

### A Night With a Tiger.

Some years since, while engaged in tea planting in India, says a writer in the Penny Magazine, I met with an exciting adventure. I had been to inspect some newly felled trees, and after having done so, was not best pleased to find I had delayed so long that evening was rapidly closing in as I set out on my return home, the way to which lay along a forest road, frequented only in the early morning; either side of the road being lined by tall trees with tangled underwood beneath.

Being on foot and unarmed, I kept the middle of the path, peering sharply around as I hurried on, knowing it was highly probable I might meet or see one or other of the wild beasts known to abound in the forest, and who only venture forth as night approaches.

When within a mile of the bungalow, which I hoped to reach without mishap, I began to whistle to keep my courage up, forgetting the old saying that recommends people "not to whistle till they are out of the wood." I suddenly came to a dead stop in the middle of a tune and stood for a second paralyzed with horror, for there, right in the centre of the pathway, stood a full-grown Bengal tiger. Fortunately he was looking down the road, so did not see me; hence I had time to consider—and in a moment of danger one's wits become sharp enough.

To go on was not to be thought of; to run back was as much out of the question, as the nearest house in that direction was many miles away, and, did the tiger give chase, the race would have been a very short one; so, swiftly and silently as I could, I made for the nearest tree, keeping my eyes on the animal all the time.

How I reached the first branch, quite eight feet from the ground, I never can recollect, but in scrambling to a higher

one I made so much noise that he heard me, and came bounding to the spot in a series of leaps which I daresay were very graceful, but I was not in a condition of mind so to regard his movements.

Stopping full in front of the bottom of my place of refuge, he looked up, then down the road, and at last turned his fierce, glaring eyes among the branches very much to my discomposure. Obviously making me out he gave utterance to several short grunts of satisfaction, by no means exhibiting that alarm which many travelers assert the boldest wild beast shows when encountering a human being; but as I crouched huddled up in a heap some twenty feet above him my attitude could not be regarded at all as a defiant one.

Sufficient daylight remained for me to watch proceedings, which I did with considerable anxiety, for, though unusual, there are well authenticated instances of tigers climbing trees; but, as I had fully recovered my presence of mind, I reckoned that, did he try to follow me, I could, being a light weight, scramble high above any branch that would bear his huge body.

First he sniffed the ground all round the tree; then, poising on his hind legs, stretched himself out to his full length till his fore-paws reached unpleasantly close to the lowest branch, while staring me full in the face the while; now one paw and then the other, with claws well out, was drawn through the bark, just like the domestic puss when sharpening his or her claws on a piece of soft wood.

Suddenly he sank to the earth, and without apparent effort he bounded on to the lower branch; but it bent and swayed under him so much that he could not obtain anything like a firm foothold; and, after vainly endeavoring to get a position, he dropped to the ground with

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