

Montreal entitled *The Canadian Reader*, price \$1, recommended by Wm Squire, E. Peck, R. Spalding of Stanstead, Zadock Thompson, my old teacher in Sherbrooke Academy, in the days when Dr. Brooks and the first Mrs. Sanborn, were among his pupils. Of all the admirable stories contained in this "Reader" probably nearly all true, I have only seen one reprinted since. How many copies are left? The story of Tell, and his wonderful feat with the bow and arrow, has been derided by some miserable destroyer of pleasant things, and I suppose if some superheated steam under the rock of St. Helena should some morning culminate in a volcano and scatter that hard mass into the sea, some of these book fellows 100 years afterward would refer to the island as being "all a myth," only "a ghost in a foggy morning." Boys! preserve some of the old records!"

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FOR THE LAND WE LIVE IN.

The Man-Eaters of Tiger Land.



NE warm day in November I was lounging about the barracks in St. George's, Burma, and happened into the canteen just as one of the non-commissioned officers of the —th regiment was reeling off some of his East India experience while on service in the central provinces. The weather was just warm enough for open doors and windows, and a group of soldiers and civilians sat around in easy attitudes, all much interested. The speaker was a broad and sturdy fellow of about thirty five, with an honest and determined face clean shaven, and his quart cup of a cap was cocked jauntily over one ear, after the fashion of his comrades. His expression was earnest and sometimes even serious, and every man present evidently accepted his statements for truth. I never saw a more orderly and decorous group even at chapel service, and I drew into the ring quite unobserved and curious.

I caught on to the subject at once. The sergeant was talking of "man-eating tigers" and the ravages they committed in the isolated farming districts, what he said having been prompted by the perusal of a paragraph in an East India edition of the *London Field* which he held in his hand. It detailed an account of the recent death of a famous tigress, known as the "Balaghat man-eater." This is how it ran, line upon line:—

"A few weeks ago we recorded how this notorious man-eating tigress had carried off a servant of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces in India during a march. The blood-thirsty brute has at last been shot. She measured 8 feet 6 inches, and at the time of her death was accompanied by several young cubs. Her first victim is reported to have been a man of the Marar caste. He and several companions were going along a jungle path when they saw this tigress stalking them, and immediately they climbed up into trees. The precaution proved useless, at least in one instance, for the tigress, springing up the trunk of a tree in which the Marari had taken refuge, pulled him out and carried him off, his

companions being too terrified to render the unfortunate man any assistance. The last victim but one of this ferocious brute was a Goud boy, whom she seized off a cart on which he was riding."

"That tigress," the speaker commented, "had a bloody record for such a young one. But I knew of an old brute out in the Terai district, where my regiment was stationed, which kept the country in terror for a period of full twenty years. I hear that he has been killed at last, Allah be praised! as all good Mahometans say; but he must have destroyed a power of men in his time, not to mention women and children, besides coolies. They do say as how he wouldn't eat any meat but man meat. Even mutton wouldn't tempt him. That one individual brute must have killed and eaten at least twenty persons each year, making a good round four hundred human beings to his score."

One listener interrupted to say that he had always imagined that these stories of tiger depredations in India were mainly exaggerations.

"Why, bless your innocent heart! do not the official bulletins show that 10,000 humans are eaten by wild beasts every blessed year? and all the Government rewards and inducements do not avail to keep them down. Were it not for our soldier boys, brave chappies! all the country districts would be depopulated in five years. You cannot well imagine what a hullabaloo one of those there man-eaters will stir up when he turns himself loose upon the country. Even populous villages are not exempt."

"Every little while the official bulletins of Kashifur or Vizayapatern, or some other of the score of infested districts in Madras and other presidencies, announce "Another Man-eater!" and at once the respective localities become uncomfortable. A reward of 200 rupees is offered. All the native farming population is dazed and apprehensive. Gallant officers of the garrisons hastily make up their shikari parties to scour the district which has been posted, armed with the most formidable weapons known to modern field service. Mothers turn pale as they regard their offspring at play beside the houses. Teamsters look askance as they drive to their daily labor in the field. All who can do so stay indoors and hug the hamlet close, for they have heard the alarm before and they know its import. A visitation is as certain as the sweep of a pestilence, and no one knows who may be the first victim. More than once in past times some unsuspecting child has been snatched from a door step, or husbandman from the field, and dragged off to the jungle, and such a tragedy may happen again. Once a bride was taken almost from the arms of her friends, swung lightly over a tiger's shoulder and trotted off to its lair. So noiselessly do these villains stalk their prey, even by noonday, as cats do birds and mice, approaching them unawares, and before the natives can reach their weapons the victim is gone!

"I don't know why it is, but as soon as ever one of that breed of tigers has once tasted human blood, by whatever chance presented, he becomes infatuated and insatiable. His whole nature undergoes a

metamorphosis. He perpetually haunts the ghats in quest of victims. No device or precaution can prevent him;—nothing but an ounce of cold lead in his heart and vitals. Of course there are tigers as tigers go; but the common run of brutes, do you mind, are usually regarded as small deer, for they slink from the presence of man if it be daylight and stick close to their lairs. They live on what they can pick up in the forests and jungles, with an occasional steer snatched from the edge of the open, and you won't often see them, even if you hunt for them. But the man-eater is the chap that is dreaded. There is no living creature more ferocious, relentless and courageous than he.

"In India sportsmanship is heroism. It requires nerve as well as judgment to beat the bush when one is liable at any moment to encounter, unawares, tigers which fear not man in his most formidable guise, and most of all to face him when he charges or stands at bay. There was poor Mr. Howard of the Norfolk regiment, as brave a lad as ever stood a cavalry charge. Some of you may remember him? He was out shooting near Malapuram, when he came across a tiger which he fired at and wounded. After waiting for an hour on the chance of the animal either dying or becoming stiffened from his wound, Mr. Howard followed up the tracks and met the tiger in the open. The animal at once charged, and Mr. Howard missing with both barrels, was seized by the arm and severely clawed on his chest. All the natives, except one who accompanied the sportsman, bolted; the one exception was a shikari who was carrying Mr. Howard's spare gun. This man very pluckily went up to the tiger and, firing both barrels, killed it and released his master. Mr. Howard was immediately taken into Malapuram, and seemed progressing favorably, but died very suddenly on the 25th, another victim to the dangerous pastime of shooting tigers alone and on foot. If the truth be known, scores of them never return to their regiments.

"Do I know how large these animals grow? Certainly I do. Some of them are enormous, and quite capable of carrying off a full grown ox bodily. It is the fashion of the garrison officers, you know, to keep scores of the largest ones captured during each successive year, and from a table recently published it is shown that since 1883 no less than thirty man-eating tigers have been killed, which measured from nine feet in length, the smallest scheduled, to ten feet two and a half inches, the largest. The heaviest weighed 540 pounds, and the height was 44½ inches. This brute was the duffer with the twenty years' record, and was killed in 1890 by Rajah Hurry Raj Singh of Kashifue."

The narrator subsequently related many blood curdling incidents which had come under his personal knowledge, and when I left the canteen I felt that I had never been plied with such a fearful category of sanguinary facts in all my life.

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CHARLES HALLOCK.

Dickens' Complete Works and the Land We Live In, 1 year only \$1.60.