

may spread a knowledge of the true game, and stamp out all the existing evils; in short, give what football talent there is in Ireland a chance, while there is a chance, and perhaps the day is not far distant when an International team may represent Ireland that shall not be called a "fraud" and a "delusion."

Now or never is the time, before the enthusiasm and popularity begin to wane. If anyone says it is impossible to organise these local clubs, I point to the Rugby Union, to English, Welsh, and Scotch football, and I say, "Impossible! Let me never hear that blockhead of a word."

SHAN FADH.

## A Fighting Tiger.

THE following story tells how a fighting tiger was shot in Bengal a few years back, at one of the shooting parties of the Maharajah of Durbhangah, in the Cosi, Dearahas, on the borders of Nipal. The Maharajah is well known for his shoots, which he gives annually. All those who have ever had the good luck to be present on one of these occasions must remember, with pleasure, the grand sport shown by their entertainer, and his princely hospitality.

We used to be out for about a month; generally starting towards the end of March. Tiger, rhinoceros, wild buffalo, deer, and pig were all abundant on the grounds we shot over. The parties were large. Sometimes there would be out as many as fifteen howdas and 200 elephants. At the time of which I write I was general manager of the Raj; my services having been lent by Government to the Maharajah for that purpose.

When we found this tiger we were camped near the Nipal frontier, in the Bhagulpore district—a tract noted for the number, size, and fierceness of its tigers. We had received good "khubr" (or news) of both rhinoceros and tiger, and overnight had decided to go out the next morning in two parties—one

after rhinoceros, the other after tiger. S— (a very skilful sportsman of those parts) was to captain the rhinoceros party; while I was to take charge of the other. The howdas (with their batteries) and the beating elephants of each party were sent off to their respective grounds before daybreak. Those who were going to shoot followed later on, on pad-elephants; first partaking of an early "chota hazri," or little breakfast—which, however, is really a most substantial meal, having for a finish a small glass of "Tiger's blood" all round, to the toast of "Death to the tiger!" Tiger's blood—as it was called—is a mixture of raw whisky and ginger wine; a mouthful of which is both acceptable and wholesome on a cold chilly morn—as the early hours in those wild jungly parts are apt to prove in spring.

The "khubr shad" of tiger was very good indeed. We were first to go after one, which was reported as being exceptionally large by the gwalors—or cowherds—who, at this time of year, are in the habit of grazing their buffalo in that neighbourhood. They declared that it had been their terror for seventeen years. This particular tract of country had not before been shot over. Its only inhabitants are the

gwalors ; who, coming in the spring from other parts of India, drive, for a short time, their herds of buffalo into these jungles, where some are, year after year, carried off by tiger.

Our game was said to be in a small island which rises out of one of the sandy beds of the Cosi. It was not an island at the time of our visit, but would become one in the rainy season.

The River Cosi is somewhat peculiar. It rises in the Himalayas, and just where it emerges from them to traverse the plains of Bengal it constantly overflows its sandy banks. Having got out of its course it frequently makes a new bed for itself, and the consequence is that a large area of country—lying at the foot of the lowest slopes of the Himalayas—is intersected by many old sandy beds of the Cosi. The river is most troublesome ; for it devastates what would be very valuable land if the waters could only be confined to one regular channel. As an instance of the mischief done by the shifting courses I may mention that I have seen the tops of two tall chimneys just showing above the sand in one of the dried-up beds of the Cosi. These chimney-tops told where there once had been a flourishing indigo factory, started by English enterprise in this out-of-the-way part of the world. The building had—in one of the changes of course—been submerged and buried by the Cosi ; and when the river after a time rolled, as is its wont, in quite another direction, there were only the two chimney-tops left above the sand to serve as monuments of the destruction it had caused.

Camped as we were—just below the first rising ground of the spars of the Himalayas—we could occasionally get views of their far-off snowy peaks, towering white into the deep blue sky. The scenery was lovely, and the weather—al-

though the sun was a little hot at midday—was all that one could desire for big game shooting.

A pleasant ride of some six miles on pad-elephants brought us up to our howdas, which we overtook near to the spot where our operations were to commence. I should explain that pad-elephants are those which are used for ordinary carriage or sowari (*i.e.*, riding) purposes. They are generally smaller than the elephants used to carry howdas, and get over the ground more quickly. When no shooting is actually going on it is far more agreeable to sit on the “guddy”—or straw-stuffed matress of a pad-elephant—on which two can sit with ease, than it is to jolt slowly along alone in a howda. For this reason pad-elephants are generally provided at these parties for the convenience of the guests, to be used in going to and returning from the scene of the day’s adventures.

Having come up to our howda-elephants we found that by some stupid mistake of the elephant-“jemadar” Lord I——’s howda was not with them. It had been sent with the rhino. party ; and as the distance between the two parties was considerable it was impossible to wait until it could be fetched back again.

This was most vexatious to everybody, but especially annoying to Lord I——, whose battery was in his howda. We got, however, out of the difficulty by a happy arrangement, which brought my old friend M—— and myself for once together in the same howda. M—— had had a howda made after his own ideas—in accordance with his experience of his own requirements. It differed from the generality of howdas by having only one seat. Most howdas have two seats—one in front for the man shooting, and a small one behind for his servant. The latter can if necessary hold an

umbrella over his master's head, hand him his spare rifles, and generally make himself useful. But M—— disliked having a servant behind him. He said that he found that they always sneezed, coughed, or did something to attract attention just at the critical moment when it was especially necessary that not a sound should be heard! So he had had a howda built with only one seat. This howda, with M——'s battery, we gave up to Lord I——, and M—— got into my howda and used my battery, I taking the seat behind him. Of course I could not shoot, but this was no disappointment to me. I had been most lucky for many years in enjoying the best tiger shooting in India, and on this occasion I was more anxious to show sport to my companions than to get it for myself. I could direct the movements of the party just as well from the back seat as from the front.

This difficulty having been settled, we got into line. There were seven howdas with some six or seven beating elephants between each two howdas, and the same number of beating elephants on the outside of the furthest howda on each flank. This line was long enough to extend from bank to bank of the small island. My howda was in the centre of the line; and from it floated a small red flag, which was understood as a signal that, while it was flying, no one was to fire at anything but tiger.

The island was covered with tall jungle grass, with here and there a low tree, and here and there a small open space. It seemed fairly certain that the gwalors were right in their assertion that a very large tiger indeed was in it. As we entered the island we noticed quite fresh "pangs," or footprints, of a tiger going up the bank; and very big footprints they were!

It was a still, cloudless day, and as we moved slowly along in line nothing was to be heard but the swish, swish of the long grass as the elephants pushed it aside with their heads and trunks. Occasionally, too, there was the crash of a tree when some elephant, finding one in its way, removed the obstacle by breaking it down.

\*The elephants were a little excited, as they will be when a tiger is near them. Now and again could be heard the deep low gurgling sound which an elephant makes as he hits the ground with the curved end of his trunk. This is a sure sign that a tiger is not far off.

Presently the centre of the line came upon a small open patch, where the grass had been burnt. Only some of the charred stalks remained; and among these we caught sight, for a moment, of a very large tiger going quietly ahead of us. When it was about fifty yards in front, and right before our howda, up went M——'s rifle, and he fired. The tiger gave no response (which a tiger generally does if hit), and was immediately out of sight in the long grass. M—— is a first-rate shot, and seldom misses. He was quite sure that he had hit, and certainly the after behaviour of this tiger justified the belief that he had done so.

On went the line, steadily and quietly, though the elephants were now much excited. Doubtless the men in the howdas were so too; for to each one present must have come that pleasurable hope that the tiger might next show in front of him, and that he might get the coveted chance of killing it.

This tiger was not very long before it did show again; but its appearance was hardly made in a pleasant manner for Colonel K——, who was the one to get the chance! Suddenly, with a roar and a mighty

bound, it leapt out of the grass (which had concealed it) right on to the head of K——'s elephant. There it was, in a most savage mood, seated on the top of the elephant's forehead! The tiger's movement was so instantaneous, that, to some who saw the incident, myself among the number, it seemed as if the tiger had, in the one bound, sprung right up on to the elephant's forehead. Other witnesses, among them M——, thought that the tiger alighted first on the elephant's head with its hind paws on the brass rings round the ends of the elephant's tusks, and that the elephant, by raising its head and tusks, had unwittingly assisted it to make a second spring on to the top of its forehead. Whichever explanation be true, the spring was done like a flash of lightning, and there the tiger was to be seen—most truly a wild beast—up on the top of the elephant's forehead, and in most dangerous proximity to the mahout and to K——.

Perhaps here it should be stated that a mahout, or elephant driver, sits astraddle on the elephant's neck between the howda and the elephant's head, having his knees and legs behind the elephant's ears.

I had seen many a tiger on an elephant's head before—not unfrequently one had been on the head of the elephant which I was myself riding. In that position I have shot them, but they have always been clinging to the front of the elephant's head, with their fore paws round the upper part of its trunk and hindpaws on the tusks. One splendid elephant off which I have shot, when a tiger got into this position would stand steady as a rock, and raise his head and tusks gently, so as to bring the tiger's head more level with the howda. He would thus give me a more easy shot; but I have never, before or since, seen a

tiger actually reach the top of an elephant's forehead.

Thus seated, the tiger faced, and must really have almost touched K——'s mahout, and was but a few inches from K—— himself in his howda. Then, in an instant, growling with fury, and with jaws distended, white teeth glistening, and bright fiery eyes flashing, it sprang straight for K——!

It was a moment of intense excitement. No one of course could fire except K—— himself; and between him and death there seemed to be no barrier but the mere chance that he might be able to shoot and kill the tiger instantaneously. K——'s position was as critical as it could be when, rifle in hand, and holding on to his howda, he received this charge. He fired just as the tiger sprang at him—and he missed the tiger!

Most providentially, however, for K——, at the very moment that the tiger gathered up its strength to spring, the elephant (a large powerful animal) gave a tremendous shake of its huge head. Swaying thus from side to side, the elephant attempted to dislodge its enemy. The result was that the relative positions of K—— and the tiger were suddenly altered just as the latter made his effort, and, instead of lighting upon K——, the tiger went on one side of him, brushing the corner of his howda. It leaped clean over the heads of three natives who were seated on the back of a beating elephant which happened to be close alongside of K——'s, and lighting on the ground, vanished again into the long grass.

K——'s escape was marvellous. It was to all of us a great relief to see him alive and unharmed. The mahout, however, had disappeared, but his elephant stood motionless, and looked as if it were dazed!

The tiger, full of mischief, while

springing at K—— had struck with his hind paws at the mahout, and had dug the claws into his neck and back. Luckily the tiger did not succeed in dragging the man off with him ; but he had knocked him out of his seat. The mahout fell into the long grass, among which we had lost sight of the tiger.

A few seconds of indescribable confusion followed upon this scene. Our anxiety was first to find the mahout ; and the howdas and beating elephants pressed round the long grass into which both he and the tiger had disappeared. No one could see either of them ; but, above all the row could be heard the angry growling of the tiger.

The best trained mahouts seem to lose their heads in such moments, and the whole lot of them were now moving their elephants about, calling out lustily to their missing mate, to their elephants, and to each other, making a storm of sound, to which was added the trumpeting and blowing of the excited elephants. In the midst of the turmoil the only quiet animal was K——'s elephant, who remained standing still on the spot where he encountered the tiger. So still and so dazed-looking was he that I could not think what was wrong with him ; for no wound which the tiger might have given him would account for his condition.

Suddenly there was a rush, and out of the long grass came the mahout. He had managed to elude the tiger and to escape, though very badly wounded. He made at once for the nearest beating elephant ; and, climbing up on to its back, induced its driver to take him quickly towards his own elephant. Mahouts are, as a class, a very brave lot of men, and have to run far greater risks than those in the howdas. This man, badly wounded as he was—mortally so for aught

he knew,—seemed to give no thought to himself, but at once tried to get back upon his own elephant. He knew it to be a very savage brute ; and that K——, when alone on its back, was in much danger. The moment that he came near his own elephant, that animal seemed to awake out of its dazed condition ; and, turning sharp round, it bolted off as hard as it could go, followed by its mahout on the beating elephant.

A runaway elephant is always a dangerous beast ; but this is more especially the case when so excited as this animal now was. It was making for tree jungle or forest. We could not, however, do anything for him to help K—— in his hazardous position ; and indeed we had then no time to give thought to his further adventures. At this moment the tiger was again sighted, going off apparently to the side of the island. No sooner was he seen than bang ! bang ! bang ! three or four shots were fired at him from different howdas. He had only shown for a few seconds ; and he once more vanished into the long grass. Some of these shots seemed to tell. If, before they were fired, he was thinking of getting away, he changed his mind upon receiving the shots. Suddenly, with a rush and savage roar, the maddened tiger sprang out of the grass, and, with one bound—before anyone could fire—was on the side of the elephant ridden by the Hon. W. E——. He managed to make good his footing there, partly on the elephant's side and partly on the guddy, or pith-filled mattress, on which E——'s howda was secured, and his head was close up to the open cane-work side of the howda.

From this position he seemed to try to make for E—— ; but luckily it was not very easy to do this, for he was too close to the howda to be

able to get a good spring. E——'s elephant became tremendously excited, and flung himself from side to side in his endeavours to dislodge the tiger. These movements rendered it most difficult for E—— to keep his feet; and it really looked as if he would be thrown out of his howda. Out flew his rifles, except the one in his hand; out flew much of his ammunition, and other things which were in the howda; but E—— held on most pluckily. Not only did he hold on, but he fired barrel after barrel at his assailant, and even managed to reload! He evidently wounded the tiger, but as no shot was mortal, though enough to exasperate it still more, the immediate consequence was to make it more anxious than ever to get at him.

It was a grand fight, and for a time the tiger held his own against E—— and the elephant. We could not tell what might happen, for none of us were able to fire. The animal and the man were so close to each other, and the elephant swayed so from side to side, that had any one fired E—— was quite as likely to be hit as the tiger.

At last the tiger was dislodged, and it sprang to the ground; but this was for a second only. With another roar, and a spring, he was up on the back of the elephant —on the guddy, and close under the back of the howda. Once more the fight began; and again the elephant swayed itself from side to side, till the howda almost touched the ground. E—— behaved with splendid coolness, and it was wonderful how he managed to cling to the howda, and to keep his feet; yet he did do so, and every now and then succeeded besides in dropping a bullet into the brute, and in re-loading.

While this scene was going on many of the beating elephants—and

some of the howda elephants too—turned and tried to bolt. The elephant on which M—— and I were, and two or three other howda elephants, were not so excited as the rest, and we kept them close up to E——.

On went the fight! It takes long to describe, though in reality it was the work of but a few minutes. The tiger tried to get at E——; the elephant did its utmost by flinging itself from side to side to dislodge the tiger; and E—— was pluckily holding on whilst he gave the tiger several shots. At last it dropped to the ground, too severely wounded to try another spring. Immediately bullets from other howdas put an end to it! M——, as I think, was the one to give it the *coup de grâce*.

It was a grand fight that, and a magnificent tiger; and E——, while it lasted, was in a position of great danger. The rage and fury of the beast may be imagined from the fact that it bit so savagely at the elephant that it broke about an inch of the end of one of its sharp-pointed fangs, deep into the elephant's side, and it was with much difficulty that the fragment was cut out.

The fight was now over, and there lay the tiger—a big beast, over ten feet in length, with most massive body and limbs. He was as grand a tiger and in as perfect condition as could be found anywhere. K——, while all this was taking place, remained in much danger. His elephant had bolted down a dry sandy bed of the river, hotly pursued by its mahout on the beating elephant. It was making straight for a large forest, and the race was one for life or death; for if the elephant could reach the forest before its mahout could reach him, K—— and his howda must have been smashed to bits against the trees. Going at the pace the elephant was, there was no possibility of K——'s jumping off

the elephant, which, could he have done so, would assuredly have attacked him.

However, all was to end well. The Cosi abounds in quicksands, and K——'s elephant fortunately got into a bit of the river's bed which had a quicksand, and so was in difficulties. This check enabled its mahout to overtake it, and the moment he got near enough for a jump he sprang up on its back, and, regaining his seat on its neck, was soon able to master it.

Of course we were not aware of all this at the time. K—— and his elephant had vanished, but where they were we could not guess.

This mahout behaved most bravely, and showed astonishing power of endurance. Notwithstanding his wounds and the great pain in which he must have been, his one idea seemed to be to execute his duty; and my experience of this class is that most mahouts would have behaved in the same way.

To return to the tiger! The next thing was to pad him and to send him in to camp. After a tiger (which like this one has shown much fight) is killed there is always delay in getting him padded. Elephants and mahouts are all in a state of excitement, and there is so much shouting, talking, and noise whilst pressing round to see their fallen enemy that it is difficult to get orders promptly carried out. Those in the howdas also come to have a nearer view of the tiger. Then he has to be measured, and a sharp look-out has to be kept to prevent the mahouts, mates, and others from pulling out his whiskers—the long coarse hairs about his mouth. These are supposed by natives of the East to be a charm of great power in all matters of love; then a pad elephant has to be made to kneel down beside the dead tiger in order to enable the carcase to be lifted on to its back. A

tiger—especially such a big one as this was—is of very great weight, and the chances are that just as he is got up on the elephant's back the animal—notwithstanding his driver's tender expressions, curses, and blows—will rise exactly at the wrong moment—*i.e.*, before the tiger has been secured with ropes on to the guddy. The motion will send the tiger rolling again to earth, and this sad occurrence may take place more than once.

So it came about that by the time we had paddled our tiger it was mid-day, and as we had settled that we would join the rhino. party for luncheon, we started at once for the rendezvous. On getting to the spot we found that they had reached it before us, and that K—— was with them, looking none the worse for all his adventures. His mahout had gone on to camp to the doctor. We were always careful to take one out with us on these occasions, there being as a rule many casualties in the course of our shoots which required prompt and skilful treatment.

K——'s elephant when running away had been carrying him in the direction of the luncheon camp. This accounted for his being there before ourselves, and it was no little relief to find him all right.

While at lunch the question arose whether K—— had hit the tiger or not? K—— insisted that he did hit it when it sprang at him. I, and other onlookers, were, however, quite as positive that he missed the tiger. That he did shoot—as the tiger sprang—we all agreed, but we could see that his rifle was pointed too much down, and not quite in the direction of the tiger. Little blame to him that he did miss! The violent shake of his elephant's head must have made it extremely difficult for any one to keep in his howda at all, and few men under such circumstances could be sure of

their aim. Still nothing would persuade K—— that he had missed. He was, however, shortly to be undeceived!

Some days afterwards, the jemadar in charge of the elephant reported that, since the day of these events, the elephant which K—— rode had been off its feed, and he asked me to go and see it. He said that from a small wound on its forehead he thought that it must have got a shot. Accordingly several of us went and examined the elephant; and at once it became apparent that K—— had hit it instead of the tiger! He had shot it right down through its forehead. He fired with a 450 Express, and the small hole which the bullet made in the thick skin of the elephant did not at first attract much notice. It was in just that part of the forehead where, if the elephant is a large and troublesome beast, as this one was, there are sure to be many such small round holes made by blows from the mahout's "baghdour," or iron driving hook. Mahouts have at times to give their elephants hard blows with this pointed weapon in order to make them obey the word of command.

We probed the wound and discovered that it went right down some eight inches through the skull and into the upper part of the trunk. When into the hole water was poured it came out at the end of the elephant's trunk.

As no one could possibly have hit the elephant on this spot except the man who was in the howda, there could no longer be any doubt where the one bullet K—— fired when the tiger sprang at him had found its billet!

This discovery also accounted for the dazed manner in which the elephant had stood after K—— fired. The wound was not such a dangerous one as might at first be thought. An elephant's head is a mass of bone cells; its brain, which is very small, lying far back in the centre of them, and the bullet had not gone near the brain. In a couple of months or so the elephant had quite recovered.

When we made this discovery K—— was no longer in camp. His leave was up, and he had left us. Thereby, no doubt, he escaped much chaff, for he had been so very positive that he had hit the tiger! He was, however, duly informed of the elephant's wound, and at last he was convinced.

Nor did the mahout's wounds prove so dangerous as we feared, though he had been mauled very severely. Ere long he, too, was at his work again, as well as ever.

In the course of my shooting I have seen many a tiger show good fight, but I have never seen one fight longer than, or with such determination as, this one did. Right glad were the gwalors that their old enemy was killed, and that he was no longer there to carry off their buffalo.

While writing this story it has chanced that my old friend M—— has been staying with me. We have greatly enjoyed talking over this and other adventures. Both of us are of one opinion, that many of our most pleasant days have been spent in the jungles after tiger, and my advice to those who love sport is, "Go to India, if you can, and try tiger shooting."