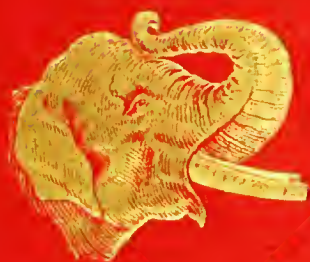
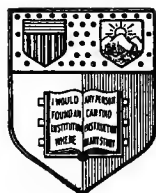


THE LIFE OF AN ELEPHANT



S. EARDLEY-WILMOT

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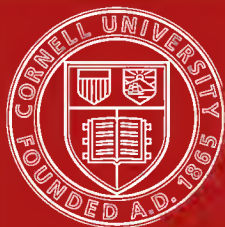
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The Life of an Elephant



"They come to rest on the crowded & busy waters."

LONDON. EDWARD ARNOLD.

The Life of an Elephant

By

S. Eardley-Wilmot, K.C.I.E.

Author of 'The Life of a Tiger,' 'Forest Life and
Sport in India,' etc.

Illustrated


by

Iris Eardley-Wilmot

LONDON

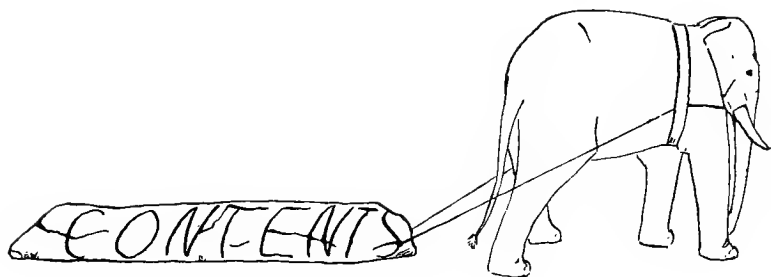
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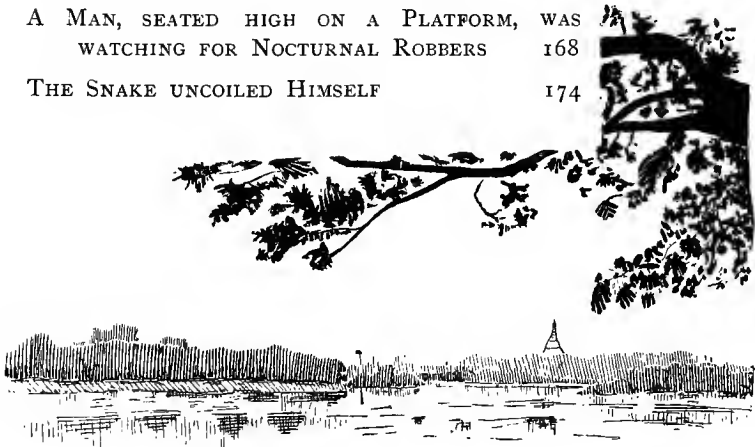
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INTRODUCTION

THREE are three animals which have responded in a superlative degree to attempts to make them the servants and friends of man—the horse, the dog and the elephant ; the two former are found in more or less domestic intimacy all over the world ; the dog having the advantage that his size enables him in all climates to be companionable ; while, in those countries only where it is possible to live a life in the open, the horse has an almost equal chance in this respect. The bulk of the elephant, on the other hand, is destructive of familiarity ; it is not everyone who can maintain a stud, or even one of these animals, so that those who have passed many years in their company are few compared with the owners of dogs and horses. All the more reason, then, that the elephant in his aspect

of servant and friend to man should receive due recognition before the spread of civilisation, absorbing the waste lands and primeval forests of the East, shall result in finding for him no more use and therefore no more room.

The record of the elephant is in no way inferior to that of the horse or dog. In agriculture and commerce he has, like them, been used in tilling the soil and in transporting merchandise; and, like them, also has carried out this work in conditions which have made him almost indispensable.

In the field of sport he has proved his value; and in real warfare, from the period when, covered with chain armour, he bore the castellated howdah into battle, or battered in the great gates of a citadel, to the time when he dragged the siege guns into position, he has never, when ridden by a trusty driver, flinched from wounds or death in the service of man. Of the horse and dog as well as of the elephant it may be said that they have failed at times in moments of difficulty. So

also has man, and perhaps chiefly for the same reason,—that the leader or rider was not trusted, that he has communicated his fear or indecision by voice, by pressure of knees or hands, and that, in this absence of authority, each was free to follow natural instincts which before were under control.

It is a common saying in India that an elephant once mauled by a tiger is ever after useless for sport; it is also the fashion to assert that the sporting elephant has nothing to fear from a tiger. Both of these statements are far from the truth. When man, with the aid of a line of elephants, is engaged in putting a tiger to death, retaliation on his part is practically out of the question; but it is another matter when a single elephant proposes to drive a wounded tiger out of high grass where he lies invisible and can choose his own opportunity for assault. In such cases a female elephant has no weapons of defence, and the male only in cases where a frontal attack is delivered; while both are prevented by careful training from taking any initiative whatever

either in self-defence or flight. In these circumstances, when an elephant has been so torn and mangled by a tiger that recovery is not completed till after three or four months of careful attention, and at the time has shown no fear, and later on has shown no disinclination to carry its rider into similar danger, it may be inferred that this forest tribe does not fail in courage such as would be considered specially worthy of praise in the dog and quite extraordinary in the horse. Cases are known where a dog has attacked a tiger, and a horse has been used even to drive him off his kill, but it is probable that careful search would have to be made in the annals of sport before many authentic cases could be produced to show that either of these animals, after being wounded well nigh to death, has cheerfully taken a similar risk after recovery.

As to sagacity, the elephant need fear no rival in horse or dog. Here he has the advantage of possessing a hand, which they have not. With it he can pick up by suction the smallest object, or carry a log weighing

many hundredweights ; with it he can either caress or slay ; and with it he can break down stout trees or extract the stone from a peach without losing a particle of the pulp. A well-trained horse will lie down at the word of command and afford shelter to his master ; a well-trained dog will retrieve his master's property and deliver it when ordered ; an elephant will do both, and more. He will assist his rider to mount and dismount either by raising and lowering him on his trunk, or by bending fore or hind-leg to form a step. He will pass under an obstacle "on all fours" if it be too low to permit of his standing upright ; he will suffer severe operations without being chloroformed or bound, when a blow from foot or trunk would put a summary end to surgical interference. Those who have witnessed the extraction of an elephant's molar tooth by means of a crow-bar and mallet, who have assisted at the opening of a deep-seated ulcer, and have seen the suffering of the animal expressed only in tears and groans, will place him for sagacity and forbearance in a

class above that which any other domesticated animal can hope to reach.

But while the elephant has one thing in common with other domestic animals, namely, that his obedience and affection can be won only with kindness, he also possesses the characteristic of long-remembered resentment for any wanton injury or insult. It is almost as if the attitude of this animal towards man were that of gratitude, expressed in willing service, for kindness received, and intolerance of injustice. The natural ferocity inborn in all wild animals, with whom self-preservation must be the first law, is with him only latent. It may, and sometimes does burst forth on occasions, which on enquiry are often found to be almost justifiable; for here it is not a case of long descent from domesticated forefathers, but, as a rule, a sudden change in the individual from independence to slavery, which makes the results attained even more astounding.

There are vicious elephants, as there are vicious horses and dogs. Such can never be trained to the use of mankind. They are

instances of a perverted nature, often perhaps the result of brain or other hidden troubles; and their removal is indicated for the welfare of those around them. Thus it was in former years that the country-bred horse of India deserved a bad name for kicking and biting whenever opportunity occurred; that the dog of the East was a treacherous and snarling beast, an outcast from the homes of men; and thus it is that now, when the example of the West has shown what can be done in the alteration of these evil traits, the animals concerned are losing their vicious attributes and thereby increasing their value as servants of man.

The sportsman in the East is happy when he can add to two faithful friends—the horse and the dog—a third in the elephant. As he emerges from his tent with his favourite terrier bounding by his side and his favourite horse whinnying at his approach, he is proud of the affection and confidence shown him. There is perhaps a still deeper feeling when his elephant gurgles with pleasure as he comes

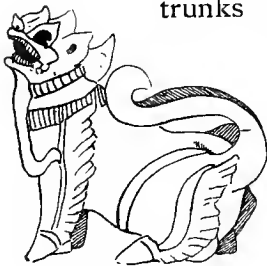
closer, and without word of command at once commences to kneel down so that he may mount; for here is an animal who has tasted of the pleasures of a free life, whose strength and sagacity are such that obedience cannot be compelled, and who yet places himself entirely at the disposal of man, content with fair treatment, and instantly responsive to kindness in word or deed.

CHAPTER I

The Arrival of the Herd

THE summit of the hill was crowned with a grove of lofty trees. They had stood thus for centuries, opposing their columned strength against wind and storms, against the onslaught of tropical rainfall, even in spite of earth tremors that made them shiver with apprehension. Their crowns were interlaced, so that they must stand or fall together ; it was an effective alliance against the forces of nature, which no single tree could hope to withstand.

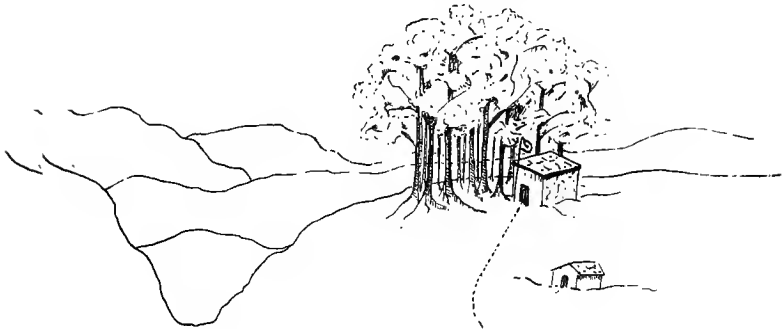
Within the grove, where the buttressed trunks rose suddenly from the soft earth, stood an ancient shrine, a hermit's cell with rough stone walls, and a little temple in whose dim recesses might be seen vaguely some



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symbol of a demon or god, unknown perhaps to the outside world, but appealing to the hearts of the jungle folk, who, suffering patiently as the animals suffer, like them also blindly sought relief. That rugged track, which led from the hill-top into the depth of the forest below, had been marked out by the feet of the votaries of the shrine, who each, as he left after supplication, cast a stone on the slowly growing mounds at the entrance to the grove.

From the hill-top the forest spread on all sides as far as the eye could reach, and it lost itself in the distant horizon where the purple outline of the hills faded into the azure of the evening sky. There was wave upon wave of hills covered with trees, so that the earth lay hidden, and down in the valleys one saw nothing but the crowns of trees forming an impenetrable carpet of foliage; only along the ridges the light filtered in vertical streaks through the closed-up ranks of tree trunks. If there were villages they were hidden in masses of trees; the forest engulfed them and reigned supreme in this lonely corner of the earth.



The sun sank,
and the brilliant
light of day was
followed by the
soft illumination



of the stars. The forest became dim and indefinite amid an intense and motionless silence. There was no sound of wind, or of animal life; the dew had not begun to drip from the foliage, and each leaf was still as if arrested in its task. Yet there was no sense of fear or oppression: rather the atmosphere was charged with the vitality of countless millions of plants rejoicing in their growth, struggling against the competition of their

neighbours, and seizing every chance which offered to reach towards the life-giving light.

At such a time there came upon any human being dwelling in the forest, first, a conviction of nature's absolute indifference to his proceedings, and next, the peace conferred by personal irresponsibility, to which, if a man succumbs, he joins the vast army of hermits, religious mendicants, and other parasites ; while, if he resists, he is left to work out a strenuous existence in conflict with the wild beasts and against the pressure of overwhelming vegetation.

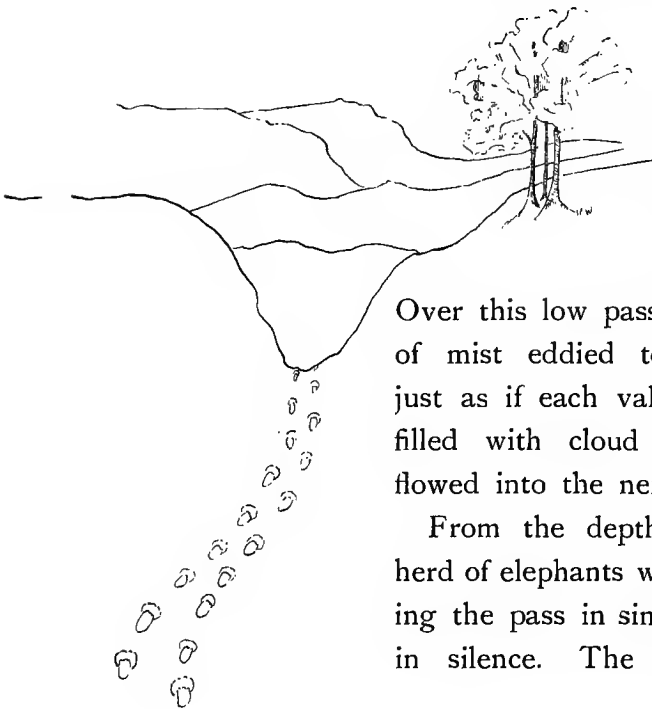
As night drew on the cooler air became charged with moisture and wrapped itself in mist. The leaves of the forest trees were weighted with the dampness they exuded ; it no longer passed away in invisible vapour, but trickled earthwards in heavy splashes, like the sullen sound of windless rain. From hundreds of miles of forest came the sound of dripping water in a ceaseless murmur, which increased the weirdness of the scene, and even served to

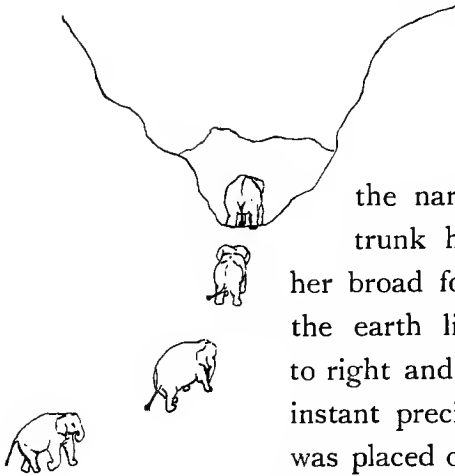
make any other sound more distinct. Thus it was that a movement became audible in the distance, at first so slight as to be indistinguishable; it was as if foliage was being quietly brushed aside, as if the dew-laden grass was being crushed by a gentle yet irresistible force. Standing on the summit of the hill, one looked down on a pass between the mountains,

a curved saddle that invited to an easier passage from valley to valley.

Over this low pass the waves of mist eddied to and fro, just as if each valley in turn filled with cloud and overflowed into the next.

From the depths below a herd of elephants were ascending the pass in single file and in silence. The leader, an



The Life of an Elephant

old female, first appeared in sight, walking quickly along the narrow trail. Her trunk hung limply from her broad forehead, touching the earth lightly alternately to right and to left, and with instant precision the forefoot was placed on the spot which had been tested, and the

oval print of the hind foot immediately overlapped the rounder track. She passed through the eddies of fog, which at times seemed to swallow her up, at others allowed but the glistening outline of her back to become visible; or again hid all but the ponderous legs which moved with regularity through the dim air.

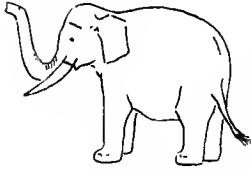


Following, came others who seemed careless of danger through confidence in their leader. Each set foot in the trail of

its predecessor, so that soon there was but one track sunk deep in the soft earth, as if some old-time mammoth of enormous size had passed that way. Females, young calves, youthful tuskers, all passed in succession, each rising into sight and disappearing over the narrow pass, plunged into obscurity on the further side. There was silence in the ranks, for the animals were on the march, intent on changing their quarters ere dawn should break. They might have been so travelling for hours, and might continue their resistless way for many more ere they halted thirty or forty miles from their starting point.



Some hours later there was promise of daylight in the sky. The mist now lay thicker over the forest, it had sunk into impenetrable strata which rested heavily on the land. Above its sharp upper line the tops of hills stood out like islands in a sea of white; along the ridges the crowns of trees appeared as if floating in the waves, their stems were



hidden in the fog. Again a movement was heard, and from below a single elephant approached, carelessly following in the trail of the herd. As he gained the top of the pass he stood motionless, save for the twitching of the extended trunk, which sucked up the air and brought him such information as he required as to his surroundings. He stood, black as ebony against the white of the mist, on short stout legs with heavy bulk of body and straight back. His forehead was broad, and the huge trunk tapered away so that its fingered end lay on the ground at his feet. Two sharp and thick tusks gleamed below the intelligent hazel eyes that looked calmly from between the shaggy eyelashes.

With body glistening with moisture and reflecting the growing light in undulating patches, the tusker turned and disappeared over the pass into the mist below, and as he went the sun rose over the distant horizon and changed the calm sea of snow into ripples of

rose and pearl, agitated by the breath of dawn and stirred by the growing warmth. Here and there columns of fog rose, to be dissipated in the clearer air; on all sides, as when the tide ebbs on a summer day, the mist receded; the islands became mountains once more, the floating tree-tops were again anchored to the solid ground, and before long, save in hidden depths of the forest, the heated air had absorbed all visible moisture, the leaves of countless plants again began to draw up water from the soil and to give out vapour.

It was while this change was proceeding that a man emerged from the darkness of the hermit's cell and stood blinking at the dawn. Belated, he had evidently passed the night in the security of stone walls in the absence of their usual tenant. The man was of small stature but heavily built; his dress consisted of a short cotton jacket and a loin-cloth tightly drawn. Arms and legs were bare, showing the firm muscles and the bronze-coloured skin: his long hair was collected in a twist at the back of the head, and secured by a silver pin. For

weapons he carried in his hand an ancient single-barrel musket; while, thrust into the loin-cloth at his back, was a heavy, but sheathless, knife whose handle protruded conveniently to the grasp of his right hand. As to beauty of features this being possessed none: but his eyes were wide-set and clear, and in demeanour and movement he gave the instantaneous impression of physical endurance and courage. Turning to the east, he saluted the rising sun, as if to give thanks that the hours of darkness were past, then, making obeisance to the woodland shrine, he strode with easy, elastic tread to the pass below.

Long before he had reached its summit he was aware that elephants had passed in the night; instinctively he had estimated the number of the herd and of its various members, and he knew that the herd-bull had followed but lately on the trail of his harem. For a few moments he also stood looking into the valley from whence the fogs of night had now retreated, and then, following the trail, he was swallowed up in the mass of vegetation below,



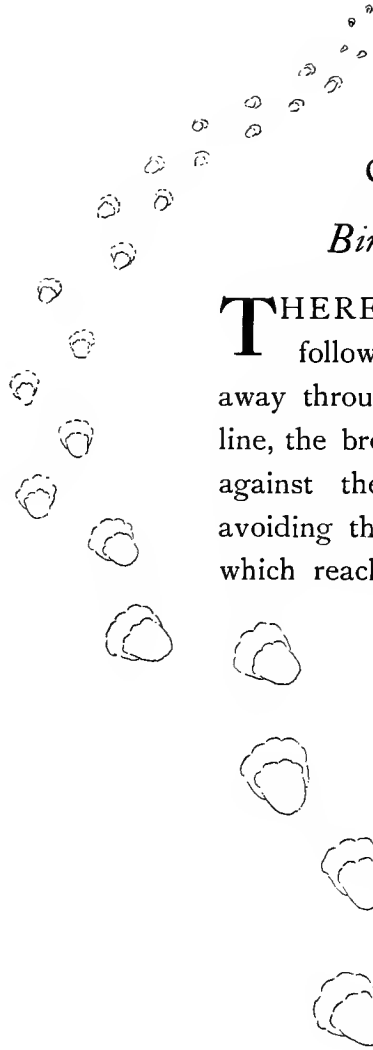
“COLUMNS OF FOG ROSE.”

The Arrival of the Herd

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just as an emmet might disappear in a sea of grass. Above, a breeze began to blow from the north-east, and fleecy clouds were forming on the horizon. An eagle swung over the forest, searching the open spaces for unsuspecting prey. Insects passed humming in busiest flight, but the forest beneath lay dark and unmoved, save that the upper foliage was ruffled with the wind.





CHAPTER II

Birth of the Calf

THERE was no difficulty in following the trail. It stretched away through the forest in a curving line, the brown earth showing darkly against the green of the herbage, avoiding the stems of the tall trees which reached one hundred feet and more towards the sky, forming a lane through the rank vegetation, and marked here and there by overturned bamboo clumps or splintered saplings. The man kept to one side of the deeply indented footmarks, for

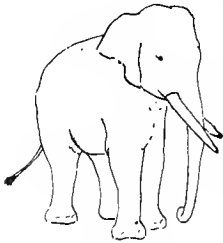
these were so widely spaced that over them it was impossible to maintain the easy stride with which he passed through the forest; his only care was to observe in time any deviation from the trail by some member of the herd, so that he might not find himself suddenly ambuscaded, or taken unawares. The trees were still dripping with moisture though the sun was half-way to the zenith; the buttressed and fluted stems stood singly or in small groups, with broad-leaved crowns enjoying the light, while below them a mass of lesser stems of bamboos, of bushes and of grass all strove as far as they might towards the source of life.

Around the stems giant climbers had worked their spirals upwards, deeply indenting the tender bark and in some cases suffocating the tree with luxuriant foliage; or epiphytic fig-trees had encased their hosts with tight-fitting jackets of wood, from which there was no escape. It was piteous to picture the struggles of these forest giants against the parasites, to contemplate the helplessness of

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these fine examples of the noblest form of vegetation.

It was when the heat of the sun was making itself felt that the trail seemed to disappear, to break up into branches too numerous to follow. The man cast around for the foot-marks of the herd-bull, and followed in these



with the greatest caution and stealth. He had not far to go. At a few hundred yards he detected the elephant standing motionless in the shade of a clump of bamboos, and returning,

followed the general direction taken by the herd with an easier mind. They were resting in a small clearing in the forest by a pool of stagnant water, throwing the wet, cool earth over head and back, the while plucking up the grasses, brushing away the clinging soil by beating the stems against the forefoot and then biting off the succulent roots and casting to one side the withered stalks.

All told, there must have been some forty

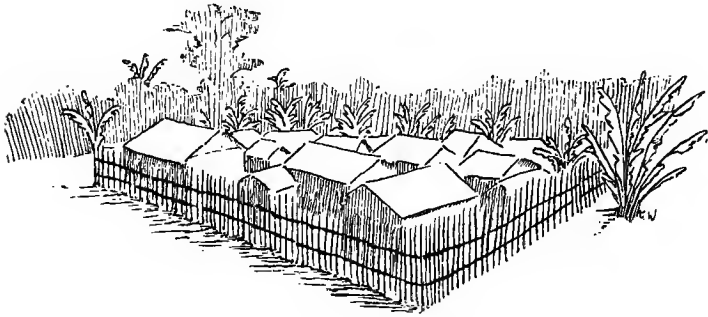
animals in the herd, consisting of half-grown elephants of both sexes, of mature females and of quite young calves. Of these latter some were lying down as if weary after the long march, others were tor-



menting their mothers for food, but nowhere did there seem to be any apprehension of evil, and the man, from a distance of some fifty yards, was able to make his observations undisturbed. Without alarming the herd, he also withdrew to a safe distance, then, with one enquiring glance towards the sky, which seemed to afford him instantaneous information as to his whereabouts, he struck into the forest, taking a bee-line for his home.

His progress at first was but slow ; he was impeded by the luxuriance of the vegetation, and had to stoop to avoid overhanging boughs, or to climb over fallen stems ; but after an hour or so of this work he emerged on a

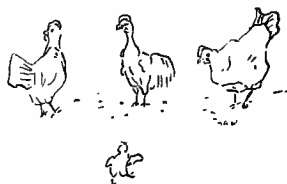
narrow footway, a beaten track between the scattered villages, and started running with pattering feet and with that renewal of confidence which evidence of the neighbourhood of fellow men seems to give to human beings, sometimes quite unjustifiably. The sun was well on the downward path before the man,



hungry and weary, observed smoke, the proof of the dominance of man over beast, rise in the clear sky. He crossed a stream on a narrow bridge of bamboo, and before him stood the fence of a stockaded village.

From the inside of the fence proceeded the barking of dogs and the lowing of cattle, the laughter and talking of those engaged in

cooking the evening meal; from the outside was visible nothing but a wall of interlaced bamboos whose sharpened ends would make an attempt at escalade extremely unpleasant. The man turned and followed the fence till he reached a gateway, flanked on either side by a small watch tower, while between these a massive door, now open, hung on primitive hinges. He entered, and before him stretched the main street of the village, muddy and uncared for; on each side were small huts raised on piles some five feet from the ground, with wide verandahs and walls and roofs of bamboo matting. Beneath these huts lay heaps of refuse amongst which dogs and fowls hunted for appetising morsels. Above, the women



sat at small hand-loom or otherwise employed in domestic labour, while children, stark naked, rolled or gambolled on the slippery floors.

In these days of civilization, when man has become dependent for his comfort, even for his existence, upon the exertions of others, it

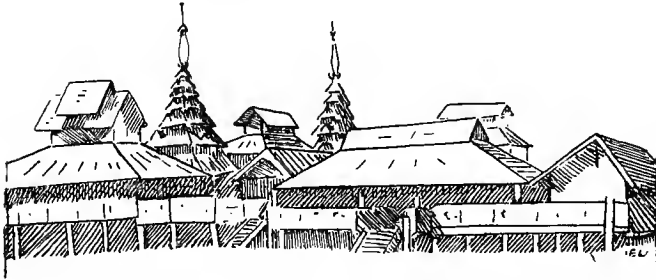
was interesting to wander through the abode of a self-supporting community such as this. There was not a man amongst them who could not have wrested a living from nature ; the village fields and the wide forests supplied the raw material for every necessity of life ; the conversion of this material into products fit for use was carried out more or less in each household. Of domestic animals there were few. The buffaloes, but half-tamed and with horns so enormous that heads were held sideways when secured under one yoke, dragged the ploughs through the muddy rice-fields or drew the carts along the jungle tracks. Their coming was heralded with the most appalling and discordant sounds, intentionally caused by the grinding of wooden axles in wooden wheels, and designed to drive off hostile beasts or spirits. When the light work of a few months was over, the buffaloes were driven into the forest, to be rounded up when wanted, often to the danger of the limbs or even lives of the owners.

The rice, when harvested, was husked by the

women, who were also experts in preparing condiments of fish or vegetables to savour their monotonous food. It was the women also who wove the cloths of cotton or silk, who cured the tobacco on the bamboo frames, who rolled the big cigars in the tender sheath of the growing bamboo. For the men remained the more arduous tasks of building and repairing the homestead, and of defending the village from man or beast. Each carried the heavy knife of the country, so balanced in its handle that it seemed to guide the hand that swung it in its deadly work. Yet with it at one moment the owner would be felling bamboos of a foot circumference at one blow, or at the next be opening a green coco-nut to drink the cooling milk, or peeling with care a pineapple as with a silver knife. The ever-present bamboo was put to a hundred uses; they wove it into baskets to hold many bushels of grain, or into others so fine that they might be folded flat without injury; from the bamboo they constructed matting cool and polished to the feet, vessels for storing drinking water, even

into receptacles in which rice could be cooked on emergency.

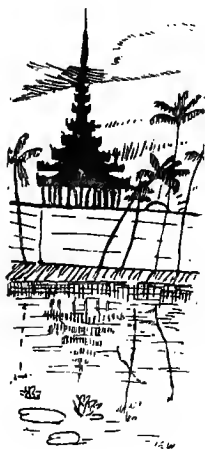
Where civilized man would go naked and hungry, these people lived in comfort, alert and deeply versed in these matters which were of immediate importance to their existence, for it was only through their intimate acquaintance with wild nature around them that they



could hope to overcome the forces arrayed against them. And yet, in the midst of what some might consider ignorance and savagery, there were ample signs of discipline and charity. To one side of the village stood the monastery, built of teak-wood and adorned with artistic carvings, the labour of love of the charitable. Around its courts of well-beaten clay stood fruit-trees carefully tended and

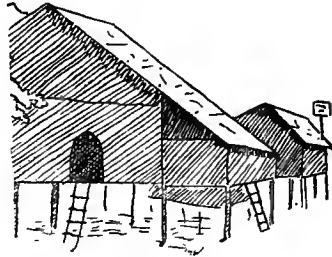
generous in their return of fruit and shade ; and here a few monks led a life of retirement and introspection. Each morning they passed through the village clad in robes of saffron, holding the bowls which were eagerly filled with choice morsels for the midday meal ; every day the boys of the village sat in rows on the polished floors of the dim hall, and learnt to read and write, imbibing at the same time the ancient precepts of hospitality and goodwill to mankind.

The monastery was never silent. During the day there was the chatter of the children or the sing-song reading from the old books ; during the evening the gongs were sending ripples of sound through the warm air. Even at night, when all slept, the tinkling of the pagoda bells rose and fell with the passing breezes ; and when the day broke and the sun suddenly leaped from the horizon the gilded peepul leaves, which struck



the tiny notes, flashed with every eddy in the breeze.

The house of the headman of the village was noticeable for its superior size and cleanliness. It stood towards the centre of the village, and near the travellers' shelter, where all who journeyed were welcome to rest and break their fast. To one side, under



a small open shed, stood the war drum, a vast metal bowl covered with skin, whose sonorous booming in olden times re-echoed through the hills when the clans were called to battle, but which was now used chiefly as an alarm in case of fire or of attack from midnight robbers. At its sound every able-bodied man would seize his arms and rally to the call, while women and children would take whatever weapon came to hand, spear or knife, and, pulling up the ladder affording access to the homestead, would defend themselves as best they might against intruders. Here, too, the

man made his report of elephants in the neighbourhood, and here we may leave him to food and rest in his home.

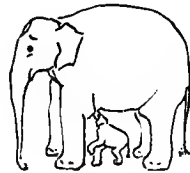
Meanwhile the herd of elephants, finding food, shade and water in the vicinity, spread themselves at ease over the country with no intention of travelling during the ensuing night. One amongst them there was who had roamed uneasily during the day, avoiding her fellows, seeking vaguely for retirement in some spot sheltered and secure. Annoyed by the busy idleness of the herd, she wandered to a distance, and as evening fell found herself alone ; at her back a perpendicular rock, still festooned with moss and ferns, before her a tangle of bamboos from which issued stems of straight trees whose leafy crowns gave promise of shelter from the midday sun.

As morning dawned with tropical haste a bear came sauntering past the spot, self-absorbed, as is the custom of his tribe, thinking solely of the good fortune of the past night when he had found abundance of fruit, longing for his lair where he might doze and drowse

through the daylight hours. To him came suddenly a loud hissing sound, followed by the thud of a heavy blow on the earth. He leapt to one side with an agility remarkable in one so clumsily built, and saw within a few yards an elephant standing with its back to a rock, at its feet a huddled mass which he suspected to be a new-born calf. He did not stay to investigate. With a bound he hurled himself into the underwood, and, as the noise of his headlong flight died away in the forest, the elephant commenced to rumble deeply with a sound like the purrings of some gigantic cat, undecided whether to be pleased or angry.

The calf lay extended at his mother's feet, under the shelter of her head and trunk, as yet too weak to rise ; from time to time she waved the flies away with her trunk or gently kicked the soft earth so that it fell in light showers on his body. On such occasions her foot struck the ground so near to the reclining calf that one could not but wonder at the extreme accuracy of her movements, an accuracy which in the human race is only acquired by the

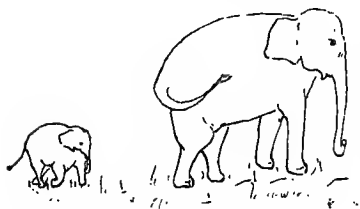
constant application to some one handicraft. She had stood thus for some hours and would so stand for many more, without food save such as she might reach from her post of sentinel; not until the calf was able to take nourishment would she move from the spot, lest harm should befall the helpless young. It was not, in fact, till the commencement of the second day that the calf uttered grunts and murmurs of discontent, and then his mother raised him to his feet by aid of trunk and forefoot, and so guided his trembling limbs and supported him till he found the udders pendent from the breast and gained strength as he satisfied his hunger.



And so the days passed in feeding and sleeping, the mother always within sight or hearing of her young, always ready to face any odds in its protection, returning to its side whenever any suspicious sound reached her ears, or when the wind brought notice of the approach of any man or any beast that might

be harmful, till, at the end of ten days, the calf was able to walk, to follow his mother for short distances at a time, then lie down to sleep while she satisfied her hunger. She, still full of maternal care, moved persistently, yet slowly, in the direction followed by the herd, hoping soon to overtake them and so profit by the protection their numbers afforded, and she had indeed nearly attained her object without mishap when an adventure occurred which might have altered the whole course of this narrative.

One morning, aware of the proximity of the herd, and intending to join them during the day, the elephant was grazing on the bamboo shoots and grass, not far from the spot where her calf was lying, when her sensitive nostrils gave notice of danger. She waved her trunk in the direction of the wind, inhaling deeply, then strode hurriedly to where her calf was hidden, standing over him as he lay. The next moment a tigress



appeared on the scene, lean and anxious looking, seemingly pressed by hunger, evidently, too, the mother of young cubs whose increasing demands for food had to be satisfied. In point of fact the animal was starving: for



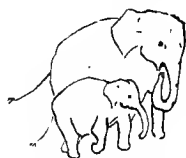
days she had been unsuccessful in the hunt, and she must eat or die, and with her her helpless family. She had scented the presence of the young calf, and thus it was that nature in its cruelty had ordained that the love of these mothers for their offspring should lead up to a struggle which must end in the slaying of one family, yet resulting in no apparent good.

The tigress walked slowly round the elephant, continually decreasing the distance between them, her object being to drive off the mother and then kill the defenceless calf. The elephant also turned slowly, keeping her head to the foe. Soon the tigress made a rush towards the calf, and was met by a kick from the elephant's hind leg, which staggered her for the moment and made her resume her prowl in the

hope of finding some better opening for attack. The duel proceeded in silence, and gradually an arena was formed in the forest, a circle of trampled grass where no concealment was possible. Several times the tigress made onslaughts, only to be repulsed, and, at the last, savage at her ill-success, she bounded at the elephant's head, clasping her with armed fore-paws, burying her fangs in the soft flesh at the base of the trunk ; scratching wildly at fore-legs with her hind claws, hoping that she could drag the elephant to earth and inflict such painful injuries that she would desert her young. The elephant flinched under the attack, and then stood firm. Maddened with pain and fear she knelt and tried to crush the adversary with her weight, but the tigress held firmly, and, with the purchase gained, pulled violently to one side in the attempt to throw the elephant. She, despairing, rose to her feet, rushed blindly forward in the desire to get rid of this rending, biting torment, and so by good fortune hurled herself full against the stem of a stout tree. She felt the tigress crushed against her bony

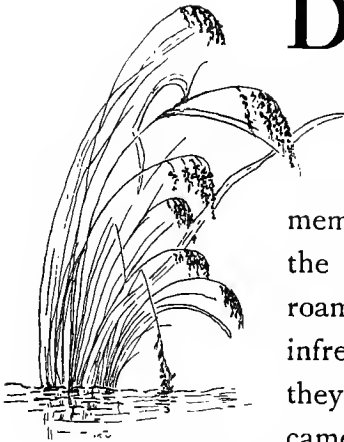
forehead, and the grip relaxed; again she butted with her full strength, and the enemy fell limply at her feet. Then, possessed solely by the fury of battle and of pain, she stamped on the still writhing body, crushing it to a pulp, kicking it till but a muddy mass remained to show her victory. At last, streaming with blood, trembling with excitement, she returned to her calf, feeling it over with her wounded trunk, satisfying herself that it had suffered no harm.

That evening, the elephant, scarred with many wounds, now plastered with clay to keep off the attacks of flies, rejoined her tribe after many days of danger and tribulation, and felt once more in the safety of home. But the tigress's cubs were calling for their mother, till their feeble cries died away in a whimpering protest as the weakness and pain of starvation gradually overcame them.



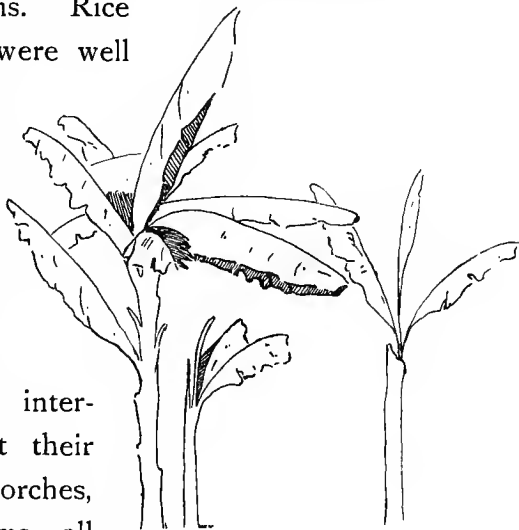
CHAPTER III

Early Experiences



DURING the absence of the elephant and her calf the herd had not remained unmolested. Beyond the intrusion of man, its members had little to fear in the vast jungles in which they roamed: and man was such an infrequent visitor that of him they felt little dread. They came, indeed, most often into contact with him when they entered his special domain: the level, fruitful lands around the villages, where the rice rose from the stagnant water in golden ranks, each ear gracefully bending with the weight of grain; where the plantain groves reared ragged leaves

against the sky, and the tender green of the young shoots sheltered in the protection of the juicy stems. Rice and plantains were well worth the risk of a midnight foray in the hopes that the owners would not wake during the



spoliation and interfere to protect their property with torches, guns and drums, all more disagreeable than terrible to the robbers. In their own domain in the primeval forest, the elephants took little notice of human beings; certainly some morose tusker, or mother with calf at foot, might resent too near an approach, or, if stumbled upon inadvertently, would brush the intruder away with a brusqueness that meant death; otherwise, in the forest, man was not a force to be seriously reckoned with;

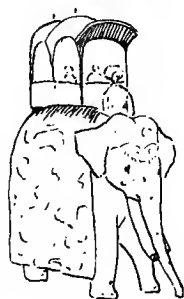
and this fact, perhaps, rendered it easier for man to take toll of the herd from time to time.

For in this country the elephant was valuable as a slave; in his youth he could convey his master across the pathless swamps, and as he became stronger he could carry loads



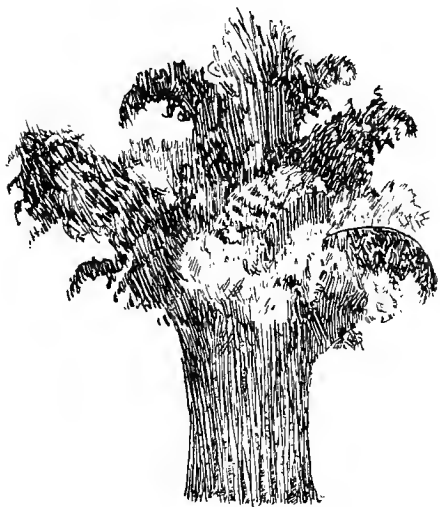
of unhusked rice from the homestead to the waterways; when mature he could assist in dragging timber to the streams, and in relieving the jams of floating logs caused by the violence of the monsoon floods; and, if he developed into a heavy animal with perfect tusks, he could be employed in the timber yards to carry or move logs of tons in weight, and might even later on be selected to bear in procession or on shooting trips those whom men permit to be rulers over them. And all this service was exacted in return for simple board and lodging, which in youth cost nothing, and later on a sum, if insignificant, yet given grudgingly, solely for the purpose of maintaining the health and physique of

a valuable servant. When young the elephant, after a day's work, was turned loose in a forest with a heavy iron chain attached to one leg, whereby his movements left a trail easily followed by his owner. As his labour and time became more valuable, food of the cheapest would be brought to him, and when older he would probably be given a weekly ration of wheaten cakes, of sugar or butter to assist in appeasing his growing appetite.



Thus it was that one morning before the sudden dawn had sprung into the sky, at the stillest hour, when man is yet asleep, and when animals are seeking their rest, the village gate was opened, and a tiny party of two elephants and four men passed out into the dimness of the forest and disappeared from sight. On the narrow path the feet of the elephants made no sound; from time to time in passing under the arched bamboos a stem was struck and instantly responded with a shower of dew,

drenching both the elephants and their riders ;
or grass, whose flowering tops were weighted

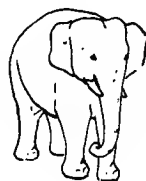


with moisture, was
brushed aside as
the party made its
way through the
dripping forest.
The sun was well
up when a halt was
made at the edge
of a forest glade,
and the simple
equipment of the
hunters could be
observed. Each

man carried a heavy knife whose handle protruded from the tightly-drawn loin-cloth within ready reach of his right hand. Other weapons or clothing they had none, now that the cotton coverlet had been thrown aside. For implements of the chase each elephant carried a stout and long rope of fibre, twisted from the inner bark of trees, and with this outfit the men proposed to capture some half-grown elephant

from the herd, and bring it to the village to be trained for use and subsequent sale.

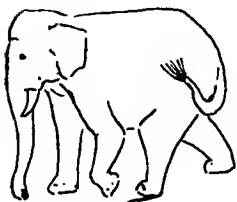
Leaving one man on each elephant, the other two commenced searching the soft soil for fresh tracks, and after a few minutes started away at a quick walk, followed at a distance by their companions. For miles they proceeded in a series of twists and turns, passing as they went evidence of the grazing of the herd in broken branches, uprooted grasses, and overturned bamboos, and it was not until they were within a hundred yards of the elephants that they halted to reconnoitre the ground and to ascertain if any of the animals were of size suitable for their purpose. A decision seemed soon to be arrived at, and, the trackers mounting, the tame elephants were urged in the direction of a half-grown animal which stood on the outskirts of the tree forest. Little suspecting the attempt to be made on his liberty, the victim moved away as the intruders approached him ; he was nervous but not apprehensive ; but on being



followed and disturbed time after time he became alarmed, and commenced to run

through the forest to shake off his pursuers. They followed with the ease of animals who were in hard training through years of labour and scanty food ; in-

crease the speed as he would they were still pressing on him ; if he threatened to charge they evaded him to right and left, only to close up again behind him ; and so, separated from the herd, with terror in his heart and trembling with exhaustion and thirst, he still plodded along in front, with the hunt inexorably following his footsteps, permitting no halt to rest or drink, but persistently keeping him on the move through long hours. At last despair took possession of



the hunted ; he turned and stood silent in the shade of a large tree, indifferent to a fate he felt powerless to escape from.

The hunters approached softly on either side of him, and in silence allowed the hunting elephants to caress the captive and soothe his fears ; he made no response, either of anger or impatience, till the ropes were secured round his neck and he was invited to proceed with his captors. Then once more, when too late, he made an effort for freedom, rushing wildly to every side, to be checked each time by the ropes attached to the elephants, finally throwing himself on the ground and lying there immovable, irresponsive to the pricks of sharp knives, to shouts and exhortations, not yielding till the last weapon of man, in the shape of a burning torch of dried grass, was brought close to his body. Then with instinctive dread he rose suddenly to his feet and dragged his captors away with him in hasty flight, till, breathless, he again surrendered and moved quietly in whichever direction the party proceeded.

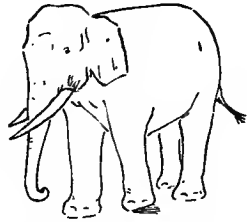
They had no wish to meet the startled herd, least of all to come within reach of the herd-bull, who might annihilate without difficulty the whole of the encumbered procession. By devious routes, carefully prospecting the ground, they arrived at the footpath leading to the village, and in single file and in silence proceeded on their way. It was sunset by the time they entered the gate, and, passing up the main street, arrived at a curious cage-like construction whose wide-eaved roof rested on stout piles strengthened by cross beams. Into this they persuaded their captive to enter, using force when he proposed to resist, and behind him were dropped two cross beams, so that he stood as in a narrow horse box, barely longer than his length or broader than his width, where there was no chance of exerting his strength for escape, and where he would remain, the observed of the village, the plaything of the children, until such time as he became accustomed to the sight of man, patient under handling and docile to the word of command. Now water was given him to drink, fodder was placed within reach, the

rough ropes were slackened from his neck, and he was left in peace to recover his nerve and temper during the hours of darkness.

Meanwhile the herd of elephants, and with them the young calf and his mother, disturbed by the intrusion of man, uneasy as if some unknown danger had been near them, gathered together for safety ; the young sheltered behind their bulkier companions, all testing the air to learn from which side this danger threatened. It was only gradually that their misgivings were removed and that they recommenced grazing, though still nervously. As night fell, however, at some silent signal from an old and experienced female, they set out on the march, and in single file moved quietly away from their recent halting place. The line was not unbroken, for the calves frequently fell out ; theirs was the difficult task of stepping between the footmarks of the longer-paced adults, and they were easily fatigued by the roughness of the road. So that, while the mothers lingered to encourage and assist their young, the main herd gradually disappeared from view, not to

The Life of an Elephant

be again rejoined till some hours had elapsed. The herd-bull remained for some time behind the retreating elephants, as if to show his independence of his harem: but ultimately he too sauntered in the same direction, careless as to any possible danger of attack, but most careful in every stride that his vast weight should rest on firm soil.



The young calf's training had now commenced to fit him for the life which might, under favourable circumstances, extend over a century. At present he gave little promise of a great future. His soft wrinkled skin was covered with a rufous down, and his forehead with long black hair, the inheritance from primeval ancestors in the north; his trunk was to grow with use, but was now small and short; from his eyes glanced wickedness rather than serenity, and his shaggy eyelashes gave them a guileful look which, indeed, was fully in accordance with his character. On the march he



plodded along methodically, his whole strength absorbed in the struggle not to be left behind ; but on halting days, when neither feeding nor sleeping, he was occupied in tricks which were far from sedate. To raise a sudden shriek of alarm, which would bring his mother red-hot with rage to his side, appeared to him to be a pleasant pastime ; to butt and harry the youngsters less strong than himself was also amusing ; and to filch some delicacy from another, even though he was yet unable to eat it, afforded him much pleasure.

Thus, during his calfhood and youth he was more or less privileged ; to his mother he clung till, after some years, others took his place ; to the herd he remained faithful because unable yet to fend for himself alone. He grew up in the fear of the herd-bull and with a wholesome respect for the young males, instinctively aware that the thrust of a sharp tusk was extremely painful, and might be fatal ; ignorant of his own strength, but alert and quick, even agile when due consideration is given to his bulk and build. Perhaps the most difficult accomplishment was

to acquire the ability to walk with ease and safety on precipitous ground, but even this was learnt with practice. A perpendicular bank, if unyielding, even if only five feet high, remained always insurmountable, for he could not raise a hind-foot sufficiently to give a purchase in bringing his body



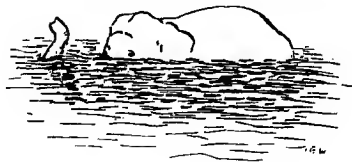
to follow trunk and fore-feet. But if the soil could be broken away the difficulty ceased to exist, for he would trample on the displaced earth and in a few seconds surmount the



obstacle. To descend a steep, almost vertical slope he would break away the brink with his fore-feet and lower himself over the edge, then, bending his hind-legs, let himself go, leaving two deep furrows to mark his course. On the narrow ridges between the valleys he would walk with circumspection, lest a false step should mean death. Indeed, he had

himself been witness to such an accident, when, the soil giving way, his companion had been precipitated into the valley below; at first grasping with outstretched trunk at bamboos and saplings to stay her fall, and ultimately, as these were torn loose, as if refusing the assistance so urgently required, lying a huddled and inert mass some seventy feet below.

He had learnt how to ford the forest streams, testing in advance each footstep lest he should chance on quicksands from which there was no escape; to swim the rivers, rejoicing in his strength, sinking, to strike the firm bottom and to rebound thence to the surface, ploughing the current with only his trunk above the surface, like the conning pole of some submarine vessel. He had been taught where to seek the food supplies of the various seasons. He knew when the bamboo foliage was at its best, when the grasses were in flower, what barks, roots, and fruits were wholesome and where to find them. He could detect



the presence of water if close below the surface of the soil, and dig for it with his powerful fore-feet ; and, as to forest fires, with one wave of his trunk he could locate the danger and strike across the wind so as to avoid this terror.

All this and much more was known to him, and in self-defence against other jungle tribes, he was fully armed. His fore-foot, gently swinging as a pendulum till the accurately timed instant when it shot forth with prodigious force, could dispose of any dangerous intruder ; for the less important kind his trunk was ready to deal a shrewd blow just as easily as it could be used to blow away an objectionable insect or to give the softest of caresses.

And so, as he increased in size, he increased in knowledge, became gradually more independent of his fellows, and was able to find a living for himself, though the love of company still kept him with the herd where he had lived for so long in happiness and safety.

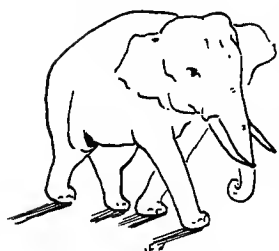
CHAPTER IV

The Monarchs of the Herd

IN the forest, even among members of the same tribe, might is right, and those who cannot defend their place of pride must yield to those who dispute it. And in the struggle that thus goes on, one factor remains the most important, and that is youth, with its uncalculated courage and irresistible endurance. The monarch of the herd may maintain peace in the community for a score of years, so long as he has no serious rival, but there is always a certainty that a stronger than he will arise one day and secure the supremacy. The leading bull of this herd, though some sixty or seventy years of age, was in no way failing in strength, in wisdom, or in beauty. True, in agility he was inferior to his rivals, and his heavy bulk imposed a severe strain upon his lasting

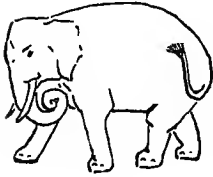
powers ; but up till now none had disputed his authority, none had dreamed of engaging in single combat with such a monster. Yet this happened at last without premeditation, as the result of passions suddenly roused, but, once kindled, not to be quenched save by a fight to a finish.

The leader of the herd, of which our elephant was still an insignificant member, was leaning carelessly against a tree watching his subjects as they grazed around him. In the outskirts two other bull elephants were wandering listlessly to and fro ; giving an impression as if



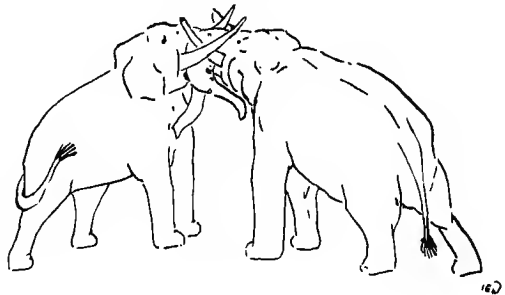
they longed yet feared to approach. Presently the one, attracted irresistibly by his desire for company, walked slowly towards the females. The herd-bull, from his post of careless observation, at once started to attention, and with ears extended strode towards the intruder, fully expecting to see him turn and fly, but in this instance the expected did not happen. The

herd-bull then, in passing, pushed the younger bull to one side : and instantly the latter turned and stood facing his lord and master with lowered head, with tightly curled trunk and shining tusks. This mutinous challenge was not to be re-



fused, and the animals met with a mighty shock, trunk to trunk, each pushing with full strength in the attempt to overthrow the other, or at least to make him swerve or flee, so that the conqueror's tusks might be imbedded in side or hind-quarters, and, in favourable circumstances, the goring be continued till life became extinct.

To turn or fly would therefore probably result in a painful wound, while to fall was practically a sentence of death. And thus these two animals which had lived peaceably together for so many years were



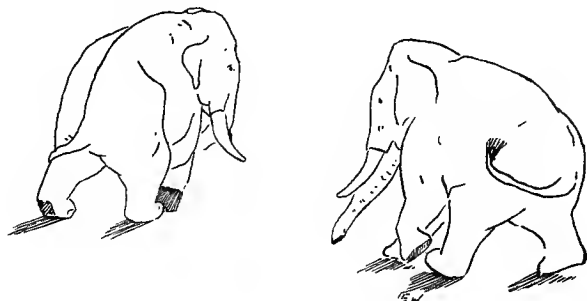
forced to a duel, which in any case must separate them for the rest of their lives. Neither had entered into it with zest, but, once begun, the instinct of self-preservation compelled its continuance; while soon rage and fury swallowed up all other feelings, and all the brutality of animal life came into play. They pushed against each other in sullen silence, while the herd instinctively moved away lest they should experience the cruelty of the vanquished or the blind lust of the conqueror; while the second bull gladly accompanied the females to enjoy, at least for a time, the unusual feeling of supremacy.

All through the tropical night the struggle proceeded with unabated fury. When the combatants separated and stood apart, eager though each might have been to turn aside and leave the struggle undecided, self-preservation insisted that the face should be kept to the foe, so that once again they met with lowered heads, with trunks curled out of harm's way. The immense muscles on fore-legs and quarters stood out under the thick hides, and the tusks,

weapons as yet useless in the fight, clashed together as the opponents met, their sharp points inflicting slight wounds on chest and shoulder, and from these blood slowly trickled, reddening the duellists, whose heated breath rose in mist in the air. There was an intolerable scent from the bodies of these animals, perceptible even to the gross senses of human beings, and most peculiarly obnoxious to the other jungle tribes; nor was there any friendly intervention to end the fight, as most usually occurs when deer, cattle, or even birds are engaged in savage warfare.

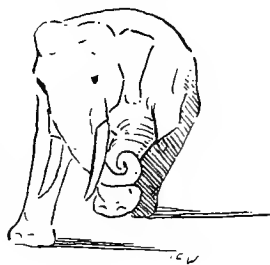
In the morning the elephants presented a sorry sight; the soft, black hides were encrusted with blood and dust; the roundness of body and limb had given place to the prominence of straining muscles, even the placid fulness of face and trunk was no longer evident; the bones of the forehead stood out through the tightened skin. The herd-bull was at his last gasp from fatigue, his adversary but in little better plight, but still sustained by the insistence of his hot-blooded youth. With a final

effort the herd-bull pushed the other backwards for several paces, then suddenly turned and fled.



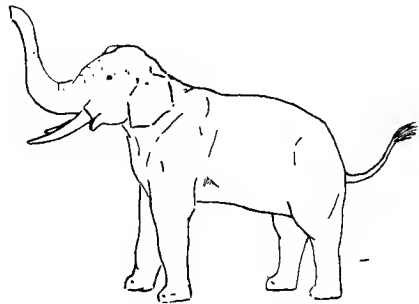
He crashed into the thickest jungle he could find, the bamboos and elastic branches recovering their position as they swished violently in the face of the pursuer. The latter could gain no ground on the vanquished, and after a time stopped to scream with rage and vent his fury on unoffending saplings and trees in his vicinity. Then, bruised and battered, he made his way to overtake the herd.

His triumph was not long-lived. In his haste he soon caught up his companions, and the females and young stood aside as he stormed



through their midst. He went straight towards the tusker with whom he had been brought up, his companion in long servitude under the now vanquished herd-bull, and without pretext, save that of fully roused passions, attacked him on the instant. The other received the shock without a tremor, and in the contact the lust of fighting seemed to be communicated to him. He pushed, and felt his already exhausted antagonist yield ground; he redoubled his efforts, and the enemy first gave way, then suddenly slipped and fell. In a moment two

sharp tusks were buried in his side; again and again till the soil was reddened and the victor stood with uplifted trunk, with crimson tusks, and glared around



for any other adversary. There was none to withstand him, and he entered into his kingdom over the necks of his two defeated foes.

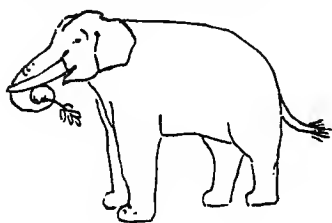
Meantime the vanquished herd-bull was

recovering his equanimity. He betook himself to the nearest stream and spent some hours in bathing, in lying in the water, in cooling his heated blood. Then, spreading earth over his wounds to ward off the attacks of flies, he proceeded to graze his way in the direction opposite to that taken by the herd.



Before following further the fortunes of our elephant it will be interesting to sketch shortly the life of this solitary tusker when driven from the herd and condemned to a life of loneliness.

A long term of not unhappy years was before him. He possessed vast experience, and his wants were fully assured in the friendly forest. He could live a luxurious life, following the vegetation in its seasonal change; browsing on bamboos so long as their foliage remained green, entering the swampy land in the summer heats, returning to the savannahs when the new grass appeared,



and at all times finding leaves, roots and fruits of various species adapted to his use during the season of their ripeness ; while astringent barks served to keep him in health during the trying spring months. It was not often that he regretted his former gregarious life ; at times he felt lonely, and then, in evil temper, vented his rage on the trees around him. But these fits soon passed, and he proceeded on his placid way, harming no one, and content to be left to enjoy his own life.

Such was his lot during maturity, but as old age crept over him the difficulties increased, not of finding, but of utilizing the food which nature provided in such profusion around him. His tusks no longer grew fast enough to replace the wear and tear of forest life, they became worn and rough ; his teeth, too, could no longer crush the bamboo, the twigs and coarser grasses, so that the constant search for softer food became laborious. His forehead and trunk were now thickly mottled with white, and the edges of his great ears hung in tatters ; the bones showed through the grey hide, and

the roundness of youth was no longer visible. He wandered aimlessly through the forest, seeking those comforts which failing vitality alone denied him. And there were none of the jungle tribes who were able to relieve him from the burden of old age, and from a lingering death by gradual exhaustion from starvation, a fate which seemed certain to overtake him.

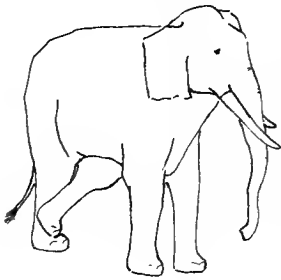
It was when in these straits that this aged bull commenced to live in the vicinity of the cultivated lands, and to rob the crops by night. But even this gave him but slight relief, for, once the villagers were alive to his predatory habits, they kept good watch and ward, and more often than not he was driven away long before he had satisfied his hunger. And so it fell out at last that in desperate mood he refused to fly from the yelling mob that threatened him, continuing to seize large bunches of ripening grain and stuff them greedily into his mouth, till the owners, gaining courage, approached so close that spears and arrows could be used with effect. Then the elephant

turned, smarting with pain, and headed for the safety of the forest ; encountering on his way a human being, he brushed him aside in his hasty stride, and, from the moment a man had been killed, the fate of the animal was decided.



Could he have known that he was proscribed it is probable that he would have welcomed relief from the oppression of growing helplessness; for it is on record that one winter afternoon, when the sky was growing red in the west, and a great silence was creeping over the land, a hunter came on the fresh tracks of an elephant, and at once recognized from their size that he was on the trail of the outlaw. There was haste if the blood-money was to be earned ere darkness fell, but the trail was easy to follow, for the elephant was deliberately heading towards a favourite stand of his, where a pool of water glistened in the shade of high rocks, and the bamboo stood around in graceful groups. As the hunter crept along the track, and slowly

emerged in the more open space around the pool, he saw the elephant standing motionless,



and watching him more with curiosity than with fear or anger. The

man realized that there was no immediate danger, that there was no necessity for hurried aim, and no excuse for

bungling this execution. He raised his rifle slowly, and, as the head of the foresight passed the base of the trunk, the trigger was pressed, and the bullet sped upwards into the brain. The elephant sank to his knees without a sound; for an instant he seemed to be balanced in this attitude, then rolled over and lay on his side, dying with the calm dignity which had emphasized his life.

The villagers, who had known of him for two generations, and who asserted that he was in his prime when the oldest of them were young, believed that after a so long and harmless life in this world of toil and trouble the

elephant would be re-incarnated on a much higher plane ; they even suggested, as if that were a reward, that his spirit might be born again as one of themselves, forgetting that they were under the subjection of labour from birth to death, while this elephant had tasted the joys of independence for nearly a century.

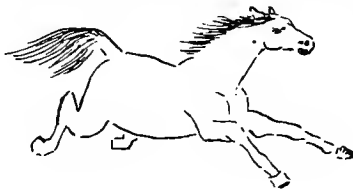
CHAPTER V

Captivity

THE change in the leadership of the herd made but little difference to our elephant, who led an uneventful life till, at the age of thirty, he was well advanced towards maturity. He then stood over eight feet high at the withers, and his tusks protruded some two feet from his lips. The animal was still growing in height and bulk, but was already formidable either for attack or defence. In short sprints on level ground no man could hope to escape

him, and a horse would have to be remarkably quick in getting away to avoid his charge; and, even after the first one hundred and fifty yards,

the elephant could maintain a good pace



when hurried, though his usual gait was at about four miles to the hour. In fact, long continued speed was not necessary to his existence. If he charged an enemy, either he caught and slew him, or the enemy decamped and thus ceased to be harmful; if he himself fled on occasions of urgency, he had either avoided the danger, or was prepared to meet it calmly after a short distance had been traversed.

The difference between wild animals and those kept for show is perhaps never more pronounced than with the elephant. This one had a black, soft and pliant hide, warm to the touch, and so sensitive that it responded at once to the attack of a fly, while other insects, so powerfully armed as are the gad-flies, left drops of blood wherever they alighted. The grey coloured hides encrusted with dirt, such as are seen in the best managed Zoological Gardens in Europe, are evidently the consequence of the want of constant throwing of mud and dust on the body, to be subsequently washed away by forcible jets of water directed from the trunk, thereby creating the friction

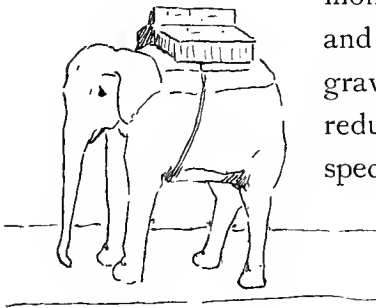
The Life of an Elephant

necessary to keep the hide clean and sensitive. So in India, even the domestic elephant is aided in such efforts towards cleanliness by being bathed and scrubbed daily with a hard brick. How important it is to keep the skin healthy by regular friction is known to the breeders of domestic cattle, but has apparently escaped the notice of curators of Zoological Gardens, who but rarely provide any means by which their captives can follow the dictates of nature as regards this form of health preservation.

Another difference between the wild and confined elephant, is that the former possesses a roundness of head and body, referable to that full formation of muscle which apparently can only be attained by suitable and varied food accompanied by sufficient exercise.

The monotony of stale buns and of slow promenades on gravelled paths must soon reduce even the finest specimens of elephant life

to creatures of no vitality of brain

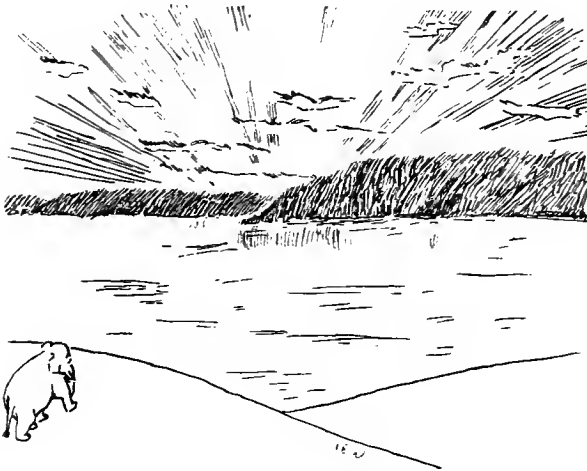


or muscle, while in those born in captivity there can be little resemblance, save perhaps in the skeleton, to the animal bred and brought up in the forest. One must, therefore, picture to one's self an alert and by no means clumsy beast; neither indolent nor greedy; fully equipped to support himself in a country where dangers are not infrequent; knowing how to ascend and descend the steepest mountain passes; able to ford the treacherous streams in safety, to swim for miles if necessary in the flooded rivers; and withal endowed with senses of sight and scent that could forewarn him in time to escape approaching dangers, whether threatened by man or by nature. With these qualities, combined with enormous strength, it was well that the elephant was favoured with a calmness of temper and with a kindliness of disposition which prevented him from using his forces for evil.

As a rule the elephant began his day, as animals will, at sunset, when he moved towards water to bathe and drink. This hour of enjoyment was marked by cries of pleasure from

The Life of an Elephant

the adults, who seemed to enjoy making the forest re-echo with their trumpeting. Then could be heard also the shrill voices of the young calves and the contented purring of the mothers,



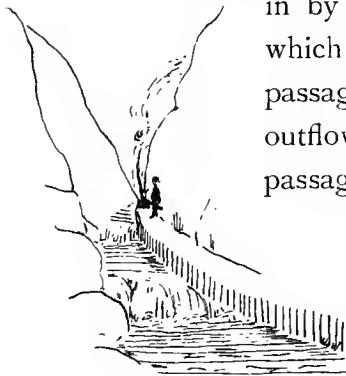
culminating in blows on earth or water with the trunk. They stood knee-deep, throwing water over their bodies, or, if there was depth enough, swimming and diving in the stream or lake; then when hunger called they either came ashore wet and shiny, or struck out for the opposite bank, the mothers encouraging the young calves or aiding them with their trunks. The secrets

of the earth, air and water were theirs. With one tap of the trunk they passed without pausing if the foothold were sound, or stopped short to avoid some danger imperceptible to man; they knew in the same way if the sand beneath the water was firm or treacherous, if the current was too swift to allow of safe passage; and with one wave of the trunk they both detected danger and located it. And so it is that in times of flood or fire, or, worst of all, of earthquake, the distress of these animals, should they be prevented from utilizing their powers for escape, is so marked as to be almost pathetic.

The herd in which our elephant still found himself consisted of individuals all more or less experienced, all amply endowed by nature with the means to pass a happy and long life, but each differing in strength and in characteristics as much as is found to be the case in communities of human beings. Only, amongst the elephants, there was blind confidence in one leader, for the reason that discussion and forethought were denied them. It was a republic

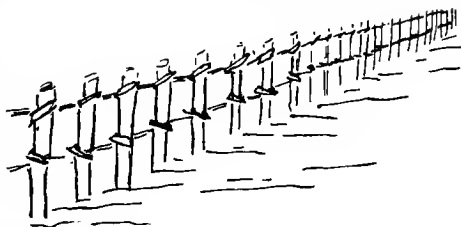
in which unreserved obedience was given to the wisest: and amongst the forest tribes the wisest is generally of the weaker sex; for that sex, because of its weakness, becomes of necessity the best qualified by nature to detect a coming danger, and to devise means of escape.

The herd had been grazing in one part of the country for some time; food and water were plentiful, and, though they more than once started on the march to new ground, yet they had somewhat listlessly given up the attempt on finding human beings busy in their path. In fact, though they did not know it, they were surrounded by a wide circle of men, whose endeavour was to keep them within certain boundaries. The broad valley was shut



in by precipitous hills, through which were only two easy passages marking the inlet and outflow of a stream, and these passages were well guarded by men armed with guns, who, moreover, kept fires blazing night and day.

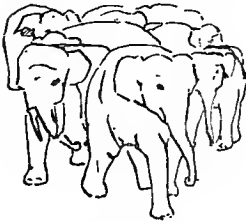
Other watchers were on the slopes of the hills, ready at all times to dispute a passage in that direction, and within this circumference the elephants lived unmolested while a stout stockade,



approached through wide wings which spread V-shaped into the forest, was being constructed in all haste. Work was pressed on day and night lest the herd, now becoming uneasy, should attempt to force a passage ere the arrangements were complete; but at last all was ready and the order was given that tomorrow the herd was to be driven to captivity.

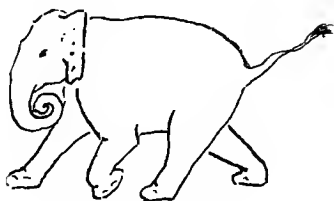
The morning shone bright and clear over the forest; it was a season when nights were cold and the days hot; when the vegetation was preparing for the coming drought, the deciduous trees shedding their leaves, the evergreens showing a more brilliant foliage as if rejoicing in their superiority over the seasons. Looking down on the valley, there seemed no sign of

man or beast, even the columns of smoke which for weeks had marked the position of the passes into the valley were no longer visible; the forest was wrapped in silence. Suddenly, fired from far away, the report of a gun echoed through the hills, and simultaneously a roar of sound arose, shouts, beating of drums and firing of guns, as some hundreds of men descended from the hillsides and converged on the pass leading out of the valley.



The elephants gathered in a body and followed the old female, who at once took command; they moved slowly in front of the gathering crowd, at first not doubting that it might be avoided; then, as the circle constricted, they suddenly realized that they were being driven, and, with the instinct of all wild animals, endeavoured to make a way of escape to one side. They pushed up the slopes of the hill at a quick walk, trunks waving and tails whipping from side to side, and were suddenly confronted with a volley of blank

cartridges fired in their faces, with shouts and with fire-brands. In the suddenness of this attack, all courage and dignity vanished, and in a disordered mass, with curled trunks and tails raised high above their backs, they fled, helter-skelter down the hill, and entering the valley, once more found themselves with men behind, and on each side, and with but one apparent way of escape open to them.



Along that way they proceeded, no longer cautious of sudden danger, unnerved by their terrifying experience, each eager to be foremost in the flight, till the path narrowed, and they discovered on each side of them not many yards distant, rows of stout piles with interlaced tree trunks, held together with climbers and ropes of fibre, which told of the work of man, and warned them of the loss of liberty or life. They halted in indecision, and at that moment pandemonium seemed to be again let loose close behind them ; guns were fired, crackers

exploded, burning torches were flung, and the shouts of men and the booming of drums became unbearable. The elephants pressed forward in a wild attempt at escape, and forced themselves through the narrow gateway.

There was here no space to receive this torrent of frightened animals, and so it was

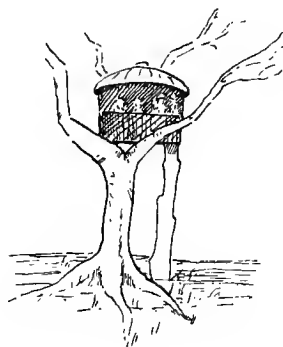
that the herd-bull was left outside, and attacked the palisade with the fury born of fear. It gave way to

the impact, and he rushed through, followed by a few



of those who had, like him, been delayed at the fatal gateway; and at the same moment the ropes holding up the huge portcullis were cut, and the way to freedom, for the rest of the herd, was barred. Then it was that scores of men arrived to hurriedly strengthen the stockade, and to prevent any systematic attempt at its destruction; firing with blank cartridges at any elephant which crossed the boundary ditch with the object of tearing down

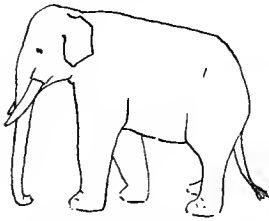
the fence, repulsing with spear thrusts the more venturesome who were not overawed with threats ; and then, too, it was that the great men of the earth, from the secure advantage of towers built into strong trees, could watch the captives, as they moved restlessly to and fro, avoiding each other, as if ashamed of their predicament, and looking with wondering and terrified eyes on the antics of their captors.



CHAPTER VI

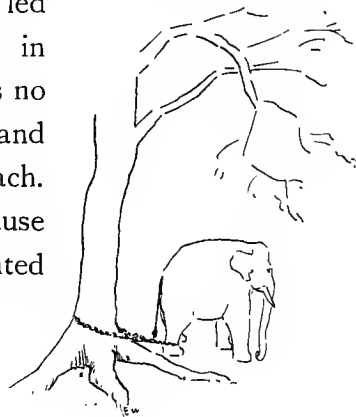
In Training for Work

THERE were some twenty-five captives in the enclosure, of whom our elephant was the largest: and it was well for him that he made no determined efforts to escape, for in order to avoid any risk of loss of the catch, his life would have been sacrificed at once; a well-directed bullet at close quarters would

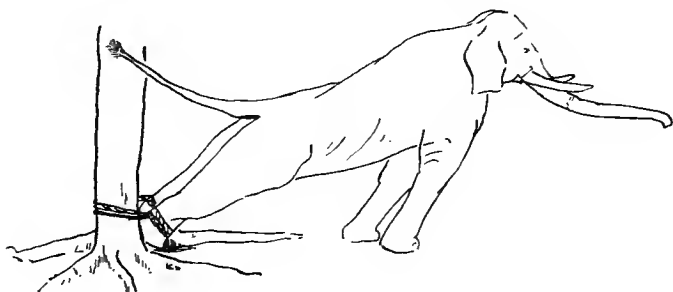


have ended his history. But, with the patient equanimity of his kind, when faced with unavoidable misfortunes, he remained placidly standing, awaiting his fate. In a few hours most of the captives grew accustomed to the sight and scent of human beings; they raised no objections when men seated on tame

elephants moved amongst them; they even submitted when, huddled between two trained animals, ropes were passed over their necks; and, most dangerous task to those so employed, when other ropes were secured to their hind-legs. Thus, one by one, they were led out through the narrow doorway in the direction of the camp, to be tied to stout trees by the heel ropes. Against these bonds they strained with all their weight, desisting only when the ropes cut deep into the flesh and imprinted on them the brand of slavery, always to be found on an elephant if born and bred in the forest and then captured and trained to the service of man. The very young calves followed the females as they were led from the enclosure, but in many cases their mothers no longer recognized them, and resented their approach. Whether this was because their young were tainted with the scent of man, or whether the terror



and anxiety of the pursuit and capture had stayed the flow of milk and so destroyed the maternal instincts, it is difficult to assert. At all events the calves wandered round the fettered elephants, finding scant encouragement, save from men who fed them with buffalo milk, hoping to keep them alive, or from the tame



elephants, which treated them with kindness and affection, so that, if not quite dependent on a nursery diet, there was good chance of their survival.

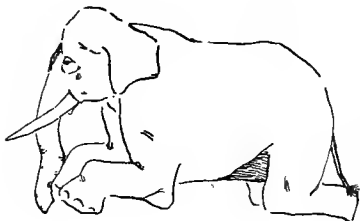
Our elephant remained the last to be removed from the enclosure, and while there, he had been constantly attended by two tame elephants, who gently frustrated any attempt at restiveness. When the ropes had been

attached to neck and leg, an imposing array of tame elephants was ready to overcome any resistance. He made none, but walked silently to his allotted place, where he was left to himself. Even then there was no unseemly struggle. He tested his weight against the strength of his fetters with one long, even pull, till the blood spurted from the wounds; the ropes held firm, and he made no subsequent attempt, suffering himself to be led to water morning and evening, eating the food provided for him with an aloofness which made mere man seem insignificant. For weeks before it was considered safe for him to take the road, he was, in reality, just as indifferent to his fate as on the day they started to leave for ever the forests he knew so well.



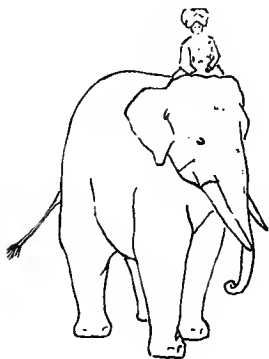
First the long weary march in chains, and then the months of training which followed, seemed to rob him of all the joy of living and alter, with altered habits, many of his natural characteristics. His patience remained, but it

was the patience of despair, and though he still deeply resented ill-treatment, he became



obedient to the wishes of his masters so far as he understood them. The first lesson was that he should kneel at

command, so that the pigmies who owned him should be able the more readily to climb on his back ; the next, that he should lie on his side, so that he might be duly cleaned by his attendant ; then that he should follow when led by the ear, and turn to right and left, or halt when ordered to do so. Finally, that all these movements should be carried out under the orders of a man seated on his neck, who emphasized his commands with a goad or with a pointed iron hook. During the whole of this schooling the shackles were never off the fore-feet, or the

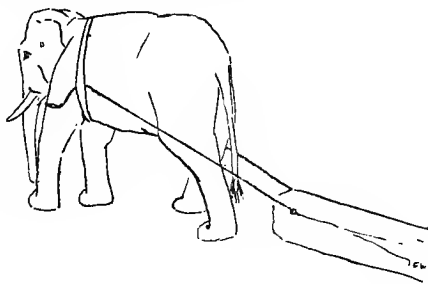


tethering chain from the hind-leg, and it was only when he had earned a name for docility that these restrictions were removed, and he found his limbs free once more, though still, on either side, a tame elephant accompanied him for fear of a sudden outbreak of fury.

And so at last he was ready for work, and was sold into slavery to the first comer who could command his price: his only safeguards against cruel treatment being the capital invested in his purchase, and the fear of his vengeance should his attendants purposely annoy him.

First, then, he was called upon to work his own passage from the forest to the timber yard, where ultimately he was to be employed in moving and arranging the heaviest logs; and this trip of some five hundred miles took nearly two years to complete.

He would be harnessed to a log, and by brute strength drag it through the soft soil to the banks



Missing Page

Missing Page

they were at the mercy of all the predatory bands in the neighbourhood. It was but a small number of such logs that the owner retrieved. All had the ownership marks at once removed, some were buried deep in the sand, to be recovered at some convenient occasion, others were hurriedly sawn up in concealed saw-pits, so that identification became even more difficult.

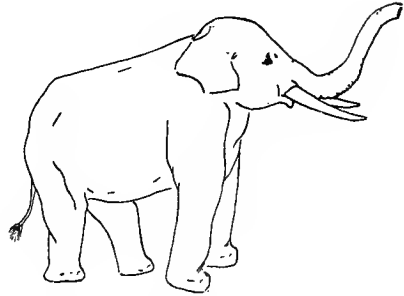
On the way down stream other rafts were encountered, made up of thousands of bamboos which floated more buoyantly than the timber ; so that on these thatched cottages could be erected, and children played joyously in the railed-in decks. In the centre of these floating villages were mounds of rice, covered with bamboo matting, the harvest from villages far away in the north, its ultimate destination first the husking mills of Rangoon, and then the markets of Europe and England.

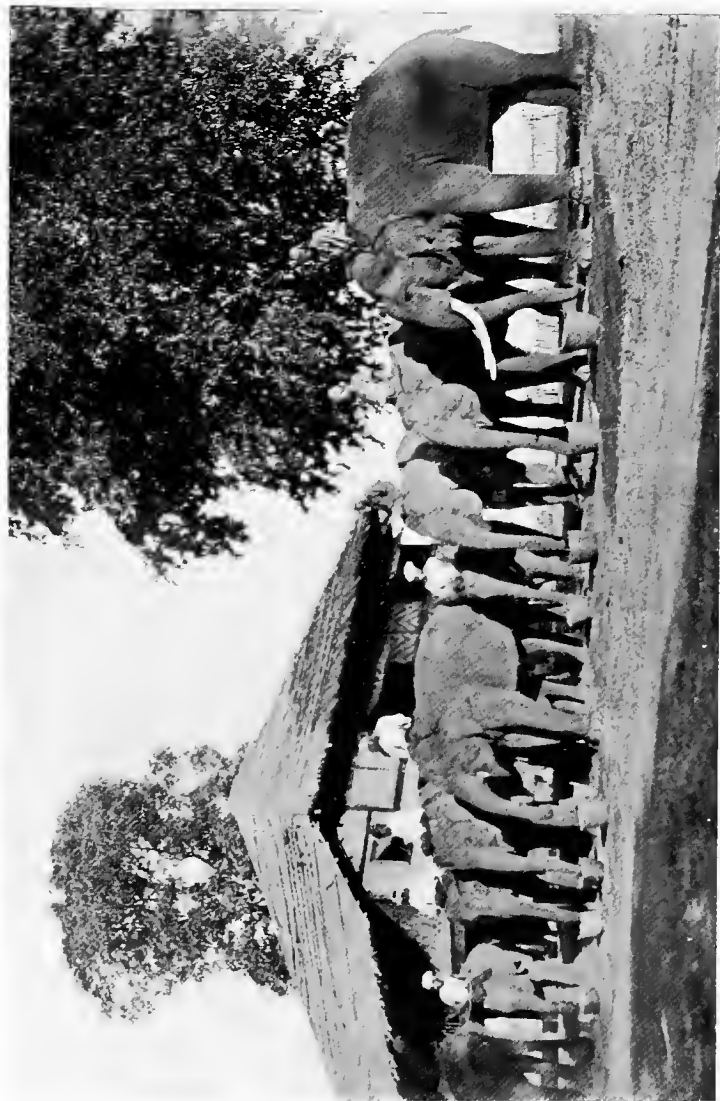
After the rafts had been despatched, there followed for our elephant a period of comparative rest from labour till the monotonous march to the timber depot was completed ; but during those two strenuous years he had become

thoroughly accustomed to the presence of man, and tolerated, but did not love him. The elephant was still regarded as a slave, for whom the lash was ready as a punishment, but to whom no reward was offered as an incentive to greater exertions. The other elephants with whom he was associated provided him with no interests; he could not respond to their advances made with caressing trunk or with loud purrings; truth to say, he wanted nothing but food and sleep after a hard day's work, for he was still growing both in height and bulk, and his masters seemed to have but small idea of his requirements in food and rest. In the short hours allotted to him for feeding and sleeping he was obliged to swallow hastily whatever came within reach, instead of, as in the days of freedom, taking time to select, cleanse, and carefully masticate every mouthful. Often his tethering chain prevented him from reaching a convenient bathing place, and thus frequently he was recalled to another day's work unrefreshed by bathing or sleep, and with unsatisfied hunger.

The Life of an Elephant

It was rather a gaunt elephant which ultimately reached the timber yard, and viewed the broad estuary and inhaled the scent of the sea air. To him at first all was repugnant, the brackish water, the slimy mud, the fodder impregnated with brine from the salt breezes; but here, as before, he adapted himself to his surroundings, but in reality possessed no one thing that made life enjoyable to him. His work, too, was the more arduous that it had to be accomplished under the burning sun. For the elephant is particularly sensitive to heat; when wild, he rarely moves when the sun is hot, but stands in the deepest shade available, and often seeks further protection by piling grass on head and neck, and throwing earth over his body. Those human beings who have lived in intimacy amongst this forest tribe will truly relate, how at times they have unwittingly approached

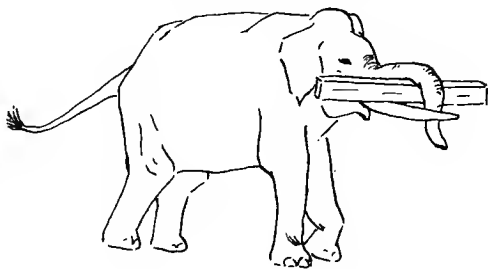




"THE OTHER ELEPHANTS WITH WHOM HE WAS ASSOCIATED."

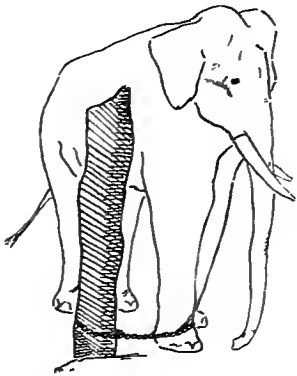
close to an elephant thus concealed, and have fled in cold terror when a movement of a grass-covered mound disclosed the presence of a hidden danger.

Here in the timber yard were creeks of shiny mud, which the tide filled with foul water ; into these creeks the logs, detached from the timber rafts, were floated at high water, and later were dragged by the elephant on to firmer soil. A broad breast-plate, ending on either side with a chain, was all his harness and, struggling and slipping in the slime, he did his best to satisfy his masters. From time to time, especially as the tide ebbed, he was forced to enter the creeks and work in five or six feet of mud and water, so that he could not do justice to his weight and strength. Once the logs were on firm ground his next duty was to arrange them in rows as ordered by his driver. The smaller logs he would lift bodily with his tusks,



The Life of an Elephant

carrying them where required with the aid of his trunk ; those too heavy to carry he would roll along the ground or, raising first one end, and then the other, bring them ultimately to the desired position. The elephant presented



a sorry sight when his day's work was done ; he was then covered with black river-mud, and felt weary and indifferent to his surroundings, being sore from the chafing of his rough harness, and irritated by the scolding and ill-temper of his

driver. During the night he stood under a shed, chained to a post, and ate what was put before him and what remained over from his rations after the rapacity of his driver had been satisfied. There is no need to dwell on this monotonous and weary time, for this elephant came through it with his life, though many of his companions had succumbed, from sunstroke, from internal strains, from sudden

unknown sickness; yet it seems but justice that in these days when sentimentality is rife, some comparison should be suggested between the treatment of a criminal, who perhaps has been for years a terror to his fellow-men. and that meted out to an animal which has done no harm; and that the attitude of either towards their gaolers may be noted when condemned to loss of liberty and to penal servitude. Perhaps, if a useful life is to be commended, an animal may show to advantage over many human beings.

Mention has been made of sudden unknown sickness, and it may be remarked that cases of poisoning of elephants, even by their own mahouts, are not of such rarity as to cause surprise. Nothing is easier than to administer a fatal dose to an animal which places such implicit trust in man; arsenic concealed in a banana is readily swallowed, and proof of the crime is difficult. A mahout who had abused his authority, and went in consequence in fear of his life, has been known to take this way of escape; while another, jealous of the promotion

of a fellow-servant, adopted this means of getting him into trouble. It will be recalled that some wild animals will refuse, when in confinement, to eat from the hand of their keeper, even when on affectionate terms with him. The wild dog, especially, insists on this suspicious attitude, and it is also sometimes assumed by monkeys. An old Langur monkey, which had been in confinement for years, would to the last insist on washing any food handed to her, with a view to removing the disagreeable scent of the human hand. This animal was extremely fond of loaf sugar, and would chatter with rage as each lump disappeared under the cleansing to which she subjected it, leaving no trace, save in sticky paws, which were greedily sucked. But the elephant, though refusing distasteful food, may sometimes be persuaded to swallow it, though at others he will close the argument by dropping it from his mouth and covering it with a massive fore-foot.

The end came at last, when a broker from India saw the elephant toiling wearily in the

timber yard, admired his shape, noted his youth, and decided that here was an animal which, with proper care, was suited for a better fate than that of a living traction-engine ; and that a profit could be made if it were possible to purchase at a reasonable price. Hence it was that, one breezy morning when the tide was running up against the wind, and the muddy water of the estuary was white with breaking wavelets, the elephant was stripped of his harness and led down to a wharf overlooking the wider stream. All around him were men bustling and shouting, rolling or carrying bales into the ship which lay alongside, and after some hours of waiting strong broad girths were fastened round his body, there was a clanking of machinery, and the elephant felt himself lifted from his feet and swaying in mid-air. The sensation was terrifying, and never before had he felt so helpless ; he waved his trunk in all directions in the hope of finding some firm hold for it, but without success ; then he felt himself being lowered till his feet touched the main-deck below, and here, once

more confined, he listened to the soothing words of his new owner.

The next few days he passed in miserable anxiety, for to an animal of this bulk there can be no peace on swaying and heaving decks,



which he imagined were unable to carry his weight ; but even this trial came to an end, and at last the ship moved on an even keel against the stream of a broad river. On either side, the banks, raised only a few feet above the tide, were covered with rice-fields or grass-lands which stretched away to the horizon, without

a break in the dull monotony of the landscape. Between them the muddy stream flowed, treacherous and uninviting ; the shallows marked with white breakers, with whirlpools forming at the tail of the hidden sandbanks. In the distance was a haze of smoke, and as the ship proceeded, feeling her way amongst currents and shoals, the signs of human beings became more in evidence in the whirring of machinery, the clanging of hammers, and the smoke from furnaces, till at length they came to rest on the crowded and busy waters. Such was the entry to the City of Palaces, a title surely appropriated by those who knew not of the real palaces in marble and stone, erected by the inhabitants of the country who possessed clearer conceptions of truth and art. Here the brick buildings were faced with stucco ; they stood four-square on the few feet of firm soil that overlay morass and quicksand, with square porticoes, square windows, and square rooms, and with only one oriental attribute, and that tending to accentuate the bad taste of the west ; namely, that servants, whether man or

beast, were lodged in the closest proximity to those who enjoyed residence in these buildings, palatial only in their size.

Slung from the ship like any bale of goods, our elephant found himself standing on the jetty at dead of night, suffering still from the effects of the sea voyage, reeling slightly as he walked. He passed through the sleeping town, where the daylight traffic was too congested to allow the risk of frightening horses and bullocks, and set his face to the north-west on his long march up-country to the market where he was to be sold. As he followed the broad road with its avenues hundreds of miles in length, he passed into a cooler and drier atmosphere at each march. Strolling twenty to thirty miles each day during the freshness of the early morning and late evening, fed and looked after with every care, he found life for the next month or two pleasanter than he had experienced since his capture. The countries he passed through were different in all respects to those in which the elephant's youth had been passed. There the forest was supreme,

and scattered villages nestled in its folds ; here the land was populated and cultivated. One left a village only to enter another, each with its groves of palms, bamboos and mangroves ; each with its water-tank which served as bathing place to man and beast ; each with its shallow well and its small and tawdry temple. There were no monasteries built of dark-toned timbers heavily carved, and no sound of sonorous gongs and tinkling bells. Of waste lands and jungles there were few, and men were everywhere, not armed and alert, but residing in open villages, seemingly with no fear of man or beast, incessantly talking and incessantly eating food of strange savour. And yet, in spite of this easy existence, there was little joyousness in the land, no brightness of colour or daintiness in the dresses, and more scolding and quarrelling in a day than would be heard in a month in the Further East.

Yet, in spite of these differences, which, indeed, affected the elephant but little ; he passed his days in contentment, regained some

of his vigour, and arrived at his destination handsome and healthy to await with good humour any further adventures that might befall him.

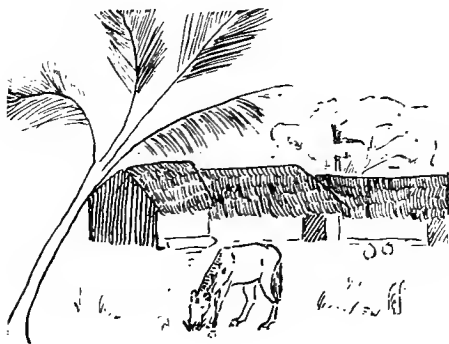
CHAPTER VII

A Change of Masters

THE site of the fair was on a broad expanse of white sand along the bank of a river flowing with clear and strong waters to the east. There was room for thousands of human beings, as well as for the hundreds of animals who were made the pretext for this gathering. On the far side of the river, the forest stretched away over the broken hills; on the other, the view was obstructed by precipices of gravel and sandstone, in whose crevices a scanty vegetation found shelter. Along the edge of the stream, under the overhanging rocks, were crowded temples, bathing ghâts, and pilgrims' rest-houses, and amongst these, at every turn, sat the members of an hereditary priesthood at the receipt of custom, confident of an easy hereafter, while making every arrangement for a

luxurious present. Here, too, the pilgrims, weary and sore-footed, offered adoration in the dark temples, entered the sacred pools where great fish jostled amongst the bathers, submitted to the loss of cherished locks by the barbers' razors, and then, clean from all impurities of body and soul, paid largesse to the priests and started on the homeward journey, laboriously bearing jars of sacred water for use in the rites and ceremonies of domestic worship. In one way this water was miraculous, for it appeared never to diminish in quantity, either by evaporation or even by sale on the lengthy march.

On the sand thousands of human beings were encamped in the open, some sheltered behind flimsy screens of grass, others, more

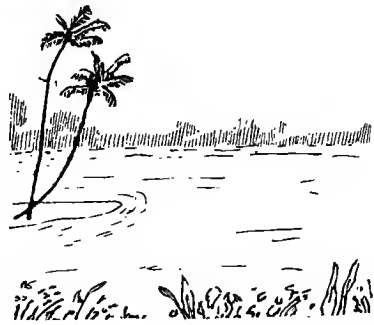


wealthy, under tattered huts, but the majority without shelter of any kind. During the day they roamed



“ALONG THE SIDE OF THE RIVER WERE CROWDED TEMPLES.”

through the fair, visiting the side-shows, staring at the religious mendicants now in full costume of skins and paint, or passing remarks on the animals exposed for sale. As the night drew on, thousands of tiny fires sparkled in the darkness, and were reflected in the broad waterway as each little encampment prepared the evening meal, and then sank to rest after the excitement of the past hours. For most of these visitors were men who rarely left their distant villages, to whom all was novel; even the sight of clear water flowing over boulders aroused their curiosity, accustomed as they were to the murky floods and sandbanks of the rivers of the country of the plains.



On the army of parasites who, with well-advertised claims to sanctity and to charity, swarmed over the fair, they looked with mixed feelings. They might revere the village priest

who stood sponsor at the introduction into caste and manhood, who assisted at their marriage and funeral rites ; but here were men who, at least outwardly, abjured all companionship, and who purposely crippled their own bodies so that, while becoming a burden in the community, they might save their own souls. Covered with ashes and vermin, and often of the most revolting habits, they commanded fees even if they inspired no respect. A fierce glance from under shaggy eyebrows or a muttered curse was sufficient to compel a hurried obeisance and a gift of hard-earned pence from the simple villagers as they passed by.

Much more exciting was it when several hundreds of these miscreants, forming procession, and with frenzied cries on their gods leaped into the swiftly flowing waters of the sacred river ; for then followed the strange spectacle of men, white and black, risking their lives to save those who deliberately sought a quick road to Paradise, but who had lost all ardour at the unwonted contact with cold pure water. The unsophisticated onlookers, inhabitants of a

country where life on earth is held, in reality, to be merely one stage of existence, may well have regarded such interference as unpardonable; but they expressed no opinion, and wandered on in the hope of witnessing other soul-stirring incidents whose recital would while away the long evenings in the distant village.

Along the lines of tethered elephants a man came sauntering, inspecting the animals with a well assumed air of indifference. He was slight and thin, with legs widely bowed, and was clad in white cotton, with an embroidered cap on his well-combed hair. His dress, his short, curly beard, and his speech as he passed the time of day with the attendants on the animals exposed for sale, proclaimed him to be a Mussulman from the north. He glanced shrewdly at our elephant, but continued without halting on his way, and it was not until an hour or so later that he returned, greeted the owner and accepted the long snake-like tube of the hookah when handed to him.

Kareem was the descendant of a long line of "Mahouts," men who, in the service of the state

or of rajahs, had spent their lives in the charge of elephants and, dying, bequeathed their knowledge and their duties to their sons. Such men formed a clan, almost a race apart, now fast dying out under the pressure of veterinary science from the west—men who possessed special knowledge of the habits and manners of this forest tribe, who had accumulated vast stores of legendary and practical information as to their treatment in disease or health, and who could judge at a glance of the good and bad points of an elephant, and decide instantly as to the temperament of each individual, and whether it was trustworthy or dangerous ; who had even invented a special language for freer intercourse with the animals they lived with. To these men the elephant seems to give a special allegiance, and often a most marked affection.

Kareem was no better or worse than those of his class. He would treat those he respected or loved, whether master or elephant, with fidelity ; he was courageous, hot-tempered, and, in physique, well suited to his profession. To

place on the neck of an elephant a driver of the figure of a well-fed family coachman would be impossible, not only on account of the depressing weight to be carried, but because agility is required to mount to the saddle by aid of trunk and tusk, or to scramble up from behind, by the help of the crupper ropes. At the present time this mahout was with his master on the look-out for a good "shikari" elephant; one which, while docile, would be courageous; young enough to be agile, and tall enough to force a way through dense forest, or seas of grass, in pursuit of game.

Thus, after he had spent some time in belittling the elephant, and had received from his owner the incontrovertible reply that the animal was "as God had made him," he rose to his feet and approached the elephant without fear, stroked his trunk, tickled him under the jaw, offered him a banana from his pocket, and then proceeded to examine him thoroughly. First the eyes, which were in colour hazel, bright and clear, without speck or film; then the inside of the mouth, which was pink and healthy; next

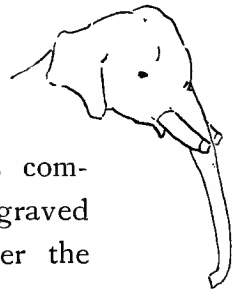
The Life of an Elephant

which might be slow to heal if neglected ; and in return for such attention, he strove to carry out all that was required of him. He knelt,



and submitted to have his forehead painted with fantastic coloured designs, he even permitted that his tusks should be shortened, though this was a serious trial to his temper.

It was one day decided, as the elephant was no longer to be used for timber work, that his long and sharp tusks had become unnecessary, and might, indeed, restrict his usefulness, and prove a danger to his companions. Maula Bux was requested to lie on his side, which he obediently did, his mahout then measured from eye to lip, and marking the same length on his tusks, proceeded to saw off the ends of either, thus avoiding the hollow and sensitive portion above the cut. When this operation was completed, two thick brass rings, engraved and embossed, were slipped over the



ends of the tusks, and tightly wedged in place, and the elephant arose, shorn of a portion of his weapons for which he would have no use in the future, though still possessing implements of the greatest value to himself and his master. The last test of his obedience was, that he should carry lighted lamps on his tusks through the encampment, and this he did with a placidity which delighted his mahout, though inwardly the elephant was far from easy, and carefully kept his trunk out of harm's way.

There came a day when the stud of elephants was to proceed to the jungles, and there be allowed to graze during the winter and spring of the year. They set out on their march in single file, each elephant carrying a load made up of his own fetters and clothing, of his driver's and driver's assistant's kit, of a small tent for shelter for the men, and of a few days' rations, the whole amounting to a weight of some three to four hundred pounds. Under this light burden the elephants tramped gaily



The Life of an Elephant

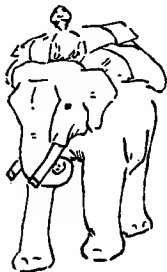
along the road, their soft feet making little noise, but raising a cloud of dust which passed away with the breeze. Where the



path led through cultivated fields the travellers stretched out greedy trunks to seize mouthfuls of young wheat or cane-sugar, until ordered to desist from robbery. When villages were reached and the little naked children rushed out with cries of joy, the elephants went

warily; when the dogs barked, they curled up their trunks in alarm, as if they knew that in this country the chance of hydrophobia following on a bite was no imaginary danger. They regained the open country, carrying the spoils they had looted; some waving a bush whose yellow flowers had given promise of a heavy crop

of lentils, another with a trunkful of grain snatched from the threshing floor; and Maula Bux, perhaps most successful





'FIRES WERE AGAIN LIT TO COOK THE MORNING MEAL'

of all, with a bundle of straw packed beneath each tusk, and a third held in his trunk for gradual consumption on the way.

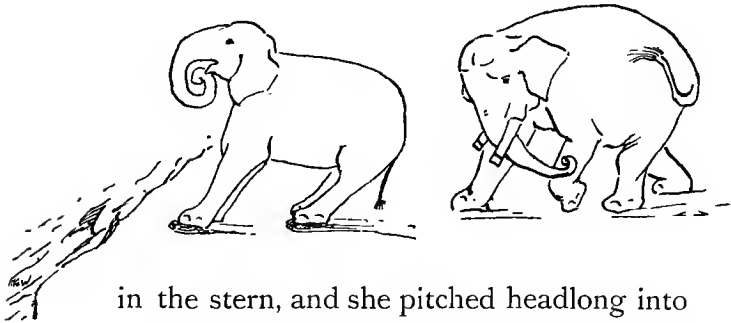
As the winter afternoon drew on, there was the arrival in camp, where, under the shelter of the evergreen mango trees, loads were taken off, elephants tethered, fires lighted to cook the evening rations, while some elephants were despatched to bring in leaf fodder from fig trees, or long grass from the banks of stream or lake for the night's feed. Then, under the stars throughout the long night, men slept while the elephants fed and rested, lying down for two or three hours at the most in the early morning hours. When dawn came to light up the misty landscape, fires were again lit to cook the morning meal, the elephants were ridden to drink and bathe at the nearest water, their loads were readjusted and the easy march began once more.



It ended one day on the banks of a broad river, where a strong stream flowed some hundred of yards in width through a broad expanse of sand which marked the limit of the summer floods. Here the baggage was loaded into boats which crossed amid the shouting of the oarsmen, while the elephants first waded and then swam to the opposite shore. To some of these animals the occasion was one of joyful play. Their naked drivers stood erect, supporting themselves by a rope round the neck of the elephant. These reared high out of the water and wallowed back into the depths, disappearing from view like gigantic porpoises; then returning to the surface, blowing out the air from curved trunks, screaming to each other in gaiety of heart, neglectful of the cries and abuse of the mahouts.

Others there were who feared to enter the current, standing with feet firmly set to the sand, refusing to move in spite of entreaties and chastisement. To such mutineers stronger persuasion was necessary; their drivers dismounted and stood by them, and then it was

that the wisdom of shortening Maula Bux's tusks became apparent. He was told to advance upon the stubborn elephants, and, when within three or four paces, to charge. His lowered forehead caught the first waverer full



in the stern, and she pitched headlong into the water, whence return was barred by threatening tusks. The choice now lay between being butted into deep water or entering it voluntarily, and the haste with which a decision was taken as the big tusker approached the next victim was almost ludicrous.

Last of all, Maula Bux himself entered the stream. There was some eight feet of strong swirling water around him ere he lost his foothold, then, with powerful strokes he made his way across, standing in the shallows, curling

his trunk at the right angle to help his driver to the ground, throwing water over his body till thoroughly cleansed, then again making a pathway for the mahout with curved trunk, and giving the final toss calculated with the utmost nicety to bring him well into his seat.

CHAPTER VIII

In Training for Sport

CONTENTMENT in captivity was now the portion of the elephant Maula Bux, for by this time the uniform kindness he experienced had deadened the longing for a wild life, and where there was no toil, there also the desire for liberty did not oppress him. Throughout the day he roamed through the forest, grazing as he went ; at times stopping to pluck some succulent grass or reed, at others breaking off the foliage of such trees as he desired ; gathering here a trunkful of bamboo, and there some fruit fallen in its ripeness. He was scarcely conscious that the mahout sat sleepily on his back, save when, forgetting, he threw dust over his body to keep off the flies, or proposed to pass under some bough, hardly high enough for the comfort of his rider. On

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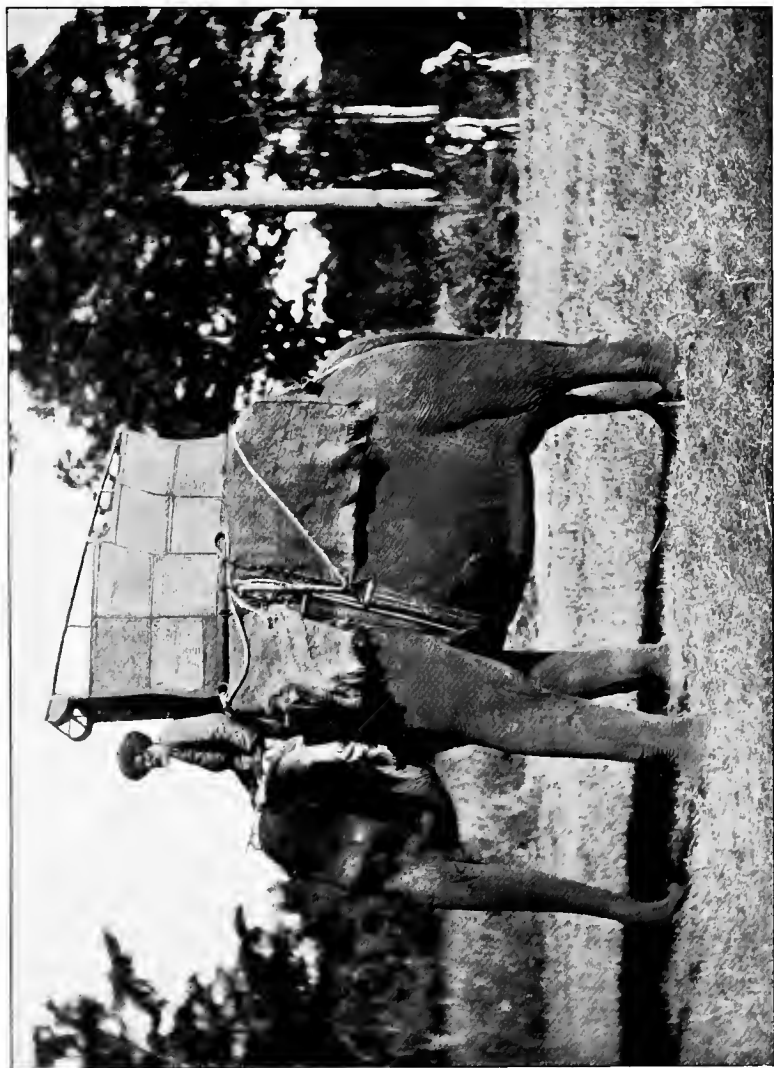
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to be abundant, and when man, the hunter, was better able to come to terms with the forest tribes. The elephants were caparisoned for a shooting party in simple and workmanlike harness, and thus stood, some twenty strong, before the rows of white tents, awaiting the pleasure of the hunters. These came eager and interested in their mounts; asking innumerable questions as to the steadiness of each elephant, and its staunchness in danger. The drivers replied, each praising his own particular charge, save only Kareem, who was content to remark that Maula Bux had not taken part in the hunt before that day.

At the foot of a perpendicular bank, scored here and there with narrow ravines cut by the



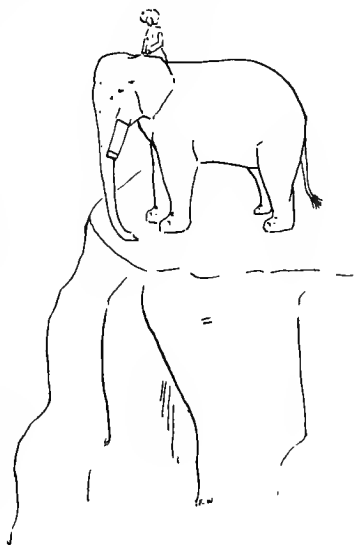
monsoon storms, was a strip of glass so high that its flowering tops reached above the tallest elephant. It merged into the forest of "shisham"



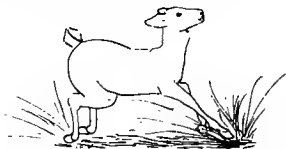
“THE ELEPHANTS WERE CAPARISONED FOR A SHOOTING PARTY.”

saplings that stretched away to where the river ran swiftly between smooth boulders, and at one end of this patch of jungle, which lay unburnt and green across the blackened plain, stood a line of elephants waiting the word of command to sweep through the cover and drive out every living thing. Maula Bux was not in this line of attack; until he had been proved, it was not expedient that he should be in a position to disorganize the beat either by a show of cowardice or by a frenzy of rage. He had been sent by a circuitous route to the top of the cliff to guard the exits from the grass-land to the hills above, and stood, a few feet from the edge of the precipice, looking down on the dense cover below.

The line of elephants advanced, and as they came the jungle tribes retreated before them;

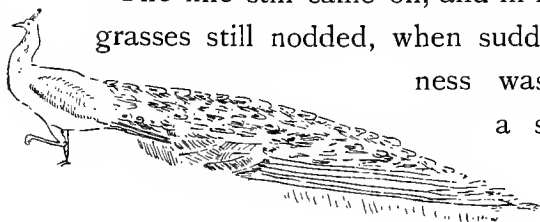


the deer rushed out to one side, clattering over the stones and splashing through the water; the pigs dashed blindly forward or broke through the line, causing the more timid elephants



to scream with fear; the black-partridges towered above the trees and soared away with outspread wings; and the peafowl, running to the edge of the forest, sped away uttering frightened cries. The only sign of life remaining in front of the inexorable line of elephants was that some yards ahead the tops of the highest stalks of grass quivered as if slightly touched from below. The more experienced elephants raised their trunks, not to point in that direction, but to assure themselves by scent what this movement was; the more experienced of the hunters laid hand on rifle and kept it ready for use.

The line still came on, and in front of it the grasses still nodded, when suddenly the stillness was broken by a shot and an answering



roar from the hunted tiger. Unscathed, he bounded away in the direction of a narrow watercourse which seamed the face of the precipice, and the next instant Maula Bux was confronted by an angry tiger which appeared to have arisen from the ground at his feet. To the elephant, accustomed in wild life to due deference even from tigers, this was a startling occurrence; but the thought of flight did not pass through his brain. Instantaneously, almost mechanically, he had swung out his fore-foot and felt the resistance of a heavy body. The tiger fell backwards, and half slipping, half leaping, reached the foot of the precipice and disappeared in the heavy grass. From above it was easy to follow the subsequent events. Escape was impossible from the semicircle of elephants and from the hail of rifle bullets, and the tiger, fighting to the last, was soon overpowered.



From that day the elephant Maula Bux was

classed as a staunch shooting elephant, and was almost expected to do the impossible as well as the possible. He found it natural to defend himself, and even to act on the offensive if he were in danger from man or beast; in such cases his courage and quick temper lent a zest to combat. But it was a different matter when in cold blood to advance upon a concealed tiger, savage with his wounds and awaiting only a favourable opportunity to tear and destroy. On these occasions he did advance, but it was only by order of his mahout or rider, to whom, through affection, he had given obedience; and often he obeyed in spite of the refusal and even ignominious flight of others of his tribe, whose courage was not so high or training so efficacious, thereby proving that even the tendency, so marked in most animals, to follow a lead, had been overcome in his case. But what appeared to be most difficult to this elephant was, that he was permitted no participation in the combat that so frequently followed. He could have understood if, when the tiger charged, he too might charge and slay his

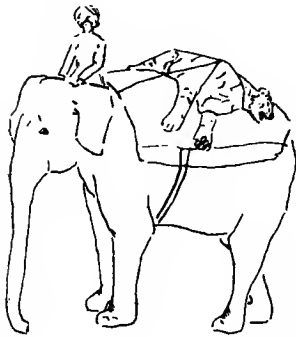
opponent with tusk, or crush him underfoot ; but to stand without movement, trusting to his rider to stop the onslaught, was almost too much for his endurance. Indeed, on one occasion he had met his adversary with tusks held horizontally, and before the tiger could get his hold, had hurled him to the ground and stamped him to a pulp, only to be scolded, even chastised for following his own instincts and not reposing perfect confidence in his master. The elephant had witnessed some accidents happen in the early period of his hunting life ; he had seen a tiger, seemingly fixed to the head of a defenceless elephant, pulling it to earth or clinging to its hind-quarters, biting and scratching through some supreme seconds of satisfying vengeance. He was on such occasions always eager to rush into the fray, to force his blunted tusks through the attacker until his grip relaxed : but here also he was prevented from interfering, and by degrees became so obedient that even in moments of the greatest urgency he would await the word of command.

Thus he gradually attained to the highest pitch

The Life of an Elephant

of training, when he would stand absolutely still in the midst of confusion and uproar, advance or retreat without hesitation, in short, sacrifice his identity to his master, and become but a dirigible tower which could follow the jungle tribes into their fastnesses and attack them in places where man would be helpless before them.

From one indignity his size and value preserved him. He was not made to carry home the spoils of the chase ; the intense repugnance



of wild herbivorous animals to blood and death is most marked in the elephant, and it is a sore trial to them to be laden with the carcasses of the slain, to have their hides crimson with

blood, to be followed by swarms of eager insects. And even when washed clean from the taint, the harness yet remains unpurified, and forever to these sensitive nostrils is

obnoxious. The smaller and less valuable of the stud were therefore used for this purpose, although the nervous and timid ones were not suitable. Such animals would at times be roused to frenzy by their own imagination; they would use every endeavour to get rid of their burdens, and the disgusted sportsmen had to look on helpless, while a prized trophy was being dragged through the forest, or a foolish elephant, entangled in the ropes, would be executing a frantic dance on the most cherished spoils of the chase.

Fear and anger are the predominating passions of the forest tribes. Probably in most cases the former is the most engrossing, but its force may be overcome by pain, hunger, parental affection and similar feelings, and then rage takes command, and what is known as courage comes into play. In fact, therefore, the varying degrees of courage in wild animals, but marks the limit where rage becomes superior to fear. As with animals such as the hyena, no pain, hunger or affection would compass this end, we call the animal cowardly; so with the tiger and

elephant, the transition is easily reached, and we call them courageous. Though there is among wild animals little of the calm, calculating courage we know as bravery in man, and though, when it occurs, it is most generally among the gentlest and most harmless of the forest tribes, yet that such bravery can be taught is evident. When a dog, a horse or an elephant can be induced to face danger at the word of command without the impetus of anger, it is surely proof of training of the very highest order.

CHAPTER IX

The Kheddah

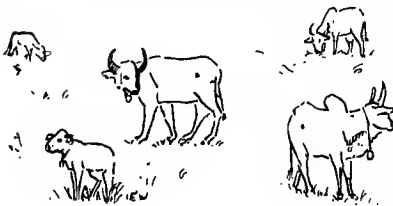
THE broad valley lay silent in the dawn of a February morning. On every side the forest-clad hills encircled the landscape, brilliant with the tender green of the young foliage, accentuated here and there by masses of white blossom where some tree, more eager than its fellows, had prematurely responded to the call of spring. The scattered clumps of bamboo had lost the vivid colouring of the winter months, and their leaves showed a yellow tinge which told of the approaching heat. Through the valley a river flowed



noisily over the rounded pebbles ; its murmur rose and fell in obedience to some air-current hardly perceptible ; it was rather as if waves of sound followed one on another with rhythmic precision. The wide water-course of bleached stones and sand, which would be covered in the monsoon with a turbid torrent, now lay peaceful and solitary ; it was bounded by dense thickets of young trees, which gave place to grassy plains stretching up to the foot of the hills. From clefts in these flowed other minor streams with rippling waters eager to join the main river. On the grassy plains a few cattle and buffaloes wandered ; their deep-toned bells clanging as they moved.

As daylight appeared over the hills, and the sun's rays struck in slanting lines on one side of the valley, the other seemed to grow more dark and indefinite. Some peafowl planed with

extended wings from their lofty roosting places to warm themselves by the river's brink ; the grazing



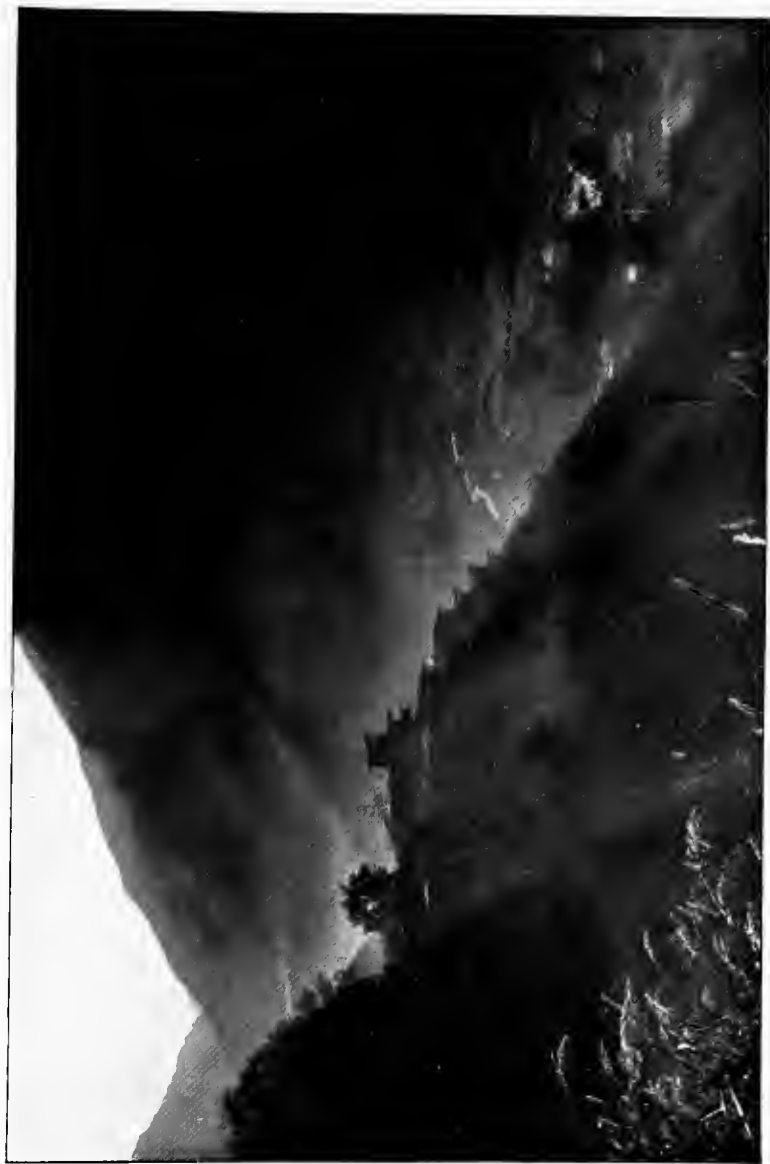
deer drew off towards the shelter of the forest ; the vultures spread their wings to the daylight, but with no intention of quitting their perches to seek the cooler air of the higher altitudes till the sun was hot ; and lastly, man awoke and set about the business of the day.

It was some hours later when all was ready for the hunt, for here the purpose was not to drive a herd of wild elephants into a stockade, but to run them down in the open forest, to lasso them, and bring them captive to the camp. It was a more sporting proceeding, where the fate of the individual would be decided by the speed, endurance, cleverness and courage both of pursuer and pursued. When at last the hunters moved in single file from the deserted camp there were some forty elephants prepared for the task before them. On each were mounted two men ; the one sitting on the neck of his elephant, armed with heavy iron hook to urge and direct during the pursuit ; the other squatting over the crupper ropes, holding in his hand a short wooden club faced with iron spikes which acted as a spur in time of need. Between

The Life of an Elephant

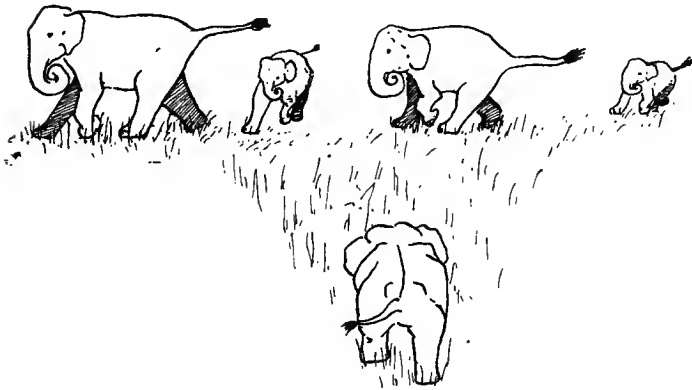
these two men was neatly coiled a stout rope, of which the free end terminated in a slip-knot and the other was firmly secured to the elephant's girths. The party crossed the river and disappeared in a deep cleft between the hills; following a foot-track they undulated, still in single file, towards a fixed goal; sometimes descending into steep ravines and laboriously climbing the further bank, at others proceeding cautiously along narrow ridges, where foothold for such ponderous animals as elephants seemed most precarious; now passing through level tracts of dense tree forest, and again following the winding course of some mountain rivulet, till at last they halted at the invitation of a man who had evidently been awaiting their approach.

There was a whispered consultation, and the march was resumed, until the hunters entered a narrow valley in the hills, and here in safe places were deposited those who came to see without risk, and those who were content with the excitement of witnessing the courage and dexterity of the hunters. Along the slopes of the valley a herd of wild elephants were moving



“AS DAYLIGHT APPEARED OVER THE HILLS AND THE SUN’S RAYS STRUCK IN SLANTING LINES.”

uneasily to and fro. The silent approach of others of their kind was viewed without much alarm, save that the scent of human beings was repugnant to their sensitive nostrils. But as they wandered in indecision towards the further end of the valley, the air seemed suddenly to be



filled with the shouts of men, with the rushing of many elephants, and with the trampling of grass and the breaking of saplings. A panic seized the herd, and it fled in confusion with uplifted tails and curling trunks; and the next moment the strangers were amongst them, each of the forty mahouts singling out a victim and devoting entire attention to its capture. Those

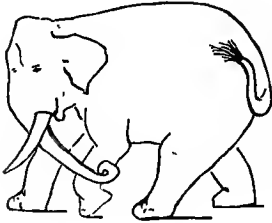
pursued ran for their lives, overcoming obstacles which ordinarily would have been deemed insurmountable, hurling themselves down the steepest slopes, but always refusing to ascend towards the higher hills, so that the direction of flight was towards the main river and to the standing camp. As each wild elephant was run to a standstill, the men attempted to pass the running noose over its neck, but only after many failures could this be accomplished; always there was a ready trunk to divert the impending danger, or to throw off the rope when it had reached its mark. Often, after a duel of this kind, the hunted one recovered its wind and the wild chase recommenced, hampered this time by a trailing length of rope, which had to be re-coiled while rushing through the jungle. At last, however, the fatal noose would be jerked tight, and then the captive would strain against it, dragging his captor through the forest till suffocated by his own exertions, and thus again brought to a standstill.

Then commenced the hurried task of loosening the slip-knot so that strangulation should

not follow, and of securing it with a strand of hemp, so that the same danger should not again occur; and when this was completed, there remained nothing but to shout for help, for amongst the densely grown trees it would be impossible, without entanglement, which would mean breakage of the rope, to lead the captive into the open. In the first hour or so some twenty of the wild elephants had been noosed, and those mahouts who had been unsuccessful in the chase, were now ordered to give assistance to their more fortunate companions. It was comparatively easy to fit a second rope, and to lead away the wild elephant, which was kept in position between the two tame ones, by the ropes strained to front and rear by these latter. Thus, after some delay the vanquished and conquerors were all assembled in the little valley to be inspected, and then marshalled on the road to prison.

It was at this moment that a diversion was created by the appearance of the herd-bull. This animal, as usual, at some little distance from the herd, had become excited by the

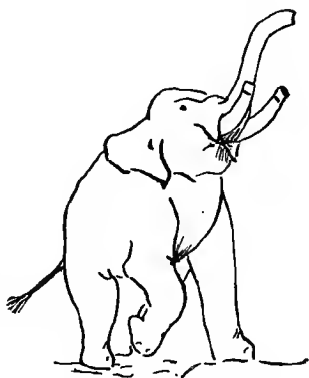
noise of the hunt, by the cries of men and elephants, by the blind rush or flight of his companions. He arrived in no mild humour, at a quick walk, his trunk swinging from side



to side, and with fury in his eyes, taking his stand some fifty yards distant from the helpless mob of men and elephants. There was at once a cry for

Maula Bux to drive away the intruder, and our elephant, whose bulk unfitted him for the chase, now stepped slowly into the arena, seeming with a glance to take in the position, and with one wave of his trunk to learn what manner of animal this was who proposed to withstand him. He turned, under the pressure of his mahout's knees, towards the foe, who also advanced to the combat; at a word from Kareem, Maula Bux quickened his pace to a charge, and the two elephants met with a shock that forced each backwards. But not for long. The superior weight of the tame

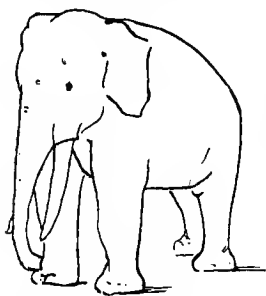
elephant soon became evident, and the wild tusker turned to flee. With a scream of rage Maula Bux pursued and butted the flying foe with his blunted tusks. Had these been of full length and sharp, they would certainly have sunk deep into the hind-quarters of the adversary, but as it was, the defeated elephant pitched forward on to trunk and knees, then recovered himself and fled into the shelter of the forest. Maula Bux was prevented by his mahout from following up his victory; he stood to receive the compliments and endearments of his driver, and after giving a scream of triumph with uplifted trunk, resumed his position on one side of the troop of elephants.



These now started for camp in single file, a captive between every two tame elephants; they seemed dejected at their fate, and made but little effort to escape. From time to time

an elephant would try to break away, but was held by the tightening ropes ; or another would throw itself on the ground, blocking the way and causing a halt along the line. But these delays were not serious ; the elephants continued their journey followed by the young calves whose mothers had been captured and, not long after sundown, were all secured in the camp.

It was rather a pitiable scene that was disclosed as the silence of a moonlight night fell on the weary camp. The prisoners struggling at their fetters, often with blood streaming from



the wounds where the ropes bit into the flesh ; the young calves wandering around seeking for protection and for nourishment which was denied them ; and in the outskirts of the camp where

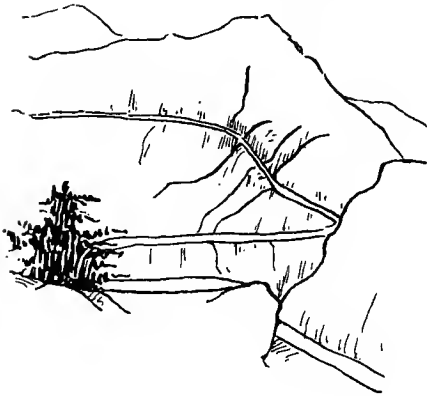
the shadows were densest, the restless form of the herd-bull who had followed the trail of his captured harem, yet, having arrived, knew not how to assist them, nor to what use

to put his strength and courage. As the day dawned he turned away, and, slowly crossing the river, disappeared in the depths of the forest, doubtless with a view to overtake and bring together the remnants of the scattered herd.



But even this solace was denied him; his attempt to rescue the herd on the previous day, his presence during the night in the vicinity of the camp had resulted in his classification as an animal dangerous to human life, or at least to human interests. The order came with the break

of day that he was to be followed and destroyed. His tracks were easy to distinguish, and



soon a khaki-clad figure accompanied by two Indians was on the trail; this followed the beaten path left by forty elephants bringing in the twenty captives of yesterday; it overlay the broad

footmarks of the herd-bull as he too had brought up the rear of that sad procession. Then entering the scene of the conflict it had passed towards the higher hills and ultimately joined a fresher track where the remainder of the herd had met and hurried away in single file to some haven of fancied security.

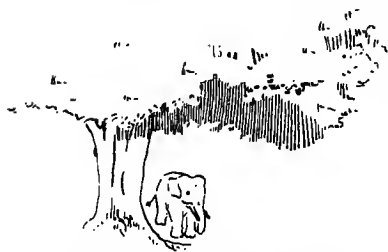
The huntsmen followed on the trail now some hours old. They hoped that during the heat of the day the frightened animals might rest; but such was not the case. Unhampered by young calves and with a known goal before

them, they pressed on in the vain hope of escaping from the tyranny of man. And so it was that when darkness fell and the trail became invisible, the three men halted to pass the night in the forest. They had but a rough blanket apiece to protect them from dew and frost, a few unleavened cakes and a little parched pulse to satisfy their hunger, and soon they lay by the camp fire to await the dawn of another day. There were few sounds in the forest save the ceaseless drip from the trees, and occasionally the rustling of passing breezes. From time to time nightjars passed, sounding monotonous notes as of sonorous blows upon firm ice, or little owlets sat on the branches above uttering curious cries reminiscent of water slowly dropping from a height. The hours passed slowly. From time to time one of the men rose and replenished the fire and drew a few whiffs of smoke from the gurgling hookah. But at last there were signs of returning day. The eastern sky was lit



with a white light which turned to yellow, then to orange and crimson, and the sun peered above the horizon as if curious to see what had happened in his absence. The men took up the trail in silence ; they were cold and hungry.

Towards midday they arrived on the edge of a plain covered with grass which waved high above their heads.

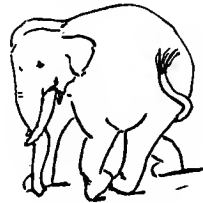


In the centre of this sea-stood an island raised slightly above the swampy soil, and on this island

beneath a low-crowned tree stood the object of their search. Evidently the herd were not far distant, the grass might well conceal many more elephants than those now left in freedom. The men sat down and considered the case. To approach the elephant through the grass without noise was a hopeless task, while from its depths to see, much less to shoot, was impossible. They determined to wait, hoping against hope that the bull would move from his post of vantage on to firmer ground, into

more open country. But as evening approached it became evident that the animal had no such intention; it also became certain that another night without food could not be spent in the forest, and so it was that after a heated discussion the khaki-clad hunter disappeared in the grass on the chance of being able to disable the bull while daylight lasted. On his tracks after a few minutes' hesitation one of the Indians also silently crept; the third man remained to signal information to his companions should opportunity arise.

There was for a long time silence over the scene; the passage of the hunters made no stir in the tall grasses. Then suddenly the elephant swung round and stood with uplifted trunk facing some hidden danger. It was a moment of anxious fear for the solitary watchman, till from the top of the grasses a puff of white smoke burst forth and a muffled report reached his ears. The elephant seemed to stagger, and turning, plunged into the grass and disappeared; a ripple



seemed to mark his course till he emerged on the further side of the swamp and entered the forest at a swinging trot. The watcher rejoined his companions, and together they inspected the ground; then, as the sun was sinking, they struck off in another direction



and reached a village where much needed food and warmth were found.

The elephant soon subsided into a rapid walk, which became slower as weakness followed the loss of blood; he seemed astonished at what had befallen him and frightened at his growing weakness. No rage was in his heart as he pursued his weary way, leaving a trail which required no care or cunning to follow.

Till at last he felt that he could do no more and stood leaning against the trunk of a huge tree on the banks of a rivulet which flowed gently through the forest. He had stood thus for hours, till around him was gathered a dark pool of blood, when suddenly his sensitive trunk brought him news of the presence of man. And now at last his heart was filled with fury. He waited till from his post of vantage he could locate his pursuers with accuracy, then with a scream of fury he charged down upon them. In those wild moments he hardly knew what happened. In his headlong rush he caught and trampled on at least one of his enemies. There were shots fired, and somehow he found himself dizzy and feeble, trying to support himself by the aid of his massive trunk. But without avail; he tottered and fell with a crash, while those of his pursuers who were still alive were bemoaning the fate of their comrade and their own injuries, and at the same time congratulating themselves on having escaped with their lives from the onslaught of a beast which had become dangerous only when hunted to its death.

CHAPTER X

Hunting Scenes

THOROUGHLY tested in the field in the company of his kind the elephant, Maula Bux, was now to be used in a more trying yet more interesting form of sport. Relieved of the heavy howdah which swayed at each stride and seriously incommoded him, the elephant had now to carry nothing but a light frame-work on which his master sat immediately behind the driver. Thus caparisoned he could pass readily through the densest jungle, nor did the overhanging boughs present so constant an impediment to him. The animal loved these silent roamings through the forest, when no word was spoken lest the jungle tribes might become aware of the presence of man: when he was guided by pressure of knee or touch of hand; when he could as he passed graze on the

various delicacies that the forest provided and so obtain that constant change of diet so essential to his health.

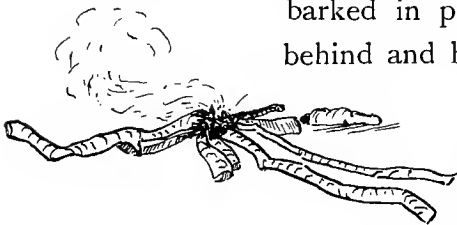
He too was able to participate in the sport that his master sought. The keenness of his sense of scent would often detect some animal invisible owing to the denseness of the forest growth, and, especially when some animal obnoxious to him, such as pig, bear, panther or tiger was in the vicinity, his sensitive trunk would be waved in its direction merely in order to assure himself of its whereabouts, but thus, all unwittingly, giving notice to his companions. The sportsman who proposes to make acquaintance with the jungle tribes and neglects the two important advantages of silence and of gaining information by watching the elephant he rides, a being much more gifted than himself in forest lore, will have but little success in his attempts. The human voice is audible at great distances amongst the silent trees, and at its sound every animal, aware of the presence of man, either removes to a distance or crouches in concealment till the danger is past. Then,

too, in a country where wild elephants abound the passage of an elephant grazing as he goes creates no alarm: the scent of human beings seated high above the ground is carried upward and forward by the breezes, so that good opportunity is given to study the forest tribes while at their ease. To do this to perfection the early morning hours or those before nightfall, sometimes even the bright moonlit nights of India, are most suitable, and for success in a pursuit so interesting to the naturalist as well as to the sportsmen, the elephant is a most useful coadjutor.

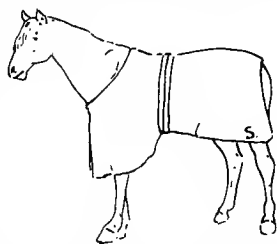
Long before the sun rose one morning, when the stars were twinkling through the frosty dew and the sky seemed of inky blackness Maula Bux strode, with his companions, away from the little encampment where shrouded forms still lay around the camp fires.

A dog had barked in protest at being left behind and his appeal had been

heard; he was now sitting, shivering with happiness,



beside his master. A horse whinnied, and the watchful grooms stirred to find the cause of the disturbance; then the darkness of the night shut out all further movement. The ele-



phant, on whom this darkness had little effect, though he used his trunk constantly as a blind man will use his stick on an unknown road, moved steadily away towards the hills, the intention being to intercept the forest tribes as they moved, heavy with food, to their resting places for the day. From time to time their presence could be heard, but nothing could be seen by human eyes. There would be the belling of the sambhar, or the sharp alarm of the swamp deer, followed by a rustling through the grass: or from the distance would come the grunting of some tiger disappointed in the chase, or the trumpeting of a herd of elephants.

When daylight broke Maula Bux had reached the foot of a range of hills which barred the view to the north, while to the south extended

the level grasslands from whence arose here and there little clouds of white mist denoting the presence of stagnant water. He climbed to the top of a small eminence and in the distance his riders saw a sight which compensated them for the chilly ride in the silent darkness, and even for such further exertions as might fall to their lot during the day. A herd of bison were scattered over the plain below moving in full security towards some plateau in the hills where they proposed to pass the day. In the dim morning light they gave the impression of a herd of enormous black cattle grazing its way homeward. The calves ran by their mothers' sides or gambolled aimlessly in their neighbourhood; the cows moved stolidly along browsing on some tender branch as they passed, or pulling mouthfuls of the wet grass. And last of all came two bulls whose massive forms seemed to dwarf the other members of the herd.

And now the sun shot suddenly into the horizon, and the scene changed. Blacks and greys disappeared from the landscape and vivid colours took their place, in the greens of grass

and foliage, in the orange and reds of the flowering trees. The herd of bison was also transformed; they passed a few yards below the hunters in all their pride of graceful strength. The bulls were of a deep chocolate colour, turning to black in the shadows; the head was held high, as if the weight of the curved horns, green and polished like clouded jade, was hardly felt; the light-blue eyes gazed serenely and confidently around, and the golden yellow of the slender lower limbs contributed to the effect of agility in spite of the ponderous bulk of an animal some eighteen hands in height. The herd passed slowly by without suspicion or alarm, imprinting on the minds of the hunters an indelible picture seldom seen save by those who pass their lives in the forest; and, as they grazed, a slant of the fickle morning breeze brought to the herd the taint of man. They swung round facing the path in which they had come, inhaling the air with suspicion, and then the signal for flight came in a sharp whistle from one of the cows. The herd turned and fled, galloping over the broken ground with the

agility of startled deer, earth and gravel flying as they passed, so that in a few seconds only a cloud of dust remained as proof of their presence.

The party wandered on skirting the line of hills, entering from time to time some deep-cut ravine and crossing its steep watershed into the next. Often when slowly mounting to the summit of these little hills a sambhar or swamp-deer would be seen passing along the further ridge, where, later on, selecting some leafy tree, he would lie on its northern side so as to be in the shade during the heat of the day. Here chewing the cud reflectively, with ears constantly twitching to and fro, and with sensitive nostrils testing the air, he would rest till the evening shadows lengthened.

These animals passed unmolested, and it was not till the broad track of a buffalo-bull was found that the sportsmen seemed at last to be in earnest. They descended from the elephant and took up the trail, following it with ease on the softer ground, losing it frequently as the animal passed over stones and rocks, recovering it again after much search. The sun was

now getting hot, and it was certain that the buffalo must soon be overtaken ; the men went cautiously, when suddenly from behind a crashing in the jungle, the thudding of heavy feet was heard. The buffalo, with the cunning of his tribe, had returned upon his trail and then struck off at right angles to it before lying down for the day. He had heard the trackers and suffered them to pass, but the sight of the elephant, which was following some three hundred yards behind, was too much for him. He rose to his feet and bounded heavily away.

The buffalo, with head held horizontally, tore through the dense forest ; it seemed impossible that his vast bulk and wide-spread horns should find a way without colliding with some tree, or that his foothold on broken and stony ground should be so secure. The impression produced on the eye was that one saw the whole of the massive head and body at one time ; the fact was, that always at least one half was covered by the thick vegetation.

In his hasty flight from an imaginary danger the buffalo took no thought of the men who

had passed him. A shot rang out dully, muffled in the interlaced crown of the trees, but no sign was given by the frightened animal. The hunters followed, and some yards ahead found blood on the trail. They followed eagerly until the gallop of the hunted was reduced to a walk, and then they too acted with circumspection.

To a wounded animal comes after the first flurry a determination to reach some place of fancied security, and as long as self-control lasts the line of retreat will be straight towards a fixed point. Zig-zagging in the track denotes growing weakness and inability to persist in any given direction. But this trail led almost



straight through the forest, and disappeared at last in a sea of high grass, wherein man was of himself helpless. Here, then, the elephant was called

upon to assist, and slowly the party entered the stronghold of the wounded buffalo. Not

a sign of the great beast was visible. The sun shone brightly on the green grass, now unruffled by any breeze; no track could be discerned, for the vegetation had closed over the passage of the jungle tribes who below had formed little tunnels for their use. It was on the elephant that the hunters must depend for information as to the whereabouts of the hunted. And this was soon given. Maula Bux halted and waved his trunk above the grasses, then for one second it remained poised pointing to the source whence came the tainted air.

At the same moment there was a rush through the grass, and the ready rifle again was fired. The rush subsided to a walk, and behind the elephant the grass nodded and trembled as a way was forced through it by some invisible animal. Some twenty yards behind followed the hunters, till the end of the savannah land was reached, and then a heavy head armed with spreading horns protruded. The buffalo,



wounded to death, still retained the instinct to avoid the open ground. Almost reeling with weakness, he turned to regain the shelter of the grass, and fell with a last merciful shot through the brain. In the evening light the hunters returned slowly to camp. Ere they reached it, the jungle tribes were again alert on their way to grazing or to hunt. From the slopes on the hills and from its deep-cut ravines they stole quietly forth, testing the air at each footstep, listening for any suspicious sound, till satisfied of safety, they rushed with quick bounds from the edge of the forest, where lurking foes might lie in wait, to the open country, where keenness of sight came to the aid of scent and hearing.

CHAPTER XI

Some Dangers of the Forest

THE inborn instincts of an animal are difficult to eradicate, yet it is to be expected that constant association with man, his greatest enemy, would result in a considerable relaxation of the usual suspicion and caution which are shown in a wild state. And this is no doubt the case. Thus, for instance, when pitfalls are dug in localities frequented by elephants, it is probably the scent of human beings which often provides a safeguard to the intended victim, but this scent would convey no warning of danger to the domesticated animal. In the same way, wild elephants are rarely, if ever, entangled in quicksands, while the tame elephant, deferring instinct to obedience, is not infrequently engulfed.

In the course of many years' wandering in

the jungles, it was impossible but that mishaps should occur to the elephant, Maula Bux. When he crossed over wide stretches of burnt grasslands, the stout, charred spikes protruding six inches or more from the surface were especially dangerous to the soft, broad soles of his feet. At times one would penetrate deeply and break off in the wound, when the elephant would halt and endeavour to withdraw it with his trunk, or to get rid of it by violent rubbing on the ground. Frequently these attempts at relief were futile, and the mahout would descend and remove the splinter with his knife, cleansing and anointing the wound on arrival in camp. Or again, the ill-fitting harness would fret the withers or back of the animal, more especially if the skin were allowed to become dusty or dirty ; and the greatest care had then to be taken that deep-seated ulcers were not formed. Or, as the elephant became older, there would be trouble with his teeth, the new growth perhaps not being strong enough to push aside the old. For, in consequence of the unnatural life in confinement, slight injuries might produce vastly

different results to those which would follow when the animal was in a normal condition.

The recuperative powers of the forest tribes will appear amazing to those whose acquaintance is only with domestic animals, though these may be of allied species. In the same way, uncivilized man shows a fortitude, even an indifference to injuries which would incapacitate one born and bred in more artificial surroundings. Nature may indeed be cruel in order to prevent racial deterioration in her creatures; she may promptly destroy the unfit and diseased; but she aids in the recovery of those who through accident are thrown for a time on her mercy. Nature, in short, takes or saves life in a beneficent effort for the common welfare, while mankind assumes the same responsibility for the benefit of the individual.

The naturalist will not have many opportunities of watching the behaviour of animals when suffering from severe injuries unless these are inflicted intentionally by man or beast; for only in the latter cases does the hunter follow up his advantage at once and so prevent

that immediate concealment which is the first instinct of the wounded. The object of this concealment is no doubt to secure refuge from the attacks of flies, which if successful are certain to prevent rapid healing, and in many cases result in a lingering death. Another reason for hiding is found in the necessity of avoiding the presence of other forest tribes, who all resent rather than pity the distress of the lame and suffering, probably because such unfortunates become a source of danger to the community by attracting the attacks of the great or small carnivora. Finally, it is only in complete rest that bones can reunite and lacerated muscles heal, while the pain of the wound and the fever which follows destroy the appetite which is the sole incentive that drives animals to roam.

Instances have been observed of the disappearance of wounded tigers in spite of days devoted to skilful tracking; yet after the search had been abandoned the animal has been known, even seen, to leave some dense cover which had been specially watched, and at once to proceed on a lengthy march to some more retired and

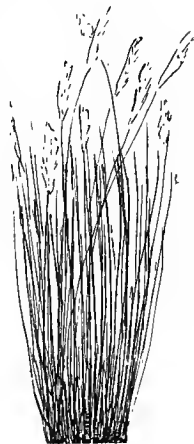
therefore safer locality. With elephants injuries have been under observation which were followed by a good recovery, though this would certainly have proved fatal in the case of domestic animals. And this fact is interesting, because an elephant is prevented from rest in concealment, first, because of his large bulk, and second, because he cannot go without food for long periods, as carnivorous animals can. On the other hand he can protect every part of his body against the attacks of flies by means of his trunk or tail, and so is in a particularly favourable position in this regard. Should one of these members be absent, however, he is no better off than his neighbours, as was proved by the fact that a noted and dangerous rogue elephant when killed was found to have lost his tail, probably when flying from a victorious opponent, and the attack of flies had resulted in a deep and wide cavity, which was probably the reason of his evil temper, and would certainly have ultimately resulted in his death.

A panther, whose tail had dropped off in consequence of a bullet wound, found means,

with the cunning of his tribe, to avoid the attacks of the winged torments of the forest. When examination became possible, some weeks after the infliction of this wound, the bullet was found flattened at the base of the spine, and externally there was no mark whatever to be observed on his denuded hind-quarters. In the same way, on more than one occasion deer have been observed who, disappearing with shattered hind-legs, have been shot weeks after in their old haunts in excellent condition, though a healed stump replaced what might have been considered to have been a limb almost necessary to their existence. From wounds of the internal organs an animal will rarely recover, but from those of trunk or limb which do not prevent it from taking a share in the life of the jungle, it will recover, provided it is allowed to follow its instincts of concealment, rest, and starvation.

A narrow rivulet flowed sluggishly from the hills between steep-cut banks of clay. Along its borders were scattered willow trees, and here and there it formed wide morasses

where flourished high grasses densely grown, forming impenetrable cover to those animals, such as the tiger and swamp deer, whose wide feet bore them safely over the ooze. To cross this rivulet at its narrowest part was the task set to Maula Bux by his driver, and, although in his wisdom the animal at first refused the passage, yet, urged once and again, his fore-feet slid reluctantly down the steep bank and he at once sank up to his shoulders in the quicksand. Immediately water seemed to pour from the soil and a miniature lake was formed around the struggling elephant, while efforts to withdraw his feet seemed to make matters worse. As he sank yet deeper into the liquid sand, his hind-feet were dragged from the bank, and now only his body was visible above the water. His companions quickly dismounted, but could give but little aid. For the elephant lay first on one side and withdrew two legs from the swamp, then rolled heavily over on the other



in a vain effort to free his limbs. He seemed for the first time in his life to be in an agony of apprehension: at one moment to lose all courage and lie quiescent, the next to be filled with a fury which led to speedy exhaustion. Meanwhile he sank deeper and deeper, till



only the top of his back and head were above water, while

his trunk waved frantically to and fro seeking for some hold, or for some object, living or inanimate, that might aid him in his struggle. While the elephant was in these extremities, Kareem, aware that he ran the danger of being seized and thrust under the body of the frightened animal, at the risk of his life slashed the girths of the harness and the heavy grass-stuffed saddle fell loose, and was immediately seized and disappeared, the waving trunk seeming to implore for further aid. Then in all haste, saplings, brushwood, anything that could be collected, were thrown to the elephant, and with such good effect that at last there seemed to be no further fear from

drowning. With his eyes below the surface of the water the trunk still continued to grope on all sides for something to grasp, till in a lucky movement it encountered the stem of a willow tree. Instantly the powerful member was coiled around it, and it was evident that if the tree held there was a chance of escape from the terrible position. The tree indeed bent and cracked, and the roots were strained to the utmost, but at last with a mighty effort Maula Bux hauled himself up the bank and stood, covered with mud, on the further side of the stream. Then glancing round with blood-shot eyes, he seemed to search for the enemy that had done him this wrong. The men stood silently watching, afraid to interfere. They passed unnoticed, but there were trees and grasses on which to vent his fury, and these he proceeded to overthrow and trample on, till around him was a wide space cleared of every living thing. This senseless rage wore itself out at last, and it was a fatigued elephant that later submitted to be led quietly away. Yet both he and the mahout had learnt their lesson ; the one in future would

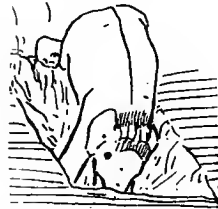
not obey when instinct told that there was danger, while the other would wisely refrain from enforcing an order which the elephant showed continued reluctance to carry out.

Of the method of capture of elephants by pitfalls much has been written, but perhaps the facts remain unaltered, that it is a method economical in initial outlay and expensive ultimately in the loss of animal life. A considerable proportion of elephants are permanently maimed or injured by the fall, while there is no possibility of selecting animals suitable for subsequent training. This system of hunting is perhaps the most ancient in existence, and is adapted to the capture of all the jungle tribes; to that of the hare, which steps on a cunningly contrived door which opens only downwards; of the deer or pig, which springs across an inviting gap in the hedge surrounding the wheat fields, to find itself impaled on a bamboo spike in the concealed pit beyond; to the tiger, bison, or elephant, which quietly passing along well-known paths is suddenly hurled into the dark depths prepared for them; but it is better

adapted to the taking of animal life, than to procuring living specimens for the subsequent service of man.

Moreover, when many pits are dug it may be impossible to visit each daily, and the entrapped animals may suffer the torments of suspense and of thirst for many hours; and ultimately, when the pits are no longer required and are carelessly left covered, they present a deadly danger to man and beast, in that in case of accident there is little chance that help will be forthcoming, and death by starvation is almost inevitable.

It was into one of these abandoned pits that our elephant fell when passing through the forest. The fabric of the solid earth giving way under foot, the short rush through space, the shock of sudden arrest amid showers of falling earth and stones were sensations which, though instantaneous; yet produced a feeling of indescribable horror. It was experienced both by the elephant and his

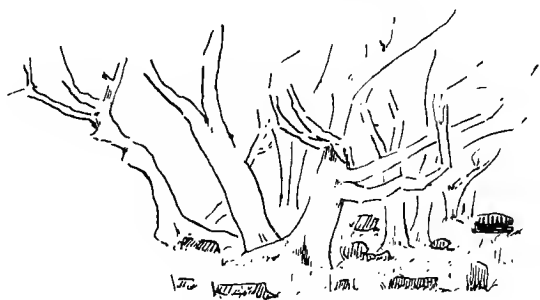


riders, one of whom was in the fall thrown violently forward, and found himself lying on the further edge of a chasm in which his companions had disappeared. And it was fortunate that this was so, and that by the aid of a rope hastily thrown he was able to rescue his fellow-man from the rage of the imprisoned elephant.

The animal stood firmly wedged in between the narrow walls of his prison, but already he had commenced to dig with tusks and fore feet in the endeavour to make a way to freedom. It was a task which might in hours or days have been accomplished without assistance had the earth been of a soft and yielding nature. But here the hard clay rendered the attempt almost hopeless. At length the elephant became calmer, and was willing to listen to the exhortations of his mahout, who sat on the edge of the pit and spoke soothingly to him, who offered him dainties of leaves and jungle fruit, nor left him till many men appeared on the scene with axes and shovels. Then from all sides, earth, brushwood, bundles of grass were

thrown into the pit to be trampled down by the willing elephant, till after long labour his head and shoulders appeared above the surface and with an effort he was once again on firm land.

Far different would have been the fate of any wild animal with none to help ; for, though there may have been no witness of their struggles, a record remains imprinted on the surroundings even when only a few bones are left to tell the



piteous tale. In the midst of a forest which had stood for centuries were once found the ruins of a populous town ; of the houses and temples only the foundations remained, level with or hidden by the leaf-mould of years. The area covered by these ruins, unsuspected by the passer-by, in itself indicated the existence of a

well-to-do people, and this surmise was confirmed by the discovery of two wells of large diameter not very far apart, which had evidently been filled in at a time when the inhabitants were put to the sword and their dwellings destroyed.

One of these wells it was proposed to open out for the supply of water to a new generation of workers in the forest that now flourished on what was once a more prosperous landscape. Some forty feet from the surface and yet twenty feet above water level lay the bones of a tiger blackened with age; the claws of both fore and hind-feet were worn to stumps, and, looking up towards the light, one could see the reason in the masonry torn from the walls of the shaft, and the deep indentations on every side of it. One could measure the height to which the animal had leapt in the first few hours before his strength fell from him, and the ever-increasing distance from freedom that marked his failing vitality: the lowest marks were scarce three feet from where the skeleton lay, and this long drawn-out death took perhaps fifteen or twenty days to complete. Below the remains of the

tiger other relics came to light, household utensils, such as ancient flour-mills ; carved tiles which once adorned wealthy houses ; bricks from demolished walls, and lastly, weapons of iron, spear-heads and swords, rusty and brittle, and some poor relics of the slain.

And when the work was completed and pure water once again flowed into the well from subterranean stores, the natives, perhaps descendants of the conquerors or of the vanquished, refused to drink lest they should be defiled by the deeds of their predecessors.

CHAPTER XII

Processional Duties

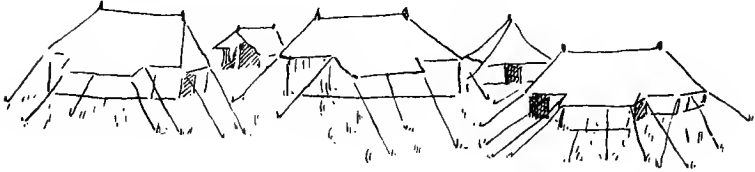
IT was amongst scenes similar to those depicted that the elephant Maula Bux spent many years of his life, till advancing age impaired his agility and increasing bulk interfered with his speed. He had grown in imposing beauty with good treatment and with the comparative freedom of a sporting life, and his value was now so great that they hesitated to expose him further to the chances of a forest life. He was sold to an Indian Prince to enhance the dignity of the State, to carry the ruler in procession, to be lent to those guests whom his owner wished to honour by affording sport with absolute safety amongst the more dangerous of the jungle tribes.

His driver, of course, accompanied him into this change of life ; for probably without his old friend, the elephant would have become useless

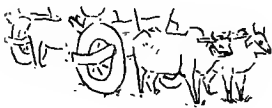
for his work. He would first have fretted at the absence of his companion, and then have vented his annoyance on his successor. A record of many years' successful care of Maula Bux went with Kareem; the presence of the mahout was equivalent to the sale of goodwill with the business. But neither man nor beast appreciated the change. To stand day by day under the shelter of a roof, on a cemented floor, to be fed monotonously with fodder, stale or even contaminated on its way to the stables; to be stuffed with artificial food prepared by man; and for all exercise, to walk sedately along the level roads was not to the tastes of the beast; while the man regretted, as all sportsmen would, the wild jungle, the rugged hills, the hardships of the summer heats, and perhaps most of all, the silent and mysterious nights. In enforced retirement, the thoughts of both often went back to the forests and recalled events, each with



some background, whose beauty had, all unknown to themselves at the time, permanently impressed itself on their memories.



At rare intervals both man and elephant were given the chance of revisiting the scenes they loved so well. There would be bustle and hurry at headquarters in preparation for the visit of some potentate. Harness and howdahs were being burnished ; tents standing in rows of snowy whiteness were being repaired ; strings of bullock carts were tailing along the road with stores of furniture and provisions. In the forest for leagues around, pit-falls were being dug to entrap the tigers and panthers, so that the local supply within reach of a central camp might not fall short ; for it is in the nature of



things that those animals which require a large supply of living food must

also enjoy a large area in which they may satisfy their hunger without exhausting the existing head of game. At last the day would arrive when the shoot was to commence. Maula Bux on such occasions was, indeed, but one of some two hundred elephants, but, bearing as he did, the principal guest, he was the centre of attraction. His work was easy. When the tiger or other animal had been located, when it had been surrounded so that there was little chance of flight, it was then his duty to stride into the arena, to find the quarry, to stand as firm as a tower when the shot was fired, and to remain so, in spite of attack until the affair was over. There was nothing to disturb his equanimity; his rider was probably trained to the use of gun and rifle from infancy and never made a mistake; and, even if this were not the case, there were ready rifles in his vicinity to complete the work which on occasion may have been unskilfully commenced.

To the elephant such trips were joyful occurrences, for he was once more in the wilds with all their fascination of running water and

growing vegetation, living under the open sky with all the sounds of an exuberant nature around him. For Kareem, the mahout, the change was also welcome, for besides observing and criticising the woodcraft of others, he was in a responsible position in driving princes to their pastime, while he returned rich in presents to resume once more a monotonous life.

On the occasion of State processions there was little pleasure or profit to be won. In fact,



the mahout secretly resented the order to deck his charge in heavy embroidered cloths which almost swept the ground on either side; to secure in its place the heavy gilded howdah, to seat himself on cloth-of-gold so that little was visible of his elephant save a forehead fantastically painted in brilliant colours, and a pair of golden tusks. Still more, he objected to be accompanied on either side by spearmen,

as if his elephant ever required more restraint than he could bring to bear. And so it was that on such occasions, the distasteful work over, he would hurriedly remove the trappings of State, and they two would resort to some quiet pool in the river, and most thoroughly remove, not only the dust of the road, but also every sign of the adornment prescribed. During such operation, Kareem would converse with his "brother" freely, expressing his opinion on the folly of such shows, and comparing the present with the old days in the forest, when they were one in pleasure and in danger; and moreover, enjoyed plentiful rations, for the man good venison, and for the elephant, all that the forest could yield of succulent fodder.

In every elephant's life comes a time when he is possessed of an evil spirit, when the world seems black before him, when good nature is replaced by a petulant and savage disposition. In the wild state this indisposition rapidly passes away: the animal feeds on astringent herbs and roots, or eats earth in large quantities

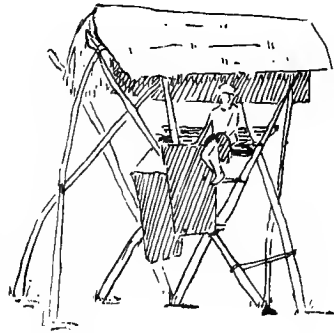
to scour himself out; he expends his superfluous energies in destroying trees and uprooting bamboos, and soon regains his evenness of temper. In confinement none of these remedies are available, and he often goes from bad to worse, ultimately to be butchered with volleys of bullets, when one well-directed shot would have ended his career.

Kareem, the mahout, in daily intercourse with his charge, noticed an unevenness of temper, a loss of appetite, a repugnance for the three hours' sleep which the healthy elephant permits to himself; and lastly, the discharge from the temporal gland which is a certain, though not constant, sign of this distemper. He strengthened the shackles of his charge and gave him cooling medicines; but even he had never seen the strength of Maula Bux exerted to the full. In the early morning hours, when all slept, the devil entered into the body of Maula Bux, who with one mighty wrench burst the chains that held his hind-legs in tether, and then placing his hind-foot on the shackles between his fore-legs tore them asunder as if made of whipcord



"A MAN, SEATED HIGH ON A PLATFORM, WAS WATCHING NOCTURNAL ROBBERS."

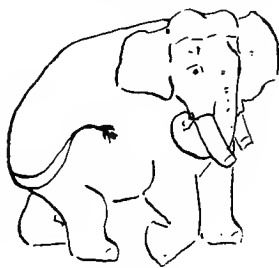
instead of iron. Then, once more free, he strode away in the direction of the forest, leaving behind him a trail of destruction. It was well that the world was asleep and that not many human beings crossed his path, for long familiarity had resulted in contempt of man, and he would gladly have satisfied his unreasoning rage in slaughter. Once indeed when crashing through the fields and trampling the ripening crops, he was annoyed by the cries of a man who, seated high on a platform, was watching for nocturnal robbers. In an instant Maula Bux had demolished the platform and trampled its occupant in the dust; and then, yet further excited by wanton bloodshed, he had raged onwards till he reached the forest. Here he gave vent to his passions by butting the trees and breaking off saplings, until his forehead was covered with blood and he stood in sullen exhaustion.



It was not long before he was missed by Kareem and the alarm was raised; an alarm which grew as the broad trail was followed and the extent of the mischief done proved the violent temper of the runaway. The men followed mounted on many female elephants and bearing ropes and shackles to lead away their captive. But it was not till nightfall that they found him, and it was then too late to make any attempt on his liberty. With break of day they were again on the trail, and discovered Maula Bux standing in the vantage ground of a small lake in the heart of the forest. They surrounded the lake, but were disappointed that the tusker would not fly from them, but stood awaiting their pleasure. They, losing courage, waited around discussing the safest method of approach. But a safe way was hard to find. As the female elephants approached within striking distance Maula Bux charged down upon them with a shrill scream of rage. Those that he encountered were violently thrown to the ground, the others scattered and fled, and the victor watched with sullen eye the removal

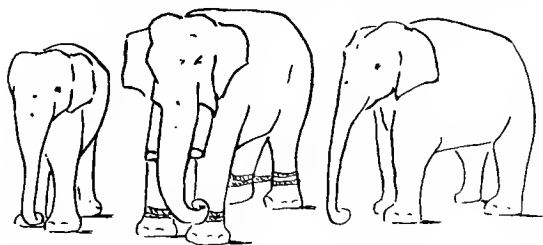
of the wounded nor made any attempt to follow the flying foe.

The word went forth that the elephant must be shot, and, while some returned to headquarters to obtain the necessary permission, the others kept the fugitive in view as he listlessly roamed through the forest. It was then that Kareem, with bitter grief in his heart, came to the conclusion that life without his brother would be of no use to him, and determined to recapture him single-handed or die in the attempt. Preparing some balls of sweetmeat in which large doses of opium were concealed he walked slowly up to the maddened elephant, and, as soon as he was detected, stood and spoke to him in terms of endearment. The crowd of natives watched the scene with breathless interest. They saw the great elephant double up his trunk and cock his ears on the point of charging down upon this insignificant intruder; then, as the man



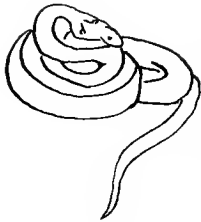
continued to advance talking the while, they saw the trunk fall listlessly to the ground and the elephant stand as if undecided what to do.

Now the man, barely more than half the height of the elephant, was alongside him, was stroking his trunk and rubbing his eyes and chin: he was offering him sweetmeats, which the elephant was devouring; and now, sitting down in front of his brother, seemed as unconcerned as if the beast was at home in his stable. It was not long before the opium took effect and Maula Bux became too dazed to carry out any further mischief; and there for some days he stood, again securely tethered, guarded on each side by a female elephant, with his driver constantly on the watch until the time arrived when he could without fear be permitted to be taken back to his place and to resume his wonted life of good health and good humour.



CHAPTER XIII

The End

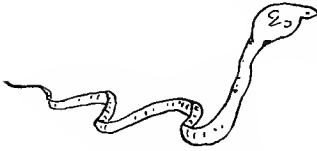


A COBRA was coiled in the sunshine on the dusty plain, each curve making a point of light: near by lay a ghostly replica of himself, a transparent tissue reproducing every scale and every marking of his body; and now, resplendent in a new coat of mail, at ease after long days of inconvenience, with poison glands full and stomach empty, the snake awaited what the future should bring.

The birds twittered overhead and the rays of the sun struck with agreeable warmth; and then a hot wind



awoke in the south raising small whirls of dust, giving warning to all living animals that it was



time to seek shelter from heat and light. The snake uncoiled himself and his black length undulated

over the plain, leaving a furrow in the dust transversely marked by the large scales of his belly. He continued his journey till he arrived at a stack of green-leaved branches which offered a cool and safe retreat, and, entering, disappeared from view.

It was sunset when the elephant, Maula Bux, returned from the labours of the day. For long hours he had borne the heavy trappings of state, which entirely enveloped his body and prevented the cooling breeze from reaching his sensitive skin. On the top of these heavy cloths of gold and silk he had carried the state howdah, itself no mean weight, wherein sat those whom the people delighted to honour. Preceded, surrounded, and followed by spearmen, by bearers of "Chaunries" and umbrellas, he had paced the processional path, unalarmed



“THE SNAKE UNCOILED HIMSELF.”

by the shouts of the populace, by the reports of guns and explosions of fireworks, all alike naturally repugnant to him. He had carefully picked his way through the crowd, harming none; lightly with his trunk setting aside those who intruded in his path; and now, another day of painful duty passed, he had been relieved of his load, had poured water on his heated body and cooled himself in the evaporation of the evening breeze; he had disposed of his rations and stood at rest watching his mahout, who in a neighbouring hut was preparing his evening meal.



The sun set and soon the moon was shining over the plain; one by one the lights were extinguished and the noise from the bazaar ceased. At such times one could comprehend the dreamy attitude of this huge beast; doubtless his memory turned to similar glorious nights passed in the peace of the forest, when absolute contentment made for happiness; or to

those other times, when, though subject to man, he roamed the jungles in sympathy with him.

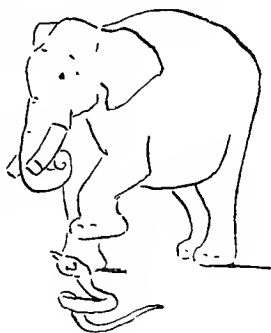
The elephant had leaned forward to draw a branch of the green fodder from the pile before



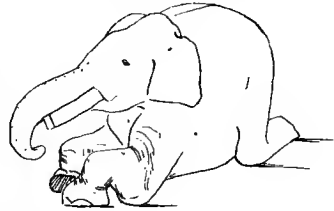
him, and was instantly aware of a sharp blow on the end of his extended trunk. A black snake was rearing its head from amongst the wilted foliage, hissing gently as it waved

to and fro. The elephant raised his massive fore-foot, and without haste crushed the reptile as a man might crush any noxious insect. Then he stood as if considering the matter.

The pain from the bite flowed in a stream of fire up his trunk, and he commenced to rock from side to side in agony ; now it reached his brain and seemed to numb it with its force ; it poured like red hot lava through his veins, so that his legs trembled and refused to



support his heavy bulk. The elephant knelt down as he had done thousands of times in the service of man, but even so there was no relief; dizzy he rolled over on his side and groaned aloud.



At once from the hut came the watchful mahout with the cry of, "What ails you, oh! my brother?" but the elephant was unable to respond to the exhortation to rise; he now lay as if insensible, breathing heavily. The mahout quickly despatched a messenger for aid, but it was long before the "sahib" in charge of the stud arrived. He found nothing but an elephant extended tranquilly on the earth, at his side squatted the mahout, weeping bitterly with cries of, "My brother, my brother!"



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UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

The Life of a Tiger

BY

SIR S. EARDLEY-WILMOT, K.C.I.E.

Author of "Forest Life and Sport in India"

ILLUSTRATED BY

IRIS EARDLEY-WILMOT

"Sir S. Eardley-Wilmot is a keen and careful observer of the manners and customs of wild creatures great and small, and his first book 'Forest Life and Sport in India,' published last year, revealed him as a notable authority on the *vie intime* of the Jungle. In this sequel Sir S. Eardley-Wilmot gives us the life-history of a tiger from his earliest cubhood until the moment when he pays the final penalty for becoming under compulsion an eater of human flesh. This true tale has many a surprising episode, though all happens from beginning to end naturally and by arrangement with Nature, who is as good a playwright as she is a dramatist. This author never makes the mistake of imputing human motives to wild animals—a mistake which is characteristic of the 'Nature-fakers.' About 150 tiny thumbnail sketches by the author's daughter (whose line is admirable; she is almost the Phil May of Jungle-life) and some delightful photographs by his wife enhance the fascination of a book which is well worthy to be placed on the same shelf as the chronicle of Mowgli's adventures."—*Morning Post*.

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