of his extensive estates. But the best of his tigers were two which had been procured from the Province of Oude. One of these was called Vizeer, and the other had received the name of Bheem, because the natives said he was a Hindoo,



"VIZEER SPRANG OUT."

and would not eat beef. So Bheem lived chiefly on goats' flesh, whilst Vizeer had no scruples as to what he ate. The real difference between them was this : Vizeer was caught when he was full-grown, and had for a long time been obliged to hunt for, and kill, whatever he wanted to eat. Bheem was captured when very young, and had been brought up by hand, on a milk and rice diet, which had been changed to cooked goats' flesh when he grew up. Bheem had never tasted blood or taken life. He was accustomed to be petted and patted by the keepers, and was, in fact, a beautiful big cat. Vizeer was a very different character. He was a very large and handsome animal. It was the custom to give him occasionally a pig or a goat to kill, as it is almost essential to the health of a tiger, which has fed on wild animals of his own killing, that he should sometimes taste fresh blood, and eat some of the flesh with the hair on it. Vizeer used to be shut up in the inner compartment of his den, whilst the pig was let down through a grating in the roof into the outer compartment. Before the pig had time to understand the situation, the door of the inner den opened, and Vizeer sprang out. With his fore-paws he seized the pig, and the next moment his huge jaws closed over its neck, so that death was instantaneous. Vizeer never relaxed his hold until he had drained the blood from his victim's body. He would sometimes at once proceed to eat a hind leg, carving the ham with his sharp teeth and bristly tongue, as neatly as a cook could have cut it with a knife. Vizeer would then compose himself to sleep, and in the course of the following night he would gradually consume the rest of the carcase ; after which he would not care to be fed again for two or three days.

The other tiger, named Bheem, appeared to have no intuitive notion how to kill his prey. A rather large village pig, about six months old, was once put into his den at the command of the Rajah, and he did not know what to do with it. Bheem patted it on the back with his paw, and seemed inclined to have a game of play with it. Naturally the pig did not reciprocate the idea of a game of play with a tiger, and resented Bheem's advances. The keeper then interposed, and removed the pig, which was happily none the worse for his adventure, and was not aware of the marvellous escape which he had had from the tiger's jaws.

There was another tiger in the Rajah's collection which had a peculiar character. It had been caught in a trap when full-grown, and may possibly have killed human beings, as well as deer or cattle, before it was captured. It had no fear of the black faces of the natives, but the moment that it saw the white face of an Englishman, it fled into its inner den, and could not be induced to come out till the white face had disappeared. It is difficult to account for this animal's aversion to a white face ; but perhaps in the family traditions of its race it is handed down that the white man is the tiger's natural enemy, whilst the black man is his natural food.

In the household of another old friend, Rajah Kalinarain, of Dacca, there was a full-grown tiger which used to go about loose on the premises. When this poor creature was quite young, chloroform had been recently introduced into India, and possibly, by way of a crucial experiment of the strength of chloroform, a doctor, who was really one of the most kind-hearted men in his profession, extracted all the teeth and claws of the young tiger under chloroform. The



"THE PIG RESENTED BHEEM'S ADVANCES."

animal thenceforth was treated as a big cat, and was petted and played with during the day, whilst at night he was chained up outside the entrance to the ladies' apartments, in case any one should wish unauthorisedly to enter or emerge from that part of the house. This tiger had, of course, to be fed on soft food, and boiled goat's flesh and rice and vegetables were the "chief of his diet." In an evil hour, the men who had to feed the tiger thought to amuse themselves by letting him kill the goats which were brought for his food, and this he was easily able to do by a blow from his huge fore-paws, though deprived of their claws. Having thus learnt how to kill a live being, he unhappily one night jumped on a small boy who had come within reach of his chain, and with one stroke broke the child's neck. He was found in the morning apparently very sorry and surprised at what he had done. But of course he had to pay the penalty of his crime, and was immediately shot by the Rajah's orders.

When the Zoological Gardens in Calcutta were established in 1878-79, the office of President of the Honorary Committee of Management was conferred on me. The late Mr. Schwendler kindly undertook the chief labour of the superintendence; whilst Dr. Anderson, of the Indian Museum, gave us his valuable aid, and the benefit of his scientific knowledge. There was no difficulty in procuring tigers or other wild animals. A tame tiger is an inconvenient pet for a native gentleman to keep, if he has not a regular menagerie; and there were many Rajahs and Zemindars only too glad to have the opportunity of presenting a tiger to the Zoo, where the name of the donor was conspicuously printed over the animal's den. There was room for eight or ten tigers, and in fact almost the only limit to the number kept was found in the expense of feeding them.

It will be readily understood that there was a good opportunity for observing the characters and habits of tigers, with such an abundant supply of them at command. As members of the committee, we took a different time for studying the animals from that which was available to the public. We used to visit

the gardens almost every morning at an early hour, as soon as the dens had been cleaned out, and when the animals were usually basking in any gleams of the morning sunshine that could reach them. It was at this time that they were most quiet and manageable, and they soon began to understand that our intentions were friendly. It is expedient for only one person at a time to handle the big cat in order to conciliate him and pet him. This must be done cautiously and gradually. Perhaps the most simple plan

is to begin by giving the animal a little fresh grass with the dew on it. After a few days the tiger will eat it from your hand. By introducing a small stick, and rubbing it along the back of the tiger, the way may be prepared for putting in the hand and stroking the beast. But it must always be remembered that the tiger's paw can strike like lightning if any offence is given. If two people try at the same time to pet a tiger, there is a great risk, because the animal may turn rapidly from one to the other. It is very foolish to attempt any familiarities with tigers when the casual outside public have been admitted. The crowd distracts the animal's attention, and he may be frightened, or



"THE MEN THOUGHT TO AMUSE THEMSELVES."

else irritated so as to lose his temper.

Some of the tigers were altogether impracticable, and would not allow any approaches to be made to them. Others were more amenable to kindness. There was a blind tiger, which always seemed grateful for any attention, and came at once when called to be handled. There was one tigress which was so gentle that she was just like a big cat, and played with a wooden ball, and liked to have her head scratched and her tail pulled. There were two fine young tigers, which were becoming very tame, when one day, owing to the carelessness of some workmen who were altering the dens, they got loose, and walked out into the gardens. It was just dark when they emerged, and most of the public visitors had gone away; but some of the native keepers got a good fright. The tigers wandered about aimlessly, and after awhile they practically re-captured themselves by jumping down into the enclosure in which a rhinoceros was kept: the inner wall being so high that they could

not have jumped out again. Here they remained quietly till the morning, when, unfortunately, two gentlemen, who had come down with their guns on hearing of the affair, thought fit to shoot the unhappy creatures, which could neither resist nor escape.

Amongst the impracticable tigers which would not be tamed, and which were deaf to all blandishments,

there were two that had been regular man-eaters. They belonged to a family of seven tigers, which infested the main road to Hazarebagh, and had killed a large number of people. As it was found almost impossible to shoot them, a sporting native nobleman set to work to catch them in pitfalls, and he succeeded gradually in securing the whole family. But though it is comparatively easy to catch a tiger in a pitfall, it is very difficult to get him out of it alive, and only two of the seven were brought out uninjured. The procedure is rather elaborate. A regular mine has to be driven up to one side of the pitfall, and in the mine a strong cage of bamboos has to be built, so that when, at last, the side of the pitfall is opened and the tiger enters the mine, he is secured in the cage, which is then dug out with its captive. This must be rather nervous work for the native shikarees who undertake it; but their courage is remarkable, and the cage is made of solid bamboos, four or five inches in diameter, which are thoroughly tiger-proof.

It is not often that tigers breed when in captivity, at least in European countries; and the few cubs which have been born alive in England have died of some congenital malformation of the palate. The pair of man-eaters in the Calcutta Zoological Gardens have had three sets of cubs. On the first occasion there were three cubs, and on the second and third occasions there were two. The cubs all grew up, and one of them was presented to the London Zoo, and lived there till last year, when it succumbed to the climate. It is hardly necessary to say that the young cubs were as pretty and playful as



"THE TIGERS WANDERED ABOUT AIMLESSLY" (p. 142).

kittens, and when the mother was to be seen playing with her cubs, it seemed hardly credible that this could be the ruthless monster which had so often killed human beings. Of course *paterfamilias* was kept apart, or he would probably have eaten his children; but he could see them through the bars of his den, and evidently took much interest in them.

It soon became necessary to wean the cubs, because they would persist in eating bits of the hard raw meat which was intended for their mother, and this food disagreed with them. A tigress in its wild state is in the habit of catching birds and rabbits, and such small deer, for its young cubs; and unless chickens and kids' flesh were provided for the young animals at the Zoo, they at once fell off in health. Some of the cubs grew up quite gentle and good-tempered, whilst others were morose and savage. The parent tigers never showed any inclination to be friendly. They had learnt to kill men, and would doubtless have done it again. The male tiger was, nevertheless, in some respects a coward. He could not bear the sight of a small elephant, which was kept in the gardens for children to ride on; and whenever the elephant came near his den, he fled and hid himself in the inner apartment. The female, on the other hand, took no notice of the elephant; whilst a Persian lioness, in an adjoining den, used to show great excitement, and every wish to attack the elephant. It would be very difficult to explain the conduct of these three animals, especially as, to the best of our belief, none of them in a wild state had ever seen an elephant.

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