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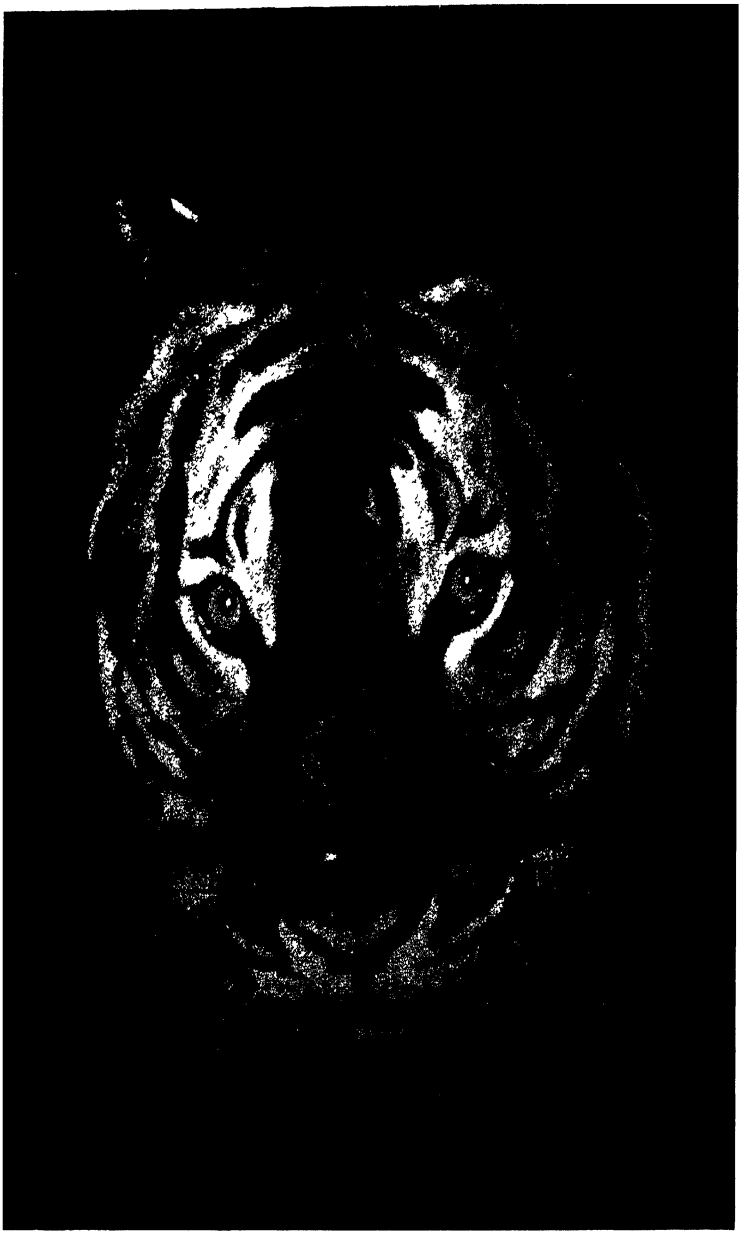
THE TIGERS OF TRENGGANU



Head of adult male tiger

Frontispiece

THE TIGERS OF TRENGGANU

by

LIEUT-COL.
A. LOCKE
Malayan Civil Service

With a Foreword
by the Right Honourable Malcolm MacDonald,
Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in South-East Asia.

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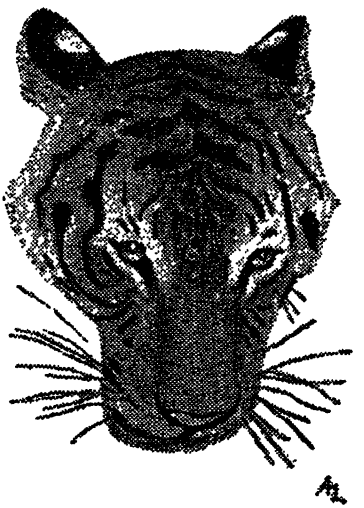
"Unless I can make you believe that there is something practically supernatural about tigers, that they are not just common flesh and bone and striped hide, but a kind of symbol of the



jungle, of the cunning and the cruelty and ferocity and incredible strength and beauty of raw nature . . .there is no use in your going on with this tale."

Edison Marshall in "Shikar and Safari."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful for the encouragement and help which friends have given me while I have been writing this book. The advice of Mrs. B. Lumsden Milne, M.B.E., and Mrs. J. M. Elliott was invaluable when I was struggling with the arrangement of the written material. J. K. Creer, Esq., O.B.E., M.C.S., was good enough to read through the final manuscript and to suggest several alterations to it. I was also fortunate enough to obtain expert assistance from Major Raymond Thomas, of the Royal Photographic Society, in preparing the illustrations. I must also express appreciation of the co-operation which I received from G. R. Leonard, Esq., M.B.E., and J. A. Hislop, Esq. M.C., both of the Federation of Malaya Game Department and from Dato' Syed Abdul Kadir bin Mohamed, *Mentri Besar*[1] of Johore, who obtained permission for me to examine the records of tigers shot by His Highness the Sultan of Johore.

I cannot speak too highly of Enche Salleh bin Mahomed, the Pa Mat of this book. Pa Mat was actually my car driver, but he accompanied me on nearly all my outings and had a hand in the death of all but one of the tigers that I shot. He had none of the excitement, his work ending when he left me to my lone wait in the darkness. He was out with me at all hours of the day and night and must have had many frightening moments. His cheerfulness, resourcefulness and endurance (particularly during the fasting month in which Malays may not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset) continually added to my admiration and affection for him.

Finally I wish to say how much I owe to my wife, Jean,

[1] Prime Minister.

who spent many anxious lonely nights while I was out after tigers and who has shown great patience with me while I have been engrossed in working on this volume.

Singapore. A. LOCKE.

FOREWORD

I think that this book is likely to become a Malayan classic. It deserves to attain that eminence. Colonel Locke is an undoubted authority on his intriguing subject. He has collected a vast quantity of information about Malayan tigers, which is a distinct contribution to local natural history, and he has set it down with admirable and most readable clarity. His mass of factual information is made vivid by his commentary upon it all, and by his accounts of personal experiences hunting the tigers of Trengganu.

He never hunted for the sake of hunting, nor killed for the sake of killing. As District Officer in a remote, wild region of the State he played his part in protecting the local population from various enemies of their well-being. These included Communist terrorist gangs who infested the jungle, and cattle-destroying or man-eating tigers living in the same resort. Colonel Locke only sought to shoot tigers when they forsook their normal diet of wild game in the forest, and took to dining off domestic animals or human beings in the *kampongs*. Otherwise he felt the admiration for those lordly beasts which their character and beauty must command, and left them free to roam at will their kingdom.

In any circumstances tiger hunting must be an interesting sport. In the circumstances which Colonel Locke met, it was fascinating and exciting. Fortunately for us readers, he has the art of conveying those qualities vividly in prose. He handles a pen as skilfully as he does a rifle, and the result of his capacity with both these potent weapons is this excellent book. His

performance with a camera is also impressive, and has provided the volume with some good illustrations.

One merit of his writing lies in its simplicity. In all his pages there is scarcely a superfluous word. His statements of facts, his accounts of experiences and his personal comments on the subject of tigers are made with an economy of language which is almost austere. He recognizes that his tale is so enthralling in itself that it needs no literary tricks or embroidery to enhance it; and so he never over-states his case. On the contrary, in many instances his modest under-statements heighten the dramatic effect of the tale.

I do not know, for example, any more effective piece of writing in sporting literature than his unadorned, bare and yet thrillingly exciting description of his encounter with the Jerangau Man-eater.

In Chapter I he writes: "I commend . . . . . the lone wait in darkness on a platform placed just high enough to permit a tiger to walk beneath it if he comes that way, and the subsequent follow-up of the wounded animal in the dark. Let the scene of the hunt be a mile or two from the nearest habitation, in an area which Communist terrorists are known to frequent, and I maintain that the average sportsman should not feel ashamed of himself when the tiger is dead."

If, after these exertions, he can return home and write as fine a book on the topic as Colonel Locke has done, then in my opinion he may also permit himself to feel proud.

Malcolm MacDonald

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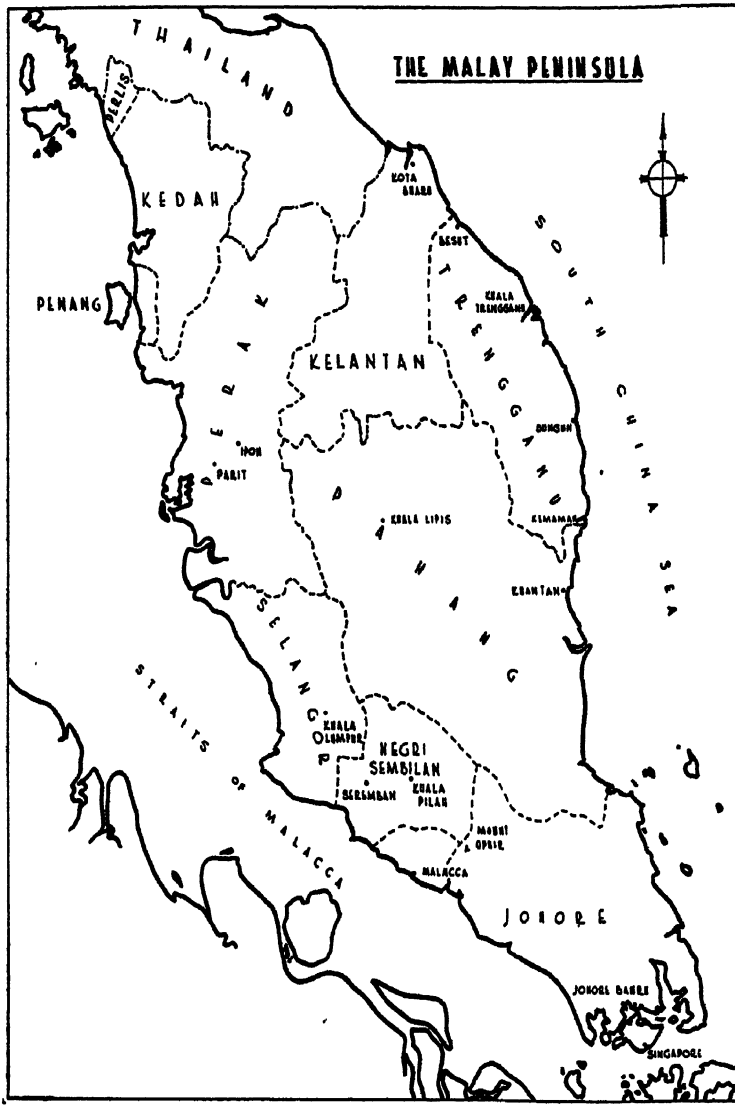
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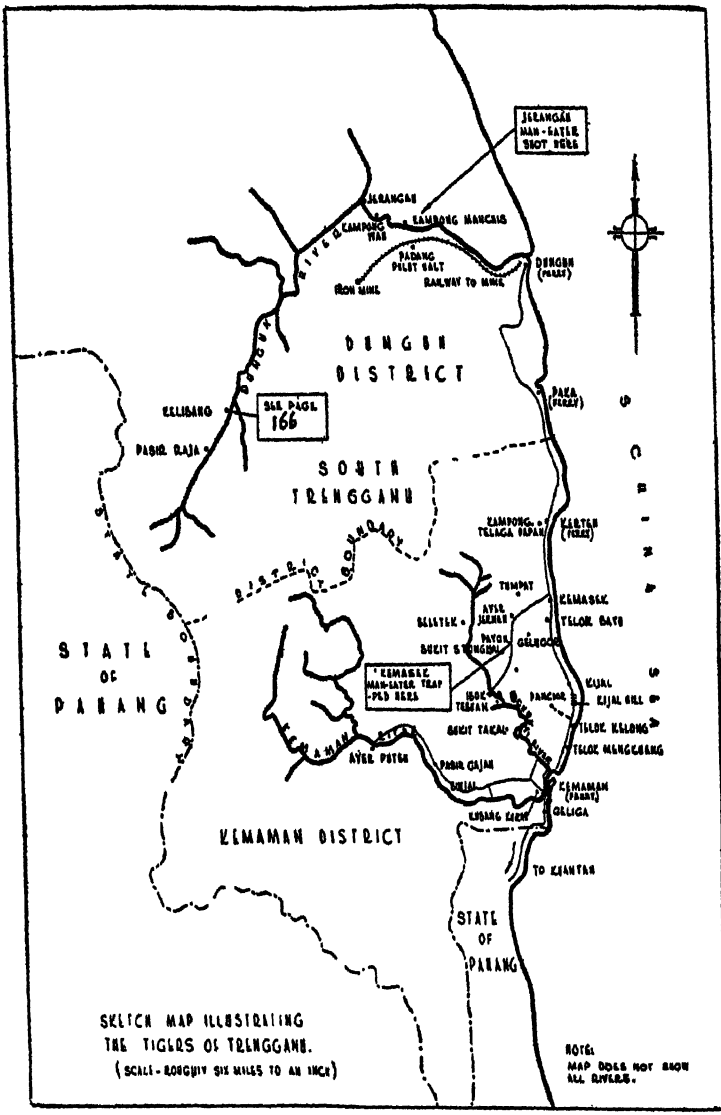
JERANGAU MAN-EATER SHOT HERE
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STATE OF PAHANG
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NOTE: MAP DOES NOT SHOW ALL RIVERS.

SKETCH MAP ILLUSTRATING THE TIGERS OF TRENGGANU.
(SCALE - ROUGHLY SIX MILES TO AN INCH)

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

I was posted to Kemaman as Government Administrative Officer in January 1949. This Administrative Area of Trengganu, which is among the least developed of the Malay States, consists of the two Districts of Kemaman and Dungun, between them covering 1,936 square miles, with a predominantly Malay population, few Chinese having yet been attracted to the area. The two District Offices are fifty miles apart. There are only three roads in the area. The through route is the East Coast Road, running from Kuantan in the south, via Kemaman, Dungun and Kuala Trengganu (the State capital) to Kota Bharu in the north. As will be seen from the map at page xvi there are only two side roads, one a nineteen-miles stretch from Kemaman inland to a village called Ayer Puteh, and the other a motorable track turning left-handed in a half-circle from Kemasek to end abruptly at Ibok. These three roads were all classified as "red" by the police at the time that I left Kemaman in 1951. This implied that travellers making use of them were liable to be ambushed by Communist terrorists. Travelling about the area was neither as difficult nor as risky as it would appear from these bald facts, however. Car, boat or cycle could be used with discretion to visit most places, although many journeys had to be completed on foot.

I had not been in Kemaman very long before I realized that, as Officer responsible for the administration of the area, I would have to do something to check the depredations of the local tigers which were killing a great many cattle and other

domestic animals. In common with other game, these tigers had multiplied during the Japanese occupation. The Emergency, as the present warfare against the terrorists is termed, had prevented those Malays who possessed shotguns from hunting them. The losses suffered by the villagers were considerable. Over a period of seven weeks, one tiger killed twenty-three cattle within a distance of a mile from my quarters. These animals were worth, on an average, one hundred Straits dollars each. In other words, the total loss caused by this brute was £270, or over £5 10*s.* 0*d.* a day, which is more than the average Malay in the area would earn in a fortnight. The most annoying thing about this particular tiger was that he ate from none of these cattle, leaving each beast untouched where he killed it.

Some of the tigers had also begun to make a nuisance of themselves in other ways. Parents would be reluctant to send their children to school along a road across which a tiger had been seen to stroll the previous evening. Rubber tappers, too, encountered them, or their recent tracks, regularly and would neglect or leave their work in consequence.

It is a good deal easier to write about freeing an area of cattle-killing tigers than it is to carry out such a task. Three facts soon became apparent. These were:

(*a*) That unless I set out to learn their ways I would destroy no tigers, for I had never shot one before.
(*b*) That I was too busy with my work to be able to spend much time looking for them myself.
(*c*) That I would have to devise some means of protection against terrorists.

The first requirement was fulfilled by devoting most of my leisure hours to visiting spots at which tigers had made a kill, or which they were known to frequent. I studied their general

habits, how they killed and where they took their kills to feed from them. I sat over kills with Malays and spent hours discussing tigers with them. Eventually, I became so engrossed in these absorbing animals that the opportunity to study them assumed greater importance than the need to shoot them, although shoot them I did when I must.

The Malay District Officers made it unnecessary for me to look for tigers myself. They organized an intelligence system which kept me informed, mainly through headmen (called *Pĕnghulus* in Malaya), of all kills in the inhabited parts of the area, thus enabling me to keep approximate track of the movements of the most troublesome tigers. This information, since it had to be received early if good use was to be made of it, was either relayed by telephone, often through the co-operation of the police, or was brought in personally by the headmen.

I was served equally well so far as protection was concerned. Not far from my home was the village of Binjai. Here was a splendid group of Malays who had enrolled as Auxiliary Policemen in order to protect their homes from the terrorists. They were armed with shotguns. I had only to tell the *Pĕnghulu* of Binjai that I wanted an escort and twice as many men as I needed would volunteer to go with me. When I shot my last tiger in a rather unhealthy area, just before I went on leave, these Malays posted themselves round the spot as sentries, leaving me unguarded only on the side from which the tiger would approach.

There are two points that I particularly wish to emphasize. The first is that tigers are not normally dangerous to human beings. Unless they are man-eaters, they prefer to give people as wide a berth as the average person would wish to give them. To quote an example: One evening, with the aid of two Malays, I made preparations to sit in wait for a tigress on the edge of a small patch of swamp, not much bigger than a tennis

court, which lay in a hollow among scattered Malay houses. On the opposite side of the swamp a number of young Malay children were playing in the late afternoon sunlight. When my helpers withdrew and left me concealed, the children, not knowing that I was hidden there, varied their game by chasing each other round the swamp. Sometimes they entered the edge of it to hide from each other. An hour later, not long after they had dispersed to their homes, the tigress, who had been lying concealed in the swamp throughout the day, came out to the remains of the cow which she had killed the previous night. There I shot her. Had she wished, she could have killed any of those children with the greatest of ease. She made no attempt to do so. I will go even further and say that the idea of attacking them probably never even entered her head.

My second point is that experience with other game, including that gained during three-and-a-half years spent in Africa and India, has proved to me that the Malayan tiger is an extremely difficult animal to study. He is as evasive as a shadow, particularly during the hours of daylight. His uncanny ability to move with a complete absence of sound, even in the thickest cover, coupled with his remarkable senses of hearing and sight, would defeat the most patient and skilful observer. Because of this one could only learn of his habits by piecing together scattered, sometimes meagre, facts collected patiently over a period of time. Thus an estimate of the area over which a tiger normally operates could be made only from news of kills, from the rare occasions on which the animal was actually seen and from the footprints (or pugs as they are called) which I came across or which were reported to me. I believe that the right conclusions were formed from such information, especially as it was gathered over a period of three years, but I would hesitate to make any more definite assertion than that.

I never attempted to kill a tiger unless I had received complaints about it and had satisfied myself that it was making a nuisance of itself. I shot alone, usually at night, darkness and the use of an electric torch taking from the tiger some of the advantages which were his by day. Only by such means can Malayan tigers be dealt with efficiently. It is practically impossible to stalk one in daylight—unless he be a man-eater (see Chapter VII). The heavy undergrowth in most of those parts of the Malay Peninsula which are frequented by tigers makes it futile even to attempt that noiseless approach which is but the first stage of the hunt. Furthermore, the type of tiger with which I most commonly had to deal—that found on the outskirts of inhabited areas—was almost entirely nocturnal.

In almost all circumstances night shooting is unsporting. If excitement is sought, however, I commend to those who may criticize my methods, the lone wait in darkness on a platform placed just high enough to permit the tiger to walk beneath it if he comes that way, and the subsequent follow up of the wounded animal in the dark. Let the scene of the hunt be a mile or two from the nearest habitation, in an area which Communist terrorists are known to frequent, and I maintain that the average sportsman should not feel too ashamed of himself when the tiger is dead.

I would add that, apart from those unfortunate animals caught in traps, which might otherwise have been sold into captivity, I have rarely shot a tiger without a pang of regret that another courageous, strong and graceful creature has died. To me they will always be by far the most fascinating and magnificent specimens of our Malayan wild life.

CHAPTER II

DISTRIBUTION, SIZE AND HABITS

THE tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is the same splendid animal wherever he is found, whether it be in Malaya, India or in other parts of Asia. This great feline ranges as far north as the Amur River, near the Sino-Russian border, and as far south as Bali. The eastern limit of his habitat is the island of Sakhalin, off the eastern coast of Siberia. The western limit is Turkish Georgia in central Russian Transcaucasia. Strangely enough, although leopards are common, there are no tigers in Ceylon, despite its proximity to India. Borneo is another island where the tiger is unknown. India may be regarded as the stronghold of the tiger, for there these animals occur far more frequently, and grow to a greater size, than they do elsewhere.

In Malaya, the tiger most commonly occurs to-day in the States of Trengganu and Kelantan, in northern Pahang and in Perak. Within this vast area, which consists to a large extent of jungle, lies the George V National Park, Malaya's principal game reserve. Tigers will be found throughout the rest of the Peninsula, excluding Singapore and, possibly, Penang, but with far less frequency. Johore was noted for its tigers before the war, but they did not seem to multiply there during the Japanese occupation to the same extent as they did in the more northern States.

I remember the great to-do which was made in the Malayan Press when a tiger had the temerity to set foot on Singapore Island in 1950. If reports at the time are to be believed, pugs were found on a beach of the Island facing the Johore Straits,

the crossing of which narrow strip of water would barely provide enough exercise to flex a tiger's swimming muscles. Tigers were, of course, commonly encountered on Singapore Island in the earlier days and there is a record of one having been killed beneath the billiard room of a well-known hotel there.

I was once asked, rather foolishly I thought, to estimate how many tigers there are in Malaya. My answer was that if I was given a year's leave, granted sufficient funds and was permitted complete freedom of movement, I would guarantee to produce an answer which would be fifty per cent. accurate. One evening, however, I amused myself with pencil and paper trying to assess the actual number. I arrived at the astonishing total of nearly 3,000 tigers. To reach this figure, I took as an average the number of different animals known to have occupied various parts of Kemaman over a period of two years and used the resultant number of "square miles per tiger" as a yardstick. My figures for certain *Mukims* (sub-divisions of administrative districts) in Kemaman were as follows:

Mukim	*Area in square miles*	*Estimated No. of Tigers*
Binjai and Banggol ...	40·8	5
Chukai (Kemaman) ...	11·3	1
Kemasek	24·0	3
Kerteh	91·6	7
Kijal	23·9	3
Pasir Semut	22·6	3
Telok Kalong ...	14·7	2
Ulu Chukai	95·5	8
Totals	324·4 sq. miles.	32 tigers

When this table was made out, I could personally vouch for the

fact that at least that number of tigers was the average to be found in all *mukims* but Kerteh and Ulu Chukai. In those two *mukims* I was not so sure, so the minimum number, made up from tigers known to me, was taken. It is interesting to note that these totals allow only ten square miles to a tiger, which is a remarkably small area, unless one is aware of the tolerant attitude of males to females with cubs, to which I shall refer later. I am told that in India tigers are so much more common than in Malaya that a shooting block ten square miles in extent which contained only one tiger would be regarded as a very poor one.

Assuming one tiger to each ten square miles to be a fair figure for Trengganu and Kelantan and allowing for the proportion of animals to be smaller, by varying degrees, in the other States, my final figures looked something like this, (attention being drawn to the fact that even in such strongholds as the two States named I have gone below the yardstick):

State or Settlement	*Area in square miles*	*Estimated No. of Tigers*
Trengganu	5050	450
Kelantan	5746	500
Pahang	13873	1100
Perak	7890	400
Johore	7321	300
Kedah	3660	150
Perlis	310	20
Selangor	3166	30
N. Sembilan	2550	30
Malacca	633	10
Penang	400	—
Totals	50599 sq. miles.	2990 tigers

It only remains for me to emphasise that these figures are

almost entirely guesswork and are in no way dependable. If anything they are probably on the low side.

Although many of the older books about big-game hunting contain references to tigers up to thirteen feet in length, it is recognised nowadays that an animal which goes ten feet when accurately measured between pegs, is big even by Indian standards. My copy of Burke's *The Indian Field Shikar Book* is an old one. Writing in 1928, Burke states:

> "From a close study of tiger literature, I have no doubt that the existence of the 12-foot tiger (*felis elongatus* of the sceptic) has been conclusively proved, and in spite of the discussions of recent years, it appears to me that nothing more remains to be said on this subject. Old time sportsmen, whose veracity cannot be questioned, vouched for tigers 12 feet and over, and though, for reasons which are obvious to present-day sportsmen, the occurrence of these huge felines is nowadays unlikely, there is no more reason to doubt their former existence than there is to question that of other big game, such as deer, and the great sheep and goats of the Himalayas, which years ago sported trophies infinitely larger than anything the sportsman brings to bag in these days of universal shikar and over-shot grounds."

Now that Burke's days of universal shikar are over in India, it may be that the tigers there will be left in sufficient peace to produce more 12-foot specimens.

The list of big tigers included in *The Indian Field Shikar Book* is headed by an animal 10 feet 9 inches in length, but contains only fourteen other animals which go ten feet or more. It is of particular interest to look at the other end of the list and to find that a tiger of 8 feet 11½ inches is considered worthy of inclusion. Two of the animals listed are deserving of

special mention. The first is a female 9 feet 9 inches long. The second, a 9 foot 7 inches tiger, with a note beside it adding "Young tiger, with milk teeth." I think one might be forgiven, when studying such records, for wondering whether those who compiled them might not have been too willing to accept without reservation the information provided by their correspondents. If the Indian tiger has the same rate of growth as his Malayan counterpart, a young tiger which had attained a length of 9½ feet while still carrying his milk teeth would reach an unheard of size by the time that he was fully grown.

Experience and the use of a steel tape both lead me to the conclusion that it is not so much the size of the tiger that counts as the method by which it is measured. There are two accepted ways of ascertaining the length of the bigger cats. In both of these, the dead animal is placed on its side and arranged with head and tail in as straight a line as they will lie without undue persuasion. If the tape is run over the dead animal following the outline of the head and body, the measurement is described as having been taken "over curves". Much preferable to my mind, and more dependable, is the method of driving pegs into the ground at the tip of nose and tail and obtaining the overall length by measuring the distance between the inside surfaces of these pegs. Measurements obtained in this way are described as "between pegs". A measurement over curves normally gives a length of from six to eight inches greater than a measurement taken between pegs. All the Malayan tigers mentioned in this book were measured between pegs.

An accurate steel tape should be used in taking all measurements. I have been told that before the war it was not unusual in India for a royally entertained guest to be credited with a fine tiger which, in fact, had been measured with a specially prepared tape, on which each "inch" shown was substantially shorter than it should have been. Another way of exaggerating

the length of a tiger is to have it held on its back on hard flat ground with its legs in the air. After the peg at the tail has been placed in position, the chin of the dead animal is forced down by pressure from the foot while the peg is driven in at the nose. Although it might truthfully be said that this was measuring between pegs, such a method would enhance the length of each animal considerably.

Although it is easy to be misled by the more complete records available from India, by reports of the unusually large animals shot there, and by the fact that the tiger is much more common there than in Malaya, I am convinced that, animal for animal, the Malayan tiger and the Malayan leopard run smaller than their Indian counterparts. The standard for Indian tigers can, I think, best be set by the "Bachelor of Powalgarh," a huge tiger, the shooting of which is so graphically described by Jim Corbett in his grand book, *Man-eaters of Kumaon*. This animal, which was hunted assiduously by many sportsmen for season after season because of its great size, was truly a king among tigers. Yet, when measured by Jim Corbett and his sister it went, not 12 feet, but 10 feet 7 inches over curves. This animal would probably have been about 10 feet if measured between pegs. I doubt very much whether so experienced a sportsman as Corbett would have regarded this tiger as an exceptional specimen had it not been unusually big even for India.

Let us compare the "Bachelor of Powalgarh" with some big Malayan tigers. I have seen in the *Istana* (palace) in Johore Bahru, where there is a private museum containing a collection of trophies of which any sportsman would be envious, the 9 feet 8 inches tiger shot by His Highness the Sultan of Johore. Superbly mounted by Messrs. Rowland Ward, of London, this is a magnificent animal. It was the largest of thirty-five tigers shot by His Highness. The biggest tiger shot by G. R. Leonard,

M.B.E., of the Game Department, was a male 9 feet 6 inches long between pegs.

The tiger illustrated facing page 16 was the largest that I ever shot. As can be seen from the photograph, the end of this animal's tail was missing (probably as the result of a fight). Measured three times with the aid of my wife, this tiger went exactly 8 feet 11 inches between pegs. Had its tail been intact, and of average length, it would have measured out at 9 feet 4 inches. I have its skin to this day and it dwarfs every other in my possession.

Average lengths may give a better indication of size than the measurements of exceptionally large animals. Burke quotes the average length of an Indian male as 9 feet 6 inches and states "tigresses measure from 8 feet 3 inches to 8 feet 9 inches and seldom tape over 9 feet."

Tigers shot by His Highness the Sultan of Johore between 1898 and 1927 give an actual average length of 8 feet 3 inches. If allowance is made for two young tigers, both under 7 feet, this rises to an average of nearly 8 feet 6 inches. This compares almost exactly with the average obtained from eleven tigers I shot, which was 8 feet 7 inches. The eleven tigresses shot by His Highness gave an average length of 8 feet 2 inches. The average of eight shot by myself was 7 feet 4 inches, the overall average for the nineteen animals being 7 feet 10 inches.

We have thus:

	Indian Tiger	*Malayan Tiger*
Average male	9 ft. 6 ins. ...	8 ft. 6 ins.
Average female	8 ft. 6 ins. ...	7 ft. 10 ins.

Leonard quotes 8 feet 10 inches to 9 feet 4 inches as the average size for the male and 7 feet 10 inches to 8 feet 6 inches for the female, but these averages are a good deal higher than those obtained from the fifty-four animals shot by myself and

His Highness the Sultan of Johore. This difference is probably explained by the fact that the animals shot by Leonard, as a Game Warden, would mainly be beasts which had turned man-eaters, or cattle killers late in life, whereas His Highness the Sultan of Johore was shooting animals driven towards him by beaters, an exciting and dangerous sport.

Tigresses are finer and narrower in the head than tigers. They rarely seem to have such big front paws as some of the older males, nor do they carry that long hair on the cheeks, a feature of the adult male which makes him look even more formidable than he is, especially when encountered face to face at close quarters.

Sizes of Leopards

The difference in size between Indian and Malayan tigers is also apparent among leopards (*Panthera pardus*), the black phase of which is more common in Malaya than the spotted variety usually found in other countries. In India leopards range in length from 6 feet to 7 feet 6 inches, but the biggest that I have measured in Malaya, a black panther, was only 6 feet 2 inches. He was an old male, just past his prime, with badly tattered ears. Leopards are comparatively rare in Malaya, so that few opportunities for measurement present themselves. For this reason I measured every skin that I came across and made the most accurate allowances that I could for stretching and drying out.

While on the subject of leopards, I should explain that these animals are not normally such a menace to human beings and livestock in Malaya as they are in India. Corbett quotes one case of a pair of spotted Indian leopards which between them killed over five hundred people. In Malaya isolated cases have occurred of attacks on human beings by black panthers, but

unfortunately I am unable to state whether these attacks were provoked or not. In the main, the Malayan leopard keeps to the jungle, supplementing his natural food by carrying off occasional goats. Dogs are eagerly sought, as they are in India, and the one black panther which I shot in Trengganu accounted for over fifty pariah dogs before he was brought to book.

Leopards, or panthers as they are frequently called, are generally more cunning than tigers and capable of even more silent movement. Leonard also points out that for some reason they do not give voice in Malaya to the extent that they do in India, where the ominous "sawing" noise which they produce is commonly heard. It may be that the black variety is not as fond of hearing his own vocal efforts as the spotted leopard.

Spotted cubs sometimes occur in litters of black panthers in Malaya, but an adult spotted leopard is definitely a rarity on the Peninsula. Hislop, of the Game Department, has shot one adult specimen in Perak and I have examined the skin of another in Trengganu.

It is most unfortunate that no system exists in Malaya for recording accurately the size of all tigers and leopards killed. Authenticated specimens are generally those shot by, or reported to, Game Wardens or Rangers, and can represent but a small proportion of the whole. The Police keep records of the tigers shot in most districts, but the length and weight are not measured accurately enough to be of any real value. If some arrangement were made between the Game Department and the Police, instructions could be issued explaining the proper method of measuring the length of a tiger and steel tapes could be supplied. If this were done, records of Malayan carnivora would be much more reliable than they are at present.

It was difficult for me to weigh many tigers, as no suitable scales were available in Kemaman. From the few test weighings that I did make, with the aid of a Chinese weighing device,

it appears that only an exceptionally large male, with a full stomach, will top the 400 lbs. mark. I do not consider weight records to be of great value, as a patient hunter shooting a tiger when it is completing a meal instead of beginning it would secure an animal at least 30 lbs. heavier than it would otherwise have been. I have read that the average weight of a Central Provinces (Indian) tiger is about 440 lbs. and that of the tigress 300 lbs., but, as averages, I consider these to be on the high side.

Colouring

The coat of the tiger varies considerably, according to the climate of the country it occupies. Thus those animals to be found in the hotter parts of India, the South Asiatic islands and the Malay Peninsula are characterized by richer colouring and more distinctive stripes than those of Northern China and Siberia. The rough, almost shaggy, coat of the tigers of the colder countries becomes progressively shorter and thinner the further south one goes, so that the smooth well-marked hide of the Malayan tiger is much the same as that of his noted Bengal brother. If anything, the average Malayan tiger is better marked than the Indian animal.

The upper and outer parts of the head, body and limbs of the tiger, also the tail, are a rich rufous brown. This background colouring varies between animals and also according to a tiger's age and condition. The belly, the underside of the head and the inside of the limbs are almost white. This light colouring is also noticeable above the eyes. The backs of the ears are black, each having a large and distinctive white spot. The body and rear legs are marked with transverse stripes, almost jet black in some animals, but of a lighter colour in others. These stripes, which are almost entirely absent from the outside of the front legs, are

closest about the head. The tail is ringed, the extremity being black and tufted. The stripes on the coats of tigers show a wide variation between individual animals. In some parts of the body they run off into broken lines and spots. Not only does the degree of marking vary between animals (as is the case with zebra and giraffe) but the stripes on each side of the same animal never correspond exactly. Black tigers and white tigers have been known, but both are extremely rare.

In some ways tigers behave exactly like domestic cats. They wash themselves in a similar manner. They sit and lie in identical attitudes. The cubs play in the same way as kittens. Their actions when stalking or about to spring correspond very closely with those of domestic cats. Tigers are not, however, able to purr, although I have heard cubs in captivity make grunting noises indicative of satisfaction and pleasure. From time to time, presumably when in quest of a mate, or when wishing to indicate that he regards the area as his own particular hunting ground, the adult male is capable of ejecting a strong-smelling secretion from beneath the tail, which is raised vertically during the process. The fluid is expelled upwards and backwards with surprising force. The spot which the tiger has chosen for this purpose can easily be recognised by the odour. Traces of the fluid may also sometimes be found on surrounding vegetation, including the undersides of leaves on low-hanging boughs.

Very often the face of a tiger in repose bears an expression which gives me the impression that the animal is either bored or anxious. When walking the head is hung rather low, usually with jaws apart because of the heat, and tends to sway a little from side to side. The back legs have a very knock-kneed appearance, and, when seen from behind, look too small, almost a little out of place, on so fine a beast. The tail is held out at a slight angle from the body during normal gaits, the last

"The biggest tiger that I ever shot" (*See p.* 12)

An old male black panther, just past his prime (*See p.* 13)

Above:
This confirmed cattle-killer slew twenty-three cows in seven weeks.

Left:
The mouth of a young tigress, showing the long canine teeth.

part of it curling up rather sharply. When lying motionless, the animal is sometimes given away by a twitching of the ears.

Tigers are able to produce a wide variety of noises, ranging from a spitting, high-powered hiss to a full-throated roar. They grunt; they have a coughing roar and various types of snarls. Sometimes they tend to produce a sound very much like a long, low moan. Occasionally they give vent to their feelings by a sort of complaining, mumbling noise. The calling roar, sounded when a tiger is seeking a mate or when a tigress is searching for a lost cub, is impossible to describe, possessing as it does such volume, so much that is challenging yet mournful, sinister yet majestic. It starts with a long, full-throated sound, ascending the scale slightly. There is a short but clear pause, then a lower, explosive boom. The nearest that I can get to it on paper is "Oooooomph — aough".

Tigers in Malaya may be divided roughly into two types, which differ only in habit. The first, which frequents the outskirts of inhabited areas and will kill village livestock when the opportunity presents itself, hunts mainly by night. The second type, which confines itself to the jungle and which is entirely dependent on wild game for its food, hunts as readily in daylight as in darkness. This rough division applies equally well to wild pig, favourite fare of the tiger, which are rarely afoot before the late afternoon in areas where they are likely to encounter human beings, but which may be seen abroad at almost any hour in the wilder parts of the country. To attempt to generalise when dealing with any form of wild life is dangerous. I have shot pig near a Malay village at mid-day when there had been no rain to bring them out early. Similarly a tiger of the first type will sometimes be driven by hunger to attack cattle near dwellings in broad daylight. Having killed, however, he will usually move the dead animal only a short

distance, before leaving it with the intention of returning when darkness has fallen.

On one trip made into the interior of Trengganu, wild pig were seen feeding at all hours of the day, while there was ample evidence, not only from fresh pugs but also from two actual encounters, that tigers were on the move as well. Furthermore, Malays living in these sparsely-inhabited parts told me that more of their buffaloes were killed by day than by night. This would probably be true, because the buffaloes in such places are left to run wild, so that a tiger would find it easier to stalk and kill a beast grazing among light undergrowth than to cut one out from the protective formation adopted by these animals at night. North of Jerangau, where the Dungun river widens and shallows, with many sandy beaches, buffaloes may often be seen at dawn and in the late evening, grouped on the riverside sand with the calves nearer the water and the adult animals in a rough half-circle between them and the jungle. A tiger would need to be very hungry, or very confident in his prowess, to attack one of these groups, although I have heard them attempting to stampede the animals in the early hours of the morning.

That more livestock is killed at night is true nearer to the coast, where buffaloes, cows and goats are usually grazed on arable *padi* fields and at the roadside—frequently with a herdsman—during the day and are penned in enclosures from dusk until dawn. In such circumstances, the tiger has better chances of securing a kill in the darkness, particularly among cows, which seem to be so overcome by fear at night that they fall easy victims. Most of my experience has been with those tigers operating near villages in the districts of Kemaman and Dungun. I have only shot one "inland" tiger, which had changed his ground, had turned man-eater and was moving about freely in the daytime.

Restrictions which the Emergency imposed upon long

personal trips made it impossible for me to learn much at first-hand of the tigers which keep to the jungle. I would have welcomed an opportunity to study these "inland" tigers, for I am convinced that they are much easier to approach and observe than those which lurk round the villages, but it seemed pointless to take unnecessary risks with terrorists by going so far afield. There was no need to shoot these tigers, since they were doing no harm to anybody or to anybody's livestock and were playing an important part in maintaining the balance of nature. This question of the way in which tigers keep down the numbers of pig and deer is far more important in Malaya than it would seem at first glance. Many European estate managers and Chinese and Malay vegetable-gardeners and padi-planters would soon notice the difference if the Malayan tiger were to die out altogether.

It is a matter for conjecture whether or not the habits of those tigers which inhabit the East Coast of Malaya are affected by the south-east monsoon, which occurs from about November until March. I have been told that the late T. R. Hubback, Chief Game Warden of Malaya before the war, subscribed to the view that the dry season sent most of the tigers inland. It is a fact that, during the dry season, the ground near the coast, a good deal of which is sandy, becomes very dry. The swamps, a favourite haunt of pig, are thus reduced in number and extent. As a result, there is a tendency for the pigs to turn inland, where the ground beneath the jungle undergrowth is damp and soft, so that rooting for food is easier. Tigers, it is suggested, either follow the pigs or else are inclined, in their absence, to increase their attacks on *kampong*[1] livestock. It is not possible for me to produce data to confirm, or to refute, this theory because, although there might be less tigers in the coastal belt during the dry season, the number of domestic animals killed

[1] *Kampong*, a village.

would increase. In point of fact, the majority of the tigers it was necessary to destroy were killed during the dry months from June to September. No tigers were killed in February or in March, which months I consider to represent the height of the breeding season.

Unless statistics concerning wild game have been collected over a very long period they are of little value. A typical example is the record of tigers shot, whether by myself or others, over a period of three years in the Kemaman district. This record gave a total of 60 per cent. males to 40 per cent. females, indicating that tigresses are in the minority. Actually, I am of the opinion that it is the males which are outnumbered by the females. I estimate the ratio at about 55 per cent. females to 45 per cent. males. Not only does the proportion of sexes of other wild animals tend to confirm this view, but it is also true that tigers are less concerned over approaching habitations and human beings than are tigresses, and would, therefore, be more likely to become cattle-killers or man-eaters. This is borne out by the fact that the only four man-eaters which occurred in the State of Trengganu during the years 1949-1951 were all males.

Breeding

Tigers mate yearly, breeding in Malaya mainly taking place between the beginning of November and the end of March. A female may come into season at any time during these months and the very limited information at my disposal suggests that she will remain in that condition for not more than ten days. This appears to be the only period throughout the year in which the tiger and tigress remain together; even during that short time they separate and meet again. It is only necessary to bear this in mind to appreciate that stories of kills

and attacks by a tiger and his mate are largely fictitious. Actually only the tigress and her growing cub, or cubs, will hunt and kill together. A tigress will sometimes still be accompanied by one cub while carrying the unborn young of her next litter. Col. A. E. Stewart records in *Tiger and Other Game* that he shot one in India carrying four unborn cubs with a youngster about ten months old at heel. I have not known of such cases in Malaya. My own view is that in Malaya the average tigress breeds every two years.

The male and the female seek each other out during the time that the tigress is in need of a mate, both making use of a distinctive call. This short period also produces those rare occasions on which tigers congregate in groups. Reasonably reliable informants have told me of once seeing five tigers together and, on another occasion, seven. These gatherings would almost certainly occur when the tigress has just come into season and before the tigers have settled among themselves which one is most worthy of her favours.

The actual mating produces the most awe-inspiring, prolonged and high-powered caterwauling imaginable. The Malays who operated one of the river ferries near Kemaman township were treated to the sounds of one of these displays of feline affection one night. It was impossible for me to convince them that the uproar had not been made by two tigers engaged in a life-and-death struggle, although Pa Mat and I found the pugs of a tiger and a tigress near the spot from the direction of which they said the noise had come. Males and females will rarely engage in a real fight, unless the tigress is concerned about the safety of her cubs or is past her cub-bearing days. A tigress is cantankerous if she cannot locate a mate when she wants one and is in an even worse temper after mating because of the rough treatment meted out to her, quite unintentionally, I am sure, by the male.

The gestation period is 14 to 15 weeks. At birth the cubs are a little smaller than the average domestic cat, but of heavier build, with large ears and forepaws. Up to six are born in a litter, although three is a more common number. All may survive in captivity, but nature is a ruthless enemy, even to a tiger, and eventually the harassed mother is likely to have only the strongest cub of the litter running beside her.

There were, in the Kemaman district at various times while I was there, four different tigresses, each with only one cub. I knew of only one with two. One other female had three cubs with her for a while, so the local Chinese wood-cutters told me. The only time that I met them there were two fluffy, big-eared youngsters and a worried, bad-tempered mother whom Pa Mat and I left well alone. Just before I went on leave, I saw the mother's pugs again and could find only one smaller set of footprints following or near hers.

What happens to the cubs I do not know. Disease must play its part. Some may be drowned, especially in the high grasses and entangled roots of swamps. I know of no animal in Malaya which would venture to attack them, except a crocodile. Before the war a tiger and a crocodile were found lying dead together on the bank of a river in Johore. From the marks on them it was clear that the crocodile had seized the tiger and both had received fatal injuries in the struggle which followed.

Tiger cubs are very attractive in appearance and are quickly tamed if they are captured young enough. Unfortunately, such pets tend to become dangerous as they grow older. A wild specimen of only four months is quite capable of inflicting serious wounds. The increasing amount of meat they require daily is also an expensive item. While I write this in Singapore, far from Kemaman, two cubs are being flown home by B.O.A.C. to English zoos. I may lay myself open to a charge of

being harsh and brutal, but personally I would rather shoot a tiger than condemn it to so cramped and unnatural an existence.

When the cubs are born, the mother at first leaves them when she must to do some anxious hunting, but the youngsters are soon able to walk in a clumsy, gambolling fashion. The short journeys which they are capable of making at this stage are of material help to the tigress, who is thus able to extend her range and to change her hunting ground when necessary. The needle-sharp milk teeth of the cubs are kept for about six months before they are replaced by the permanent set. The second set of teeth are hollow, the cavities finally closing after about twenty months.

The process by which the canine teeth are replaced is of particular interest. Since the animal would be at a grave disadvantage if it were without canine teeth for any length of time, the new and permanent canines grow up inside the hollow milk teeth. Thus, when the milk teeth eventually loosen and drop out, the new canines, already protruding from the gums, are immediately available to take their place.

When they fail to be satisfied by her milk, from about five months after birth, the tigress gives the cubs small game to supplement their diet. This is when the sucking pig, the tender mousedeer, the peacock and the jungle fowl must beware.

Soon the young tigers will follow their mother when she goes in search of food, but it will be nearly a year after their birth before they are encouraged to be at hand for the kill. Small creatures, maimed but still alive, are given to them first, to be tossed about and worried, clawed and chawed, before death releases them and their warm blood quickens the senses of the tiger-in-training. The tigress is a patient teacher and a good mother. She will defend her young with great courage and determination, often attacking those who approach them

before there is any real need for her to do so. She is not quite such a model parent as many think, however. There have been cases of cubs being deserted by the mother when great danger threatened. The young have also been eaten when the pangs of hunger have overcome the instincts of motherhood. I have been told more than once that adult males will seek out male cubs to kill and eat them, but I find it hard to believe this, especially as the tigress would oppose such cannibalism resolutely.

Tigresses and Cubs

If it is difficult to study adult tigers, it is still more difficult to learn about the ways of a tigress with cubs. She is constantly on the alert and will hurry her young away, sometimes forsaking the neighbourhood altogether, at the first signs of danger. By great good fortune I had in the Kemaman district at various times three tigresses with cubs, all of which were in localities where I could try and learn about their ways without having to worry about Communist terrorists. Two of these cubs were of approximately the same age and size, being about a year old. The third, which was nearing the end of its second year and the time when its mother would leave it to fend for itself, I accidentally shot in mistake for its parent, an error easily committed at dusk with a nearly full-grown animal of an unfriendly disposition.

One tigress took her cub regularly to an extensive area of flat land near the coast. Here, where there were no houses, was an expanse of swamp, intersected by creeks of foul black water, with varying sized patches of sand on which pugs showed clearly. To enter the animals' hunting ground, I had to wade waist-deep through a particularly unpleasant and muddy creek. However carefully I moved, the faint noises made in crossing

this and the various swampy spots always prevented me from catching mother and child at rest or at play, but much could be learnt from their tracks in the sandy parts. It was interesting to see that when resting, or warming themselves in the rays of the early morning sun before it became too hot, the couple nearly always lay down a few feet apart, facing in opposite directions.

At night I sometimes heard them amusing themselves with the large herd of tame buffaloes which grazed through the area. More than once the sound of heavy hoofs came to me mingled with the crashing of undergrowth and the distinctive "chush-chush" sound that these big beasts make when hurrying through water and I knew that the tigers had alarmed them. One night, during one of these commotions, the tigress raced past me in the dark at a distance of about twenty paces. The cub was not with her, or if it was I did not hear it, and I came to the conclusion that they were trying to get the herd between them in the hope of isolating a cow or calf. It is possible that the tigress was endeavouring to turn a calf in the direction of her cub so that the youngster could make the kill.

One morning, mystified local Malays showed me the carcass of a buffalo calf which they had found dead in the sea surf and which, they believed, had been killed by a black panther. They had put it in a shady place until I arrived. An examination of the dead animal convinced me that the kill had been attempted by the tiger cub, which had brought the animal down and administered the bite which eventually proved fatal, but had not been strong enough to hold the sturdy young beast. Pa Mat and I back-tracked the calf into one of the swamps half a mile away from where it had run into the sea in an instinctive dying effort to evade its pursuer. The marks which we found showed that the tigress and her cub had got the herd between them on a track which they were in the habit of following on

their way to the main creek. On the far side of the water were the pugs of the tigress, well splayed out because of the speed at which she had been moving, and depressions where an adult buffalo had fallen twice. From the pattern of the pugs and hoof prints it was clear that on each occasion the buffalo had fallen during panic-stricken flight and not in evading, or being knocked over by, charges. It had apparently escaped unharmed. The cub had attacked the calf on the other side of the creek, but had not tried to follow it up after it had broken away, possibly through anxiety at being separated from its mother by too great a distance.

I moved the dead calf to a stretch of open grassland not far from the swampy area, so that the tigers might remove it that night if they wished and I could follow up the drag the following evening in the hope of obtaining a photograph. I thought that they would have no further interest in the kill, especially as it was unlikely that they realised that the calf had died. It came as a surprise, therefore, to be telephoned later that evening and told that the tigress and cub had been seen feeding from the carcass at three o'clock that afternoon, without even having bothered to drag it off into the surrounding bushes. Driving back to Kijal, I left the car some distance away and quietly approached on foot in the darkness. The absence of sounds from the direction of the kill convinced me that the animals had gone away. As I switched on my torch to have a look at the dead calf, however, the tigress, who was in the undergrowth some yards to my right, made a coughing kind of noise, half grunt and half hiss, and I heard the pair of them making off rapidly without any attempt to conceal the sound of their movements. I hid nearby and waited for over two hours but they did not return, probably having received too great a scare at my approach.

It is unusual for tigers to feed in the open, this being particu-

larly uncommon in daylight, but on an occasion such as this the impatience and hunger of the cub would probably be responsible. Had she been by herself, the tigress would undoubtedly have waited until it was dark before going to the kill and would then have dragged it off to a well hidden feeding place. What usually happens in such cases is that the cub, lacking experience and caution, walks up to the kill and begins to feed. The mother, seeing that nothing happens to the cub, follows suit. This can have tragic consequences—for the cubs.

A Malay waiting over a dead cow near Kuala Trengganu in 1951 saw a young tiger cub approach and shot it dead. He remained in his tree, not daring to descend. A little while afterwards a second cub appeared and was also shot. It was followed by a third which met the same fate. The tigress, which the Malay should have shot if he wanted to kill the slayer of local cattle, did not appear. I have never heard of three tigers being slaughtered at one sitting before or since.

The other tigress and cub which I was attempting to study resisted all my efforts to photograph them, although I twice found that the ground of their shaded lying-up place was still warm to my hand. My excursions to the spot were not entirely without profit, however. One visit to the area—which consisted in part of sparse undergrowth with tracks of silver sand running through it—disclosed that part of it was so marked with pugs that it looked as though a large number of old and young tigers had passed that way, except that the pugs went in all directions. There were also clear imprints where tigers had been sitting, lying down and even rolling over. It took a long time to solve the riddle.

Then it suddenly dawned on me that the tigress and her cub had been having a grand game of chase-and-catch, the same game that a domestic cat will play with her kittens. Here the cub had waited behind some bushes until mother came along.

I could visualise them rolling on the ground, grappling, with their hind feet working against each other's bodies, in gentle imitation of the terrible disembowelling stroke which all cats, big or small, employ. Here mother had chased her cub at full speed. In catching him, she had been a little too rough, with the result that the cub came down so heavily that its body left a clear depression in the soft sand. What a game they had played there in the moonlight and how I wished that I could have been there to watch them.

The education of a young tiger continues well into the second year and I would say that proficiency in killing small animals is not acquired until the cub is some 18 months old. The actual kill is, after all, only a small part of what the cubs have to learn. They must be able to move silently, no matter what lies in their path. They must learn how best to use their wonderfully keen eyes and ears and how to make the most of their comparatively poor sense of smell. They must be taught how to swim. They must understand the importance of getting down wind of their prey, so that the strong rank smell of their own bodies does not reach the nostrils of their quarry. They must be taught what is good to eat and what not to eat. To avoid *Tok Landak*, the porcupine, with his sharp, penetrating quills.

There is much of this kind of thing, and more, to be learnt, but a tiger cub's education is not all work and no play. There is a good deal of romping. First with tolerant mother, when her cubs are very young; later with twigs, leaves and other objects; and, finally, with the bodies of the small animals which are caught and killed. A Malay once told me how he had seen a tiger playing with the carcass of a young pig. The tiger picked the dead pig up in his front paws, sat up on his haunches and threw it from him, then pounced on it as if to cheat himself that it was still alive. He was patting it in a

coaxing manner, as a cat will pat at a wind-blown feather, when he realized that he was being watched. One quick glance at the man and he seized the dead piglet in his mouth, vanishing in a few swift bounds.

Finally the time comes, after nearly two years with its mother, when the cub is left to fend for itself. One day the tigress will readily risk her life to protect her cub. By the next day, as the need for a mate possesses her, her attitude will have become one of complete indifference, even of hostility. At two years of age the cub is quite capable of looking after itself; it would, in fact, probably have survived had it been separated from its mother when a year old. Not until it is five years of age will the young tiger be fully grown. Thereafter it will increase in strength and weight rather than in size. The period during which the cub runs with its mother is not one of conscious training effort by the tigress, for the young of the wild learn by emulation and experience rather than by tuition.

If he survives his fights and the traps, guns and other hazards which will be his lot, the tiger may expect to live for twenty-five to thirty years. Then, if death is the natural result of old age, he will creep away in the feebleness caused by his inability to kill food, to some hidden spot where he will compose himself patiently, as wild beasts do, for his last long sleep.

Before his death he will display many signs of his advancing age. Apart from its scars, his coat will lose its lustre and much of its fine red colouring will fade. The hair of his face may assume a pronounced grey or white tinge. His claws will lose their sharpness and begin to bush out. Many of his teeth will be broken or missing. His pugs will be splayed out and, when seen in wet clay, will show many cracks and creases. The face of one ancient tiger which we had in Kemaman looked almost snowy white by moonlight. Even walking seemed an effort.

His breathing had a distinct wheeze about it. I thought to shoot him to give him a speedier end, but before I could do so he went off on his own, I hope to the dignified death which he richly deserved, for his record was a blameless one.

CHAPTER III

DIET, KILLS AND AREA COVERED

THE Malayan tiger does not have such a varied diet as the tiger of India where ungulates—serow, goral, nilghai, black buck, swamp deer, chinkara, sambur, chital, barking deer, four-horned antelope and mousedeer—are plentiful, in addition to various species of pigs and monkeys, hares, rabbits and an assortment of the bigger birds. In Malaya, the tiger must content himself with pigs, which appear more frequently on his menu than anything else, with an occasional *rusa* (the Indian sambur) and a still more occasional barking deer. Mousedeer, which are not much larger than hares, are not big enough to make a satisfying meal. Nor are the peacock or jungle fowl, although any one of them would be most acceptable to a really hungry animal. I have never heard of a Malayan tiger attacking a wild elephant, although such encounters have been reported from India. In his book *Big Game of Malaya*, E. C. Foenander tells of a *sĕladang*[1] calf being killed by a tiger, which was then prevented from feeding from it by an encircling movement maintained by adult members of the herd.

Doubt is expressed in the same book about the ability of a tiger to break the neck of a mature bull *sĕladang*. While I agree that a tiger would need to be very hard pressed for food to tackle so formidable an adversary, I must point out that I have seen several of the huge bull Indian water buffaloes, used by the Malays to draw wood or sled-like conveyances carry-

[1] The Malayan wild oxen (*Bibos Gaurus Hubbacki*).

ing fruit, etc., which have been killed by tigers. These big bulls cannot be so very far behind a *sĕladang* in size, weight and strength, although they may lack the wild animal's ferocity. The important thing to remember is that a tiger does not break his victim's neck by force, but kills by biting into the neck near its junction with the head, a function for which the long canine teeth are admirably suited.

Although I frequently came across the tracks of tapirs (*Tapiris malayanus*) in Trengganu, I never heard of one of these odd looking and almost defenceless animals being killed by a tiger. However, in the June 1950 issue of *The Malayan Nature Journal*, J. A. Hislop included in an article on these animals a note by C. E. Jackson describing how a tiger had attacked a tapir at some waterworks near Kuala Lumpur, both beasts having fallen into the "intake well". The tiger escaped, but when the tapir was hauled out after considerable difficulty it was found to have suffered severely from its attacker's claws. Its lower left jaw-bone had also been completely crushed by a bite. The animal was accordingly destroyed.

It may be of interest here to record that tapirs are not as mute as many believe. I have heard them in the late evening making a noise remarkably like the persistent shrill yapping of an excited dog. The sound would have passed unidentified had I not realized that there could be no dogs in that particular area and questioned the local Malays who were with me. If the tapir is attacked, it would also be reasonable to suppose that the Summatran rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sumatrensis*), which exists in Malaya in rapidly diminishing numbers, must also occasionally fall victim to a tiger when immature. These animals are met with so infrequently (I knew definitely of only one pair in Trengganu) that the average tiger would probably pause in amazement at the sight of one instead of attacking it.

Above:
The buttocks of kills are almost invariably eaten first. (*See p.* 34)

Left:
An injured buffalo which the Author had to destroy.
(*See p.* 34)

A typical kill after one night's feeding (*See p.* 39)

Cases also occur on the sea coast in which tigers kill the giant turtles as they come up the beach to lay their eggs. The turtle is turned over onto its back and thus rendered helpless. It is then killed and eaten at leisure.

Collecting these turtles' eggs, over a hundred of which may be produced by one reptile in a night, is a profitable occupation in parts of Malaya. Large sums are paid to the State Government concerned for the right to collect all that are found along each section of the shore. The Malays engaged in gathering this harvest from the sea are in the habit of spending the night on the beach to mark the spots where the females deposit the eggs and to ensure that they are not stolen. The fires which they light for warmth and companionship may be seen burning along the coast until late at night. They are apt to die out before dawn, however, for by then most of the watchers are sound asleep, wrapped from head to foot in *sarongs* to keep off the sand-flies.

It was to such an East Coast beach that a young tiger came near dawn one morning in 1951. There were the dying embers of a fire. Beside them was lying a shape the like of which he had never seen before. It had no head. It appeared to have no limbs. It did not move. Curiosity overcame him. He moved closer. There was still no sign of life. Stepping up to it, the tiger gave the shape a gentle, playful nip to see what would happen. The roar of pain and terror which resulted so startled the tiger that he made off hurriedly. A few hours later, the Malay was in the Kuala Trengganu hospital, the bones of one elbow crushed and splintered by that one exploratory bite.

Apart from wild animals, the Malayan tiger which is prepared to enter or approach a village has buffaloes, cows, occasional goats, sheep, pigs kept by Chinese, dogs, cats, tame monkeys and poultry on which to feed. Malayan cattle

are very small compared with European farm types, the exception being the big Brahmini bulls usually owned by Indians. Dogs are taken frequently; cattle run them a close second, losses among them being high because of their curiosity. I have never heard of a tiger killing two buffaloes one after the other, but the death of two, sometimes three, cows in one encounter is not unusual. What happens is that the herd of cows is grazing in daylight, or lying down, when the tiger attacks the animal which he has singled out. The remainder flee for dear life, tails held high as they gallop off. Then they all stop to look back. Seeing nothing, one or two return to find out what has happened. They approach too close to the tiger. Enraged at being disturbed over a fresh kill, the tiger attacks again and another cow dies, quite unnecessarily. Tigers will eat almost anything that they can kill or which they find lying dead. It is known that crabs have been eaten as well as frogs.

Tigers appear to specialize to a certain extent. One develops a fondness for beef and perfects a technique which will assure him of kills from herds of cattle. Another acquires a liking for dogs, discovers the best way in which to kill them and will carry off as many as three in one night, taking them from different, widely-spaced houses. I am fond of dogs and have been sickened to see how a tiger hunts them out. Sometimes the big cat will creep silently up the steps of a house to take the dog off the veranda where he lies sleeping. More common is the trick of going beneath a Malay house, built on piles three or four feet from the ground in accordance with local custom, and seizing the animal from his favourite corner.

One dog belonging to a Chinese had evaded several such attempts, although three other dogs had been taken from the same dwelling. This particular animal was astute enough to forsake the outhouse, which appeared to offer him the best

refuge, at the first sign of danger and to slink off to hide among the vegetables growing in the garden. He, too, died eventually. It was not good to see, the following morning, the signs of the grim game of hide-and-seek which had been played. The dog had repeatedly changed position as the tiger sought him out and had cleverly evaded two springs. Finally he was caught in the open as he attempted to move from one cultivated patch to another. Dogs are small enough for tigers to carry without dragging, but the deeply impressed pugs of the front feet of the tiger give as clear an indication, when a kill has been made and is being carried, as the drag marks caused by the bodies of larger animals.

Method of Killing

Tigers kill with their teeth and not by blows from their forepaws as many believe. They leap upon the animal's head, neck or shoulders, grip with their big sickle-shaped claws and bite deep into the neck close to the head. In nearly all cases the quarry is borne to the ground by the weight of the tiger coupled with the force of the spring, and the fatal bite is made with the tiger lying across the fallen beast. It sometimes happens that the beast's neck is broken by the tiger's grip or in the fall, but this is incidental to the main attack with the teeth. Badly timed attacks are sometimes made, placing the tiger so far back on his quarry that he is forced to relinquish his hold, or else causing him to miss his target altogether.

There are two methods of attack, the more usual being a leap which is the culmination of a successful stalk to within close range of the hunted animal. When a sufficiently close approach is not possible, usually because suitable cover is lacking or because the hunted animal is moving about too much, the tiger charges in the knowledge that his terrific

initial speed and the surprise caused by his appearance—often accompanied by a blood-chilling roar—will probably enable him to reach his prey before it has had time to get into its stride. Things do not always go as the tiger plans. I once saw an old boar, obviously nearing exhaustion, pounding across a large coconut estate, followed at a distance of about seventy yards by an equally tired tiger. I would very much like to have seen the outcome of that chase but my work called me elsewhere.

I have only witnessed one kill by a tiger and that was over so quickly that it was very difficult to follow what happened. The victim was a scurrying dog, overtaken in great distance-devouring bounds by a tigress. The final spring, which was made at full speed, must have covered at least eight yards. I was so concerned with trying to save the dog by getting in a snap shot that I had only a vague impression of the tigress coming to rest with the dog between her paws, simultaneously biting its head and neck. I fired as the spring was completed, but only succeeded in inflicting a flesh wound in the hind leg of the tigress which was nearer to me. This tigress was shot ten days later when I had devised, and Pa Mat had constructed, a wooden cage in which a dog could be placed for bait without fear of its being hurt. A cruel trick practised in Malaya is to tie up a dog so that its back feet are suspended clear of the ground. This makes it whine so much that a tiger in the vicinity will almost certainly hear it. I resorted to the cage only because of the number of dogs this tigress was killing.

Tigers are not as cruel as they are reputed to be and, apart from those made sport of by cubs, most animals that they attack are killed instantly. Nor will a tiger normally be interested in securing a fresh kill when he already has one upon which he can feed. Unnecessary slaughter does occur in

certain circumstances, as is borne out by the killing of more than one cow as I have described. It has also been said that a young male tiger will sometimes kill several animals in a night through a desire to show off or because he revels in his skill and strength, but I have never known this to happen in Malaya. The only case of deliberate wanton killing that I heard of was the slaughter in one night of all the thirteen sheep which were in the narrow confines of a small enclosure. Here the milling animals may have enraged the tiger after he had killed the single beast he sought, or else the big cat found something fascinating about the sheep, which were not common in that part of Malaya, and could not resist the urge to make sport with them.

When an animal has been killed by a tiger, the carcass is removed to a sufficiently sheltered eating place. Frequently this is in such thick undergrowth that it is necessary for a human being to crawl on hands and knees to reach the kill. A spot near to water is often chosen, so that the tiger may quench his thirst, as he will wish to do regularly when feeding. Although it seems unlikely that a tiger can have a sense of guilt, the fact remains that wild animals, no matter where they are killed, are rarely dragged as far as domestic animals. Long drags are even more frequent when the tiger is a man-eater making off with a corpse. The obvious answer appears to be that domestic animals, more often than not, would be slaughtered near to habitations, so that the tiger would be prompted to take them a long way away to avoid being disturbed. This is not always the case. A cow, killed where a village consisted of only three houses, was taken half-a-mile. A wild pig, secured by the same tigress close to one of these dwellings while rooting among the vegetables, was taken a bare fifty yards.

The carrying powers of the Malayan tiger are not to be

compared with those of the Indian tiger, which, if reports are correct, can pick up a dead buffalo as easily as he can a dead man. Small animals such as dogs, young pigs and immature goats are the only kills that are carried clear of the ground. Many Malay huntsmen will say that a tiger seizes a fully grown cow by the neck, slings the carcass over his shoulders and makes off with it in that fashion. I cannot believe that this is true. Even a fully grown tiger will find it more convenient to half drag and half carry a dead pig weighing as little as 100 lbs. When the carcass of a heavy animal—a buffalo, cow or big wild boar—is moved, the tiger walks backwards to drag it. Taking a firm grip with his teeth, he gives a tremendous thrust with all four legs. Directly the dead animal begins to move, the tiger continues backwards with short, powerful tugs until the momentum gained by the first hard pull is lost. A brief pause and the process is repeated. Tigers sometimes find themselves in difficulties when moving a kill, the horns of dead cows and buffaloes, in particular, being prone to catch beneath roots and between the trunks of adjacent trees and saplings. Dead cattle cannot always be removed from the enclosures in which they have been killed, although great tenacity is shown in breaking down fences, tearing out boards and even digging where necessary.

One young tiger spent half the night attempting to make off with a cow which he had killed in the compound of a Malay dwelling. He had jumped the surrounding fence easily enough to reach his prey, but it proved an insurmountable obstacle when he came to carry his dead victim away, although he had sufficient sense to select the lowest point in it where a rough stile had been constructed. From the pugs, and the cow and tiger hair found on the upper rail of the stile, it was clear that the problem had been to swing the dead cow over the fence after the struggle to lift it into position. Each time

that the tiger did this he was unable to force the carcass over the top. Every time that he jumped the fence to pull it across, the cow would flop back again. Once a tiger has made up his mind to do anything, he will often go on trying to do the same thing over and over again, although several simple alternatives may be available to him. In this case the tiger gave up the struggle only when the cow fell onto its back into a steep-sided ditch near the fence, becoming so tightly wedged that even he could not remove it. More than once I have noticed that, when the horns of a dead beast become jammed beneath a raised root, the tiger persists in pulling forwards, when a few steps backwards, or even sideways, would free the obstruction. Whether this obstinacy is due to lack of intelligence or to stubborn pride I cannot say. The trait is noticeable in other aspects of a tiger's behaviour.

The strength which a tiger is able to exert in moving a kill is amazing. The dead buffalo, a photograph of which appears opposite page 33, was left by a tigress lying in a great clump of grass and reeds. The aid of eight fishermen, who were accustomed to heaving on ropes, was enlisted, but they proved incapable of moving the animal an inch. There it remained until it was pulled out by a four-wheel drive truck fitted with a winch. When the tigress returned later in the dark I let her be to see whether she could move the dead buffalo on her own. All that I heard were the two huge "wooshes" made by the carcass as it slid over the ground when she began to drag it back to cover again. After that I shot her.

Feeding

Once the kill is in a spot to his liking, the tiger begins to feed. In nineteen cases out of twenty, the buttocks are eaten first, then the hind legs and so on up the body towards the

head. A half-eaten kill left by a tiger is nearly always the same in appearance, consisting as it does of the forward part of the body, the front legs and the head. If the kill is a cow or female buffalo in calf the foetus may be torn out and eaten first. Leopards and black panthers on the other hand nearly always feed first from the stomach. Some tigers will remove parts of their kill and bury them before they begin to feed, this being most common with the trotters of wild pigs. These are severed from the legs and concealed in the ground, some pains being taken to pat down the covering earth. Other tigers acquire the habit of hiding a half-eaten kill beneath leaves and grass, this being done so neatly that it is difficult to believe that an animal has collected and arranged the covering materials. The entrails of a kill are never eaten by a tiger. They, and many other small pieces of flesh, bone and skin, are dragged off by the monitor lizards which, attracted by the smell, visit the kill when the tiger is not there.

A fully-grown tiger will eat up to 40 lbs. of meat at a meal, depending on how hungry he is. It makes no difference to him how putrid the flesh has become. I have heard a tigress making unusual blowing noises when eating from a dead buffalo of which little more was left than a seething mass of maggots and have no doubt that she was blowing to clear the grubs from her nostrils. Hungry tigers are far from being particular feeders and will readily devour any carrion to which they have been attracted by smell. Sometimes they stoop to outright scavenging, as did the tigress and her cub which made a habit of visiting a town refuse dump in Trengganu to see what scraps they could pick up.

A tame animal which has died a natural death, or a wild one that has been shot and put out as bait, proves just as acceptable to a tiger as a kill that he has obtained himself—a fact which enabled me to end the career of more than one cattle

thief. Distinctive and repulsive noises are made while feeding, including the sound of the meat being torn off and swallowed in great gulps. A close examination of a dead buffalo, from which a tiger had been permitted to take two mouthfuls before being shot, disclosed that nearly 4 lbs. of meat had been consumed in those two bites. Grinding of the teeth, accompanied by a soft rasping noise from the throat, is frequently heard as a tiger returns to a kill. This is, perhaps, the feline version of lip-smacking in anticipation of a meal. The noise produced from the throat is much like that made by a domestic cat when it sees a bird beyond its reach, except that it is considerably louder.

It is unusual for a tiger not to return to his kill, once he has fed from it, but cases must sometimes occur when fresh food is almost forced upon him. A blundering pig might approach too near a tiger's lying-up place, for example, and awaken the instinct to kill. The Kemasek man-eater, before he began the final series of killings which made him so feared in 1951, behaved in a most peculiar manner on discovering a live cow which I had tied up for him. He was walking along a sandy track carrying a dead mousedeer in his mouth when he heard or smelt the cow. He could not have been hungry or he would have eaten the mousedeer instead of carrying it. Evidently he had already eaten that night and had come upon the mousedeer unexpectedly. The cow must have appeared as another easy victim, not to be passed by although he had no need for it. Tossing the mousedeer to one side (I found it five yards from his pug marks), he killed the cow and dragged it off into the nearby swamp as I had intended he should. Having killed the cow he did not know what to do with it and contented himself by chewing most of the flesh from the face instead of eating the more succulent parts. He then left both mousedeer and cow and walked off, not bothering to return on

either of the two following nights on which I waited up for him.

Although a tiger almost invariably returns to a kill from which he has fed, he will hardly ever come back to a dead animal which he has left uneaten of his own accord. It is hard to account for these apparently aimless kills when the tiger goes to a great deal of trouble to secure them, but the fact remains that such instances do occur. There is no apparent reason why the kill is left. I have taken great pains to ensure that cows killed in this way have not been disturbed, and have checked by the absence of footprints afterwards that no one went near them, but the tiger seemed to have lost all interest in them.

I do not include in this category kills over which an attempt has been made to shoot the tiger, as there is always the possibility that, however carefully the preparations have been made, something has been done to alarm it. Cattle will be left lying in the open after being killed in the daytime, but that is because circumstances combine to make it inconvenient for the tiger to drag them away. Next morning it is usually found that the tiger has returned and made off with them. It is only when the tiger has a completely free choice in the matter and elects to leave his kill uneaten that he can be depended upon never to return to it again. I have known other tigers to be attracted to such kills, however.

Tigers are certainly individualistic. One that I knew of always made for the nearest water with his kill and, having reached it, proceeded to tow the dead animal along the shallow parts. This must have simplified his task of removing his kill, but added considerably to mine when I had to try and follow him up, as there was a complete absence of pugs or drag marks.

Contrary to popular belief, tigers do not have lairs, although

they will occasionally carry off their prey to the same spot when no alternative feeding place is available. A case in point was a tigress which made off with a number of dogs from dwellings close to a police enclosure. This animal took the dead dogs up a steep hill behind the police station and ate them among the bushes on its summit. She had no option unless she was prepared to walk through the streets of the township with a dead dog in her mouth. When I found the spot, I collected from it six dog collars, two of which were later identified by the animals' owners. The feeding place was so close to the police station that I could look down from it on to the roofs below. I wondered, as I stood there, how the Malay policemen and their families would have re-acted had they known how near a tiger had often been to them.

Area Covered

Tigers cannot normally afford to remain in one locality for more than a day or two at a time, because local game will begin to move out of the area almost as soon as a tiger moves into it. Tigers have a pronounced musk-like smell, easily identified by other animals from a distance. The noises which accompany a kill, such as the shrill squeals of a stricken pig, provide further warnings to game to make itself scarce. I knew of one isolated rubber plantation which could usually be depended upon to yield a wild pig for the table, if one knew how to stalk these watchful animals. Time and time again Pa Mat and I found, on the narrow path leading to this spot, the pugs of an old tigress. If they had been made within the last two days, we knew that our chances of shooting a pig were slender. In some of our other haunts, too, we noticed that if there were fresh pugs there would be few new pig tracks and vice versa.

It is for this reason that tigers do not stay in one place for long, but must be on the move continuously. Their movements, plotted over a period of months, produce definite patterns. The most common of these is a rough triangle, the three points of which are fluid but are generally five to eight miles apart. Having secured a victim at one point of the triangle, a tiger might remain there for one, two or three nights, until he has eaten out his kill. He then moves on to the second point and will remain there for another two or three days, before transferring to the third point. Another short stay there and he returns to the vicinity of his starting point. Such a programme not only enables each hunting area to be visited every nine to twelve days, but also permits the tiger to follow up the game which tends to leave each part of his area as he visits it.

Pa Mat and I proved many times that a tiger which had secured a kill, whether from village livestock or from wild game, could generally be expected to return to the neighbourhood within about ten days. Often the circle, or triangle, is completed with monotonous regularity. Occasionally the tour is accelerated or slowed down, depending on the success of the tiger's hunting. Sometimes tigers will go off on long jaunts. I once followed the pugs of a male from the point where I found them behind my house. The tracks led across country to the main East Coast Road and then kept to the roadside until approaching the river ferry, a mile from my home. Here they turned off so that the tiger could swim the river a safe distance up stream from the building occupied by the Malays who operated the ferry. I lost the tracks there, but the pugs appeared on the roadside again five hundred yards beyond the river and continued to keep to the road, apart from a few deviations, until they branched off into the jungle near Panchor. This tiger covered not less than twelve miles

that night from the time that he passed behind my house. How far he had gone before that is not known. The same pugs were seen on this route once or twice again. Then I found them no more. Later I discovered that this animal had apparently been on a visit of inspection to an area left vacant by the death of another tiger which I had had to shoot. Finding it more to his liking than his own, he had eventually moved into it. It is one of the surprising facts about tigers that when one is killed another soon appears to take over the unoccupied hunting "block".

Once he has adopted a particular area as his own, a tiger will strenuously resist any attempt on the part of another tiger to poach upon his preserve. This does not often happen, but when it does there is usually a fight to decide which animal shall remain in the disputed territory. These are, I believe, the only occasions on which fights occur except during the breeding season. A male does not appear to resent the presence of a tigress in his area, especially if she has young with her, but they do not consort or share kills, preferring to keep out of each other's way. I learnt of one battle royal between two males in Trengganu in 1951. Local Malays heard the sounds of the fight coming from the top of a hill during the middle of the morning. The struggle went on during the day, the scene of it slowly moving down the hill onto the banks of a river. Here, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, the younger and smaller animal succeeded in overcoming and killing his opponent. Tiger-like he could not resist a brief feed from the body of his fallen foe before leaving it.

These fights are rather like a quarrel between two domestic cats, in that far more of the time occupied is spent in circling, snarling and threatening than in coming to grips. The exchanges themselves are of short duration and are divided by long periods of manœuvring. Although I have not seen one of

these fights myself, I have shot a tiger which had recently taken part in one. The most obvious of this animal's injuries were a deep bite on one foreleg, the absence of two claws from the opposite forepaw and damage to the mouth, which included two broken canines. When skinned this tiger was found to be so full of black thorns that barely an inch of the underside of the skin did not have its share of them.

Unlike domestic cats and most other felines, including leopards, tigers have not the slightest aversion to water. On the contrary, they like to lie in it during the heat of the day and are very strong swimmers. One is reputed, before the war, to have been in the habit of swimming some four miles to an island off the coast of Malaya to hunt the pigs which existed in numbers there. Malays will tell you that when a tiger sets out to cross a river he makes for some fixed point on the opposite bank. If the current carries him downstream, or if he misses the mark for some other reason, he will return for another attempt rather than land at any other place than that which he has chosen. This was another Malay belief that I could not readily accept, but one day, when I was in the jungle during floods caused by the monsoon, I saw something which made me wonder whether it was true or not.

I was with a police patrol. We had followed a track which led us to a swollen, fast-moving river which it was necessary to cross. Along this path were the pugs of a tiger, a fine male from the size of them, which led straight to the water's edge and there ended abruptly. Boats were procured to take us over the river, the crossing being accomplished with difficulty because of the swirling, eddying flood of water. I was among the first to cross and there were the pugs of the tiger where he had stepped ashore on the exact centre of the continuation of the track and had gone on his way. The volume of water was

so great that even so powerful a swimmer as a tiger must have been swept some distance downstream. Yet he had obviously swum back, probably along the slack water against the far bank, to land where he had originally intended.

One must assume that sometimes during floods of this nature a tiger must be swept so far downstream that he is lucky to reach the further bank at all. He would then have no option but to swallow his pride. They must also be drowned at times too, for the first dead Malayan tiger that I ever saw was one floating down a river after severe flooding. Tigers do not as a rule climb trees but have been known to ascend to a considerable height when the danger which prompted them to climb was sufficiently grave. I know that at least one Malay has lost his life through depending on the fact that he could climb and that the man-eater he was hunting could not. Chased by the animal, he struggled up a sloping tree with a sense of relief which turned to panic when he found the tiger following him. He could not descend because the tiger was below him, so he had no option but to jump for it. The tiger followed suit and caught him as he reached the ground.

One of the differences between Indian and Malayan tigers is that the latter, when walking at their normal speed, do not normally place their hind feet on top of the pugs made by the front feet. Both the Indian tiger and leopard frequently do so. I have seen a great many tigers' pugs in Malaya, and not a few of the pugs of leopards, but the only time when they overlapped was when a tigress was stalking a dog across a newly-dug garden. In this case, I believe, the animal deliberately placed her back feet in the deep depressions caused by her forepaws so that she could move more steadily and silently.

The pugs of the male tiger reproduced on facing p. 49 are typical of those seen in Malaya. This photograph, taken of pugs on dew-marked silver sand, also illustrates clearly the

difference in size between the fore and hind feet, the latter being appreciably smaller. This difference in size is sufficiently marked to lead inexperienced Malays and Chinese to believe that two animals, one bigger than the other, have left the tracks. Such reports of two tigers having passed along a track or through a village often reached me.

The Indian tiger frequently injures itself by impatient attempts to kill porcupines, the quills of which penetrate deeply and cannot be plucked out. They are bitten off, but cause suppurating wounds which in some cases have incapacitated the animal sufficiently to cause it to turn man-eater. I, personally, have never heard of a Malayan tiger killing a porcupine although this must sometimes occur. Of the thirty or so dead tigers which I have examined I have never seen one carrying either the marks of porcupine quills or the quills themselves.

Spring Guns and Traps

Malays have three main methods of killing tigers which they themselves are unable to shoot, either because they do not possess a gun or are afraid to do so. Some Malays, but by no means all, are terrified of the animals for superstitious reasons. I have known of three of them, one armed with a gun, sitting in a tree shaking with fright while the tiger they were waiting to shoot fed at his leisure below. Fortunately this is not common to all Malays and I could quote many examples of great bravery shown by them in fending off attacks or in destroying tigers which were making a nuisance of themselves. There is in the private museum at Johore Bahru the skull of a tiger killed by a Malay with his knife in 1951. This beast had killed two of the man's relatives before it attacked him. The skull has a great gash across the side of it. Another blow apparently

Just before the kill. The pugs of a tigress at full speed. Note the marks made by the unsheathed claws.

Pugs of a male tiger showing the difference in size between the fore (*lower*)

struck the mouth, breaking off two canines. The Malay, who was badly injured, received a suitable reward for his bravery from the Johore Government.

The three most common local methods of destruction are the trap, of which there are several varieties, the spring gun, also with variations, and the noose, a vile contrivance. Pits are also resorted to on occasions.

The trap most widely used to-day (one is illustrated opposite page 65) is built of stout jungle poles, driven into the ground and fastened together with rotan, with a heavy wooden roof. The trap is higher at the front where the door is situated and slopes down sharply to the back, where the live bait, a dog or goat, is placed in a box so contrived that the tiger cannot kill it even when he enters. The door is normally made of one large thick plank and is constructed so that it slides up and down freely between vertical posts. This door is raised and held in place temporarily by means of a piece of wood while a wire is led from the top of it, through the roof of the cage and down to a release, fashioned from wood, which is secured to the floor. After the wire has been adjusted to the correct tension, the prop is removed from beneath the door, which is left suspended by the wire. When the tiger enters the trap he touches the release and the door falls behind him. A variant of this trap has no door, but only two walls. The principle is the same, except that a heavy mass of logs falls onto the tiger when he enters and crushes him.

The spring gun, as its name implies, consists of a gun fastened near a kill or track. A thin line is led back from the trigger round the trigger guard and then forward in the direction in which the gun is pointing so that, in theory, any beast colliding with it automatically discharges the gun and shoots itself. These contrivances are so dangerous that they are now

illegal in Malaya. Older methods, based on the same principle, included a weighted spear which fell on the animal from above as he passed along a track and a spear which was so arranged that it lunged forward as the passing animal struck the release cord. I have been told by a Malay who was so much of an expert on spring guns that the walls of his house were well decorated with the horns of sambur, that the greatest difficulty in ensuring that they work perfectly lies in the adjustment of the line, which is damped by dew at night and tightens of its own accord. For reasons which he would not disclose, he would not use wire.

The noose, which is an extremely cruel way of catching a tiger, is one of the oldest methods, except that nowadays Malays make use of plaited steel wire instead of the ropes on which they were forced to depend in the past. A long springy sapling is chosen near to the kill which the tiger is expected to visit or beside the path along which he is known to prowl. The top of this is bent over by the combined efforts of several men and secured to the ground. The wire, fastened securely to the top of the sapling, ends in a running noose left lying open flat upon the ground. The loop is concealed by leaves and twigs. In the centre of the noose is placed a stout peg and to this is attached a simple trigger release. When all is ready, the tension from the sapling is transferred to the wire, so that when a tiger places a foot inside the noose the sapling is released, springs back violently, and draws the wire noose tight over the foot. Great skill is necessary in choosing the right type of sapling and in adjusting the wire so that the tiger's strength is dissipated in tugging against a pressure which yields when he jerks, but which keeps the noose tight when he goes the other way. Having caught your tiger in this fashion it only remains to find someone to kill him for you. The execution is often carried out by a local "firing squad", not

one member of which would dare to tackle a tiger alone or on even terms.

Pa Mat had a laugh at my expense when I shot a tiger caught in one of these wire nooses. Certain that the animal was held securely, I approached in rather a cocksure fashion and administered the *coup-de-grâce* from close range with a shot through the tiger's neck. The tiger rolled over, kicked once or twice, then died. At that very moment the noose slipped off its forepaw and the sapling sprang back into position. He was a big tiger and I fully deserved the scare I had for taking such foolish liberties with him. What had happened was that the tiger had caught its foot in the noose the previous evening. During its struggles, which incidentally had completely flattened the undergrowth in a circle round the sapling, the noose had slipped three times. The first time it had passed over the dew-claw at the back of the paw and had caught round the main pad. The second time it had slipped partly over the "palm" of the pad. The third time that the noose had slipped the tiger had almost freed itself, but its frenzied efforts to escape had drawn the wire tight again, this time across three of the toes. By this time the strength of the animal had almost been exhausted, otherwise it would have escaped. Each different position into which the wire had slipped was marked by a great weal on the unfortunate animal's paw.

The chief objection to the local methods of dealing with tigers which I have described is that they fail to discriminate between a harmless tiger and the local livestock killer or man-eater for whom they are intended. One could not blame Malays and Chinese for resorting to them in the days when guns were few and far between, but nowadays there are not many districts in which some form of suitable firearm is not available. Unfortunately the majority of the inhabitants of

Malaya, including Europeans, regard every tiger as a potential enemy. They do not seem to know, or care, that the average tiger will flee at the approach of man. Or that most tigers live almost exclusively on the wild pigs which cause more damage to agriculture than any other animal in the country.

Modern electric torches, so essential for night shooting, were invented long after guns. I inquired of one very old Malay how they were able to shoot tigers by night without them. He described to me how they suspended a coconut-oil lamp over the kill, shading it with a plaited straw fisherman's hat so that the light could not be seen from a distance but was focussed down onto the kill. This, he told me, would frighten some tigers away, but if the beast was a bold enough killer of cattle, or of men, it would take no notice of the light and would come within range.

I can well believe this, because tigers are such contrary creatures. Let one slip be made in the preparations for sitting over a kill and the tigers will notice that something is wrong and will stay away. Yet try to prevent a tiger from approaching his kill and you will often have the greatest difficulty in doing so. Once when I was away from Kemaman on tour, a tigress killed a cow belonging to a Malay whom I had rated soundly for not reporting previous kills to me, or for reporting them too late. Knowing that I would return the following day and fearing that the tigress would drag off the kill (which in fact would not have mattered in any case) the Malay drove a series of sticks into the ground round it and on them suspended old pieces of clothing, to act in the same manner as scarecrows. Before darkness fell, he added a lamp as a further precaution. The tigress, ignoring all these attempts to frighten her off, went to the spot directly it was dark and dragged the cow off to a piece of thick jungle nearby. Fortunately she was unable to eat out the kill that night and returned the following

evening when I was waiting for her. She was an incautious animal which I could hear approaching for a long time before she reached the kill, so that it was a simple matter to shoot her.

CHAPTER IV

TIGER HUNTING

No book on tigers would be complete unless it dealt with the question of hunting these animals. That I have written something on the subject here, however, should not be taken to imply that I wish to encourage anybody in Malaya to start shooting tigers for sport. I am opposed to the wanton destruction of these creatures simply because they are tigers—because it is generally considered that they are dangerous animals which should be destroyed whenever opportunity permits.

The tiger which keeps to the jungle and which preys solely on the animals to be found there attracts little attention. He is not commended for leading his normal life or for refraining from making attacks on livestock or on human beings. On the other hand, the tiger which turns man-eater—and not one in a hundred does so—receives a great deal of local, and even wider, publicity. Reports of his crimes are coloured and exaggerated. No allowance is made for the possibility, I would almost say probability, that a wound inflicted by a careless or irresolute hunter is the reason for his change of habit. The unsavoury reputation which he gains is accepted without question as being indicative of the behaviour which may be expected of all tigers.

I have stressed elsewhere, and I will stress again here, that the average tiger will go out of his way to avoid an encounter with a human being. An equally important point in this big carnivore's favour is that he is the only animal in Malaya which is capable of checking, and which does check to a considerable extent, the depredations of wild pigs. I make no idle statement

when I say that if the tiger became extinct, the damage wrought to agriculture by pigs in some parts of the Peninsula would rapidly assume formidable proportions.

I do not, in fact, share the concern of those who fear that the tiger will soon die out in Malaya. In my opinion, far too much of the country remains undeveloped and uninhabited for that to happen for many, many years to come.

The main danger to the tiger is that the instinct to kill is as strong in the average man as it is in the average tiger. When the victim is the unfortunate tiger this instinct to kill is strengthened not only by fear but also by a feeling that success in the hunt will be regarded as proof of the hunter's prowess and courage. If a man is suitably armed when he meets a tiger the chances are that he will do his best to kill it, particularly, I fear, if the tiger is at a disadvantage and the risks run by the hunter are slight. He will no more hesitate to shoot at the tiger than the average inhabitant of Malaya, be he European, Malay or Chinese, will hesitate to kill every snake that he meets for the reason that it might possibly be dangerous. The fact that not all snakes and only a few tigers are likely to be a danger to man is beside the point.

I have in my home the skin of a large tiger which is used as a rug. The first question that most visitors ask is: "Did you shoot it yourself?"

That one should be able, no matter by what means, to bring about the death of one of these magnificent creatures appears by them to be regarded as a definite feather in one's cap. When I tell them that the tiger which originally possessed the skin killed more than a score of adult buffaloes they are not particularly interested. They are more anxious to hear details of the animal's death than to learn the reason why it had to be destroyed.

Tigers have to be killed when they become man-eaters,

when they make persistent raids on village livestock and, on much rarer occasions, when they begin to make a nuisance of themselves in other ways. One male which I shot not far from Kemaman acquired, for reasons which are not known, the habit of approaching rubber tappers and growling at them. However innocent it may be, a tiger's growl is an awe-inspiring sound. In this case it was more than sufficient to cause the tappers to stop work frequently. After the local smallholders had suffered what they claimed to be serious financial losses, I yielded to their wishes and shot this animal. I have often wondered since whether I could not have succeeded in driving him out of the area by adopting less drastic methods. One of the Kijal twin tigresses (see Chapter V) developed similar traits, but such cases are uncommon. It is normally necessary to eliminate only those tigers which habitually kill livestock or men.

It is rightly considered something of an achievement in India to shoot a tiger if the hunter is on foot. There the terrain is often more open and the tiger, when hunted in this manner, has a fair sporting chance. In Malaya, while local conditions favour the quarry rather than the hunter, the tiger's sporting chances are not so great because of the means which have to be adopted to get within range of him. Stalking is virtually impossible, except in the most exceptional cases. Beating, which is commonly practised in India, is usually also out of the question, chiefly because of inability to enlist the aid of sufficient men willing to co-operate by driving the tiger towards the guns.

The method of shooting tigers most frequently employed in Malaya is to sit up, either over a natural kill or over a live or dead animal put out for bait. While this is not so sporting as stalking or beating, it is not quite as simple as most people believe. Experience and great care are necessary in making the

preparations in such a manner that the tiger's suspicions are not aroused. Patience is demanded while awaiting the opportunity for a shot. Determination is required if the animal is wounded and has to be followed up and finished off.

Others share these views. In his book, *Big Game of Malaya*, E. C. Foenander writes:

> "It is, of course, admitted that the tracking of a tiger is impossible in some areas where this animal leaves no trace of its whereabouts—this certainly applies to the Malayan jungles, where the beast cannot be bagged in that way unless the hunter has the nose of a hound. . . The shooting of a tiger from a platform over a kill, however, is recognised by many as fair sport, for, to be successful, the hunter has a lot of hard preliminary work to do. He has to have a good knowledge of the animal's habits and to endure a silent, lonely watch which may be prolonged throughout the night. If the beast is wounded by the only shot fired—rarely will there be a chance to fire another aimed shot if the animal is not crippled with the first—the dangerous follow up the next day must be undertaken and the consequences faced by the hunter because the animal has to be killed."

While the details of hunting the Malayan tiger which I give here will mainly be of interest to those who may never see a tiger in its natural environment, they may also be of some assistance to Malayan readers who are faced with the need to tackle a tiger which has become a local pest.

While the present Emergency continues in Malaya, the first precaution to be taken before any form of hunting is contemplated is to consult the local police. In many parts of the country to-day there are good reasons for discouraging people from wandering about with arms and ammunition which

might fall into the hands of Communist terrorists. Indifference to danger is not always a praiseworthy trait, especially when it may lead to an increase in terrorist-held arms or to a lowering, if only temporarily, of local morale.

The second point, which is almost as important, is that before deciding to go after a tiger, the hunter must make up his mind, beyond all doubt, whether he is prepared to follow up his quarry if he succeeds only in wounding it. If there is any doubt about it, then my advice would be to leave tigers alone. More than one acquaintance of mine expressed a desire to shoot a tiger in order to secure the skin as a trophy. When the time came to wait alone, or when the undergrowth had to be entered in search of the kill, he realized, however, that a tiger-skin rug was not such a great attraction as it had originally appeared to be. It is far wiser to give up the hunt if and when this stage is reached, than to persist with the result that a wounded animal is left at large, to die a miserable death or to become a potential danger to others. Tracking down a wounded tiger, whether this be done in daylight or in darkness, is a tricky business. The consequences of a mistake, or a failure of nerve at the critical moment, may be disastrous.

When shooting tigers, or for that matter any other big game, it is essential to be fully conversant with, and to have the utmost confidence in, the weapon used. Any ammunition showing the slightest signs of irregularity should be placed on one side, for practice or for shooting other types of game. Experience in dealing with smaller types of game is desirable. If a wounded beast has to be followed up, it is of considerable assistance to be able to tell from the blood trail approximately where and how badly the animal has been injured. A good deal of blood does not automatically indicate that a severe wound has been inflicted. The reverse sometimes applies. The tiger may succumb to its wound before the blood, trick-

ling down the coat, has had time to begin falling to the ground.

Frothy blood is characteristic of a lung wound. Much may be learnt from the height of the leaves or grass on which the blood is found. Blood on both sides of the trail normally shows that the bullet has passed right through the tiger which, in such circumstances, may live for some time. A reasonably long blood trail should enable the experienced tracker to judge where the tiger has been wounded. For instance, blood consistently appearing in a front pug would suggest a wound near the shoulder, and so on. It is only when such things have been learnt by personal experience, however, that they can be used to real advantage.

If a more suitable weapon is not available, tigers may be shot with a double-barrelled 12-bore gun, making use of the single solid lead bullets known as spherical ball. Winchester make a good cartridge, with a bomb-shaped "ball" and a heavy charge, which has great stopping power. The use of buckshot is not advisable except in an emergency, as the possibility of killing the tiger outright by hitting a vital spot is left too much to chance.

When following up a wounded tiger in thick undergrowth it is sometimes difficult to walk erect. Many times I have been forced to crawl for short distances. In these circumstances, especially when it is likely that the tiger may be encountered at very close quarters, it is difficult to aim and fire a rifle accurately in the event of a charge. At such times a double-barrelled gun loaded with L.G. (large game) cartridges is a handier and more effective weapon than the Mannlicher ·375 rifle which I normally carried.

If ball is being fired from a shot-gun for the first time it is essential that a number of practice shots should be taken, the requisite standard being the ability to hit an unhusked coconut

three times in succession at twenty paces. There is no doubt that a magazine or double-barrelled rifle, firing a soft-nosed bullet of at least ·350 calibre, has great advantages over a shotgun. Weight is the limiting factor in a hot and humid climate and the reason why I consider the ·375 Mannlicher to be the best all-round weapon for anything but elephant. Many more experienced shots favour weapons of a greater calibre, even for tiger. The British Service type ·303 and the American Service ·300 carbine are not to be recommended although I know that tiger have been shot with both. Neither has great stopping power.

Aiming Points

The best spot at which to aim is well up behind the shoulder, but the position from which the shot is fired has to be taken into account. The aiming point should be raised appreciably if the tiger is below the marksman and lowered if the animal is above him. When looking down on to a tiger, especially from behind, the spine between the withers is the ideal mark. An accurately placed bullet striking that spot will have most telling effects.

When facing a tiger it is best to sight just below the centre of the chin to strike the chest squarely. The head shot is not as satisfactory as it would seem. It does not always kill instantly. The wounded animal will not be incapacitated, but may be very savage. Furthermore, if he is not located, the tiger may die a lingering death since he will not be able to lick the wound to keep maggots out of it. A minor consideration is that a fatal shot striking a tiger in the head is apt to do so much damage to the teeth and skull that the appearance of the head, if it is to be mounted, will be ruined.

The best killing or stopping shot, and my favourite, is that

taken at the centre of the neck, midway between head and shoulders. This shot is not always possible and is not justified unless accuracy is assured, as the margin of error permissible is comparatively small. No matter what the point of aim may be, and however impatient the aimer, it is better to let the opportunity to shoot pass unless there is a good chance that a serious wound, at the very least, will be inflicted. A high proportion of the tigers shot in Malaya carry old buckshot wounds from shotguns. My belief is that many of these are caused by shots fired beyond the lethal range of this type of weapon.

Once when I had trouble with the Mannlicher I was guilty of taking a very foolish chance with an old tiger. He had been killing buffaloes regularly but never at times when I was able to deal with him. At last a suitable opportunity arose. Pa Mat went with another Malay to the scene of the kill and erected my seat in the tree which I had chosen for that purpose earlier in the morning.

I made it a habit always to check over the rifle before using it, applying a little thin oil to the working parts when I took it from the gun cupboard. As luck would have it, I was detained at the office that afternoon, so that no time could be wasted if I was to be at the kill early enough. I changed in record time and attended to the Mannlicher with equal rapidity. As I pushed the bolt forward after oiling it there was an ominous noise and feeling. Examination showed that the striker spring had broken. It was then that I should have given up the idea of going after the tiger, but I did not want to disappoint the villagers who, with greater confidence than my own, were expecting me to kill it.

I had no spare striker spring, but Pa Mat and I unearthed a powerful spring from the garage and this we wired into place between the backsight and the moving part of the bolt of the

rifle. The weapon fired well enough. The trouble was that it could be fired only once. After that the temporary spring had to be unfastened, the bolt moved to get the next round into the breech and the spring replaced. Reloading was not a rapid process.

When I fired at the tiger, after he had come to the dead buffalo in the darkness, he rolled over once, regained his feet and made off. Reloading the rifle and re-adjusting the spring and the wire which secured it, I descended from the tree and followed in search of the tiger. I hoped very much that not more than one further shot would be required.

When I finally found the tiger with the aid of my shooting torch I was abreast of him. All that I could see were his hindquarters and his tail. He was standing up. The rest of his body was concealed by foliage. I was about to fire my solitary shot through the leaves at the point where I judged his shoulder to be when I noticed that the tail was hanging straight down. It was also motionless. Keeping my rifle to my shoulder, I went closer. I discovered that the tiger had been in the act of passing between two small saplings, growing close together, just as death overtook him. His hindquarters were supported by these saplings in an upright position. The front part of his body had collapsed. His head was resting on his twisted forepaws. I resolved there and then to do no more shooting with a rifle that could only be fired once.

Even with the advantage of being in administrative charge of the area, I at first experienced the greatest difficulty in Kemaman in obtaining news of kills soon enough for the information to be of any use. The local Malays and Chinese knew that I was trying to help them by destroying the tigers that I hunted, yet they seemed incapable of appreciating the need to help me by providing early and accurate news of kills. Before we devised a satisfactory reporting system it was not unusual to receive

advice of a kill a week after it had happened. Time is, of course, of very little importance to the rural population of Malaya. One day is very much the same as the next. Ignorance was largely to blame, too. Many Malays and Chinese thought that, because a tiger had visited their compound one evening, he would be found in the same place night after night.

When the news of a kill is received, even if it is too late for there to be any possibility of encountering the tiger, it pays to visit the scene to see for yourself exactly what took place. A great deal of useful information may be obtained in this way, especially by examining the pugs of the tiger concerned. With experience it is possible to determine from the pugs the sex of the animal, also to gain some idea of its weight and age. Nor does it take long to learn how to identify the pugs of one tiger from those of another.

The pugs of the male are larger and the toes give a general impression of being square, compared with the smaller, more rounded imprints made by the female. Pugs which are splayed out when the animal is moving at its normal walking speed normally show that the animal which made them is past its prime. Weight may be gauged from the depth of the impressions, due allowance being made for the nature of the soil in which they are found. If the depth of the front pugs is greater than normal, again allowing for the type of ground on which they are found, it is likely that some small animal such as a dog or young goat was being carried at the time that they were made.

Rewards for killing cattle and man-eating tigers are paid in some Malay States, the amounts varying. I made it a practice to give the equivalent sum in cash, immediately the tiger was dead, to the person who had provided the information which enabled me to shoot it. This helped in obtaining early reports, even of ancient pugs! Later I reimbursed myself by submitting

an official claim. I do not agree on principle with the idea of accepting rewards offered for the killing of man-eaters. The destruction of these animals should not, in any case, be attempted unless the hunter has already had some experience in dealing with more normal tigers.

Baits

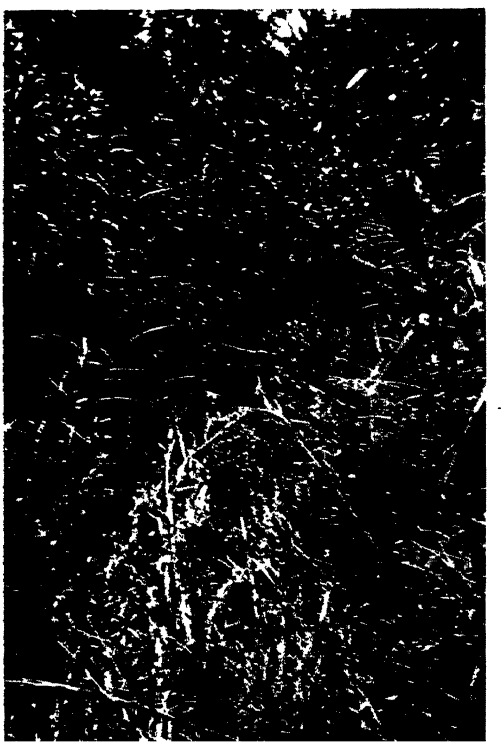
If the tiger is concentrating on goats or dogs, the kills will be eaten out overnight and nothing of the carcass will be left near which to await the tiger's return the following evening. This being so, a live goat may be purchased and tied out for bait in the hope that the tiger will come that way. The goat will suffer considerable discomfort from mosquitoes and, strangely enough, having regard to the climate of Malaya, from exposure. I had one white nanny-goat which I purchased for this purpose. I tied her out twice, each time without success. Not being sufficiently hard-hearted to sit and watch her stamp and bleat, I thenceforth kept her in my garden. Goats being what they are, she twice produced kids, thus repaying me for my consideration.

A dead wild pig, weighing 80 lbs. or more, will probably prove a more successful bait than a live goat, as pork in any form seems irresistible to tigers. It will certainly be of more convenience to the hunter than a live bait over which he must sit, as it may be left out for the tiger to drag away. This is almost certain to happen once a tiger finds it, however strong its smell may have become. Arrangements can then be made at leisure to sit up the following night at the spot where the tiger has left the remains of the bait.

In the wilder parts of Malaya it is usually a simple matter to stalk and shoot a wild pig, yet it is surprising how difficult this can sometimes be when a pig is required urgently for bait.

The front (*left*) and hind paws of a tiger (*See p.* 48)

A successful trap. The door has been propped up to remove the dead tiger (*See p.* 49)



Left:
"Stalking is virtually impossible in Malaya". This drag (*centre foreground*) of the Kemasek man-eater shows why.

The dead pig should be placed where the tiger is most likely to find it, on a narrow strip of land between two swamps, a jungle track, or some such suitable spot. It cannot be left anywhere near a Malay dwelling or on a path used by Malays, to whom, as followers of the Islamic faith, pigs are abhorrent. The bait should not be tied down, since this might alarm the tiger, which should be at liberty to remove it to a spot to his liking.

The carcasses of animals from which a tiger has fed must always be stalked with painstaking care in the hope of obtaining a shot in daylight. The tiger may be lying up near the kill or some yards away from it. The hunter should make the approach alone, it being borne in mind that if he can hear himself moving the chances are that the tiger will hear him as well and will make off. Apart from the sharp lookout kept for the tiger, an equally close watch must be maintained for the big monitor lizards, usually wrongly described in Malaya as iguanas, which are often attracted to the kill by the smell. When surprised or alarmed these reptiles retreat noisily and hastily. This will warn the tiger if he is about. It will also probably petrify the inexperienced hunter if he is not prepared for these sudden movements in the undergrowth.

Patience is the key to successful stalking. Knowing whether to put heel or toe first to the ground is the principal lesson to be learnt in silent movement. The mistake most commonly made is to assume that no living animal is about because nothing is seen or heard. Nearly all wild creatures remain motionless for long periods while listening for the sound of possible enemies.

After the kill has been stalked and the absence of the tiger confirmed—as it will be in the majority of cases—it is best to withdraw from the spot to decide on the preparations which must be made. The hunter should try to judge from which side of the kill the tiger is likely to approach. He should choose

his position accordingly, making due allowance for the fact that he will almostly certainly have to shoot in darkness. How much moonlight there will be may influence the choice, concealment being more difficult under a full tropical moon.

There are usually two alternatives—to sit up in a tree or to wait on the ground. Sometimes a nearby building, a cattle enclosure or similar structure, may be used with advantage. One of the most comfortable, although unsuccessful, waits I ever had for a tiger was on the side of a small grass-covered hill, at the foot of which the kill had been left.

A platform in a tree is advisable, certainly for the first tiger to be shot. This arrangement ensures that the human scent will travel some distance before it reaches the ground. Such an elevated position also enables the tiger to be seen among low vegetation which would render him invisible from ground level. Most important of all, when a tree is used the tiger will be free to approach the kill from whichever direction he fancies. I have shot four tigers which, in approaching the kill, passed directly beneath me. As heights are apt to be deceptive and noises magnified in the darkness and silence of a tropical night, such experiences are themselves not without excitement.

The would-be shooter of a tiger who elects to sit on the ground while awaiting his quarry will almost certainly be safe from attack, although he may well be growled at. He will need a very good set of nerves if he is to remain perfectly still in the darkness until the tiger has reached the kill. Some tigers do not make a direct approach, but have the habit of circling their kills before returning to them. The hunter will have no success if he imagines that he will be able to swing round to shoot as the tiger draws near. If he were to attempt this, the disturbance he would create would panic the tiger into rapid, and probably final, flight.

When the sitting up place has been selected, great care must

be taken to conceal it carefully and to leave no signs which might warn the tiger that anybody has been to the spot. The platform should be as small as possible and, if placed in a tree, should not be too high from the ground. Fifteen feet should be regarded as a maximum, but the nature of the surrounding trees will be the limiting factor. Foot and back rests, easily fashioned with the aid of two stout poles, help to prevent unintentional movement and enable a steadier shot to be taken.

Sitting up alone is more exciting and the chances of success are increased. There is also a greater sense of personal accomplishment when the tiger is dead. The periods in which the hunter is hidden before darkness falls often provide excellent opportunities to study other forms of wild life. During such waits I have been able to identify some of the rarer Malayan birds and have had a barking deer, accompanied by a week-old kid, pass within a few feet of my hide.

It is essential that none of the materials used in erecting a platform should be taken from near the kill. Not only will the inevitable noise warn the tiger if he is anywhere near, but many tell-tale signs will be left. If poles have to be cut for the platform it is better to obtain them some distance away. A permanent platform made from a piece of wood about two feet long by a foot wide is the ideal solution to such problems. It can easily be kept in the boot of a car and need not be heavy. Through the corners of my seat were bored holes to take the ropes used to secure it in position. Four ropes, each six yards long, were passed through these holes. They were then knotted above and below the plank so that an equal length remained free on each side of it. This proved a most convenient arrangement, enabling the seat to be placed in position in almost any tree. Noise was reduced to a minimum, as was the time taken to erect the platform. Whatever type of platform is used, it

must be secured rigidly. If it tends to sway or move, the resultant creaks will give the game away.

Once the seat is in position it needs to be camouflaged thoroughly, preferably with branches from a tree of the same kind as that in which it is placed. No branches should be taken from the tree in which the hunter is to wait. The most important points to remember and those most frequently overlooked are:

(*a*) Branches used for concealment should be fastened the right way up and not hung downwards. To hang them downwards is easier, but reversed foliage is often conconspicuous, especially by moonlight.

(*b*) The feet and legs should be hidden completely, but should not be touching the camouflage if all noise is to be avoided.

(*c*) Sufficient branches must be placed behind the shooter's head to prevent it from being silhouetted against the sky when looked at from the ground. What may appear as pitch darkness to dull human vision may seem little more than twilight to the keen eye of a tiger.

(*d*) A seat in a tree is not concealed if, on completion, it has the appearance of a large bird's nest. It must blend into its surroundings well enough to be difficult to detect from the ground even in daylight.

Once while waiting concealed beside a track, I was amused to see a group of fishermen come along and stop to look at the dead buffalo over which I was sitting. Not one of them noticed me. When I pulled their legs about this later they denied emphatically that I could have been there, until I repeated a remark which one of them had made. The importance of silence in making the preparations is proved by the

fact that, on another occasion, I discovered that the tigress I intended to shoot had been lying within fifteen yards of the tree while we were placing my seat in position. I was able to shoot her only because I sat motionless during the two hours before darkness fell. This long silence served to reassure her.

The final step is to make sure that an unobstructed shot can be taken if the tiger comes to the kill. The best way to go about this is for the hunter to sit in his seat in the tree and to see for himself what must be cut away. The removal of a few twigs is all that is generally required. These must not be left lying about near the kill. Any large branches of trees can, if necessary, be tied out of the way to avoid lopping them off.

It is a laborious task for one person to erect and conceal a platform, as the solitary worker has to climb the tree repeatedly with materials. Two persons, one on the ground and the other in the tree, will complete the job in a quarter of the time. Pa Mat and I could usually fasten my portable seat in position and conceal it in fifteen minutes. On one pressing occasion this was done in under two minutes and the tiger was shot in daytime.

All should be ready by 4.30 in the afternoon, so that the shooter is in position by 5 p.m. As it will be about two hours before it becomes dark, this provides ample time for the tiger, which may be nearby, to regain the confidence he may have lost through hearing movements.

It is unwise to delay the start of the wait until darkness is approaching. A friend of mine, who was most anxious to bag a tiger, did this with amusing consequences. A cow had been killed close enough to a village for him to be able to prepare a comfortable waiting place in a Malay house. He cut a small hole in the bark wall so that he could shoot from a chair. Satisfied with these arrangements, he went off to drink a cup of coffee with the local Malays. Time passed pleasantly while

they were exchanging stories. It was not until it was almost completely dark that he took up position in readiness to shoot the tiger. Resisting the temptation to fall asleep, he maintained a dogged watch throughout the night. Then, as the first faint streaks of dawn lit the sky, he saw why he had been unsuccessful. The tiger had been there before he began his wait and had gone off with the kill. He had sat through the long night over a cow which was no longer there.

The clothing worn while sitting up should be unobtrusive in colour and thick enough to prevent insect bites. One thickness of drill is not enough for the aggressive Malayan mosquito. Mosquito repellent should be applied to the exposed parts of the body, it being an ordeal to sit still while being attacked by hordes of insects. Smoking is not permissible, not so much because of the smell of tobacco, but because of the extra movements which will be made.

The Moment Arrives

If the preparations have been made efficiently and the hunter has not given himself away while in position, the tiger should be on the kill shortly after darkness has fallen. If the moon is full a cautious animal may be reluctant to approach until it begins to wane. If no signs of movement have been heard by 9 p.m. and the evening is a dark and fine one, the chances are that the tiger suspects the trap and has decided to seek food elsewhere. Heavy rain may keep a tiger away from his kill. Although they do not have an aversion to water, tigers seem to dislike having drops fall on them from trees. In wet weather they may remain in the open, keeping away from their kill until the rain has stopped.

Rain is a great drawback when sitting up for a tiger, the noise of it drowning all small, significant sounds. The best

thing to do is to wait until the downpour ceases and then to give the tree a good shake to remove the drops. If this is not done the noisy dripping will continue for so long that the lone watcher will find it hard to distinguish between the sounds of real and imaginary movements. Tree-shaking may appear contrary to the general rule of refraining from all movement, but I have employed the trick successfully.

Provided that he is alert and has good hearing, the shooter should be able to detect the sounds made by the tiger as he stealthily draws near. These will be very faint if the kill is lying on bare earth or short grass, but most tropical evenings are so still that the smallest noises are audible. The first sound that I once heard was the gentle crunch of wet sand beneath a tiger's pads. On another evening I heard nothing until I recognised the sound of the animal's breathing as he sniffed the scent of the bait which I had provided for him.

More usual noises are the movement of twigs on the ground, leaves being crushed underfoot, or the body gently brushing against low foliage. Some tigers approach a kill with great skill and stealth. Others display an almost complete lack of caution. Governing factors are the neighbourhood in which the kill is lying, the temperament, age and experience of the tiger and the pains taken to avoid noise when erecting the platform and while waiting concealed in it. A tiger will approach a wild pig which he has left half-eaten in the jungle more readily than a domestic animal that he has left lying near a village.

The most striking demonstration of indifference in returning to a kill that I have witnessed was given by a young tigress in 1951. She had started killing buffalo calves and the local headman had asked me to deal with her. It took us some time to find the kill and by that time it was too dark to erect a seat, nor could I expect Pa Mat to go off alone in the gathering

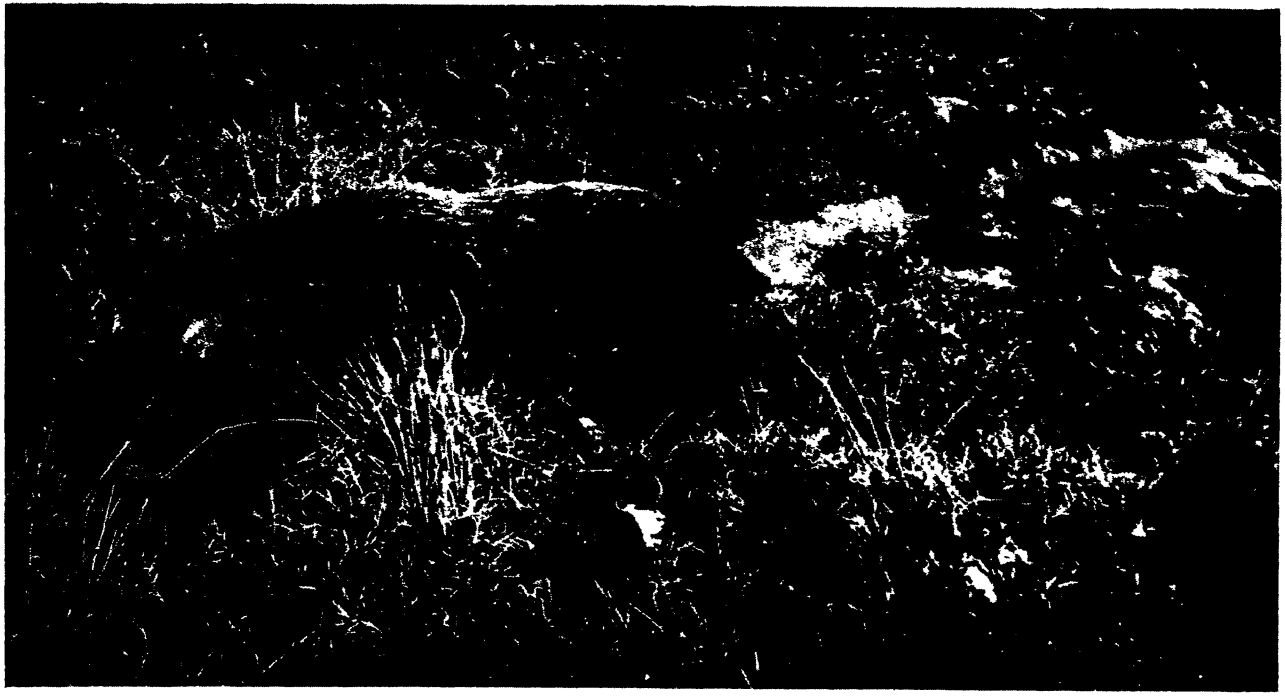
darkness. We waited side by side on a bough ten feet from the ground.

We had not sat there long before I was startled by a heavy thud and crash off to our right, followed by the sound of an animal coming towards us. The noise was so great that at first I thought an old boar was hurrying up to find out where the appetising smell of decaying flesh came from. Then, as the animal came closer, I realised that it was the tigress. The crash had been the result of a playful leap over a shallow stream, through which any other tiger would have waded in silence.

On she came in such a jaunty fashion that I had a wild notion that she would appear swinging a handbag, with a saucy hat worn well over one eye. She did not go to her kill immediately. Indeed, from the noise of her movements, she appeared to be uncertain where she had left it. In her anxiety to begin feeding she literally tripped from spot to spot in the most abandoned fashion. Each pause was accompanied by a loud, unladylike sniff.

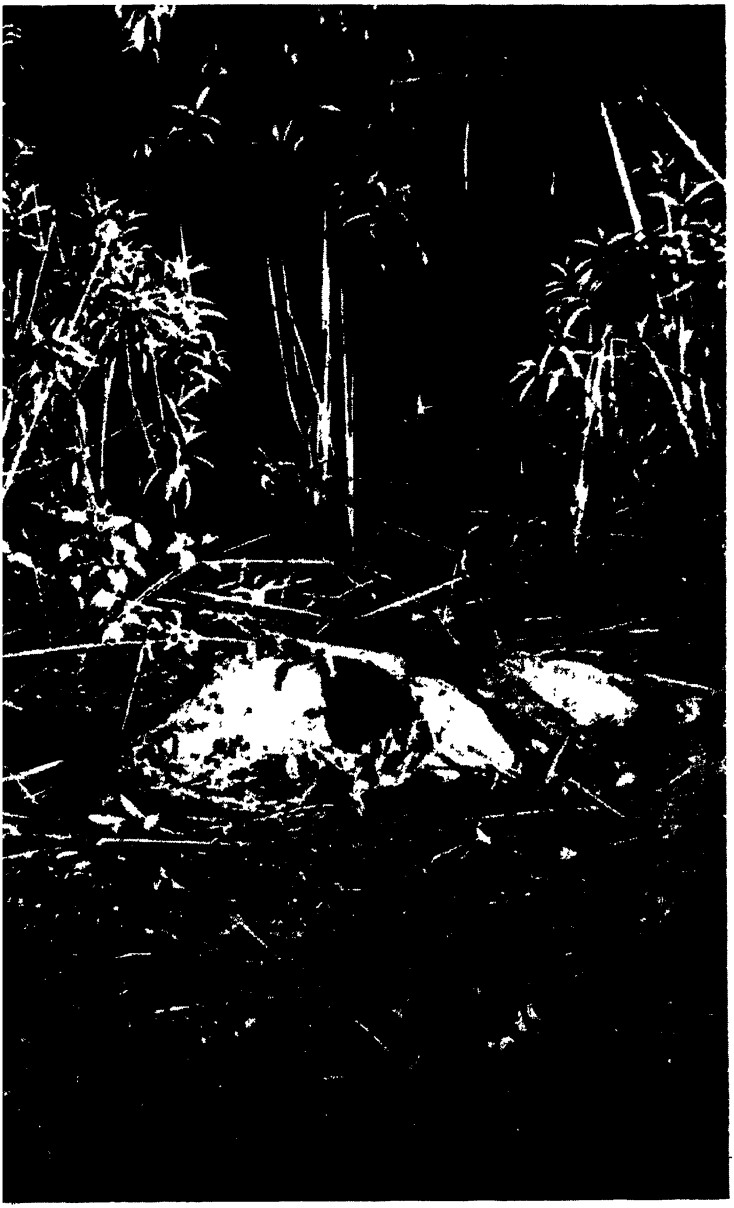
To cap all this, when I finally turned on the shooting torch, after she had begun her meal, the foolish animal put her head on one side and gawked at the light in such a droll fashion that I had no heart to shoot her. Instead I greeted her with a loud "Shoo". This startled her so much that she nearly fell over before blundering off into the darkness. Pa Mat and I kept this episode to ourselves for various reasons.

Generally speaking, the sounds made as the tiger comes to feed will not be heard until the animal is only a short distance away. For this reason it pays to be in a position from which a shot may be fired with the minimum amount of movement. This is not the time to begin groping for the rifle or to start wondering whether the safety catch is on or off. If the hunter is caught at an unguarded moment because the tiger comes to the kill unduly late it may not be possible to avoid some movements.



"Usually a simple matter to stalk and shoot a wild pig" (*See p. 64*)

A tree on which a tiger has sharpened his claws.



"The tiger leapt sideways as the flashlight photograph was taken" (*See p.* 77)

The result of a successful daylight neck shot. A tiger photographed in the position in which he fell.

These should then be timed to coincide with the noisy sounds of feeding, in the hope that the tiger will not hear them, and must be made slowly and smoothly.

The mistake most frequently made is to be over-anxious. Once the tiger has begun his meal he will probably remain at the spot for two hours or more, so that there is no need to hurry. The sounds of feeding will be unmistakeable, whether they have been heard before or not. Although I have been close to tigers many times, in daylight and in darkness, my heart always begins to thump when I first become aware of their presence. Others who have had some experience with tigers tell me that they react in the same way. This being so, it pays to allow plenty of time, when circumstances permit, for the body to steady itself. It is of further advantage to allow the tiger to settle down to his meal and to forget any qualms which he may have had in coming to it.

When the hunter is quite ready, and not before, the shooting torch may be switched on and the shot taken. If the shot is to be an accurate one it is essential to place the torch so that it illuminates the foresight. The best type of torch is a plastic one, the case of which will not glint. The two-cell type is sufficiently powerful if the shooter himself is not to be dazzled by it.

When the light goes on the unsuspecting tiger will remain stationary long enough for a careful shot to be taken. Familiarity with the rifle should enable it to be sighted roughly in the dark. Then, if the tiger has been located accurately by ear, only a slight re-alignment will be necessary after the torch is put on. The recoil when the shot is fired will probably make it impossible to see the result of it immediately.

If the tiger has been shot at before he may know what the shining light portends, in which case he is likely to depart too hastily for a shot to be fired. An old tiger in the Kemaman district had been injured in a night collision with a car. He

recovered from the mishap, but retained an overwhelming dread of bright lights. When I put my torch on him over a dead cow one evening, he promptly reared up and fell over backwards into the nearby bushes. Even with the light switched off again, he lay there making the most dismal moaning noises. They were not roars or growls, but sounded as though the beast was in mental anguish. I was convinced that he thought another car was after him.

The moans eventually died away and the two of us waited in silence for twenty minutes. Then the tiger summoned up enough courage to creep out and resume feeding. I allowed him plenty of time to recover from his fright and to become absorbed in satisfying his appetite, which, judging from the noise he made, was a keen one. Deciding that a snap shot was the only answer, I put on the torch again. Immediately I did so, however, he burst into instant flight and went tearing up the wooded hill behind him. This tiger's fear of light must have been very great, since the scare he received that evening was apparently sufficient to deter him from killing any more cattle.

When the tiger flees as soon as he sees the light, the chances of being able to take accurate aim are negligible. This is due mainly to the fact that it requires a second or two for the hunter's eyes, accustomed as they have become to the darkness, to adjust themselves to the light of the torch. No shot should normally be attempted in such circumstances.

Some tigers take no notice when a light is shone on them. Others demonstrate against it. Frederiksen, a Danish planter, who shot a number of tigers in Trengganu before the war, always used an old car head-lamp, placed above and behind him. This light was operated by a switch controlled by foot. When he turned this powerful beam onto one tiger, the beast looked up at it calmly and then went on feeding. Apparently quite unconcerned, it was allowed to eat for nearly ten

minutes before it was shot. This cannot be regarded as a criterion. The shot should be fired as rapidly as possible, consistent with accuracy.

Being blessed with exceptionally keen hearing, I find it best to extinguish the torch directly the shot has been fired and, thereafter, to follow the tiger's movements by ear. This is of assistance if the tiger goes off, as it enables the search for the blood trail to be limited to the direction in which the animal has gone. Valuable time is saved in this way, for the first signs of blood may not be found for some distance and tracking without them in the dark can be a slow business.

Even if the animal has been killed outright there will often be a good deal of noise. Sometimes this will be limited to a loud gurgling sound. Other unpleasant signs of death heard may include the jerking or extreme stretching of the limbs, or the beating of the tail on the ground.

It is not often that tigers drop dead immediately, even when mortally wounded. Some will run for a considerable distance before collapsing. One large male, his heart almost split in two by the soft bullet, went sixty yards at full gallop before succumbing. During this mad rush he broke through a well-made fence. Pieces of wood were scattered in all directions. A man would have slender chances of avoiding serious injury were he unintentionally to impede so powerful a rush.

A tiger with such a serious wound can hardly be aware of what it is doing. Its movements must result entirely from muscular reaction. It is an interesting point that, no matter how sorely wounded, a tiger invariably tries to make off in the direction from which it has come to the kill.

If the tiger has moved away after the shot, the hunter has to make the decision whether he will follow up at once in the darkness or wait until daylight. Opinions differ. Some say that to follow up in darkness is suicidal. I do not agree because

of the great advantage gained by the use of a torch, the light of which is reflected by the animal's eyes. This will enable a tiger to be picked out far more readily by night than it would be by day, as I have often proved. Apart from this fact, the likelihood is that the tiger will be found dead or incapacitated. There is no real excuse for failing to inflict a fatal, or crippling, wound on so large an animal with a modern weapon at the close range customary when shooting from a platform. The only two tigers which I failed to recover the same night were both shot while moving at speed on the roadway. Their story is told in Chapter VI.

Assuming that all has gone well and the tiger has either been killed outright or the follow-up has been successful, the head and feet must be tied with sacking to prevent the whiskers and claws from being stolen. Otherwise they are likely to be removed surreptitiously when help is obtained to carry out the dead tiger. Care must be taken to see that the carcass is not dragged along the ground or treated roughly, for only gentle handling will ensure that the skin remains undamaged. Having killed a tiger, for whatever reason, it is pointless to spoil the trophy for want of a few pains.

Some brief details of how to deal with the dead tiger may not be out of place here. It should be shielded from the direct rays of the sun, which will make the hair slip more rapidly than anything else. If the tiger cannot be carried to the nearest road or river without undue exertion, the body may be skinned, the head and feet being left until later. The simplest way to tackle the skinning is to place the animal on its back and to secure the legs with ropes to poles or trees, so that they are held upright and apart.

The first cut is made down the belly from the chin to the tip of the tail, following the distinct "parting" in the hair. The cuts down the inside of the legs should follow the centre of the

white part of the limbs if the skin is to look symmetrical when mounted. The pads should be split open and the inside of them cleaned. The whiskers may be removed and sent to the taxidermist in an envelope. The head, particularly round the eyes and mouth, is the most difficult part to skin properly.

With these points in mind, the skinning may be left to experienced Chinese, Indians or Malays, but close and constant supervision is advisable. It will take two local men about four hours to skin a fully-grown tiger, slightly less if the animal is still warm when they start work. After skinning, the skull should be cleaned of as much flesh as possible with a knife and the rest removed by careful boiling.

There are many ways to treat a skin, but unless an experienced person is available to help and advise it may easily be ruined. Any attempt to sun dry it will be disastrous. If drying is attempted it must be done in the shade. In Malaya, where skilled skinners are rare and some flesh may be left on the skin, it is safer to immerse the skin in a pickling solution rather than to risk amateur drying or preserving methods. There are various forms of pickle, one being made with formaline and salt and another consisting of an alum and salt solution. The main thing to ensure when immersing the skin in these solutions is that no air bubbles are left in its folds.

Photography

Hunting with a camera instead of a rifle is growing in popularity. My efforts to photograph Malayan tigers were of little avail. One flashlight showed a head peering from the bushes, but lost definition when it was enlarged sufficiently for reproduction. Another (see page 72) came out perfectly, but the tiger leapt sideways at precisely the wrong moment and does not appear in the picture! Picture-taking with an

automatic flashgun and a camera operated by a trip wire was not attempted.

The main problem experienced in photographing tigers over their kills was that of concealing the reflector, which must be used out-of-doors if the light is to be concentrated in a given direction. The shining surface of the reflector facing the kill was too obvious for the tiger to ignore. Rarely did I have enough time at my disposal to secure and conceal the cameras and arrange the improvised method of remote control necessary.

Since I could not afford to risk damaging an expensive camera by carrying it in my hip pocket when scrambling about and wading through water, an ordinary folding Brownie was used for almost all the photographs reproduced in this book. Those of the tiger cub facing page 80 are the copyright of J. A. Hislop, who took them and who kindly permitted me to reproduce them. The other, facing page 81, is reproduced through the kindness of the Officer Commanding the 1st Battalion, 7th Gurkha Rifles. It is of a young tigress called "Nepti" (Gurkhali for "Flat nose") which was captured by the Gurkhas while on anti-terrorist operations. This animal is now in the London Zoological Gardens.

A tiger's pug-marks

CHAPTER V

MY FIRST TIGER

It was not until I had been in Kemaman for nearly six months that I succeeded in shooting my first tiger. For the first four months I was far too busy travelling about the area and making the acquaintance of the people to have time to spare for anything else. During that time I was also learning what I could about tigers as a necessary preliminary to any attempt to destroy those which were killing livestock.

When I did start work my efforts were marked by a series of complete failures. Lacking experience and knowledge, I depended too much on the advice of my Malay friends. Many willing helpers were available, some with experience and some without. Because I was busy, I left them to make the arrangements which are necessary if one is to sit up over a kill and joined them in the evenings at the time they recommended, to do the shooting. The arrangements which were made varied widely. Sometimes a vast area of undergrowth would be cut down round the dead cow, or whatever it was I was to watch over, so that I would be assured of a good field of fire. Sometimes I sat on the ground; sometimes in a vast platform ("ramp" as we called it) erected in a tree. Any number of people would volunteer to sit up with me to tell me when the tiger approached and when to shoot. I always had to use a great deal of persuasion to reduce the number of people with me to two and often, as the night wore on, I wondered whether I should wake my companions up or not if anything happened.

A record of these unsuccessful attempts was kept and, after eighteen long nights during which no tiger approached and the Kemaman mosquitoes waxed fat at my expense, I decided that my helpers and advisers had more in the way of enthusiasm than they had in experience. As a result, I decided that the next time a tiger killed anything I would make all the necessary arrangements myself and would endeavour to shoot the animal alone. The word was passed round to the *kĕtuas* (unpaid village headmen) of the local villages most frequently visited by tigers, that the next kill was to be reported to me personally at once and that it was not to be interfered with in any way. There was not long to wait.

On the 30th June, 1949, I received information that a tiger had killed a cow at Kampong Kubang Kurus the previous night. This village, really a collection of widely-scattered Malay houses, is within the Kemaman township. The kill had actually occurred half-a-mile from the Kemaman hospital. Nothing had been done to interfere with the dead cow, of this I could be certain, as efforts to find the carcass had failed. I had despatched Pa Mat to take a Malay girl by road to Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the Federation 299 miles away, for an urgent operation on her eyes. I set off on my own. I took with me a shotgun (being without ammunition for my Mannlicher rifle at the time), some lengths of stout rope and cord and additional clothing.

At first I could find nobody who knew anything about the kill, but eventually I located a middle-aged woman who undertook to show me where the dead cow was thought to be lying. It is unusual for a Malay woman to volunteer to help a stranger (as I was then) but this good soul quickly proved herself a cut above the average by giving me some very active help in despatching a large monitor lizard which I wounded with a borrowed spear after it had seized one of her young

Studies of a tiger cub.
(*See p.* 78)

Nepti, the tiger cub captured by the 7th Gurkha Rifles.

fowls. This by-play successfully accomplished, we set off again. I was soon shown an area of land about two acres in extent onto which the tiger was believed to have dragged the dead cow. Flanked on three sides by grassland and on the fourth by a rubber small-holding, this piece of land was covered almost completely by undergrowth as high as a man's head. At one side only were there a few open grassy patches.

Thanking the woman, who at this stage seemed very anxious to return to her home, I set out to circle the overgrown area to find the place where the drag entered it. Since a tiger drags and does not carry any but the smallest animals, it usually leaves a clear trail of flattened grass, bent and broken twigs and so on. I am one of those people who, if they have to search through a number of identical articles to find a particular one, will always discover it to be among the last they look at. Because of this I derived some slight amusement from the fact that my search for the drag took me almost completely round the piece of land before I discovered what I was looking for. Having found the drag, the next thing to do was to walk back along it to the spot where the cow had been killed. This place was marked by a good deal of blood, long since dried to a blackish brown, and the signs of a struggle. I was not then sufficiently experienced to find any of the tiger's pugs and I doubt very much whether they would have told me anything had I been able to do so.

Returning to the edge of the undergrowth into which the drag vanished, I stopped to load the shotgun with L.G. (a heavy type of buckshot, each cartridge of which contains six large lead pellets), to light a cigarette and to make up my mind whether I really wanted to shoot a tiger or not! The undergrowth looked very thick and ominous to me. Hoping that I would not meet a large tiger face-to-face and not being

at all sure what steps I ought to take if I did so, I moved forward along the drag with exaggerated caution. I had not gone very far before my nose told me that I was approaching the end of my search. I was soon examining the dead cow, which the tiger had left in a cave-like recess in some creeper-covered bushes. There were a great many fat and unpleasant bluebottles about. These I regarded with disfavour, not then knowing how helpful they can be in locating a kill in certain circumstances.

The position of the carcass, from which both hind legs and the rear portion of the body had been eaten, was such that there would be little chance to shoot the tiger in the dark without cutting down a great deal of the surrounding vegetation. I wished to avoid thus disturbing the spot, as I was confident that this had been the cause of many of my earlier failures. Setting out to reconnoitre, I discovered, not many yards away, a narrow strip of grass, apparently the remains of an old track. On to this the carcass could be moved so that I would have a clear view of it from the corner tree of the adjoining rubber plantation.

A strenuous half-hour followed, during which I must have impressed a number of Malays with the peculiarity of my behaviour. First I obtained about twenty yards of thick wire, one end of which I fashioned into a loop. Returning to the kill, I succeeded in passing this loop over the head of the dead cow with the aid of a stick. The pains which were taken to avoid coming into contact with the carcass were not because of the abominable smell, which made me retch, but because I did not wish to taint it with human scent. The next step required more patience. Selecting four of the more robust men from the Malays who, inevitably, had now gathered to see what the *Tuan* was doing, I had them line up in single file and follow me to the kill. I allowed no-one else to move from

the rubber. These men were persuaded to drag out the dead cow, so that it slid over the ground along which we walked. It was, I judged, sufficiently odoriferous to obliterate all trace of the smell of our footsteps.

When the kill had been placed to my satisfaction, the wire was removed, again using a stick. I ignored the suggestions of the onlookers that it should be used to tie down the cow to prevent the tiger from moving it. Next the platform was erected, as low down in the rubber tree as the branches would permit. Two short lengths of plank, borrowed from a nearby house, were employed, as I wanted no noisy pole-cutting in case the tiger was lying up close at hand. What a job I had with the well-meaning Malays while I was preparing my perch. Small boys wanted to examine the cow and must walk all round it to do so. The men were anxious to slash down bushes so that the tiger, if it came near, might easily be seen. They considered that the platform should be big enough to hold at least three men, making it possible for some of them to wait with me for the tiger. In short, they sought to help by trying to do everything that I was anxious to avoid.

When all was ready, the Malays, with the exception of one young man whom I knew slightly, were told to return to their homes and to stay inside them. To make certain they would obey I explained to them that I was so nervous that, if anybody approached the tree, they would probably be shot at in mistake for the tiger. When the two of us were left alone, I changed into the garments which I had chosen as being mosquito-proof, being convinced that it was essential not to make the slightest movement during the long wait which lay ahead. The shorts that I was wearing were replaced by green drill trousers, over which were bound long puttees. A second pair of trousers, a dark cotton scarf and a thin waterproof parachutist's jacket over my shirt completed the outfit. My solitary Malay

watched these preparations with amazement. He had never before seen a European wearing so many clothes.

After explaining what was required of him, I climbed up into my seat, which uncomfortable previous experiences had prompted me to furnish with a cushion. I then lowered a strong cord, to which my helper attached in turn the shotgun, my bag containing spare cartridges and, finally, a dark coloured monsoon cape and a wide-brimmed hat as protection against rain. Having arranged all these to my satisfaction and anointed my face, neck and hands with mosquito repellent, I looked down to tell the Malay that he was needed no longer. I need not have bothered, for the feeling of being left all alone down there had proved too much for him; he had already slipped away.

Sitting in my isolated little world, I checked over my preparations. Things had been timed to a nicety, so that I was ready and waiting for my tiger a full two hours before it was expected to put in an appearance. Knowing nothing about tigers in those days, I was not certain whether they lay up in daytime near their kill (as is actually often the case) or whether they moved down from the jungle during the early evening and made the final approach after dark. Making certain that my position was one in which I could remain in comparative comfort for several hours, I settled down to wait. I believed then, I remember, as I do now, that a complete absence of movement is essential before darkness falls, but that movements may be made slowly and carefully after dark, provided that they are not accompanied by any rustles or creaks. The last thing that was done was to push forward the safety-catch of the gun—an old double-barrel with which I had rarely succeeded in bringing down a bird—so that there would be no tell-tale click when the time came to use it.

Nothing happened until about 6.30 p.m., when the faint

noise of something gently brushing against leaves to my right attracted my attention. Without moving my head, I was able to catch a momentary glimpse of the hindquarters of a tiger as they disappeared into the expanse of undergrowth which stretched before me. The animal had reached the spot by coming down silently behind me through the rubber. My heart began to pound, which surprised me, as this was not the first tiger that I had seen at close quarters. Quite apart from this purely physical reaction, I was filled with excitement. This was my first attempt to shoot a tiger on my own and already the animal was showing some willingness to co-operate. My theories about the importance of keeping still were right after all, or the tiger must have caught sight of me as he approached from behind.

The brief glimpse that I caught of the tiger was followed by an absorbing ten minutes during which I saw nothing and heard not a sound until the unmistakable crunch of teeth on bone came to me. The tiger, entering the undergrowth to my right, had moved seventy yards across in front of me to the place where it had left the dead cow. In doing so it had given no indication whatever of its presence. There was no sound; there was no tell-tale movement of the undergrowth. Wonder at the way in which so large an animal could move so noiselessly changed to puzzlement at what it was eating. Suddenly it occurred to me that at least one leg bone must have been left behind when the dead cow was moved, an error I determined never to make again. After a time, the sounds of feeding stopped. I was left in a state of great anxiety, while the gathering darkness slowly hid the cow from my sight, until I could make out nothing but the indistinct line of the narrow strip of grass on which it was lying. I feared that the tiger, discovering that his meal had vanished, would look no further than that one bone. That, having chewed upon it for a

while, he would go off to start a new night's hunting elsewhere.

I was in despair, vowing that never again would I move a kill from the place in which a tiger had left it, when I fancied that I could discern a shadowy movement where the strip of grass, lighter coloured than the surrounding vegetation, ended. My eyes were strained into the darkness. The movement, if there had been one at all, ceased and I was again filled with despondency. Then, suddenly, I became convinced, with little apparent cause for such conviction, that something had come to the dead cow. Pushing forward the switch of the electric torch, which I had tied to the shotgun, I found myself looking straight into the face of the tiger. The tiger retaliated by staring back at me with a look on its face which said very clearly, "What the blazes do you think you are doing?"

To this day I can close my eyes and see that tiger standing there as though we had confronted each other but a moment ago. The torch did not light up the animal distinctly. The eyes shone like balls of crimson fire—an impression which, I learned later, was only gained when you looked deep and straight into them. From the attitude in which the tiger appeared to be standing, I had a clear but quite erroneous notion that it had placed its forepaws on the dead cow so that it might look up at me the more closely.

It seemed to me that we faced each other for an age. Then, realising that unless prompt action was taken the tiger would make off, I fired the right-hand barrel of the gun straight into the face before and below me. Three things happened immediately and simultaneously. The torch went out. The gun, which I was holding awkwardly and far too loosely, struck me a glancing but violent blow on the side of the face. The tiger, as I heard in the darkness, took a terrific bound to my left, crashed into the bushes and then, apparently, did not move

again. My every nerve was strained in the attempt to locate it; to discover where it was and what it was doing. Told that a wounded tiger might thrash about in the undergrowth, I expected to hear either these sounds of violent movement or else noises which would indicate that it was in its death throes. I heard nothing.

After twenty minutes' anxious wait, I tested my torch and, finding that it was still working, cast its light methodically backwards and forwards over the ground in front of me. This told me nothing. There was no sign that I could see of the tiger's arrival or of its hasty departure. Putting the torch out again, I lit the cigarette which I so badly needed and wondered what the intrepid big game hunter, of whom I had read so often, would do next. Would he nonchalantly curl himself up in the tree and sleep soundly until the next morning? Or would he descend and follow up the wounded animal—assuming that he had hit it at all, which in my case was open to doubt? It was with some reluctance that I chose the latter course, as the ground beneath me looked singularly uninviting. I had not then acquired the knack of sleeping on a small platform and was quite certain that I would fall out of the tree if I attempted to spend the night in it.

On reaching the ground, I realised that a night in a tree, however uncomfortable, held many more attractions than the weird shadows, cast by my torch, which danced and flickered round me. I was sufficiently scared to be uncertain what should be done next. My torch made up my mind for me by going out and thereafter resisted all my frenzied efforts to make it light again. I would like to be able to say that I was annoyed at having, at that stage, to postpone my search for the tiger. I cannot do so. My main feeling was one of distinct relief. All that I can now remember clearly is that I walked straight into one very solid rubber tree, twice fell over roots

and then blundered into some bushes. After this I pulled myself together and made my way more slowly to the nearest Malay house where I spent the night. After answering a number of questions from the Malays who had heard the sound of the shot, I bathed at the well and had a meal of rice and fish before retiring to the sleeping mat provided for me. It was not only the hardness of the floor that made it difficult for me to get to sleep that night. I could not be certain whether I had wounded my tiger or not. The thought of searching for it in the undergrowth the next day did not appeal to me in the slightest. Whenever I closed my eyes I saw a pair of blood-red eyes staring at me.

The Follow-Up

A careful examination of the cow and the surrounding ground at dawn the following morning revealed no tell-tale bloodstains or hair from the tiger. It was impossible to tell whether the animal had been wounded or not. Anybody who endeavours to shoot wild animals should automatically accept the responsibility of ensuring that no wounded beast is left to die a slow and painful death. It is even more important that a wounded tiger is followed up and despatched, particularly in populated areas where there is a danger that someone may unwittingly approach it and be attacked. The task before me in this case was to comb an area of overgrown land for a tiger which might or might not be wounded. The chances were that, if untouched by my buckshot or only slightly hurt, the animal would have made off during the night. If I came across it, it would either be dead or wounded sufficiently to prevent it from travelling very far. I did not know much about tigers, but I did know that they are nasty customers when wounded. The best way of finding the creature, if it was there, was to

look for the place where it had been lying down during the night or for the signs of blood from a wound.

As I started my search it began to rain heavily. The rain reduced to a minimum the possibility of finding any new blood trail if the tiger changed its position. It also lessened considerably my chances of being able to hear the animal's movements. I have followed up tigers by day or night a good many times since that day, but experience does little to reduce the tension until the tiger is found. There is also a noticeable reaction afterwards. On this occasion, I was watched by a number of the local Malays who had established themselves in the trees overlooking parts of the area. It took me nearly two hours to cover every foot of the ground.

Nothing was found to suggest the presence of the tiger. Just as the job was finished, the rain ceased. I took the precaution of renewing the cartridges in the gun, the right-hand barrel of which I had loaded with solid ball, thus converting it in effect into a smooth-bored "rifle" firing a round lead ball weighing one-and-a-quarter ounces. Although it now appeared certain that the tiger had moved off in the darkness, I decided to make doubly sure, by a rough re-check of the ground, that my movements had not forced it to change its position and thus evade me, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

This time I moved more quickly. I soon found, on a leaf near the particularly dense undergrowth where the tiger had originally left the dead cow, one small and very watery-looking drop of blood. By this time the Malay onlookers had descended from their trees. Five of the more daring men, convinced that there was no tiger there, were following behind me at a distance, although I had warned them several times not to do so. I was new to the game, otherwise such foolishness would not have been permitted. Not long after coming across

the solitary spot of blood, I glanced up from looking at the ground just in time to see the tiger walk across a small piece of open ground near the edge of the undergrowth and disappear behind some Straits Rhododendron bushes. I turned to warn the men behind me but they had already vanished completely, without making a sound. Moving forward as quietly as possible, I saw the tiger standing broadside on to me at a distance of some twenty-five yards. I was lucky enough to down it with the solid ball. This, I found later, had gone too high and had passed clean through the animal's body just below the spine. The tiger was down and apparently incapable of rapid movement. As I approached near enough to make certain with my final shot it turned, snarling, and tried to drag itself towards me using only its front paws. It was a sickening business and I was glad when it was done.

Although I could not feel at all proud of the thoroughly unbusinesslike way in which I had brought about the animal's death, I examined this, my first tiger, with some satisfaction. I had learned a good deal and hoped to do better next time. The animal was a young tigress, in very good condition, with remarkably few of the ticks normally found on these creatures. Measured later, she went 7 feet 5 inches between pegs. My shot in the dark the previous night had been aimed too high—a natural tendency when firing downwards—and only three of the lead pellets had struck the head. Two had grazed the skull, ricochetting and leaving clearly defined lines. The third had hit the left eye, blinding the animal on that side and thus accounting for its failure to notice me when I located it. I received a supply of soft-nosed ammunition for my ·375 Mannlicher rifle two days later and used that much more efficient weapon thereafter.

CHAPTER VI

THE KIJAL TWINS

IT is charitable to think that the misdemeanours of the Kijal Twins—as twins they certainly were—could be attributed to their bad upbringing. Their father, the biggest tiger that I have ever shot, was a confirmed killer of buffaloes.. He killed once too often, however, and I found him lying dead in the velvety darkness with a bullet through his heart, sixty yards from the place where he had been feeding when I fired at him. Their mother also appeared to have a rooted dislike for natural food in an area where wild pigs abounded. She preferred to take any kind of village livestock that she could get between her paws and her teeth—buffaloes, cows and goats. She, too, eventually went the way of her mate, although her killing was not quite such a clean-cut matter as his had been.

The evening that I sat in wait for her near her last kill was one of heavy rain and gusty wind, with the boom of the sea-surf close at hand to add to the noise which concealed the sound of her approach from me. I did not know that she had been shot at before, nor was I then aware that an experienced tiger will sometimes growl as the kill is approached, in the hope that a would-be slayer will react to the sound and disclose his presence. Owing to the fact that I was waiting in a swamp which contained no trees, I was sitting seven feet off the ground on a plank supported by four shaky poles stuck into the soft mud behind a low clump of bushes. Her first full-throated snarl came after a series of capable roars produced much earlier on, before the rain and wind began, from the hillside facing me.

It made me jump. It also filled me with surprise that the volume of it was not sufficient to send my shaky perch teetering to the ground. She repeated the threat twice more, as if to reassure herself that no human being was about, before she began her meal. I was wet and unsympathetic enough to reward her with a bullet below the right eye, which was all that could be seen of her in the light of my shooting torch.

At the time that their mother died, the twins had already begun their own hunting, probably because the mating season was near at hand and the old tigress had no further time for them. They hunted together for some months, existing on the food that the jungle provided and supplementing this fare with an occasional goat from Kijal Darat. Then they separated, as tigers and tigresses will. One moved over to the southern side of Kijal Hill, making her domain the area roughly bounded by the three villages of Panchor, Telok Kalong and Telok Mengkuang, although she never ventured quite as far as the last-named. Her sister usually kept to the northern side of the hill, but there were times when I saw their tracks together and knew that cubby loneliness had led them to join forces temporarily.

Malays tend to take a philosophical view of the depredations of tigers—as indeed they must in Trengganu—and regard it as a matter of course and the will of Allah if an occasional goat or calf is killed and dragged off to be eaten. All would have been well with the twins, and they would probably have been alive to this day, had they contented themselves with reasonably infrequent raids on the livestock of the neighbouring villages or had they adopted the respectful attitude towards human beings which is shown by the majority of their kind. Unfortunately, as I have indicated, parental influence was not what it should have been and they began to make their

presence felt in equally unpopular, although quite different, ways.

The young tigress on the northern side of Kijal Hill apparently decided that goats were plentiful and easy to kill. She began to slaughter them at an alarming rate. Her sister, on the Panchor side of the well-wooded slopes, showed little desire to feed from village livestock. Her interest appeared to be in the Malays themselves and, although she never attacked anybody, she was sufficiently inquisitive and playful to cause them some alarm. Stories reached me of tired woodcutters, returning from work along the road to Telok Kalong, who looked over their shoulders and saw a tiger padding along at a distance behind them. Hysterical children described how a huge tiger, quite fifteen feet long and five feet high, had snarled at them from a roadside bank as they drove their father's buffaloes home. The calls for help which I received from the *Pĕnghulu* of Kijal and the *Kĕtua* of Telok Kalong reached me within eight days of each other.

At first I was inclined to believe that it was the same tigress that killed goats at Kijal and scared the good people of Telok Kalong and Panchor, but there was soon proof that they were different animals. The tracks of tigers are very easily found and identified when made on open soil, whether it be a well-used jungle track, the loose earth at the side of a road or the patches of dazzling white sand which are peculiar to Trengganu and parts of Pahang and Kelantan. Rain, especially torrential tropical rain, wipes the slate clean so that it is a simple matter to remember the last downfall and assess how long the tracks have been there. Dew also leaves its mark on these tracks, especially when they are in sand, and gives a further and more accurate indication of the interval which has elapsed since the animal passed that way. It was the ability to judge how old tiger tracks are, aided by conveniently spaced rain and dew,

which finally brought me to the conclusion that the Kijal tigress, as I then thought her to be, was in fact two different animals, although the footprints, so far as I could see, were identical.

I examined one morning, a long way back from the road north of Kijal Hill, the pugs accompanying the blood spots and faint drag marks made by a young tigress when she had killed and carried off a goat. Malays who had heard the commotion told me that the tigress had come into the village at about ten o'clock the previous night. The goat which had been taken was not fully-grown so that there was no point in following up the drag, as the carcass must have been eaten out overnight. I also knew that, having eaten a substantial meal, the tigress would be heavy and lazy and would not go very far before finding a sheltered place in which to lie up during the heat of the day.

Leaving Kijal, I followed the main road over the hill and left my car at the southern foot of it, to walk the two miles to Panchor, where it was necessary to examine some land which had formed the subject of a petition to the State Government. Almost immediately after striking inland from the road, I noticed on the sandy path which I was following the tracks of a young tigress which had come from the direction of Panchor and had turned off towards Telok Kalong. The pugs were marked by dew so that it was highly improbable that the animal which made them could have killed a goat at Kijal the same night. So two tigresses were in the area and both were of very much the same size and age. Wondering whether they might be from the same litter, I made enquiries and discovered that the *Pĕnghulu* of Kijal himself had seen a tigress with two cubs cross the road north of Kijal Hill about a year earlier.

Although Pa Mat and I often had an eye on several different

tigers at the same time, we normally tried to deal with them one by one. In this case we had two tigresses living next-door to each other, and elusive animals they proved to be. The Northern Twin, as we called her, would kill a goat at Kijal and the night afterwards I would wander round and through the village with a torch and rifle, hoping to catch a glint from her eyes. Darat Kijal, as the inland part of the village is called, is spread along half-a-mile of the main road, some of the widely-spaced houses extending back from the road for over a mile. The dwellings are erected among coconut trees on flat, grassy land, with few fences to mark the limit of one landowner's property from that of his neighbour. It was an ideal place in which to search for a tiger by night.

I would, perhaps, have devoted the better part of two successive nights to such aimless but enjoyably promising searches when news would reach me that the Southern Twin had been up to her pranks again near Telok Kalong. So the scene of the hunt would change to the south side of the hill and my nightly walks would take me up and down the track leading to Panchor and along the paths made by woodcutters on the slopes between the main road and the sea.

One night the tigresses joined forces again to kill a large billy goat on that side of Darat Kijal which is bounded by the foot of Kijal Hill. To do so they coolly went right under a Malay house and into the enclosure below it where the goats were kept. When the irate and alarmed owner of the goats shone a torch on them, they turned their great yellow eyes on him insolently and indifferently without pausing in their task of dragging the goat away. The next night I sat up for them on the path which we thought they would take if they returned to the house for another goat, but all that I got for my pains was a collection of highly irritating pig ticks, so small as to be barely visible to the naked eye. Afterwards neither of

the tigresses was seen or heard of for nearly two weeks, which prompted some of the more foolish local Malays to say that they had discovered I was after them and had moved away. This gave Pa Mat a certain amount of amusement and caused me further, but quite unreasonable, irritation to add to that caused by the pig ticks. The tigresses soon returned to haunt their respective sides of Kijal Hill and to continue to be a source of annoyance, fear and loss to the people of Darat Kijal, Panchor and Telok Kalong.

So matters continued until June 1950, when the fishermen of Pantai Kijal decided to follow the out-dated custom of opening the *kuala* (river mouth). These celebrations involve the expenditure of a considerable amount of money in carrying out a ritual designed to placate the Gods of the Sea. They normally include a performance of *Mak Yong*, a week-long type of operetta, couched mainly in old-style, formal Malay. As this would probably provide my only opportunity to witness one of these performances, I went over to Kijal in the evenings as often as possible.

On the night of the 7th June 1950, Pa Mat and I left Pantai Kijal by car fairly late, having seen most of that night's episode of the show. We were descending the far side of Kijal Hill when an excited ejaculation from Pa Mat brought me back with a start from the world of Courts and Rajas into which I had drifted. Looking down the decline in front of us, which was illuminated by the lights of the car, I was just in time to see a tigress do an abrupt about-turn and make off down the hill again at a lolloping gallop.

Fortunately, I made it a habit to carry my rifle loaded, with the torch attached to it, beside me in the car when we travelled at night. On my urging him, Pa Mat shot the car forward round the next bend and brought it to a quick standstill. I was out on the road in no time, but even so the tigress was moving

A young tigress in very good condition (*See p.* 90)

"Almost towing her up the slope'. The first of the Kijal twins (*See p.* 100)

so rapidly that she was already but a dim shape at the extreme limit of the headlights' range. This was no time for steady aiming and gentle squeezing of the trigger. The hasty snap shot which I took was probably the luckiest which it will ever fall to my lot to fire.

The recoil of the Mannlicher was sufficient to make me lose sight of the tigress momentarily. To my chagrin when I next focussed my eyes upon the animal, I saw her walk off the road apparently unhurt and disappear into the long grass beside it. Pa Mat, however, was certain that the animal had sat down in the road suddenly when I fired and had also lurched as it disappeared from sight. Quickly we ran the car down to the place where she had disappeared, so that we could make use of the lights to examine the surface of the road. The first thing that we noticed was a wet, brownish-yellow stain about eighteen inches long and one-and-a-quarter inches wide. Neither of us had seen a tiger leave a mark like that before and we were puzzled until I remembered the clay swamp beyond the hill. Obviously the mark had been made by the tail of the tigress striking the road and depositing on it some of the clay that she had picked up whilst traversing the swamp a short time earlier. A few feet beyond this long stain I found one small splinter of bone, which I placed in my wallet for closer examination later. A few small drops of blood leading from this fragment of bone vanished at the narrow roadside verge. This verge was flanked by high coarse grass, running level for only a few feet before falling abruptly down a steep embankment to the jungle some distance below. While we were standing at the edge of the grass and peering down into the darkness beneath, I heard a low growl and knew that the tigress was near at hand.

Now that I had been unsporting enough to take a snap shot at a tigress that I had met on the roadway, on the assumption

that she was one of the Kijal Twins, it was up to me to follow her and find out how badly she was wounded. We extinguished the lights of the car, as they were of no further use to us owing to the steepness of the slope. Watched by a rather anxious Pa Mat, I set off down into the darkness, aided by the light of the torch attached to my rifle. I had no sooner entered the grass than my feet encountered space instead of firm ground. Although I threw myself backwards into a sitting position, I continued to progress in a rapid slide which carried me almost to the foot of the slope. It is a tricky enough business to follow up a wounded tiger in the dark without having to do it at some speed in a sitting position. I scrambled back to the roadside rather promptly. A second attempt met with little more success, so I tried to find a less precipitous way down from the road. The embankment continued for some distance, but I eventually located a side drain which enabled me to descend with some semblance of dignity.

Working back along the fringe of the jungle to the spot above which Pa Mat was standing, I gathered that he was quite relieved to hear my voice. I had left him unarmed in the darkness and he thought he had heard the tigress growl again. To reassure him, I had him switch on the headlights of the car, but, as their blaze only served to embarrass me, they had to be put out again. It was a simple matter to see where I had glissaded down the slope, but I could find no trace of the way taken by the tigress. Each time that I moved too far into the jungle I would hear rather plaintive noises from Pa Mat. Having been frightened many times myself, I know what a nasty sensation fright can be. Besides, while I was occupied, I was also armed. He, poor fellow, had no weapon and nothing which I could give him to do to take his mind off real or imaginary growly noises. These are not pleasant to hear if one is standing alone in the dark. Pa Mat flatly refused to enter the

car and leave me, as he put it in terse Malay, "to play with a wounded tiger."

His uneasiness eventually communicated itself to me, mainly because I could not concentrate on looking for the tigress. Every time that I stopped making soothing remarks in order to use my ears, his voice became more and more tinged with alarm. Eventually he thought up a new plea, pointing out that unless we started off for Kemaman soon the ferry would have stopped working for the night. By this time I was hot, tired and impatient and abandoned all thought of trying to find the tigress until the following morning.

Although the next day was a Friday (which is observed as Sunday in Trengganu and some other Malay States), I had agreed to attend a gathering of schoolteachers. I must confess that the proceedings were speeded up a little in my anxiety to return to Kijal Hill. At last the meeting was over and we could change into our shooting clothes and be off. This time I took with me Che Abdullah bin Isahak, *Pĕnghulu* of Binjai, one of the quickest Malay trackers that I ever met in Trengganu.

How different the spot looked in the daylight. The car had barely stopped before Che Abdullah was showing me where the tigress had left the roadside in a great bound, had somersaulted once down the slope and had finally entered the jungle leaving a clear trail in the undergrowth. The marks of my slide of the night before ran parallel to the tracks of the tigress and were two yards away from them. For some reason for which I could not account, I was confident that the tigress was already dead. It took me but a moment to assume a sitting position and arrive, still in that posture, at the edge of the jungle. A rather startled *Pĕnghulu* followed me involuntarily, by the same means, immediately afterwards. Pa Mat came behind us more sedately.

Within a few minutes we were examining the dead tigress. The slope from the road was so steep that her death throes had carried her down, half rolling, half sliding, to finish up in a huddled heap with her head jammed beneath a fallen tree. The body had telescoped towards the head, making her look disappointingly small after the enormous apparition we had seen on the roadway the previous night. Measured later she went only 7 feet 4 inches between pegs. Her lower body, limbs and tail were covered with caked clay, confirming my theory about the long brown mark that we had found on the roadway after the shot.

While Pa Mat went back to Telok Kalong to fetch men to help bring out the carcass, the *Pĕnghulu* and I cut and twisted lianas to bind the feet together. We also cleared, with our *parangs*, the path up which we would have to climb back to the road. Even with six sturdy fishermen and their ropes to help us, it was warm, hard work moving the dead tigress up to the car. We managed finally, by almost towing her up the slope, four men hauling on ropes from above and the rest of us easing the burden up and over the more difficult parts.

The shot which I had fired the previous evening had been a very lucky one. Aimed at an indistinct shape travelling fast downhill in uncertain light, the bullet had struck the centre of the tail, an inch or two from its junction with the body. The fraction of bone we had found the previous night had been from the tail. The bullet had afterwards travelled the full length of the body. During skinning, the mushroomed lead tip of it was discovered clenched between the animal's back teeth. The growl that I had heard must have been the death-rattle. The fact that the tigress had stood up again after being hit, had walked to the side of the road and then jumped down the embankment, gave proof of the enormous strength and vitality possessed by these animals.

By foul means rather than fair, I had accounted for one of the Kijal twins. Meeting her, as I had done, when she was coming from the direction of Panchor, I naturally assumed that she was the animal which had been pestering the people of Telok Kalong. Subsequent events were to prove that it was the Darat Kijal tigress that I shot that night, presumably on her way back from a visit to her sister. Over a month passed before I realised what had happened. No more goats were killed at Darat Kijal, but reports of a tiger being encountered in the Panchor-Telok Kalong area began to reach me again.

The Second Twin

During the following July and August the little spare time at my disposal was occupied in hunting a tiger and tigress which, quite independently of each other, were causing trouble at Banggol, on the other side of Kemaman from Kijal. Luck was with me and I finally killed the pair of them within five days of each other, the female on the 21st August 1950, and the tiger on the 26th August. I shot the female over a wild pig which she had killed, and used an artificial bait to trick the tiger into approaching sufficiently near me for a shot on a night full of brilliant moonlight.

Meanwhile we had not lost sight of the remaining Kijal twin, who appeared to have settled down to a fairly regular circuit between Panchor, Telok Kalong and the coast. I discovered the track which she almost invariably followed when returning to Panchor and worked out when she would next use it. That night I waited for her on a convenient grassy hillock overlooking the path. All my calculations were right except one and that one exception was enough to prevent me from getting a shot at her. When the tigress returned towards Panchor from the direction of the coast she nearly always

struck the road after crossing a small open patch of grass. She had then only to follow the road for forty yards to reach the beginning of the track to Panchor, beside which I was lying in wait for her. Knowing this, I had left my car parked a hundred yards south of the Panchor track so that the tigress would not see it. As luck would have it, on that particular night she struck the road much further south than usual and immediately encountered the car. Pa Mat and the man waiting in it with him heard her hasty leap back off the roadway onto the bank. When they climbed the bank just afterwards their torch caught one yellow flicker from her eyes before she turned back into the jungle again.

I had shot the first of the twins in a most unsatisfactory and unsporting manner on the roadway by night. As it turned out, her sister came to a very similar end, although she first provided a little more excitement.

On the 28th September 1950, I went to Dungun to attend parents' day at the girls' school there. My wife came with me and so did the Group Teacher, 'Che Muda bin Abdul Rahman. My wife had repeatedly asked me to take her along when I was going out after tigers and had just as consistently been refused, for reasons which must be obvious. Returning from Dungun at 9.30 p.m. that night, we met the tigress standing in the middle of the road at the exact spot where she had encountered my car while I had waited for her on the Panchor track. She was then a bare two hundred yards from the place where her sister had died.

Directly she realised that a car was approaching, she walked off the road to our right and disappeared. Pa Mat ran the car to a quiet standstill and I was out in the road beside it in a flash, swinging my rifle slowly backwards and forwards in the hope of catching the reflection of her eyes in the light of the torch attached to it. My wife was leaning out of the car win-

dow watching me and about three yards directly behind me.

Now, at the particular place on the roadside verge on which I was standing, the Public Works Department had been excavating soil for road repairs. This work had left a small cavity, with its steepest side nearest to me, exactly five feet (measured afterwards) from where I was standing. In this hole, unbeknown to me, the tigress was crouching, looking up at me. To behave in this fashion was contrary to the habits of a well-mannered tiger and proved that all that had been told me by the people of Telok Kalong had not been exaggeration.

I swung the torch round twice in sweeping half-circles on the undergrowth further away, then directed it momentarily onto a low cluster of large reddish leaves which caught my eye. I was bringing it round again, rather low down, when I caught sight of two odd-looking rounded tufts projecting above the edge of the bank near my feet. I deflected the rifle and torch downwards and shone the light straight into the face of the tigress. It had been her ears that had caught my attention. Taking rooted objection to being discovered, she immediately reared up and let out a short, threatening roar. My wife received the full benefit of this at unpleasantly close range. She told me afterwards that the Group Teacher, who was sitting in the front of the car, immediately wound up the window nearest to him with great dexterity.

I found myself in a rather embarrassing position. The tigress was demonstrating immediately below and in front of me. The car containing my wife was directly behind. Between them I had very little room in which to manœuvre. Had I been armed with a shotgun, I could have fired both barrels together with some effect. As it was I had little time to make certain with the rifle. I did the first thing that entered my head. Raising both my arms, and the rifle, into the air, I

shouted at the tigress to the fullest extent of my lungs. The creature had apparently never been addressed in this way before and, although there is no doubt that my action cannot have caused her as much alarm as she had given me, it produced the desired result. She jumped away sideways, ran swiftly along in the direction of Telok Kalong and emerged onto the road about twenty yards away.

Pa Mat answered my call for light with commendable speed and had the headlights switched on promptly. Again, it was necessary to take a hurried snap shot at a fast-moving, indistinct target. At the shot the tigress turned a reverse somersault. That is to say, her back legs were knocked forward under her, so that she landed on her back with her head towards me, the legs waving violently in the air. I ran forward, working another round into the rifle with the bolt as I did so, but before I could fire again, the tigress rolled off the road and vanished from sight. The tracks showed blood splashes where the tigress had fallen. She had regained her feet after rolling over twice and had then entered the nearby undergrowth.

During these events I had been wearing clothes far more in keeping with a social engagement than a tiger hunt. Directly we saw what had happened to the tigress, Pa Mat opened the boot of the car so that I might change into older and more suitable clothing in which to follow her up. It was at this stage in the proceedings that my wife intervened.

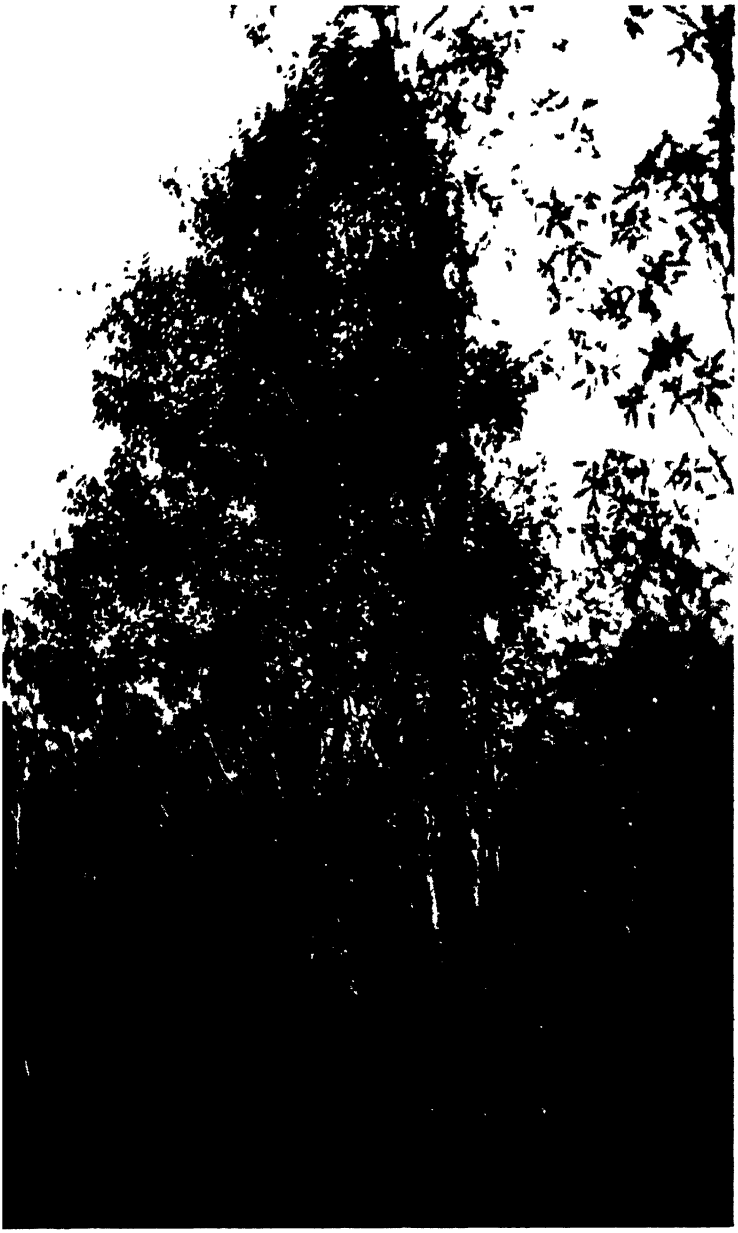
"Do you really think," she asked, "that I am going to sit here and let you crawl through that hole in the undergrowth in the dark after a wounded tiger?"

I began to argue, but those who are married will appreciate that there are times when the most persuasive words fall on deaf ears. Pa Mat lent me a hand, but that only brought the Group Teacher into the discussion. As he had once been Pa Mat's head schoolmaster, we gained no ground there.

Pa Mat and the Author with two tigresses.

A flashlight photograph after a follow-up in the dark.

Pa Mat erecting a platform—



—The completed hide

Hunt the hunter! The Author in a well-concealed platform.

Finally, of course, Pa Mat and I had to give way and agree to postpone our search for the tigress until the following day. By doing so we missed an excellent chance of killing her that night. When we returned the next afternoon, once more accompanied by *Pĕnghulu* Abdullah, we found that, after negotiating the roadside patch of undergrowth into which she had disappeared, the tigress had spent the night on the edge of a small clearing just beyond. In the frenzy caused by the pain of her wound, the unfortunate animal had proceeded to bite down all the young saplings within her reach. Had I followed her up in the darkness I would have had her at a disadvantage in that small clearing and could, I think, have ended her pain.

The three of us, Pa Mat, *Pĕnghulu* Abdullah and myself, now began the task of finding out where the tigress had gone to. From the torn and tattered saplings the tracks led us across a stretch of muddy water onto the slopes of a small bush-covered hill beyond. This takes but a moment or two to describe in writing, but it took the three of us over half-an-hour to pick up the trail because of the water into which it led us. Eventually the *Pĕnghulu* found, on a small piece of white wood, a single smear of dried blood where the wounded animal had left the swamp. There the trail ended. The ground beneath the bushes on the hillside was too firm for the pads of the tigress to have made any impression on it. We could find no further trace of the animal, although the three of us, all well-versed in tracking of that kind, searched thoroughly until darkness, sifting through dry leaves and examining minutely the lower leaves of bushes in the hope of finding a single drop of dried blood.

It was fortunate that the next day was a Friday so that we were able to renew the search early, casting round in ever-widening circles from the place where the tigress had left the

swamp. Again we could find nothing, although our quest took us as far as Panchor where we followed a difficult trail which a different tiger had made through another and far more extensive swamp. Pa Mat and I were both satisfied, from the heavy way in which she had been brought down by the shot, that the tigress had received a severe wound. So, too, but with less reason, were the people of Telok Kalong and Panchor. They declined to make use of the main road past the spot until they were satisfied that she was dead. It was imperative to find the animal and to find her quickly.

Thus it was that, while I was occupied in the office throughout the following day, Pa Mat and *Pĕnghulu* Abdullah occupied themselves in rounding up a number of men, a list of whose names I had prepared the previous evening. They finished up with a band of fifteen of the toughest-looking Malays I have ever seen together. Every one of them had a shotgun. I also knew from personal experience that each and every one of them could be depended upon to carry out the scheme that I had in mind. We went to the spot by truck late that afternoon. There I explained to the men that they were to keep in line, five yards apart, so that each of them could be seen or heard by those on either side of him. Then we began to beat in line from the place where we had found that single tell-tale smear of blood.

The first two beats, taken in a direction away from the road, produced nothing. The third, on which I set the long line of men moving parallel to the road, was more successful. When the line had crossed the hill which the three of us had searched so thoroughly before and had reached the grass-covered slopes beyond, the prearranged signal of a whistle sounded, indicating that some sign of the tigress had been found. Running down the halted line, I was shown the marks in the coarse grass where a tiger had either been lying or had fallen heavily. Putting my

face close to the ground, I confirmed by smell that the animal had been there the previous night. The odour also made it clear that the beast was wounded. Renewing my warnings to the searchers to exercise great caution, I set the line in motion again, crossing backwards and forwards in front of it so that I might cover as much ground as possible.

Very soon afterwards a shot rang out. Racing in the direction of the sound, I was just in time to see *Pĕnghulu* Abdullah fire a precautionary second shot at the tigress which, now dead, was still lying in the position in which a searcher named Ali had found and shot her. We cleared some of the surrounding undergrowth in order to take the photograph facing page 113. My bullet, the hole made by which can be clearly seen, had hit the right hind leg squarely and had broken the main bone in three places. I was glad that the animal was at last out of her misery.

During our early searches we must have passed very close to her on more than one occasion, for we eventually found her only three hundred yards away from the edge of the swamp where the blood trail had ended. Unlike other wounded tigers for which I have searched, she had not disclosed her position by snarling at us. This tigress was one inch shorter than her sister—7 feet 3 inches. In all other respects they were as alike as two tigresses can be. Pa Mat and *Pĕnghulu* Abdullah were as convinced as I was that she was the twin sister of the animal that I had shot on Kijal Hill, close at hand, not so very long before.

So the Kijal Twins died. Both met their end in a manner which any sportsman would regret. Both were shot on the roadway as the result of a chance encounter. They were also the only two animals that I failed to follow up and despatch immediately after shooting them. Their destruction by such means would have been inexcusable, had they not been making

a nuisance of themselves. I had succeeded in eliminating them, but my success was an empty one. The villagers of Telok Kalong and Panchor and the goat owners of Darat Kijal were the only people with real cause for satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII

MAN-EATING TIGERS

THE Malayan tiger does not often turn man-eater. When he does lapse from grace in this way he is usually destroyed before he has killed many people. If local huntsmen are unable to deal with him, experts from the Game Department are called upon, with the result that in most cases the tiger's career as a man-eater is soon brought to an end.

I have been told of one tiger which killed thirty-six people in the Dungun district of Trengganu before the war, but have been unable to obtain confirmation of this story. This is the greatest number of human lives that I have heard credited to one tiger in Malaya, although there were probably worse cases before the *parang* (heavy slashing knife) and the spear were superseded by the shotgun and the modern sporting rifle.

Even if the Dungun man-eater's record could be confirmed, it would nowhere near match that of some of the man-eating tigers and leopards of India. Jim Corbett, who has written two superb books about man-eaters and who will never be equalled as an authority on this subject, credits the Champawat man-eater—a tigress—with four hundred and thirty-six recorded human kills. Several of the other tigers which he hunted successfully nearly equalled this grim record.

My own limited experience is that a Malayan man-eater will rarely secure twenty human victims before a stop is put to his reign of terror. More often than not, an accurately placed bullet or a cunningly contrived trap will write *finis* to

his career before he has as many as ten human lives to his discredit.

The following is typical of most Malayan man-eaters. A tiger operating in Trengganu killed his first man on the 13th December 1947. He killed four more people—on the 15th June 1948, the 20th June 1948, the 8th September 1948 and the 17th December 1948—before being shot by a headman on the 31st December 1948 after killing four goats. Incidentally, this tiger was a male, as have been all the other Trengganu man-eaters of which I have records. On the 11th March 1951 I followed up the drag marks after a Malay rubber tapper had been carried off. There was no doubt that this man had been killed by a tigress. No other kills occurred in the neighbourhood afterwards, however, and I would not describe a tigress, or a tiger for that matter, as a "man-eater" because of a solitary kill.

Tigresses do become man-eaters in Malaya, however. One killed seven Chinese in the District of Parit in Perak in 1949. This man-eater was accompanied by two cubs, one of which was trapped. She disappeared in 1950, presumably having died or been killed in a pig trap, for there is no record of her death.

In my opinion there are three reasons why the Malayan man-eater does not become so great a menace as the man-eater in India. These reasons are:

(*a*) The Malayan tiger operates over a smaller area and is thus easier to locate and consequently to kill;
(*b*) The Malays display greater determination and skill in dealing with tigers than do the Indian villagers;
(*c*) Help from experienced hunters is more readily forthcoming in Malaya.

I could quote many examples to support the first two of these contentions. The Kemasek man-eater, which killed

twelve people in Trengganu between September 1950 and July 1951, ranged over an area of not more than 150 square miles. The Indian man-eating tigress of Chowgarh (sixty-four victims) was known to operate over an area of 1,500 square miles. I know personally of one incident in which a young Malay, whose wife had been seized by a tiger, clung to her in an attempt to save her. Finding this of no avail, he released his hold and drove the animal off with the short knife that he was carrying. Unfortunately, the woman lived for only a few minutes afterwards. Corbett quotes only a few similar cases from India. Furthermore, I believe that, apart from Gurkhas, the Indian villagers themselves do not kill as many tigers as do the Malays who seem willing, when necessary, to tackle them even with spears or knives.

Why do tigers become man-eaters? The shortest possible answer to that question is "When they lose their instinctive fear of man". In most cases, the Indian tiger begins to kill human beings when circumstances beyond his control rob him of his ability to obtain sufficient natural food. These circumstances are usually either an injury, which slows him down or prevents him in other ways from killing game, or are else the natural results of old age—slowness, failing sight, broken teeth, bushed-out claws—which have the same effect.

Among other contributory factors in India have been outbreaks of contagious or infectious disease which have swept the country. Hindus normally cremate their dead. When deaths are frequent, however, and the strength of a village is decimated by disease, it is sufficient from the religious point of view to place a live coal in the mouth of the corpse. It is then cast over a cliff or disposed of in some other way which obviates burial. It is known that carnivora have fed from such collections of dead bodies and have thus lost their fear of man and have acquired a taste for human flesh.

Leonard, of the Malayan Game Department, who has had many years' experience with all types of game on the Peninsula, has told me that the Malayan tiger turns man-eater for the same reasons as the Indian variety, except that on the Peninsula there would not normally be unburied corpses from which it could feed. He also considers that grown cubs, reared by a man-eating tigress, will occasionally kill a human being when they are hungry and no natural food is available, because they have lost their instinctive fear of man and have become accustomed to human flesh. Jim Corbett expresses the opinion that the cubs of a man-eating tigress do not automatically become man-eaters. This difference in the views of two authorities backed by long experience is not one on which I am qualified to express a definite opinion. One would imagine, however, that a cub whose mother killed human beings and who shared the resultant meal would not retain its fear of man. The only man-eaters of which I had personal knowledge in Malaya were males, so that there could be no question of their ways being handed down to their cubs.

Leonard throws new light onto the general question of man-eating tigers by dividing them into two classes, the permanent man-eater and the man-eater which kills man only at intervals. The permanent man-eater is the tiger so crippled by injury or old age that he has become incapable of killing anything but human beings. As Leonard states, such man-eaters are easier to deal with than the other variety, because they can more readily be marked down.

That an old or badly injured tiger can always kill human beings when he is unable to obtain deer or pig is something of a reflection on a civilization which has robbed man of much of his sense of hearing, most of his sense of smell and some element at least of his natural instinct of self-preservation. One would

"Each and every one of them could be depended upon". Pa Mat in the centre of front row with *Penghulu* Abdullah behind his right shoulder (*See p.* 106)

The second of the Kijal twins, lying where she was finally shot (*See p.* 107)

think that Malays and Chinese born and bred in Malaya would preserve those characteristics which enabled their ancestors to outwit the tiger, the elephant and the *sĕladang* in the jungle many years ago.

This is not so. My experience has been that a large proportion of the rural population of Malaya—with the exception of the *Sakais* and other aborigines, who are experts in jungle lore—know little, if anything, about the wild life of the Peninsula. Man has, in fact, become easy meat for a man-eating tiger in a very literal sense. Twice whilst searching for signs of the Jerangau man-eater during periods between his kills, I approached rubber tappers working in the area. In one case, involving a Chinese, I tapped him on the shoulder before he was aware of my approach. In the other, I was within two yards of a Malay before he knew that I was near him. The fact that in neither case was I taking more than usual pains to move silently demonstrates how simple it would have been for a tiger to get within springing range of either man. That both were working in an area in which a man-eater had killed recently is a further indication of man's great inferiority in jungle lore. Both might have been expected to have been very much on the *qui vive*.

A typical case of a man-eater, quoted me by Leonard, was a large male who was in perfect condition when he was shot by him after killing eight people over a period of twelve months. When the beast was skinned it was discovered that he had received, at some stage, a full charge of buckshot in the face and shoulder. Until it healed, this injury was sufficient to prevent him from being able to kill his natural food. During this period he had been forced to kill and feed from human beings. When the animal recovered he returned to his more normal diet, except that he had lost his instinctive fear of man and would kill a human being when he was prompted by the

pangs of hunger and when more natural game was not immediately available to him.

A surprisingly high proportion of the tigers that I shot bore the traces of wounds inflicted by man, generally in the form of buckshot which could usually be located beneath the skin by running a hand over the body and limbs. Apparently the movements of the animal eventually work these leaden pellets to the surface after the skin has healed. There they remain. The Jerangau man-eater carried one such buckshot over the big biting muscle of his right cheek. The Kemasek man-eater had two, beneath the skin over his ribs.

A common form of natural injury is the breaking of one or more of the four canine teeth. These comprise the tiger's chief means of killing game, nature having designed them of sufficient length to sink deep into the flesh of the victim and thus reach a vital spot. When these teeth are lost through old age, or when more than two are broken off short, a tiger experiences great difficulty in killing his prey after he has sprung upon it, although deer being more delicate animals in every way would be more easily despatched than pigs, which have their thick skins and heavy layers of muscle and flesh to help protect them.

These canine teeth are sometimes broken during fights. More frequently the damage occurs when the tiger is working at the bones of big bovines to reach the succulent marrow within. When the break is an old one, the sharp edges of the tooth are found to be worn down, turning it into a smooth, rounded knob.

Although gun-shot wounds and broken or missing teeth are among the factors which cause tigers to turn man-eaters, not all tigers which suffer from either or both of these handicaps begin to prey on man. The gunshot wound has to be sufficiently severe to prevent the tiger from killing his natural

game at least for a period; the lack of teeth has to be a sufficiently large handicap to rob the tiger of his killing powers.

This book is about tigers in their natural environment, so that tigers in captivity should have no place in it. However, while photographing the two tigers "Bulat" and "Muntil" at the Johore Bahru Zoo, I made one very interesting discovery. This was that, probably owing to their close proximity to visitors to the Zoo and having the human scent constantly in their nostrils, both have completely lost their natural fear of man. Both, if released, might well become man-eaters.

"Bulat" once ignored me completely while I was trying to get a full-face "shot" of him. Then, when he thought I was off my guard, he walked forward, as he had previously done a dozen times, to the spot where he always turned away. Reaching it, he made a lightning sideways spring and paw-stroke at my face and camera pressed against the bars.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that, more often than not, it is man himself who makes the Malayan tiger turn man-eater. While a gun-shot wound does not necessarily cause a tiger to develop man-eating habits, the fact remains that most of these tigers, when they are killed, are found to bear the scars of old wounds of this nature. It is for this reason that I would stress again and again that nobody should attempt to shoot a tiger unless he is prepared to follow up the wounded animal and destroy it. When shooting other types of wild game, the follow-up of a wounded beast is necessary for humane reasons. With tigers, humane reasons are of less importance than the danger that others may suffer from the shooter's carelessness and lack of determination.

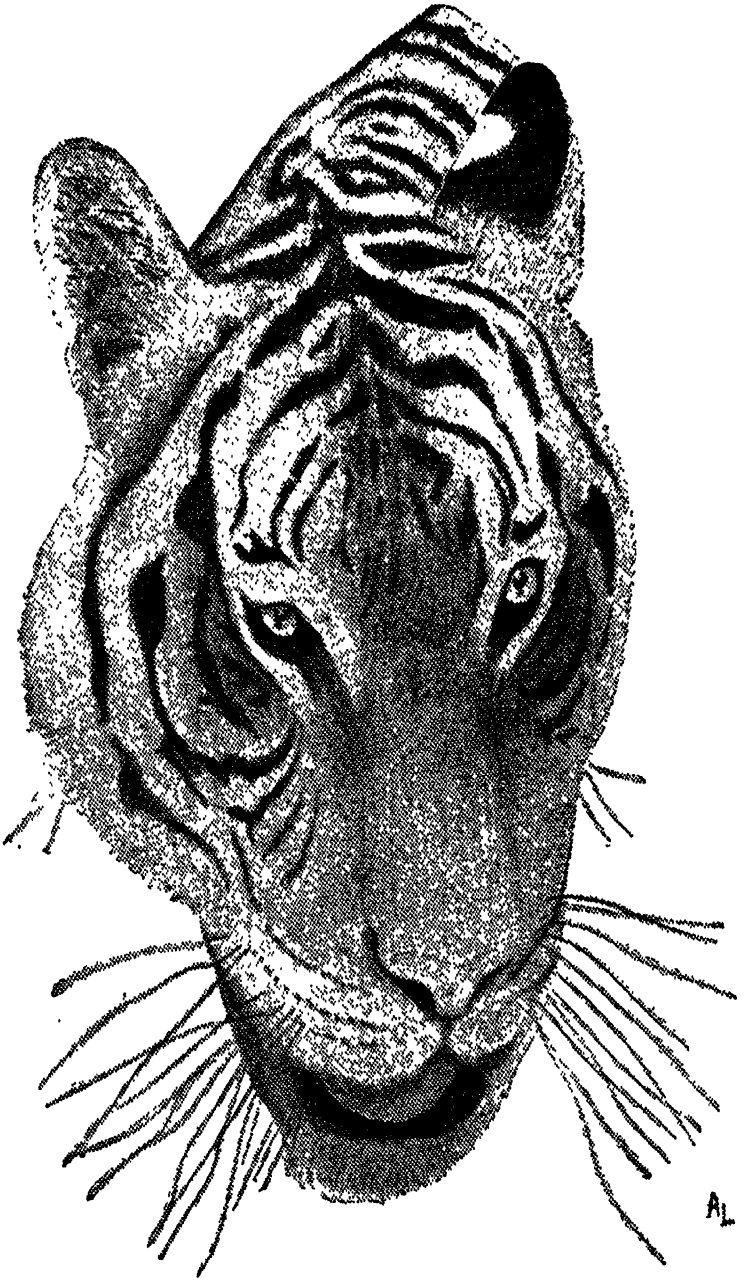
Having made the point that tigers turn man-eaters only when something has occurred to make them lose their instinctive fear of man, I must lay equal emphasis on the fact that the average tiger, if left alone by man, will retain his fear

of human beings throughout his life. Apart from those which may be attributed to the man-eater, who in Malaya is very much the exception rather than the rule, attacks on human beings are almost always made by a tigress protecting young cubs. Such attacks are rarely driven home. If the person who is the subject of such resentment is killed during such an attack, no part of the body is eaten by the tigress or her cubs. The danger having been removed, the fear of man prevails and the corpse is left untouched.

I have examined the injuries of the victims of two such attacks by tigresses. In each case, they were confined to claw scratches on the head, neck and shoulders. In neither case had the attacker's main weapon, her teeth, been used. In both these incidents there was no doubt that the injured man had inadvertently approached a tigress with cubs and that she had driven him away, in much the same manner that a bitch with newly-born pups will demonstrate at the approach of a stranger.

A feature of other attacks of which I have heard has been that the cub, or cubs, "assisted" the tigress. This is obviously a figment of imagination on the part of the person attacked, resulting from the reluctance of young cubs to be left too far behind by their mother.

One attack by a tigress with a cub, which occurred not far from my home, involved a large bull buffalo. This beast was being led back from work by its master when the pair of them stumbled on a tigress and her youngster, who were lying up in the long grass through which the man and buffalo were passing. The tigress immediately sprang at the man, but contented herself with rearing on her hind legs and tearing at his face and neck with her claws. She was promptly attacked and driven off by the buffalo. The man attempted to make off, but was overtaken and attacked again. Once more the buffalo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drove off his assailant. A third attack by the tigress followed, the buffalo again coming to the rescue.

When he finally reached the main road, the man met some other Malays, who placed him in a trishaw and sent him off to hospital, so that his wounds might be cleansed and dressed. The buffalo was determined not to leave his master, however, and trotted heavily along behind the trishaw until they reached the township. There he stopped, eyeing the retreating vehicle in doubt, before turning and making his solitary way home again. Malays who met him on the road told me afterwards that he walked with a definite swagger, punctuated by an arrogant shaking of his great head and by self-congratulatory snorts and grunts.

Apart from their vigilance when accompanied by cubs, tigresses are rather truculent animals during the breeding season, especially if they cannot locate a mate as quickly as they would like. I would not put it beyond them to attack human beings who accidentally approach too close or who surprise them while they are in such a mood.

Two rather amusing incidents, resulting, I believe, from the bad temper of a tigress in such a condition, occurred whilst I was stationed in Kemaman. In the first, a tigress chased a bus full of people for half-a-mile. In the second, armed police travelling in a truck were pursued in similar fashion. On neither occasion did the tigress succeed in overtaking the vehicle she was chasing, probably because neither of the drivers was prepared to wait and see what her intentions were.

Apart from temperamental tigresses, with or without cubs, there are other occasions on which a tiger cannot altogether be blamed for attacking a human being. I would say that unless the animal is a man-eater, such attacks are confined to those made:

(*a*) By a tiger surprised over a fresh kill, or inadvertently cornered;

(*b*) By a wounded tiger.

Most experienced sportsmen agree that a wounded tiger is as dangerous as any living animal, but it does not follow that a wounded tiger will always attack those who set out to track him down or who inadvertently come across him. I remember very well two particular occasions on which tigers, who had been wounded but not killed outright, were followed up in the dark. During these searches the light of my torch clearly indicated my position to the animal that I was after. Although neither of these animals was wounded severely enough to be incapacitated from attacking, neither of them did, in fact, do so. Both animals were followed up immediately after being shot at and could not, therefore, have been affected by that stiffening of their wounds which, many hunters claim, handicaps an injured tiger considerably. The advice generally given is to allow at least half-an-hour's respite before starting the follow-up. I prefer not to do so as I maintain that the animal is in greater pain, and therefore more truculent, when the numbing effect of the high-velocity bullet has had time to wear off. Furthermore, I consider that a wounded tiger is at a greater disadvantage when still dazed by the terrific impact of the bullet than he is when given time to recover from the initial shock and to nurse his grievance.

Compare my experiences with the two wounded tigers mentioned above with a statement which appeared in an English newspaper article on Malayan man-eaters on the 26th August 1951. This article quoted "a seasoned Malayan huntsman" as saying:

> "Once wounded . . . . a tiger will attack any man on sight, even after the wound has healed."

The truth of the matter is that a wounded tiger is an extremely dangerous animal, but it does not follow automatically that all wounded tigers will attack. A safer generalization, and one to which I would give my full support, would be that no tiger can be depended upon to behave in any given manner in any particular set of circumstances.

A question frequently asked of me is whether man-eating tigers have ever accounted for any of the Communist terrorists who sulk in the jungles of Malaya. I have as often replied that it is doubtful whether the dead man's comrades would report the matter to the police, their enemies, even if such a death occurred. There is, therefore, no information on the subject. I will add this. While I was attempting to shoot the Kemasek man-eater, we found the droppings of a male tiger, the pugs of which corresponded exactly with those of the killer. Contained in these droppings was a piece of the thick skin from the sole of a human foot. This was eight days after the man-eater's last *reported* kill. I formed my own conclusions and leave those who read this to do the same.

The fact that a man-eating tiger secures most of his victims by day is an advantage to those who endeavour to shoot him. Another advantage, although perhaps a more doubtful one, is that when a tiger turns man-eater he loses his instinctive fear of man. This means that he will not bolt at the approach of a human being as readily as will a normal tiger. As he almost invariably conceals himself cunningly and remains motionless when a likely victim comes within sight, it is necessary for a most careful look-out to be kept when searching for him. Hunting man-eaters calls for great patience and some endurance. It has also been said that courage is required. Of this I can only say that the two man-eaters which I hunted both frightened me so thoroughly that they succeeded in convincing me that I cannot be a very courageous person.

Two factors in Malaya operate to the man-eater's advantage. The first is that many of the tracks along which villagers must travel run through country which provides excellent cover for a tiger. They are often very narrow, with solid undergrowth on both sides of them. The second is that a man or woman engaged in tapping rubber forms the perfect subject for an attack. There is, again, ample cover to conceal the animal's approach, particularly on the smaller holdings where little clearing of the secondary growth between the trees is undertaken. Even when the ground is kept clear, opportunities exist for the animal to stalk undetected to the edge of the planted area where it meets the jungle and there to wait for his victim to approach him. The very nature of the rubber tapper's task places him at a disadvantage. Tappers almost invariably work at a distance from their colleagues. The pause which they must make at each tree, the concentration that they must apply to their work and the stooping position adopted during the actual tapping all combine to favour the man-eater.

Once he has marked down his victim, the man-eater will either stalk right up to him or will launch his attack by a charge, accompanied by a blood-curdling roar. No matter which method is adopted, the tiger then grasps his victim with the claws of the fore-paws and kills by biting into the neck, in which the long upper and lower canine teeth practically meet. Death must, in such circumstances, be almost instantaneous. In the majority of the cases which I saw, there were claw marks on the back of one shoulder and on the opposite cheek, or the scalp. The bite was made sideways from behind into the neck, usually on the left-hand side.

Drags

Directly the man-eater has secured a victim, he proceeds to drag the corpse away to find a suitable place in which to feed from it. I have never known a man-eater to feed at the spot where the victim was secured, although I have sometimes noticed that brief stops to eat have been made during the drag. These stops differ from those which occur when a man-eater hears people approaching, moves the corpse to a different spot, and is again disturbed as they continue to follow him. The Kemasek man-eater once led me a mile and a half through most difficult country in this way, always succeeding in keeping ahead of me. Each time that he realised that he was being compelled to move on again he voiced his annoyance in a manner which frightened me considerably. He finally left the body without having had a real opportunity to feed from it and without giving me a chance to have a shot at him.

The corpse of a dead person is dragged by the neck, not carried as apparently occurs in India. It often happens that during the drag the tiger does not relinquish the original grip with his mouth by which he ended the life of his victim. If the hold on the neck is altered, the fact is apparent from the greater amount of blood found at intervals on the line of the trail. A characteristic feature of the drags which I have followed has been the two lines made by the toes or heels of the victims. The clothes are nearly always torn off by thorns or sticks while the body is being carried off and are found at intervals along the grim trail.

When he is making off with his kill, sometimes dragging it at his side, sometimes walking with it between his legs, the man-eater often behaves in a manner which can only be described as aimless. Like the tiger who has killed a domestic animal, but to a greater extent, he behaves as though he is too

beset by a feeling of guilt at the crime he has committed to realize what he is about. He will drag his victim much further than he really needs. He will ignore excellent feeding places, which would prove most acceptable to him if the kill were a wild pig or deer. More often that not he will finish up in an ill-concealed spot, with poor protection from the sun.

The Jerangau man-eater once swam the body of a Chinese rubber tapper across a narrow river. Reaching the far bank, he turned sharp to the left, proceeding along the water's edge for about thirty yards. He then re-entered the water and went back across the river. Having covered nearly a mile, he finally began to feed at a spot which was a bare two hundred yards from the place where he had struck the man down. I cannot believe that such behaviour is deliberate or that it represents an attempt to throw pursuers off the trail. If a man-eater cared to keep travelling in one direction he could put such a distance between himself and those seeking to overtake him that they would have little chance of coming up with him before dark. It would take a very brave, indeed a foolhardy man to follow up a confirmed man-eater by night.

Without wishing to go into too many gruesome details, I will state that the man-eater normally feeds first from the limbs, beginning with the feet. The Jerangau man-eater invariably consumed the left legs of his victims first. The Kemasek man-eater always first ate the right leg. I never knew either of them to depart from these grisly habits. Malays will aver that a man-eater cannot feed from a corpse which is lying on its back, because the animal dare not look into the face of man. In point of fact, it matters little to the man-eater whether the kill is lying face downwards or not. Most victims are attacked from behind, fall on their faces and remain face downwards during the drag.

Few people are lucky enough to survive an attack by a man-

eater. The Kemasek man-eater attacked his first human being on the 12th September 1949. He did not kill his first man until almost exactly a year later, on the 29th September 1950. The victim of the first attack was a Chinese rubber tapper, working before daylight as Chinese tappers often do, with a lamp attached to his head. His wife was tapping nearby. They had adopted the practice of communicating with each other by shouting at regular intervals. This habit is followed so that some warning of a mishap may be given. The idea is that, if one of a pair of tappers who adopt this system fails to obtain a reply, he stops work and goes to investigate.

This is what happened when the Chinese tapper suddenly ceased calling to his wife. She went to see what was wrong, found blood and pugs and at once raised the alarm. A search party was organised. By great good luck, one member of it noticed the feet of the unconscious man, which were just visible at the edge of the jungle. He was hurried to hospital and eventually recovered, although, when I last saw him, his neck was badly scarred and the co-ordination of his limbs was impaired. A man-eater is sometimes driven off a victim after an attack, but even if the person is then still alive he usually succumbs within a short time. The wounds very quickly turn septic, particularly in such a hot climate. This is largely due to the decayed meat and filth which collect on the underpart of the claws.

Although the limited area over which they range makes it easier to locate Malayan man-eaters than Indian tigers of this kind, there is one great difficulty in shooting these brutes on the Peninsula. From reading Jim Corbett's *Man-eaters of Kumaon*, it is evident that when he had set out to destroy a man-eater he had a free hand to do as he wished. Rarely were the animal's kills, whether man or beast, disturbed before he wished them to be. During attempts to destroy the Rudra-

prayag leopard, poison was injected into human kills so that the man-eater would feed from them and die. On another occasion the body of a young boy killed by the leopard was chained out in a courtyard in the hope that the animal would return to it. Such methods would be out of the question in Malaya, where dead Muslims must be buried as soon as possible to meet the requirements of their religion.

As I shall relate in the story dealing with the Jerangau man-eater, my attempts to shoot this animal were repeatedly foiled by having human kills removed before I could reach the spot where the tiger had left them. There was not the slightest intention on my part of allowing the man-eater to feed from the body. It was essential, however, that the corpse should be permitted to remain out as an attraction to the man-eater to return to that spot. When this was at last done, more through fear of the tiger than through a wish to comply with the instructions which I had issued, the tiger was shot as it reached the corpse.

In most cases in Malaya, the fact that a man-eater has killed a human being is soon discovered. Perhaps the attack may have been witnessed, or the sounds of it heard, by a terrified colleague working only a short distance away. The alarm is raised at once. Soon, as large a body of men as the village can produce sets out to retrieve the body. In some cases, depending on local circumstances, the search is conducted by the police. The searchers are often inadequately armed (a courageous police-corporal who once insisted on accompanying me as an anti-terrorist escort, despite my pleas and threats, carried only an automatic pistol), they show great bravery in recovering the body but they automatically make it virtually impossible for the tiger to be shot until he kills again. The dead body provides the best possible opportunity of establishing contact with the man-eater. It is this chance of getting within range

of him that the searchers unintentionally spoil when they remove the corpse.

What happens is that, when the remains have been recovered, they are carried back to the nearest village. They are then despatched (often by boat) to the local hospital so that the cause of death may be confirmed officially. After the search party has gone off with the body, but usually not until darkness has fallen, the man-eater returns to the place where he left the kill. Finding it there no longer, he may follow the path along which it has been carried, but thereafter his interest in it ends. The chances are that nothing more will be heard of him until he kills again.

I have attempted to describe, in my story of the Jerangau man-eater in the next chapter of this book, some of the setbacks which are likely to be experienced in trying to destroy one of these tigers. In this case it was not so much the cunning and skill of the man-eater, but a series of misfortunes, which enabled him to remain alive. It is these strokes of bad fortune and unsuccessful efforts at destruction which usually make a man-eater still more difficult to kill.

In addition, it is particularly disheartening to realize that the tiger will almost certainly secure one more victim, at least, because he has not been destroyed. As I had some experience with tigers in Kemaman I felt that it was incumbent on me to do my utmost to destroy the only two local beasts which turned man-eater while I was there. Not only was this in the general interests of my area. I was also prompted by being able to imagine very clearly the extreme terror which an unarmed man must experience in the last moments before dying such a death.

The Kemasek Man-eater

There were several unusual features about the career of the Kemasek man-eater. In this case I am far from convinced that the animal in question became a man-eater for any of the customary reasons.

To begin with, he made his first attack on a human being towards the end of 1949. As I have already stated, the injured man survived. The next attack, in which a Chinese man was killed and partly eaten, took place almost exactly a year later. If an injury, or some other disability, led this tiger to make his first attack, it cannot have been a very serious one. Nor can it be asserted that the incident was an indication that the tiger had lost his instinctive fear of man. Had he done so at that stage one would have imagined that it would not have been long before he made another attack, especially as the area over which he operated consisted largely of rubber small-holdings. These were invariably so overgrown that they would afford him excellent cover. Furthermore, much of the local rubber tapping was started before dawn with the aid of headlamps. Tappers working alone in this manner fall easy victims to a man-eating tiger, as this animal proved later most convincingly.

An even more significant fact about this tiger was that he killed all his victims between the eighteenth and twenty-ninth days of the month. It will be seen from his record, which is reproduced below, that not one person was killed during the first half of any month.

Date	*Victim*	*Place*
12 Sept., 1949	... Chinese man (survived)	... Telok Batu
29 Sept., 1950	... Chinese man	... Pondok Limau
25 Nov., 1950	... Chinese man	... Bukit Takal

Date	*Victim*	*Place*
27 Jan., 1951	... Chinese man	... Pondok Limau
23 May, 1951	... Malay man	... Kampong Tebuan
18 June, 1951	... Chinese woman...	Payoh
20 June, 1951	... Malay woman	... Ibok
21 June, 1951	... Chinese man	... Bukit Takal
27 June, 1951	... Malay man	... Gelugor
18 July, 1951	... Malay man	... Beletek
21 July, 1951	... Chinese man	... Bukit Stongkal
25 July, 1951	... Chinese woman...	Payoh
27 July, 1951	... Malay man	... Tumpat

Apart from the dates, there are two other very interesting things about these details. First, a straight line drawn on a map between the two furthest kills gives a distance of under ten miles. Secondly, the periods which elapsed between certain kills confirm that this tiger could kill wild game when he wished, otherwise he must have perished from hunger. Even during the rapid succession of eight kills between the 18th June and the 27th July, there is a gap of twenty-one days when the man-eater did not feed from human flesh and must have eaten elsewhere.

What do these facts disclose? It is evident that this tiger confined himself to a comparatively small area of jungle and rubber land. It is equally clear that he did not have to depend on killing human beings to satisfy his hunger.

There remains his peculiar habit of attacking people only as the end of the month approached. I have not heard of such a theory being associated with man-eaters before, but in this case I consider that deafness, or partial deafness, may have been to blame. A tiger depends on his sight and hearing far more than on his sense of smell to lead him to his victims. There was no moonlight during the latter parts of those months in which he made his human kills. Robbed by the absence of the

The Kemasek man-eater. A very lean and light beast (*See p. 129*)

Well-defined trail left by a tigress dragging a dead pig.

moon of much of his ability to see, and lacking the ability to hear, this tiger may well have gone hungry until he learnt how easy it was to locate and kill rubber-tappers. Once he made this discovery his brief reign of terror, and such it was, began.

When this man-eater was dead I made a thorough examination of his carcass. This tiger was a male, only just eight feet long. His teeth were in perfect condition. The only signs of an injury or a wound that I could discover, even after skinning the animal and partly dissecting it, consisted of two small buckshot just beneath the skin over the ribs. The skin had not adhered to the flesh below when this wound healed, as is sometimes the case.

This tiger, as the photograph facing page 128 shows, was a very lean and light beast, carrying little fat.[1]. This is consistent with the suggestion that his hunting had been restricted during a part of each month. Even when this tiger began killing human beings he was never permitted to make anything like a full meal before the kills were recovered.

During my examination of the dead tiger I paid particular attention to his ears. Unfortunately I am neither a surgeon nor a veterinary officer. I could find nothing which would tell me whether the animal had been deaf or not. This tiger suffered badly from worms, as many of his kind do. Apart from these parasites, the stomach contained;

(*a*) Some hair from a mouse-deer;
(*b*) A complete half husk from a rubber nut;
(*c*) Two small pieces of galvanized iron, the larger of which was a little over one inch square.

I am at a loss to account for the presence of the husk or the pieces of iron.

When the Kemasek man-eater made his first attack on a

[1] Compare the picture of the Jerangan man-eater facing page 136.

rubber-tapper, at Telok Batu near Kemasek in September 1949, the other workers on the estate became alarmed and wanted to stop work. The Chinese who was leasing the estate at the time sought my help. A cow was purchased as bait and was sent to the place. I went there myself with Pa Mat the next morning and gave the estate foreman, a Chinese, clear and simple instructions.

The foreman was told, and shown, where to tie out the bait each evening. We impressed on him that it was almost certain that the tiger would not return for a week, probably not until eight to twelve days had passed. I provided him with rope. Everything possible was done to ensure that the instructions would be carried out. To make certain, I had Pa Mat return to the place alone an hour later. He went through all the instructions again with the foreman. Pa Mat told me later that, when he was leaving, he said to this Chinese:

> "Do not think that the *Tuan* does not know what he is doing. Above all do not stop tying out the cow if the tiger does not return in a day or two. The *Tuan* is right in saying that the tiger may not come back to this place until a week or more has passed."

In spite of all this, the foolish man tied out the cow for only three nights. Then, assuming that the tiger would never return, he kept the bait tethered by a long rope attached to a small stack of lengths of wood behind his house. This was the worst thing that he could have done. The tiger, passing that way on the eleventh night, promptly discovered and killed the cow. As it was near the foreman's house, he wished to drag the dead cow away. Each time that he attempted to do so, the pile of wood moved as well. The rope, which the tiger could easily have broken had the other end of it been secured to a stake or tree, resisted all his efforts to free it. Finally the

Chinese foreman, who had heard the commotion, disobeyed yet another of my instructions. He shouted at the tiger from the security of his house until he drove it away.

I was in a quandary when I went to the estate the following morning. It is unwise to move a kill in circumstances such as these, but in this case I had no alternative. The only place in which I could conceal myself was in the foreman's house. It was quite impossible to persuade him to take his family into Kemasek for the night.

I took the most elaborate precautions when moving the cow away from the house, but even so this was enough to rouse the tiger's suspicions. He would not approach, although I waited for three long nights and once heard him moving stealthily some distance away.

Another cow, put out as bait at the same spot some months later, was found by the tiger when he had already eaten his fill from another kill. As I have already described, he merely killed it out of devilment and left it lying close by.

The presence of Communist terrorists in the area frequented by the Kemasek man-eater complicated my efforts to shoot him when he later began to kill human beings frequently. In this case we were forced to resort to traps, four of which were erected at considerable expense. In the last of these, not long after it had been completed, the man-eater was caught. I destroyed him in the trap by shooting. A glance at his paws was sufficient to confirm that he was the man-eater. The people who lived in the area over which he had operated did not share my confidence, since they were convinced that two man-eating tigers had been at work. Nobody has been killed in the area by a tiger since that day, however.

I was able to obtain little information of the other two man-eaters which operated in Trengganu while I was there. Both were in the extreme north of the State, some distance from my

area. They were both males and, so far as I could ascertain, were ranging over much the same area, which is unusual. Both were destroyed by making use of spring guns. This was reported to me by telegram when I was on the point of leaving to go there to see what I could do to help.

One of these man-eaters was killed outright by the spring-gun set for him. The second was only wounded. When the local Malays turned out in force to track him down the following morning he was found still very much alive. He promptly turned on his pursuers. The Malay at whom the charge was directed tripped over a root and fell heavily. He was a very fortunate man. His fall brought him down so suddenly that the tiger's spring carried him right over the prostrate figure. Luck was not on the side of the tiger that morning. His charge took him on into a large hole, probably part of some old mining works, from which he could not escape. Thus handicapped he was easily destroyed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JERANGAU MAN-EATER

I

JERANGAU is the name of a small riverside village, fifteen miles inland from Dungun. On the opposite bank of the Dungun River, but three miles downstream from Jerangau, lies Kampong Wau, "*kampong*" being the Malay word for village. Yet a further three miles towards the river's mouth is Kampong Manchis on the same side of the river as Jerangau. It was over the area bounded by these three small Malay villages, which are all dependent for their livelihood on the surrounding rubber plantations, that the Jerangau man-eater ranged during the latter part of 1950 and the first half of 1951.

There are three ways of reaching Jerangau from Dungun. The first is to go by river. In a reliable motor boat this takes three-and-a-half hours if you do not strike a sandbank or sunken log and so damage the propeller of your craft. By taking the second or third way a saving of half-an-hour can be effected, if luck is on your side. In both cases you start the journey by making use of the light railway which follows the course of the river to the local iron mine, but descend from the train at a halt called Padang Pulut. From Padang Pulut, which is almost opposite Kampong Manchis, there are two alternatives—to go upstream in a dugout canoe or to cross the river and walk the six miles to Jerangau through rubber and jungle. I am quite certain which of these two is quicker. It is always the one which you decide not to take on that particular day.

My house at Kemaman was three hours by road south of Dungun, so that I could not possibly get to Jerangau until at least six hours after the news of a death had reached me. Add the time taken for the kill to be reported at Jerangau, for a man from Jerangau to go to the nearest telephone (at Padang Pulut six miles away) and for the message to be transmitted to me in Kemaman, and it will be appreciated that a delay of eight hours, at the very least, must elapse before I could be on the man-eater's trail. Luckily, I was visiting Dungun on duty when some of the kills took place. On these occasions a considerable part of the delay was avoided. Communist terrorists, reported at irregular intervals as having been in the Jerangau district, constituted a threat which had to be ignored, although we did what we could to be on our guard against them.

The death of the man-eater's first victim was not reported to me. Nor did I hear of the second death until it was too late to do anything about it. This second victim was a Malay killed on the bank of the Dungun River between Jerangau and Kampong Wau on the 12th July 1950. Local Malays asserted that two tigers fed from the body. So few of them understand that a tiger's front paws are much larger than the hind paws, however, that they frequently believe that two tigers have left the pugs, although these have actually been made by the same animal. Two tigers may have been at work on that occasion; that I cannot say, but I do know that the Jerangau man-eater killed his remaining victims, and fed from them, alone.

The Malay in question had walked from Kampong Wau to Jerangau to visit relatives. His failure to complete the return journey at first caused no alarm, as his wife thought that he was still at Jerangau, while the relatives whom he had visited knew that he had gone back to Kampong Wau. Consequently his disappearance was not discovered until the third day. The

search party which then set out soon found his knife lying on the river bank. Approaching this spot were the man's footprints. Following them, and superimposed on them in places, were the pugs of a large tiger. A blood-stained *sarong* was found inside the jungle at right angles to the river at a spot two hundred yards from the knife. The remains, bearing little likeness to the man as he had been known, were discovered some four hundred yards further on.

That night the tiger, following the path along which the search party had returned with their burden, approached close to Kampong Wau before giving up his search for that which he had left lying in the jungle. This habit of trying to find out where their kill has been taken is, I think, one of the most ghoulish things about man-eating tigers.

From the details given me by the acting *Pĕnghulu* of Jerangau, it was evident that this was not an attack resulting from a chance encounter, but a deliberate stalk and kill. I therefore instructed him to warn his people to be on their guard and to go about in groups of not less than three people. This advice, heeded at first, was soon forgotten. Another Malay, this time a rubber tapper, was killed on the 27th January 1951. In this case the body was recovered with only one leg eaten. Again I learnt of the death too late to reach the spot in time to attempt to follow up the tiger.

The man-eater soon struck again, on the morning of the 1st February 1951, and this time there occurred the first of the series of exasperating incidents which were to dog my efforts to kill this tiger. Work connected with the activities of Communist terrorists had taken me far up the Dungun River. While returning by boat, I passed Kampong Wau, in which the fourth victim had lived, just before noon on the 1st February 1951. I noticed a number of people gathered on the river bank. Concluding that, as it was a Friday, they were

going to the Mosque, and having much on my mind, I overcame my inclination to stop and went on downstream. Had I halted, as I intended to do when I first saw those Malays, I would have had my first real opportunity to go after the tiger. When I saw them they were actually awaiting the return of the party of men which had gone off to look for the body.

It became clear at this stage that not only would this tiger almost certainly kill again, but that unless I could obtain early news of the next death and, preferably, arrive at the spot before the body was moved, I would have little chance to deal with him. As a result, instructions were issued to the acting *Pĕnghulu* to impress upon the local Malays and Chinese the need to report the next death at once. The Officer-in-Charge of the Dungun Police District (H. K. Batchelor) made similar arrangements with the Malay Police Officer in charge at Jerangau. I would like to say here that the Jerangau man-eater might be alive to this day but for the help given me by Batchelor. Unfortunately "Batch", as we knew him in Trengganu, was killed in a river ambush by Communist terrorists not far from Jerangau a few months later.

Nothing more was heard of the man-eater for over a month until, on the 7th March 1951, he killed his fifth man, another Malay rubber tapper. I happened to be in Dungun when the news was received there and set off at once by motor boat for Jerangau with great hopes of arriving at the spot before the body was moved. Half-way up the river, however, we met another motor boat towing a smaller craft. In this was the body of the dead man. Whilst changing the clothes on the body—I needed the blood-stained ones for a scheme that I had in mind—I saw that the tiger had killed in the usual manner, seizing the unfortunate Malay from behind by the face and shoulder and sinking his teeth into the neck. I also

"I constructed an imitation corpse from the dead man's blood-stained clothes" (*See p.* 139)

The trail left by the Jerangau man-eater as he took his last victim up the river bank and into the jungle (*See p.* 148)

"The Jerangau man-eater" (*See p.* 151)

A fine male, shot on foot after a daylight stalk.

noticed from the wounds that the man-eater's lower right canine tooth was either missing or broken.

From enquiries which I made on arriving at Jerangau, I learnt that I would have little chance of finding any clear pugs, as at least sixty men had joined in the search for the body. At this stage, it should be realized, I did not know whether the man-eater was a tiger or a tigress, or anything else about it. I could learn a great deal from an examination of its footprints. It was for this reason that I asked first to be shown where the man had been killed. From this spot a great newly-trampled track went off into the jungle where the villagers had followed the drag. I began to cast round for the place from which the tiger had launched its attack. I had to exercise a great deal of patience while innumerable people pointed to the huge trampled track (as though I could not see it) and repeatedly said, "He went that way, *Tuan*, and not where you are looking".

At last my search was rewarded and I was able to piece together what had happened. The tiger had been coming down through the jungle where it bordered the rubber estate, when it had heard or caught sight of the Malay. The man had finished his tapping and was engaged in collecting the liquid rubber from the cups fastened to the trees. After watching him for a while, the tiger crept out among the rubber trees, belly to ground, as a cat will stalk a bird, until it gained a position behind a rotting fallen tree. There it crouched hidden from view. It waited a while in the hope that the unsuspecting man would come closer. Then, as it saw its victim turn back from the last tree of a row, it launched its attack.

A tiger depends on surprise and his terrific initial speed when making a kill in such circumstances. In the soft ground just behind the fallen tree, I found the two deep impressions made by the tiger's hind paws as they thrust it forward at its

prey. The man-eater had covered the ground between it and the man in two great bounds. A companion working a short distance away had heard a terrible cry of fear followed by a snarling roar from the tiger—then silence. Try as I might I could find no pugs sufficiently clear to tell me what I wanted to know about the tiger.

Following the wide track made by the searchers, I saw that the man-eater had taken the body into the jungle at the edge of the estate and had then dragged it about three-quarters-of-a-mile before entering a swamp. This was a gloomy place, through which one walked in half-light, in six inches to two feet of water. Visibility was limited to a bare five yards in the clearer parts of this swamp. On my way I noticed, embedded in a small mound of mud which protruded from the water, a small white chip of what I took to be wood. Picking this up on my return journey, I found it to be a portion of human shin bone, indicating that the man-eater had paused to feed at that spot. The point where the body had been found had little to distinguish it from the rest of the swamp, except that a great deal of the surrounding undergrowth had been cut down as a precautionary measure. Apart from being thoroughly uninviting, it was a poor place in which to try to set the stage for the tiger's destruction.

Going on a little alone into the swamp, where the search party had not penetrated, I found three clear pugs on a piece of firm soil. These told me that the tiger was a fully-grown male, with exceptionally large fore paws. The individual toes of the hind paws were unusually pointed, being almost triangular in shape. I knew that I would recognise them again anywhere. Leaving the swamp, I followed the path along which the body had been carried back to Jerangau, searching for a suitable tree in which to place the small portable seat which I used for shooting tigers at night.

Rubber trees, with their sparse foliage, are never satisfactory places in which to attempt to conceal oneself. In this case I was forced to select a large tree the overhanging boughs of which were likely to obstruct my view when it came to quick shooting in the dark. When Pa Mat had climbed the tree and I had passed my seat up for him to fasten in position, I turned to the dead man's bloodstained clothes. With the aid of some dry leaves and grass, I constructed from them an imitation corpse which I arranged on the ground in front of the tree. I hoped that, if the man-eater did decide to follow the body back to the *kampong*, he must come across this dummy. If he paused to smell at it he should give me a chance to get a shot at him.

I took my place in the tree a good two hours before sunset, sending Pa Mat back to Jerangau with the police escort which had come with us. The police were told to make a good deal of noise as they moved off so that the tiger, if he were within hearing, would think that we had all returned. Then I settled down to wait. As the slightest movement might give my position away to the man-eater if he was watching from cover, I sat completely motionless until nearly nine o'clock without hearing a sound from him. Then I heard him coming towards me in the darkness. He approached, not from the swamp on my left as I had expected, but from directly behind me. Moving very slowly and carefully, he passed directly beneath me, went forward a short distance and then stopped. I already had my rifle held to my shoulder, so that it could be fired without further movement. Immediately the tiger halted, I pressed forward the switch of the torch secured to the rifle.

I found that the tiger was not standing over the dummy corpse as I had imagined. Instead he had his back to me and was slightly to my left. The result was that all but half his head and right shoulder were hidden from me by a bough of the tree in which I was sitting. I took quick but careful aim

high on the shoulder and fired. At the exact moment that I did so, the tiger turned sharply on his hind legs and swung off to the left. For an agonising split second I was conscious that the animal was turning away. The realization came to me too late to prevent the completion of the act of squeezing the trigger. The man-eater's movement and the shot seemed to coincide exactly.

I was mystified by the complete silence which followed. Had I missed the tiger completely or wounded him slightly, I would have expected to hear him bound off. Had I killed him outright, I would still have heard the sound of his last convulsions. As it was, I heard nothing. After waiting for ten minutes, I descended from my perch. As both hands were needed in order to reach the ground, I had no option but to sling the rifle over one shoulder with the lighted torch pointed downwards. This climb down into the darkness, with the possibility that the man-eater was waiting below, was not the most pleasant thing that I have done.

I examined the place where the tiger had been standing when I fired at him. I found his pugs and the hole in the ground made by the bullet. There was no hair near this hole, nor was there any blood or fragments of bone. I followed the pugs far enough into the swamp to make sure that no blood had dropped afterwards. Then, feeling that I was permitting the tiger too great an advantage, I returned to my tree. I sat smoking with my back to it, not intending to climb to my seat again, but I began imagining that I could hear rustlings and the sound of movements behind me. Feeling rather cowardly, I eventually returned to my safe perch.

It was some time before Pa Mat and the escort returned, the roar of the Mannlicher having been heard at Jerangau. They came through the rubber in a compact body, torches flashing, with four local Malays bearing two strong poles on which to

carry out the dead tiger. Pa Mat had made them bring these, telling them that the tiger was certainly dead. What could I say in the face of such confidence? I had no excuses to make. I had missed a first-rate chance to get the man-eater and that's all there was to it. I have rarely felt more depressed. Our journey next morning back to Dungun and then on to Kemaman was a gloomy one. Quite apart from the fact that the man-eater lived to kill again, I knew that next time he would think twice before returning to a kill in the dark. It was almost certain that the trick with a dummy corpse would not succeed in attracting him again.

Following my unsuccessful attempt to kill the man-eater, written instructions were issued to the village headmen that the body of the next person killed by the tiger was not to be moved until I arrived at the spot. These instructions, written in Jawi, were handed out by a Malay officer who visited the *kampongs* concerned and explained to the villagers why this step was necessary. I also obtained a fat cow from Dungun and sent it to Jerangau by motor boat. This beast was tied out in the rubber every night and was rested and fed in the village during the daytime. The tiger took not the slightest interest in it. Because most of the villagers were now frightened to go out to work, there was a local move to put out some spring guns. This proposal was overruled. These dangerous contrivances are easily set off by domestic animals. The shot, passing over a small animal such as a dog, may hit anybody who happens to be in line with the gun. Frequently they only wound the tiger which sets them off, thus making him a greater menace.

After an interval of twenty days, the man-eater killed a Chinese rubber tapper not very far from the scene of my previous attempt to shoot the brute. The information that I received late in the afternoon was that the body had been left

lying where it had been found. When I arrived early the next morning I was dismayed to discover:

(*a*) That the body had been moved to a small clearing to make it easier for me to shoot the tiger.
(*b*) It had been swathed in cloth like an Egyptian mummy.
(*c*) A big platform had been built in a nearby tree and in this parties of men in relays had been guarding the body to prevent the tiger from approaching it.

These misguided attempts to help, all of which were contrary to the instructions which had been issued, had almost certainly frightened the tiger away from the kill for good. However, the local people thought he would return and, more to convince them of my determination to help them than anything else, I waited there alone for fourteen hours. For reasons which must be obvious, since the man had been dead for some time, it was not a very pleasant vigil. I was not sorry when the *tětabu*[1] birds began to greet the dawn. During my wait I heard nothing of the tiger.

It seemed to me that every time I had a chance to kill the man-eater, it was inevitable that something or another would go wrong. A Malay *bomoh*, or witch-doctor, at Jerangau and another at Dungun both told me, quite independently, that it would be impossible for me to shoot the tiger until it had killed its eighth man. One was encouraging enough to add the proviso "If he does not kill you first, *Tuan*."

The seventh victim of the man-eater died on the 6th April, south of Kampong Manchis. He was a Malay who had gone fishing in the Dungun River. His body was recovered the same evening. I was away on tour when this kill occurred

[1] The Malaysian great-eared nightjar (*Lyncornis temminckii*), the mournful call of which is heard only at dusk and dawn and which sounds like "teet-a-bu" repeated several times.

and learnt about it two days later. The next kill would be the eighth and would prove whether the Malay *bomohs* were right or not!

II

Not long after he killed his seventh man, the man-eater attacked and slew a fully-grown male buffalo barely half-a-mile from the Jerangau Police Station. Misfortune continued to dog my efforts for the carcass was not discovered until three days later. Until then the tiger had been feeding from the buffalo in the open, offering an excellent opportunity for a clear shot. When the villagers found the dead beast, the man-eater dragged what was left of it into a swamp near at hand.

I was having lunch at Dungun when the news came through but, although I made use of the mine railway, I was unable to reach Padang Pulut until four o'clock. Although we almost certainly broke the record for the walk from Kampong Manchis to Jerangau, we were not at the kill until six o'clock. We immediately began to erect my seat. The pugs round the spot from which the kill had been moved were clearly those of the man-eater. None of the trees near the kill was strong enough to bear the weight of a man, so we chose the biggest that we could find, which was about three inches thick, and erected beside it three other poles which we stuck into the mud. To these four uprights we attached my seat and there camouflaged it. The whole affair was very shaky, working as we were against time, knee-deep in mud and water and pestered by mosquitoes.

It was nearly dark when Pa Mat and the two Malays I had persuaded to help us went off and left me to myself. I had a strong but unaccountable feeling that the tiger had ap-

proached while we were at work and had gone off again on hearing the noise that we could not avoid making. Because of this I did not expect him to come to the kill early, if he came at all. Just before 9.30 p.m. he walked towards the back of my seat, moving with even greater caution than on the last occasion on which I had heard him. He stopped when a few yards away from me, stood there for a full minute, then turned and went away again. My seat was well concealed with foliage. I knew from experience that this would make it impossible for me to try turning in order to shoot. The noise that I would make, moving among the leaves, would have sent the tiger off for good.

The man-eater's actions confirmed my impression that he had heard us putting up the platform and was suspicious. I doubted very much whether he would return to the dead buffalo, although I was prepared to wait for him until dawn if necessary. I therefore rested my rifle on the stout stick which I always fastened across the front of my seat for that purpose and adopted a more relaxed position, with my hands resting on my knees. The rifle, the butt of which was in my lap, was so placed that I could return it to the firing position without noise.

I had sat in silence listening to the night noises of the jungle for over two hours—a glance at my wrist-watch later showed that it was nearly midnight—when I suddenly became aware that the man-eater, walking with an almost complete absence of noise which was uncanny in view of the water in which he trod, had come up behind me again. He stood there for a moment or two, then, moving forward again, came in directly beneath my feet—and stopped.

It is difficult to describe the period of suspense which followed. My feet, supported by the foot-rest of my platform, were less than eight feet from the ground. My rifle was not in

my hands. Even if it had been, it would have been impossible to fire it at the tiger with any real hope of hitting him, although the noise of it would almost certainly have frightened him away if necessary. Alarmed though I was, this was the last thing that I wished to do.

So there we remained, in complete silence. I was not sure whether the tiger was interested in me or in his dead buffalo. I did know that, if he had a hankering for human flesh, he had only to stand on his hind legs to reach my feet with his fore-paws. After a wait of at least three minutes, which to me seemed very much more like fifteen minutes at the time, the man-eater began to creep cautiously towards the dead buffalo, which lay in front of me. With equal care my hands gently found the rifle. Very slowly, I began to raise it to my shoulder. My hopes ran high. I decided that, directly the tiger had moved forward far enough, I would switch on my torch and try a snap shot. He was so close to me that I could hardly miss him. My main difficulty was to make certain of his exact position from the sound of his movements. Until I switched on my torch I would see nothing in the darkness.

Slowly the man-eater crept forward. Slowly the Mannlicher came to my shoulder. Try my eyes as I might, I could see nothing. Suddenly the tiger did something which I have never known one of his kind do before or since. He drew in his breath clearly and sharply in a distinct hiss. The noise was made in much the same way in which people will catch their breath when something unpleasant, which has been half-expected, suddenly happens. Thinking over the incident afterwards, I came to the conclusion that, looking back over his shoulder, the tiger had suddenly made out the bulk of my platform against the sky. I was convinced that I had made no sound to warn him.

As he made this noise the man-eater leapt into crashing

movement—not forward, as I had hoped, but backwards and to my right. My torch went on at once, but although I scrambled to my feet immediately and swept the light round the undergrowth behind me, I could discern no movement. It is not easy to rise suddenly from a sitting position in a small seat suspended in mid-air. It was the time taken to do so which helped the tiger to escape. Even had he gone forward, I would have been very fortunate to have hit him because of the rapidity of his movements.

Another chance missed. I put my head in my hands and very nearly wept. Inevitably on such occasions there is ample room for recrimination. Should I have done this and not that? I asked myself a hundred such questions and mentally kicked myself all round the extensive rubber estates of Jerangau while waiting for the dawn to come. Then, miserable and stiff, wondering how I had ever succeeded in shooting any tigers at all, I splashed down into the swamp and walked dejectedly back to the village.

No further news of the man-eater was received and, during the days that followed, the local people began to hope that the two scares that I had given him had driven him away for good. Then, on the 23rd April 1951, he killed another Malay rubber tapper, six miles away from Jerangau at Kampong Manchis. This man was killed at ten o'clock in the morning. I heard later that the man-eater had been seen some time earlier the same morning as he crossed the Dungun River below Kampong Wau.

This was his most daring attack to date. Previously he had attacked people only when they were alone. This time he pulled down his victim while he was standing beside another Malay, again near the extreme edge of the rubber where it met the jungle. The dead man's companion suffered so badly from shock that he was incapable of speech for seven hours

afterwards. I, for one, do not blame him. To hear the breath-taking roar of a charging tiger close behind you and to have your companion killed at your very side must be a truly terrifying experience. Some weeks later I had another man-eater threaten me at close range in thick undergrowth. That was almost enough to make my heart stop beating momentarily, armed as I was with a good rifle.

For some reason which subsequent enquiries failed to make clear, the people of Kampong Manchis did not report the death of this, the man-eater's eighth victim, until nearly four o'clock in the afternoon. Batchelor rang me up at once and I left Kemaman for Dungun as soon as I had collected my rifle from my quarters. All my other gear, including spare clothing, was already in the car, as it had been every day since my first attempt to shoot this tiger. By the time that we reached Dungun it was obvious that I could not possibly arrive at Kampong Manchis before dark. Batchelor came to my help by arranging that the police escort, which would come down from the iron mine, would meet me at Padang Pulut early the next morning.

We had crossed the river and were in Kampong Manchis before 9 a.m. the following day. There was then some slight bother about the anti-terrorist police escort. The sergeant-in-charge, whom I happened to know personally, had instructions to escort me wherever I went. It was clear that I would have no hope of shooting the tiger if I was accompanied by a dozen policemen. We compromised. One Malay constable, who volunteered for the job, came along to act as my escort. His real function, although I did not mention this, was to give moral support to Pa Mat, who would have to return by himself if I remained in the jungle alone.

We prepared to start, but a further complication arose. Pa Mat, burdened as he was with the portable platform and with

a number of ropes, could not possibly make effective use of the shotgun with which I had armed him in the event of an emergency. Seeing that this was one of the occasions on which he was really uneasy, I agreed that an elderly Malay should accompany us to carry the load. Four people make a party which is exactly three too many when the quarry is a man-eater. In this case it could not be helped. Even as it was I could see that the sergeant was far from happy about the arrangements I had made. We left Kampong Manchis to proceed first to the spot where the man had been killed. We took with us two local rubber tappers to point out the place. They took to their heels as we neared it and I did not see them again.

The rubber small-holding across which we now made our way was roughly rectangular in shape. It lay at an angle to the River Manchis, with the tree at its northern corner only five yards from the river bank. The dead man had been collecting latex with his companion. The two of them must either have been seen or heard by the tiger from the further bank of the river, which was there only about fifteen feet wide. Crossing the river, he entered the bushes to their left as they approached this corner tree. Both men were facing the tree and the river. The scrub enabled the man-eater to get within eight feet of their backs before he made his spring. I doubt very much whether the Malay he killed had much time to realize what was happening to him.

Having secured his victim, the tiger took the body across the river and made off with it into the jungle from whence he had come. It was through this rather forbidding-looking jungle that we now began to follow the drag. I went ahead, followed at a distance of some fifteen yards by Pa Mat. The constable and the other Malay walked together, further back still.

A follow-up of this nature is an exacting and tiring business. It is always oppressively hot working in jungle to which no

breeze can penetrate. Noise must be kept to an absolute minimum in the hope that the tiger may be surprised feeding, or at rest. A guard must be kept against a surprise attack. Added to these causes of stress is the knowledge that your search will eventually bring you to a most unpleasant sight. On this occasion I was handicapped by having three people with me, a heavy responsibility. Furthermore, the sound of their footsteps, no matter how quietly they tried to walk, made it difficult for me to hear the sound of any movement that there might be ahead of us.

It was one-and-a-half hours before I found the place for which I had been searching. It was then about 11.30 a.m. and the body had been at the man-eater's mercy since 10 a.m. the previous day. What struck me most forcibly was that the face of the victim, a young Malay with a particularly fair skin, was as peaceful in death as it might have been if he had merely been sleeping quietly. Many writers would have their readers believe that persons who die in horrible circumstances have on their faces afterwards a look of extreme terror. This is not always true. It was certainly not so in this case.

My examination of the remains showed that the tiger had been feeding from them very recently. From what I saw, I decided that he had not left the spot because of our approach, but had gone off for a drink, as tigers frequently do when feeding. Pa Mat and I wasted little time over the body but began to look round for a suitable place in which I could await the man-eater's return. No trees near at hand appeared suitable. It looked as if I would have to conceal myself on the ground near the body. I did not relish this idea for several reasons, among which was the possibility that the tiger would not return until after dark.

Whilst we were trying to find an answer to this problem, a squirrel called sharply several times off to my left. I knew that

he was scolding to give warning that the tiger was on the move. I gently tapped twice on a tree with my big hunting-knife. The squirrel stopped almost immediately. It was safe to assume that the tiger had heard the noise, as I had intended he should, and had stopped, probably lying down, to await developments. It was at this moment that I noticed that a stout sapling, ignored previously because of its slender girth, branched into two about seven feet from the ground. This small tree was about eight yards from the kill. Mounting to this fork I found myself looking down on to the bushes beneath which lay the remains of the corpse.

It took but a moment or two to jam and rope the platform into place. While Pa Mat carefully removed sufficient foliage for me to be able to make out the body, I fastened a cord in front of me and over this hung several wild banana leaves, thus hiding myself behind a complete screen. In the centre leaf I tore a small hole and through this thrust the barrel of my rifle. Directly these hasty preparations were completed, Pa Mat, following the instructions that I had been whispering to him while we worked, ran noisily to where the two other men were standing. The three of them made off at some speed through the jungle back towards the rubber estate. I had hopes that the man-eater, hearing them go, would think that they were frightened and that the jungle, and the body, were his again. I glanced at my watch as the sounds of their departure receded. It was then 11.43 a.m. I sat with my rifle held ready to my shoulder, the sweat running down my face, chest and arms. I vividly remember even now how thirsty I was.

Not many minutes had passed before the squirrel called again twice. Shortly afterwards, to my intense satisfaction, I heard the faint sounds made by his great feet as the man-eater advanced towards me. Slowly these sounds came closer. Then the head of the tiger came into view as he neared the body.

The manner in which he had approached suggested that he intended to move the remains to a new hiding place. When the head appeared I was sorely tempted to send a bullet crashing into it, but head shots are not as certain as one would think. So I waited with all the patience at my command until the tiger, reaching out to seize the body, exposed the side of his neck to me. It was at the centre of this mark that I took aim and fired. The whole jungle seemed to explode with noise.

After the shot the tiger lay on his belly, with his forepaws doubled beneath him. The hind legs worked convulsively several times, each jerk sending the body forward a little, until the head had been forced back beneath the trunk and out of my sight. A final convulsion brought one big forepaw flopping out to fall, as though protectingly, across the human remains that lay close by. When all movement had ceased, I swung my rifle skywards in the direction in which I knew Pa Mat would be standing, having heard the report of the rifle, and fired a second shot to tell him that all was over. It was then 11.57 a.m.

Pa Mat returned with the constable, having sent off the other Malay to fetch the remainder of the escort and some men from Kampong Manchis to carry out the remains of the dead man and the dead tiger. We photographed the two of them as they lay to provide positive proof that it was the man-eater which had been killed. Then we tied the legs of the dead tiger together to facilitate its removal. The man-eater, as I had believed, had outsized front paws. He was in splendid condition, apart from one upper canine which was broken. Measured later he went 8 feet 6 inches between pegs.

When the dead tiger had been carried out of the jungle into the sunlight, I took a less gruesome photograph of him. An enlargement of this picture, which faces page 136, was later sent to the *Pĕnghulu* of Jerangau. He affixed it to the wall

of the most popular coffee-shop there, so that it could be seen by the Malays and Chinese who lived in the area which had been terrorized by the man-eater.

So far as I was concerned, this was the end of the Jerangau man-eater. Six weeks after I shot him, however, a minor Malay official living at Dungun began trying to make trouble. Without bothering to learn the facts of the man-eater's career, or of his death, this man sent a petition to the State Government of Trengganu. In it he complained that I had used a dead Malay "as bait, in order to enjoy the sport of tiger shooting". Anybody reading the petition, a copy of which came into my hands, would have imagined that I had taken corpses away from protesting relatives and had left them lying about in the jungle in the hope that stray tigers would be attracted to them. No mention was made of the fact that the delay of six hours in reporting the death of the man-eater's last victim had been the main reason why it had been impossible to recover the body the same day.

The petition annoyed me immensely, but I took no action on it until the Head of the State Religious Department wrote to me. In his letter he asked me not to make use of dead Malays if I wished to shoot tigers. I replied in carefully-worded Malay, asking whether it was really believed that I had done this. Was it thought better, I asked, to allow more people to be killed than to permit a dead body to remain unburied for a few hours? I pointed out the delay in reporting the death of the last victim and emphasised the respect that I had always shown for the religious beliefs of the people of my area.

The matter created something of a stir locally until the *Mufti* of Trengganu, supreme in religious matters within the State, intervened. He issued a letter deprecating the action of the petitioner in making use of the word "bait" and reproving him in no uncertain terms for writing the petition at all.

"It appears," said the *Mufti's* letter, "that the body was allowed to remain in its original position solely for the purpose of killing a tiger which was interfering with the peaceful lives of the *kampong* people. This is a praiseworthy undertaking and one that is esteemed under Islamic law."

The only concrete result achieved by the petition was to rob me of an excellent chance of shooting the Kemasek man-eater when he killed a Malay in a bandit-free part of his domain. The *Mufti's* letter not having been written at that stage, I permitted the body to be removed after waiting beside it for only an hour. When the village people came to the spot they made a great deal of noise which was heard by the man-eater long before they arrived. He was then standing some ten yards away from me, concealed from sight by the trunk of a large tree. In another minute or so he would have emerged from cover, presenting me with an easy shot in broad daylight. As it was he made off without showing himself. The ironical feature of this incident was that the Police insisted on taking the body back to Kemaman to be examined by a Government doctor, with the result that it could not be buried until the following day. Had I known this, I would have made the villagers wait longer. As it was, this tiger went on to kill four more people before it was trapped.

CHAPTER IX

SUPERSTITIONS AND LEGENDS

It is only to be expected that the tiger should figure prominently in Malay and Chinese legends and superstitions, since for centuries both races have lived in countries in which "the striped one" is the only really dangerous beast of prey. Although it may be difficult for European minds to understand how credence can be given to some of the myths and superstitions described in this chapter, it must be appreciated that they are believed implicitly, not only by the illiterate village Malays and Chinese labouring classes, but also by many educated members of the two races. As Sir Hugh Clifford tells in his book, *In Court and Kampong*, the Malays will listen to the most far-fetched stories with "supernatural excitement, fear and interest, but no surprise". This might be said with equal truth of the Chinese who are, if anything, even more prone than the Malays, whose country they share, to believe in the supernatural. Although most of them differ in detail, it is interesting to find that some Malay and Chinese legends follow lines which are basically similar. Many of them also bear a striking likeness to Indian and Burmese myths concerning tigers.

There is a religious flavour to several of the beliefs held by Malays and Chinese. Ask your Malay why a tiger attacks his human victims from behind and he will tell you that this is inevitable, because on the forehead of every person is inscribed a verse from the Koran proclaiming man's superiority over all other creatures. It is this inscription that the tiger cannot face.

Argue with the Malay that the attack is made from behind because that is the direction from which the tiger may best approach his victim unseen and you will not be believed. Many Malays also place great faith in reciting certain passages from the Koran before they enter the jungle, holding that this practice will prevent a tiger from attacking them.

The commonest Malay superstition and that most widely known to Europeans concerns the ability of certain human beings to turn themselves into tigers. That it is human beings who turn themselves into tigers, and not tigers which change themselves into human beings, is a reversal of the original legends, as I will explain later. The belief is based on the assumption that men or women may possess supernatural powers enabling them to turn into tigers, in which form they prey upon animals and upon their fellow-men. These persons usually become tigers as darkness is approaching, the transition back to human form taking place either at dawn or just before returning to the house in which the tiger lives when adopting his more normal human role. I discussed the belief several times with Pa Mat, who would always talk to me with absolute freedom, and it was clear to me that even he was far from convinced that the idea was an absurd one.

I heard in Kemaman a first-hand account from a Malay who, with two of his friends, had encountered in the jungle a wild-looking man who was on his hands and knees when they saw him. He was frothing at the mouth and, so I was told, growled at the men so fiercely that they made off.

"Clearly," said the Malay who described the incident to me, "the man was in the act of transforming himself into a tiger. We were fortunate to escape from the spot unharmed."

Although the possibility cannot be overruled that the trio encountered some unfortunate fellow in the throes of a fit, I believe it more likely that they met an abnormal and probably

uncouth stranger and that their imaginative and superstitious minds built up the story round this chance meeting. After all, a story loses nothing in the telling, whether it be told in a village in Malaya or on the banks of a trout stream in England!

There is a fascinating story about a man who could change himself into a tiger, or who was believed to possess the ability to do so. Very briefly it is that a stranger went to live in a Malay village, on the outskirts of which he soon built himself a small house. Not long afterwards livestock belonging to the villagers began to be killed by a tiger. Soon this animal had killed and devoured a number of Malays as well. Suspicion fell on the newcomer, who had been noticed leaving his house at dusk to go off into the jungle, not returning until dawn the next day. No action was taken against him, but some of the more enterprising men of the village built a tiger trap, baiting it with a live goat. One evening the newcomer was returning to his home through the jungle when he became aware that a tiger was stalking him. There were no suitable trees into which he could climb. Seeing the new trap he ran to it and, having entered, sprung the release so that the great door fell into place.

Now a trap built to keep a tiger in, will keep a tiger out just as effectively. So the man was safe, although he had an uncomfortable night ahead of him. Not long after dawn the following morning the man's shouts attracted the people from the village. They gathered round the trap. He explained to them what had happened. Instead of releasing him, however, they maintained that his presence inside the trap was proof that he was a tiger, now back in human form. Without further ado they took up their spears and stabbed him to death. Betty Lumsden Milne tells this story, far more neatly than I can, in her book, *Damit and other Stories.*

Jim Corbett relates a similar incident in *The Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag.* Infuriated Indians had seized a *Sadhu*

(holy man), contending that he was the leopard which had killed so many people, and were about to wreak their vengeance on him. Fortunately, an experienced Government officer intervened and persuaded them to guard the man for a number of days before dealing with him. During this period the leopard killed another man, thus absolving the suspect from blame. I like the attitude adopted by the revengeful Indians in Jim Corbett's book when it was thus proved to them that the holy man could not have been responsible. "The wrong man has been apprehended," they said, "but next time no mistake will be made."

There are many Malay tales about were-tigers, some of them featuring the *Sakai*, the aborigines of the Malay jungle, others concerning men from Korinchi, a small state in Indonesia. One of them describes how a visitor to a village became ill and vomited up the feathers of a number of fowls. His hosts did not regard this unusual feature of his illness with any great favour, as a tiger had killed several chickens in the village the previous night.

Another legend tells of an unfortunate girl who married one, Haji Ali, and woke one morning at first light to see him entering their house. He was standing half-way up the rough steps leading to the house when she first noticed him. What made him particularly repugnant to his young bride was that he then had his own head, but his body was that of a tiger. As the horrified girl watched, the body gradually turned into that of a man, the process finally ending with the disappearance of the tail. Rather naturally, the girl made off. Nothing would persuade her to return to her husband, despite his great wealth.

Some weeks later, the headman of this village, following the pugs of a tiger which he had shot at and lamed in a front leg, found that the tracks took him to the steps of Haji Ali's house. His way into the house, beneath which lay a pool of bloody

water as though someone inside had been bathing a wound, was barred by the Haji's two armed sons. When the headman returned the following day, backed up by some of the other elders of the village, he found that the family had fled, leaving all their possessions behind them. Much later a traveller brought to the headman news that Haji Ali had settled down in another neighbourhood. He also told how Haji Ali had apparently suffered some form of accident, since one of his arms was gnarled and twisted, as though the bones had been shattered by a gunshot wound. I heard several modern versions of this story in Trengganu.

The belief that men possess the ability to transform themselves into tigers originates from ancient Malay legends that tigers can change themselves into men. It has a parallel in the Chinese story of the warrior who always appeared in striped clothing, by doffing which he turned into a tiger so that he could prey upon solitary travellers.

The Malay legends, when compared, are much the same, but credit three different tigers with being king of their race. In the States of Trengganu and Kelantan, the home of the tigers is referred to as Kandang Balok, which is reputed to be in Ulu[1] Kemaman. There rules Dato' Uban, the king, in a house built of human bones, thatched with human hair. Here the tigers walk about in the guise of human beings and live as such. To leave their village they must make their way through a tunnel beneath a white river. It is while they are passing beneath this river that they turn into tigers.

In the State of Negri Sembilan it is Dato' Paroi who rules the tigers, which have a settlement on Mount Angsi. There in human form they even study, undertake farming and read the Koran. Dato' Paroi is believed to be a were-tiger who, to this day, wanders through Negri Sembilan, Malacca and northern

[1] *Ulu*, the head waters of a river.

Johore. There is a place bearing his name on the road between Seremban and Kuala Pilah. It is called Keramat[1] Tok Paroi and is considered by Malays, Chinese and Indians to be well worth visiting to offer up prayers and to make small offerings. The third of the tiger kings is said to occupy Mount Ophir in Johore and bears the Malay name of that hill, Tok Gunong Ledang. He and his tiger warriors are reputed to have once had a battle with Dato' Paroi, who defeated them all although fighting single-handed.

The Chinese also have many legends about were-tigers. They believe that if a person is devoured by a tiger he becomes a spirit, known as Ch'ang Kwei, who leads the tiger to other victims, protects him from danger and encourages him to commit new murders. Very similar is the belief that a man who dies after being bitten by a tiger lacks the courage to go elsewhere and serves the tiger as a slave, known as Ch'ang.

The presence of figures of white tigers in many Chinese temples is due to the belief that the White Tiger is the god of the West and controller of wind and water. This belief, which results in the placing of the symbol of a tiger on the western side of some Chinese graves, arises from the legend of a princess of Yun. This princess deserted her baby in a marsh, wishing with good reason to conceal its birth from her husband. The baby was found and suckled by a tigress until, by a remarkable coincidence, the husband of the princess came across it and took it home. The child later became a minister.

The white tiger is associated with metal by the Chinese. Due tribute is paid to it at funerals when any object of metal is placed in a grave. This is in no way connected with the superstition that a coin placed in the mouth of the dead will serve as an all-powerful charm against evil spirits. I was examining the body of a Chinese victim of the Kemasek man-eater in the

[1] *Keramat*, a shrine.

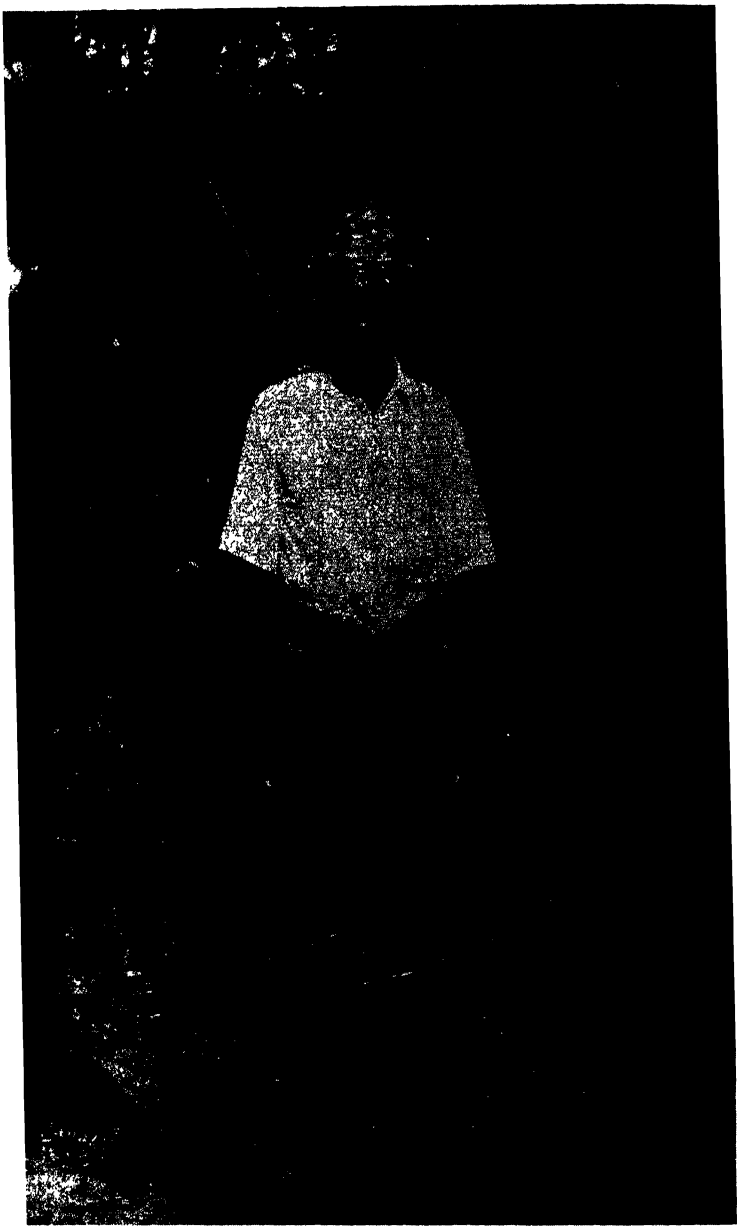
Kemaman mortuary when I first learnt of this belief. The widow of the dead man approached me and did her best in Chinese to make me understand that she wanted something from the body. Being forced to fall back on signs, she opened her mouth, pointed inside it and then turned towards the corpse. Even then it took me a moment or two to grasp her meaning. I then recovered and returned to her a ten-cent piece which she carefully wrapped up in a piece of cloth.

All students of the Malay language know the story of the tiger and *Sang Kanchil*, the mousedeer who occupies in Malay literature a place very similar to that of Brer Rabbit. It tells how *Sang Kanchil*, who was out feeding a little earlier than was his usual custom, saw a tiger about to pounce on him. Thinking quickly because he did not wish to die, he went on chewing with great relish and remarked to himself, "My, my! How good these pickled tigers' eyes are." This so frightened the tiger that it made off.

The Chinese version of the story differs only slightly. It tells how a tiger was about to devour a monkey which, seeking to escape, remarked that he was much too small to make a good meal but would gladly show the tiger where he might obtain a truly regal feast. Agreeing, the tiger followed the monkey to a hill on which lived a sambur. When they approached, the sambur noticed them and at once scolded the monkey, saying, "You promised to bring me ten tiger skins. You have brought only one. You still owe me nine more." These words scared the tiger out of his wits so that he ran away leaving the monkey and the sambur to congratulate themselves on their escape. This story, although attributed to the Chinese, is actually, I believe, of Indian origin.

My favourite legend, Malay or Chinese, was told me something like this:

Crossing a jungle river during the anti-terrorist operation mentioned on page 165.



A typical Trengganu Malay.

Many, many years ago before the time of guns and when tigers were numerous, a handsome young Malay saw and fell in love with a girl of great beauty. Fortune favoured the couple, whose parents did not object to the match and, after the observance of the usual formalities, they were married and settled down to a life of great happiness. This was to prove all too short, however. After a few months a tiger killed the young wife and made off with her body into the jungle. The husband returned to the village just in time to join the party of men which set out to recover the corpse. When it was found he would not permit it to be touched. Instead he forced from his companions a promise to remain at the spot while he went back to the village. "I shall return just before dusk," he told them. When he rejoined the waiting group they noticed with surprise that he had donned the rich and colourful clothes which he had worn at his wedding. Also that he carried two of the wicked Malay knives known as "*kěris*", instead of the customary one. They were all the more surprised when he told them to return to the village and to leave him alone with his dead wife. Fearfully they obeyed.

When they were out of sight the husband tenderly lifted the body. Lying down in the place which it had occupied, he drew it on top of him so that it almost completely concealed him. Thus he waited with a bared *kěris* in each hand until darkness fell and the tiger returned. Then, as it stood over them, he plunged the two weapons simultaneously into its sides. Leaving the *kěris* embedded in the body of the dead animal, he picked up the body of his wife and slowly returned with it to their home.

Perhaps my fondness for this story might be attributed to the fact that I thought it to be an original one, not previously pub-

lished. It was not until some time later that, in a book on *Malay Magic* by W. W. Skeat, I came across a similar tale, connected there, however, with the superstition that a tiger's victims must appear to him as headless before he may kill them (see page 169).

More widely known to Europeans is the Malays' dislike of uttering the word *harimau*, or more commonly *rimau*, meaning "tiger". They believe that if the word is used by them during the daytime it will be impressed on the subconscious mind of the tiger, then dreaming in the jungle. Thereafter, they consider, they will be in great danger from the animal, which will seek them out and kill them. During my last year in Kemaman I noticed that many of the Malay men whom I knew and who were aware of the number of tigers which I had killed, were using the word *harimau* quite freely. After a time I questioned first Pa Mat and then one of the men, a paid Government headman. Both, I thought, looked a little sheepish, but both gave the same answer. This was that no harm would come to anyone who used the word in my presence, as all the tigers knew of me and would do everything within their power to keep away from me and from my friends. I had read, before I went to Trengganu, that Malays would prefer to use fancy names such as *Tok Bĕlang* (the striped prince) or *Si-pudong* (old hairy face). In point of fact I heard the first used only once, by a story-teller fond of extravagant terms, and have never known the second to be used in conversation. The village Malays that I met preferred the word *dia* (he) or avoided mentioning the tiger directly by name.

Despite many attempts, it proved quite impossible for me to convince Malays that tigers could not possibly open a durian, those odoriferous but delectable tropical fruit, the skins of which are covered by strong, sharp spikes. Both Malays and Chinese are positive that tigers will wait below the durian trees

at night to make certain of obtaining their share of the fruit. The truth of the matter is that tigers dislike thorns and prickles just as much as do all the other big cats. The spines of a durian are sharp enough to pierce the hands of the inexperienced person who attempts to handle them without sufficient care. How then could a tiger, with his comparatively tender pads, tear open the fruit in order to eat the creamy substance within? Apart from the difficulty of opening the fruit, I do not think a tiger would depart from his staple diet of flesh, although I have known one, obviously in extreme hunger, eat the tainted ground on which a highly decomposed buffalo had been lying.

The story of the tiger and the durian came about, I suspect, and has gathered weight since, from the Malays' habit of watching over their durian trees at night when the fruit are ripe and have begun to fall. Not a few of them must have seen, on moonlit nights, a tiger going about his lawful occasions. Lo and behold! They look next morning and find a half-eaten durian (actually left by a porcupine or bear). The answer to them is obvious. The king of the jungle has stopped on his way home to partake of a dainty dessert.

Occasionally one hears tales of Malays who are able to befriend tigers to such an extent that the animals will come to them and feed from their hands. A Malay to whom these powers were attributed lived at Cherating, south of Kemaman, but somehow never seemed to be at home when I went there and always had pressing business in Kuantan when the Malay District Officer sent for him. As he was a Pahang Malay and Cherating, being in that State, was outside the District Officer's jurisdiction, I could hardly blame him.

A former *Pĕnghulu*, then so old that his hands shook and his eyes watered, told me an amazing story of a Malay with these powers, who lived alone on a small clearing at the jungle's

edge at Kijal when the *Pĕnghulu* was a boy. The old man, who would have been offended deeply if I had questioned the truth of his story, described this Malay as being so at home with tigers that he always kept a large platter of cooked rice and other food for them on the ground near his house. Often two or three tigers would be seen sitting or lying near his home like great domestic cats but would leap up and disappear at the approach of a visitor. The man's favourite was a huge male, which, the villagers said, used to accompany him and watch over him when he entered the jungle. One day at dawn, just when the small patch of *padi* (growing rice) near the house was at its greenest, a herd of *sĕladang* visited the clearing and did irreparable damage to the young plants. Calling his favourite tiger (which, I could not help but feeling, had not proved as good a guardian as my informant made out) the Malay showed him the ruined *padi* and pointed out to him the tracks of the bull which was the leader of the herd. The tiger at once set off after the *sĕladang*.

"Two days later," my friend went on, "the tiger returned weary and mud-stained, with a great wound running along one shoulder. My father and two other men were called to the house and, keeping at some distance, for they were afraid of the tiger which led the way, they followed the householder to the spot where the big bull *sĕladang* lay dead. The ground around bore the signs of a long and hard struggle. The *sĕladang* was skinned and the meat cut up so that it could be carried back to the village for a feast. The tiger sat a short distance away and watched what was done.

"And," concluded the story-teller, "do you know, *Tuan*, that my father saw the tiger's master walk up to it and offer it a piece of meat, but it refused to eat and only pressed its body against the man's legs."

This account was given me in the early hours of the morning

and was followed in breathless silence by a group of Malays who obviously believed every word of it.

I was fortunate enough to obtain for myself more up-to-date confirmation of this belief that a sympathetic feeling can exist between man and tiger, but there was a long gap before the two halves of this particular story fitted together. I have an English-speaking friend in the Malay Police, whom we will call Sergeant Jusoh. He is a good police officer, indefatigable on patrol and both skilful and patient in extracting information from illiterate, dull-witted villagers. It would be hard to believe him to be superstitious. An anti-terrorist operation had taken us far into the jungle until we were close to the boundary which divides the States of Trengganu and Pahang. After an unsuccessful shoot at some terrorists, we camped one night on the sandy banks of a river on which stands a village known as Kampong Kelibang. Local Malays told us that a man had been killed by a tiger three nights earlier at the next village upstream.

At about 10.30 p.m. the local *Pĕnghulu*, who was acting as guide to our party, came to me in great excitement to tell me that a tiger had just tried to kill Sergeant Jusoh. Seizing my electric torch and the American ·300 carbine with which I was armed, I ran to the scene. Sergeant Jusoh who, even in the light of a weak moon, looked unusually pale, told me that he had been sitting on the sand near the river talking. He had felt some hairs brush his face—"kiss" was the word he used, for he spoke to me in Malay. Turning his head, he had found himself looking into the face of a large tiger at a distance of only a few inches. He actually felt, he said, the animal's breath on his face before it turned and padded slowly away.

I took this story with more than a grain of salt, until I cast round for tracks. I found, showing very clear in the sand, the

marks where the Sergeant had been sitting and, a bare yard from them, the last of the great pugs which approached the spot. I went after the tiger immediately, as it was not certain whether he would return, but the tracks finally led off into the jungle and I had been asked not to fire the carbine (and thus disclose to the terrorists that we had not left the spot) unless it was unavoidable. It was just as well that the tiger was not overtaken. I discovered later that, unused to its mechanism, I had failed to cock the carbine properly so that it would not have fired had I needed it.

Well over a year later, in August 1951, I shot a tiger near the road running from Kemaman to Ayer Puteh. He had been killing buffaloes regularly and his time to die had come. The area in which I had to deal with this tiger was not a very safe one, but I was fortunate enough to be provided with an escort by the 14th Police Jungle Company, then in training nearby. The escort waited concealed in an empty house while I went off alone to keep my appointment with the tiger. When we took the carcass back to the Jungle Company's camp, the Malay policemen crowded round to see it. I had a drink before setting off back to Kemaman and, while I was enjoying it, Sergeant Jusoh, who had been posted to the Jungle Company, came in. I asked him if he had been to see the dead tiger but he shook his head and walked off in a rather abrupt fashion. Later, just as I was leaving, he approached me while I was standing alone and said:

"Have you forgotten that night on the river bank when the tiger kissed me on the cheek, *Tuan*? He could have killed me easily had he wished. He did not do so. I am friendly with tigers and do not care to gaze upon them when they are dead. I would prefer not to help anybody to kill one."

Sergeant Jusoh said this without rancour but with a sincerity I could not help admiring. To round off what I consider to be

an unusual story, I should add that I took the trouble to make enquiries about the man killed by the tiger near Kampong Kelibang, three days before our party had reached there. He lived alone in a house set apart from the rest of the village, but when a tiger entered the adjoining buffalo enclosure he wasted no time in going down to tackle it—alone, in the dark, armed only with a sword-like *parang*. His body was found among his buffaloes the next morning, but the heavy blood trail which led away from the spot told that the tiger itself had not escaped unharmed.

Sometimes when a tiger gets into one of these cattle enclosures at night, the villagers, awakened by the resultant disturbance, are able to drive the intruder away. Often, however, a cow or buffalo is left badly injured, perhaps at its last gasp, and must at once be butchered in accordance with religious custom if the Muslim villagers are to be able to consume its flesh. This paradoxical saving of an animal's life in order to kill it occurred fairly regularly in Kemaman, but the meat was not held in great esteem. All the Malays to whom I spoke about it said that the flesh of an animal attacked by a tiger always had a pronounced and unpleasant flavour. Many of them declared that it tasted "hot", for Malays are great believers in a theory that food or drink can be heating or cooling, irrespective of its temperature when consumed. I tried one small piece of a cow that had been half-killed by a tiger before it was slaughtered, but could taste nothing unusual. The meat was, in fact, so steeped in curry that it had no flavour of its own. I remarked to the Malays that it tasted very hot to me (deliberately using the Malay word *panas*, hot of temperature, instead of *pedas*, hot of peppers, etc.) but they were not very amused.

A pleasing Malay legend explains the hatred which all tigers feel towards domestic cats. This hatred is very real and I have

no doubt that if a buffalo, a cow, a goat, a dog and a cat were tied out spaced in a half-circle and a tiger approached so that he received the scent of all of them simultaneously, he would first kill the cat in preference to any of the other animals. An insane burst of rage seems to fill a tiger when the smell of a domestic cat reaches his nostrils. One morning near Kemaman, I examined the remains of a small but bushy tree in which a cat had endeavoured to shelter to escape from a tiger. The tiger had killed and eaten the cat eventually, but had first literally torn the tree to shreds in its frenzy.

The Malay explanation for the tiger's hatred of the domestic cat is that in the beginning of the universe, the cat, which had come into the world first, was instructed to teach all that it knew to a new animal called a tiger. The cat performed its task with efficiency, but decided that it might be in its own interests if it did not instruct the tiger in the art of climbing trees. The tiger was at first delighted with the tuition which it received, but this satisfaction turned to rage when the omission was discovered. Henceforth, the tiger vowed, the cat would be his enemy, to be sought out and destroyed whenever possible. That, say the Malays, is why the cat seeks to hide its tracks by covering its droppings so neatly and carefully, whereas the tiger is not concerned how he leaves his marks about the jungle. I discovered this story after several old Malays had been heard to refer to cats as '*Che Gu*', the Malay abbreviation for "Mister Schoolmaster".

There are a number of spoken Malay charms to which are attributed the power to protect the speaker from tigers. Some are religious. Another is reputed to lock the tiger's jaws until the user of the charm is safely home. Care must be taken with this charm to revoke it when safety is reached, for the tiger will certainly bear a grudge if his jaws remain locked. The Malay *bomoh* (approximating to witch doctor) will sometimes invoke

the tiger spirit to cure sickness, as it is regarded as being sufficiently powerful to drive out any evil spirits.

It is the fable of Mohamed Yatim which seeks to explain the origin of the tiger. Mohamed Yatim, the orphan, was the name given to a baby boy found by a woodcutter lying at the jungle's edge. The child had a white skin, green eyes and unusually long nails. He was soon in trouble at school, because of his fierce behaviour. The time came when he turned on the schoolteacher, growling savagely. The teacher flogged away at him with a stick. During the beating the child became more and more animal-like until he dropped on his hands and knees and ran off, a tail appearing as he did so. The beating with a stick of *'los*, or *'tas*, wood (of which the tiger is still reputed to live in fear) produced the stripes which the animal bears to this day. As the boy-animal made off the teacher cursed him, saying that he would feed only from those human beings who were headless.

"Dwell you," he said, "on the borderland between the primeval forest and the secondary jungle growth, and on the borderland between the secondary jungle growth and the plain."

There are two generally recognized methods by which the tiger is reputed to ascertain whether his prey is "headless" or not. The first is of religious significance, in that it is connected with a quotation from the Koran to the effect that no person shall die before his appointed time. To find out whether the appointed time of his victim has arrived or not, the tiger looks at him through a hole in a leaf obtained from a certain kind of tree. If the appointed time of the victim is near he appears to the tiger to be headless. If he is not headless his time has not arrived and the tiger must look for a meal elsewhere. In the second method, the tiger lies down and takes between his paws a leaf of a particular type. He gazes at this leaf until it takes the

form of his victim. If in this form the victim appears to be headless then the tiger knows that this person has been granted to him.

Tigers were held in such reverence in the Malaya of long ago that wakes were sometimes held when they fell victim to any of the various kind of traps which were then the common method of destroying them. The dead animal was supported in as lifelike an attitude as possible, in some cases a rope being attached to its head to move it up and down while the ceremony was in progress. A piece of wood would be placed inside the mouth to prop open the jaws. Strangely enough, although the ritual was designed to honour the fallen beast, it often included a dance performed by two men in which they mocked and ridiculed the Lord of the Jungle.

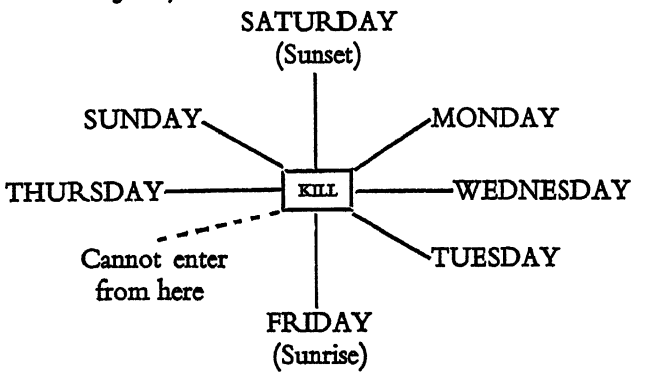
Some tigers are believed to be sacred and will not hurt, or allow other tigers to hurt, the people of the area which they protect. Should any great wrong be done, however, they will first warn the local population to mend their ways by killing a domestic cat. If this warning is not heeded they will kill livestock, and then people, until the wrong is righted.

Thus a foul deed would probably have been blamed for the killings of the tiger known as "He of the Hairy Face", which spread such terror in the area surrounding the junction of the Tembeling and Jelai rivers of Pahang long ago and whose killing of seven men and two women in one night is so graphically described in *In Court and Kampong*. Sir Hugh Clifford refers to it as the only recorded case of a tiger attacking Malays within a closed house in a *kampong*.

As I have already stated, a tiger almost invariably feeds first from the haunches of the beasts he kills. One of the exceptions is that, if a buffalo or cow is killed while in calf, the unborn calf is torn out and devoured first. Has this, I wonder, any connection with the old Malay belief that during her first preg-

nancy a woman can be smelt by a tiger from a distance of "seven hills and seven valleys"?

Go out to shoot a tiger with an old Malay huntsman in Trengganu even to-day and, more likely than not, he will refer to "*langkah buah dua-puloh*" which can best be translated as "twenty paces". Ask him to explain and, if you have his confidence and he knows that you will not scoff, he will draw for you, probably with a stick in the sand, a diagram which will look very much like this (except that the wording will be written in Jawi):



Your friend will be careful to set out the diagram so that the line marked Saturday will point due West. Now, if the day on which you are to await the tiger is a Thursday, then the Malay will tell you that the tiger *must* enter from the direction in which the line marked "Thursday" points, and so on for the other days of the week. The dotted line, which is the "Monday" line continued through the kill, is deliberately left blank, because the tiger cannot approach from that direction, no matter what day of the week it is. This diagram serves if the tiger visits the kill during the hours of daylight. If he is expected by night there is a second plan, with only two lines bisecting the kill at right angles allowing only four days of the week in which the tiger may approach.

I hesitate to belittle the beliefs—superstitious or religious—of other people, particularly when I would not dream of going after a tiger with one more, or one less, than eight cartridges, or if the loading of my Mannlicher rifle has not been carried out in accordance with a special procedure, most carefully checked by Pa Mat. The fact remains, however, that the direction of a tiger's approach to its kill is dictated by two main factors, wind direction and general circumstances. If the tiger is suspicious he will first circle the kill, sometimes doing this as many as three times, carefully testing the wind and listening and looking for signs that will tell him whether all is well or not. Let him see the movement of a glowing cigarette end, or hear a whisper or cough, and he will melt away into the night as inconspicuously as the jungle shadows in which he lives.

I have heard it so many times. "Sat up for a tiger last night. Confounded animal didn't come anywhere near me." Yet an examination of the ground made the next morning round the ill-concealed sitting-up place almost always revealed fresh pugs, indicating that the tiger had come and, wisely, had gone away again. I have even counted six cigarette ends beneath a watcher's tree and have seen, a bare fifteen yards away, the marks where the tiger had patiently settled down to await developments before he moved off in disgust.

If the tiger has no suspicions—and he should have none if the preparations to sit up have been made with skill and care—he will either approach up-wind, or according to the position in which the kill is lying. I once shot a fine tiger at Ayer Puteh, thirty yards from the bank of a wide river, the opposite side of which was occupied by a compact group of houses. The kill, a fully-grown cow, was lying on a small open stretch of grass, flanked on one side by the river and, on the other, by the jungle, which was some seventy-five yards away. The tiger, which had eaten only a small amount of meat

from the kill, had been surprised in the late afternoon of the previous day by a Malay and had made off into the jungle. This accounted for the fact that the kill was lying in the open, for no tiger would have left it there by choice.

Had I decided to follow the diagram which is reproduced on page 171, I would have expected the tiger to come to the cow along a line of approach which would have brought him straight through the village on the opposite side of the river. He would afterwards have had to wade and swim the river in full view of the occupants of at least a score of houses. As it was, it was obvious that he was lying up in the jungle in exactly the opposite direction. It was equally clear that he was very hungry, having eaten little, and would come in to the kill early from the side of it opposite to the river. He did, and if Pa Mat and I had not made such an expert diagnosis of the case (never count on a tiger to do what you expect!) we would have put my platform up in a slightly different position and I would have had a clear shot, instead of a difficult one through an overhanging branch. It's an ill wind, however, and the resultant follow-up was an exciting affair, especially when, on my finding the dead tiger, a Kampong Guard, concerned for my safety for other reasons, came up. Thinking it was still alive, he took a hasty shot at it and nearly blew my head off with buckshot.

I repeatedly heard in Trengganu of the existence of a rare type of tiger referred to as *harimau jalor*, which is reputed to have its stripes running from head to tail instead of round the body in the normal fashion. Were I to encounter one of these tigers, I was told, I would see an animal far bigger than any I had ever shot before. Having no proof, I cannot deny the existence of such an animal. All that I can say is that I know of nobody who has yet seen a dead *harimau jalor*. Very often the skin of a big male is almost entirely reddish-brown on the

shoulders, the stripes, if any, being small and widely spaced. This large expanse of unstriped skin, continuing as it does down the front legs, may well have led to the belief in the existence of this legendary animal. It would be an easy matter for a Malay, catching sight of a big male standing facing him but partially concealed, to gain an impression of an absence of normal stripes. It would need no great stretch of the imagination to visualize stripes running the other way, especially if the sun was shining down brightly through the branches of surrounding trees, thus casting hard shadows from them.

There was in Kemaman, while I was there, a very large male ranging over the Ibok-Pasir Gajah area. Three times this tiger was seen by Malays and on two of them he was mistaken for a cow—an error which occurs much more frequently than one would suppose. Once a Malay woman saw him near her house in the early afternoon, close to some washing which she had put out to dry. She hastened forward to drive the intruder away before the clothes were soiled, but her return to her house was even more rapid when she discovered what kind of a "cow" it was. This tiger was one of our "blameless locals" as I used to call them. He did no harm to anyone and killed no cattle. We left him alone and I like to think that he is still leading a peaceful existence.

Also in the Ibok area at that time, if the reports which reached me were true, as I believe they were, was a very old male tiger with unusually long and distinctive whiskers. Age had whitened much of the hair of his face and had given him an air of great venerability, prompting the local Malays to accord to him the rank and name of *Dato'* (Sir). As is often the case when an animal becomes noted locally for its age or size, the theory was advanced that this *Dato'* among tigers would never be killed except by a bullet of solid silver. Certain

Communist terrorists have gained the same reputation, but most of them have died, one at least with a dose of good solid lead buckshot from a Kampong Guard's gun in his face. An old and crotchety wild boar in the Paka district of Dungun had the same said of him, but Pa Mat and I found that a lead and copper bullet from the Mannlicher proved too much for his digestion.

The Ibok *kampong* folk went further than the silver bullet theory with their old tiger and I was told, in all sincerity, that he never sought his own food, but that it was killed and taken to him by the younger tigers and tigresses living in the area. This I cannot believe. Somebody may have seen a tigress carrying a mouse-deer or young pig back to her cubs when she was beginning to wean them. That would be enough to lead to conjecture and the supposition that a meal was on the way for the *Dato'*.

I have read that if a Malay comes across tiger tracks in the jungle he will cover them with leaves and a twig or two to prove that he has shown due deference to the Lord of the Jungle. I have never myself seen cases of this custom and could obtain no confirmation in Trengganu that it was observed. Possibly it is more common in other States or has died out in recent years.

Tigers feature in a great many Chinese beliefs and superstitions. References to the tiger in ancient manuscripts show that the animal's stripes were reproduced roughly in the original written Chinese characters. An early Chinese reader describes the tiger in the following quaint manner:

> "He is seven feet in length and bears *his* young seven months. When 500 years old he becomes white and is said to live sometimes to the age of 1,000 years." (The italics are mine.)

The image of the tiger is affixed to walls by Chinese as a charm against spectral influence. Likenesses of the animal in wood, ivory or metal are worn on the body as a protection against the demons of disease. A tiger's claw, sometimes mounted in silver, is bound to the body or carried in the pocket to avert evil. Small bones from the feet of the animal are regarded as potent charms and amulets. They are also tied to the wrists (against the pulse) or feet of young children to protect them from convulsions.

Spectral fevers, it is claimed, may be cured by sitting on a tiger's skin, but this may not be done too frequently, for superstition has it that there is a danger of the sufferer turning into a tiger. The Chinese believe that the figure of a tiger holds a unique place as a door charm, for he is a valiant destroyer and expeller of spectres. Many images are depicted as sitting on tiger skins, or else their lower garments bear the familiar stripes. The devil-dispelling properties of the tiger were once considered so great that men of learning advised sufferers from obstinate fevers to cure themselves by reading treatises on the animal. As far back as the sixteenth century one Chen Ki Ju devoted a whole book to tiger lore. I would dearly love to possess a copy of this publication.

Both the Chinese and the Malays attribute great healing and other qualities to various parts of the tiger's body. The Chinese hold that a charm fashioned from a tiger's claw gives the wearer the courage of that animal and so protects him from sudden fright. The flesh is recommended for debility of the spleen or stomach. Pills made from the eye-balls will cure convulsions.

I have been disconcerted more than once by being approached by blind Malays with a request for the eyes of the next tiger that I shot.

"If you will only give me the eyes, *Tuan*," they would say,

A *Bĕrok* (Coconut) monkey.

The sun sets, but the jungle awakes. An evening scene on a Trengganu river.

"I shall have medicine made from them and shall be able to see again."

If, to my own unskilled eyes, there appeared to be a possibility that modern science could help these unfortunates, I would do my best to overcome their fear of hospitals and persuade them to be examined by a doctor. In many cases, I am sorry to say, no skill was needed to tell that nothing could be done for them and then I would gladly promise that the next pair of tiger's eyes would be theirs. Hypocritical, perhaps, but it gave the poor souls some small comfort.

The whiskers and claws of a dead tiger are in much demand among Malays, as charms made from them are reputed to give their wearers great strength and courage. Let the carcass of a tiger shot by a European be left unguarded only for a moment or two and all the whiskers will certainly disappear as if by magic, and probably a claw or two as well.

I would always wrap up a dead tiger's head in my mackintosh, bound with rope, as soon as possible after its death to safeguard the whiskers. Either Pa Mat or I would afterwards watch over it closely until it was safely locked in my garage. Once when we had reached the car and lowered a dead tiger to the ground, so that the carrying poles might be removed, I noticed a lean brown hand emerge slowly from beneath the vehicle, where a wily Malay was lying in wait. I let the hand reach the whiskers and then put my rubber-shod foot firmly upon it, to the delight of the onlookers. At the same moment Pa Mat took up a position on the far side of the car to bar escape from that side. We all laughed at the incident so much that I could not resist giving the man one whisker. Unfortunately the other Malays who were standing round, but who had shown less initiative, could not easily be made to understand why they should not be favoured in the same way.

I could also tell of a tigress, shot at Binjai, near Kemaman,

in August 1950, which was well guarded by three of us, but which was found to be minus one hind claw when examined in daylight the next morning. We had watched over the dead animal so closely that, thinking back, I was able to remember the only possible opportunity that was given for the claw to be removed. It needed but little more thought to recollect which Malays were near the hind feet at the time and which of them would yield to such temptation, to establish definitely who the culprit was. His surprise when tackled at the psychological moment in a crowded coffee-shop some days later and asked to return the missing claw was sufficient to convulse those friends of his who were present and to whom he had probably but a moment before been boasting of his artfulness. Before I left Kemaman I had delivered to him in a sealed envelope a spare claw which I had by me. I thought that he deserved it.

One has only to see a good tiger skin mounted without whiskers or claws to appreciate why the sportsman guards his trophy so jealously. A mounted skin is, I know, a poor reminder of the fine animal which once wore it, but to the shooter of the animal it brings back a great deal of the thrills and excitement of the hunt.

Having been called upon to shoot a tiger that had been caught in a trap, I first took the customary measurements of the carcass for record purposes (although it would not form part of my own bag) and then had it placed on the grass near the market at Kemasek, making it clear that I had no further interest in it. The crowd which had gathered took quickly to the idea that the tiger was theirs for the asking and in a remarkably short time no sign of the dead animal remained. The biggest single piece removed by any one person was the head, a coveted prize despite the fact that it was already denuded of whiskers, skin, eyes, tongue and lips.

My knowledge of the uses to which present-day Malays and Chinese will put the various parts of a dead tiger are far from complete, but a few of them are listed below:

(*a*) The flesh is recommended by the Chinese for debility of the spleen or stomach.

(*b*) The skin, either burned or roasted, and mixed with water is regarded, again by the Chinese, as a panacea for all ills.

(*c*) More intimate portions of the body are believed by Malays to possess great aphrodisiacal properties.

(*d*) Sickness of the stomach, if the patient is a Chinese, may be cured by small doses of tiger grease diluted with oil.

(*e*) Certain bones, especially the floating ribs and those from the end of the tail, are reputed by both races to have powers of warding off evil and of gaining good fortune and luck for those who carry or wear them.

A sixteenth century publication attributed to Sheikh Kamal Al'dian Aldomayre, with the title of *Kitab Hayat Al'Hywan*, contains a most amazing collection of Islamic beliefs concerning animals. From it I extracted the following information:

> The tiger, which in appearance has a slight resemblance to the lion, has black and white stripes on his skin. When this animal becomes enraged he is filled with such frenzy that all thought and caution leave him, until the time comes when he will exhaust and kill himself. There are two kinds of tigers. One is large, with a small tail. The other smaller, but with a larger tail. All other animals are more afraid of him than of the lion. He is proud and obstinate. Killing is in his blood.
>
> When the tiger has eaten his fill he sleeps for three days

and nights. If he falls sick he will kill and devour one rat. This will cure him. He is fond of arrack. If men provide sufficient for him he will consume it until he falls drunk. He is then easily caught.

When the tigress produces young, each is born with a snake wound round its neck. These snakes may bite people, but the bite will not prove fatal. Tigers, who are second to lions in honour, guard themselves more carefully than do lions. If a tiger and a lion meet they must always engage in battle, but fate decrees that each in turn will win these struggles. If a lion has food, then he stays in that place to consume it, but a tiger always makes off with his meat.

A tiger is able to leap one-third of forty yards high. He will not eat food that he has not caught himself and he will not eat meat which is not fresh. If the head of a dead tiger is buried in the ground many rats will congregate at that place.

The gallstone of the tiger, if applied to the eyes, will strengthen them. It will also stop the eyes from persistent watering. From the gallstone may also be brewed a most virulent poison which will cause instant death. If the severed head of a tiger becomes rotten, then whoever smells it will die.

Tigers will not approach the head of a dead human being. Such a head, if dried and fastened above the door of a dwelling, will keep tigers away. If the hair of a tiger is burnt it will drive out all the centipedes from that place. If one *tahil* (one and one-third ounces) of tiger's flesh is consumed, then whoever consumes it will be impervious to snake-bite. If the skin is sat upon while naked then the patient will be cured of certain types of sickness. If a man is wounded by the teeth or claws of a tiger he must take great pains to conceal his wound from rats, for these animals will attempt to

urinate on the wound. If they succeed in doing so the man will die.

If a tiger is encountered in a dream then the following will befall the dreamer:

If a tiger is seen	... The dreamer will meet an unjust ruler.
The dreamer kills a tiger	... He will kill his worst enemy.
The dreamer eats tiger's flesh	... He will receive riches and honour.
If the tiger climbs on to the dreamer's back	... The dreamer will be in trouble with Government or with his enemies.
The dreamer befriends a tiger	... He will marry an unsatisfactory wife.
A tiger enters the dreamer's room	... A rogue will come to the house.
The dreamer is ill when he meets a tiger	... The dreamer will recover from an illness.
He fights with a tiger but fails to kill it	... He will fall ill of an incurable fever which will hold him like a prison.
If the dreamer seizes the hair, flesh or tail of a tiger	... He will receive great riches from the Sultan or from his enemies.
If he dreams of sleeping with a tiger, but is not afraid	... He will be safe from all his enemies.
If he encounters a tiger which kills many people by tearing off their hands	... The Government of his country is unjust.
If the tiger devours the heads of people	... The dreamer will have continuing success until he becomes a Raja.
If he seizes a tiger and places it in a cage	... He will become friendly with an unjust ruler.

If the dreamer is a slave and a tiger visits him ... He will become a free man.

If the voice of a tiger is heard ... A heavy sentence of imprisonment will be imposed on him.

The same book suggests that the following remedies, prepared from parts of the carcass of a tiger, are efficacious:

The brain mixed with aged oil when rubbed on the body will cure laziness or pimples.

The tail, dried and ground to powder, if mixed with soap will produce an ointment which, when used while bathing, will cure skin diseases.

The tail dried, powdered and mixed with water makes a drink which will give those who consume it an unquenchable thirst for arrack.

The gallstone, mixed with honey, will cure abscesses of the hands and feet.

If the fat is dried and a mixture made from it with flour and garlic, then no feline animal will attack those who rub it on their body.

Fat from a tiger's face is mixed with essence of roses. If this is rubbed on the face then the user of it will be honoured by all who meet him including princes.

Panacea for all sicknesses of the stomach: Take a pinch of dried tiger's gallstone, salt it and wrap it in bark with a fragment of bezoar-stone. Pound this out flat, roll in rice flour and place in hot water. To be drunk before meals.

To the Malayan hunter of to-day the bones of the tiger he shoots are of the greatest saleable value. I know of a small tigress, shot in Selangor in 1951 by a party out pig-hunting, the carcass of which was sold in Kuala Lumpur for two hundred Straits dollars, or approximately £23. The Chinese who obtained a dead tiger for this price in the Federal capital

most certainly made at least 400 per cent. profit from the sale of the charms and cures he concocted from it.

The Chinese believe that tigers' bones, like those of men, contain a soul substance, or vital fluid, and are of great value, particularly those from the head. They are powdered, cooked in order to destroy the marrow, and the resultant mess is mixed with all kinds of medicaments as a protection against the evils of nightmares, dreams and fever. Another type of medicine made from the bones is said to cure demoniacal disease.

I took the trouble to learn a little of the modern method of preparing Chinese medicine from the bones of a tiger. The flesh is removed very roughly and a slow preliminary boiling takes place, during which the melted fat is skimmed off and placed on one side for special cures, massage, the treatment of sprains and so on. Then the real boiling process begins, the huge vessel containing the bones being kept at a steady temperature for a full thirty-six hours, during which time a vast quantity of firewood is consumed. Dried afterwards in the sun, the bones are allowed to become parched and snowy-white before they are ground to the consistency of flour. This fine powder is mixed with various herbs and other ingredients, among which may be some borrowed from modern science. The resultant black paste—in appearance very much like liquorice when dried out sufficiently—is fashioned into small tablets similar in shape and size to a domino. As a modern refinement these tablets are sometimes wrapped in cellophane paper.

When the medicine is to be taken, one or two of the tablets are dissolved in a bottle of *samsu* (Chinese rice wine), a process which requires much patient shaking. The resultant liquid is consumed in small doses. My curiosity led me to accept two of these tablets, prepared from the bones of a tiger that I had shot. I also acquired a bottle of *samsu* in order that the direc-

tions might be followed faithfully. One sip of the liquid was all that I could manage, however, and the bottle was passed to my Chinese cook-boy, who accepted the unexpected gift with marked enthusiasm.

Whatever Europeans may think of such unusual cures, there is no doubt that the Chinese place great faith in them. The Chinese manager of a local tin mine was always badgering me for bones for medicine to keep his labour force at its best. He once told me of an old labourer, hardly able to walk, who took a course of tiger-bone cure and who, a few days later, was striding about with youthful vigour. It is difficult to tell whether the efficacy of such a remedy results from the faith of those who take it, from the Chinese ingredients with which it is mixed, or from the modern drugs introduced into it in these more enlightened days. There is another form of medicine made from the liver, if it is available for treatment soon enough, which is reputed by certain Chinese to have even greater healing qualities.

I have mentioned the floating ribs, which, incidentally, can be made into most attractive brooches. There is also a peculiar Chinese superstition concerning the atlas and the axis, the latter being the bone on which the head rotates. It is believed that a tiger cannot look upwards except on a certain day each year. Therefore, if these bones are kept in their correct position one above the other, the atlas will be seen to rock slowly backwards and forwards on the axis on that particular day. It is quite certain, in actual fact, that a tiger is able to look about him as freely as he wishes, although, for obvious reasons, he will not make it a habit to stare up into trees.

A considerate tiger, imbued with a desire to comply with local belief, might well find himself in a quandary about his ability to raise his head, for village Malays avow that if a tiger stares up at a monkey, the unfortunate animal is sufficiently

mesmerised to descend into the jaws waiting beneath him. I have no doubt that the sight of a tiger close at hand chills the blood of a monkey as much as it does that of a human being (when the tiger is not behind bars), but I doubt the hypnotic power of the big cat's eye. My scepticism is not entirely without foundation as I will explain.

In many villages in Trengganu one will notice stout poles stuck vertically into the ground near the Malay houses. These poles either end in the sheltering branches of an adjacent tree or have a plank, or small box, fastened to the top of them. On these poles are kept the tailless monkeys[1], which are trained to ascend the coconut trees on the end of a long cord and to send down those nuts which have ripened sufficiently to be of use. Most of the monkeys employed in Trengganu come from Pahang, a well-trained animal from which State will command a high price. They normally wear loose-fitting collars of copper wire which, oddly enough, bear a striking similarity to the telephone wire used by the Government Telecommunications Department. At night each monkey is fastened by its collar to a chain, the other end of which is affixed to another stout wire ring which slides loosely up and down the pole, thus affording the animal a certain freedom of movement.

Now at Kerteh, at the back of the group of houses known as Telaga Papan (a well made of wood), there lived an outsize *bĕrok*, the owner of which had erected for him a befittingly stout pole, thus enabling him to view the world from on high. The peak of the pole was surmounted by a wooden box, on top of which the monkey could sun himself in his leisure hours and into which he could just contrive to curl during the chilly hours of the night.

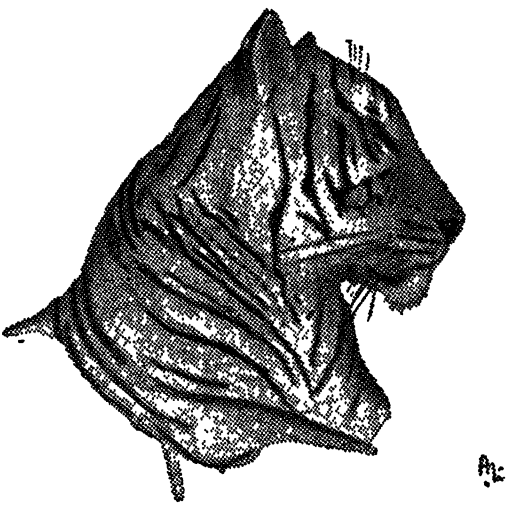
[1] The Malayan baboon (*Macacus nemestrinus*) known to the Malays as *bĕrok*.

One night the most alarming noises, emanating from the direction of the monkey's perch, awakened the animal's owner. As he had no gun he was too frightened to investigate what had caused the disturbance until the morning. When daylight came the *bĕrok* was missing and so was his pole, his box and his chain. All that remained was a hole in the sand where the pole had stood—and the pugs of a tiger. Now, had that tiger been capable of staring at the *bĕrok* in a sufficiently compelling manner, the monkey would have come down to earth (in more ways than one) and would have been killed quickly and comparatively quietly. Having killed the monkey the tiger would have found he could not make off with his meal because the wire ring was lying at the base of the pole and the chain would have proved too strong for him.

I am convinced that what really happened was that the monkey did not come down from his pole, but merely sat and gibbered at the striped shape below. The tiger sprang and sprang again until his great weight, inadvertently striking the pole a solid blow at each jump, forced it over. Then the *bĕrok* was seized by the tiger, who went off dragging pole and box behind him. I did not hear of this incident until I was in Kerteh some days later. Had the tracks been followed up the next morning it would have been a simple matter to find out how far the tiger had gone with his cumbersome and awkward burden.

When you are setting out on a hunt the Malays will tell you that if a snake or monitor lizard crosses your path from right to left all will be well. But if the reptile crosses from left to right, you will return home empty-handed. There are many monitor lizards in Trengganu. They crossed my path frequently. On no occasion did I succeed in shooting the tiger I was after if their waddling rush took them across my route

in the wrong direction. It is for reasons such as this that I hope that I have not appeared too doubting in describing some of the beliefs and legends associated with tigers in Malaya.



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