



TIGERS AND TIGER-HUNTING.

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With Illustrations by HARRY DIXON.



THROUGHOUT the numerous varieties and species of carnivora there is none more interesting than the genus *Felis*; there is no class of animal which embodies to the same degree and generality the instinct of destruction. The individuality is almost the same in every species; there is the natural ferocity, combined with wariness; the prey is approached by stealth; although the attack is sudden and resolute, extreme caution is observed in the approach, and the instinct of self-preservation is strongly marked by the desire for concealment throughout every variety of the tribe.

The ordinary domestic cat is an excellent example of the genus. When a kitchen cat deserts the house, and despising the puny sport of mousing, seeks nobler game in the neighbouring coverts and preserves, she becomes in character the leopard, or tiger of the Indian jungles. It is most interesting and instructive to watch the movements of such a cat when she is seeking her prey, in happy ignorance of being observed. If she were painted in stripes she would become a tiger in miniature; every attitude is the same; she creeps stealthily towards a doomed leveret, step by step; now she halts, and crouches low; her tail moves spasmodically from side to side, the tip striking the ground in restless excitement. Again she creeps forward; but presently she turns her head inquiringly, and looks around in nervous anxiety lest something, or somebody, might disturb her game. Satisfied at last, she makes a sudden run forward, and with a fatal spring she seizes her prey by the neck, at the same time she fixes her claws firmly upon the unlucky animal, and there is no escape. Now is the moment when the natural ferocity of the tiger may be witnessed in any ordinary domestic cat: let the game be a simple mouse, and who will venture with ungloved hands to rescue it from those pitiless jaws?

If a person has had long acquaintance with the larger felidæ in their native haunts, he cannot fail to observe the habits of the domestic cat with more than ordinary interest, as every movement and expression will remind him of the nobler animals of his past experience. Although the tiger is merely a large cat, it differs from the latter in its peculiar love for water. During the hot season the tiger may often be found stretched in a shallow pool that will just cover its body when lying at full length. Tigers will swim long distances; they are said to swim from Singapore to the mainland; they also cross the Bramahputra river in places exceeding a mile in width. The numerous islands of the Sunderbunds abound with tigers, which wander throughout the archipelago, swimming from isle to isle. The tiger is a thirsty animal, and must always drink immediately after eating. It is a common error generally accepted that the tiger is fond of great heat; this mistake has originated in the fact that most countries inhabited by this animal are within the tropics; but the tiger is widely

distributed, and is found in Northern China, and even in Siberia; the skins of such animals when obtained towards the end of winter are extremely valuable, the fur being thick and silky, like that of the snow leopard, another instance of the distribution of the *Felis* in cold latitudes or altitudes.

In the hottest season of India the tiger is at a disadvantage. The streams are dried up. Rivers that were important in volume, have been steadily shrinking since December, and April finds only small pools at long intervals in the sudden bends of the torrent bed. Tanks of small extent that were drinking-places for vast herds of cattle until the end of February have become dry. All the domestic animals in like manner with the wild denizens of the forest must drink from the only sources that exist. At the usual drinking hour the cattle must assemble at the water. When night arrives, and mankind no longer disturbs the scene, the wild animals from great distances arrive at the lonely drinking-places. The tiger can at such a season obtain his food with ease, but he labours under the grave disadvantage of himself being a



TIGER SWIMMING ACROSS THE BRAMAHPUTRA RIVER.

water drinker, therefore he can easily be discovered, as, should he kill an animal near a drinking-place, he must drink after having made his meal, and he will assuredly lie down and sleep within a short distance of the carcass which he has secured. This peculiarity is general, although there may be frequent exceptions when tigers have been unsuccessfully hunted and shot at by inexperienced persons; in such cases they become so wary that they simply eat their first heavy meal, drink from the nearest water, and retreat to some unknown haunt, leaving the body of their slain animal to be devoured by vultures, hyænas, jackals, &c., which would quickly clean it to the bones.

The ordinary habits of the tiger induce him to lie somewhat near to his carcass, because he is well aware that unless he is on guard, the vultures will leave nothing for his second meal. When a tiger springs upon an animal he seizes it with his jaws by the back of the neck, at the same time he drives the claws of both his fore feet into the flesh, and twists the head round so as to break the neck; he then relaxes his grip, and takes a new hold by the throat. From that hold he drags the dead animal into the nearest deep ravine, or dense piece of covert, where he can conceal his victim and himself. He then begins his meal. There are certain peculiarities in the habits of tigers which differ from those of leopards. A tiger invariably commences by

eating the hind-quarters of an animal ; a leopard, as certainly, tears open the breast, and feasts upon the stomach, lungs, heart and liver before it would touch the actual flesh.

I have frequently examined the neat surgical operation when a tiger has eaten the flesh of a buffalo's haunch, and then cut the skin as though with a knife, and divided the joint by dislocation, thus separating completely the thigh from the pelvis. Generally that portion is sufficient for the first meal if the buffalo is nearly full grown. The tiger will then drink, and sleep until the evening. At about sunset or shortly after, he will return, and eat the remaining thigh ; he seldom has an opportunity of a third meal, as the jackals discover the carcass, and in spite of the tiger's watchfulness it quickly disappears.

From this short description of the tiger's habits it will be easy to comprehend the comparative facility with which he can be interviewed during the hot season, when water does not exist, except at few and distant intervals. At that period, all leaves with the exception of a few evergreens have fallen from the trees and bushes ; the grass has withered and fallen to the ground, leaving the jungles clear and open to view for more than a hundred yards in a direct line, thus every animal can be distinctly seen. In April and May the ground is so heated by the sun, that if rocky, the pads of a tiger's feet would suffer severely from the extreme heat of the surface ; in fact he could not travel far over bare plateaux of rock, or upon hard ground devoid of some covering of withered herbage. The tiger accordingly oppressed by the hot wind and almost insupportable temperature, indulges in sleep, and declines to move until at sunset the earth shall have cooled, and permitted him to wander forth in search of his accustomed prey.

It may readily be imagined that if the tiger suffers from the terrible heat, the hunters will in due proportion be distressed by the exhausting climate ; nevertheless from the middle of March till the end of May is the acknowledged tiger season. The cold months from early December until the end of February are delightful in Central India. During that time the skin of the tiger is far more beautiful, as the coat is longer and more furry than in the hot summer, especially the long hair about the throat and neck which is remarkable in the male. But although the temperature is delightful, and the aspect of the country at its greatest beauty, there is an extreme difficulty in the hunter's path, as the dense foliage renders the jungles thoroughly opaque, and no animal can be seen distinctly even at five paces distant. Every brook, and every nullah contains running water ; the tanks are full ; in nearly every depression there is a muddy fluid in which tame buffaloes wallow, and village pigs grout up the borders in search of water-snails and roots. It will easily be seen that the difficulties of tiger-shooting are multiplied : it is impossible to determine the whereabouts of the animal, as water can be procured everywhere, and the wild beasts, such as Sambur deer, pigs, Nilghye, &c., are scattered throughout the country ; therefore the tiger has to work hard for his game, instead of haunting a solitary drinking spot and waiting for the arrival of thirsty animals.

A sport which is comparatively simple during the hot season becomes a science during the winter months, and an intimate acquaintance with the habits of the tiger is necessary to ensure success, in addition to extreme patience and hard work.

Tigers have well-beloved localities which become their haunts : these are generally densely wooded dells among jungle-covered hills, with a river in the immediate neighbourhood. The proximity of a river ensures a vast amount of the roughest ground, as the drainage of the hills during the rainy season will have torn the surface into innumerable deep ravines, all converging towards the stream. These ravines or nullahs vary in depth from six to thirty feet, and being overgrown with tangled thorns and gigantic grasses, they become impenetrable retreats, from which it would be impossible to dislodge a tiger unless by means of fireworks.

During the cool season tigers are obliged to wander over great distances to obtain their food, accordingly they lie upon arrival in a district within the well-known locality which constitutes their haunt. These places are thoroughly understood by the village *shikaris*, and they are well aware that a tiger will as certainly go direct to this haunt, as though he were a human being who would put up at a well-known inn. It is this intimate knowledge of the country which is essential to success during the winter season. Upon arrival at any new locality the first step should be an examination of

the borders of all streams near the accustomed haunt, especially those where clean sandbanks invite an animal as a resting place for drinking. If there are no tracks, there will as a rule be no tiger in the neighbourhood. There are generally two or more haunts within a distance of a couple of miles; both should of course be thoroughly examined, also the banks upon either side of the main river.

We will suppose that after a long day's search the track of a tiger has been discovered upon the bank of a river, perhaps a mile or more from the usual haunt. That evening a buffalo must be tied up as a bait as near as possible to the track, but close to some nullah into which the tiger can drag it for concealment. At the same time another buffalo, or perhaps two, should be tied up in a favourable position in the accustomed haunt; and the second haunt must also be baited, although at two or three miles distance, as it is impossible to determine the exact locality of the tiger during the cold weather.

A buffalo should not be less than two years old, and in good condition, as a tiger will frequently refuse to notice a thin, half-starved animal. The rope should never be tied round the buffalo's neck, as it would excite suspicion; it should be made fast to the fetlock of a foreleg and then be secured to a tree. When a tiger kills a buffalo he bites through the rope, and then drags the body into the nearest nullah. The cutting teeth of a tiger are extremely sharp, and will divide a rope like shears; there are six of these teeth in either jaw, but in the upper jaw there are two very small extra teeth fixed transversely at the back of the farthest cutting teeth; these are mere tubercles and so small as to be useless.

The buffalo baits having been tied up in the evening, and sufficient rice straw as food for the night having been thrown before them, nothing more can be done until break of day. At the earliest dawn trustworthy men are sent to each spot where buffaloes were tied. Should one have been killed and dragged away, the men should simply satisfy themselves by the tracks that it has been killed by a tiger, and not by a leopard; but they should upon no account attempt to find the carcass, as at that early hour the tiger would probably be with it, and should he see the men, he would leave the buffalo, and perhaps go straight away for miles, only to return at night when all was quiet.

The news of a "kill" having been brought to camp the preparations for the hunt are made without loss of time. Everything depends upon the perfection of these arrangements. The number of beaters must not be excessive. It is a common practice to collect the greatest number possible, and in many instances the men are pressed against their will by Chuprassis. In such cases the beat is rarely successful, as the natives take no interest in the hunt, and instead of keeping an unbroken line and preserving a compact chain of units at regular intervals, they resolve themselves into knots or groups of ten or twenty men, leaving gaps in the line of a hundred yards or more, through which the tiger is certain to break back, and be seen no more. I never allow men to be pressed, as I would rather forego sport altogether than endanger the life of a native by compulsion. It is impossible to lay down any fixed rule for the number of beaters, as much will depend upon the conditions of localities, and the party of shooters. Personally I dislike parties, and prefer to shoot alone, as the natives take greater pains to please an individual than a multitude; they like the idea of one master, and they exhibit greater confidence when orders are given without any consultation with others, or difference of opinions.

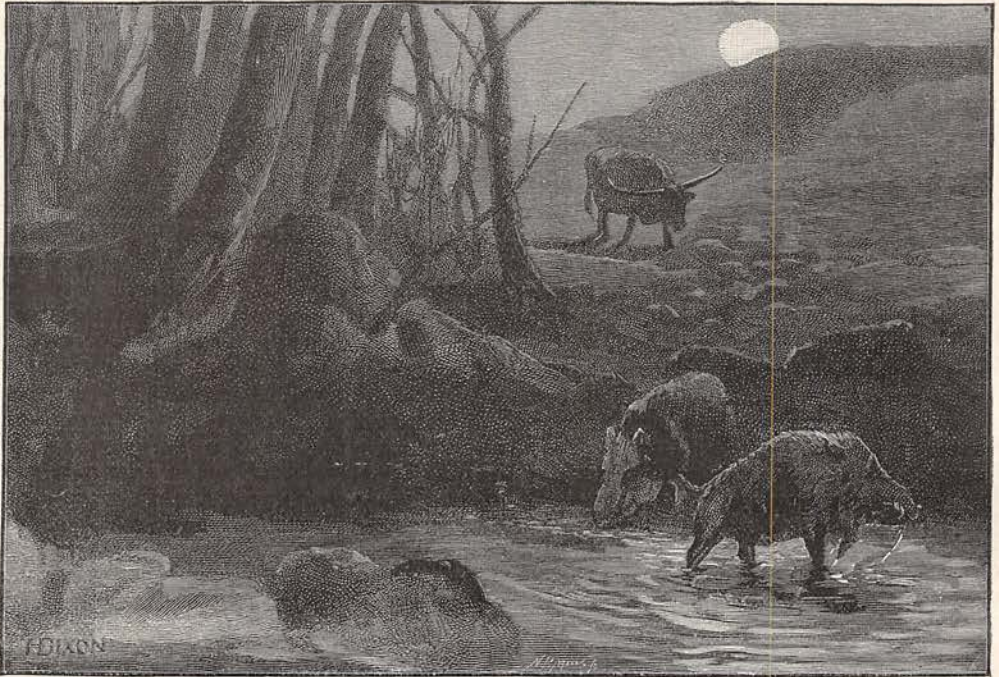
A party of four guns will frequently employ two hundred beaters. When shooting alone I prefer eighty good men, all willing, and none under twenty years of age. The head *shikari* is responsible for the line; he selects eight or ten dependable men whom he stations at intervals to prevent stragglers, and to preserve the line intact during the advance over broken ground. In addition to the beaters the head *shikari* takes twenty experienced villagers as "Stops"; the success of the drive depends mainly upon these assistants.

At first sight it appears almost impossible that a solitary gun would have the remotest chance of obtaining a shot at a tiger that is to be driven forward through an area of perhaps two, or three hundred acres of jungle, intersected by numerous ravines, but it is astonishing how much may be effected by a thorough knowledge of the animal and its ways.

When driven before a line of beaters, a tiger never moves quickly through the jungle, unless a shot is fired; he walks slowly forward, and frequently halts, to listen

to the shouts of the approaching line, and to form his opinion of the situation. His instinct warns him that some danger lies ahead, otherwise he would not be driven from the rear, accordingly he declines a direct course, and descending into a tempting ravine or nullah, he steals cautiously along its winding channel until at a favourable turn he emerges upon the higher ground; again listening, he cuts off an extensive bend by crossing the level surface for fifty or sixty paces, and then again descending to the deep asylum he continues his retreat On arrival at the junction of several nullahs with the main ravine he leaves them altogether, and having halted once more, and looked back in the direction of the beaters, he comes to the conclusion that an escape either to the left or right would be preferable to any advance in front; he alters his course without delay, and would escape altogether from the beat unless turned by the intelligence of a "Stop."

The "Stops" are men expressly stationed upon trees upon either flank of the crescent formed by the line of beaters, in such order that they form a continuous chain, at intervals of about one hundred yards, extending to within that distance of the gun



AT THE LONELY DRINKING PLACES.

upon either side; thus should the gun be posted in a position to command a ravine, there will be upon the left and right within one hundred yards two Stops, and from these the chain of Stops will continue until they embrace the entire circuit, and become connected with the wings of the crescent formed by the line of beaters. In the winter season when the jungles are green and dense, the Stops should be nearer together, at intervals not exceeding fifty paces. It will be observed that by this arrangement the area of jungle to be driven will be enclosed as though within a huge net, and no animal can attempt to escape from the well-guarded line without being seen. The object of the Stops will be to keep the tiger from breaking out of the drive; this requires most careful management. If all goes well they will be able to conduct this wary animal direct to the spot where the gun is stationed. To effect this, each Stop is provided with two or three pieces of dry and brittle stick that will snap (when broken) with a sharp report.

When all have been posted in their stations by the head *shikari* and his assistants, the drive commences. The wild chorus of a large body of men shouting and yelling at their loudest, in addition to tom-toms upon either flank, awaken the tiger suddenly from his sleep. I always endeavour to procure a couple of tom-toms for

the lines of beaters, as a tiger is not so likely to charge through, and escape by breaking back. Such a movement is always dangerous, as he would probably attack the first man whom he met.

The tiger being well within the drive, and cautiously advancing as already described, would easily escape to the right or left were not the Stops on the alert. One of these men will suddenly perceive a dusky object of a yellowish hue moving slowly through the withered grass and tangled foliage; it is coming straight towards him, and in a few moments, if not turned, it will be outside the beat. This is a critical period, and cool judgment is required. Too loud a noise would turn the tiger back, and he might break through the line of beaters; the Stop waits until he can see the animal distinctly at about thirty yards, he then breaks a stick. The sudden snap at once attracts the notice of the advancing tiger: he stops and listens.

The Stop breaks another stick, repeating the snap. Not liking the sound, the wary tiger turns, and altering his course, proceeds in the required direction. In this manner he is conducted by the unseen guides, and led towards the spot where the shooter is posted, anxiously awaiting the appearance of the game. Sometimes the snapping of a dry stick is not sufficient to turn the tiger; in such a case the Stop would clap his hands, or perhaps cough, or make some slight sound that would be sufficient to turn the animal without producing a scare; the latter is always to be avoided, as the tiger might dash recklessly between the Stops and be altogether lost

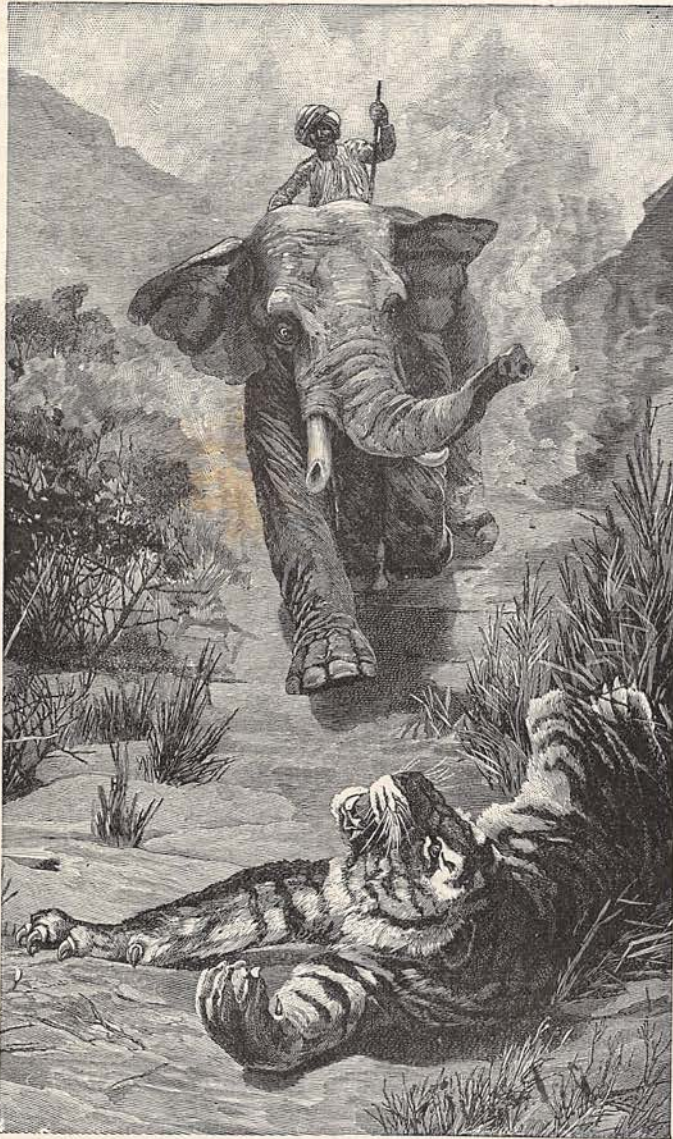
At last a shot is fired! . . . This is a moment of intense excitement as nobody can know whether the tiger has been killed, or only wounded. If wounded, there is extreme danger for the beaters; these people being aware of the fact, generally climb into trees directly they hear the shot. I always give a signal by bugle if the tiger is dead; if the signal is not given, the beaters know that they must look out for their own safety. Should a tiger be only wounded, the Stops are of immense service, as some of them must have seen the direction he had taken.

When a wounded tiger has to be followed up, especially during the cool season when the jungles are so green and dense that no object can be seen until you are close upon it, the danger commences. The first step is to discover the blood track. This having been done, a *shikari* ascends a tree, from which lofty position he can examine the ground some distance in advance. All being clear, the blood track can be followed, the rifle being on full cock and ready, until another tree is reached; this will be climbed in the same manner, and the party will proceed in the same cautious fashion until the wounded tiger shall be descried. No shot should be fired until the shooter can obtain a position that will give him a clear chance at a vital spot that will produce sudden death.

Nearly all the casualties which take place annually in India are the results of following wounded tigers. It is strange that people who reside in India and pretend to be lovers of this sport do not keep a few small dogs simply trained to follow upon a blood track. Half a dozen curs thus trained would run a wounded tiger to bay in a few minutes; this would mark the spot, and it would be comparatively easy to approach cautiously and to take a deadly shot while the attention of the tiger was occupied by the dogs. A wounded leopard is still more certain to attack, and dogs would be of immense assistance in following such dangerous game.

I always provide myself with a couple of elephants, and should a tiger be wounded, they become invaluable. Although it is difficult to procure an elephant sufficiently steady to carry a howdah, there are many such animals that will advance upon the track of a wounded tiger and stand tolerably steady until he should either roar, or charge, in which case the elephant would probably run away. Should an elephant bolt in thick forest with a howdah, the occupant would most likely be swept off, and the howdah be smashed to pieces by opposing branches, but the simple pad may be comfortably and securely arranged by lashing with strong ropes a solid bolster transversely across the seat. This bolster should be made of the strongest floursack stuffed with rice-straw firmly pounded. The rider leans his back against this unyielding support, which enables him to shoot without the slightest fear of being thrown off should the elephant bolt at the moment of firing. Even should an elephant run away when thus accoutred, the rider upon a pad can throw himself forward, or upon one side, and dodge the branches of trees that would certainly destroy a howdah.

The most exciting form of tiger-shooting is in the grass country where no trees exist, and the tigers are discovered by beating with a long line of elephants. In such countries baits are tied up in numerous positions, and should there be a "kill," the neighbourhood is driven by thirty or fifty elephants. To enjoy this sport there should not be more than two guns; generally there are six or eight, and the tiger has no chance, but is killed as soon as he is viewed. I have hunted with a line of forty



ELEPHANT CHARGING A WOUNDED TIGER.

elephants without any companion, but as a solitary gun. Occasionally I have had a tiger on foot for several hours without the possibility of obtaining a shot, as he has charged and broken through the long line of elephants repeatedly; this has much enhanced the sport, when after marching and counter-marching for several miles he has at length been cornered and received his quietus.

There are many people who imagine that nothing can be easier than to shoot a tiger from the secure position of a mucharn, or platform, in a convenient tree; in many cases there is no difficulty, but in all there is great discomfort, which is a disadvantage to the shooter, who may have been doubled up in a cramped position for more than an hour before the critical moment arrives and the tiger appears before him. There is some art in the construction of a good mucharn. A tree must be selected which provides three strong boughs rising from a common centre, and spreading outwards to admit a triangular platform. This is arranged by lashing three bars of wood each about ten feet in length across the upright boughs. When this frame-work is completed,

sixteen cross-bars perfectly straight, and about three inches in diameter, should be laid across the triangle as close together as possible. These must be secured by lashing, and the mucharn will be complete. A carpet folded in four layers should be arranged upon the corduroy construction, upon which the shooter sits. No person should dangle his legs over the edge: Dr. Hamilton was killed two years ago by a tiger which sprang up, and seized him by the leg when in this helpless position.

The difficulty of shooting from a mucharn is very great should the animal present itself upon the right of the rifle. It is almost impossible to turn, and in this manner

a tiger is frequently missed, or perhaps only slightly wounded. I have a small turn-stool with a wide base, the height being exactly arranged to admit of a rest being taken by placing the left elbow upon the knee; this is a charming arrangement, as the pin of the turn-stool being well greased, no noise is produced by turning, and a shot may be taken in any direction. Care must be taken lest the recoil of six drams of powder should upset the shooter from his seat. I also have a portable platform four feet by three feet six inches made of teak planks screwed upon two parallel bars, which project at either end, forming four handles about two feet long, like a gardener's hand-barrow. This contrivance is lashed across the triangle, and forms an excellent level surface; when covered with a folded *dhurri*, or carpet, the turn-stool is thoroughly secured from slipping. My advice to every person who is preparing his shooting position is, "make yourself thoroughly comfortable; do not begrudge the time, or trouble, but prepare your mucharn with the greatest care, and do not accept the position unless you can command a shot in every direction."

There may be circumstances when this becomes impossible, and in such cases the animal is almost certain to present a shot which cannot be commanded by the rifle. I had a notable example of this on 28th December, 1890. At a place called Ghât Piperia in the Damoh district in Central India there are three well-known tiger haunts separated from each other by three or four miles. As I have already described, a tiger invariably occupies the well-known haunt upon his arrival in the district, probably after an absence of several months, therefore Ghât Piperia had earned a special reputation. I had frequently visited this place in former years, and I possessed the inestimable advantage of knowing the jungles intimately throughout the district.

There was a very large and much-respected tiger that was in the habit of visiting these attractive haunts: this animal was exceedingly fierce, and he had an awkward custom of breaking back, and of attacking the line of beaters; in this manner he had killed a man during a hunt by the Deputy Commissioner in the spring of 1890. When a tiger has killed a man he becomes an object of more than ordinary interest, as he is certain to repeat the attack upon the next opportunity. This animal had been hunted and shot at so frequently that he had become exceedingly wary, and he had adopted an artifice by which there is little doubt he had many times escaped from death. He would move at the usual stealthy pace through dense jungle, but should he arrive at any open place, the increased light was sufficient warning, and he would instantly change his slow pace to the fullest speed, and dash across the glade at the rate of an express train.

When I was camped at Ghât Piperia, this tiger had not been heard of for some months, and the natives felt very confident that he would shortly reappear. I had baits tied up nightly in the usual places, and daily made excursions to a distance of several miles to drive the jungles with fifty or sixty men, in the hope by disturbing an extensive outlying circuit to induce the tiger to seek covert in one of his well-known haunts. Unfortunately when assisting in the construction of a mucharn, I had lately met with an accident, by cutting my left thumb nearly off with a sharp bill-hook, therefore I carried my left hand in a sling, and I was placed at a serious disadvantage.

We were driving jungle on one occasion in a piece of first class reserve forest where I expected to find either Sambar deer, or cheetul,¹ and my hand being disabled, I contented myself with a long .450 Colt's revolver, with which I could kill anything at a short distance. Instead of a mucharn, which takes a considerable time to build, I arranged my ladder in a manner that was not inconvenient. This ladder was 4ft. wide inside at the base, and 2ft. 6in. at the top by 15ft. in length. The sides were very strong bamboos, and the rungs were teak, exceedingly strong and fixed by iron bolts completely through the bamboo, secured by screw nuts and washers. I always carried two very straight and thick wooden bars about six feet in length. It was only necessary to choose a tree which presented a fork about twelve feet from the ground, and to lash firmly across the fork one of the bars in front, and the other behind exactly parallel. The ladder was then fixed in such a position that the top rung rested against the front cross-bar, to which it was firmly lashed; the projecting side of the ladder was secured against the trunk of the tree with a strong rope.

This arrangement formed a comfortable seat upon the three parallel cross-pieces, the rung of the ladder, and the two bars. The usual objection to any fixed position

¹ Spotted deer.

existed, that it was impossible to shoot to the right, but with a pistol this disadvantage was reduced materially. When seated upon this arrangement, the ladder was concealed by heaping against its length several long branches in full foliage.

We had completed two drives, and the only animals I had seen were about a dozen cheetah, which in complete ignorance of danger, halted within seven or eight paces of my position. There was a buck among them, but he had just shed his antlers, therefore I would not fire. The beat being concluded, I was considering the next movement, when a native in great excitement, and streaming with perspiration, suddenly arrived with the report, that *the* big tiger had sprung out of a ravine and seized one of his cows while he was watching his herds: he had run from the scene, and knowing our locality he had come at best speed to give the information. I knew the place well from his description, it was about a mile on the other side of my own camp, two miles and a half from the spot where I now stood. No time was lost, all my men were eager for the sport, and we hastened in the direction of Punda, the scene of the



FROM THAT HOLD HE DRAGS THE DEAD ANIMAL INTO THE NEAREST RAVINE.

attack. We had to pass our camp, therefore, upon arrival, I sent all the people forward, and rode to the tents to exchange the Colt's revolver for my Paradox gun. This was more handy than the rifle, being nearly four pounds lighter ($8\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.), and in case of necessity I could use it with one hand.

As I hurried the elephant along the level plain, the whole of which was cultivated with wheat, I could distinguish the vultures soaring above the jungle-covered hills upon the right front; this denoted the spot where the tiger had dragged the cow. A crowd of people were collected together with my *shikaris*. The blood was pointed out where the struggle had taken place, and the cow had been dragged about eighty yards to a deep ravine which formed at this season a stream of running water. My head *shikari*, Kerim Bux, had examined the drag, and had discovered that the tiger had not been contented with the ravine as a place of concealment, but he had dragged the carcass across the sandy bottom, and had pulled it into one of the lateral nullahs which drained into the main stream. The vultures were sitting upon the boughs of a tall peepul tree, and there could be no doubt that the tiger, having been undisturbed, was now eating the prey which he had so audaciously obtained.

The village people knew exactly where he was. The interior of the jungle was as

bad as can be imagined ; it was composed of dense evergreen bushes called karoonda, and the ground was broken into a perfect labyrinth of deep ravines or nullahs, all of which drained into the main channel which formed the boundary of the cultivated plain.

I left the elephants upon this plain, and, accompanied by my *shikaris*, I made a *détour*, crossed the stream, and struggled up the almost perpendicular bank on the jungle side. After descending into several deep nullahs we arrived upon a narrow hog's-back between dense jungle, which formed a wall upon either side. This high ground was perfectly clean, the grass having been closely eaten by numerous sheep and cattle ; it resembled a road of about eighty yards width which descended direct to the main stream, into which at right angles all the nullahs drained. The tiger was supposed to be within two hundred paces of this spot. All the beaters, accompanied by the village headman and *shikaris*, had gone in an opposite direction, to take up their position for the drive whenever the signal should be given. Great silence was observed, and our people spoke in what they imagined to be whispers.

We were in a difficulty ; there were no large trees adapted for a mucharn ; the largest was about the thickness of a man's thigh, but this merely possessed a simple fork about ten feet from the ground. After much discussion it was arranged that as a mucharn was not possible, the ladder should be lashed against a cross-bar in the manner already described ; but the ladder was too long, and it was impossible to fix it in such a position that I could sit upon the top rung. After much delay in trying various experiments, it was determined that the only feasible plan would be to secure the ladder against the cross-bar from the rear of the tree, which would conceal it, as it grew from dense karoonda bush ; I was to stand upon the third rung from the top of the ladder, facing the place from which the tiger was expected to emerge. This was a horrible position, as it would be absolutely impossible to take any shot upon the right, as the rifle would be hampered between the rungs of the ladder, the side of which would prevent the barrel from being pointed in that direction. My *shikaris* were unanimous in declaring that the tiger would not appear upon the right, but that he would approach exactly in front, in which case I should obtain a splendid shot.

I descended from my unpleasant post, and examined the ground closely. A very clever *shikari*, Gholab Singh, who knew every yard of the jungle, differed from the other men ; he declared that the tiger would emerge upon my right front, in which case it would be impossible for me to take the shot. I accompanied this man, and he showed me a narrow game-path like a sheep-run ; he was positive that this would be the tiger's route, as it led direct from the nullah, where he was now lying upon the "kill." I counted forty-one paces from that path to the foot of my ladder ; I immediately ascended, and endeavoured to take a trial shot with the Paradox at an imaginary object supposed to be standing in the path. By straining every muscle, and twisting my body to the left, I could barely accomplish this. Unfortunately it was impossible to improve the situation ; my head *shikari* and all others left me, to arrange the Stops, and to give the signal for the beaters.

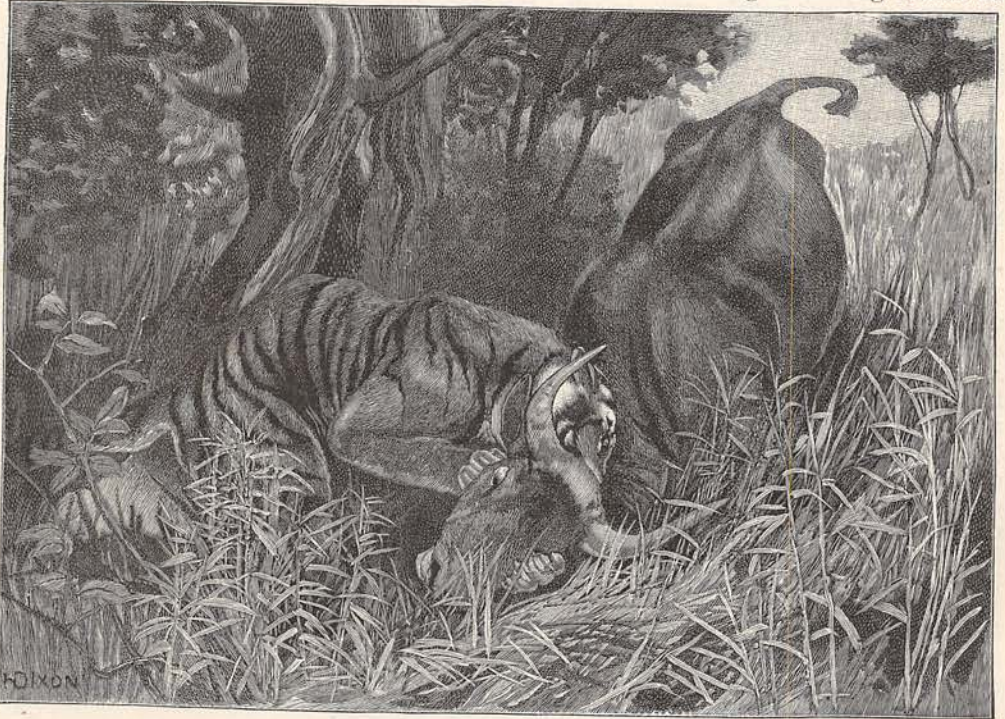
The distance was so short, that I had not long to wait in my uncomfortable position, standing on the narrow rung of a ladder. As the beaters knew within a few yards the exact locality of the tiger, they had arranged a half-circle, and with a magnificent burst in chorus, they gave a sudden yell within a hundred yards of his lair. The beat was splendid, tom-toms rattled loudly, and the concentration of voices showed that the men were in close line together.

I felt sure that if the tiger did not break back, he would not be long in appearing, should he determine to make straight for my position. I was well on the look out in every direction. Five minutes had not elapsed when I detected a movement among the withered grass and green bushes upon my right front, exactly in the narrow path which Gholab Singh had declared the tiger would adopt. In another instant he was standing within the jungle, but close to the exit of the path. Although the view was not clear I could see his shoulders with sufficient distinctness to have made certain of the shot, had I been able to point the rifle ; it was in vain that I strained every nerve and almost lost my footing in leaning to the left, in the endeavour to take aim ; the ladder prevented the possibility. Perhaps if the animal had remained there for half a minute I might eventually have succeeded, but after a few seconds of hesitation, he played his accustomed game. With three short but loud roars he rushed forward at a

tremendous pace across the open, passing obliquely within five yards of me, and disappearing in the opaque karoonda jungle. With one hand I endeavoured to swing the Paradox round, and I fired in the hopeless chance of reaching him; it was in vain; the bullet struck the hard ground far behind him, and I heard it "ping" through the air as the *ricochet* carried it far away towards the neighbouring hills. This was an immense tiger, and the view of his rush was magnificent: but he was gone!

When my people assembled I described the incident; the only man who was contented was Gholab Singh, who was proved to have been correct in his opinion, that the tiger would make his appearance from the small game-path on the right, and not from the front as the other *shikaris* had insisted.

I remounted my elephant, and we all steered towards the camp; everybody was somewhat crestfallen, as such a chance of a mid-day "kill," and a tiger almost in the hand, seldom occurs. The people reminded me of all they had previously informed me regarding the habits of this tiger, and of his extreme cunning in making a dash at



TIGER KILLING A BULLOCK.

full speed across the open, which had saved him upon so many occasions. They seemed to think that my wounded thumb had interfered with good shooting, but if both hands had been sound it would have been impossible to hit that tiger from the uncomfortable position in which I had been placed. It determined me in my principle—"Above all things make yourself thoroughly comfortable, if you can."

I felt deeply (perhaps ridiculously) humiliated in the escape of this well-known tiger. I had made six voyages to India upon shooting excursions, and this was the only tiger fired at that I had not brought home on the same day to camp; the spell seemed broken. When we reached the camp and the beaters received their pay, I told them my determination to remain in their country for any length of time, as I should not leave until I had succeeded in killing that same tiger. The men were all in good spirits, and they agreed to assist in every way, as the beast was a public enemy.

A few days' careful search throughout the neighbourhood proved that the tiger had forsaken us. The shot fired was enough to scare this wily animal, and to drive him to some distant jungles. There were no others in the accustomed haunts, therefore it was a matter of extreme patience if this notorious tiger were to be interviewed again.

I determined to amuse myself daily by driving all jungles within a radius of six miles from camp in rotation. This would give a diameter of twelve miles, therefore if I should work out the circle of country after a regular system of driving, I should so thoroughly disturb the distant beats that any animals would naturally concentrate in the sanctuary of a three mile radius from camp; this would be preserved as a quiet asylum. Every night three buffaloes were tied up in the customary haunts, in case they should be revisited by the tiger, and every morning we sallied forth with two elephants and about forty men to beat the distant jungles in the order that had been pre-arranged.

It must be remembered that the tiger escaped on 28th December. . . . Eighteen days elapsed in constant work without the faintest trace of a tiger throughout the country. On the 15th January we were as usual driving jungles about six miles from camp, when upon entering a level meadow bordered by a stream, and jungle-covered hills, I saw a large buffalo lying down alone. Directing my elephant towards it, I saw that it was dying: there were several wounds in the throat, and the back of the neck, which denoted the recent attack of a tiger.

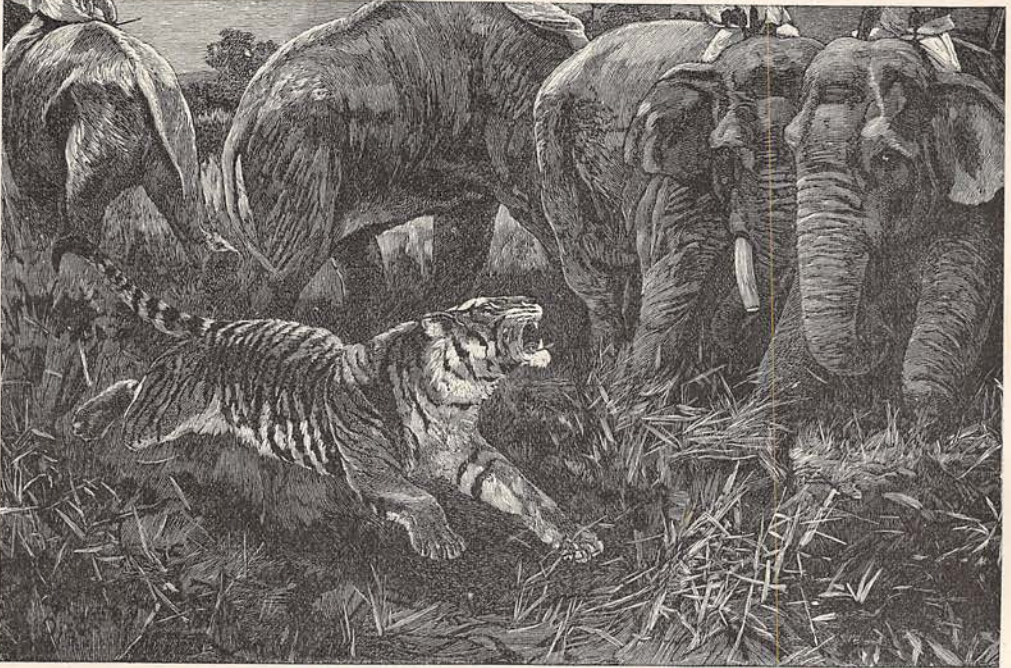
There was a village within a quarter of a mile. We therefore hurried in that direction, but meeting some natives on the way, we were informed that they knew all about the dying buffalo. It appeared that on the previous evening, a little after sunset, a man was driving his herd of buffaloes from pasture to secure them for the night, when the well-known tiger sprang out of the nullah bordering the plain, and seized a large female. The man shouted, and two buffaloes that were near, immediately attacked the tiger with such impetuosity that they knocked it from its hold, and drove it into the stream bordering the jungle from which it had made the attack. This is not an uncommon occurrence, as buffaloes will generally rush to the rescue should a member of the herd be attacked. The wounded buffalo was able to march with its companions to the village, and had accompanied the herd to pasture on the following morning, but inflammation had set in, and the throat had rapidly swollen to an extent that threatened suffocation. The poison from a tiger's claws is rapid in its action.

The first movement necessary was the examination of the tiger's tracks. These we discovered in a few minutes in the nullah bed from which he had sprang upon the buffalo. I felt sure that he had left this portion of the jungle, as a tiger will always change his quarters when baffled and defeated; nevertheless we drove about a mile of jungle at the foot of the rocky hills. There was nothing in the drive except wild pigs, and numerous peacocks. The character of the country was a large, but monotonous extent of steep hills about six hundred feet above the level of the plain: the rock was red sandstone in flat masses. The summit of these ranges was a plateau which extended for some miles, and in many places the sides of the hills were so precipitous that the wild animals could only ascend by favourable passes. Having thoroughly beaten one side of the valley, we crossed over and examined the jungles upon the opposite line of the hills. In ten minutes we came upon a tiger's track apparently quite fresh, as there had been no wind to fill the foot-prints with dust or sand. These tracks were immensely large, and they were at once declared to be those of the big tiger which had been the object of our search for so many days. We came to the conclusion that after he had been driven off by the two buffaloes on the preceding evening, he had crossed over the plain during the night, and the line of his retreat was in the direction of our camp: he was therefore travelling towards one of his accustomed haunts. We accordingly followed up the tracks for about two miles, until they turned to the right and entered a narrow wooded valley which ran far into a bend of the precipitous hills. At length we came upon a small tank of exceedingly muddy water, where an ancient shooting station built of masonry still existed, although in ruins. The tiger's footprints were deeply imbedded in the mud on the fringe of the water, but he evidently had declined to drink such impurity, as his tracks turned before he had been sufficiently near to slake his thirst. Nevertheless this proved that he wanted water, therefore we felt sure he would have crossed the hills, and have taken the wished for direction towards the big river Bearmi.

I had three elephants, therefore we formed a line with the beaters, and drove the entire jungle through the valley up to the foot of the hills. I ordered guns to be fired, and the elephants to scream and roar, to hasten his retreat, should the tiger be anywhere upon this side of the hills. We then hastened to camp with the good news—"that the tiger was in the neighbourhood once more."

Upon our arrival in camp I at once sent my head *shikari*, Kerim Bux, to a favourite haunt about three miles distant, near a village named Deori, with instructions to tie up two buffaloes in the most likely places about a quarter of a mile apart. Other men were started off to tie up buffaloes in totally different directions, in the two haunts already described. I felt perfectly certain that the tiger would kill one of the baits before morning, as the attack upon the buffalo on the previous evening proved him to be hungry, and game was so scarce in the jungles that it would be difficult to capture. I ordered Kerim Bux to engage fifty well-selected men at Deori and the neighbouring villages, to be ready on the following morning when required. Others would be ready to accompany us from Ghât Piperia should there be a "kill" reported at break of day.

The morning broke. At about 7.30 a.m. two parties arrived, driving before them the buffaloes which had been tied as baits at two of the positions. There had been no kill there. At about 8 a.m. we perceived in the distance, Kerim Bux, and one native advancing towards the camp from the Deori side. Kerim was a big man, pluck to the



TIGER CHARGING THE LINE OF BEATER ELEPHANTS.

backbone, and of great physical strength, and there was a peculiar elasticity in his step this morning that denoted satisfaction. When he came within easy hearing, the words "a kill" at once rejoiced the camp. The elephants were already accoutred, and everything being prepared we started without the least delay. Kerim had seen the tracks, verifying the presence of the big tiger within a hundred yards of the spot where the buffalo was tied; there was accordingly no doubt that our old acquaintance was close at hand.

I did not wish to form too long a line of beaters, as I knew the ground was a perfect labyrinth of deep and dangerous nullahs, and the tiger would assuredly be lying in one of these not far distant from his "kill." Fifty good men would be sufficient. Three dependable fellows were entrusted with percussion shells, which explode with a loud report when thrown upon the ground; these were to be thrown into the deep nullahs, into which no human being could penetrate owing to the tangled thorns and grasses. These three men would occupy either flank, and the centre of the line, and it was hoped that the frequent explosions would prevent the tiger from breaking back.

Crossing the Bearmi river close to the camp, we rode across the Saleeah plain for nearly three miles, and by the time we had reached Deori, such a multitude of natives

had collected as volunteers that it was necessary to dismiss them, after having selected fifty of the best men. We were now only one mile from the spot where the "kill" had taken place. The headman of the village took the lead. After crossing several deep places I dismounted, and left the elephants in a secluded glade; following the guide, I at length found myself upon a narrow ridge covered with jungle; this was about fifty feet above the bottom from which we had ascended.

My head *shikari* had prepared this spot many days previous, to be ready should a tiger kill the bait. Kerim had cut away all jungle on the left, clearing a space twenty feet in width to the bottom of a deep nullah, along which he expected the tiger to advance. On the other side of this nullah, the hillside was open grassland, thus I could not only command the nullah about forty yards distant but also the open grass slope beyond. On the right of the ridge there was an exceedingly narrow glade, about nine paces in width, running parallel for about one hundred and twenty yards: from this, a jungle-covered hill continued the mass of forest which covered the surrounding country. Kerim Bux had already constructed a mucharn between two trees which grew close together on the summit of the ridge, exactly above a narrow cattle-path which ran along the centre of the hog's-back throughout its length. My ladder was erected in the middle of this path behind the mucharn, and completely blocked the passage.

When I had quietly examined the surroundings, I expressed my dissatisfaction with the arrangements. "Why should the tiger approach by the deep nullah upon the left, and then ascend the side of the ridge where the jungle had been cleared?" In my opinion a tiger would avoid a nullah which had open grass-land upon one side; and certainly he would refuse to take a path which had recently been cleared of jungle by the axe. I did not believe that any tiger would expose himself in so reckless a manner, especially such a cunning character as we were now expecting. Neither did I believe that he would be foolish enough to march along the narrow glade upon my right, as this particular tiger had the knack of avoiding open places, or of going at full speed across them.

All my *shikaris* and the village headman were determined; they declared most positively that the tiger would take either the left or right, but that he certainly would not come along the cattle-path upon the crest of the ridge. I stubbornly adhered to my own opinion that the tiger would keep to the path, in which case I should be helpless, as the mucharn was screened by an evergreen tree (the Bael), in thick foliage which would completely block the view in front—in fact should a tiger be within three yards of me I should not even be aware of his presence. The triangular framework of the mucharn was actually lashed to this Bael tree, the boughs of which had been pruned away as much as possible, but it was so large and thick that it was impossible to clear the path without cutting away all the heavier branches; this would make a great noise, and the sound of an axe is well known to all wild animals to denote the presence of man.

I prophesied that we should have a repetition of the calamity of 28th December, and that the tiger would escape simply through the careless construction of the mucharn. However, my usually dependable man Kerim was very positive, especially as his opinion was supported by the majority. I took my seat, and the *shikaris* all retired to command the beaters, who were at no great distance. I was now alone, and I carefully studied the position. I had previously examined the path, which descended along the ridge to the low ground beyond, and communicated with the numerous nullahs; it was therefore the natural route for any animal to select if it were driven from those secure retreats. There was a turn in the path as it ascended the ridge, and by leaning as far as possible to the left, I could see for about twenty yards in a straight line, before the bend in the path commenced. By peering carefully between the branches and leaves in front, I could see anything that might be upon the path, but it would be impossible to shoot. Thus should the tiger advance along the route in my front, I should have had a magnificent chance had the view been clear, but I should be paralyzed in my present position.

Suddenly the beat commenced with a burst of voices, and three successive explosions along the line; these were quite as loud as the report of a rifle. I could distinguish several Stops in various trees at a distance to the left upon the grass slope on the other side of the deep nullah, and I watched carefully the expected approaches both to my left and right; occasionally craning to my left to obtain a clear

view of the cattle-path in front. The drive was splendidly conducted; the explosive shells were fired in admirable succession, but nothing appeared in view. The beaters were within three hundred yards, and I should have expected the tiger to have presented himself before this, as the reports of the explosions would have accelerated his movements. Again I leaned half out of my mucharn to view the cattle-path. I was startled; the tiger was nearly beneath me!

I could have put salt on his tail! He was an enormous fellow, and he was walking along the path without a sign of hesitation. It was impossible to fire from my position, but thinking that he would pass exactly underneath my mucharn, I pointed the rifle directly downwards, waiting for his appearance. There was the sound of a sudden rush; and he was gone!—Vanished, when he was almost within my grasp. The broad ladder which formed a gate across the path must have alarmed him. I thought that he had broken back, and that some accident would happen to the beaters, but in a few seconds I caught sight of him for an instant, dashing at full speed across the far



HE WAS AN ENORMOUS FELLOW.

end of the narrow glade upon my right. I took a snap shot as he disappeared in the thick jungle upon the hill-side, and I could just distinguish his form as he continued his mad course through the jungle parallel with the little glade.

I never liked to hear the report of my rifle without seeing a white belly stretched upon the ground: I had missed. It was a very awkward and unexpected shot at a little over seventy yards. The men came up; I felt angry, but ashamed. Scolding was of no use. "I told you so," was my only consolation. We now called in the Stops. Several men had seen the tiger passing over an open hill-side, and making for a well-known place in which he would be certain to lay up until the night time; during which he would probably quit the neighbourhood.

One more chance remained, and we determined to follow him without delay; his retreat was a mile distant, in which he would assuredly lie up until disturbed. We were not long in arriving at the spot. It was a grassy dell, at the bottom of which the river wound its zigzag course between jungle-covered hills. At this season (16th January) the river's bed was about twenty-five yards in width, but dry, except in the sudden bends where the strong current had scooped deep holes. There was a clear space of open grass for about forty yards upon either side of the river which formed the bottom of the glen: from this the jungle-covered hills rose to a height of about 200

feet. The tiger was supposed to be on the other side of the river, among the nullahs formed by the drainage from the hills. We descended into the dell, and crossed the river, which as it wound round the base of the hills and formed a long and unequal channel with perpendicular banks in some portions, while at others the ground shelved gradually towards the stream. I was of opinion that the tiger would cross at a point where the river issued from the jungle between two forest-covered hills, as I considered he would avoid the open ground. There was a tree of immense girth and height which grew on the extreme margin of the river's bank; three huge limbs about nine feet from the ground would form a resting place for my platform. When this was completed, and I had taken my seat, I discovered a considerable disadvantage in the position, the limb that formed the right support was so enormous that it screened the view of my right front. If the tiger should break cover upon that side, I should not be able to see it until it had almost passed upon my right. I knew the locality thoroughly; it would have been perfection for three guns, as they could have been placed one hundred yards apart, which would have commanded the whole length of the glen, but as I was alone there would be considerable difficulty in driving the tiger within a reasonable range. Everything would depend upon the Stops. I impressed the men with the necessity of unusual caution. I had no doubt of their capabilities, the great danger lay in the tiger refusing to come on before the beaters, and that he might break back. I was thoroughly comfortable on my roomy platform, and I could turn noiselessly with ease in any direction. Several times I experimented upon turning quickly to my right, and aiming between the huge limbs, one of which screened my front; this I could accomplish with rapidity. As I sat with my back to the river's bed which was just beneath me, I faced the hills about a hundred yards distant from which the tiger was expected, and I had forty paces of open grass-land between me and the edge of the jungle at the base. Upon my left I looked directly up the river's bed, into the hollow from which it issued between the forest-covered hills, therefore no animal could possibly escape without being seen by me.

There was no wind, but, as the line of beaters had commenced at some distance upon the other side of the hills, I could hear no sign of their advance. I felt a delightful excitement, as this tiger seemed to bear a charmed life; I had fired two shots, both of which had missed; certainly that upon 28th December was an impossible attempt, and that of the morning was a mere random chance, nevertheless they both counted as misses. If he were to escape me a third time I might as well bury my rifle, and retire from the world of sport. While I was reflecting upon such matters, the shouts of the beaters, although faint, were clearly distinguished from the cooing of countless doves, which always cause confusion in a drive until the men close up. Presently the wild cries and yells sounded almost close to me, as the beaters arrived on the sky-line of the hills, and began to descend towards the glen which I commanded. The tiger would probably make for the jungles where he had killed the buffalo, from which we had driven him in the morning; in that case he must cross the river and must be opposed by a line of Stops.

I was keeping a sharp look-out, when suddenly a splendid sight presented itself. A tiger which looked enormous, emerged at a trot from the jungle on my left, and for a moment halted in the dry bed of the river between the forest-covered hills. He was then in bright green grass about two feet high, which grew among the large rounded stones that formed the river's bed. I would not fire, as he was quite one hundred and forty yards distant, and although I knew that I could hit him, having already taken a steady rest with my elbow on the knee, the shot would not have been sufficiently accurate to kill him without further trouble. Having stood and listened attentively upon the edge of the stony channel, which was in that place about thirty yards in width, he determined to cross into the jungles upon the opposite hill-side; without further hesitation, he walked quickly towards the other bank. This was a terrible disappointment, he would escape from the beat!

At this moment I heard a sound like a short cough, from a tree nearly facing the advancing tiger; he stopped suddenly in the middle of the channel.

"Well done, Stop!" I inwardly exclaimed.

The tiger stood and listened, then turning abruptly to his left, he trotted along the centre of the dry channel, direct for my position. Again he halted, as though he had changed his intention, and turning to the right, he made straight for his first direction to the opposite bank. . . . A crack was heard as though some person had clapped

his hands! . . . The tiger again halted, and listened with keen suspicion. . . "Ha—Ho" . . . a voice uttered from a tree top on the river's bank. This decided the tiger; he turned quickly round, and trotted back into the jungle from whence he came. "Bravo Stop! Beautifully done!" . . . We had him once more within the beat in thick jungle, and the beaters were closing up in a half circle.

I felt sure that the tiger, having been turned twice, would not attempt that same place again, therefore I turned my stool to face the front, as I knew that he could not remain long without either breaking back through the beaters, or showing himself upon the open. Suddenly I heard a man clap his hands from a tree on my extreme right; by this I knew that the tiger was headed, when trying to break out in that direction. In less than a minute I heard "Ho, ho," in another spot; the Stops were behaving splendidly; without them we should have had no chance.

The line of beaters yelling their loudest, and two tom-toms rattling like the roll upon a drum, had now closed into three parts of a circle, and I began to fear that the tiger had managed to slink away between the Stops. Suddenly I heard three short but terrific roars close in my right front! In an instant I knew that he had broken cover, although I could not see him owing to the thick limb of the tree just before me; but, throwing my rifle over the obstruction as I had already practised, I was just in time to fire, as, at the fullest speed, the tiger dashed past me on the right. He was within five yards of my tree, and he rolled over a complete somersault, owing to the great momentum of his pace, falling in a heap down the perpendicular bank into the dry bed of the river, seven feet below. He lay dead just beneath my tree; the .577 solid leaden bullet had struck him high upon the shoulder. We found on a subsequent examination that in its downward course it had passed through the centre of the heart, and remained flattened beneath the skin low down upon the opposite flank.

This was a satisfactory termination after so long a search as nineteen days for this formidable tiger. The beaters had been first-rate throughout, as it will have been observed that in three drives from 28th December, the tiger had been brought close to the gun upon every occasion; this with a solitary gun is high art in *shikar* arrangements. The finish had been splendid. Few people can imagine the grand exhibition of power when such a tiger rushed at immense speed across the open glade; and the overwhelming effect of the .577 solid bullet in rolling him over stone dead, like a rabbit, while going at this speed was simply magnificent.

When we arrived in camp and the tiger was measured and weighed, the results were:—length from nose to tip of tail 9 ft. 7 ins.—weight 400 lbs. This animal was immensely muscular, but entirely devoid of fat, not one ounce existing upon the body. Had he been equal to the average he would have weighed 420 lbs. On the previous year I had killed one that weighed 437 lbs., which was the largest that I have ever tested. Several pounds should be added to these weights for loss of blood. When the skull was boiled, and cleaned, I found an injury to the arched bone through which the large muscle passes to work the lower jaw. A portion of this had evidently been shot away at some former period by a hollow express bullet, which had, as usual, splashed into minute fragments upon striking the hard substance, and ceased to exist; had this been solid, it would have penetrated the brain.

About six weeks after this incident I returned to the same locality, and with the same *shikaris*, and beaters, I had the extraordinary good fortune to find a fine tigress with four handsome cubs, a little larger than foxhounds. In two days I killed them all; the arrangements being so perfect that each animal was driven within sixty yards of the rifle. The tigress was the first to fall dead, and after an exciting hunt of a couple of hours, two of the young ones shared the same fate. On the following day after great trouble, I obtained shots at the remaining two. Five were therefore killed in two days by a single gun, which is sufficient testimony to the character of the *shikaris*, and the beaters. Not one of those five animals ever moved, but fell stone-dead on receiving the bullet.