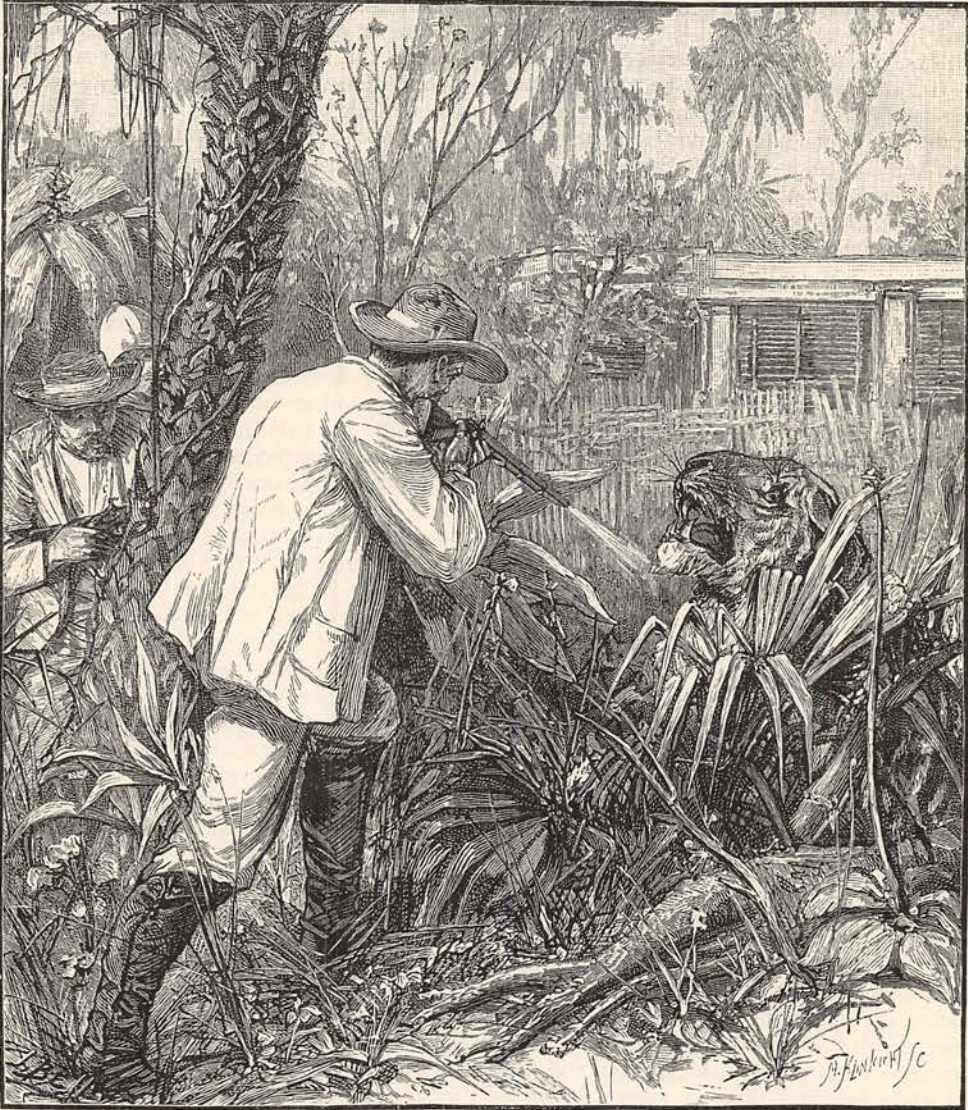


WHEN living in the jungles of Upper Bengal, I once went, in the month of March, as the cold weather was closing, to see some better chance for deer, and certain risk to estate coolies. Soon after dinner the possessor of this dangerous weapon retired.



"THE TIGER SPRANG UPON THE BANK" (p. 537).

friends residing twenty miles off. I arrived at my destination late in the afternoon. Almost immediately after, I heard hints about a new gun; and I was subsequently informed that the youngest assistant on the estate had recently received a present of one, which was dealing out mutilation to birds, and damage to the trunks of large trees, without limit. In due course I was shown the weapon; and from all that I heard about it, I concluded there was a very bad lookout for all tigers within a certain radius, only a slightly

An hour later, a cry of "Tiger!" was raised, which resulted in our friend suddenly joining us in the verandah, in total disregard of the chilly night (he being clad in pyjamas and dressing-gown), and armed with his universal destroyer. We pointed out where the tiger was said to have been seen to move. With surprising courage, the young gentleman cautiously approached the spot. Gradually nearing the object which excitement had allowed him to take for a tiger, our Nimrod rose up, and put the gun to



his shoulder. Then he turned round, came into the verandah, passed a few observations upon the want of sense of some persons he knew, and retired. The supposed animal turned out to be a piece of corrugated iron resting against a log.

Next morning we were aroused by a shout of "Tiger!" from the natives. The alarm at any time is an exciting one, and forgetting for the moment the occurrence of the previous evening, we went out—that is to say, three of us did; our sporting friend declining to listen to the alarm. But it proved to be well-founded. A small stream ran past the cook-house of the bungalow, and at this time was very low. From it a tiger had come, sprung over the fragile bamboo fence which surrounded it, and carried off a goat. The servants said they saw the robbery committed. Instantly the coolies began to assemble, some of them armed with axes. As is usual with natives on such occasions, they invited the animal to come out. "They wouldn't do anything to him, if he would only come; oh, no! they merely wanted to see him, as they had seen his father, his mother, and a few other members of his family. Yes, the Sahibs had guns, certainly; but they were only for the mosquitoes, so would tiger kindly come out?" and so on.

Clods were thrown in, and sundry growls heard; whereupon the owner of the new gun frantically rushed out, and entreated some one to inform him where the tiger was. Another assistant was armed with a Snider, and the manager with a smooth-bore. I stood without a gun on the bungalow side of the stream, beside the bamboo fence I have mentioned, and which, I should add, could easily have been broken by a child; consequently the protection and shelter offered me were not worth speaking of. (Remaining in such a place was a grave indiscretion on my part.) After shouting, yelling, clod-throwing, and frequently presenting arms, there was a rustle in the scrub-jungle, and we caught sight of the animal. Our universally mutilating friend at once let fly; but nothing seemed to come of it. We waited some time, and then the tiger sprang upon the bank, with his fore-feet within half a yard of the muzzle of the new

gun. It went off, and the brute was killed—shot in the chest. A mighty shout was raised. "Was there ever such a Sahib, who would come straight from his bed and kill a tiger? Would not the factory coolies tell it to their children fifty years hence? Ah! that they would."

The Sahib in question had taken the cartridge from the breech, and put in another, having a hazy notion that his gun had gone off; but some time passed before he realised that he actually had shot and killed a tiger. We gave him all the glory. Assistant No. 2 discovered after the event that he had been rushing about with a cork in the muzzle of his gun, and the manager had put snipe-cartridges into his smooth-bore.

Very courageous were the coolies when the animal's death had been fully proved. One valiant Bengali rushed in and landed "Stripes" an awful crack on the nose with an axe. The carcase was taken into the verandah, and we turned to the bungalow for coffee.

Afterwards, a coolie woman came up with a sickly child, and wished to be allowed to bathe her offspring on the dead animal. Permission was given, and the anxious parent placed her youngster on the dead body and poured several jars of water over them both. Naturally the child cried at the strange nature of its means of support; but evident satisfaction was visible in the mother's face, as she told us that the child would soon be well, having had the tiger's strength imparted to it. Men pulled out the creature's whiskers, and nibbled them for courage. One took out the tongue, cut it in small pieces, and distributed it amongst the coolies, to be smoked and dried by them, and worn in a band round the arm as a preventive from fever.

The animal was a cub, measuring only six feet. The occurrence made an exciting beginning to the day, but we gradually calmed down. It had been amusing, but certainly also had been very dangerous; and I do not think that any of us will again go out on foot after tigers, or with corks or snipe-cartridges in our guns.

S. B.

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## HOW TO CHOOSE A PAIR OF SPECTACLES.

BY DR. LITTON FORBES.



O many, perhaps to most persons, the notion of having sooner or later to wear spectacles is not an altogether agreeable one. The reason of this dislike may possibly be found to a certain extent in considerations of personal vanity, but much more, it is to be hoped, in a not altogether inexcusable ignorance of the full value of spectacles as a means both of increasing and preserving vision. Any one at all acquainted with the structure of the human eye knows that spectacles are usually an absolute necessity to all

persons with healthy eyes once they have reached the age of forty-five or fifty. Sometimes, indeed, persons optically old, that is, over fifty-five or sixty, have been heard to boast that "they can read and write just as well as ever, and have never worn glasses in their lives;" and the suppressed inference is that therefore their eyes must be extraordinarily good, and they themselves more than usually hale and hearty for their years. The truth is, however, that such persons are, and always have been, more or less short-sighted. If tested for distant vision