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A REPORT ON
RACING'S BIGGEST WINTER

EVENTS & DISCOVERIES

continued from page 13

physiological dissertations—nothing offensive to any reasonable person. But true love as opposed to just mating. Love is a great psychological experience for a dog, particularly the first time, just as it is for man.

"It forms character. Think of the handicaps under which a dog operates—no privacy, for one thing; not merely from people but from other dogs. The competition is tremendous and the disease takes a long while to run its course, during which it monopolizes its victims.

"My mother-in-law used to bring a little Pekingese bitch to the house when she visited us, and it pulled in dogs big enough to saddle and ride, from two miles and more off; we identified many of them.

"They all come up to the door in the morning and ring the bell, so to speak, and put on their best smiles and selling manners. Dogs not only have a sense of humor, embarrassment, guilt and other human characteristics but they are the world's best salesmen. They ask, 'Can Millie come out and play?' as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths. They always made my wife laugh, they were so obviously trying to butter her up.

"When that doesn't work they settle down to the endless vigil, and instead of being bad-tempered they usually get acquainted and play—of course being careful to stay within reach of the front door. They were really sort of grateful to me when I bought an air gun and started stalking them; it was like a game and they enjoyed it. It took them half an hour to get educated to the range of that gun. Before the afternoon was up I had them as wary as wild animals.

"As you doubtless know, a dog who is Cupid's victim wouldn't think of going home at night, and, as a matter of fact, I have often wondered how they do it in shifts—go home and gulp and then gallop back. But they stand guard all night.

"Experience is just as valuable in love-making as in any other endeavor, and the newcomer who lacks it has just as hard a time as any freshman at West Point. It is funny but also appealing to early psychological wounds now hidden with scar tissue, which all of us bear, to see the young pups on their first run making chumps of themselves and finally getting run off when things begin to come to a head. It is always touching as well as inspiring and, to

be sure, amusing to see a boy grow up into a man overnight.

"What this piece needs is a No. 1 dog man with a philosophical outlook and vivid memories of his own youth, and all the free time in the world, and competence with a camera. I lack all of those things except memories of my youth."

WATCHMEN'S TRIUMPHS

WINTER is the time when bird watchers strain their eyes in hopes of spotting one of those rare winter visitors—which is to the birder what the hole-in-one is to the golfer. Feeding stations are under lengthy scrutiny in search of the unexpected.

Residents of eastern states down through Pennsylvania and New Jersey were rewarded this winter by wandering flocks of evening grosbeaks. This species is at home in the coniferous for-



ests of the north, mostly in Canada. But occasionally there comes a winter when evening grosbeaks get the wanderlust and move southward. The reasons for these irruptions are not clear but when they happen even people with only a casual interest in birds get excited.

An airplane pilot swore that he had

seen a bunch of small parrots in his backyard. This conclusion was not too farfetched because evening grosbeaks, particularly the males, are brightly marked with yellow, white and brown and have large, ivory-colored beaks.

In Bucks County, Pa. Mrs. Loraine Rudy peeked out her window in hopes of seeing a grosbeak or two, but instead she saw a horse eating the grain on the food tray. This seems to be the only report this winter of a horse on a bird-feeding station.

Down in Florida, Ornithologist Alexander Sprunt Jr. recorded two triumphs, a Greenland wheatear and an American eider duck. The wheatear, a small brown thrush, normally breeds in the arctic regions and winters in tropical Africa and southern Asia. The American eider is seldom found south of Long Island, N.Y. Why either bird happened to go to Florida is anybody's guess.

It also was hard to explain why an Atlantic fulmar happened to be sitting beside a road near Ramsey, N.J. This bird also is at home in the arctic. Harry Breitenback of Ramsey caught it. After the bird had rested and had been admired by birders, it was turned loose. It headed northeast.

Other ornithological discoveries of varying importance were reported from over the country. They included a communication from one of SI's correspondents that bird watching is backed by a scriptural imperative of sorts. *Matt. 6:26* enjoins: "Behold the fowls of the air."

SPECTACLE

INDIAN TIGER PARTY

In Cooch Behar, the grand-style tiger hunt of legend carries on unchanged in pomp and ceremony and as luxuriously as ever

The favorite diversion of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, ruler of a princely state of northeast India, is carrying on his grandfather's traditional tiger shoots from the backs of elephants. True, the once private tiger tamasha is now open to paying guests who apply to the Maharaja's Himalayan Shikar Syndicate. But as far as custom is concerned everything is about the same as it was 100 years ago. Indian shikar life has all the luxuries of a Grand Hotel in the jungle. At sundown guests gather in a circle (*right*) for cocktails; a retinue of manservants stands ready to attend to every want; there is ice for the drinks and even hot water to shave with. On top of this, and the sights and sounds of the Indian jungle, there is big game hunting as Kipling knew it. For a firsthand report on the hunt, see Film Director John Huston's article on page 19.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY YLLA

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ELEPHANT CARAVAN of hunters and beaters moves off through the high grass and brush in search of tigers. Huston and the other members of the party ride in howdah on elephant's back.

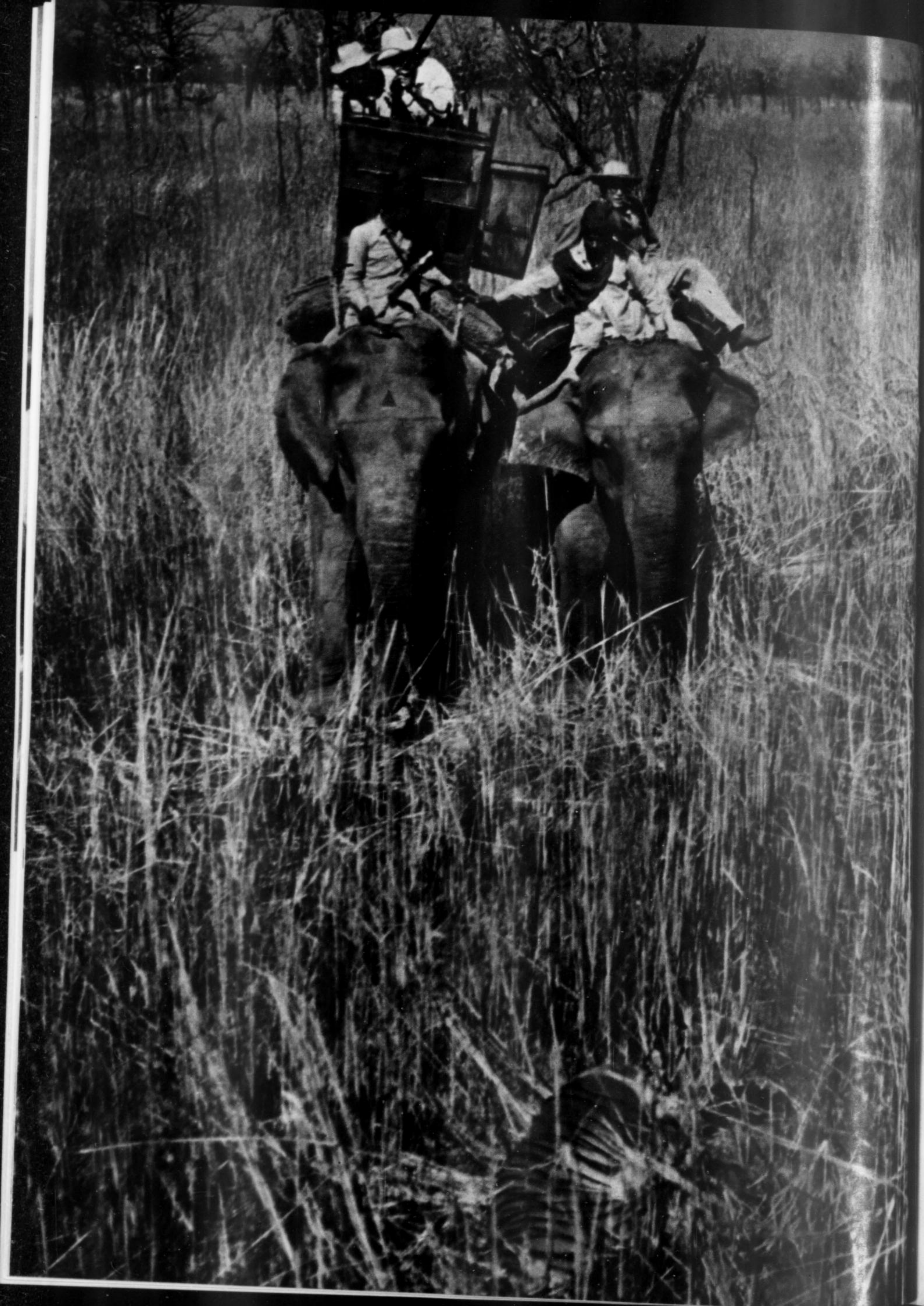
HUNTING PARTY, including staff of green-turbaned mahouts sitting astride gaily decorated elephants, lines up for inspection on first day before commencement of organized drive for game.





JUNGLE-EDGE PICNIC is enjoyed by hunters John Huston (*left*), Mr. and Mrs. Walter Buchen of Chicago, T. Wynyard Pasley of New York, Major Parbat Singh and Mr. and Mrs. Felix Fenston of Guildford, England.





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'LIKE A LICK OF FLAME IN THE JUNGLE'

by JOHN HUSTON

That is how the tiger looked to this famous movie director and sportsman when, after four days of hunting, he sighted his prey

THE BENGAL TIGER is the biggest of all tigers, and the biggest Bengals are to be found in Assam State, which borders the princely province of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar. The Himalayan Shikar Syndicate leases shooting blocks there from the Indian government and is allowed to hunt each block for two weeks of the year. The hunt in which I participated was out of Camp Parbati, from which one can see the foothills of the Himalayas. Getting there takes an hour and a half by DC-3 and some four hours by jeep from Calcutta, which is the point of departure.

There were seven in our party, but only three were shooting: Walter Buchen, a Chicagoan, Felix Fenston from Guildford, England and myself. The others included W.B.'s and Felix's wives; Wynyard Pasley, the representative of a New York and London travel agency, who took bookings for the hunt; and the late Ylla, photographing for SI. Only Felix had shot tiger before—with a gun, that is. Ylla had photographed them.

Camp Parbati had four big luxury tents around a quadrangle, an open-air bar and a wooden dining room on stilts. Beyond the quad were more tents, smaller ones, for the officers and servants of the hunt. All in all, we found the service somewhat better than that furnished by our favorite hotels. Each of us had his own personal bearer or orderly, behind whom stood, or rather ran, a little host of water carriers, sweepers and washermen. The water in our private baths was always hot, our clothes from the day before well laundered. And there was ice in the drinks put into our hands.

At cocktails before dinner, a tiny, bearded man appeared. He salaamed to each of us in turn and I saw that his hands were the size of a young boy's. He wore a pale violet turban, white tunic, fawn-colored breeches and white cloth puttees that wrapped around his naked insteps. This was the Raj Kumar, which means son of raja, and he was the commanding officer of the hunt.

The block we were in was about 12 miles square. Five young domestic buffaloes had been tethered out over that area. In the morning scouts would go out to see whether any had been killed. If so, they would come back ringing a bell. Then we would go after the tiger.

No bells were rung that first morning. In other words—no kills. Pasley and I walked down to the elephant camp. The early-morning curtain of ground fog had not yet lifted and the great grey shapes of the beasts loomed through



HUSTON AND FRIENDS Lucien and Felix Fenston are photographed with the day's bag at weighing-in ceremony after hunt.

it hugely. There were 30 in all—20 beater, six pad and four howdah elephants, and they were having the final touches put to their battle array: blue, red and white designs, no two alike, painted on their foreheads and on the meaty bases of their trunks. A ladder was produced and we climbed aboard one of the pad elephants—so called because a mattress was tied to its back. The mahout, astride its neck, banged his elephant hook against the beast's skull, which echoed like a hollow log, and we were on our way back toward camp.

The first hunt was what is called a general hunt. That is, we were to shoot anything in the way of game that ran or rose before us: deer, pig, jungle fowl, peacocks, anything. Sometimes a panther is kicked up on a general hunt—rarely a tiger. Reaching the jungle, we changed from the pad elephants to the howdahs, meaning those with a basketlike platform on their backs. The beasts were then

continued on page 52

AS ELEPHANTS APPROACH CAUTIOUSLY, HUSTON (RIGHT) PEERS OVER MAHOUT'S HEAD TO INSPECT KILL

INDIAN TIGER HUNT

continued from page 19

deployed into a long battle line and moved forward through the jungle.

I had selected for my weapons, from the camp armory, a double-barreled .450 Holland & Holland rifle for big game and a 12-gauge Rigby shotgun for the small. Both were idle until mid-day; then there was a scampering around my elephant's feet and a little hog deer darted out. I killed it. It was the only blood drawn that day. Thirty elephants, 29 mahouts (the Raj Kumar is his own), four officers, three shooters, six weapons—one hog deer, somewhat larger than a rabbit.

No kill the second day, so it was another general hunt. Nor were there any kills the following night, although two added bullocks were staked out, making seven baits in all.

Early the fourth morning I heard an excited voice shouting in Hindi from the road. Others in the camp passed my tent on the run. I thought something must be up and left off dressing to join a group that had formed around a hairy, nearly naked little man, who was rolling his eyes and waving his arms in what seemed to be a fit of terror. He was a buffalo man. During the night a tiger had killed one of his bullocks. He thought he knew where that tiger was lying up even now.

As a rule a tiger kills shortly after nightfall. Having broken the neck of its prey, it licks a place raw with its sharp, scaly tongue and drinks up the blood. Then, thirsty from the salt, it goes to water. After drinking deeply it finds some sheltered, shady place in the jungle and lies up until a little before dawn, when it returns to the kill and eats it out. The fact that this tiger had not gone for one of our seven baits but had made what is called a natural kill was taken as an indication of sagacity, which meant it was of mature years and therefore large.

At 10 o'clock that morning, we were standing in our howdahs facing a strip of jungle where the buffalo man thought the tiger was lying up. I was in the center, W. B. on the left, Felix on the right. The elephants in the oncoming beat began to trumpet—notes as pure and clear as any Louis Armstrong ever blew and proportionately louder. My heart action accelerated.

On came the beat, out of the trees and into the grass, where we could see the elephants in line. Then the tiger came, like a lick of flame against the green backdrop of the jungle—its forward movements were so flowingly

graceful and effortless that they seemed almost slow. But I knew better when I tried to lay my sights on it: it was fast as a flaring bird. It came from the right. Felix fired twice. The tiger swerved my way. As I pulled the trigger, my elephant swayed wildly around, throwing me heavily against the side of the howdah. Facing about I got a last glimpse of its yellow-and-black stripes. I fired again, knowing I would miss, and I did. Its course described a sweeping S and covered, I reckoned afterward, some 200 yards. I am certain its time, from appearance to disappearance, was under 10 seconds—a good winner's time on a fast track.

That night Captain Naryan wrote in his log that a fine shot had been given us and that he didn't know why we had missed.

Fifth day, no kill; sixth day, no kill; seventh day, no kill.

A feeling that we had missed our one and only chance settled over us, that the gods of the hunt were disgusted with us for shooting badly. We were informed that in the elephant camp the mahouts were making a blood sacrifice of a goat. Also that the Raj Kumar was shaving his beard.

The eighth day, no kill. Another general hunt. As the elephants were getting into line, Major Parbat Singh, who, with Wyn Pasley, was with me in my howdah, looked out over the scrubby terrain and remarked that the country didn't seem very promising. Five minutes later I saw a tiger. It came

into view from behind a thicket some 60 yards ahead. Before I could signal the mahout to stop, it had disappeared behind some scrub. But it showed itself again almost immediately, bearing leftward and away through the grass. It was about 125 yards off now. I didn't hear my soft-nosed bullet slam home nor was there any growling or thrashing about in the grass.

"I think you got him," Major Parbat Singh said without conviction.

Wyn said he thought so too.

THE HATEFUL SOUND

Word was passed along the line that I had shot at a tiger. The Raj Kumar rode up on his elephant and asked if the tiger was hit. I said I didn't know. He gave orders sending the howdah elephants one way and the pad elephants another. When we were about 400 yards apart, we deployed again, taking up positions at right angles to the original beat.

The clamor of the new beat started up, grew louder as it advanced—then died. Something was called out from over the distance. My mahout turned to me smiling and offered his hand. I shook it and Major Parbat Singh's and Pasley's. Felix and W. B. both called congratulations. Then the beat started again where it had left off. I didn't understand why, if my tiger was dead.

"There may be another one," Major Parbat Singh said. "Better get set."

Instantly there was the rattling, hollow, belching, and infinitely hateful sound that is the growl of a tiger. Our



howdah elephants answered with a fanfare. Then stripes flashed briefly through heavy foliage. The beat came on. Circling toward Felix a tiger ran into the open. Felix fired both barrels. The tiger swung toward me. I fired. The tiger headed back toward the beaters. It was as though it were able to reverse direction without losing speed. Then it went to cover in a small island of very high dense grass.

Our three howdah elephants were moved up so that each faced a different side of the cover. The beating elephants were then crowded together, and shoulder to shoulder they pushed in from the fourth side. They took no joy in this part of their task. They rolled against each other; tried to back away; got their heads beaten. The yells of the mahouts, the squeals and trumpeting of the elephants—and every so often that infinitely hateful growl—made a wild and hellish din.

The tiger finally came backing into view, giving ground only by inches. It backed, belly to the ground, head up, heavy forelegs spread. Felix fired.

The tiger turned briefly towards Felix's elephant, growled, then, facing the beat again, made a short charge on the nearest beating elephant, which backed, squealing. But the tiger did not push its charge through. It circled on itself, as though to make a bed, then lay down and became lifeless.

Captain Naryan and two others got off their elephants and approached it cautiously. One of them picked up a stick and threw it at its head. Finally Captain Naryan pulled the tiger's tail. It was dead, all right. They stretched it out full length, drove pegs into the earth at its nose and the tip of its tail, then measured the distance between with a tape line. It was exactly nine feet. Ropes were hitched around its forelegs above the elbows. It was lifted aboard and secured to the back of an elephant.

Then we went to where my tiger had fallen. She was a young female, 8 feet 4 inches—small. My bullet had entered from behind her left forearm and had come out her right ear. It was at once a heart shot and a brain shot. Her skin was prime—the yellow vivid and the black very black. I remembered the first golden pheasant I ever killed. How beautiful it was, like a magic bird—the Firebird. My tiger was a Fire-animal.

I have cursed myself on several occasions when I wounded game and it got away. But only that one other time, long ago, did I feel regret over game I had killed instantly.

I hope to go again next year! **END**

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