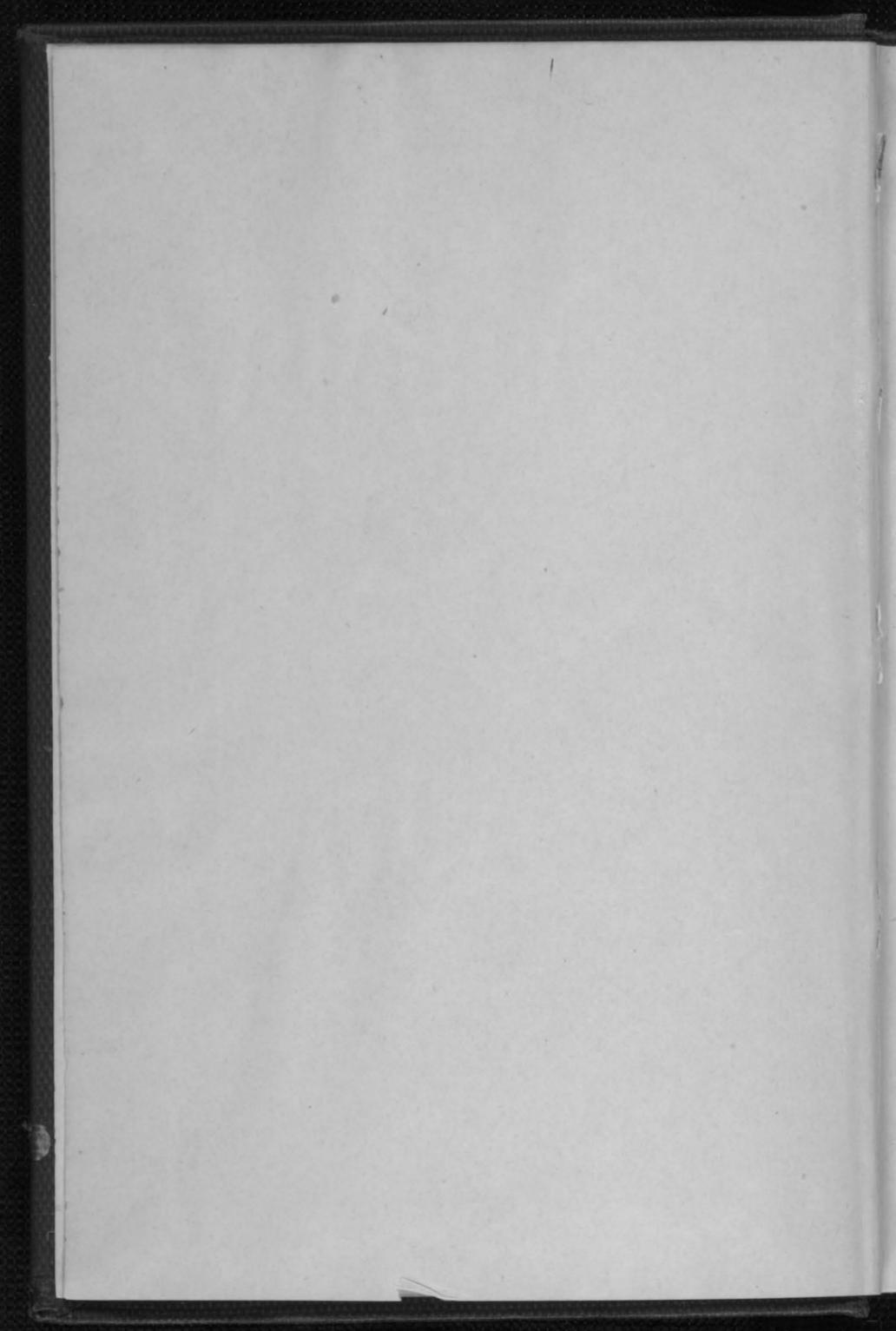
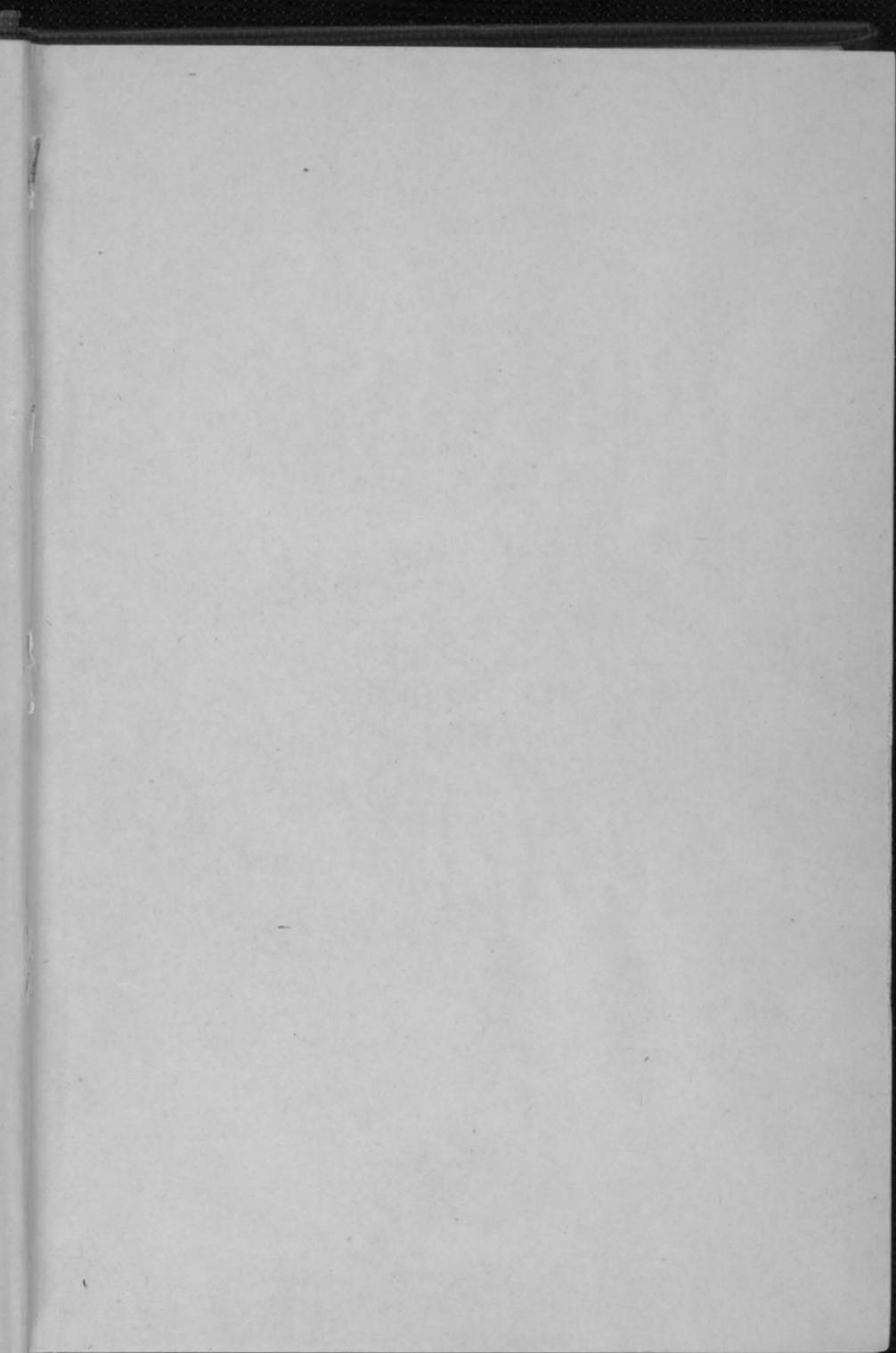


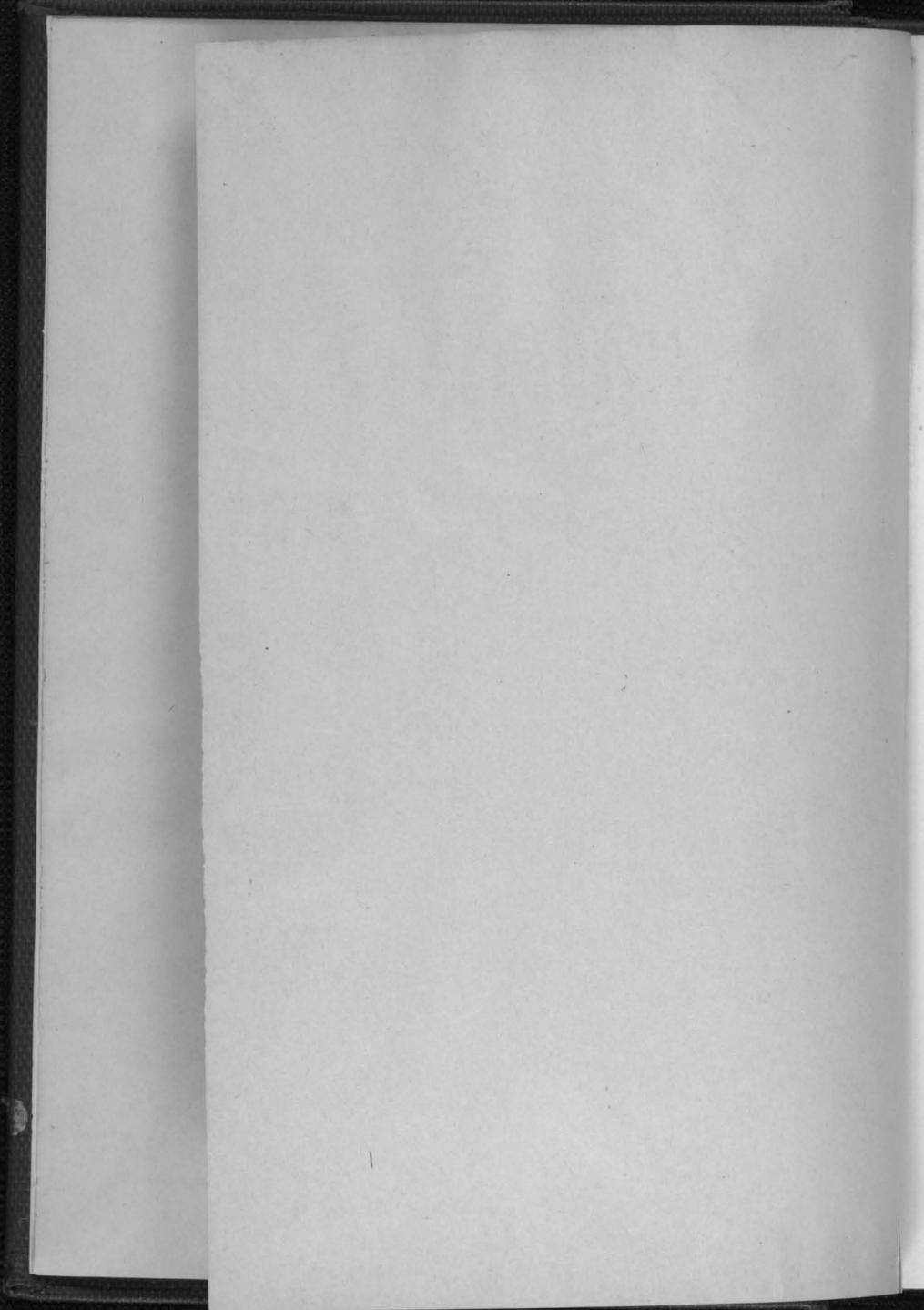
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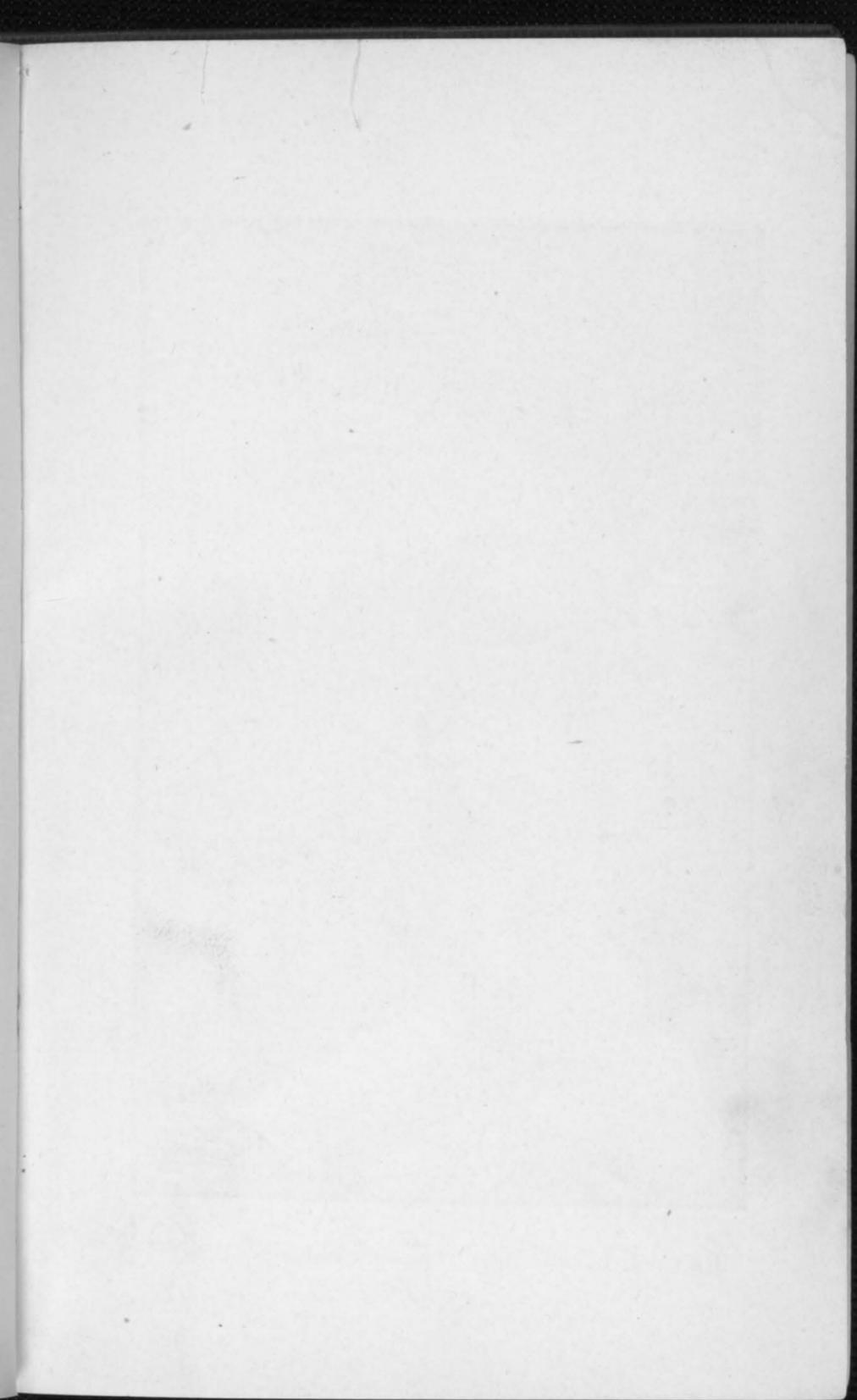
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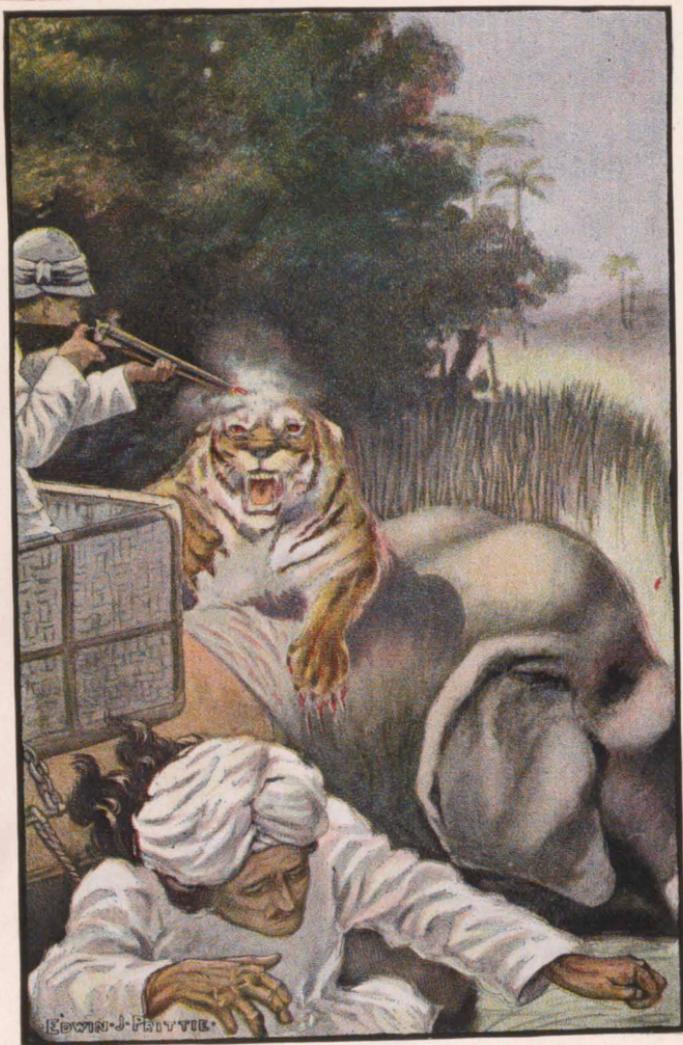
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He fired, but the tiger kept on climbing.

see page 75

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# THE HUNT OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT

A SEQUEL TO "RIVER AND JUNGLE"

## CHAPTER I

### FOLLOWING THE SPOOR

YOU will recall that in the story "River and Jungle," we parted company with Nughwa, a famous elephant-catcher, and Dudley Mayson, the son of an American missionary, just as the two had caught sight of a white elephant, which they had set out to capture. The friends were seated in a "howdah," or saddle, on the back of Wahrida, a tame elephant of remarkable sagacity, who clearly understood the difficult work required of her.

The incidents I am about to relate occurred, as I have reminded you, about a generation ago in the kingdom of Siam, where the white elephant is held in the highest veneration, be-

cause he is believed to be the incarnation of some future Buddha. The highest possible honors are paid to him at the court of Bangkok, the capital, and whoever succeeds in bringing one of the sacred animals to the king is sure of a munificent reward.

There is really no such creature as a white elephant. A peculiar skin disease sometimes imparts a pinkish tint to parts of his body, and the more there are of such blotches, the higher is the value of the brute. You remember my telling you that the great showman P. T. Barnum once said to me that the first sight he had of his famous white elephant, on the ship which brought him from Bangkok, filled him with such disgust that he was thankful some months later, when the animal perished in one of the fires that often create general devastation at Bridgeport, Connecticut.

It was toward the close of a sultry tropical afternoon that young Dudley Mayson and the native Nughwa, while journeying northward through the jungle toward the Laos country, saw in the distance, three elephants feeding, one of which was of unusual size and marked so abundantly with white spots as to give him exceptional value. Nughwa had been the first to discover the prize. He passed the glass to

Dudley from whom he had borrowed it, and the lad, seated in the howdah, spent several minutes studying the animal with absorbing interest. His companion did not speak, but kept his dark eyes fixed upon the flushed countenance of the youth, whom he had learned to regard with affection, not merely because he was the son of the good missionary at Wahta-Shat, but on account of the sturdy virtues and admirable qualities of the lad himself.

Twilight is always of short duration in the tropics, and while Dudley was gazing, the forms of the bulky animals grew indistinct. Lowering the telescope, he turned to his companion and asked with a sigh:

“Nughwa, why can't we capture him to-night?”

The native, as you remember, had quite a vein of waggery in his make-up, and on the journey from Ayuthia to the missionary station he enjoyed more than one joke at the expense of the plucky young American, but in one instance, at least, the latter gained his revenge. The elder looked grave as if he had been pondering the question.

“In truth, why not? You know the trouble in the case of white elephants lies not in capturing them, but in finding them to catch. They

are so few in number that a catcher may spend his whole life in the jungle and yet never see one."

"Of course the only difference between them and the ordinary animals is in the color."

"That is all; since hundreds are caught every year, it is as I said; the white ones are so few that they do not count."

"You have taken many in the night-time?"

"As many as by day."

"Then we may as well start this business without waiting until to-morrow."

The native nodded his head.

"The sooner he is taken, the less the distance and difficulty of getting him to Bangkok."

"What is your plan, Nughwa?"

"You know how important it is to have that clear in your mind. You have come many thousand miles from the other side of the world; I have learned to hold you in high esteem, and mean that you shall have all the glory of making captive the white elephant."

Dudley Mayson looked in questioning wonder at his dusky friend. Could he be in earnest? The bronzed face was never graver and more serious.

"Me to have the glory of capturing him! How can that be?"

"Will not the credit belong to you when you make him prisoner?"

"Yes; but I know nothing about such matters."

"There must be the *first* success with every elephant-catcher; would you not like to try it?"

"Yes, indeed, if I had the slightest chance; tell me your plan."

"It is very simple; you will slip up behind the elephant when he is feeding, being careful not to make any noise that will scare him into running away; then you must go at one of his hind legs and hold him fast till I can come up and tie him; be sure not to let go, my friend, or he will give you the slip."

There was not the shadow of a smile on the face of the native, but the youth noted a peculiar twinkle of the black eyes. Dudley made as if to stoop and catch up the coil of rope that lay at his feet.

"That's another debt I owe you, and which I won't forget to pay the first chance I get. You are worse than any of the boys at home. Try to be serious, Nughwa."

The guide obeyed. The words he now uttered were in earnest:

"Elephant catching at night is too hard and

expensive a business for us; in fact it is wholly out of our power."

"What is the common method?"

"In the first place, you must have several hundred people and a dozen tame elephants to help. It takes several weeks before you can succeed with scores of fires, with much shooting, and tumult and torches to drive them into the big corral that has been made ready. When this has been done, and the corral closed behind the animals, they are caught and can be roped and tamed without any haste in the matter. That is the way elephants are caught at night."

"Then we must remain idle till morning."

"We have no choice."

"How shall we sleep?"

"Just as we are; what better bed can we ask? You learned long ago that an elephant never lies down unless he is ill, and there isn't anything the matter with Wahrida. While we sleep, she can eat until tired."

"Why is an elephant fonder of eating at night than by day?"

"On account of the dew on the vegetation, which makes it tender. He eats nothing but vegetable food."

"You mean when wild; you ought to see

some of the tame ones go for peanuts and cake and candy. One of them will bankrupt all the boys in a neighborhood."

"I have seen them do such things at Bangkok, and I feed Wahrida sugar now and then. Did you ever see one of them go down a steep hill or bank?"

Dudley replied that he had never witnessed such a performance.

"If the slope is very steep, he kneels down and reaches carefully forward, with one foreleg in search of a safe footing. If he doesn't find it, he makes it by hammering the soil first with one foot and then with the other, drawing forward a hind foot to take the place of the one released in front. They are very careful and take no chances."

"I have seen them test a bridge when urged to cross it, and, if they weren't positively sure, nothing could make them step onto the planks. Nughwa, I remember walking with other boys beside an elephant for miles waiting for him to step on the end of his trunk, which it seemed to us he couldn't help doing."

"Did you see him do it?"

"Never."

"And never will, because he isn't such a simpleton. That trunk is the most wonderful

organ created. You know that it contains fifty thousand muscles, that it can pull up a tree or pick a needle from the floor. I have met elephants in the jungle that were totally blind and probably had been so for years, but, if *you* saw them, you would never suspect it."

"How do they manage without their eyesight?"

"They depend on their trunks, which never fail to supply them with food, and to warn them of dangerous ground. Your father once tested the skill of Wahrida by asking her to pick up a coin which he laid so close against a rock that she could not get hold of it, as she would have done had it been an inch farther away. What did Wahrida do? She pointed her trunk just above the coin and blew a blast that caused it to fly several feet back. Then she picked it up and handed it to your father."

"I should say that that came pretty near reasoning."

"Pretty near it! An elephant reasons as much as a man; at least Wahrida does."

"I am not going to dispute anything you say about her," said Dudley recalling that he had offended his friend only a short time before by expressing a doubt of some of her achievements as related by her master.

The two sat for a long time conversing, while the animal continued daintily feeding upon the tender herbage, made more tender by the plentiful dew. This compelled occasional changes of position, and it was remarkable that she accomplished them without discommoding those upon her back. Apparently there was no effort on her part, but the youth did not need to be told that their freedom from disturbance was due to the sagacious creature.

Finally Dudley sat down on the bottom of the howdah and leaned his head upon the seat. Nughwa kept his former position. The night was clear but warm, and the racket and turmoil of the jungle never ceased, but we can become accustomed to all sorts of sounds and the lad had long since grown familiar with the voices of the night.

“Do you think we are likely to be bothered by any wild animals?” he asked when there was a lull in their conversation.

“We may and we may not, for danger always threatens, but, if it comes near, Wahrida will tell us. It was a little farther than this in the Laos country, that I was on a hunt, more than a year ago. It was one of the hardest hunts of my life, for the nature of the jungle compelled me to keep on my feet nearly all day. I caught

up with the herd a little while before dark, and thought I had my prize sure, but, before I could make him fast, the rest, with an old bull at the head, charged me and I had to leave in a hurry. If Wahrida hadn't caught me up and dashed off, I don't see how I could have escaped. She can outrun any elephant I ever saw and she had to do her best.

"She went a good many miles before she dared stop. I was so worn out that she had not been at rest more than a few minutes when I sank into sleep. Wahrida was about as tired as I and glad enough to get a chance to sleep, but she did not feel at ease in her mind. She knew more about her kind than I did, for I supposed we were well rid of the herd. We had left them a long distance behind, but they knew how to follow us even at night through the jungle, and Wahrida was certain they would do so. She tried to tell me all about it, but I was too dull to understand what she was saying and too weary to care for anything except slumber. Then, too, I never felt any alarm when she was on duty.

"I must have slept two hours when she suddenly awoke me. You must remember that she carried no howdah, and I had stretched out on the ground at her feet. Her way of letting me

know at such times that something is wrong is to rub the end of her trunk over my face. She not only did that, but I had hardly opened my eyes, and had not yet learned what the trouble was when she lifted me off the ground, and, hardly pausing to place me astride of her neck, when she was off like a race horse.

“That whole herd of elephants had sneaked up in the night, and they did it so well that even Wahrida, who was on the watch and looking for something of the kind, did not find it out until too late. The cunning beasts had learned hours before that she was fleet of foot than any of them, and they were too wise to give her the chance she had before.

“What do you suppose they did? There must have been more than a dozen, and they separated and stole forward, like so many shadows, until when they came to a halt, they formed a circle and had Wahrida completely surrounded. No matter in what direction she turned, she must run against one or two of her enemies. Never was any animal so completely trapped as she, and, when she picked me up and placed me on her neck, she knew it.

“How did she escape? Listen, and then deny if you can that she is not as wise and as capable of reasoning as you or I or any man.

You shall say you never heard of anything so wonderful, and, if Wahrida and I were not here, I should not dare ask you to believe it."

Before telling the incident, Nughwa thought he would make sure of having a listener. As he suspected, Dudley Mayson was asleep, and, inasmuch as the youth showed so little interest in the story of the elephant-catcher, the latter let it go at that and never referred to it again.

## CHAPTER II

### OTHER HUNTERS

“IT IS well,” said Nughwa to himself, with a grim smile, when he knew his companion was asleep, “he doesn’t know what a good story he has lost, and when we don’t know of our loss it is just the same as if we hadn’t any.”

No one could question this bit of philosophy, which was hardly original with the native, nor can it be doubted that he was wise when he decided to join his young friend in the realm of sweet unconsciousness. Before doing so, he spent a few minutes, as was his custom in communion with his Maker. Then he stood upright in the howdah and peered around him in the gloom. The foliage was too dense for the moonlight to penetrate it, though here and there a silvery arrow shot for a little way among the upper branches. The simultaneous lighting up or darkening of a tree by the peculiar fire flies, as has been described, received no attention

from him, for the sight had long been familiar, nor among the bedlam of sounds did he detect anything to cause misgiving. He knew that if danger threatened, the sagacious quadruped would give him timely notice.

“Well, Wahrida,” said the native in his own tongue, “I will bid you good night.”

She had finished her evening meal, and had balanced herself on her beam-like legs, preparatory to slumber. When she heard the words of her master, she lifted the point of her trunk upward and backward, as if groping for something. Nughwa was expecting it, and gently caught the organ with one hand and touched his lips to it. Wahrida was happy and content. The picture was certainly a singular one. In the depth of the tropical jungle stood the largest of quadrupeds, balanced on her massive legs, and in the native saddle on her back reposed two persons,—and the whole three were asleep. It would have taken something out of the usual order of things to awaken the sturdy American youth, but a slight noise or disturbance which was not in tune with the medley of eternal sounds, would have roused the elephant and her master as quickly as a bolt of lightning. But none of these things took place, and the warm night

came to an end without any wakefulness on the part of Nughwa and Dudley until the elephant began moving about.

The animal had no difficulty in procuring her morning meal, for less food than is generally supposed suffices for her species. It was all around her in the form of berries and foliage, rendered more delicate by the dew that had settled upon them through the night. She showed no haste or greed, but ate more after the manner of an epicure, who is particular in selecting the daintiest of morsels.

Our friends could have stayed on her back and eaten the meal with which they were provided, but every person feels a longing to stretch his limbs and to move around after a night's rest. Besides, the ablutions in the pool near at hand were a necessity. So the two slipped to the ground, and allowed their sagacious friend to conduct them to the water, where they bathed their faces and hands and drank bountifully.

"This is the coldest water I have found in this part of the world," remarked Dudley, as he wiped his face with his handkerchief, and lying down on his face indulged in another refreshing draught.

"That is because a spring bubbles up right

below where we are drinking. A little way further up or down the bank the water is too warm to be pleasant."

"Wahrida couldn't have known it, when she came here."

"No, but she knows it now; she enjoys it more than we do."

The animal had waded into the pool until it touched her body, which was only a short distance from shore. There she paused and began spurting the cool element over her dark brown hide. There could be no question of the pleasure which this gave her, and the man and youth hastily ate their breakfast, seating themselves on the bank, and smilingly watched her actions.

She tramped here and there, sometimes standing with her side toward the bank, sometimes facing it, and again her position became diagonal. She was only a few paces distant all this time. By and by she swung around so that her head was turned directly away from our friends. It was wonderful to see the accuracy with which she sprayed herself. No youngster with his toy "squirt gun" could have aimed more skilfully. Our young friend could not repress his admiration.

"I never saw it beaten; I believe she can hit the head of a nail—"

Further compliment was checked on the part of the youth, by the reception of a watery volley full in his face and neck, driven with such force that he toppled over backward with his feet kicking the air.

Now nothing looked more innocent and unintentional on the part of Wahrida. Standing with her head away from the couple, and aiming at her haunches, what was more likely than that she should overshoot the mark and strike an object that was in line with the direction of the fire? So it looked I say, but nothing can be more certain than that the mischievous animal deliberately used Dudley Mayson as a target. Nughwa was so certain on the point, that he hastily scrambled to his feet with the purpose of getting out of the zone of danger as quickly as possible. You know he was an active man, but his agility was not quite sufficient in the circumstances. He received the hydrostatic missile on the back of the neck with such force that he stumbled on his hands and knees, instantly leaping up and taking himself beyond reach. The blinking, laughing youth knew enough to imitate him, and he was materially helped in his flight by a second impact, this time in the hollow of his back. He was almost but not quite carried off his feet.

Reaching a safe point, the two stopped and looked back. Wahrida had swung around so that she stood quartering, and was gazing at the couple with what seemed a wondering apologetic expression, as if she wished to express her regret over making such a blunder.

"You can't make me believe you're sorry," called Dudley; "I'm glad you gave Nughwa a good dose, for I know he taught you the trick."

"An elephant doesn't need teaching when mischief is concerned; that isn't the first time Wahrida has served me that way; I was expecting it."

"Why then didn't you get out of her reach?"

"I was hoping that she had enough respect for me to be satisfied with the attention she paid to you, but she shows no more regard for me than that other beast did a few days ago."

"And that makes me willing to forgive her; besides, Nughwa, I don't mind a ducking now and then in this climate, only I would rather not have it in the form of a shower bath from an elephant."

The native sharply commanded the brute to come ashore. She obeyed as meekly as a lamb, and stood, as if expecting punishment or a reprimand, but her master could not scold the creature whom he loved for a little thing like

that. He patted the trunk that had been the instrument of mischief and said:

“Wahrida, don't do that again until we get back from this hunt; we shouldn't care at any other time, but we have too important business on hand. We have set out to catch a white elephant, and we need all the help you can give us. When that is over you may have all the fun you want.”

Dudley wondered whether it were possible that the animal grasped the full meaning of these words. He dared not question her master, for he would have been offended. Nughwa certainly had no doubt in his mind, and it is more than likely his confidence was warranted.

The two were assisted to their seats in the howdah, and the native ordered the elephant to resume her journey, adding, as he did so, that they had wasted too much time already. Although the pool was of comparatively narrow extent, she did not cross it but moved through the tall grass on the bank until she came to a place where the stream which fed the pool was only three or four rods in width. The depth also was shallow and she moved rapidly to the farther shore. Only a brief distance was passed when she reached the point from which the three elephants had been seen the day before.

Nughwa had the telescope in hand, and without checking the steed, he pointed it toward the spot upon which his companion had already fixed his gaze.

"I don't think they are there," remarked Dudley, as Nughwa lowered the instrument after only a momentary survey.

"No, and I am glad of it; I was uneasy lest we should see them."

"And why?"

"This country is too much settled; it would be a good deal better if the white elephant were farther north. This part of the country doesn't contain many villages or settlements, but they are here and there, and I'm afraid others have seen him; if that is true, we are sure to have trouble, and may fail."

"It seems to me that we cannot escape a certain risk, for when we get beyond all the villages, we are liable to come upon other hunting parties, even in the Laos region."

"Yes; we cannot expect everything will go smoothly; your good father has taught me never to look for that during our life in this world. I hope we shall capture the white elephant, but we must be prepared for disappointment."

"I have been prepared for that from the beginning."

They had traveled about a mile farther, when the guide uttered an expression of impatience. In answer to Dudley's inquiring look, he pointed to the northward. The youth saw fully a dozen horsemen as they debouched from the wood and galloped northward at a leisurely pace.

"Why, they're following the spoor of the white elephant!" exclaimed the lad in dismay.

"That is not certain, but it may be true. It will matter little unless they have already seen him, for you know there can be nothing in the footprints to tell them the secret."

The horsemen were vigilant, for they had not gone far when they observed the elephant and its riders and reined up and awaited their approach. Nughwa spoke to Wahrida, who pushed forward in a straight line until the two parties came together. The strangers were Siamese, brown and half-clothed, all without saddles, but showing by their pose that they were excellent horsemen. Several of them talked freely with Nughwa, but of course the listening American, who saw many inquiring looks cast toward him, could form no idea of the meaning of the words.

The conversation did not last long, when the

horsemen galloped off. They made a slight change in their course, so that the paths of the two parties diverged, the larger showing no noticeable interest in the smaller.

“They are not hunting elephants,” exclaimed Nughwa, “but are after a tiger which has killed a great number of animals, and last night struck down and ran off with a woman, the wife of one of the men, as she was standing in the door of her own hut. I have heard of the beast before, and that woman is not the first human being she has slain. The tiger is more to be dreaded than the lion, for he is quicker and stronger.”

Scientific tests have proved the truth of this declaration. The royal Bengal tiger, when in his terrible prime, is one-fifth stronger than the lion, and proportionately is the most powerful and ferocious beast that lives.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NATIVE VILLAGE

“**D**ID those hunters learn why we are here?” asked Dudley.

“No; they first asked who you were, and when I had told them, they wanted to know why we had ventured so far from home. I dared not tell them a falsehood, and I said you and I were off on a hunt. I did not explain what we were hunting for: do you think I should have done so?”

The dusky native seemed in distress, and looked so appealingly at Dudley that he smiled:

“You would have been very foolish had you done anything of the kind.”

“I am glad to hear you say that, for I was troubled, but ah! suppose they had asked *what* we were hunting for!”

“All that was necessary was for you to tell the truth, and say we were following the trail of three elephants; it isn't likely they would inquire anything about the *color* of the one we're after.”

“But suppose they had asked me?”

“You should have told them there are lots of people in this world who have made their fortunes by minding their own business, and you submitted the fact to them for their consideration.”

Nughwa was not quite satisfied. After a brief silence, he added:

“Such an answer would not have told them the truth; would it not have been better had I spoken the words your father would have used?”

The youth blushed and laughed:

“Any or everything that my father does is better than what I do. But so long as it has come out all right, let’s drop the question. It seems to me that we are likely to meet those hunters again, and perhaps that man-eating tiger too. Did they give you any more particulars about him?”

“They say he has troubled them for a good while, and he deceived them by a trick which they ought to have suspected. When he had slain a person in one of their villages, he did not take refuge in the nearest jungle, but passed right through another village or around it, and hid in the forest beyond *that*. The cunning beast had reason to believe none of the people

would hunt for him beyond another village, where he could have got a victim, and he was right—that is for a time.”

“I should think these men would have asked you to help them.”

“They did, or it may be that we shall come together again, for we shall not be very far apart for several days.”

Dudley was surprised by these words. They sounded strange in view of the eagerness of the native and himself to press the hunt for the white elephant, but the youth knew his friend had good reason for the course he had evidently decided upon. The prospect of a tiger hunt caused a little quicker throbbing of the heart, for, if there is such a thing as royal sport, it is surely that of hunting the emperor of the jungle.

Dudley shrewdly suspected that Nughwa's wish was to delay the hunt until certain the prize was well out of the neighborhood. The three animals seemed to be making their way northward toward the Laos country at a leisurely pace, and for a day or two were likely to be seen by some of the villagers. Should this take place, the chances of Nughwa and his young friend would be worth little.

“The worst thing about this business,”

added the native, "is that they are following the direction of the spoor."

"How can that be when we parted company some time ago?"

"Use your eyes; look ahead."

And obeying the direction, Dudley Mayson, to his astonishment saw two of the horsemen, on the edge of a piece of woods, only a little way in advance, their position showing that they were awaiting the coming of Wahridda and her riders.

"Where are the others?"

"In the wood beyond; they have noticed that our course is the same, and they intend we shall help them kill the tiger; it won't do to refuse."

"I should be much pleased if it were not for the delay."

"I have shown you that the delay is likely to be best for us; the tiger is a fearful beast to hunt, but with so many to hunt him, and with Wahridda to help, we are likely to have good sport."

Nughwa greeted the horsemen when he reached them. As he supposed, the others were near at hand, and they came forward singly or in couples until all were gathered around the great elephant-catcher, whose fame was known

to them. Three of these men said they had found the trail of the tiger, whose hours were numbered, for they were determined he should not escape them. He was a monster that should have been slain long before.

Nughwa was curious to see the tracks of the tiger, which are difficult to follow in a jungle, not only because of the nature of the ground, but on account of numerous other footprints with which the beast's are apt to be confounded.

"I should like to see the spoor of the tiger," said Nughwa in his native tongue.

"Come with me and I will show it to you."

The speaker was a small weazened old man, who turned his horse's head to the northward and rode off at a walk. Nughwa spoke to his elephant who followed. A few paces away the leader checked his animal and pointed to the ground. Nughwa leaned over from the howdah and carefully studied the marks, so faintly outlined that he was sure no other member of the party would have detected them. Years of experience had made the veteran as skilful as an American Indian in following the trail which is veiled from ordinary eyes.

"You are right," said Nughwa admiringly; "your power is greater than any other man's; lead on, and we will keep with you."

As the guide settled back in the saddle, he spoke in a low voice to his companion:

"You saw that the spoor of the tiger mingles with that of the three elephants; why the tiger has followed them I do not understand."

Dudley was almost stunned by the fact. He had left the study of the ground to his friend and had not noticed the disturbing fact.

"That will knock all our plans sky-high."

"Unless the tiger turns off from the spoor of the elephants; I am sure he has done so; let us hope that he has not delayed too long."

Fortunately for our friends' peace of mind, this hope was realized sooner than was expected. Only a little way in advance, the old man, who was acting as the guide of the other horsemen, directed attention to the pleasing fact. The group came together for consultation. Nughwa taking part in the talk, which was of an earnest nature. The decision reached was a singular one. It was that the old man should follow the trail for some distance without any companions, while the others pressed on to a native village, directly in front. Nughwa, in telling all this to his friend, gave the explanation:

"The hunt is likely to be a long one, and noon is so near they wish to go forth fully prepared

for the hard work. While their guide is following the spoor, and learning what he can learn, the others think they may pick up some more knowledge in the village. I feel better because the two spoors have parted company."

"Suppose they join further on?"

"That is hardly possible, for there is no reason why they should do so."

The stretch of woods through which the whole party now made their way was more open than any yet seen. Dudley spoke of its remarkable freedom from vines and underbrush, which often makes traveling difficult in tropical countries. Nughwa replied that such peculiar stretches of forest occurred all through Siam, even in the mountainous regions to the north.

Almost without warning, the elephant and horsemen debouched into a native town, numbering fully a thousand people. Like the missionary village it contained but a single street, which extended its entire length. The huts, of similar size and model, were made of bamboo framework and mats and covered with grass roofs, and some of which leaves and branches were seen. The fashion in the way of dress was that which has already been described, and with which Dudley Mayson had become familiar. In one respect a noticeable difference was noted.

Many of the garments displayed brilliant colors, and the wearers, who were young people, made no attempt to conceal their pride in the same.

The arrival of the tiger hunters naturally caused a flurry, which was increased when it became known that they were hunting for the fearful man-eater, who, only a few weeks before had stricken down a lad and carried him away from the edge of the village. While the question was under discussion, the old guide of the horsemen rode up in great haste, and with considerable agitation of manner. He had followed the trail of the tiger to a spot, where he had paused to devour his hapless victim. The dreadful evidence was too clear to be doubted. The astounding feature of the proceeding was that the brute had carried his prey so far before pausing to make his feast. How great his size and how prodigious his strength!

Several of the party were eager to pursue the beast without further delay. So earnest became the dispute that Nughwa was made arbitrator. He said it would be wise to fortify themselves and animals for the hard task before them. The rest would do the horses good, and also benefit the men. So it was decided to tarry in the village until after the noonday

meal, and no one except Dudley Mayson suspected the real reason why Nughwa advised this delay.

A bit of interesting information came to light. A dweller on the outskirts of the village, while standing in the door of his hut, just as it was growing dark the day before, caught a glimpse of an enormous tiger stealing through the jungle and going southward. When the man was asked why he did not pursue the beast, whose identity he suspected, he naively replied that he was restrained by the fear that he might overtake him. As proof of the terrifying dread with which such animals are regarded, it may be added that this man, although he had the reputation of being a fine hunter, could not be induced to join the party that had set out to run the tiger to earth.

The greatest concern of Nughwa was as to whether any of these villagers knew anything about the white elephant. The indications were that they were ignorant, and the diplomatic inquiries he made confirmed him in this belief, which was as gratifying to himself as to Dudley Mayson. It looked as if the diversion created by the tiger hunt would remove all danger of the discovery of the abnormal quadruped by "unauthorized" parties. It remained

to be seen what consequences would come to our friends because of their taking part in the royal sport. Moreover, back of this element of personal danger, lay the probability that with so much start the white elephant would pass beyond the possibility of pursuit, for it was unreasonable to suppose the trail of the three could be followed much farther. Ere long it must lose its identity, or, should the trio join any of their friends, they would have nothing more to fear from man and boy.

The visit of the foreign lad, with his paler complexion, his handsome face and his different clothing, could not fail to awaken considerable interest in the native village. When he ventured to stroll hither and thither for a short distance, he was followed by a score or more. Several times some of the younger ones stepped timidly forward and touched him, instantly recoiling as if startled by their own temerity. Dudley smiled, for there was nothing offensive in their action. He tried to talk with two of the most prominent of the little party, but had little success. Neither could understand a syllable of what the other said, and though the visitor was quite eloquent in the way of gesture, the natives showed little or no comprehension of his meaning. It was evident that these simple-

minded folk looked upon him as a superior being. When he squatted on the ground with his companions to eat his dinner the young people forced enough food upon him to last him for several days.

The diet was simple and wholesome. The principal food of the natives of southern and eastern Asia is rice. The solid fare is salt fish, fruit and *ngapee*. The last named is a condiment which is very popular throughout Farther India. It is made of fish, on (and sometimes past) the verge of putridity, mixed with rice, and forming a kind of paste. Although our young friend had now been in this remote country for a considerable time, this was his first taste of the curious compound. The flavor was so peculiar that he hesitated, as one will naturally do when uncertain of the ingredients of the food set before him. He glanced across at Nughwa, who was squatting nearly opposite. His friend nodded his head, and at the same time opened his mouth to a prodigious extent and filled it with the stuff to signify that it was a favorite with him. Dudley had noticed that the natives were also fond of it, and, in the circumstances, he saw no reason for further hesitation. In truth he ate more than he needed, only to find that the *ngapee* placed on the grass

on either side of him was greater than before. When he saw the grinning faces of the delighted youngsters he shook his head.

“When a person has eaten twice as much as he needs, he is a glutton if he attempts to eat more. Such indulgence is unjustifiable and is certain to result in the impairment of his digestion and to cause him profound regret, approaching in some instances unmistakable remorse, since he alone is blamable for his lamentable bodily condition.”

Nughwa was so astonished by this outburst, that he abruptly ceased eating and looked in amazement at his young friend. The latter solemnly winked.

“I know they can't understand my words, Nughwa, but *you* can, and from the way in which you are placing yourself outside of your dinner, it would be well for you to remember my advice.”

“Why blame me,” asked his friend, “when I am only trying to keep up with you? Besides there is no knowing when we shall have time to eat again.”

“As if any one could go hungry in *this* country,” remarked Dudley with fine scorn.

“It isn't that; food is too plenty for one to suffer, but we may be kept so busy after this

hunt is started that we shall have no time to eat."

Dudley Mayson ceased eating, threw back his head and laughed so heartily that every one looked wonderingly at him. You know how infectious mirth is. Nearly all the men grinned in sympathy with the youth, and several of the native boys chuckled outright. They could not help it. Even Nughwa laughed.

"The idea of our spending a day or two in fighting a single tiger," said Dudley, when he could control himself; "O, it's too much; you'll have to try again, Nughwa."

The native responded with a remark so peculiarly American that Dudley looked at him in astonishment:

"By and by you'll laugh on the other side of your mouth."

"I'll warrant you learned that from Fannie; it sounds just like her."

The dinner did not take much time. I need not remind you that these people knew not the use of knives and forks, and Dudley had been quick to adapt himself to the fashion. I have intimated elsewhere that the betel-nut is a favorite with all classes in Burmah and Siam, and is so generally chewed that it is rare indeed to see an adult whose teeth are not discolored by

it. The Siamese are inveterate smokers, and they begin the habit so early in life that many a child indulges in the weed before he has ceased nursing at his mother's breast. This sounds incredible, but it is a fact.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PARTY HUNTS THE TIGER

**T**HE religion of Farther India is Buddhism, one of the most extensively diffused faiths in the world. They burn their dead as do the Hindoos, and as some people in this country prefer. The bodies of the priests are first embalmed and then publicly cremated with great ceremony and demonstration.

While strolling through the village, Dudley Mayson saw a small temple containing an image of Buddha, while a number of priests loitered lazily about, with their closely-shaven heads exposed to the full glare of the sun. They seemed to feel no earthly interest in the affairs of the world around them, and though the American youth stood for several minutes attentively studying them, he could not perceive that they gave him a glance. The Siamese are among the laziest people in the world.

The halt at this native village did not occupy more than an hour altogether, so that the flam-

ing sun was hardly past meridian, when Wahrida, in her deft style, assisted Nughwa and Dudley to her back, and they seated themselves in the howdah, and amid the grins and wondering stare of nearly the whole population, the tiger hunters turned their faces away from their hosts and took up the hunt of the frightful man-eater in earnest.

“It seems to me,” said Nughwa, when they were well clear of the settlement, “that you treat this business too lightly.”

Dudley looked inquiringly at his friend, who certainly was in earnest.

“I have not meant to do so, Nughwa.”

“You do not know that when a tiger has once tasted of human flesh he prefers it to all others. He will turn aside from that which has been always the most tempting for the sake of an old wrinkled man or woman. I don’t doubt that this beast has lived almost wholly upon men, women and children for the past year or more.”

“It seems impossible, and yet what you tell me shows how important it is that he should be slain at the earliest hour possible.”

“Depend upon it we shall have no child’s play. The beast is of great size and ferocity. He will make a great fight.”

"I have read that there are many ways of hunting him."

"There are, though the plan of this party is to get him into such a position that he can be killed by shooting, and that is the most dangerous for the hunters. The herdsmen who find that a tiger has slain one of their oxen, build a light, strong scaffold, about twenty feet high, near where the partly-devoured carcass lies, the chances being that when the tiger becomes hungry again, he will come back for another meal. One of the best shots climbs to the top of the scaffold, and his friends bid him farewell before going off to leave him alone. It is probably in the dusk of the evening that the beast comes sneaking back, stretches out on his belly beside the carcass and begins to craunch it in leisurely fashion. The man on the platform has the best chance in the world for a shot, and he aims at the heart of the creature. He rarely misses tumbling him over dead."

"But sometimes he misses?"

"Yes; he may be a little nervous and he may tremble slightly when he pulls the trigger, and he only wounds the game. He glares upward in the direction of the report, and trotting nimbly for a few paces, gathers his muscles for one tremendous leap at the platform. He

catches it below and begins scrambling to the top of the platform."

"Does it stand the strain?"

"Nearly always, for those who built it know the danger of the thing I have spoken about. If it gives way, the hunter comes crashing down with him, and he never escapes. But, if it holds and the tiger is able to cling to the slippery bamboo, the man swings his sharp tulwar, and chops off the paw below him. This so disables the beast that he cannot get to the top of the platform, and the hunter has time to load his gun again and finish his enemy with no harm to himself."

"What are some of the other methods?"

"The safest one is to put enough poison in the carcass to do the work. Another is to use a trap-bow, which drives a poisoned arrow into the brute."

"Such unsportsmanlike practices are not known in my country."

"Because the tiger is not known there. If you had him, you would not stop at any method of killing the slayer of men, women and children."

The old man, who had shown so much skill in following the fearful animal, naturally became the guide of the party. He rode slightly in ad-

vance of the others, bearing to the left, all following without question. Nughwa kept Wahridda at the rear, ready to drive her to the front the moment it became necessary. From their elevation, the riders could observe the movement of every horse and rider, among whom as yet there was no sign of fear or hesitation.

A brief ride in the direction named, and the veteran leader, without checking his steed, turned his head, and, with a grin, which displayed his colored teeth, pointed to the ground in front.

"That means he has struck the tiger's spoor," said Nughwa.

"And what of the spoor of the elephants?"

"That is far over to the right; we need not be anxious about that. My friend," added the native gravely, "we must give no further thought to the white elephant until the man-eater has been killed."

The party were now crossing an open grassy plain, where all were exposed to the fervid rays of the sun. The heat would have been intolerable to Dudley Mayson, but for the breeze created by Wahridda, who found no difficulty in keeping pace with the moderate gallop of the horses. From his perch, the youth peered in-

tently at the grass in front of the leader, but could detect nothing of the trail which he was following with unerring accuracy. Of course the shadowy footprints were obliterated by the hoofs of the horses, and it was useless to look for them after the passage of the animals.

"Can you make out the tracks?" asked Dudley, when he saw his companion scanning the ground in advance.

"No, but he does, and that is enough."

"Do you think the tiger is far off?"

"I believe we are close upon him. He likes the thick patches of Korinda shrub, where the leaves give him pleasant shade and the best means of hiding himself. Hello! the old man has found something."

The guide had come to a sudden halt, and was leaning forward, with his eyes fixed on the earth. The others closed around him, and the action of Wahrida was amusing. Like a big boy, who means to learn what interests his play-mates, she pushed her way among the horses, who did not display any resentment at her intrusion. The men were talking excitedly, and Nughwa explained the cause to his companion:

"The tiger halted at that spot, and finished what was left of the woman."

"I cannot see any signs of the remains."

“There is hardly any to be seen, for the blood dried up long ago, but there are millions of ants at work, turning up the earth, where a part of the body of the poor woman rested. There will be no trouble from this time on in following the spoor.”

So it proved, and while the hunters paid their attention mainly to the signs immediately in front, Nughwa gave attention to the country beyond. It was noticeable, too, that the leader of the party frequently glanced in that direction. These two veterans were trying to figure out where the tiger was likely to pause for what might be called his permanent rest. His lair most likely was somewhere in the neighborhood.

“After eating a big meal,” said Nughwa, “the tiger takes a nap lasting two or three days.”

“He surely awakes now and then.”

“He wakes a good many times, but only long enough to get a big drink of water. When his sleep is finished, then look out! His hunger for a man diet is more dreadful than ever. I am quite sure,” added Nughwa, peering ahead, “that this tiger is not far away.”

The party at this time were in the midst of an open plain, covering an area of perhaps ten

or twelve acres. It was covered with the same rank grass, though to Dudley it seemed to be of shorter growth than that through which they had been making their way earlier in the afternoon. When he mentioned this impression to Nughwa the latter said he was not mistaken.

Something like two hundred yards ahead was a patch of timber, of not very great extent, but expanding into a broad jungle on the left. A stream of water, no larger than an ordinary brook, was in sight not far off in the opposite direction. When Nughwa had directed Dudley's attention to these points he added:

"You see everything that the tiger could wish is here—water and a dense jungle, all a good way from the village. I am as certain as I can be of anything that we are close upon the man-eater."

The same thought must have been in the mind of the horseman, for before going much farther, the whole company again halted for an exchange of views. Addressing the elderly guide, Nughwa told him his belief. The alert veteran nodded his head, with his odd grin.

"You are right; we are near the tiger."

The horses gave a singular confirmation of this declaration. They were restless, as they would naturally be in the presence of danger.

Whether it was their keen scent or vision, or that mysterious sixth sense of which we know so little, but whose existence is abundantly proved, that warned them, we cannot say, but there could be no mistake as to the uneasiness of the horses. Even Wahrida acted as if she believed the declaration of her master.

The halt of the party was for the purpose of holding a council of war. All agreed with their leader and Nughwa that they were likely to see the tiger within the next half hour. It was important therefore to decide upon their course of action.

"There is but one thing to do," said the guide, after listening to the chatter of his companions; "wait until we get the beast in fair range, and then give him a volley. Some of the shots will go wild, for it is plain to me," added the old fellow with a grin, "that several of you are scared almost to death, but there ought to be enough bullets sent into the body of the tiger to make it hard for him to do any damage. What do *you* think of my plan?"

The guide looked up at Nughwa perched on the back of his elephant. Our friend smiled and replied:

"I think the same as you, except that I do not

see the proof of the fear of which you accuse them."

"You don't know them as well as I," said the guide with a broader grin than before. "I have heard of your bravery and skill, Nughwa, and when you agree with what I say, then I know my plan is right. When we come upon the beast, he is likely to charge us. You must remember," added the guide addressing the horsemen, "that one shot if rightly aimed will kill the biggest animal that ever lived. Let each of you try to fire that shot. I shall do my best, and if we *all* try, some one must succeed."

Nughwa smiled and said to Dudley:

"There isn't one chance in a hundred; in the flurry, and running to and fro, he and I are as likely to miss as you or any of them."

There was some thought that the game had turned to the left, where the jungle expanded, in which event it would be highly dangerous to follow and attack him, but the trail kept in an almost mathematical line to the neck-like piece of forest into which it disappeared. On the margin of the wood, the whole party paused again for consultation. Instead of remaining on the back of his elephant, Nughwa dropped lightly to the ground, calling back to Dudley:

"Stay where you are, but have your gun ready."

"What do you intend to do?" asked the wondering youth.

"I'm going to rout him out."

Nughwa then explained his plan to the other natives. It was a daring thing, and they looked admiringly at their sinewy countryman. Not even the veteran leader had nerve enough to press into the jungle, but he, like his companions, was quite content to have the task performed by another.

On the suggestion of Nughwa, several of the horsemen shifted their positions. He warned them that when the tiger showed himself, it would probably be with a rush, and, above all things, they must keep cool and aim with care.

The minutes following the disappearance of Nughwa seemed interminable to Dudley Mayson, for it looked to him as if his brave friend was throwing away his life. The youth listened for the sharp crack of the rifle, the growl, the cry of pain and the brief struggle, but they came not.

The young American's suspense became unbearable.

"I will not sit here while he goes to his death," he muttered, compressing his lips,

“even though such was his order. These men are too cowardly to give help, and will not care if Nughwa is added to the tiger’s victims.”

In the act of climbing down upon the neck of Wahrida to drop to the ground, Dudley Mayson checked himself, for he like the horsemen had caught a significant sound from the jungle in front.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TIGER HUNTS THE PARTY

THE sound which reached the listening ears of the party was a soft rustling of the undergrowth, such as would be made by the stealthy approach of an animal. The hammer of every gun was raised, and the horsemen allowed their frightened animals to move back several paces.

At the moment when every one seemed to be holding his breath, not the tiger, but Nughwa, the guide, walked forth.

He could not have had a closer call, for more than one weapon was leveled at the spot where he came into view, and the finger of more than one hand was pressing the trigger. The fellow seemed totally unconscious of the sensation he had caused. His dusky face was lit up with a smile, and he raised his hand and shook his head as a signal for them to remain quiet.

A few noiseless steps farther and he said (afterward interpreting his words to Dudley):

“I saw the tiger’s lair. It is behind me—not more than a hundred feet away, but the tiger is not at home. He cannot be far off, and is sure to return soon. He is a terrible creature; the bones that are scattered about show that he has carried many persons there and devoured them; besides that, he has eaten others in the jungle.”

An instant later a cry was heard from the two horsemen who had ridden to the brook, and they fired their guns and retreated in frantic haste. All eyes were turned in that direction.

“There he goes! there he goes!” called Dudley, rising to his feet in great excitement, and pointing toward the trees, among which he observed the sleek and partly screened body of an enormous tiger, gliding stealthily in the direction of his lair.

Every one saw him at the same moment, but so much foliage and vegetation intervened that no one could secure a good enough aim to risk firing. The motion of the tiger was sinuous, silent and impressive in its gracefulness.

The cunning beast must have felt distrustful because of the number of his enemies, with whom he did not care to have a fight. He took long, silent steps, his body moving close to the ground, his large head raised just high enough,

as it was turned slightly to one side, to note every action of the hunters. He glided swiftly forward, his silken, striped hide showing here and there among the leaves. He would disappear for a moment, and then be almost fully revealed. It was proof of the tiger's sagacity that when these comparatively open spaces were reached he flitted like a flash across them, as if in fear of tempting a shot. If the spot was too open, he turned a little aside, so as to have the advantage of the vegetable screen, and finally vanished from sight as he turned more directly toward his lair, a little distance back in the jungle.

As he was disappearing, half the natives let fly at him. They would have done better when his side, even though partly hidden, was turned toward them; but, as it was, the beast was hit. He emitted a snarling growl, and was seen to leap several feet in air, as the feline species does, when struck. But he certainly was not badly hurt, and, when he whisked from sight, his trot had changed to a gallop.

Dudley had raised his gun several times, but the chance was not quite what he wished. He was now greatly excited at the fear that the creature was about to escape.

"He'll get away! he isn't hurt much! We must kill him!"

The same fear appeared to seize every one. One of the natives in his eagerness, leaped from his horse, and forgetting all prudence, dashed at full speed after the brute. He had hardly disappeared from sight, when an agonized cry was heard. Before he could halt and bring his gun to bear, the tiger whirled about, and, with one stroke of his paw smashed the skull of the presumptuous hunter, as if it were an eggshell.

Nughwa looked up in the face of Dudley and shook his head. He did not speak, for the gesture and expression of his countenance made words unnecessary. The youth knew the man-eater had added another to his long list of victims.

Those who understood the nature of the beast, knew that the incident would inflame his natural ferocity. While he might retreat before a large party of hunters, he had slain too many men singly to have any fear of an individual. What stronger proof could he give of this than his wheeling about in the presence of a large company, and striking down the audacious native, who was rash enough to imagine he could do him harm?

Nughwa, it will be remembered, was the only

man on foot. You know too much of him to doubt his personal bravery, but he possessed the no less desirable quality of prudence. When he saw the hunter plunge into the jungle he called to him to stop, but the fellow was too excited to pay heed. Our friend had not yet fired his gun, for he meant if possible not to throw away a shot. Marksman as he was, he knew that a twig would sometimes spoil the perfectly aimed bullet.

Nughwa shared the belief of his companions that the rage of the tiger would be so roused by what had just occurred, that he would charge from the jungle and attack the whole party. He had seen that very thing done only the year previous, when the missionary was with him. It was the intention of the native, in such event, to secure a quick, but unerring aim, which he believed would bring a summary end to the career of the jungle terror. He formed a striking picture, as he stood like a bronze statue, his left foot slightly advanced, the weight of the body balanced on the other limb, his rifle firmly grasped with both hands, and his black eyes fixed upon the spot where the beast must first show himself, if he charged.

But the tiger disappointed every one. Minute after minute passed, and not only did he fail to

appear, but the strained ear could not catch the faintest sound that indicated his stealthy approach. No doubt remained that after striking down the native, he had made haste to his lair.

“He is a coward,” said one of the impatient natives; “he kills only women and children; he is afraid of a man with a gun.”

To this the reply might be made that the tiger had proved the contrary fact, when he slew the hunter who had a weapon in his hand at the time.

No one answered, however, for the situation was too tense to admit anything in the nature of discussion. The others who spoke did so in whispers or in low tones, as if afraid the animal would overhear and be angered by their words.

For where they and Nughwa were stationed, they could see the feet and part of the body of the native stretched out in the undergrowth. In falling, he had done so with his face to the tiger, as a man will sometimes fall toward the blow which brings him to the earth. The beast might return to seize and carry the body to his lair, even when his instinct told him he was certain to draw the fire of the hunters.

Nughwa had stood a little while in the atti-

tude described, being several paces nearer the jungle than the horsemen, when he became convinced that the tiger, if he chose to do so, could steal near enough to seize the shoulders of the body and drag it back into the jungle, with little risk to himself. The fear that this would occur led Nughwa to do an heroic thing.

With a whispered prayer for aid, he began taking slow, short steps forward, his eyes upon the inanimate figure, and the undergrowth beyond, and his weapon ready for instant use.

"What are you doing, Nughwa?" called the terrified youth in the howdah, not fully reading the purpose of his friend, who took his hand from the stock of his gun long enough to make a warning gesture of silence. In doing so, he did not remove his gaze from the body a few paces in advance.

Step by step, Nughwa inched forward, his movements being as noiseless as those of an Apache Indian. When he paused nigh enough to touch the feet of the other by stooping, his sensitive ear had not caught the slightest sound.

The guide remained for a full minute in this attitude. Then he bent his knees and carefully deposited his rifle along the length of the body. His purpose was to gain the full use of his arms, and to drag away the weapon and re-

mains together. While in the act of seizing the ankles of the native, he caught a sound like the rustling of a leaf stirred by a breath of air. With lightning quickness he snatched up his gun, raised the hammer, and held the muzzle pointed into the jungle.

Nughwa, who was resting on one knee, knew, when he heard the disturbance a second time, that the tiger was drawing near. Evidently he was returning for the body. The native had time to dart backward and save himself, but he made no attempt to do so. Instead, he raised his rifle and put the stock against his shoulder. He was now ready to fire on the fraction of a second's warning.

His expectation was that the brute would make one of his tremendous leaps from the brush, not at the dead man but at the live one. If he did so, he must burst into full view, and give the opening for a fatal shot. The guide must have had a good deal of self-confidence to believe he could reach the heart of the creature, but he had done it, in somewhat similar circumstances, and he did not shrink from the ordeal, even though he knew that such a shot would not be sufficient to save himself, for the beast could not be hit until he had begun his leap, and was actually in mid air. The agile fellow's

purpose was to spring aside the instant he pressed the trigger, and to depend upon his activity to keep beyond reach of the destroying claws of his foe.

The tiger was there beyond a doubt. Not only was he heard as he stealthily drew near, but Nughwa caught a purring mutter which revealed his identity. Moreover, the beast could not fail to know of the presence of the hunter.

Why he did not assail Nughwa, as he had assailed the man before him, was inexplicable. The guide did not attempt to explain the action, or rather inaction of the beast, nor was he ever able to offer any theory, other than the fact that the most sagacious of wild animals, like the wisest of men, are sometimes actuated by whims or freakish impulses.

The acute situation must have lasted for six or eight minutes, and then Nughwa heard the soft, rustling sounds again, but the tiger did not come forward into view, nor did he burst into sight, with his single, terrific bound, for which our friend was waiting. The amazing conclusion could not be escaped: the man-eater was retreating!

Hardly able to credit the fact, Nughwa now waited longer than before. Once or twice he wondered whether his foe was not stealing for-

ward on his right or left, so as to flank and attack him from the rear. But such a suspicion implied an incredible cowardice on the part of the tiger. Moreover, the native was sure of hearing any such movement, despite the skill of the feline species in stealing through the jungle.

Nughwa proved his faith in this theory by once more laying his gun upon the body, seizing the ankles, and moving backward. Had he been mistaken, his life would not have been worth a moment's purchase; for, with all his inimitable quickness, he could not have brought his gun into play in time to save himself. Needless to say, that as he moved slowly back in a stooping posture, he kept his gaze upon the point where, if his foe attacked, he must first show himself.

The silent, waiting and almost breathless horsemen, including Dudley Mayson, saw the stooping back of Nughwa coming toward them, dragging the mangled body, with the rifle extended along it. Just beyond the edge of the jungle, he let go the ankles and the feet dropped limply to the ground. Picking up his gun, he faced about and came smilingly back among his friends, to whom in a few words he told what had occurred.

There was little, however, to tell, for the re-

appearance of Nughwa, with his sad charge, told its own story.

"It must have been because he was nearly killed," said one of the horsemen; "he would not have acted that way unless he was disabled."

"But he was able to slay Argark," suggested another.

"That was because he had not yet felt the full effect of the bullets we fired into him. I am sure we have little to fear."

To prove he believed his own words, the speaker urged his horse nearer the wood. The animal was restless, and had to be sharply urged. He evidently knew more than his master of the real situation, and finally refused to go farther. While the rider was still urging him, Nughwa shouted:

"Look out! here he comes!"

Such was the fact. The tiger, having been hunted by the party, now set out to hunt the party in turn, and he did it with a vengeance

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TUG OF WAR

**T**HE tiger had declined to attack Nughwa, when his instinct must have told him that his chance was of the most favorable nature. Now, when that chance was seemingly one-tenth as good, he assailed the whole party. It was a daring act, but it was characteristic of the animal.

For an instant all saw the phosphorescent gleam of his eyeballs amid the green, large-leaved shrubbery, and then the huge round head, with the ears pressed flat, the red jaws parted, and the long sharp teeth showing, shot forward, as if driven by a catapult, or describing a parabola of twenty feet, and landed directly among the horsemen.

At the instant he touched the earth, he made a lightning-like sweep of one of his paws, and clove the head of a horse, as if with a broad-axe, the rider barely escaping by throwing himself backward from his seat. The hunters were

so involved that all were afraid to fire, lest they should shoot their friends. Nughwa saw that more lives would be lost, unless the tiger were quickly killed, and he stepped forward with the intention of gaining a shot.

Slight though the action was, it drew the attention of the brute to him. Before the native could bring his gun to bear, the animal charged, with the inimitable celerity of his species. Scarcely less active, Nughwa made a backward leap that saved him for the moment, but unfortunately his heel caught in a wire-like vine running along the ground, and he went over on his back. Dudley Mayson groaned in agony, as he leaned over the howdah, too spellbound to think of using his gun, which was grasped with both hands.

Several of the horsemen, however, discharged their weapons, but, in the confusion they failed to disable the creature, but rather added to his fury by the sting of the hurts which they inflicted. With all his dexterity, Nughwa would not have been able to dodge the tiger a second time, and assuredly that would have been the end of him, but for the sagacity of Wahridda.

Hardly had the body of her master touched the earth, when she shot her trunk forward, seized him around the waist, as he was in the act

of rising, and with the tiger almost upon him, she swept him upward through the air and dropped him on her back just in front of the howdah. It was done with such quickness that had not the native flung out his hand and gripped the edge of the saddle, he would have been precipitated to the ground again. But, as it was, he dropped his gun.

“Look out!” shouted one of the horsemen near Dudley; “the tiger is after you!”

The youth was stupefied for the moment by the hurricane rush of events, as indeed were most of the Siamese. Not so, however, with Nughwa. Recovering his balance, he instantly faced the tiger who was beginning to show the effect of the many wounds he had received. But, though the guns were continually popping, the excitement and bewilderment were such that it seemed impossible to bring him down. His appalling power and quickness of movement were shown, when he struck down the horse of the elderly native who had acted as the guide of the hunters. The escape of the fellow himself was narrower, if possible, than his comrade's a few minutes before. He had fired his gun, with no more effect than the others, and there was no time to reload. Had the situation been less tragic the performance of the old man

would have been laughable. As he dropped from his smitten horse, he rolled over and over several times, like a log when it reaches the base of a high hill, came to his feet as if made of rubber, leaped under Wahrida, and crawled with undiminished speed to the other side, where, for the first time he stood upright, and looked around as if trying to find out what it all meant.

It is a peculiarity of the tiger that if he misses his victim at the first leap, he generally walks sullenly away, as if disgusted with himself, and does not repeat the attempt for some minutes afterward. Thus the dextrous interference of Wahrida did more for her master than would be supposed, for it withdrew the attention of the brute for the moment from him. Had Wahrida noticed the dropping of his weapon she would have picked it up and restored it to her master. But the precious seconds could not be spared now, since the weapon lay several paces away, so covered by the matted grass that the elephant would have to make a brief search for it.

"Is your gun loaded?" asked Nughwa, turning abruptly to his young friend.

"Why, yes; I have been waiting for a good shot. Where is yours?"

“Out there, in the grass; we have no time to hunt for it now. Be ready, for I think the tiger will attack us next.”

Prudence ought to have led Dudley to pass his weapon to Nughwa, but the eager wish to gain a shot at the tiger restrained the offer. The native would have been justified in demanding the gun, but he was checked by that chivalry which was one of his most admirable qualities.

You must remember that the events I am describing began and ended in barely a fourth of the time I have taken in the telling. Dudley saw the raging brute bounding hither and thither, the horses snorting, rearing and plunging in their terror, while the riders were continually blazing away with their guns. It must be confessed, too, that some of the bullets missed the riders themselves more narrowly than they did the raging brute.

And yet not all went wild, for that glossy hide showed crimson streaks here and there, and more than one missile had bored its way into the lithe, sinuous, beautiful body.

Dudley was gazing, held by a strange fascination, upon the thrilling scene, when, without any preliminary sign, the tiger suddenly became motionless. Pausing in the centre of the

circle, he stood erect, lashing his sides with his tail, his mouth open, while he flitted his head from side to side, as if to decide at what point to make his final attack. At such crises, a person has a strange disposition to notice trifling things. The youth saw the red drops, in three places, falling upon the grass, and noticed that one series near the left shoulder fell faster than the others. In fact, the third, near the thigh, was decreasing, as if the blood in the wound had begun to coagulate. The same proof that the beast had been hard hit showed in the parted jaws. The lad observed the slight muscular contraction of the breast, where the fur was of lighter color, as the tiger emitted his cavernous snarls, and there was a peculiar, restless, cat-like twitching of the forepaws, such as the species sometimes show when gathering their muscles for a leap.

“He’s coming after us!” repeated Nughwa, who never once removed his eyes from the terrible brute; “hold your gun ready, keep cool and fire just below the throat.”

Nughwa was right. The tiger seemed to recognize in him his most dangerous enemy, and, a brief interval having elapsed since his first attempt, he now trotted several paces toward the elephant, until he reached the right

spot, when with the grace or slight effort that a cat makes in springing from the floor to a chair, he bounded from the ground, alighted directly on the shoulder of Wahrida, and began climbing after the two on her back.

At this instant several natives, who had succeeded in reloading their guns, fired at the beast. One of the bullets almost grazed the forehead of Dudley Mason, while the others went wild.

"Don't fire!" shouted Nughwa, who had heard the whistling of the missile; "you will hit us."

The sight was terrifying to the young American, who saw the huge body poised for an instant in mid air, as he came arching over, like a diver, who leaps from a cliff beyond the head of the spectators, and then, striking the flabby side of the elephant, he stuck like a burr.

But only long enough to steady himself. The youth saw the massive head, the ears flat, as if pasted down, the black lips drawn back in a horrible grin, with the carnivorous teeth like white daggers of needle-like sharpness; and others so short as to be hardly visible. The hairs or "smellers", sticking outward from the nose, seemed to bristle with fury.

The muzzle was curiously mottled, showing

jots of inky blackness, alternating with pink, while a crimson rivulet trickled down the front and over one eye, as if the brute were shedding carmine tears.

Dudley was dazed for the moment, and then he saw that his foe was climbing the shoulder of the elephant, as he would have pulled himself up the bark of a tree. The claws were amazingly long and were shot their fullest length from their sheaths. Sharp as needles, they sank into the dusky hide of the huge quadruped, and must have caused her intense pain, but the noble animal made no outcry, nor gave the slightest evidence of suffering. She seemed to feel it was her duty to bear it all unflinchingly, through fear of interfering with the plans of the hunters, but, unnoticed by anyone, the sagacious creature evolved a plan of her own. She began moving slowly toward the jungle.

Even in this critical moment, the native courtesy of Nughwa prevented him from doing his manifest duty. Instead of snatching the gun from the hand of his young friend, he stepped into the howdah beside him and called out:

“Now’s your time! Don’t wait, but make sure!”

The advice was good, and Dudley did his best to obey it, but it would have tried the nerves of

a veteran to make a good shot, even with so brief a space between him and his target. The consciousness that the slightest deviation in his aim was almost certain to prove fatal to himself and friend, affected the nerves of the youth. The watchful Nughwa saw the slight tremor of the gun barrel, and gathered himself for the failure he knew was coming.

It was impossible that the youth should miss the brute, who it may be said, was within arm's length. He hit the tiger, but did not stay his advance. Only one thing remained to be done.

"Quick!" shouted Nughwa, "jump to the ground!"

As he spoke, the native dropped upon his feet in the grass. Dudley was scrambling after him, when his friend called again:

"Wait where you are!"

But the warning was too late. The boy leaped and landed directly beside the guide, who grasped his arm to keep him from falling.

"Look at Wahrida! She knows more than all of us together."

The wise animal had reached the edge of the jungle, heading for a tree that was fully two feet in diameter. The tiger at that moment was drawing himself up her wounded shoulder, by burying his sharp claws in the sensitive flesh.

Suddenly Wahrida lurched forward, as if yielding to weakness; but it was not so, the action being a part of the ingenious scheme she had formulated a few minutes before. The plunge placed the tiger between her shoulder and the solid trunk of the tree, and the impact was terrific, for it was impelled by the momentum of several tons of flesh and bone. The brute was caught between the upper and nether millstone.

A single cry burst from the victim, thus inextricably trapped, but he received no mercy from his conqueror. She had driven her body with all the power she possessed, against the tree, using the tiger as a buffer, and, instead of swinging back again, she held her position, pressing forward with might and main, her ponderous legs at a considerable angle, as if determined to push the trunk over.

"She needn't do that," said the admiring Nughwa, "for the tiger is done for."

Wahrida waited until all doubt was gone, when she eased herself back to the upright position. The mashed carcass dropped like a bag of flour to the ground. The man-eater was as "dead as Julius Cæsar."

Wahrida surveyed the wreck and ruin for a minute, ready on the first appearance of life to

crush it to the earth. Convinced that it was all over, she leaned the unwounded shoulder against the tree that had served her so well. The action this time was for support, and with a view of relieving her suffering, for the claws of a tiger are cruel.

The eyes of Nughwa filled with tears, as he ran forward and began patting the side of the animal.

“My noble Wahridda!” he exclaimed; “you are ready at any time to give your life for your master, and he is ready to give his for you. Let me look.”

She straightened up again, and with continuous expressions of pity, he examined the wounds, so far as he could while standing on the ground. That none of them was dangerous did not matter, for they hurt dreadfully. The animal appeared to feel a certain shame because of the weakness she had shown. She displayed her gratitude for the sympathy of her master, by extending her trunk over his shoulders and fondling him in turn.

“You will soon be right again,” he added, taking the trunk in his hands, and caressing it; “keep up your courage, Wahridda, and in a few days you will forget all about this. Dud-

ley, will you hunt for my gun, while I look after my sweetheart?"

"Here it is right at my feet," replied the lad picking up the weapon.

"Keep it till I am through with her."

"What are you going to do?"

"Come with me and see."

## CHAPTER VII

### HUNTING THE ELEPHANT SPOOR

WITHOUT paying the least heed to the horsemen, Nughwa moved off toward the brook that was near at hand, followed by Wahrida and Dudley Mayson. Entering the stream, the animal, at the command of her master, knelt down, so as to bring her shoulder within reach. Then the native washed the hurts with as much tenderness as if they had belonged to a child, which could not have submitted more meekly.

“Do you not know of any herbs that would help to heal them?” asked the young American.

“We have plenty such in Siam, that your people and I know how to use, but we can’t very well apply them to Wahrida. Then, too, I do not like to offend her.”

“How can you offend her?” was the wondering inquiry.

“She doesn’t like to have a fuss made over

her; haven't you noticed that she came out of the water without waiting for me to tell her to do so?"

Such was the fact. The elephant showed impatience while her master was washing her hurts, and her withdrawal from the stream clearly implied that, so far as she was concerned, the "incident was closed."

It was now necessary for Nughwa and Dudley to return to their new acquaintances, who expected them. The guide told Wahrida to remain where she was, while they exchanged a few words with the natives.

"They will ask us to go home with them," said Nughwa, in low tones, as they walked slowly back; "what excuse shall I make?"

"Say we have started out on a hunt."

"But haven't we had it?"

"No, not the one we had in mind when we left home."

"We can't have a more interesting one."

"I think we can; you and I are more interested in the white elephant, than in all the tigers in Siam."

"But, if they ask me, what shall I say?"

"Ask you *what?*"

"What animals we intend to hunt."

"Say as you did before,—that we are hunt-

ing elephants. No fear of them asking you their color. If they do, tell them it is none of their business."

"O my friend," said the shocked Nughwa, "that will never do."

Dudley laughed at the simplicity of his companion.

"Of course you cannot tell an untruth, and there is no call to do so. But you have the right to refuse to give them information, which is no concern of theirs. If you find yourself puzzled, translate their words to me; I think I can give you some help."

By this time they were so close to the party that the friends ceased their conversation. Although they had been absent but a short time, the natives had recovered to a great extent from their excitement. One of their number had been slain, to say nothing of the two horses stricken down. Of course the body of their comrade would be taken home upon the back of another of the animals. The old guide of the party and one of his friends showed their resentment toward the tiger, by each firing another bullet into the carcass.

"Ah, you coward," said the elder, spurning him with his foot, "you have killed a good many women and children, but you will kill no more.

The babe of the mother can now sleep in peace on her bosom. It is a different thing for you to fight *men*."

"Don't forget Wahrida," said her master, who overheard the words, and was unwilling that injustice should be done his brave friend.

"Yes, she was fortunate enough to take part, but she was just in time, for I had my gun loaded again and was about to shoot the beast through his heart."

"Why didn't you do so in the first place?"

"I wished to give the others a chance," was the unabashed reply.

"I don't think *they* wished it," Nughwa could not help saying; "I know *I* didn't."

Ignoring the reproof, the elder native said:

"You have had enough hunting; you will go back with us?"

"No; I have set out to give my friend an elephant hunt, and he will not be satisfied till I do so."

The native looked off to where Dudley was standing beside the elephant, as if he doubted the explanation. Nughwa was so afraid he would cut closer with his questions that he called out a general good-bye to the party which was making ready to go home, and loped the short distance to Wahrida.

"Let us mount and hurry away," he said in an agitated undertone.

"I do not see the need of haste," remarked the amused youth, suspecting the cause of the guide's uneasiness.

"He began to ask questions; there's no saying what was in his mind."

Wahrida, who seemed to have forgotten her hurts, lifted them to her back and stood motionless awaiting orders.

"We are ready," said her master; "find the spoor of the white elephant as soon as you can, for we have lost much time."

She raised the point of her trunk high in air, as if by that means she hoped to discover the scent, though even Nughwa could not explain how that was to be done.

The animal's conduct was certainly singular. Slowly circling her trunk about she gradually wheeled until she faced a little to the west of north. Then she trumpeted, and started at a walk which quickly became rapid enough to take them beyond sight of the horsemen, several of whom were watching the movements of our friends.

"She has found it," said Nughwa with a glowing face.

"I will not dispute you, but I cannot understand how that is possible."

"Nor can I, but it is true. You will see more of her skill before this hunt is ended; she is a wonderful creature."

"No one can question that, but some things are impossible even to Wahrida, and this looks like one of them."

"Now, if you were to make a guess as to where the spoor of the white elephant is to be found, what would you say?"

Dudley scanned the surrounding plain and jungle before replying:

"I should certainly say we are following the right course."

"So should I; maybe Wahrida *guessed* it."

All the same, as the youth knew, the guide attributed the action of the animal to absolute knowledge.

Wahrida had gone no more than a hundred yards, when Nughwa excitedly exclaimed:

"Why didn't we think of it? Why were we such fools? You had no more sense than I, and both have been blind and deaf."

Dudley Mayson looked at his companion in astonishment.

"When the tiger came out of the jungle, one

of the horsemen told you to look out, for he was after you."

"He did; I remember his warning clearly."

"How was it you understood his words?"

"Why—my gracious! *he spoke in English!*"

"And neither of us noticed it; it was I that was the fool for I had told you before that none of them could speak your language, and you and I said a good many things about the white elephant when we were with them: it is bad, bad, bad."

"It isn't likely that more than one or two of them can understand our words."

"One is too many, for he could tell the others."

Dudley was not not only startled by this discovery, but was distressed over the bitter self-reproach of his friend who had certainly committed a woeful oversight.

"I remember," said the youth, "glancing at the man who uttered the warning the instant he spoke. It was only a glance, but it was enough to stamp his features on my memory. I am sure we said nothing within his hearing that could tell him our secret."

"You say you are *sure?*" asked Nughwa longingly.

"I would not deceive you, my good friend;

I have no doubt on that point. I am certain of another thing. The man who spoke the words in English was never near enough, when you and I were talking together, to overhear what we said. When we halted in the village for dinner, I saw enough of the hunters to remember all their faces; I recall him as never being within ear shot, when we said anything about the white elephant, which was only once or twice, despite what you think."

"You have lifted a great load from my heart, but it is not all gone, for, if one of them can speak English so well, there must be others. I cannot understand where that one picked up his knowledge, for his words were as clear as yours; but I ought to have taken no chances, for there was no need of it."

Dudley was glad to see the comfort the guide took from his assurance. The two spent some minutes in comparing notes, with the result of more satisfaction. The references to the prize they were seeking had been very few, and naturally they spoke in guarded tones. They were warranted in believing their secret was unsuspected by others, though just enough doubt remained on the point to cause misgiving.

Meanwhile, Wahrida was doing her duty, as if she had forgotten all about that encounter

with the man-eating tiger. Indeed, an inspection of her hurts showed Nugwha that the flowing of blood had wholly ceased, and it was probable that she felt little or no pain from them. At any rate they required no further attention.

It need not be said that the elephant was left wholly to herself. Her master's faith in her sagacity was too absolute for him to interfere even by suggestion. Her route led for a long distance along the margin of the expanding jungle to which reference has been made. This enabled her to make much better progress than otherwise.

Dudley understood the occasional glances which the guide cast over the country they were leaving behind them. Once or twice he borrowed the youth's glass, and spent several minutes in scanning the tropical landscape.

"Do you see anything of them?" asked the youth, as his friend handed the instrument back to him.

"Nothing: I am almost sure you are right, but the Siamese are cunning and we must not forget to look now and then to the rear."

There is a monotony about tropical weather, which Dudley Mayson had noted before this memorable day. Morning after morning was clear, bright and hot; the noons and afternoons

were sultry, and the nights nearly always suffocating. When the rare variations came, they were generally in the form of typhoons, hurricanes or whirlwinds, which, though they lasted but a short time, were furious beyond description. The young American's experience with such terrific outbreaks taught him their danger, and he always uttered a sigh of thankfulness when they were over.

It is said that the children in the schools of Iceland are taught that their climate is the most desirable in the world. In his country, there is no end to the variety of weather, and, it is natural, therefore, that when we change to a region where a mild, even climate is almost unvarying, we grow weary of it and long for something in the nature of a blizzard or howling tempest. A diet on quail may be enjoyable for a time, but the day is sure to come within a month, when we should be glad to exchange it for salt pork.

A gentle breeze stealing along the edge of the jungle, cooled the faces of the elephant-catchers on the back of Wahrida; and, as the sun sank below the horizon, its rays were far less trying; but it was one of the mysteries of the country to Dudley that this riding car was not provided with an awning to protect the in-

mates from the flaming sun at noonday. Such screens are seen at times, but surely one of them was never more needed than in the case of the young American.

The conclusion naturally reached by this visitor from the other side of the world was that the natives of Farther India become so accustomed to the fiery beams that they do not suffer therefrom. The shaven and unprotected heads of the priests pointed that way, and caused him to hope that in the course of time he would become as good a salamander as they.

"All that I have to look out for," he grimly muttered, "is that I don't become sun-struck, while learning the trick."

## CHAPTER VIII

### IN THE JUNGLE

ALL this time, Wahrida was striding forward with her swift, even gait, as if she was certain of the ground over which she was traveling, and knew the precise point toward which she must direct her footsteps, in order to regain the spoor of the white elephant and his companions.

From the dense jungle on the left came the hum and murmur and turmoil of the mystical life within; but Nughwa and Dudley had become so accustomed to the voices of the animal kingdom, that they gave little or no heed to them, and were carried evenly onward as if over one of the ordinary roads of America.

At intervals they came upon moist and sunken ground, from which the mosquitoes rose by the million, darkening the air and swarming around the ears of the riders, until the youth was driven almost frantic. Fortunately, however, these plague spots were rare and not extensive, and,

since Wahrida, as if in sympathy, increased her pace, the lad after a time learned to bear the infliction quite well.

Twilight was at hand, when Dudley, who was studying the ground in advance, caught sight of an animal, as it came out of the jungle, stopped, and raised its head, as if studying the elephant and the passengers she was carrying. Nughwa happened to be looking back at that moment and did not observe the brute.

"Another tiger!" exclaimed Dudley; "I wonder whether he is acting as the rearguard of the white elephant."

Nughwa replied after a single glance:

"It is not a tiger, but a leopard; don't you see his spots?"

"I do now. I have heard that they are almost as bad as the tiger."

"No, for the tiger is the worst beast that treads the jungle, but that is one of the biggest leopards I ever saw; he would be an ugly fellow in a fight; shall we fight him?"

"I would say yes at any other time, but at this rate we shall never come up with the prize we are after. We mustn't forget, too, that Wahrida has suffered enough for to-day."

"I think the same; if the leopards will leave us alone we won't disturb them."

“The leopards!” exclaimed Dudley; “why, you’re right; there are two of them.”

The first brute had been joined by a second, and they formed a striking picture, as they stood side by side, with heads elevated, looking fixedly at the elephant, and couple on her back. Wahrida had swung off to the left upon catching sight of the first brute, as if she preferred to pass them by unmolested. Thus, when she came opposite, she was separated from the animals by at least a hundred yards, and bore still farther away.

“It looks as if they are trying to decide whether to come out on the plain and attack us,” said Nughwa, who kept his gaze upon the two creatures; “I guess we shall have to fight them,” he added the next moment, as one of the leopards, with head still raised, and his tail swaying from side to side, walked slowly out upon the plain, for twenty paces or so, and again halted.

The second brute, however, remained on the margin of the jungle. Evidently he was not as pugnacious as his companion, and disposed to be more cautious. The action of the couple was almost human in its intelligence. The first turned his head and looked back at his companion, saying as plainly as words:

“Why don't you come on? What are you afraid of? We can kill that elephant and the two strange creatures it carries as easily as if they were only flies.”

And the second, refusing to stir, seeming to reply:

“The elephant isn't of much account, but I don't like the looks of the other two animals; I have seen their kind before, and they fight with strange claws.”

The leading leopard was not rash enough to make the attack alone, and he now turned back and sullenly rejoined his companion. Then the two trotted along the boundary of the jungle so as to keep nearly abreast of Wahrida.

“That means that if we try to enter the wood,” said Nughwa, “it must be over their dead bodies, and I guess we won't try that.”

The leopards did not trot far, when they turned into the jungle and disappeared. No doubt they looked upon themselves as victors in the singular encounter, and who shall say that such credit did not belong to them?

The twilight rapidly deepened, and Wahrida, who must have felt that all fear of the leopards was past, turned into the jungle, where there was not only water, but a bountiful growth of a species of small trees and under-

brush of whose twigs and foliage she was very fond. Nughwa and Dudley had sufficient food without seeking any. From their elevated seat, and favored by the slow progress of Wahrida, the guide had plucked a number of mangosteens and durians, while the thoughtful fellow had preserved some of the dried fish from the village where they ate their dinner.

The two came down from their perch to drink and stretch their limbs. The water was almost lukewarm, but it was clear, and, in the circumstances, quite refreshing. With such an endless supply of wood, there was no trouble in starting a large fire and keeping it going.

"I have no doubt the howdah is looked upon in this part of the world as quite comfortable, but I get dreadfully tired of it," said Dudley, stretching out on the grassy earth, as far away as he dared place himself from the heat of the blaze.

"It is safer on the back of Wahrida, and I don't think it wise to spend all the night here, but we can stay for a few hours; by that time you'll want to get back into the howdah."

"I certainly won't want to do so before that time—helloa! that's something new!" exclaimed our young friend, coming to the sitting posture.

Dudley believed until this moment that he had heard all the sounds of the jungle, varied as was their character, but, as he said, that which now fell upon his ear was certainly new, as it was infinitely more pleasing than anything that had come to his knowledge since entering this remarkable country.

The sounds can be best described as those which would be made by a dozen or more skilful flutists while testing their instruments. There was no resemblance to any tune, nor was the variation marked, but the tone was liquid and of exquisite softness. The youth listened, charmed, and then, looking across at his companion, asked in a subdued voice, as if afraid of breaking the spell:

“What is it?”

“The whistling tree.”

The answer was mystifying, but Dudley waited for the further explanation, fearful of losing even a small part of the strange, sweet music.

The “whistling tree” is a species of acacia, which grows abundantly in Nubia, and the Sudan, and is found also in the West Indies and some parts of Farther India. Frequently its shoots are distorted in form by the larva of insects and swollen into a globular bladder, some-

times two inches in diameter. The insect leaves the structure through a circular hole in the side, which being played upon by the wind becomes a musical instrument.

The singular sounds lasted for more than an hour, growing more fitful and faint, and finally ceasing because of the dying out of the gentle wind that had stirred the foliage. The pure musical quality of the tones gave them a distinctness above the harsher and louder noises that are rarely absent at any hour in the smothering jungles.

Nughwa sat for some minutes calmly smoking his pipe, when looking across at Dudley, directly opposite with his back against a tree, he asked:

“Do you feel as hopeful as ever?”

“Why should I not? Has *your* faith in Wah-ridda grown less?”

“That can never be, for she has given too many proofs of it. Neither you nor I can understand how she can do it, but she is drawing nearer the spoor of the white elephant all the time, and tomorrow or next day we shall strike it.”

“And yet, Nughwa, I see you are troubled over something.”

“I am,” he replied, replacing the stem of his

pipe between his lips and puffing in silence for a full minute.

“What is the cause of your trouble?”

The native removed the pipe and looking across into the face of his young friend, spoke slowly and impressively:

“You remember that after we had finished our dinner at the village to-day, you walked back to the side of Wahrida, and stood for a minute or two before she lifted us to her back. Can you recall what I said?”

Dudley thought for a brief interval.

“You said it was well to help slay the tiger, but it would delay our own hunt and make it harder.”

“That is right; and what did *you* say to that?”

It required no time for reflection on the part of the youth.

“I agreed with you, but was sure it would make no special difference.”

“You are not repeating the words you said.”

“I do not think I can, but that was the substance of them.”

“I can tell you what they were. You said, ‘He is such a prize that we can afford to spend weeks or months in hunting for him.’”

"You are right; those were the exact words, but I didn't say the elephant was a white one."

"There was no need of your doing so; every native of Siam knows that the country contains only one kind of creature that is worth such a hunt."

"I can't deny you're right, and wasn't it lucky now that no one overheard me?"

"I wish I could be sure of that. I said nothing further, and just then Wahrida reached out her trunk to help you into the howdah. I turned my head and saw two of the natives right behind me watching her as she did it. They were not speaking, but looking at her."

"It is hardly likely they understood what you and I said."

"One of the couple was the man who called out that the tiger was about to attack you."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Dudley in the slow, hesitating monotone which a person uses when amazed at something he hears.

"I wish I wasn't, but there is no doubt of it."

"Then I spoiled everything," exclaimed the youth bitterly; "why were we both such idiots as to refer in any way to the white elephant, when there was not the slightest need for doing so? We may as well give up the whole thing."

Nughwa smiled at the despairing mood of his young friend.

"It isn't as bad as that. It is true we spoke the words I have said and the native who speaks English as well as I stood only a few paces away, but you must not forget that each of us lowered his voice, just as if he were afraid of being overheard, though we weren't. The man must have had sharp ears to catch your words, for mine were of no account without them."

"Well," said Dudley with a sigh of relief, "you have heartened me again. Then, too, we did not see anything of the horsemen after we parted company. If one or more of them tried to follow us this afternoon, we should have caught a glimpse of them."

"We cannot be sure of that. It would be safe for him to keep well out of sight, for he knew our route, and would have no trouble in tracing the spoor. There may be five or six Siamese after us, and they may be in camp no more than two or three hundred yards away."

"Do you think that is likely?"

"I do not, but it is possible; at any rate, I will take a look around before we sleep; stay where you are till I come back; I shall not be gone long."

Nughwa rose from his seat, gun in hand, and vanished as silently as a shadow in the jungle. Dudley could not help wondering what the fellow would do if he came upon a camp of their rivals. Of course, it would be impossible to turn them back, for they had the same rights as he in their native country. But if there were no more than two (it was incredible that there should be less) would Nughwa use violence toward either?

“If he were his olden self, he would be pretty sure to do something of the kind, but his conscience is too tender to permit it now. It is too bad if we are to have rivals, but I don’t see what we can do to prevent it.”

In the midst of these disturbing meditations, the young American became suddenly aware of a form standing in the glow on the other side of the fire and looking across at him.

“Well, Nughwa, did you see anything of them?”

The guide smiled as he shook his head.

“I do not think any of them learned our secret.”

## CHAPTER IX

### HURRAH!

**T**HE declaration of Nughwa filled Dudley Mayson with hope. It seemed to him that the failure of the guide to discover anything of the Siamese was proof that none of them was in the vicinity. It followed therefore that they had not overheard the words which would have revealed the all-important secret.

Such was the view of the American youth, but he failed to remember one peculiarity of his dusky friend: that was his highly sympathetic nature. The self-reproach of Dudley awakened his pity, and he did the most he could, not only to take the blame upon himself, but to convince him that the prospect was all they could ask. He never doubted that Wahrida was nearing the trail of the three elephants, and was certain to come upon it on the morrow; but, in giving the lad the impression that all danger of interference from rivals was past, he went farther

than the real truth. He was not yet free from that fear.

The prime cause of Nughwa's misgivings was the uneasiness of Wahridda. Ordinarily she would have finished her feeding in the course of two or three hours, but he heard her moving here and there, long after the time when she would have sought repose in ordinary circumstances. He knew this restlessness was not due to any suffering from her hurts. The only cause, as it seemed to her master, must be the presence of strangers in the neighborhood.

Nughwa gave no hint of his suspicion to Dudley, but told him that as they were likely to have a stirring day, it was wise for him to obtain slumber while he could.

"Then you mean that we shall sleep on the ground?"

"We may as well do so; I shall keep such a bright fire that no wild animals will disturb us."

"But how about *your* sleeping?"

"I shall get all I need; I can sleep and wake when I wish."

The guide possessed the ability, which is not uncommon among veteran hunters, of being able to lose and regain his senses, almost at any minute he chose.

With this assurance on the part of his de-

voted friend, Dudley abandoned all anxiety, and speedily succumbed to the drowsiness that had been stealing upon him during their brief conversation. He slept the sleep of perfect health and approving conscience, the two sweetest balms that can come to any person.

The youth had rested some two hours, when, without any apparent cause, he awoke, with every faculty at command. Looking across the fire, where he expected to see Nughwa, either sitting or reclining, he failed to observe him. Dudley came to the sitting position and stared around. Then he pronounced Nughwa's name several times in a guarded voice without bringing any response.

The lad, however, felt no alarm, for he knew his comrade was not far off. The vigor with which the fire was burning showed that a goodly quantity of wood had been flung on it,—enough to throw out an all-embracing glare, whose warmth was distinctly felt.

“That means that he left only a few minutes ago and will soon be back; I'll wait for him.”

Dudley's posture was not so comfortable as lying down. So he adjusted his body as best he could, with the result that within the succeeding ten minutes he was as sound asleep as before and did not open his eyes until the gray

light of dawn was stealing through the jungle. Nughwa was moving about the camp, for in truth he had gained little sleep during the night. Dudley made no mention of his having been awake for a brief time, thinking that the guide might not be wholly pleased to learn that his absence had been noted.

“We’ll eat our breakfast as we go along,” said the latter. The two drank from the brook, bathed in it and said their prayers, after which Wahrida lifted them in turn to her back, and they took their seats in the howdah. Then the guide addressed a few remarks to the animal, which were amusing in their earnestness and breadth. He assured the sagacious creature that he had suddenly turned fool, and, unless she would take charge of affairs, nothing could save him from the consequences of his folly. He was afraid that bad men were hunting for the white elephant, and if she did not hasten, they might run away with the prize. If Wahrida would help capture him, then the senses of Nughwa would come back to him; otherwise he would be an idiot for the rest of his days. Not the least entertaining part of this business was the unshakable belief of the native that the animal understood every word said to her. It cannot be doubted that she comprehended some

of them, for she started westward at a pace that exceeded any shown since the hunt began. The route led her through jungle and across plain, sometimes crashing into the timber at a rate that made the riders duck and dodge, and threatened to tumble them and the howdah to the earth.

Nughwa used the glass unceasingly. Not once did he point it to the front, but always to the south. Although he said nothing, Dudley knew he was searching for followers. The fact that he saw none was no proof that none saw him.

Suddenly the guide lowered the instrument, and leaning over the howdah, peered down at the ground a few paces in advance. Only for a few moments, when he straightened up and with a glowing face, exclaimed:

“Wahrida has found the spoor of the white elephant!”

Dudley had been studying the appearance of the grass in front and suspected the truth, though it seemed incredible that she had succeeded so unerringly. But she had certainly “turned the trick.”

“It is the most wonderful thing I ever saw,” said the admiring youth; “you can’t tell me anything about her now that I won’t believe.”

"I knew you would have to say that; she knows more than you and I together, and," he grimly added, "*that* isn't saying much."

"Can you form any idea of how long ago it is since the three elephants passed this way?"

"No one knows that beside Wahrida; if she could speak, she would tell us the minute," replied Nughwa, implicitly believing every word he uttered.

Reasoning in a general way, as may be said, the guide believed they were within twenty-four hours of their quarry. It will be understood that the three animals were not likely to make haste, for they had no call to do so, while the pursuit was so vigorously pressed that, despite the diversion caused by the tiger hunt, the distance between the respective parties ought to be comparatively slight.

While making clear the situation, Nughwa held the glass to his eye, scanning with keen vision the open plain stretching to the north and west. If the pursuers were pursued, the former now gave the matter no thought. All their attention was centered upon the front. The youth shaded his wrinkled brows with one hand and peered into the hot sunlight, he and his companion silent for the time in the absorption of their interest.

By and by Dudley became convinced that he saw one or more animals feeding on the edge of the jungle; but the distance and obstruction were too great for him to feel certain. He looked at his companion, who sat just opposite, thinking that if he descried anything of moment, he would be quick to make it known. His pose was the old familiar one. The stock of his rifle rested on the bottom of the howdah, with the barrel leaning against the seat behind him, the coil of rubber rope lay to the rear, and the instrument, held in position by both hands, was leveled, but the youth was unable to decide the exact point toward which it was turned.

“Nughwa,” said Dudley, “I think there are one or two large animals on the edge of the jungle, a long way in advance; am I right?”

Instead of replying, the guide silently passed the instrument to his companion. The latter did not notice the unusual glow of the dusky countenance, nor did he observe the almost imperceptible tremor of the muscular hand that was extended toward him. With his arms clear of all support, so as to avoid the effect of the swinging pace of Wahrida, our young friend fixed his attention on the point where he knew some animal or animals were browsing.

The next moment, his hands dropped to his knees and he gasped:

*"It is the white elephant!"*

Nughwa smiled and nodded his head. Controlling his own agitation, he said:

"You are right."

The rare animal was standing with his head away from the pursuers, and was plucking a species of berry of which his kind are very fond. A rod or so from him was one of the elephants similarly employed, but the third was not in sight. He was probably within the jungle, near at hand, also feeding.

As seen in the morning sunbeam, the white elephant was a sight to make a hunter's nerves tingle. No wonder that such a veteran as Nughwa found it hard to remain cool. He knew the princely value of the prize, less than a mile away, and felt the responsibility of the task on his hands.

As a matter of course, Wahrida had been as quick as her master to make the important discovery. She slowed her pace, and, without any command from Nughwa, came to a halt.

"What does she mean by that?" asked Dudley.

"To get rid of us and the howdah."

This reply explained nothing, and Nughwa added:

“When she goes nearer the elephants in front, she must appear as a wild animal. The sight of us or the howdah would make them suspicious.”

“You have run the risk of being seen at any time during the last half hour.”

“But haven’t been seen; what little wind there is comes from that way. Wahrida takes us into the jungle.”

She turned and had to go only a few paces, when she forced her way among the dense vines and branches. Nughwa dropped to the ground and called to his companion to follow.

“Now for the howdah!” said the native beginning to tug at the knots and buckles fastened under the body of the huge creature. Dudley gave what aid he could, and jumped back when his friend called to him to look out. The structure came tumbling downward with a bang that threatened to shatter it, but it was made for rough usage and was uninjured.

“Nughwa, we shall have hard work to get that back again,” said the youth, to whom the structure looked large and heavier than ever.

“We can’t do it without help.”

“And where shall we get help?”

"Wahridda," was the expressive reply.

Nughwa now explained his plans.

"She will go forward until she attracts the notice of the three. They may take her for a rogue elephant and drive her away, but she is cunning and will hold their attention long enough to give me a chance to do something with the rubber rope."

"And what am *I* to do?"

"Stay where you are, or you may come to the edge of the jungle and watch the sport."

"Aren't you going to take your gun with you?" asked Dudley, as his friend moved off with only the coil of rubber rope.

"I shall have no use for it, and it is a burden. Wahridda will keep on the plain where she is in full sight, but I will stay in the wood and be not far behind her. As I told you, you may watch us."

The elephant moved out from among the trees onto the grassy plain, and started at a walk toward the two elephants, the third being still invisible. Nughwa advanced over a parallel course, keeping within the jungle, and making his way with the celerity and ease of an Indian scout. Dudley Mayson, it need hardly be said, allowed nothing in his field of vision to escape him. As Wahridda receded, he called

the telescope into play and noted everything with absorbing interest.

The single elephant was quite close to the couple, when she trumpeted. They immediately turned and looked toward her. A moment later the third elephant emerged from the jungle and joined in staring at the stranger. Wahrida moved forward at a brisk pace, and by and by the four met. That animals possess a language of their own cannot be questioned, and there must have been an interesting exchange of questions and answers.

Nor can it be doubted that Wahrida, on her part, falsified like a pirate, for she was actuated by the resolve to help her master all she could, and lacked the restraining conscience which was one of the latter's most marked attributes.

## CHAPTER X

### A PRISONER

WITH his glass pointed at the group, and his attention fixed upon the three elephants, Dudley Mayson failed to see the native, as he stole out of the jungle, and ran rapidly after Wahrida. This was because Nughwa maintained a crouching posture and kept his head below the top of the tall grass, which offered no resistance to his progress.

Dudley noticed the four bulky animals standing close together, and then a commotion suddenly appeared. There was trumpeting and moving about, and all at once the two brown elephants plunged for the jungle, as if in a panic. Certain that something important had taken place, the youth lowered his glass, snatched up his friend's gun, and broke into a run along the side of the jungle.

The native turned, threw up his hands, and, with more excitement than Dudley had ever seen him show, called out:

“Hurrah! hurrah! *I've caught the white elephant!*”

It came about this way:

Taking advantage of the diversion caused by the call of Wahrida, her master stole up behind her. She loitered over toward a tree, more than a foot in diameter, which stood on the edge of the jungle. The intelligent creature knew this was indispensable to the success of Nughwa's plans, and it was easy for her to draw the three after her.

In a twinkling, Nughwa ran one end of the rubber rope around the base of the trunk, where it was tied securely. With the remainder of the coil, whose end was looped, he glided noiselessly to the side of Wahrida, and passing under her body, waited for the white elephant to lift one of his hind feet. Wahrida knew what was going on, but not one of the three did. The white animal stood so solidly on his four feet, that the native gently tickled his ankle with his fingers. Instantly he lifted the foot and Nughwa slipped the loop under and brought it up for several inches over the ankle. Before, however, he could draw it taut, the brute shook it off and partly turned his body and head to learn what mischief was going on.

Expecting this action, Nughwa darted under

Wahrida, whose body shielded him from sight. The white elephant must have believed the titillation was caused by his own movement in the grass, for his suspicion was lulled.

In a few seconds, Nughwa was back in his perilous position, and once more scratched the ponderous ankle. As before, the foot was lifted from the ground. At the same moment, the noose was slipped over it, and a slight distance above, where it was jerked tight in a flash. Quick to perceive the distress of their companion, the other two elephants, instead of rushing to his help, basely deserted him, and fled in a panic to the shelter of the jungle. Then it was that the exultant Nughwa dashed out on the plain and shouted the glad tidings to Dudley Mayson, who was running at headlong speed toward him.

Meanwhile, as may be supposed, the prisoner was furious. He was a superb creature and he struggled like a leviathan with an iron hook in his jaws. At first his efforts were aimed to shake loose the loop around his ankle. But it was too rigid to be moved. Then, trumpeting his fury, he started to follow his cowardly companions. The elastic rope stretched amazingly, and almost any one would have supposed that the terrific strain would snap it asunder. Had

it been of ordinary hempen material, it must have parted, but it had served a similar purpose before, and Nughwa's confidence in its strength could not be shaken.

Finding it impossible to join his companions, the captive backed toward the tree to which he was fastened, the recoil of the rope adding greatly to his discomfort while on the retreat. When the rubber had relaxed to its natural length, the prisoner glared around, as if to decide upon the best thing to do.

During these stirring minutes, Nughwa stood a little way off, with folded arms, calmly watching the actions of the albino. Wahrida was also a calm spectator, and any one not knowing the circumstances would have thought she was stirred by pity and was trying to think of some way of helping the unfortunate fellow, but, had her nature been demonstrative, she would have hardly been behind her master in the exuberance of her behaviour.

The sight of the elephant-catcher, calm and pitiless, roused all the fury of the prisoner's nature, for he must have known that the native was the author of his misfortune, and it was upon his head that vengeance should be visited. The bulky creature glanced for a moment at him, and then started on a rapid walk in his di-

rection, with trunk outstretched, eager to seize, hurl him to the earth and trample out the last vestige of life.

Nughwa did not stir, but stood like a bronze statue, with arms folded and a tantalizing smile, that must have added to the fury of the albino. He had but a rod or two to traverse, but before the space was passed, the elastic rope began to tauten, and he could not fail to feel its restraint, but he pressed on.

Dudley Mayson, who was hurrying to the spot, was terrified by the picture.

"He is struck dumb with fear," was his thought; "he cannot save himself, but why does not Wahrida rush to his help?"

It looked indeed as if the sagacious brute were held under the same spell that made her master helpless; for, looking upon the exciting picture, she remained as motionless as he. Still hurrying and now close to his friend, the youth shouted:

"Run, Nughwa! Quick, or you are lost!" Then, in an agony of dread, he called to his four-footed friend:

"Save him, Wahrida!"

It is doubtful if the brute understood the appeal, since her knowledge of English was

limited. Be that as it may, she gave no heed, and did not stir.

"His life is worth more than the white elephant," was the thought of Dudley, who, coming to a halt a few paces away, brought his own gun to a level. He was in Nughwa's field of vision, and the instant the young American raised his rifle, the native called in an angry, sharp tone:

"Stop! none of that!"

Dudley lowered his piece, but it may be said his heart was in his mouth, as he looked upon the terrifying picture before him.

The tugging rubber rope quickly reached its limit. With all his prodigious power, the white elephant could not advance another step. The imprisoned foot was pulled backward almost horizontally from the body, and must have caused great pain. But in his rage he gave no heed to it, and reached forward with his trunk to seize his exasperating captor. The organ was as straight as a rod of iron, but the extreme point lacked almost a foot of touching the face of the native.

It was a crucial test of the superb nerve of the fellow, but he stood it without an additional heart throb. That rope had been tested more

than once and had never failed. He knew its capacity and his confidence was unshaken.

But if it had snapped! It must grow weaker as time passed, and the moment of yielding would come sooner or later. Had it not arrived?

No; the finger-like point of the trunk groped in vain. It could not seize that grinning countenance which was so near and yet so far. Had Nughwa chosen, he could have reached out and slapped the organ, but he contented himself with remaining stationary, and grinning with folded arms.

"I wouldn't stand in his shoes for a million dollars," said Dudley Mayson to himself, "and yet he feels no fear."

The albino soon saw the hopelessness of his attempt. He retreated two or three paces, narrowly saving himself from being thrown off his balance by the fierce pulling of the rope. When this eased, he stood motionless, looking at the man, who without change of pose, calmly confronted him. Perhaps that big brain was speculating as to whether another charge would not break the rope and allow him to get at his tormentor. If so, he must have decided that it was useless to try such a thing.

Dudley Mayson in his intense interest had

come a few paces nearer, but was still somewhat farther from the captive than his friend. The elephant seemed suddenly to become aware of his presence, and trumpeting savagely, lunged toward him.

“Great Cæsar!” exclaimed the youth, wheeling about and dashing off; “I don’t want anything to do with *you!*”

Dudley ran as never before, not looking back, and flinging both guns aside, so they could not impede his flight. He knew it was impossible to secure an effective aim at the colossal brute, when he was almost upon him, and he did not try. At the moment when he was sure the thunderous tramp was within two or three paces, and fast drawing near, he heard the shout of Nughwa:

“Run! run! head this way so I can get a shot!”

The fugitive was in too much of a panic to reflect that his friend could have gained his chance by following the albino, and indeed he had it before the chase began. But Dudley obeyed, and began circling around so as to bring him back to the native, who, as it now struck him was fonder of playing the statue act than of interesting himself actively in his behalf.

This change in his line of flight gave Dudley Mayson his first chance to take a glance at his pursuer. The instant he did so, he disgustedly dropped to a walk and looked resentfully at Nughwa.

The white elephant was still held by the rubber rope, and his pursuit of the youth had ended perforce in the same minute that it began.

"Better pick up your gun," called Nughwa, who was shaking with laughter; "you may find need for it."

"I don't suppose there's any use in getting mad," muttered our young friend, as he started back over his line of flight; "but I'd give a good deal for the chance of paying Nughwa for that trick."

It took a longer time than he expected to recover his weapon, but he finally recovered it unharmed from the tall grass and walked back toward his still grinning friend, who said as he came forward:

"How happy the good missionary will be, when he learns that his son can run faster than any Siamese!"

"You can't know that, when none of them has been chased by a white elephant."

"Nor have you."

"But I thought so, and that's the same."

"If he had broken loose it would have been the last of you."

"And it would have been the last of you, when you thought you looked so handsome with the fellow almost reaching you with his trunk."

"I knew that, and I knew, too, the rope wouldn't break."

"Some day you will get fooled, Nughwa; rubber like everything else wears out in time, and this one will be worthless."

"Do you think I forget to examine it often? Do you think I cannot see the first sign of weakness? The white elephant is strong, but the rope is stronger, and so it will be for some time to come."

Meanwhile, the captured animal was not idle. After being emphatically reminded once or twice of his bonds, he retreated to the tree, and stood silent and sullen for several minutes, meditating mischief, or perhaps figuring out some way of extricating himself from the worst dilemma of his life.

He groped about the loop which encircled the tree, and twisted himself into a grotesquely awkward position, as he tried to examine the thong around his hind leg.

"Isn't it possible," asked Dudley, "that he may be able to untie it?"

"Yes; an elephant has done much harder things than that."

"Suppose he succeeds?"

"It will be bad for us," calmly replied his friend; "he may attack me, and I'll have to shoot him. There will be no need, if he makes for you, for you can outrun him."

"But what of Wahrida? Won't she play any part in the business?"

"Everything will depend upon her; don't you see how closely she is watching him? Before he unfastens the rope she will do something."

What the nature of her intervention would have been was not given to Dudley Mayson to know, for the prisoner soon gave up the task of trying to unfasten the rope, and once more turned his attention to the author of his troubles.

## CHAPTER XI

### IN THE TOILS

**A**LTHOUGH the white elephant was not yet ready to submit as a captive, and, although his resentment against his captor was too savage to allow him to cease his efforts to revenge himself upon him, he acted more coolly, though none the less determinedly. Instead of making a headlong charge, he began walking slowly toward Nughwa who had not shifted his position.

The albino was carefully testing the rope, when still several paces from the native, it began drawing so hard that it was difficult for him to set down the foot and hold it where placed. He did so with considerable effort, and then felt his way for another step, like one of his species, when passing over a distrusted bridge. This took him so near the man that the extended trunk came within a yard of his face. Nughwa, standing with folded arms, kept up his tantalizing grimaces.

The animal was now standing with all his feet on the ground. For a moment he remained motionless, and then lunged suddenly forward. Dudley Mayson held his breath, nervously clutching his rifle, for he dreaded the worst. Nughwa's gun lay several paces away, and could not help him, if the bond yielded. Nor indeed could the shot of the youth and the nimbleness of his friend, nor the interference of Wahridda save the doomed one.

But the rope did not break, and, as before, the severe strain drew back the imprisoned leg into an almost horizontal line. The pain caused the animal to resume his awkward retreat, but, more hurried now, he lost his balance and sagged down on his side with a groan.

"Too bad!" exclaimed Dudley; "he must be hurt."

"Not enough to make any difference," replied Nughwa; "keep away from him or he will get up again."

He did so, though greatly hindered by the thong that held him fast. When he finally came to his feet, he fell back so near to the tree, that the rope was loosened and caused him no more trouble.

"He has had enough of that," said Nughwa, "and won't try it again."

Matters being thus, the two friends were able to speak with more assurance of their plans and intentions. Nughwa walked the few paces necessary to pick up his gun, and the two sauntered to the side of Wahridda, who stood as if she felt no interest in the proceedings, though it is not to be supposed that the slightest incident or phase escaped her. The prisoner remained by the tree, sullen, savage and treacherous, yearning to get the man and youth in his power, but unable to do so.

“How are we going to take him to Bangkok?” asked Dudley.

“Tame him first.”

“And how do you propose to tame him?”

“Starve and scare him to death.”

This method was certainly an heroic one, and, though the expression was exaggerated, it revealed the plan of the professional elephant-catcher. The prisoner could not be driven through the jungle, and across the plain, or compelled to obey in any way until thoroughly cowed by the fear of his master.

“He cannot get any food or water for himself,” said Nughwa, “and we won’t let him have any until he begs for them. I’ll start a fire near by and that will frighten him.”

“How long will it take?”

"A week, maybe longer; I cannot say."

"I wonder whether during all that time we shall see anything of the other hunters."

Nughwa's face clouded.

"I am afraid we shall, but, if they try to steal him from us, or to share in the reward for the prize, they will have trouble."

"I am with you there," said the youth, with a flash of his eyes; "he belongs to us and no one shall take him away."

As a token of his earnestness, he extended his hand to Nughwa, who accepted it rather gingerly, for he was unused to the peculiarly American form of emphasizing a pledge.

"Since we are to stay here so long, we may as well go back and get the howdah." Nughwa spoke to Wahrida, and she followed behind him and Dudley, as they led the way back to the edge of the jungle, where the huge, unwieldy saddle had been left. The work of replacing it on the back of the elephant was the hardest in which our young friend had lent a helping hand. It never could have been accomplished but for the help of the animal herself. She knelt down and calmly waited for the word to rise again. Tugging and straining and resting and toiling, it was at last adjusted and secured.

“Whew!” sighed Dudley, as he leaned back against a sapling, and mopped his forehead; “I shouldn’t want to follow that business for a living.”

“It isn’t likely you’ll ever be asked to do it again; before we go back to begin taming the white elephant, I will take a look around.”

Nughwa made no attempt to conceal his uneasiness about the other natives. While he could recall no incident when the one who had spoken to Dudley in English seemed likely to have heard the visitors refer to the white elephant, yet it was likely he had gathered an all-important hint.

“After keeping his secret so long, why did he betray it to me?” asked the youth.

“I have asked myself that question. The only reason, as it seems to me, is that he forgot himself.”

“Doesn’t it look as if he did *not* forget himself, and therefore knew nothing of our real business in this part of the country?”

“Why should he have pretended ignorance at all?”

“We don’t know that he did. You began talking in their native tongue and there was no reason for the one or two who knew English to change.”

"But they had to do so in speaking to you."

"There was no call to speak to me until I was in danger from the tiger, when that fellow did not hesitate."

"Your words are worthy of your father," said Nughwa admiringly, "but they do not convince me."

"They do not convince myself," said Dudley with a laugh; "I am sure we are not through with those men."

"While you go back with Wahrida to keep an eye on the other, I will take a look over the country with the help of your glass."

Dudley did not remount the animal. It was easy walking through the tall soft grass on the margin of the wood, and despite his labor with the howdah, he preferred to do so rather than to sit on his perch in the glare of the hot sun.

Rifle in hand, and with the telescope suspended about his neck with a cord after the manner of its owner, Nughwa plunged deeper into the jungle. He made his way to the highest ground in the neighborhood and then selected the tallest tree to climb. Native of the country as he was, and accustomed to every phase of its varied life, he was always alert and watchful. Had he not been so, he might not have seen a small, brilliant-hued serpent coiled about a limb just

above his head, and waiting for him to come a little nearer before inflicting its sting.

It was so slim and beautiful that one might have readily believed it was harmless, but with its smallness, it displayed the triangular head and pits behind the glittering eyes which are the invariable signs of a venomous species. In truth, though a rare reptile, even in Farther India, the native knew that it was one of the deadliest in existence. He had once seen a woman struck on the hand by a specimen no larger than that over his head and ten minutes later she was dead.

Balancing himself astride of the limb on which he had paused, Nughwa held his gun by the stock and carefully reached upward with the muzzle. The reptile was within easy touch, and now began rapidly uncoiling from around the branch. The native knew the meaning of that. One peculiarity of the species is its habit of leaping toward its victim when the latter halts while beyond striking distance. It will be watchful and motionless in the path, as a person or animal draws near; but, if the latter catches sight of the imp, or draws back or hesitates, it will leap several feet toward him, and he must be exceedingly lively to avoid the lightning-like stroke.

The momentary pause of the native in his ascent caused the serpent to leap at him, for though such action should cause it to fall to the ground it would suffer nothing therefrom. A few seconds later it thus fell, but, when it did so, there was not a semblance of life in the hideous thing.

Nughwa calmly resumed his climbing, handling his gun with the ease of an American Indian in similar circumstances. His survey embraced a country of stream, jungle and plain, similar to that over which he and his companion had journeyed almost every day since leaving Wahta-Shat. The scenery, with its many beautiful peculiarities, was too familiar to him to attract special interest. He was looking for something of a different nature.

The excellent instrument revealed here and there more than one animal peculiar to Siam. The trees near at hand contained monkeys, jays, pigeons and other birds; he saw a herd of elephants hardly a mile away feeding, and, far in the distance to the westward, he noted the sheen of water in which he had seen the rhinoceros when in this section the previous year. And there were many denizens there which the telescope did not show him,—buffaloes, bears, wild pigs, deer, gazelles, ourang-

outangs and still others. But he cared for none; he was looking for man, the king of them all.

He fancied once that he detected a faint column of vapor against the burnished sky, such as might have drifted upward from the camp of a party of hunters; but, when studied a few minutes through the glass, it vanished and he directed his attention elsewhere.

But nowhere, in all the extensive domain, could he discover sight or sign of a person, and, after a prolonged search, he gave it up. None the less, the veteran knew that the very men for whom he was searching might be within a hundred yards of the tree from which he was looking out over the country. If they anticipated any such visual hunt on his part, they could easily elude his vision. In the possibility that they were unaware of his suspicion lay his hope of discovering their whereabouts. Be that as it may, he had failed for the time, and, descending the tree, he set out to rejoin Dudley Mayson and Wahrida and to begin his task of rounding the captured white elephant into the "form" that would make it possible to conduct him southward to the potentate who would eagerly pay a princely sum for the sacred animal.

Emerging from the jungle, Nughwa proceeded at a moderate pace to the spot where the white elephant was held a prisoner. He had not yet joined his young friend when he saw something unusual had happened. Dudley had started as if to go in quest of the guide, but halted upon observing his approach and beckoned to him to make haste. He broke into a lope, and coming up quickly asked the youth the cause of his excitement.

"Something is wrong, and I don't know what it is."

"What does it seem to be?"

"A little while ago, I was standing a few rods from the white elephant, when Wahrida trumpeted. I turned to learn what it meant, and saw she was pointing at the jungle, and acting as if she had observed something she didn't like. I looked, but could not see anything unusual. Nughwa," added the youth in a lower voice, "I believe some of those hunters are near us."

"More than likely you are right; anyhow, I shall soon know."

He turned to the jungle into which he plunged without hesitation. If any man or men had been there, they must have left evidence of their

visit which could not elude the keen eyes of the guide. Dudley anxiously awaited his return.

At the end of half an hour, Nughwa came back. Paying no attention for the moment, he went up to Wahrida and began talking to her in his native tongue. Dudley watched the wise creature, who made several circling motions with her trunk. Then her master turned to his comrade.

“They were not the hunters which she saw.”

“Can you be certain of that?”

“Yes; I studied the brush so closely that I should have seen their footprints. Besides, she told me no strangers have been near you while I was away.”

“But something disturbed her: what was it?”

“Elephants.”

## CHAPTER XII

### TAMING A WILD ELEPHANT

**N**UGHWA explained more fully:  
“His two companions who ran off like cowards may have felt ashamed of themselves; but more likely it was only curiosity to learn what had happened to their comrade. They came to the side of the jungle and peeped out. Wahrida saw and warned them to keep away or they would get into trouble. Did you notice how the prisoner acted?”

“I did not look at him.”

“He must have seen the two—I know from the footprints that that was the number—but he was so disgusted that he would not notice them. They wouldn’t have been scared at the sight of Wahrida alone, and had no one been with her, they would have gone to the help of the poor fellow—but it was the warning of the howdah on her back, the sight of you with your gun, and more than all, the picture of the prisoner tied to the tree, that scared them. When she trumpeted they turned and made off.”

“Will they not come back?”

“I do not think so, but who cares if they do? If they show themselves again, I shall shoot one of them, and, if the other doesn't act right, I'll kill him too. I haven't any fear of other elephants,” added Nughwa significantly.

“Did you find out anything to cause mis-giving?”

“No, and yet some of those hunters may be watching us now.”

Instinctively the two glanced along the side of the jungle in front and behind them, but discovered nothing. After all it was Wahrida upon whom they must depend to give them warning of the approach of the danger which they dreaded more than all others.

Nughwa now explained the plan of his campaign as it may be called. No inconvenience was likely to mark a prolonged stay in this region. There was such an abundance of timber, fruit, and indeed of all that they could possibly need, that it was like reaching out one's hand to pluck what was before him. It was decided to encamp on the ground just within the jungle, the main reliance being upon Wahrida to warn them of the approach of danger in any form. The captive was not to be allowed any food or water until after his spirit had been

thoroughly conquered, and in order to hasten his change of mind, fire would probably be added to the means brought into play.

Our friends having fixed upon the site of their camp spent an hour and more in gathering the right kind of fuel with which to kindle a fire and keep it going through the night. Wahrida was not expected to give any aid, and, passing into the wood, she resumed her browsing, as if there was nothing else in the world in which she was interested.

All this time, the white elephant stood beside the tree, which was set out a little from the jungle, as motionless as the trunk itself. He faced the two bipeds, who were operating only a few paces away, as if meditating upon some scheme of annihilating them. If so, he must have decided that one possibility only existed—that was to break the rope which possessed the dreaded quality of yielding and still holding him fast.

In a few minutes he was at it again, and Nughwa and Dudley watched him. What followed was much the same as before. He charged like a runaway locomotive, and the youth instinctively shrank back and stepped closer to his rifle which was leaning against the trunk of a tree. Nughwa merely smiled. He

had seen that thick rubber thong tested so sharply that his faith in it was unshakable. The captive lunged forward, abruptly fell back to relieve the pain of his leg, "pulled" as never before, swung to one side, dived forth again, only to retreat to the immovable trunk, able to do nothing more than trumpet his rage. He made a weak attempt to untie the rope from his limb and from the tree, but you need not be reminded of the exasperating difficulty of unfastening a rubber knot. He speedily gave over the effort.

"Nughwa," said Dudley some minutes later, "you told me it is going to take a long time to tame the white elephant."

"Yes; we can hardly do it under a week and it may be longer. It would not be wise to try to drive him through the jungle till he is like a dog, that is anxious to do all he can to please his master."

"And you have no fear that you will not succeed?"

"I only fear that some of the hunters may trouble us. If ten or more of them should come up here to take him away from us, it will be—not pleasant."

"Will you submit?" asked the youth with a sly glance at the dusky countenance.

“Those people know I am a Christian, or at least try to be, but my religion does not command me to submit to wrong and robbery. If they think it does, they will learn their mistake. If they try to steal away the white elephant, they will get a lesson that will not depart from them during their lives.”

“From what you have said, I know you intend to keep the prisoner under your eye all the time.”

“Yes, until he is delivered to the first king at Bangkok. I shall run no risk that I can prevent of losing him.”

“I don't see that I can be of any help to you; if you are willing, therefore, I will take a ramble through the jungle; I shall give my efforts to trying to locate those hunters, if any of them are in the neighborhood; they will not be expecting anything of the kind, and I shall have a good chance of finding them.”

The native was silent for a minute or two. Evidently he did not think much of the plan, but, that being so, he saw no real objection to it. He knew how monotonous the next few days must prove to his young friend, and he sympathized with him.

“Go, if you wish, but do not wander too far; remember there will be danger all around you;

keep your bearings, and come back to me before night, for I do not wish to be compelled to hunt for you as I have had to do before."

Dudley promised to remember the advice and took his departure.

Left to himself, Nughwa the elephant catcher now gave his whole attention to his prisoner. Wahrida continued browsing near the edge of the jungle, seemingly caring for nothing else, but ready at any time to obey the summons of her master. The albino was standing beside the trunk of the tree, where he was held helpless. He did not resort to the regular shifting of his feet, or the slightly rocking motion of his body, in which his species sometimes indulge when held captive, but remained as motionless as a wooden structure.

The native leaned his gun against a sapling, walked forward a few steps, folded his arms, and then made an address to the captive. It was in native Siamese and was put in the most insulting words he could frame. It not only declared the animal the most unworthy of his kind, but grossly reflected upon his ancestors. It was so shameful indeed that no self-respecting elephant could allow himself to be addressed in that style. That the albino submitted was due to the restraint imposed by his bonds and

the fact that he had never been educated in the language of his native country; he didn't know what was said to him.

Nughwa turned his back on his prisoner and went to where Wahrida was feeding. From her he procured a handful of delicate red berries of which her kind is fond. Returning, he halted a little way from the captive and held them out to him.

"You would better eat, for it will be a long time before you get another chance."

The brute stood sullen and motionless. If the expression may be allowed, he scowled at the execrated creature who thus gloated over his misery. I doubt whether any person ever saw an elephant (or, for that matter, any other quadruped), that wasn't hungry. The titbits were tempting. After paying no heed for a time, the prisoner began walking slowly toward the outstretched hand, which was near enough to be reached without straining the rope.

But as the trunk began groping for the delicate berries, Nughwa slowly moved backward. A spectator would have said he was standing still, when, in fact, by a peculiar action of his feet, he was retreating. He knew to an inch how far the animal could reach, and he kept gliding back, back, before the outreaching pris-

oner, until the albino formed a grotesque picture. He was leaning forward on three feet, with trunk extended, and the fourth leg pointing backward almost horizontally. He was at the utmost limit of the rope and still lacked three or four inches of touching the dusky palm in which nestled the crimson dainties.

The disappointed captive was still seeking them, when Nughwa with his other hand gave the trunk a smart cuff, turned his back and walked away. It was cruel and yet not half so cruel as he would be before the taming business was over.

The elephant hitched and stumbled back to his station, whereupon the grinning native advanced quite close to him and once more extended the hand containing the berries; but, though he spoke soothing words, the captive could not be deceived a second time. He refused to notice the gadfly.

"That's the first lesson in taming you," said Nughwa, though one might well question of what the lesson consisted. The pupil was certainly as sour and ugly as ever, and it would not do for the man to venture within his reach.

Nughwa could not repress a feeling of admiration, when, from the brief distance, he surveyed his prize. In the first place, he was of

unusual size, quite young and in fine condition. More than all that, he surpassed in his peculiar attractiveness, any of the sacred white animals he had seen in the king's stables at Bangkok. The greater part of his body displayed that pinkish tinge, which, as I have explained, is believed to be the result of some sort of skin disease. No freak of nature can possess the beauty of nature itself, but beauty, after all, depends greatly upon the point of view.

Again was the exultant truth forced upon the native that, could he succeed in getting the white elephant to Bangkok, he would be one of the most fortunate men in Siam. The first important success had been gained,—he had captured him; would he be able to guide him the hundreds of miles necessary before the lucky fellow could claim his reward?

Enough has been said to show the earnestness of the native in this matter. No sane man surrenders a fortune without a struggle, and no matter how powerful the would-be despoilers, they would meet anything but a submissive victim in Nughwa. He was thinking not of himself alone, but of the good missionary whom he loved above any other man. He knew that Mr. Mayson would never accept the smallest part of the sum received for the white elephant;

but it could be made to reach him through his son, who was a partner in the remarkable enterprise, and would continue a partner to the end.

Now, you do not need to be told that it was precious little help Dudley Mayson could give the professional elephant catcher. Had Nughwa been compelled to tell the truth, he would have said that the company of the young American was rather a handicap than a help. For instance, he had not rendered the slightest aid in making the albino a prisoner, nor was it probable he would be able to do so in taming and transporting him to the royal city.

Nothing in the world, however, could induce Nughwa to make such an admission. Moreover, he insisted to himself, that there *was* a prospect of the youth proving a valuable ally. Suppose—and the supposition was reasonable—there was to be a fight with their former partners in the tiger hunt. The excellent marksmanship and the personal bravery of the young American could not fail to be big factors in events. Still further, if Dudley during his ramble and scout through the jungle, should be able to locate the natives, the knowledge would be extremely helpful to the man.

And yet as the hot summer afternoon drew to

a close, and nothing was seen of the youth, who ought to have returned long before, Nughwa felt a growing uneasiness. Night itself so added to this misgiving that he reproached himself.

“I should not have allowed him to go; because he has not come back. I am sure some ill has befallen him.”

## CHAPTER XIII

### A WILD BUFFALO

IT WAS natural perhaps that Nughwa and Dudley were each more uneasy over the fear of interference from the native hunters than he was willing to admit to the other. It was brave on the part of the guide to declare, and he was in earnest, that he would not submit to be despoiled of his prize, but he might be compelled to see it wrested from him. Our young friend was impressed with this fact, and it was the conviction which really led him into the jungle, rather than his distaste for the tiresome waiting through the weary days and nights of the taming of the captive elephant.

The plan of the youth was ambitious. He meant, in the event of coming upon the hunters (who, of course, would have the English-speaking native with them), to force upon them the fact that, though they might be able to take the valuable prisoner from Nughwa, and even to conduct him to Bangkok, yet it would do them no good, but rather much harm; for not only he

and Nughwa would follow, but the missionary of Wahta-Shat, who was known far and near as a just man, would not rest until the wrong-doers were punished. It was an ambitious scheme, I repeat, on the part of Dudley Mayson, but he was hopeful it would succeed.

The tropical forests have been described too frequently to require anything further in that direction. The chattering of monkeys was incessant, and the lad caught glimpses of the frolicsome creatures among the branches on every side. Had this been his first experience in the jungle, he would have been hardly able to make any progress at all; but we can become accustomed to anything, and Dudley Mayson was already used to these jungles with their overflowing vegetation and animal life.

It was impossible to follow any clearly defined plan in his wanderings. Nughwa had warned him to keep his bearings, and he did not need to be reminded of the necessity of doing so. He made an effort, but the task seemed to be impossible. The forest was unfamiliar and without landmarks. The old recourse of the hunter who observes the thicker bark on the northern side of the trees would not avail him here, for of course there was nothing of the

kind, and he could think of no peculiarity of the jungle that would give the slightest help.

In the circumstances, the lad was on the alert and kept his senses keyed to a high point. It was certainly a reasonable supposition that if the native hunters had followed, they were at this time not very distant from the camp. The vicinity, therefore, was the region which should be searched.

Dudley was picking his way through the jungle in this cautious manner, when he abruptly halted. He had heard a rustling as if made by a person in walking over the leaves; but it might well be one of the numerous wild animals he was liable to meet at any time, and he brought his gun to the front ready for instant use. At the same moment, he stepped behind the nearest tree, for he did not wish to use his weapon except as a last resort.

He was not a second too soon, for whatever or whoever it was that caused the disturbance, he heard a second similar noise in the rear. Instinctively, he shifted around to the other side of the trunk, though, by so doing, he ran a greater risk of detection from that direction. He immediately discovered that it was not a man but a wild animal that was drawing near. Moreover, he was one of the most dangerous in

the Eastern world. In fact, he was an Asiatic buffalo.

The young American had never seen one, but he recognized him from the descriptions he had read, as a gigantic bull—a brute for whom the tiger respectfully makes room, when the two meet in the depths of the jungle. The cow in Africa will gore the life out of a lion that dares to molest her young. The Eastern buffalo has an immense spread of horns that are like dagger points; it possesses great speed, and absolutely knows no such feeling as fear. If a company of infantry should rouse the creature's rage, he would lower his horns and charge the whole body like a cyclone. One of the most famous hunters of royal game said:

“If you should give me the choice between taking a shot from a rifleman at thirty yards distance, and meeting the charge of a jungle buffalo, I would take the rifleman every time. He might miss, but the buffalo never misses.”

In the present instance, the brute was walking slowly forward as if in quest of something that had stirred his suspicion. The fear instantly occurred to Dudley that the animal had heard his stealthy footsteps. This seemed the more likely because now that the youth had be-

come absolutely still, the bull paused, as if seeking to locate the faint noise.

Standing thus, his head and shoulders were in full view, but most of his body was hidden by the exuberant foliage. Peering from behind the trunk, Dudley noted the large head, covered with dark hair, and resembling in form that of the domestic animal, the ears, the big, lustrous eyes and the amazing spread of the curving horns, beautifully symmetrical in form, but terrible when one reflected what they were capable of doing. Fully six inches in diameter at the base, they arched upward and tapered to an exceedingly fine point, which the owner could drive through a man's body as easily as if it were cheese. In such critical situations, a person often notices insignificant things. Dudley saw the glisten of several drops of moisture on the nose of the bull, and two twigs hung from his jaws, showing that he had been suddenly interrupted in his feeding.

Our young friend noted another fact: the bull instead of looking directly at the sheltering tree, was staring a little to the right.

"That shows it wasn't I he heard," reflected the lad, "or, if it was, he mistook my place, and can't find me."

The cunning buffalo of the orient will often

stop in the midst of a charge, when the hunter is hiding, and, with head thrown up, stand like a statue for several minutes, listening for the slightest sound that will betray his enemy, whom he resistlessly charges in the same instant that the knowledge comes to him. All that the lad had to do was to thrust his head an inch or two farther from behind the tree, or to stir his feet, or to make a faint noise with his lips. But it need not be said he did none of these things.

The supposition of Dudley was that the bull, after waiting a little while, would move forward to investigate. Since he would have to pass to the right or left of the trunk, all that the young man need do was to shift his own position correspondingly, so as to keep the shield between him and his enemy. The crucial task would be to avoid betraying himself.

It is said that the only way in which the tiger can get the better of the buffalo is by a stealthy approach from the rear, which allows him to leap upon his back and use his frightful claws, his victim being unable to shake him off, so as to bring his horns into play. Dudley was speculating as to whether he would be able to dart around the trunk rapidly enough to elude the

brute, who would be obliged to move upon a larger circle, when the unexpected happened.

The sharp crack of a rifle sounded through the jungle, and the buffalo was hit. The shot came from a point to the left, and the bull instantly thundered through the undergrowth toward the hunter who had dared do such a thing. The diversion was providential, and, had Dudley Mayson accepted it as such, not a shadow of danger would have remained to threaten him: all he had to do was to change the course he had been following.

But an American youth, when caught in such circumstances, can be counted upon to do the very thing he should not do.

Relieved of all fear, the lad left his position and started after the buffalo whose course could be traced by the trampled vegetation, and who could be plainly heard as he crashed through the undergrowth with an impetuosity that seemed would overturn any tree with which he came in collision.

Dudley had not run more than a hundred yards when he became suddenly aware that the noise of the buffalo's progress had ceased. Had not this cessation been so abrupt, the pursuer would have believed it was due to the distance passed by the bull which had carried him beyond

hearing. What the youth did not suspect was the fact: the brute had paused in order to locate his foe through the sense of hearing. Dudley, therefore, in following up the buffalo, was doing a most dangerous thing for himself.

He also paused, and looked about and listened. Even then he had only to remain motionless for a little while, when the savage brute would soon resume his search for the hunter that had wounded him. He had not located the youth who was stealing upon him from the rear.

"I know that that bullet hit him," reflected the young American, "for I saw him flinch; it looks as if the buffalo has fallen after his short run."

Dudley resumed his advance but was wise enough to use the utmost care. A dozen paces took him in sight of the bull whose pose and appearance were much the same as before. He was standing in the same attitude, with head raised and looking to the front, as if he knew the hunter he was seeking was somewhere in that direction. The youth noted his sleek, snuff-colored side, and massive flanks and legs upon which he was planted like a rock, and he could well believe the accounts he had read of the brute's ferocious daring.

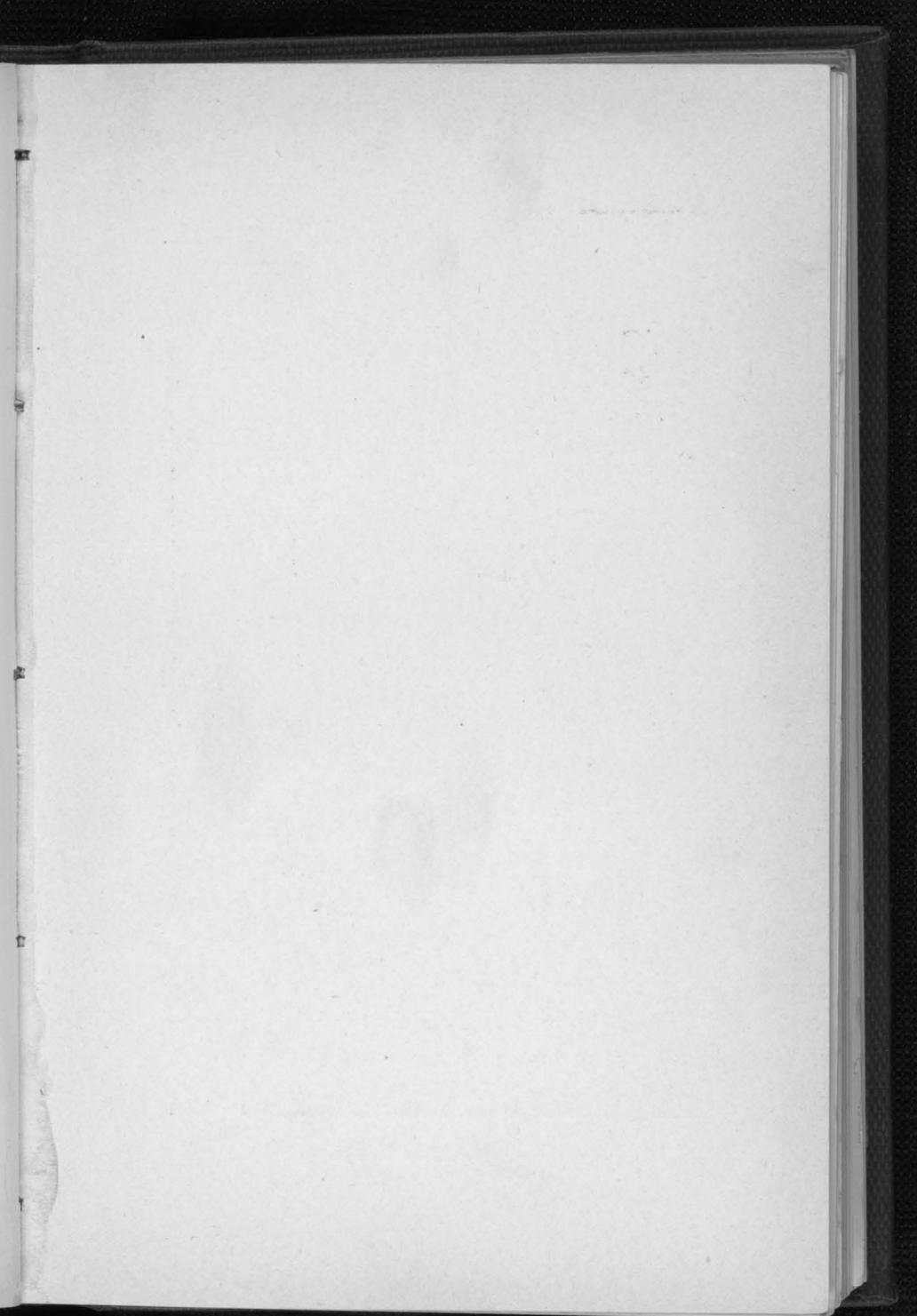
It seemed odd that the bull kept his nose pointed in one direction; but, since he was likely to try to use his sense of sight, the youth, seeing no tree near at hand that was large enough to avail him, crouched down in the dense shrubbery. This was an effectual screen, and by gently parting a few leaves in front, he could see the buffalo, who must have been unable to detect him.

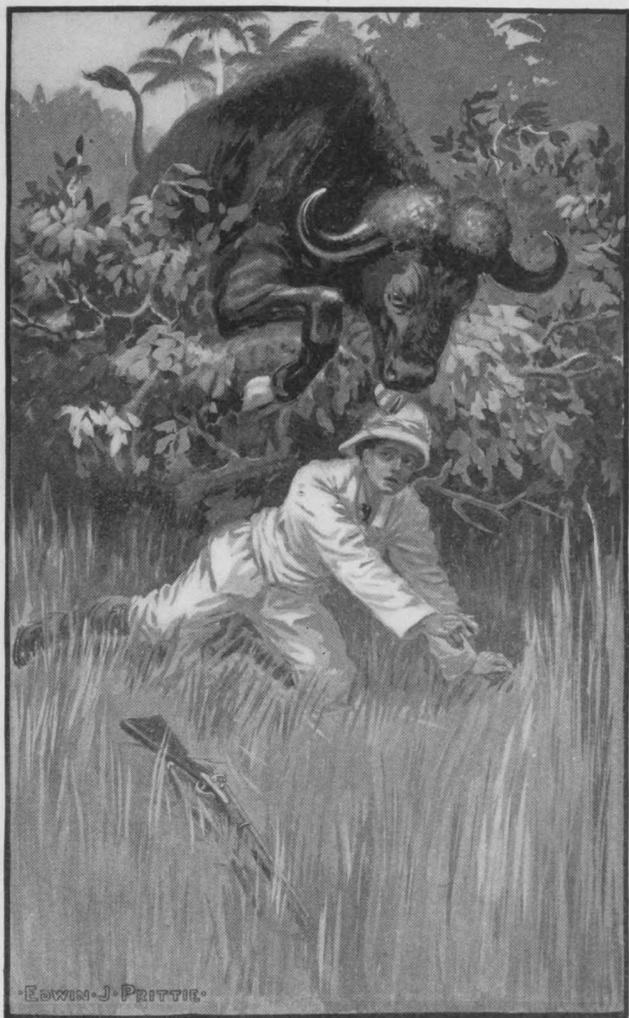
That this was a wise precaution was proved a minute later, when the bull, without stirring a hoof, turned his head and stared toward the point where the young American was crouching. Dudley was not scared, for he knew he was invisible.

“But, if he should happen to come in this direction,” reflected the lad, “it will put me in a bad hole——”

Again the report of a gun rang through the jungle, and the terrifying fact connected with it was that the shot was fired from directly behind Dudley Mayson! Indeed the bullet must have passed over his head in order to reach its mark.

The peril burst upon him like “a bolt from the blue.” Hardly had the sound, so different from the usual noises of the jungle, split the sultry air, when the bull charged like a demon. The sight of a young man leaping up from the





One of its hoofs grazed his hat.

ground and scurrying off at headlong speed, must have told the buffalo that he was the offender, and he made for him with irrestrainable fury.

It was not strange that the fugitive was "rattled" for the moment, and, instead of leaping up and catching the nearest branch and scrambling beyond reach of the charging buffalo, he turned, shot wildly at the brute, and then, flinging his gun aside, wheeled and ran as never before.

A few rods in front was a thick clump of undergrowth, so dense indeed that the fugitive did not believe he could penetrate it. He made a quick circuit around and crouched down in the hope that his pursuer would not note where he tried to hide himself. In the exceedingly brief interval thus employed, Dudley reflected that three shots had been fired at the buffalo within the last few minutes. Probably the last had missed, though there was no certainty of it, but the first had not, and it was almost certain that the second found its mark. Moreover the man who fired them must have done so with deliberation, and therefore with skill.

This being so, the young American asked himself why the infuriated beast did not fall down and depart this life, but there was hardly time

to ask the question, when the bull was upon him. Instead of passing around the bushes, however, he lowered his head and plowed through them. So tremendous was his momentum that he went clean over the head of the fugitive, who felt one of his hoofs graze his hat, and caught the rush of the wind created by the meteoric charge.

Dudley sprang up and started to do what he ought to have done before—dashed for a tree, hoping for a chance to leap up among the limbs, or at least to shelter himself behind the trunk; but the buffalo gave him no opportunity to try this recourse; for, with an agility surprising in so large an animal, he checked himself, after passing through the brush, whirled about and made for the lad again.

The latter saw that it was useless to run, and indeed to try to reach any kind of refuge. The bull was too near, and his speed too great. The boy, therefore, appealed to a last desperate, and seemingly hopeless resort.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LOST IN THE JUNGLE

ONE day, several years previous to this incident, Dudley Mayson, in crossing a field, was overtaken by an angry bull which tossed him in the air. A farmer, while running to his help, shouted to him to lie still flat on his face. The boy did so, and the savage animal was so puzzled by sight of the inanimate figure, that he did nothing further until the man came up and drove him away. Whether the bull would not have renewed his attack, if left unmolested, was an open question.

The incident came back to the young American, when he found it impossible to get away from the fierce buffalo, and he lay flat, fervently praying to heaven to help him, for he was no longer able to help himself. The brute paused a few feet away, snorting with rage, and apparently waiting for the youth to rise in order that he might get a fair chance at him; and, again the question as to what the assailant would have

done, had the fugitive remained quiescent, remained unsettled.

The bull was on the point of moving forward, probably to shove his horns under the body, when he emitted a strange, guttural bellow and went down like a log to the earth. Dudley heard him struggle, and then when all became still, he ventured to raise his head and stealthily glance at the brute. He was lying on his side as dead as dead could be. One at least of the shots had been so well aimed that it closed the career of this formidable denizen of the jungle.

"I couldn't have had a narrower escape," was the truthful exclamation of the youth, who thanked heaven over and over again. He felt so faint from the reaction that he had to sit down for a few minutes until he could rally. Then he rose to his feet, and still trembling in his limbs, went back to where he had flung his rifle. His next act was to reload it, for he did not need to be reminded that the emergency was likely to come at any moment when his life would depend upon its possession.

"It would be curious now if it was *my* bullet that laid him out; yes, it would be so curious," he grimly added, "that it couldn't be true. I wonder who my friend was that used his gun in

nick of time, though if he hadn't fired at all, it would have been as well with me."

The natural supposition of Dudley was that the other would come forward and reveal himself. Giving no further attention to the dead buffalo, the youth held his position for some minutes looking and listening, but the usual sights and sounds were not disturbed by the approach of any person, and he was forced to believe that whoever the individual might be, he had no intention of appearing in the open.

When the buffalo collapsed, the thought came to Dudley that it was Nughwa who had befriended him, and who was indulging in a little characteristic amusement at his expense, but a minute's reflection convinced him of the impossibility of this being so. The reasons against it were too numerous to be named.

It followed, therefore, as quite probable that the stranger was one of the native hunters for whom the young man had been looking. And, if there was one of them near, in all probability there were more, and the danger which Nughwa feared became more tangible than ever.

The youth might spend hours in guessing and speculating and little good would it do him. Only one prudent course was open: he should

return to camp with the least possible delay, and he set out to do so.

“Nughwa told me to keep my bearings,” he reflected, “and I ought to be able to do so. I went hunting a good many times, on the other side of the world, and I don’t remember that I once lost my way. About all that I have to direct me is the sun, and I don’t see that that is of any use. It is pretty well down in the sky, which must be toward the west, but I have forgotten what direction that is from the camp.”

It will be seen that the young man was in an unfortunate situation, but he was by no means hopeless. Resolved to do nothing blindly, he carefully recalled the course he was following when he discovered he was near the wild buffalo. It was comparatively easy to retrace his steps to that point. This done, he felt sure of the direction to take in order to reach the plain. The route brought the sun in his face, and he must bear in mind to hold it thus until he emerged from the jungle, at or near where the white elephant was held captive.

Making his calculations as carefully as he could, he resolutely kept his face toward the declining sun, and threaded his way through the undergrowth and between trees, on the alert for danger which was liable to appear at any mo-

ment. The various denizens of the tropical jungle were hardly ever absent. He paid no attention to them, so long as they did not interfere with him. An aged and gray monkey emitted his warning cry from a limb a little distance in advance, and he and fully a dozen others scampered off among the branches, until seemingly at a safe distance, when they peeped down at him, some from behind the trunks of trees and others from the topmost boughs, as if challenging him to follow them in a frolic.

"You can climb too well for me," said Dudley, smiling at their antics; "I shouldn't have much of a show in playing tag with you."

Afraid that they might become unpleasantly familiar, he turned off so as to flank the mischievous creatures. Much to his relief, they let him go without further attention.

Our young friend had too many disturbing thoughts to notice monkeys, even when, a few minutes later, others appeared in front of him. It will be admitted that he had had an exceedingly narrow escape from the wild buffalo, but he asked himself whether having met one, he was not likely to meet others. It certainly was singular that this dreaded bull should be wholly alone in the jungle. What more probable than that his herd was at no great distance? This

fear caused the youth to advance with the utmost caution, using his eyes and ears every moment, and often pausing to peer into the exuberant vegetation that was on every hand. He had discovered the bull through the slight rustling he made, and he meant to do so again in case the same kind of danger threatened.

The lesson of that encounter was not lost upon him. He knew more about Asiatic buffaloes than he had ever known before.

“If I catch sight of one of them, I’ll try to slip away; if he sees me, I’ll take to the nearest tree—and I won’t have to go far—carrying my gun with me; then I can shoot and load from my perch; for,” he added, “I never heard of a buffalo that could climb a tree.”

One of the greatest shocks of his life came within the following five minutes. He was stealing forward in the slow, guarded manner described, when he was startled by a low, almost inaudible *moo*, which came from a point almost directly behind him. He turned his head like a flash, and there was a second buffalo, not more than twenty yards away, that had seen him before he looked around.

It was a cow, not so large as the bull that had been killed a short time before, but she had a formidable spread of horn, and as ferocious

a temper as the dethroned monarch. Probably, too, she had companions not far off. She was standing in almost the precise attitude of the bull when first seen, with head raised, and a pose of intense attention. But there was this difference—she was not listening for sounds of an enemy, but was looking at that enemy and apparently debating what she should do with him.

Dudley Mayson understood all this at a glance, and the momentous question that called for quick decision was as to what he was going to do. Buffalo and boy were staring fixedly at each other and the critical situation must quickly end.

Our young friend brought his gun to the front, so as to lose no time in firing should it become necessary, but he wished to avoid using the weapon, when it was almost certain that such use would only add to the rage of the brute. Ten or less paces to the right would place him underneath a tree, whose lower limb he could reach by a single smart leap, but the searching glance he cast at it told him it was likely to bend so low under his weight as to bring him within range of the fearful horns, before he could clamber to a higher perch. By springing to the branch closer to the trunk, he would ob-

tain greater rigidity, but the limb curved upward so that he was in doubt whether he could grasp it at a single leap.

Dudley decided to make the best use of the seconds, and not wait until the buffalo charged. So, when he had taken one long, satisfying look at the animal, he began edging sideways toward the tree which he had fixed upon as his refuge. The temptation to break into a run and make a sudden dash for it was almost resistless, but he did not need to be reminded that nothing is so certain to induce pursuit as flight. The sight of him running headlong would influence his enemy into a furious onslaught. In retreating, the young man must do so without attracting the attention of the buffalo.

Accordingly, he began edging to the right, inch by inch, and with his gaze upon the brute, who could not be expected to retain her position for more than a minute longer. It is not unlikely that this was the first time the cow buffalo had even seen a real biped (leaving monkeys out of the doubtful classification), and her emotion at first must have been wonderment at the strange sight. Be that as it may, it is not to be supposed that, when she would not hesitate to charge a lion or tiger in defense of her young, she would feel any fear of the handsome but

insignificant creature that stood in front of her.

Dudley kept up the shifting of his feet, resolutely refraining from hastening the action, and watchful all the time of his enemy. A casual glance at the fellow would have made one think he was motionless, and yet, from the moment he started, he was not stationary for a second. Like the creeping of the shadow over the dial, he drew steadily nearer his goal.

With every inch of advance, his hopes arose. Sooner than would be supposed, he had crossed one-half of the interval; it was now certainly within reach; he had not a particle of doubt that he could elude his foe.

A few more inches were passed, when Dudley felt there was no reason for further hesitation. Withdrawing his gaze from the buffalo, he quickly dashed across the intervening space, and with a vigorous bound upward, grasped the protruding limb with his right hand, the left holding his rifle. The seizure of the branch was followed by a snapping sound, and the next instant he lay flat on his back, with his hand closed over the bough which was across his breast. The wood was so brittle that it broke off close to the trunk like a pipe stem.

In a panic, the terrified youth sprang to his

feet, and dropping his gun, dashed for the trunk of the tree, up which he climbed with a vigorous quickness that would have roused the admiration of the most agile monkey.

Not until twenty feet above the earth did he stop and breathe with a feeling of safety. Then he peered downward, expecting to see the baffled animal glaring up at him in impotent rage. But she was not in sight.

"It's mighty lucky she didn't come for me, when that limb broke!" gasped the relieved Dudley; "for she would have got me sure."

Then he turned to inspect the animal herself. She was so near that he expected to see her in plain view, but the density of the tree's foliage was an impervious screen. From where he was perched close to the trunk, he could not catch a glimpse of the buffalo.

The young American felt a longing to get possession of his weapon. There it lay, where he was sure he could snatch it up and climb out of danger before the brute could reach him. In his panic, he had dropped the gun, and, the reflection that his foe might keep him up the tree indefinitely, where he could not help himself in the least, led the youth to make his decision quickly.

Before descending to the earth, however, he

must have a glimpse of the buffalo. It was all important to know something, if possible, of her exact location and probable intentions, before he came down to recover his gun. It might be that she had approached a little closer, and it would not do to expose himself to her anger.

The only way for Dudley to gain the necessary view was to move out among the limbs on the side toward the buffalo, and then part the foliage sufficiently to allow him to peep out and see the brute. At the height he had reached the branches made the task an easy one; but, unfortunately for our young friend, he failed to recall that the grain of the wood was of phenomenal brittleness.

## CHAPTER XV

### FROM DARKNESS TO FIRELIGHT

**D**UDLEY MAYSON moved carefully out on the limb, which bent beneath his weight, until he had proceeded far enough to pause and reach out his hand to part the intervening foliage. He was in the act of doing so, when, without any warning, the branch upon which his feet rested broke off short. This threw his weight upon the limb above his head, which he grasped with both hands. That, too, snapped apart with the same promptness as the other, and he went downward like a plummet. He instinctively clutched at the branches, but they served merely to break his fall, and he landed on his feet, slightly jarred but unhurt.

Fearful that he had no time to recover his rifle, he whisked to the other side of the trunk, so as to interpose it between him and the buffalo, and then, with an upward leap, threw his arms about the comparatively narrow trunk and began desperately climbing.

It will be noted that his position was such that his face was turned toward the point where he had seen the buffalo, and, while climbing, he naturally looked in that direction. To his amazement, he saw nothing of the animal. She had vanished.

But he continued climbing until he reached the base of the first limbs. He was too high to be in any danger, and resting for some minutes, he stared in turn at all points of the compass. Since the obstructing foliage was above his head, his view was quite clear. In no direction could he see the buffalo. The evidence was clear that when he made his dash for the lower limb, the cow was startled by his appearance and sudden action, and hurried off. The young hunter's panic was causeless.

"I didn't expect anything of *that* kind," was his thought, still hesitating and afraid to believe in his good fortune. Finally, he slowly slid down the trunk, and picking up his gun, stared searchingly at all the points in his field of vision. Nothing could be seen to cause the slightest misgiving.

"That cow certainly hasn't as ugly a disposition as the bull had; it may be," he sagely added, "that she has a calf not far off, and has gone to that. She wouldn't be so kind if I fol-

lowed after her, and, since my experience with the other, I am glad enough to leave her alone."

Relieved thus unexpectedly of a most trying situation, Dudley now gave his energies to extricating himself from the jungle. The afternoon was well along, and he had no time to idle. He took good care to avoid going toward the spot where he had seen the last buffalo, and then pressed on with more vigor than he had used in entering the jungle. When he had gone a considerable distance, he halted.

"I don't think I went more than half a mile from Nughwa's camp, and I'm sure I have traveled that far on my way back—"

At this point, the youth made the disturbing discovery that the declining sun, instead of being in front, as it should have been, was almost directly behind him. He was farther from the open country than when he encountered the buffalo bull. It was inevitable that the many causes named should have interfered with the course he had laid out for himself, but he ought not to have forgotten the matter as he had done.

Nothing was to be gained by regrets, or by following his impressions of the right course. He knew he should walk toward the setting sun, and he resolutely set out to do so, though it was

with the oppressive fear that night would find him still in the jungle. There is probably no task in the world easier for a person than to go astray in a solitude, when he lacks everything in the nature of guide marks. When the short, tropical twilight settled into the gloom of night, Dudley was still wandering through the jungle, where he had never trod before, and without even the sun to beckon him aright.

The situation would have tried the nerves of a veteran hunter. It was far different from that of a man in an American forest, where there is little danger of an attack by wild animals, and where, after starting a good, crackling fire, he is safe from molestation. In the jungle, such a protection is only partly effective, and Dudley Mayson dreaded to stop and settle down for an all night's stay in the wild region. He could not help believing he was comparatively near the camp, and he might reach it by pushing on; he certainly could not do so by giving up the attempt.

By and by the darkness became so profound that he held his gun in front to avoid running into the trees and obtruding limbs. It seemed to him that the voices of the jungle were never so numerous and terrifying. They included animals, birds and insects, and more than once

he fancied he heard the hiss of some serpent in his path. The dread that the putting down of a foot would be followed by the deadly sting of the reptile caused him to hesitate, and ask himself whether he were not taking too many chances, even with the prospect of soon reaching camp. But it was the multiplicity of the perils that held him to work, and caused him to see little choice between standing still and going on.

As he had noticed before, the simultaneous glow of millions of fireflies illuminated some of the trees from top to bottom; but they made the blackness of the night more Egyptian from contrast. The Siamese bats are as large as owls, and every now and then some of them seemed to find pleasure in whisking so close to the head of the youth that he instinctively dodged. Once one of them grazed his face, and he made a vicious slap at the repulsive thing. He missed the bat but gave his own nose a stinging whack.

Of all his frights, the most nerve-racking was the sudden belief, now and then, that some wild animal was following him. Dudley stopped short, and, with gun in front, peered into the gloom that was as impenetrable as a stone wall. The fact that when he thus halted, he heard

nothing of his pursuer would have been comforting, but for the belief that the animal was waiting for him to turn his face away again. This dread caused the youth to walk backward for some distance. When his eyes were useless, he could not save himself from becoming entangled in a running vine, and going over on his back with his feet kicking the air. He was up in an instant, expecting to feel the fatal impact of some tiger or leopard, but he was spared, and, after a time, ventured to walk in a natural manner.

Dudley had reached the belief that the only hope for him was to get help from Nughwa. If the distance to camp was as slight as he supposed, a shout ought to travel the space over the noises of the jungle. It was certain that the guide would not set out to aid him unless he was summoned to do so.

The lost youth was about to call the name of his friend, when he caught the twinkle of a point of light a little way in front of him. It was different from the glow of the fireflies, and with a thrill of astonishment he exclaimed.

"It is made by a fire! I believe it marks the camp of the hunters that are trying to steal the white elephant from us."

He began treading carefully toward the light,

but had taken only a few steps when it disappeared. This he knew was caused by the intervening vegetation. He pressed on and in a few minutes saw the light again. He pressed on faster than before and had gone but a short distance, when he excitedly called out:

“Hurrah, Nughwa! I’ve found you at last!”

It was a strange scene upon which the lad looked—one that he was sure to remember always. He had left the jungle and stood amid the tall grass of the plain, on the edge of which three fires were burning, with Nughwa passing from one to the other and carefully nursing them all. Each was only a few paces from the white elephant, which formed the centre of the flaming triangle. Wahrida was spending the night somewhere out of sight, but was within instant call should her aid be needed.

The prisoner was subdued for the time, and in his helpless fear had sunk down to the ground, as if in the collapse of despair. At intervals he partly raised his head and looked first at one pile of flames, and then at another, wondering perhaps which would be the first to begin consuming him. Holding his head motionless for a minute or so, he moved it vaguely about in air, as if groping for the hand of an unseen friend, after which he let his head drop,

like one who knew it was useless to make any appeal or to try to help himself.

Before the coming of Dudley Mayson, the captive made his mute supplication to the professional elephant catcher, but Nughwa would never have succeeded in his peculiar calling had he allowed his sympathies to affect his conduct. He knew his business too well for that.

He raised his eyes as the youth came into the circle of light, and remarked without the least trace of excitement:

"You stayed longer than I expected."

"And longer than I intended."

"How came you to do that?"

Nughwa had laid aside his gun, and now paused, and, looking in the face of his friend, awaited his answer.

"I got into a mix-up with a wild buffalo and lost my bearings."

"I heard you fire three times, and supposed you were safe in a tree and your last shot finished the beast, whatever it was."

"Only one of the shots was mine."

The guide showed his surprise.

"Who fired the others?"

"I wish I knew, but you can tell better than I."

Dudley now gave a hurried account of his

experience with the bull buffalo, making no mention of his minor one with the cow. The story not only interested but disturbed Nughwa.

"The hunters were later than we in reaching this place, but they are close by for all that. The two shots were fired by one of them."

"Why didn't he show himself to me?"

"He didn't want you to learn who he was. He knew you would recognize him and know how it was he happened to be here when his home is a good many miles away beyond where we killed the tiger."

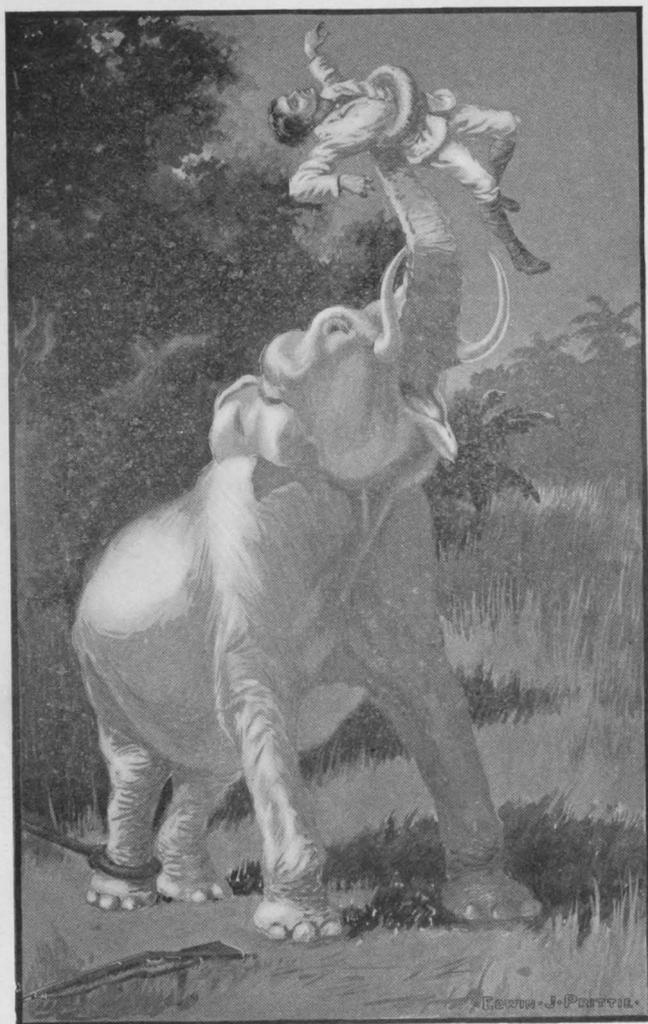
"Why did he fire from behind me at the buffalo?"

"So as to make the animal kill you; and I don't understand why he didn't, except that the man made a better shot than he intended, or possibly it was *your* shot that brought down the bull."

"If he were anxious to get me out of the way, why didn't he shoot me instead of the bull?"

"He did not dare do so; he knows you are the son of the missionary at Wahta-Shat, of whom the king at Bangkok has heard only good things. If you were shot, I would find out who did it. There would be no escape for that native, for, if the king did not punish him, I should, and he knew that. But, if it were found





It seemed that his last moment had come.

you had been gored by a buffalo, then no person could be blamed. I think, too," added Nughwa, "that those people do not wish to kill either of us, though they may, after all, try to do so; they have followed that they may steal the white elephant, or they will think a long time before they try to do more. We have talked thus far as if there were eight or ten of them, but I now believe there are not more than three, and perhaps only two. One is he who called to you in English, when the tiger was about to attack you."

"Why did not more follow us?"

"It would make trouble among themselves. That native caught enough of my words and yours to learn that we were on the spoor of a white elephant. He told his secret to a friend or two, and they have kept on our track."

"What made them so late in reaching this spot?"

"We don't know that they were late; but Wahridda traveled fast, and it must have been that they lingered a long distance to the rear, so as to prevent our discovering them through the telescope."

The words of Nughwa removed much of the fear that had troubled Dudley Mayson ever since he awoke to the fact that one of the hunt-

ers knew how to speak English, and had doubtless learned the secret of the man and boy. Nughwa did not believe these men would attempt the lives of himself or his companion. How then did the two or three expect to make good their claim to the princely prize? They knew better than to hope that the real captors could be frightened into giving him up.

A simple explanation presented itself to the young American, though he did not suggest it to the guide. It was that the other Siamese hoped by keeping not very far behind the couple, to locate the white elephant in time to become his captors, or at the least to aid in making him prisoner.

And since they had failed in both the major and minor scheme, it was natural that Dudley Mayson should say to himself:

“I don't see that we need give those hunters a further thought.”

## CHAPTER XVI

### A LESSON

**N**UGHWA meant to hurry the taming of the white elephant as much as possible, but with all the haste, several days must pass before it would be safe to start him on the southward journey to Bangkok. In more hopeful spirits than at any time since parting with the native hunters, Dudley Mayson ate his evening meal of fruit, and, after drinking from the nearest stream, whose water was hardly cool enough to refresh him when he laved his face, he lay down to sleep, as peacefully as if in his own bed at Wahta-Shat.

Following his plan of hastening matters, the native did not allow his prisoner to forget that he was in the hands of a merciless master. In addition to subjecting him to the uncomfortable heat from the fires, Nughwa at intervals drew a flaming brand from one of the piles, and carried it to a point within a few feet of the elephant's head. Then he slowly circled it about, and fainted as if he meant to thrust it into the

captive's eyes. The albino was frightened, but displayed a certain stoical resignation, which showed that he understood he had no way of helping himself. Looking upon the means as necessary to the end, Nughwa was not hindered by any sympathy for the hapless captive.

Dudley Mayson was so fatigued from his tramp through the jungle and its terrifying experiences that he slept until midnight, when he was awakened by the startling report of a gun, seemingly directly over his head. Coming to a sitting posture, he asked in a scared undertone:

"What's up, Nughwa?"

"Nothing; sleep on and don't mind a little thing like that."

"A little thing like that! What made you fire your gun?"

"I'm taming the elephant."

"And taming me too," growled the youth; "it seems to me you're crowding the poor fellow too hard."

"I can't do that; don't fret; I'm giving him a little amusement—that's all."

While talking, the native was busy reloading his weapon. When this was done, he stepped near the prostrate elephant, and discharged the gun close to his immense ear. The brute started convulsively, as if from an electric shock, and

struck savagely at his tormentor. Had the blow reached the native it would have finished him, but he was too much of a veteran to forget himself, and in this instance a miss was as good as a mile.

Nughwa did not continue this system of treatment, and, when Dudley lay down again and closed his eyes he was disturbed no more by the reports of the gun. The fires, however, were not allowed to slumber, and the youth noticed, when he opened his eyes at daylight, that they were burning as bright as ever.

“Well, what is to be done to-day?” was the natural question of our young friend.

“We’ll let the fires go down, all except one, which will burn low, but will not go out.”

“And why not?”

“I want to use that *to smoke him.*”

The youth looked questioningly at his friend who explained:

“If there’s a breeze, no matter how slight, we’ll fix the fire so that the smoke will blow over in his face, and he will have to breathe it. That will make him cough, and when an elephant coughs, it is like an earthquake.”

“If you keep on, Nughwa, in the way you have begun, you will kill the poor fellow. Why do you not show him a little mercy?”

The native grinned at the simplicity of the youth, and reminded him that this was not the first of the *elephantidae* he had made captive and tamed. Nughwa said he was willing to admit that he sometimes played the fool, and he had done so with emphasis since setting out to capture the white elephant, but he had never lost one of the gigantic creatures, through ill-treatment of him, and he was inclined to believe he would not begin with the elephant that was far more valuable than all he had caught in his life before.

"I don't doubt that, but it pains me to see you hurry the taming business and thereby make it more cruel. There is no need for such haste, for we are in command of our time."

"There again it is likely you are wrong, but we will not talk about it. All the dried fish that we brought is gone. There is enough fruit within reach to serve us, but it will be well to have something better; I will make a little hunt through the jungle."

"And will also look for those hunters?"

"I shall not forget them. I hope to meet them and have a little talk; they don't understand matters and it will do them good to hear what I have to say."

"Shall I go with you?"

“No; the white elephant must never be left alone; one of us will be with him at all times, and both of us most of the time.”

“What of Wahrida?”

“I called her to me before you awoke, and told her that when she was wanted I would call her. If anything happens that makes you need my help, shout as you know how to shout, and I will come to you. I shall not go so far that I will not be able to hear you.”

When Nughwa turned away the sun was well up in the sky, and another flaming day opened over throbbing plain and suffocating jungle. Standing within the shadow at the edge of the wood, Dudley looked out at the prisoner who was exposed to the fervid rays. A few minutes after the disappearance of the native, the animal climbed slowly to his feet, and stood as he had stood, when suddenly contemplating the man who had put this indignity upon him. It was as if he knew a respite had come, and enough courage had returned to make him feel like resuming his natural posture.

The lad could not help pitying the bulky creature, held a hapless prisoner by the small thong looped about his leg and fastened to the trunk of the tree. It seemed to the youth that there was a human expression in the eyes,

which appealed to him to do something to relieve his misery.

“I should like to help you, but it won't do. What's the use of capturing you if you are to be turned loose again? You will become the favorite and pet of the king; there won't be any delicacy too good for you, and the ignorant people will worship you, as if you were divine, but I wonder whether you will ever be again as happy as when roaming the jungles of your native country.”

Dudley stood for some minutes contemplating the hapless monarch, and then yielded to an impulse that was more creditable to his heart than to his judgment.

“I don't suppose Nughwa will be pleased, but I can't stand idly by and see you starve when there is plenty of food almost within your reach.”

He ran along the margin of the jungle to where he remembered seeing the red berries, which were relished by Wahrida. It took only a few minutes to fill his hat, when he came back and set it on the ground within easy reach of the animal, hurriedly retreating to a safe point. He had no intention of stirring the anger of the resentful prisoner, who swung forward a few paces, extended his trunk and speedily appro-

priated the contents of the hat. Quicker than the gathering was the disposition made of them. Then the captive looked at the youth in a way that plainly said:

"Thank you, young man; bring me some more."

"I am ready to do so, but I'd like you to go back a little farther."

It was proof of the sagacity of the species that the elephant understood the hesitation of the lad, for, almost immediately he moved slowly backward toward the tree to which he was fastened, keeping his face turned toward the youth. The latter ran nimbly forward, picked up his hat and was off again.

Four times did he place the hat with its berries within reach of the prisoner, and the same number of times, as a matter of course, they were devoured. When this was done, Dudley fancied he saw a noticeable increase in the girth of the animal.

"If I keep it up, Nughwa will notice, when he comes back, how you have swelled and he will know what I've been doing, and there's no saying what *he* will do. Anyhow, I'm certain you feel a good deal better, and, if he doesn't like it, he mustn't give me the chance to be merciful."

Our young friend was in the midst of his self-satisfied musings, when he made a startling discovery. He and the white elephant had spectators. Several hundred yards to the north, and close to the side of the jungle, but in plain view, two Siamese were standing motionless and looking at him and the animal, as if they hardly understood the meaning of the picture before them.

The lad in turn surveyed them with absorbing interest. That they were the native hunters, who had been following him and Nughwa ever since the elephant hunt, he did not doubt, but they were too far off and too much screened by the tall grass and vegetation for him to see them clearly. The guide had taken the glass with him, so Dudley could not avail himself of that aid.

Yielding to a natural impulse, he beckoned to them to approach, but, instead of doing so, they turned and pressed into the jungle. Why they should have shown themselves puzzled the youth, and he was inclined to think they might after all be strangers, instead of the two whom Nughwa had in mind, and from whom he expected some sort of trouble.

"I don't know whether I should call to him or not. If they are strangers, then more than we

supposed know about the white elephant. When Nughwa comes back, he will have something more to tell, and he will hurry up the taming of our prisoner——”

While looking toward the spot where he had just seen the natives, Dudley Mayson had his back toward the albino, and, unsuspected by himself, he was within his reach. He was reminded of his forgetfulness by a touch upon his shoulder, and, turning his head, saw the trunk insinuating itself about his arm. With a frightened cry, he struggled hurriedly to wrest himself free, but had his strength been ten-fold what it was, it would have availed him nothing.

He did not shout to Nughwa, for had the native dashed forward with the speed of the wind, he could not have arrived in time to be of the slightest help. Wahrida was much nearer, but was beyond sight in the jungle, and she could not plunge to the spot soon enough to prevent the prisoner from working his will with the young American who was certainly caught in the toils.

In his frantic struggles, his hat fell off, and he tumbled to the ground. He tried to bring his gun around so as to use it, but he was handled so roughly that it was knocked from

his grasp, and when he made a clutch at it, he had been drawn too far from the weapon to reach it with his hand. The next instant, the elephant by a dextrous movement, shifted his hold from the arm to the waist, and raised the boy from the ground.

Certain that his last moment had come, Dudley ceased his resistance and commended his soul to God. He shut his eyes, and held his breath, believing that the next moment he would be dashed to the earth and trampled upon.

But nothing of the kind took place. The brute, after raising him high in air, set him down as gently as a father would have deposited his child upon his feet. Still dazed and terrified, the youth remained motionless, awaiting the instant he would be flung down and crushed under the ponderous feet.

He stood thus for a second or two, when he was roused from his daze by the discovery that the elephant had withdrawn his trunk from around his body and for the moment he was free. With a thrill, he bounded off several rods, until certain he was outside the zone of danger, when he paused and looked back.

The white elephant had made no attempt to pursue him, but was standing close to the tree to which he was fastened, with the looped rub-

ber rope coiled loosely on the ground, and looking at the frightened lad, as if amused by his action. If it were possible for his species to smile, he surely would have done so at that time.

Through the brain of Dudley Mayson, a glimmering of the truth began to force itself. It is well known that the *elephantidæ* remember kindnesses as long as insults. The lad had just shown mercy to one in need of it, and the beneficiary took the rather curious means described to show that he appreciated it.

“You might as well kill a fellow as scare him to death,” said the happy and grateful youth; “I wonder what would have happened to Nughwa, if he had been caught as I was and I guess I needn’t wonder either,” he added.

When Dudley had fully recovered from the shock, he saw the significance of what had just occurred. If it was too soon for the giant captive to be subdued and tamed, the point had certainly been reached, where he was friendly disposed toward the junior member of the firm of elephant-catchers, while his feelings were the opposite respecting the senior partner. It cannot be doubted that as matters stood, the white elephant hated the one and loved the other.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A DISASTER

“**I** THINK you are entitled to a few more berries for that,” said the pleased youth, after a smiling look at the huge creature which seemed to be surveying him with peculiar interest; “and you shall have them, too.”

When our friend came hurrying back, with the crimson fruit, he forced himself to do something which tried his nerves more than he would have been willing to admit. Instead of setting down the hat and retreating, he walked in front of the animal and held it out to him. The captive moved swiftly forward and began eating the berries. He was near enough to seize the lad, but made no attempt to do so.

“I wonder what Nughwa will say when he finds you and I have made up; I guess it will be best to keep mum; I won't say anything if you don't. I haven't kept the fire burning very strong, and I'll let him think I forgot about it,

that is, if he chooses to think so, which I don't believe he will do."

It was a little past noon when the native emerged from the jungle, bearing the quarter of a deer on his shoulder. He had shot the animal at such a distance that his friend did not hear the report. The coals from the fire were raked out, and the venison cut in strips and laid on them. Had the weather been cold or even temperate, the solid food would have been relished more than it was, but the two made a fair meal, and would be quite content to rely upon fruit for an indefinite time to follow. As it was, the dinner was composed partly of mangosteens and durians, Dudley having become extravagantly fond of the latter.

Just as the meal was finished and Nughwa had lit his pipe with a live coal, he glanced down to the ground, as if something had caught his eye. Such was the fact, and, stooping, he picked up a red berry, which he inspected with no little interest. Then he looked at the jungle, and next glanced at the white elephant, finally turning his face with an odd but significant expression toward Dudley. The latter blushed guiltily, but neither spoke. Nughwa understood what had occurred during his absence and

he knew that his young friend was aware that he knew it: that was sufficient.

"Did you see anything of the hunters?" asked the younger.

"I neither saw nor heard anything of them; it may be after all they are not in the neighborhood."

"I am afraid they are," said Dudley, who thereupon told of his observing the strangers at some distance to the north, on the margin of the jungle, adding that his view did not permit him to decide whether or not he had seen them before.

"I think they are the two that have been following us since the tiger hunt, and one of them shot the buffalo yesterday."

"Why did they let me see them when there was no need of it?"

"They knew that rifle shot would give us knowledge of their presence in the neighborhood, and no harm could come from showing themselves. Perhaps it might benefit them by making us think they intended no wrong."

The heat seemed more oppressive than on the preceding day. Our friends were glad to keep within the shade of the jungle, while the white elephant turned the shadow cast by the tree to his advantage. When Nughwa made a move

to renew the fires that encircled the captive, Dudley protested.

"It may be right for you to frighten and perhaps to punish him, but it is un-Christian, Nughwa, to make him suffer so much. There is no necessity for it, because, if you were not in haste, you would not torment him."

The native was impressed by this reasoning and promised to wait until evening before renewing the fires, but he gave his companion to understand that it would be useless for him to make any further appeals to him. Wahrida was heard now and then feeding in the forest near at hand; but, as she knew she would be summoned when wanted, she did not come near the camp.

Instead of sleeping, as it would seem he ought to have done, the guide passed along the side of the jungle to the spot where his companion had seen the two natives. He was anxious to interview them, and made search for some distance in the wood, but, when he rejoined his friend, he said:

"I did not come upon the first sign of them; it begins to look as if they are keeping out of my way."

"And why should they be afraid of you see-

ing them, when they know I learned of their presence here?"

Nughwa shook his head and smiled meaningly.

"It is not given to me to read their thoughts; all that we have to do is to be watchful and act the part of Christians."

"No one can dispute that, my good friend. But I cannot see that you have had more than a wink of sleep in the last twenty-four hours—if you have had that much—and you ought to take it while the chance is yours, for you can't know when it will come again."

"I intend to sleep to-night," was the indifferent response.

"Through until daylight, of course?"

"No; I could not do that if I wished; I will sleep the first half and then take your place. I will do so now."

And, without more words, the native passed just within the edge of the jungle and lay down, without anything in the way of a bed beneath or over him. He did not need it, for a covering would have been oppressive, and the leaves were as pleasant to him as eider-down to the weary traveler. Dudley Mayson knew ten minutes later that his friend was unconscious.

Finding himself master of the situation for

the time, the young American naturally gave his attention to the captive. A lad with an active imagination is sure to conjure up more fancies in such circumstances than can be described in pages of text.

“Nughwa expects me to act the part of persecutor while he sleeps, and to keep those fires going, so that the poor animal shall not know a minute of comfort, but I can’t do it, and I don’t believe there is any need of making him suffer any more. I won’t let the fires go out, but they may die down a good deal.”

Standing about half way between the sleeping native and the hapless captive, Dudley watched the animal for some minutes in silence.

“I wonder what he is thinking about. All creatures like him can think, *of course*,” he added, as if arguing the question with some one at his elbow; “he must know that no one besides me has charge of him, and because I have been kind he hopes I will set him free. By gracious! if he wasn’t a white elephant I’d do it!”

But Dudley was not so foolishly weak as to undo the great work that had been carried through in the face of so much difficulty, and, accompanied as it had been by a run of good fortune, such as rarely or never comes thrice to

a person in this life. Never for a moment did he feel disposed to release the prisoner, but he did mean to be a merciful jailer.

The elephant and the youth stood facing each other, and both motionless. It was plain the great beast was interested in this strange being, who walked on two legs, and with hardly a hundredth part of the quadruped's strength, was become through some wonderful magic, his master, as much as if the prisoner was but a tiny insect. The captive had struggled with the fierceness of desperation, but vainly, to break his bonds. He was at the mercy of this strippling, who, while his companion was relentless, had shown mercy. Was his kindness at an end?

Dudley knew there is only one line of action that is absolutely safe for the sentinel when on duty: that is continual vigilance, which must be secured by unremitting motion. So it is that the wearied watcher keeps pacing to and fro, with all his senses alert, knowing that if he sits down for a minute or two to rest, he is sure to be overcome ere he is aware, by slumber.

Ordinarily, our young friend would not have incurred such a risk, whose nature none understood better than he. But he reasoned:

“I have had so much sleep lately that I do

not need any; it is different with Nughwa; any way he can sleep when he chooses; I believe it wouldn't bother him to do so, if he stood on his head; it's so warm that it's mighty uncomfortable for me to keep up this eternal tramping; if no one can remember the moment he drops off to sleep, he knows when he begins to feel drowsy, and I'll take warning and get upon my feet again; but, if I shouldn't, I can't see that any harm will be done."

Dudley did not feel the slightest drowsiness, after he had been seated for fully fifteen minutes, but at the end of that time, he made a remarkable discovery. Just beyond the bulky, statue-like figure of the elephant, another form gradually assumed distinctness in the gloom. At first the sentinel thought it was his fancy; then he believed it was some prowling wild animal, and the next minute he knew he was looking at a man.

From somewhere in the world of darkness, he had come forward and now paused on the verge of the field of vision,—too far off to be seen distinctly, and yet nigh enough to prevent any mistake as to his species.

The instant and natural conclusion of the youth was that the man was one of those whom he had seen a few hours before, and that he

had come forward to reconnoitre the camp. It was impossible, as Dudley viewed it, that he should hold any immediate designs upon the white elephant. He might have one or more companions near at hand, but they would not dare brave the anger of Nughwa. In other words, the young American believed that the stranger had come forward merely to spy out the land; the result of such spying would appear later.

It will be noted that since the interloper was in a line with the elephant, the back of the latter was toward him. So far as Dudley could tell, the man had made no more noise in his advance than a shadow. The elephant, therefore, could not be aware of the intrusion.

The sentinel had hardly reached this belief when the animal slowly swung his head around so far as he could, and looked at the man standing a few paces to the rear. In some way, possibly by scent, he had discovered his presence. He stared fixedly at him for three or four minutes, and then the huge head swayed ponderously back to its former position. The albino felt no further interest in the fellow and resumed his steady, unvarying inspection of the youth.

One conclusion of this peculiar situation was reasonable: the stranger was not alone. He

had at least another companion near by, and more than likely several of them, who did not choose to reveal themselves. Dudley might well speculate as to why the single native had done so, but the action of him and the others were incomprehensible from the first, and the sentinel made no effort to explain that which promised to explain itself before many hours should pass.

The most important question the youth asked himself was as to whether he should awaken Nughwa and acquaint him with the situation. He decided not to do so for the reason that there seemed nothing to call for immediate action. The guide was in need of the rest that had come to him, and it would be easy enough to summon him at any instant. With his sleep unbroken until midnight, he would be in the best form for the trying hours before him. So Nughwa was not disturbed.

Dudley had risen to his feet, and now noticed that the elephant had again turned his head and was looking to the rear. The lad took a step toward him, and on the instant, the shadowy form beyond disappeared. Evidently the Siamese just then did not desire any closer acquaintance.

The young American stood for a minute un-

decided as to his duty. Seeing him so near, the elephant extended his trunk as if to caress him. Dudley felt just enough timidity remaining to decline to respond, and, returning to his former position, sat down on the ground. At the end of fifteen or twenty minutes he was asleep.

Nughwa having counted upon his comrade to awaken him, did not rouse himself as all veteran hunters can do, but slept straight through until the first streakings of light in the east. A minute later Dudley was startled by a shout which brought him to his feet as if from an electric shock.

“What is the matter?” he demanded confusedly, staring about him.

Never had he seen the face of the guide so agitated, as he answered in a voice, tremulous with emotion:

“What is the matter! *The white elephant is gone!*”

“What do you mean?”

“He has been stolen while we slept!”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE NEW PURSUIT

**T**HE startling news was true. Dudley Mayson ran the few paces to the tree where he saw that the rubber rope had been cleanly cut by a knife. The cunning captive had doubtless moved off so noiselessly, the moment he found himself free, as not to awaken the lightly-sleeping Nughwa, and thus gained several hours' start, which it was clear, he had employed to the best advantage.

The whole disheartening occurrence was so clear that explanations were useless. Dudley was chagrined and filled with self reproach. He could offer no palliation for his remissness and made no effort to do so. He expected a burning denunciation from Nughwa, and it cut him keenly that neither then, nor at any time thereafter, did he utter a word of reproof. Not only was the native a philosopher, who believed it folly to cry over "spilt milk," but he was chivalrous and considerate to a degree rarely seen.

Possibly he knew his comrade would suffer more because of his silence, and therefore preferred thus to heap coals of fire on his head.

With surprising quickness, Nughwa regained his self-control. He had roused Dudley in the first moment of his discovery of the astounding truth, but almost instantly became his cool, natural self again.

"We have had one hunt for the white elephant; now we shall have another."

"You mean to recapture him?"

The native looked in the face of the youth, as if he did not understand the question.

"They left only a piece of the rubber rope; they took away the larger part, and you told me at Wahta-Shat that you had not tried to capture any elephant without such help."

"And did I not tell you that I always carry *two* rubber ropes?"

"I have no recollection of your saying anything of the kind."

"I never fail to have a couple; accidents may happen."

"Where is it?"

"Coiled up and pushed under the seat of the howdah."

"I never noticed it."

“There are several things which my young friend has not noticed.”

This was the nearest approach to a reproof that Nughwa the native ever made:

The time had come to utilize Wahridda again. Her master placed the tips of two of his fingers between his lips and emitted a whistle that must have penetrated for a mile at least across the plain and through the jungle. Knowing the animal would speedily appear, Nughwa turned his face away from the spot where she would emerge.

“The spoor is so well marked that she will have no trouble in following it. The white elephant can't be many miles ahead.”

“But the thieves will hasten, and can he not travel as fast as Wahridda?”

“No; she has been trained so well that she is swifter than any other elephant. It has been my effort for years to make her fleet of foot, for she thereby becomes more useful to me. Then, even if the white elephant is fast, he is not in the best condition, for he has been without food and water for a long time.

Dudley winced but said nothing, for nothing appropriate to say occurred to him.

“Because he is hungry, he will stop at many places on the road to browse and eat, and the

natives cannot prevent him. This is in our favor."

"Now that the thieves have got him away from us, what will they do?"

This was the all-important question, and Nughwa was thinking hard. One phase of the business which did not occur to the youth greatly disturbed his companion. Although the white elephant had been in the power of the guide but a short time, yet considerable had been accomplished in the way of taming him. His captor had been hopeful of completing the work sooner than he had announced to Dudley. The contingency which the veteran feared was that the animal's spirit had been so broken that his new captors would not find much difficulty in handling him. With such an advantage, they might terrify him into such complete submission that they would head southward for Bangkok, calling in so many of their friends to help (and the enormous value of the prize made this practical) that they would easily hold the captive against the utmost that Nughwa and his companion could do to regain their property.

That Nughwa would make a determined and unrelenting fight for the prize that was rightly his was certain, and yet all the probabilities were against him, if the fears named should

prove to have foundation. At the same time, he knew it was quite likely that his thieving countrymen were carrying out some scheme of whose nature he had no conception.

In the midst of their talk, a gentle trumpeting was heard. Turning their heads at the same moment, they saw Wahrida standing on the border of the jungle, her trunk raised, while she stared at them, saying as plainly as the words themselves:

“Well, here I am; what’s the trouble?”

Nughwa, with an impatience that was rare in him, beckoned her to come forward. She obeyed and awaited further orders. He now spoke rapidly, and with some excitement, for several minutes, in the Siamese language. Dudley knew he was telling her all that had occurred the previous night (except the first visit of the native, which the youth shrank from mentioning), and our young friend almost succeeded in making himself believe that the words were understood by the animal. There could be no doubt that she comprehended the main facts, and that was enough.

Without pausing for their morning meal, the man and youth were lifted in turn upon the back of Wahrida, and took their places in the howdah. As they did so, Nughwa touched with

his foot the coil of rubber rope, shoved back, almost out of sight, under the narrow seat. Dudley nodded his head.

"Strange that I never noticed it before. Suppose *that* should fail you?"

"Then we'll go home, and let the others have the white elephant; we may have to do it, anyway."

While the two were talking, Wahrida elevated the point of her trunk, and moved it slowly from the right to the left, as if she was gifted with the scent of a bloodhound, and was groping through the air for the clue that is denied to other animals. She did not seem to meet with any success, and then began walking forward with a halting step. She was scrutinizing the ground for the trail, which she ought to have found with little trouble, since she knew it must begin at the tree to which she had been tied.

It will be borne in mind that the business for the time being rested wholly with Wahrida. She alone was qualified to act, and her master gave her a free hand, without the least interference from her. Suddenly she made a lunge as if attempting to leap a chasm that yawned in front of her.

"She has found it!" exclaimed her owner,

with a flash of his black eyes; "something will be done before we are many days older."

There could be no doubt of Wahrida's success in the first and most important step. She had struck the spoor of the white elephant, and began at once to swing off at a pace that filled the hearts of our two friends with hope. She could traverse the jungle faster than the hunters mounted on horses, and there was every reason to believe a sight would be gained of their prize before the setting of the sun.

The pursuer was making her way through the jungle, and the facility with which she did this stirred the admiration of Dudley Mayson. He had experienced considerable traveling by elephants during his comparatively brief residence in Siam, but this was the first time he had seen the fleetest of such animals do her best in the face of obstructions that would have checked or turned aside almost any other of her kind.

Sometimes, when Dudley looked to see her swerve to the right or left to flank an unusually dense portion of the wood, she crashed through it, like a locomotive, seemingly with undiminished speed. Then, if the obstacle could not be borne down in this fashion, she turned aside just enough to clear it, with the least possible loss of ground or time. The two on her back

were kept dodging and ducking to avoid the branches that threatened every minute to scrape off not only them but the howdah itself. But Wahrida acted as if she knew precisely how much the cumbrous saddle would bear, and never taxed it too far.

Dudley Mayson thought it singular that they did not come in collision with some of the numerous denizens of the jungle, but he was kept so busy saving his head and face from the blows of the limbs that he had little time to think of anything else or to ask questions.

Suddenly Wahrida halted, as if in doubt whether to continue forward in a direct line or to turn aside. It was the first time she had done anything of the kind, and Dudley peered down from his perch to learn the cause. She had reached a declivity of more than twenty feet in extent, so steep that it would have troubled a horse to go up or down it. It extended as far to the right and left as the eye could follow.

“Why do you pause? Go on.”

In his impatience, Nughwa spoke in English, something he was never known to do with his favorite. Not understanding him, the animal turned to the right, intending to seek a place that was easier of descent. Sensible of his mis-

take, her master now repeated his command in his native tongue. Wahridda instantly checked herself and obeyed the man, as she always did, regardless of consequences.

The method of performing this task has already been described. Stretching out one of her beam-like legs, she stamped the soft earth until it was packed firm, when she rested the foot on it. The same process was followed with the other foot, after which the hind legs were brought into play, and a marked advance made. This was continued, steadily and without any haste, until the massive creature was at the bottom of the declivity.

While Dudley admired the intelligent action of Wahridda, he was amused by the conduct of Nughwa. He moved down from the howdah and sat astride of her flabby neck, which he continually patted with one of his hands, speaking soothingly, as if to encourage her efforts, which really needed no encouragement, since the task was quite an ordinary one, attended with little or no difficulty. But, though the native talked in a tongue that was unknown to the American, the latter did not need an interpreter of the words. Nughwa was sorry he had spoken so curtly to his comrade tried and true, and was saying so, and promising not to do it again.

And it is safe to assume that Wahrida accepted the apology and all was as serene as before between them.

When comparatively level ground was again reached, the elephant, instead of proceeding directly forward, turned to the left and lumbered slowly along the base of the declivity.

"What is the meaning of that?" asked the puzzled youth.

"She is going back to the spoor; when she turned to find a better place, she left the spoor for a little way."

The native said something in an undertone to his animal who took a few steps and then paused. Nughwa pointed to the slope, which was now on his left hand, and asked:

"Do you see?"

There were precisely the same imprints and stamping of the ground as had been made by Wahrida in descending at the point behind her.

"Some elephant has made his way down that."

"And he was the white one that we were following; he cannot throw Wahrida off his track."

"I saw you studying the ground; have you learned how many men were with him?"

“Two,—the same that you saw yesterday.”

“On foot?”

“No; they’re on horses. Though the two are alone, I think they will soon be joined by others; then our trouble will begin, unless we can overtake the couple before the meeting.”

“It looks as if there is ground for your fear, and the white elephant has become so tamed that they are able to handle him.”

Nughwa’s face darkened. He had the same fear and was much disturbed.

“Can you tell how many hours we are behind him?”

“I have heard your good father say that you have people in your country, whose skins are red, who can tell how old the spoor of his enemy is; but, since the missionary himself never saw it done, I am sure the persons who spoke such words to him did not speak the truth. We know that the white elephant came down that little hill some time between midnight and this minute, but whether it was one hour or ten hours ago, no one can say, though I think it was not very long since.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### JUDGE NOT BY APPEARANCES

**W**AHRIDDA continued to make good progress. Her master indeed once requested her to moderate her pace, for now and then the ruin of the howdah and their own displacement were threatened. Nughwa had been quite free in giving his news and plans to his young companion, but the latter was sure that he kept much to himself, and that his busy brain was formulating schemes known to no one else.

A few hundred yards beyond the declivity, the elephant changed his pace to a walk, and then, without any command from his master, halted.

“What does she mean by that?” asked the wondering Dudley.

Instead of replying, the guide muttered some exclamation in his own language, dropped to the ground and made off. When he returned in a quarter of an hour or so, the youth saw from

the expression of his face that he had made a pleasing discovery. He waited for him to explain, which he did, after being helped back to the howdah, and when the pursuit had been resumed still at moderate speed.

“You know that the white elephant was *very* hungry?”

“I believe they always feel that way,” was the diplomatic reply.

“That is true; a well elephant can eat at any time, day or night. Off to the right yonder grows the red berry of which he is so fond. Wahrida knows it, and she paused, thinking I might wish to look for the fellow there. I did so, and found that he had done some feeding, but he did not wait long.”

“Why not?”

“The two horsemen that were following him scared him away, and he went on at a faster pace than before. The treatment I gave him has made him timid and he fears a man more than ever. So he fled again.”

“You speak as if the horsemen are not with him.”

“I am sure they are not, and that is good for us. They are keeping close in the rear, and do not allow him to loiter.”

“Then the white elephant is fleeing north-

ward, pursued by two horsemen, and two persons on the back of another elephant, who are a little way behind the horsemen?"

"I think you have told the truth."

Even so, the situation was mystifying to Dudley Mayson. The rival parties were of the same numerical strength, which meant that the one to the rear was the stronger. The horsemen must know that Nughwa was at their heels, and unless they received reinforcements, he would defeat their purpose. What additions did they expect? When would they appear and where would they come from? The future must answer these questions.

The thieves, therefore, had simply released the white elephant, which made instant use of his freedom, by starting off at a pace that he would keep up until well tired out. Hungry as he undoubtedly was, for the charity of Dudley after all was only trifling in that line, his pauses for food would be few and brief. His first burst might take him fifty miles or possibly farther. Finally, when compelled to pause from exhaustion, he would be so used up that a hunter with nerve and skill had only to act promptly to make him captive again. The thieves, therefore, were following him close, ready to use the advantage when it presented

itself. It must be that they expected to be joined by friends, while on the road. Perhaps such a junction had already taken place, although as yet Nughwa had come upon no evidence of the fact.

The plan of the thieves meant a tremendous strain upon their horses, for the weather was oppressively sultry and the traveling hard, even though the bulky fugitive trod the path for them—a disadvantage, as will be noted, against the white elephant and which told in favor of her who was pursuing him.

To the surprise of Nughwa, the spoor which had led for hours through the unbroken jungle and across the grassy plains, turned to the right and dropped into a distinctly marked path. This looked as if they were in a section containing settlements, for the road taken by the white elephant showed that it was in common use by mounted travelers. There were no signs that carts had been employed, but the width of the path was sufficient for the fugitive to make rapid and easy progress. As if aware of this, Wahrida struck a gait which carried her forward at a speed that astonished Dudley, who knew her ability in that line.

Nughwa was familiar with this primitive highway, for, as he told his companion, he had

ridden over it more than once in the olden times, when elephant-catching was the profession by which he made a precarious living.

"It runs for a long way," he said, "and will be a great help to us."

"Are there no ravines or gullies to be crossed?"

"Only one, and we are close to that."

A few minutes later, they passed around a long curve in the path and came upon a structure which could not have been more simple in form. The gorge thus spanned was a dozen feet in depth, and not quite as wide. Two large trees had been cut down and felled so that the trunks lay side by side and touched. Then the upper surfaces were roughly hewed off, and a bridge thus made a yard or so wide. The brevity of the span and the thickness of the logs made it strong enough to bear the weight of a locomotive. In the process of time, the decay of the wood would weaken the structure, but that day was far distant.

"I thought that an elephant always tested a bridge before venturing on it," said Dudley, as Wahrida drew near the ravine at a cautious walk.

"They do unless they know all about it. She

has been over this before, and sees she has nothing to fear."

Nevertheless, Wahrida came to a stop, on the edge of the brink, as if she did not like the look of things. Nughwa was on the point of commanding her sharply to hasten across, but restrained the words. He had learned to trust her sagacity, and knew how much wiser it is to err on the side of prudence.

When she paused, her master crept out on her neck and peered searchingly down at the bridge. His keen eyes could detect nothing amiss, but he held his place and watched the actions of the animal. She proceeded to test the tree-trunks in the most thorough fashion. Thrusting one of her ponderous feet as far out as she could, while holding her position on solid ground, and ready to draw back without inconvenience, she began to bear down slowly and with great care.

She was doing this, when the two on her back were thrilled by a splintering sound. They saw the structure sink several inches and knew it was giving away!

Nughwa's face was like a thunder cloud, as he dropped to the ground, ran to the side of the rude bridge, and stooping down, looked at the under side of the logs. They were convex and

covered with bark, and the first glance told the startling truth. One of them had been cut almost in two, the white gap yawning like the open mouth of some great animal. Thus weakened, that trunk would not have borne the weight of a child.

With their native hatchet, and probably with the only one in their possession, the horsemen had set this trap for their pursuers, and with characteristic cunning, had carefully removed the chips to prevent their attracting the eye of Wahrida and her master. Had she stepped out upon the structure, nothing could have saved her from going to the bottom of the ravine with the ruins. A fall like that meant death to so bulky an animal, for, had she escaped with her life, she would have been so badly hurt, that her owner, out of mercy, would have been compelled to shoot her.

The swarthy face of Nughwa grew darker. To him the act was one of unpardonable treachery. He could forgive any injury attempted against him personally, but could not forgive the base attempt upon Wahrida. Had he been within reach of the criminal, it would have gone ill with him. Dudley saw the mental struggle going on with his friend and said nothing until it was evident that he had mastered the "old

Adam", which may be put to sleep, but never wholly dies within the breast of any man.

When the native was helped back to his perch, he spoke as if the matter was of slight importance.

"When they finished cutting that log we must have been close upon them. I am glad I did not catch them at work."

"So am I," remarked Dudley with a meaning smile; "they know we are hot on their track."

"They knew it from the first, but it will give them a good start again."

"If one of the logs is sound, can she not use that as a safe bridge?"

"She could if she chose, but there are some things, which even I cannot make Wahrida do. She knows that that bridge has been tampered with, and a hundred men could not force her to bear her weight upon any part of it. She will now have to find a place, where she can cross without any risk at all."

The animal needed no directions. She knew what was expected of her, and set about doing it with her usual intelligence. Leaving the path for the unbroken jungle, her progress of necessity was more difficult. But for his disappointment and impatience, Dudley Mayson

would have found rare enjoyment in her conduct. It was impossible for her at times to keep within sight of the ravine, and now and then her detours were of considerable extent; but invariably, after going a short distance, she returned, and, pausing near the edge, stood for some minutes looking attentively up and down the depression. It is safe to say that not a foot within her field of vision escaped her scrutiny.

"It seems to me," remarked the youth, while the animal was making one of these surveys, "that she can do it here."

"It looks so to me, but she must decide—Ah! she does not agree with us," added Nughwa, as Wahrida once more swung back into the jungle and began another detour; "I shall not say a word to her, though we are losing time that we cannot well spare."

Ere long the elephant changed her course and crashed through the jungle to the gorge, as she had done several times before. Her action made Dudley laugh, for after a single glance, she made headlong haste to a point only a few rods distant. The two knew the meaning of her abruptness. At the place named, the banks of the cañon-like passage not only sank to half their usual depth but sloped so gradually that

the crossing was less difficult than the descent of the declivity some time before.

Wahridda adopted the method with which you are familiar, and, in less time than would be supposed, ascended the opposite incline. The ravine had been crossed without mishap, but at the cost of considerable time. They were fully a fourth of a mile from the broken bridge.

"You know the country so well," said Dudley, "that I suppose you will push into the jungle and strike the path a long way ahead."

"It is easy to do that I am sure, but it does not rest with me to decide; I have made up my mind not to interfere with Wahridda in any way, for I know that, if I do, nothing but disappointment will come to us."

The head of affairs seemed to be fully aware of her functions, for she did not show the least hesitation in acting, nor did she appear to expect any suggestions from the man whom she had served so long. Her judgment was that the best course was to get back to the trail by the shortest route possible, and she began the task by heading for the broken bridge. As before, she was forced to make several detours, and much time and effort were unquestionably thrown away. The young American chafed when, knowing that they had pushed on for a

considerable distance in the right direction, he saw her wheel and come back to the gorge, which she followed until again compelled to diverge. He held his peace, however, for he knew that no protest would avail him. At last, the path was reached. With the devious route she had been obliged to follow, Wahrida must have traveled several miles, and nearly two hours had been used in getting only a dozen feet away from the starting point! It was very disappointing to our young friend, and not being used to all kinds of disappointment, as Nughwa was, he felt much more keenly the delay and probable loss of their prey.

When they were hurrying over the trail again, Nughwa, bravely hiding his disappointment, said to his friend:

“There is now little chance of our seeing the white elephant before tomorrow.”

“A good deal of the afternoon is left,” replied Dudley with a sinking of the heart, “and Wahrida is traveling fast.”

“So are they in front of us.”

“But I am sure no elephant can equal her speed.”

“That is true, but the white elephant is a good goer, and those horsemen are giving him no rest. Unless they make a long halt, we have

no hope of catching sight of any of them before another day comes."

"Will they keep up their flight during the darkness?"

"They will for a good part of it, and," added Nughwa significantly, "much can be done in a single night."

## CHAPTER XX

### AT THE FALLS

“A H! It was what I expected.”

As Nughwa uttered the exclamation, he pointed to where the path turned sharply to the left, while it was seen that the fugitive had not made the slightest variation in his course. There, too, were the footprints of the horses, who were still well in advance of the pursuers.

“We are passing into a new country,” added the native, “where it will be harder work to travel fast.”

“Which applies as much to those in front as to us.”

“Yes, and makes our speed more nearly equal.”

Dudley had noted the changing character of the section, even before they reached the defective bridge. To the north towered a series of elevations, almost lofty enough to entitle them to rank as mountains, while the ground over which they were traveling rapidly assumed

a character that required more care, and, as has been intimated, compelled a slower rate of progress, much to the disappointment of the young American, who, until the declaration of the native, had not felt a doubt of the crisis being attained before the set of sun. If the horsemen had not succeeded in injuring or killing the pursuing elephant, they had done almost as well in greatly delaying his pursuit.

The gravest difficulty has occurred to the reader. Among these hills and in this broken country, there was danger of losing the trail altogether. Of course there could be no distinguishable difference between the footprints of these animals, of whom there must be more or less in the neighborhood. Two facts had helped the pursuers: the white elephant was fleeing alone—an unusual thing with his species—and the tracks of the horsemen, who followed him hard, were a guide. But the monarch albino was likely to affiliate with others, and thus sink his identity, so far as our friends were concerned. If the country grew much rougher, the horsemen would be compelled to abandon their animals. If, when this took place, Wahrida was far to the rear, the trail would be irrecoverably lost, and Nughwa did

not hesitate to declare that further effort would be hopeless.

When the sun sank below the hot horizon, the outlook was as gloomy as it could well be. Nughwa had little to say, and it was plain from his looks and manner that he was depressed in spirits. Wahrida had traveled fifty miles since early morning and was still in excellent form. Most of the way, especially the latter portion, was through a rough country which was growing worse the farther it was penetrated. It was reasonable to believe that the fugitive had not done so well, and the certainty that the pursuers, when the defective bridge was reached, were close upon him, and that now they were not likely to see him before the morrow, was aggravating to the last degree.

Camping time was near at hand, when the interest of Dudley was roused by the sight of a waterfall, not far in advance and slightly to their right. Being on somewhat higher ground, it was in plain view, and amid the myriad sounds of the jungle, its soft murmur was distinctly audible. A changing mass of mist, resting directly over the falls, revealed at the first glance where they were; while from the elevated perch in the howdah, the curving, glisten-

ing sheet of water was visible throughout almost its whole extent.

No picture could look cooler and more inviting to the hot, tired traveler, on this sultry day, and the youth felt a yearning to hasten to the spot and plunge and frolic in the refreshing pool that he knew was at the base of the tumbling waters. What specially appealed to him was that the scene, viewed from the brief distance, was a perfect reproduction of one in his own native land, where he and his playfellows had sported and dived and swam, with an abandon of enjoyment such as only a lot of rugged youngsters can feel, and the memory of which always lingers like that of a "shadow in a desert land."

He hoped the night would be spent near the waterfall, but his fear of obtruding his wishes kept him mute on the subject. Great was his pleasure therefore when he noted that Wahrida was making directly for the place, as if she knew the feelings of her friends as to the matter.

What strongly impressed Dudley Mayson was a marked brightening up of spirits on the part of his companion. This may have been a reaction from his previous depression, or, what was more likely, there was tangible ground

for the change of mood. Suspecting the reason for this happy turn, the youth ventured to ask:

“Do you think we are near the white elephant?”

“Yes; I believe he will spend the night not far from the falls. Wahrida and I have been soothed to sleep many times by the sound of these waters. I know they are attractive to her, for you saw her change of course without any word from me. It is fair to think they are pleasing to the other also.”

“The horsemen may frighten him into keeping up his flight.”

“Horses grow tired the same as elephants,” said Nughwa.

Meanwhile, Wahrida was laboring forward with the steady, plodding persistency which was a part of her nature. The surface was so broken that she was forced to make many short turns, some of which were at right angles to a direct course to her destination, but she did not halt or hesitate until it was growing dark. Then her progress stopped as abruptly as if she had reached the edge of a fathomless abyss. Her journey for the day was over.

“We go no farther,” said Nughwa, letting himself down from the howdah, while Dudley quickly dropped beside him.

“Shall we sleep on the back of Wahrida?”

“We have spent so many hours there that it will be pleasanter on the ground. She will keep watch over us no matter where we sleep. I think you have forgotten something, my friend.”

“What is that?”

“It is a long time since we have eaten food.”

“Have no fear that I have forgotten *that*, but a fellow doesn't get as hungry in this climate as he does in my country, where even the weather is civilized. Then, too, we have had so much to excite and disturb us, and there has been such need of hurry, that I gave little thought to food. Shall we kindle a fire?”

“No; there is danger of its telling too much. If those thieves are in the neighborhood, they will look for us, and we don't want to give them any help. We'll make our supper from fruit, and in the morning I will catch some fish. There are plenty of them below the falls. I will leave you here, while I gather food.”

It struck the young man, that he could do nearly as well for himself in that line as Nughwa and that he needed no help in securing his supper, but he shrewdly suspected that his friend had some other purpose in view than the simple procurement of eatables. There was

no saying what could be accomplished by a guarded scout through the vicinity, in the way of gaining knowledge of the white elephant and his abductors. So he allowed the native to depart without any inquiry.

Left to himself, Dudley gave his attention to the waterfall, which was so near that it was speedily reached without difficulty. Wahrida, as the third member of the party, pushed a slight distance into the wood and began energetically feeding, for she was undoubtedly hungry and in need of nourishment.

When the youth reached the waterfall, he found it to consist of a sheet of water, about a hundred feet in width, perhaps a foot in depth, and with a fall equal to half the breadth. As the water swept over the ledge, it was a greenish, crystalline mass, which split in several places in the course of its descent. Through these cone-shaped openings, and through the swiftly falling sheet itself, the foamy, tumbling, ever-changing piles could be seen, like shifting heaps of snow, as they were caught and hurled hither and yon by the momentum of the plunge.

Dudley stood for some minutes admiring the picture. Night had descended, but a moon, nearly full, was in the right quarter of the heavens to add its entrancing effect and to give

a fleecy, softened beauty to the scene. Both banks were crowded with the deep green, broad-leaved vegetation, which grew to the very edge of the water, as if jealous of the space of which it was thus robbed. The stream below the falls was flecked here and there with white patches of foam, agitated and dancing, as it disappeared in the exuberance of foliage and vegetable growth.

As if nature meant to add every charm to the exhibition, the lone spectator caught a faint glimpse of the prismatic tints in the clouds of mist that climbed upward in shifting masses under the soft light of the moon. These vanishing suggestions of a rainbow flickered and came and went with an elfin grace that added to the fairy-like appearance of the scene.

All this was entrancing in the highest degree and the most indifferent person could not look upon it without being impressed, but to Dudley Mayson the most striking fact was its wonderful resemblance to that other waterfall, which he remembered so vividly on the other side of the world. In dear, far away America, whose memory stole upon his consciousness like a vision, he had looked upon the counterpart of that which was before him. He saw again the faces of the boys with whom he had dived and

plunged and frolicked in the cold waters below the heaps of foam, which themselves rolled over and pushed one another as if in rivalry with the shouting youngsters.

The young American was standing near the base of the fall close to the water, and the bright moonlight enabled him to see the opposite bank quite clearly. He stood thus, now and then catching a grateful touch of a fragment of the mist, as some eddy in the gentle wind wafted it against his warm cheek.

“And there is the Pirate’s Rock!” he exclaimed, almost believing for the moment that he was back again in the home of his boyhood. “Ah!-how many times Jim Hillson and Tom Reynolds and Dick Henson, and I and the rest of the boys have dived off of it! It was I who gave it its name, because we had read about something of the kind in a novel which we kept hidden in our desks from our teacher. I believe if I were on the other side, I would take a dive from it, without waiting to shed my clothes. Helloa! I never saw anything like *that* on Pirate’s Rock.”

From the hot brush of the jungle, a leopard, spotted, immense, and of surpassing grace and beauty, walked slowly out on the rock, and, pausing on its edge, stood looking across at the young

American, as if to inquire why he had dared to set foot in this solitude. The rock, black and dripping moisture, towered twenty feet above the water below the falls, projecting to a somewhat less extent into the stream.

"I wonder what he means to do," said Dudley, recalled from his vagrant fancies; "it looks as if he is thinking of jumping into the water and swimming across to make a closer acquaintance with me. I think I know what kind of a welcome to give him."

Dudley decided, in the event of the leopard doing anything of the kind, to wait until he had swum across the stream, and was ready to emerge at his feet. He would then plant a bullet between the eyes of the beast which he was sure would give him his quietus. Even as the two stood, the shot could not have been finer, but our young friend was quite willing to let the leopard alone, so long as the brute did not interfere with him.

The action of the animal was singular to say the least. Several minutes passed, during which neither he nor the youth moved a limb. What a picture it would have made for a kodak, with the gleaming falls for a background, and the dense jungle to serve as a frame! Then the leopard swung slowly around and with his cat-

like tread, passed into the wood and disappeared. Whether he had emitted any threatening growl could not be known, since such a sound would have been overborne by the noise of the waterfall.

"I didn't expect anything like *that*," muttered Dudley; "I can't think I scared him, for I am sure I don't look very terrible; he must have thought I'm not worth his bother."

It was a natural result of his lively experience in Siam that, after the departure of the leopard, the young American gave him no further thought. Such a sight would have kept you and me on the anxious seat for hours.

"Now, if these falls are like those at home, I can walk across behind them."

Investigation showed that he could pass to their rear, but the gloom would not allow him to see whether he could make his way to the other side. That must be learned by groping back of the fleecy veil, but the moonlight which passed through the falling sheet, and between the open spaces already mentioned, showed that he certainly could make his way for a considerable distance.

"I shouldn't be satisfied to go back without knowing more about it; so here goes!"

## CHAPTER XXI

### COALS OF FIRE

**D**UDLEY Mayson picked his way with the utmost care, for, even with the help of the moon's rays, he was enveloped in a gloomy, subdued light which could not save him from a dangerous, if not fatal slip, if he forgot his caution for even a moment. He was hopeful of being able to pass to the other side, though really there was nothing to gain by doing so, but hardly half the distance was traversed, when he was stopped. Amid the dripping wetness and obscurity, he could find no further footing. It might exist, but there was no call for any more risk and the young man set out on his return.

He had been in this part of the world long enough to know that danger was liable to break upon a person at the most unexpected times, and he kept his wits with him. It was because of this that he had not yet reached the point where he had passed behind the fall, when he discovered that some one was ahead of him.

His first thought was that the leopard had swum the stream above or below the fall and was creeping after him, but the fancy was instantly dismissed. Then, too, he perceived that he was approaching not a quadruped but a man.

"I wonder if Nughwa is looking for me," was the next thought of our young friend; "I guess not, for it isn't Nughwa."

Such being the fact, several conclusions were inevitable: the man was one of the horsemen that had stolen the white elephant, and that prize was in the neighborhood. Moreover, this Siamese must be aware that the pursuers were nearly on their heels, and that a collision was almost certain to take place within the succeeding few hours.

The suspicious Dudley thought it more than likely that the man was hunting for him or for Nughwa. He may have seen the youth when he was standing on the edge of the stream and was waiting for him to emerge.

"And yet that can't be true," he reflected, as he stood still, thinking over the situation and trying to fix upon the best course to follow; "if he wanted my life, he can't have a better chance than he had when the leopard and I stood admiring each other. But I am of no account;

Nughwa is the one; that fellow doesn't know where I am, but is looking for my friend."

Suddenly the stranger whisked from sight. Holding his gun ready for instant use, the youth came out from behind the falls and looked searchingly around. The moonlight showed the man climbing the rocks toward the top of the cataract. To avoid being seen, Dudley stepped back so as to interpose the masses of stone between them and carefully watched the movements of the fellow, who steadily ascended the almost perpendicular slope, with the nimbleness of a chamois, until he stood out in bold relief in the moonlight.

By this time, the lad was clear in his mind that the Siamese was hunting for Nughwa. The strife for the possession of the white elephant had reached such an acute stage, that the thieves were determined to establish their claims to him at all costs, and they were ready to commit any crime to do so.

"They may succeed," was the shuddering thought of the watcher, "but they can do so only by treachery. Nughwa is on his guard and is keener-witted than they—"

Dudley started as something touched his elbow. Turning his head, he saw his comrade at

his side. The noise of the waterfall compelled them to raise their voices.

"You saw him pass this way?" asked the native.

"Yes; yonder he is now."

"No, he isn't; you don't see him."

The youth glanced aloft. To his surprise, the native had vanished.

"He was there a minute ago; I wonder if he's looking for me."

"No, because he had already seen you; he is after *me*, and now I am going after *him*; move a little to the right, and don't go away till I come back."

It was on Dudley's tongue to ask how long he should wait, and what he must do in case his friend did not return, but such a question would have been a reflection on the other, and it was not asked. Nughwa did not wait for any further words, but started up the rocks, following the path that the other had taken before him.

The youth was ten-fold more apprehensive than his friend. That the latter was superior in strength, skill and prowess to the other native was unquestionable, but it often comes about that the veteran scout is outwitted through some unfortunate circumstance, by the veriest tyro. Every one is subject to accident

or slip, and no one can forecast the future. It seemed to Dudley that a man in the situation of the Siamese in front could not fail to watch the rear as well as the front. What would be easier for him than to hide himself at the crest of the rocks and pick off his pursuer as he was coming up?

But if such a peril were a tangible one, Nughwa himself could not be blind to it, and he swiftly climbed the rocks as if he had not the slightest reason to fear anything of that nature. Another fact made Dudley uneasy: he knew that his companion was in an angry mood. The tampering with the bridge, and the narrow escape of Wahrida incensed him more than a direct attempt against himself. He had striven to overcome his resentment, but the memory rankled, and, now that he was sure the thieves were seeking his life, it was only simple self-defense to strike back.

"There's going to be a fight to the finish," muttered the lad, compressing his lips; "and, if Nughwa has a fair show, I'll bet on him every time, but where is the other Siamese?"

It was this question which intensified the anxiety of Dudley Mayson. Nothing seemed more probable than if one of the criminals was looking for Nughwa, the second was doing the

same. If so, then the owner of Wahrida was placing himself between two fires, and giving a frightful advantage to his enemies.

“He ought to have left me free to follow him, for, while he was attending to this wretch, I could look out for the other. If I didn't know that Nughwa is in one of his worst moods, I should follow him in the face of orders, but I have disobeyed him several times, and I dare not do it again.”

The very phase of the danger which the watcher dreaded became manifest in the following minute. He was standing in the position to which he had been assigned, peering upward in the gloom, where, among the fitting shadows cast by the boulders and masses of stone, he now and then caught glimpses of his companion, as he rapidly ascended, when he was startled to discover that a third party had projected himself into the impending collision. Between Dudley and his comrade appeared this fellow, as if he had been waiting among the rocks until Nughwa had passed, slipped out and took up the pursuit of the man who was pursuing another man. He was the second thief that was doing the very thing Dudley feared above all others.

It was an alarming phase of an alarming situation. Nughwa was now unquestionably be-

tween two fires, or men; if he discovered the enemy at the rear, as it would seem he was almost certain to do, would he be able to protect himself against both?

It flashed upon Dudley that he had an imperative duty to perform and it must be performed in a very brief space of time. He should interfere and save his friend at once. Stepping back from the rock which had partly sheltered him, he brought his gun to his shoulder and aimed at the native who was a comparatively short distance above him. Despite this fact, however, he was baffled by the interposing shadows. It looked as if the man had some thought of such danger, and availed himself of the intervals of gloom with such skill that the aim must be unsatisfactory.

But more than that, the overwhelming consciousness pressed upon the youth that he was about to take the life of another person. True, he might offer the best of reasons for doing so, for Nughwa certainly was in great peril. Had this peril been directly upon him, and the shot absolutely necessary, there would not have been an instant's hesitation on the part of his young friend, but the danger was not immediate and he could not justify himself.

"I can't do it," he said lowering the weapon,

and letting down the hammer; "some folks would say I am squeamish and perhaps I am, but I have never done anything of the kind and I *never shall*."

It was a worthy resolution, but it could not lift the unspeakably oppressive dread that unless he did something positive, it would soon be all over with his friend.

"When Nughwa told me to wait here, he didn't think of anything like this; I shall pay no attention to his orders."

And so, gun in hand, Dudley started after the party. The singular situation was thus presented of a procession of four persons climbing or having climbed the precipitous height, with the alternate ones deadly enemies, and, with the exception of the leader, each in pursuit of the one in his immediate front. It was natural that the last should be in the greatest haste, and, being less expert than the others, he was overtaken by a mishap. He had climbed about one-fourth of the distance, when he stepped upon a stone which rolled under his foot, and, despite his efforts to save himself, he went bumping to the bottom, never pausing until he sprawled on the spot where he was standing a few minutes before.

Dudley was considerably jarred and bruised,

and it took a minute or two to pull himself together. But the chief injury was to his feelings. He was angered with himself—a feeling that became acute, when he reflected that had the second Siamese chosen to turn upon him, he would have been wholly at his mercy.

The noise of the waterfall must have shut out the scrambling, rattling descent of the discomfited youth, forgetting which he exclaimed disgustedly:

“He knows I am below him, but doesn’t care; he considers me of no account, and I am not! Nughwa needn’t count on my giving him any help.”

Nevertheless, he again set himself resolutely to the task of climbing the rocks. There was greater need of haste than before, but it need not be said that the youth avoided repeating his performance. Slowly, steadily and surely, he went up the precipice to the level ground above.

Meanwhile, Nughwa was improving the minutes. Calling into play all his phenomenal strength and activity, he went up the rocks like a mountain goat, without the slightest slip or faltering. His experience made failure an impossibility. He had caught a glimpse of the man he was after, and brief was the distance separating the two. Had the leader chosen to

turn about and confront him, he who was at the top of the cliff must have held an almost fatal advantage. Nughwa expected him to do this, and had already decided upon his course of action. He intended, at the first sight of the man, to bring his rifle into play, doing so with such quickness that the other could not forestall him.

But the fellow did nothing of the kind. When he had whisked over the upper edge of the ascent, he was not seen again, and, fearful that he would escape, Nughwa fairly leaped to the top, where he paused in a crouching position and stared around in the gloom.

He saw nothing of his man, but suspected he was in hiding near by. A moment or two, however, dissipated that belief. The fellow must have learned that Nughwa was hot after him. Since he was one of the natives who had taken part in the tiger hunt, and, since also he must have known something of the prowess of the elephant catcher, his courage oozed out before the prospect of an encounter on anything like equal terms. The basis of his campaign was a treacherous advantage. Unable to gain that, he turned and fled like the coward he was.

"It is better that it should be so," muttered the victor in a softer voice, after he had looked

about him. "He is a heathen and I am a Christian, and I would have forgotten it when each was trying to kill the other. I am glad that he fled and his death will not be upon my hands—"

The din of the falls prevented his hearing the slight noise behind him at that moment, but, providentially, his position allowed him to catch sight of the dusky figure stealing toward him. Instantly the guide flamed with wrath; he threw aside his rifle and whipped out his formidable knife. This Siamese was more courageous than the other, and also discarding his gun, advanced without the slightest evidence of fear to the attack.

The position of the two was such that the criminal was about half way between Nughwa and the edge of the bluff, which was only two or three paces behind him. As the two approached, the guide recognized the native as the one who had addressed the warning words in English to Dudley Mayson. The discovery did not tend to soothe the tempestuous rage of Nughwa.

At the moment of colliding, a singular thing took place. Both struck at the same instant, and in precisely the same manner, and with such vicious force that each weapon was hurled

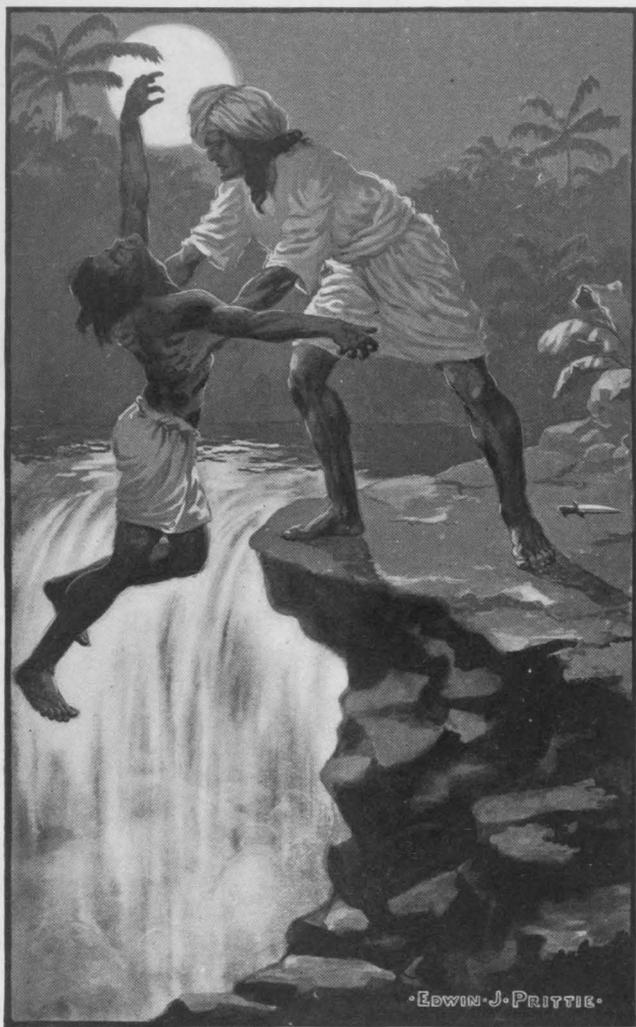
several feet from its owner's grasp. Neither dared to try to recover his knife, and they grasped like a couple of Grecian wrestlers and began a furious struggle for the mastery.

Nughwa found he had grappled a powerful adversary, but he was not quite the equal of the guide either in strength, or expertness. Despite all the assailant could do, he was forced slowly but irresistibly backward to the edge of the cliff over which a fall was certain to be fatal. He struggled and fought like a demon, but in vain. He was in the grip of his master and saw he was doomed. His remaining hope was that he might drag his conqueror to death with him.

Nughwa knew what his foe was trying to do and frustrated him. Back, inch by inch, the wretch was pressed, until at last he was held poised on the edge of the precipice. Throwing a single terrified glance at the abyss behind him, he clutched the arm of his conqueror and held fast with a despairing grip. Nughwa wrenched him loose, and the next instant his feet went over and he frantically trod vacancy; and then, seeing all hope gone, the victim ceased his struggle and stoically awaited his doom.

For five, ten, fifteen seconds, during which the stern Nughwa held the man suspended in





He frantically trod vacancy.

mid-air neither stirred a muscle. Then the double victor, with a grander triumph than soldier ever won, deliberately drew the other back and stood him on his feet.

“You are a heathen; I am a Christian!”  
And he loosed him and let him go.

## CHAPTER XXII

### "BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE"

ALL through this remarkable struggle Dudley Mayson was standing in a cleft in the face of the precipice, not more than ten feet below the couple. Had Nughwa flung his victim over, as he first intended, he must have grazed the head and shoulders of the youth, who, expecting such a termination of the tragedy, clung as close as possible to the flinty wall, where, peering upward, he saw the Siamese drawn out of sight, and suspected what had taken place. He heard the words of Nughwa, above the noise of the falling waters, but they were not in his own language.

The vanquished hunter was not wholly lost to manhood. He saw that when helpless in the grasp of Nughwa, whom he had striven desperately to kill, he was spared through no claim or merit of his own. It was a simple exhibition of the triumph of Christian teaching over heathenism. The man stepped to where his

knife and rifle lay, and, as he picked them up, looked at his master and said in his native tongue:

"Thank you!"

Nughwa gazed calmly at him, but did not speak. The man turned and dived into the jungle, on his way to find his less brave companion. At the same moment, Dudley Mayson clambered over the edge of the cliff and rose to his feet. He was panting from the exertion, and the guide asked:

"Does it make you tired?"

"A little,—it is quite a climb, even though I rested on the way."

"It isn't so hard going down; I'll lead, and look out you don't come tumbling upon me."

The youth did not think it worth while to mention the experience he had already had in that line, and cautiously descended after his leader. From some cause that Dudley could not understand, his friend did not wish to talk about the incident in which he had borne so creditable a part. The youth respected this mood, and let him believe he had simply climbed the cliff to gain a closer view of the fight. True, he had disregarded the order of the guide, but the circumstances were exceptional, and nothing was said on that point.

A little way from the base of the falls, the leader turned off among the rocks, to a point where he had left the fruit which he had gathered, and the two, who were now very hungry, sat down and ate their fill. The weather was so warm that neither a fire nor covering was needed, and making sure that no serpents or prowling beasts were near, the two lay down and slept quietly until early morning.

All this time, Wahrida remained among the hills, attending to her eternal appetite, but, holding herself subject to instant call. A reasonable conclusion from what had occurred was that the white elephant was at no great distance from the falls, having probably remained there during the night. Whether the two natives would seek to harm Nughwa further was uncertain. The guide himself believed the danger had not passed.

Another belief of Nughwa gave his companion encouragement. It was that the two Siamese who had followed the white elephant with such vigor, had lost trace of him with the coming of night. If so, the couples stood on the same footing, which was no footing at all, for evidently everything now depended upon the movements of the royal creature himself.

What those movements had been remained to

be learned. In truth, Nughwa knew no more than Dudley. He hoped that the animal had paused in the vicinity of the falls to satisfy his appetite. The species of berries to which his kind are partial, grew abundantly, and there could be no question of this one's hunger. On the other hand, his vivid memory of the harsh treatment by his captor, and the terrifying pursuit of the horsemen, might have given him such a panic that he would make only a few brief halts until a hundred or more miles farther north.

Enough of the fruit remained to serve our friends for the morning meal, and, when they ate, it was with the decision to wait until nightfall before doing so again. Nughwa had spoken of having something more substantial in the form of fish from the stream, near which they had spent the night, but, though such a meal would have been welcome to both, time was too precious to permit the indulgence.

The first and all-important task was to find the spoor of the white elephant, for the density of the forest which enveloped them on every hand precluded any extended view such as they often gained when on their way to this section. But the impossibility of distinguishing the footprint of one of the immense creatures from

those of another is too self-evident to be dwelt upon. It was decided not to call upon Wahrida until it was clear her services could be turned to account. In this precipitous region the hunters could move about much better on their own feet than by depending upon those of the sagacious quadruped.

What Nughwa set out to find was the track of a single elephant. Since, as we know, these animals almost invariably wander in herds, it was possible, if not probable, that if the single one could be found, it would be he for whom they were searching. The hope was a vague one, but the guide used it to the limit.

Withdrawing from the immediate vicinity of the waterfall, the hum and racket of the jungle made itself audible, seemingly with redoubled power. On the opposite shore a wild buffalo glared down upon them, as if challenging the two to a combat, but our friends did not send a shot in his direction. They were too accustomed to the abounding animal life of the country, and too eager for other game, to pay attention to a little thing like that.

"Ah! I believe this is the spoor!" suddenly exclaimed Nughwa, stopping in his walk and scrutinizing the ground immediately in front. Dudley stepped forward beside him and joined

in the scrutiny. They were among the trees and undergrowth, and at their feet grew a species of short grass upon which the imprint made by a large animal plainly showed. In addition, the appearance of the shrubbery told that he had passed that way not long before.

"There seems to have been only one," remarked the youth.

"That is all there was at this point, but there's no saying when he was joined by others. If we had one of your Indians here, we might learn how long ago it was the elephant passed this way, but, as we haven't, we'll have to do the best we can."

Naturally the native took the lead, with his companion as near as was convenient for the two. Dudley noticed that the spoor led slightly away from the course of the stream, but a little way farther began approaching it.

"I'm afraid he has crossed," said Nughwa over his shoulder.

"What of it? Can't we do the same?"

"Yes, but the white elephant was not likely to pass over until through feeding and ready to start on a tramp that will last many hours. If he has done that, he will make as good time as Wahrida, and it may be two or three days before we gain sight of him again. He is used to

such rough ground as this. You have noticed how plentiful the berries, which he likes, grow around us."

Dudley had observed the fact. It was an ideal feeding ground for elephants, and he wondered that Wahrida had not made use of it. But then, in a region of such overflowing vegetable growth, there must be plenty of such places, and it was not to be supposed that she had lacked for food.

Nughwa halted several times in order to scrutinize the trail. Once he started with the belief that he had come upon the footprints of a second animal, but closer examination showed that all the tracks were made by a single elephant, who in moving aimlessly about had naturally repeated some of his steps.

The pleasing feature of the situation was the certainty that no horses or men had preceded the couple over the trail. It would have been natural for the two natives, because of the roughness of the ground, to discard their horses, and travel the same as the others. Had such been the fact, Nughwa would have learned it at several points, where the depressions in the ground were so damp and soft that a passing child could not have avoided leaving the evidence behind him. Nothing of the kind, how-

ever, appeared, and the native knew that he was in advance of the thieves.

The spoor steadily approached the stream, and some two hundred yards below the falls, the pursuers emerged upon the bank.

"He may have entered for a bath," suggested Dudley, "and after that come out again, either above or below us."

"It is possible, but not likely. While you go toward the falls, I'll take a look down stream."

They separated and made a brief search in this manner. The spoor was not seen again by either, and, at the summons of the guide, the youth rejoined him at the point where the trail led into the water.

"He is on the other side, and that's where we must look for him."

He emitted the shrill whistle by which he signalled to Wahrida, and the response was prompter than either expected. The animal was nearer than supposed. She had in fact crossed the stream during the night and was feeding only a little way inland, when the summons reached her. She emerged from the wood and paused on the bank to await an explanation from her master.

"O Nughwa," said Dudley; "I'm afraid it is her trail we have been following all this time."

His friend shook his head.

“No, it is not; no other person may be able to tell her spoor among others, but it is so familiar to me that I cannot mistake it. She crossed at some place we have not seen; we are on the spoor of another elephant and I think it is the white one.”

Meanwhile, the native had called to Wahrida to come over to them. In her deliberate fashion she stepped into the water and slowly waded out, while her friends watched every movement. She was ready to swim at any moment, and, as the depth steadily increased, they expected to see her do so.

When she reached the middle of the current, the howdah was still high and dry, but it remained to be seen whether the channel did not put in nearer to the bank where the couple were awaiting her approach. Such, however, was not the case. By and by the whole bulky body came into view, then the upper parts of the beam-like legs, and finally she came out, without a particle of moisture on the huge saddle.

Nughwa and Dudley were quickly lifted to her back and took their places in the howdah, which showed considerable effects of the rough usage it had received in its passage through the jungle. Now that she was carrying her human

burden, she was more careful than before, stepping slowly and feeling every foot of the way.

"I don't see the need of so much caution," said Dudley, a trifle impatient; "she has just crossed and knows the depth—good gracious!"

At that instant, the side of the howdah on which Nughwa was sitting sagged so deeply that the young American, totally unprepared, dived head first into his lap. The edge of the structure touched the water, but instantly righted itself again. As the native assisted his friend to scramble to his feet, he shook with laughter.

"You ought to have thought of that."

"How could I? What was the cause of so sudden a lurch?"

"It was only one of Wahrida's jokes; you learned long ago that elephants like to play tricks on their friends; I knew she was up to some mischief, so I was not surprised; you must learn Wahrida's ways."

"I should like to do so, but I don't believe I ever shall. Is she likely to try anything of the kind again?"

"No, she has had all the fun she wants on this trip, but you must always be on the lookout; she and I often play jokes on each other."

On the other side of the stream, the two dismounted. The coil of rubber rope was left in

the howdah, and Wahrida was allowed to do as she pleased until she should again be needed. The trail was readily found and followed without trouble for nearly two hundred yards, when the increasing light showed that the pursuers were near the margin of a grassy plain.

"I think we shall find him there," said Nughwa in an undertone, "keep close behind me and make no noise, for it is easy to alarm him—Sh! I hear him; wait where you are."

Slowly and silently the crouching guide advanced a few yards, and then cautiously parted the bushes in front of his face. One glance was enough, and he turned and beckoned to Dudley to come up beside him. As the youth did so with the utmost care, Nughwa whispered:

"If you want to see the white elephant again, look!"

Dudley obeyed and saw the solitary animal busily feeding upon the berries and tender herbage at the further side of the narrow plain.

But his flabby hide did not show a square inch that was not of an unmistakable brown color!

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ONE OR TWO MISTAKES

**T**HE grim native could jest even in the depths of his disappointment.

"I know you want to see the white elephant; so do I, but it doesn't do either of us any good; we shall have to look again."

Dudley Mayson's hopes had been so high, and he was so confident they were on the verge of success, that he could not restrain his disappointment.

"Confound it, Nughwa! we may as well quit and go home; if that animal is ever captured, it won't be by *us*."

In his impatience, the youth forgot the warning the guide had given a few minutes before and threw caution to the winds. The elephant, which was a bull of unusual size, suddenly stopped feeding, and stood with his trunk in air. It was the attitude of listening. He had heard something that awakened his suspicion.

Not only that, but hardly were the words of the youth spoken, when the brute located the

point whence the sound came. He trumpeted, and with hardly a moment's hesitation charged straight at the two crouching figures.

"Look out!" called Dudley, as if he could give instructions to the veteran in such a critical moment; "he's coming for us!"

The lad whirled and dashed off with headlong speed. The undergrowth seemed suddenly to become twice as dense and involved as before, and, at the second step he sprawled forward on his hands and knees; but he was instantly up again, diving into the jungle more frantically than ever. A glance over his shoulder showed the massive brute making straight for him.

Nothing is so inspiring to a pursuer as the sight of a fugitive striving to escape from him. The bull saw the youth running for life, but failed to see anything of the man; he therefore made for the former.

Nughwa, instead of leaping up and making off, held his ground. He was directly in the path of the enraged beast and a spectator would have been certain that to remain only a few seconds more, would insure his being trampled to death.

But never was the veteran cooler than during these trying moments. He measured the sweep of the column-like legs, and decided just where

each of the fore feet would be placed on the ground. He shifted his own position slightly to conform with them, and crouched still lower, the foliage so screening him that he remained invisible to the brute, whose attention was fixed upon the other figure skurrying off in the jungle.

It was when the immense front literally overshadowed the Siamese that he pointed his rifle, as if at the sky and pressed the trigger. There was no possibility of missing, though he might fail to reach a vital spot.

The instant the shot was fired, Nughwa leaped aside with inimitable quickness, escaping in the nick of time, the foot of the bull. He dashed several rods before whisking behind a tree. His object was to gain time to reload his weapon, and he had not a second to spare. It was important that he should escape the notice of the elephant until the weapon was ready again for use. He therefore did his work, not only as fast as he could, but with the utmost caution.

After completing the task, he did not care how soon the brute discovered him; for, when the day came which saw Nughwa fire *two* shots without bringing down his game, he was ready

to fold his arms and allow that same game to put him out of business forever.

The flash, the noise and the sting of the wound bewildered the elephant, who, for the moment, did not comprehend what had taken place. He stopped his charge and seemed to be groping around for the foe that had thus stepped between him and his prey. As he thus stood, with an unusual silence prevailing the jungle, Nughwa plainly heard the rapid pattering of something on the leaves. He knew what it meant. The elephant was mortally wounded and could not last much longer. The first shot had done its work.

Nughwa stepped out from behind the tree as he finished reloading his gun. He felt no fear of the game which saw him, and, aware that he was the cause of his undoing, took several vague steps in his direction, and then paused and leaned against a thick sapling.

It was merciful now to slay him as soon as possible, and the native brought his weapon to his shoulder. The elephant seemed to know the meaning of the movement, and threw up his trunk, as if he would ward off what was coming; but it was useless. As the second sharp crack of the rifle rang out, the monstrous body sagged heavily downward to the earth. A

splintering crash accompanied the fall, and one of the immense tusks was broken off so sharply that the loosened portion was hurled several paces away. Such accidents often cause serious losses to wary hunters.

Nughwa went forward and looked down at the enormous brute, from which the last spark of life had gone. The sight, in all the circumstances, was pitiful, but the man was too accustomed to such scenes to be impressed by it. His thoughts reverted to his young friend.

"I don't think I ever saw him more scared; he must be running yet, and we are both losing more time than we can afford."

Truth to say, Dudley Mayson was in a panic when he plunged at headlong speed into the jungle with the knowledge that an enraged elephant was crashing after him at a much swifter pace than he could attain. What boy or man would not be flurried in a similar situation?

The young American had not gone far when he felt certain that his fear for his companion was causeless. Nughwa could take care of himself anywhere better than any one else could do it for him. More than that, the chivalrous fellow had lingered on purpose to protect him, but in his panic, the fugitive believed the native

had failed, and he therefore, continued fleeing with all the speed of which he was master.

He did not check his flight until he heard the report of Nughwa's rifle. That showed the man was busy, but, since he was liable to mistake and failure, Dudley thought it well to keep going awhile longer. Upon hearing the second shot, however, the panting youth came to a halt.

Close listening failed to detect the faintest sound that could be made by such a large animal as an elephant. The pursuit was certainly over, and the lad could not feel any more solicitude for his friend. Though the rifle reports made it certain that he had had a collision with the brute, there was no doubt in the mind of Dudley as to the result.

"Nughwa has been in this business too many years to make any slip in a simple case like this."

Now that the immediate danger had passed, the thoughts of the youth naturally reverted to the real purpose of this venture toward the northern region of Siam. While, as it seemed to him, the white elephant could not be far off, he could think of no means by which to locate him. They might pass within a hundred feet of where he was feeding without suspecting it.

In short, the problem seemed to be another version of hunting for a needle in a haystack.

The "fly in the ointment" remained in the form of the native hunters who were engaged at the same task. It was not to be supposed, after what they had done, and the risks they had run, that they would withdraw from the effort to secure the most valuable prize that any one can secure in that strange land. Their chance was the equal of Nughwa's, and it would be strange if they turned back so long as any promise of success remained.

The interesting question was as to the moral effect of the guide's encounter with one of his countrymen at the top of the precipice. He had certainly given a striking proof of the effect of the gentle teachings of the missionary, and of their superiority over that of heathendom. The man whom he spared had thanked him for the unexpected mercy.

What was the extent of this gratitude? Would he return the forbearance if it came in his way to do so? Would he resort to no means for removing the formidable and only obstacle in his path?

Neither Dudley Mayson nor Nughwa himself could answer this question until the actual test was made. The white elephant had shown his

appreciation of the kindness of the youth, when he was suffering. The memory of such animals, as we know is long, and he could be counted on never to forget what our young friend had done for him, when he was ahungered, but man is sometimes baser in his conduct than the beasts of the field, and the hunger for gold has instigated the most infamous of crimes.

“So I shall have to wait and see, but no matter what those fellows do, *I’m* out of it. I am of no account, and it’s just the same as if Nughwa were running the whole business alone, which reminds me that it is high time he and I were at work again.”

In his flight from the charging elephant, the young American had zigzagged a good deal, naturally believing that by so doing, he could confuse his pursuer, whose speed was far greater than he could attain. It followed therefore that he had so mixed the points of the compass that he had to do some figuring in order to make his way back to the edge of the narrow plain where he had parted so abruptly from his companion. The distance was trifling, but the two were as effectively separated as if miles lay between them.

Manifestly the thing to do was to signal to Nughwa. They had been in each other’s com-

pany long enough to understand these calls, and the youth did just what he had seen his friend do when summoning Wahrida to him. With the tips of his fingers between his lips he sent a piercing whistle ringing through the jungle.

“He couldn’t miss hearing that if he were twice as far off as I know he is. Curious he doesn’t answer,” added Dudley, after listening for a minute or so; “he doesn’t want to lose time any more than I do.”

He repeated the signal, but with no more effect than before. Only the usual hum and discord of the jungle came back to the listening ear.

A shiver of dread passed over the young man. Could it be after all that harm had befallen the other? The two reports of his rifle proved he had had a fight with the angered elephant, and it might be that the fatal ending which always impends over the professional hunter had come to him at last.

Yielding to a fear akin to a panic, Dudley started off at a loping trot to find his friend. In his headlong flight, the youth had left a trail which could be retraced with little difficulty. The bad thing about it was it was so devious that the distance was fully double what he would have to traverse if he took a direct course.

When he came to the point, where, as he well remembered, he had made a sharp turn, he stopped.

"There's no use of wasting all this time. Just off to the left is the spot where the mad elephant turned us back, and here goes!"

He struck into the lope again, for his impatience was growing, and he had not taken a dozen steps, when he came nearer than in all his life to throwing a double somersault. He certainly went over one and a half times, and came down with a jolt that made him think for a moment his neck was broken. His gun was thrown several feet from his hands, and, before he could pull himself together, he rolled over again.

Some kind of a wild animal had run into him and caused the trouble—not one creature, however, but several, apparently no larger than ordinary dogs. The comical feature of it all was that these wild pigs were as much scared as the lad over the collision that was wholly accidental. Something had startled them, and they made a rush without seeing the strange intruder who burst among them. Suddenly caught in a terrifying situation, one of them made a plunge, with the aim of whisking between the legs of the lad, and he would have

succeeded in passing through, had the legs been twice their length and double their distance apart.

The attempt, therefore, was a failure, and while Dudley was climbing to his feet another energetic pig repeated the attempt with similar results. A second desperate effort placed Dudley upright, and he made off with might and main. At the same time, the pigs scampered in the opposite direction, and it would be hard to say which was more frightened, they or the young American.

A brief flight told the latter there was really no danger, and he turned and looked around. He was just in time to catch a vanishing glimpse of the curling tail of the last pig, running with all the frantic haste it possessed. Dudley went back and picked up his gun which had not been harmed, and resumed his hunt for his dusky friend.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### A SURPRISE

**N**UGHWA appeared at his elbow, stepping from behind a tree and smiling at the amazed expression on the face of his young friend.

“Didn’t you hear me whistle?” asked the latter.

“Yes, but you were coming toward me and there was no hurry. I wanted to see how you would make out in finding me. You were doing well.”

“Did you see me turning flipflops over those wild pigs?”

“No,—how was it?”

Dudley hurriedly told his experience, at which the native smiled. The youth added with a touch of impatience:

“Precious time is going fast, and I don’t see that we are making any progress at all.”

“We truly are not doing much,” coolly replied the guide; “perhaps you will tell me how to do more.”

"I know better than to try to instruct you, Nughwa; but I can't help feeling that we are wasting hours by loitering in these parts."

"Suppose the white elephant is doing the same?"

"Do you think he is?" eagerly asked Dudley.

"I do; I don't believe he is far off. We have lost the trail, but I hope we shall find it again before the day goes by. You must not forget that Wahrida is also hunting for the animal, and is more likely than we to find him."

"I did not know that; I feel more hopeful now."

"Elephants like valleys and plains rather than mountains; in truth they won't make their homes among mountains; they are too hard for them to travel."

"But these are hills,—not mountains."

"The animals have the same objection to them; it's just as much trouble for them to get around. If the white elephant keeps on to the northward, he will follow some valley or route that others have taken before him. Hello!"

The younger saw no reason for the exclamation, until Nughwa pointed in advance, where a short distance off, a faint column of smoke could be seen filtering among the tops of

the trees and gradually dissolving in the pulsating air.

Evidently a camp fire had been kindled there, and it was hardly possible that it could have been done by any one except the two hunters who had already played so prominent a part in the stirring business.

"We must find out about that," said Nughwa, after they had stood for some minutes looking and talking together. "You take that way and I'll take this, and we'll soon learn the truth."

The task was not a hard one, for the camp was comparatively near and the foliage and vegetation screened their movements. Only ordinary care was necessary, and the youth made sure that his friend advanced faster than he. Thus Dudley was later in stealing near enough to gain sight of the camp, which, as both supposed, belonged to the abductors of the white elephant.

The couple had started a small fire, over which they were broiling some small fish, evidently taken from the adjoining stream, as it will be remembered our two friends had intended to do. Having gathered considerable fruit for their morning dessert, they were provided with as good a meal as one could wish.

After watching them for several minutes,

Dudley thought it prudent to withdraw. The natives were not likely to remain idle long, and, if in leaving the camp, they happened to head toward him, unpleasant complications would follow. The youth noticed that the two were talking quite earnestly, and he believed Nughwa would use the chance to gain some information which, if not helpful, was certain to be interesting.

So it proved. Hardly a sentence was spoken which the eavesdropper did not overhear. He learned that, as he supposed, the thieves had lost the trail the night before, and neither could suggest any means of finding it again. Their horses were turned loose not far off, but for the time, they could be of no help to their owners. The face of the country made them unavailable, and the men could move about more readily on foot.

The guide was surprised by one fact. He recognized each as members of the party of tiger hunters. One, as we know, was the man that had addressed Dudley Mayson in English at a critical moment, and the encounter between him and Nughwa could never be forgotten by either. The curious fact intimated was that neither of the natives made the slightest reference to Nughwa. No doubt they had already

done so, but the subject was evidently finished between them.

The important result of the guide's stolen knowledge was an immediate change in what may be called his plan of campaign. When, after a careful detour, he rejoined Dudley Mayson, and had told what he overheard, he added:

"I feel more certain than before that we are close to the white elephant."

"Let me ask you *why* you believe so, Nughwa."

"All four of us lost his trail last night; he has not been disturbed for a good many hours; he believes his tormentors have left him; and, although he still means to travel a long way to the north, he feels it safe to give attention to his appetite; you must remember that he has a hunger which it will take a day or two of hard work to satisfy. If he ever *does* turn up in Bangkok, he will never know such a hunger again," added Nughwa.

"In the meantime, what are *we* to do?"

"You see there is twice as much chance of our finding him, if we hunt separately, as there is in keeping together. Therefore, we will separate. You think Wahrida is likely to do more than we, but she may fail. The white elephant must be found by you or me, or he will

never be found at all, and your chance is as good as mine. All that you and I have to watch against is that we don't lose each other."

"How shall we make sure we do not?"

"It is easy enough; we shall simply wander to and fro and take our chances of stumbling upon the white elephant. Standing here, we can hear the noise of the waterfall. Make certain you never wander too far off to hear it. When night comes, go back to the waterfall and I will meet you there. No matter how long you have to wait, don't go away till I join you."

"I will remember your words, but, suppose I shall be fortunate enough to gain sight of the prize, how shall I let you know, without alarming him?"

"If I hear three sharp whistles, I will know that you have found him. If you go back a little way into the jungle, he won't be scared by the sound, which he will think is made by some animal, for there are plenty of them around him. If you *do* get sight of the animal, don't lose him again."

"Suppose it is *you* who finds him?"

"I will signal the same. Do we understand each other?"

Dudley could not think of anything more that needed to be said, and the friends parted com-

pany. Let us follow the footsteps of the younger member.

It may have been only the natural buoyancy of youth that caused the young American to feel more hope than at any time since the preceding night. As he moved through the forest, he stepped more briskly and with keener spirits, though his intelligence would not let him shut his eyes to the fact that the probabilities of failure outweighed those of success.

“There are four of us—not taking Wahrida into account—who are hunting the white elephant, and I can’t see that any one has a better chance than the others, or that they are not all equal. If those two thieves keep together, they won’t do any better than Nughwa or I. My friend knows more than both of them united, but I don’t see that it will be any help to him at this stage of the business. It is a pretty ingenious theory that Nughwa has, and I suppose there is something in it, but I shouldn’t be surprised if there’s a slip somewhere.”

You will bear in mind that, in a certain sense, danger threatened our young friend throughout every hour if not every minute spent in the Siamese jungle. The overflowing animal life included the fiercest of wild beasts and the most numerous of reptiles. I have related some of

his experiences with these, but I have also omitted a number, because of what may be called a sameness in their nature. Thus, he had not gone a hundred steps, after his last parting with Nughwa, when a moving gleam and glitter on the ground, among the vegetation in front, warned him of the presence of one of the deadly serpents of the country. He halted and scanned the space narrowly. A faint rustling to the left turned his attention thither, and he was just in time to see the reptile glide from sight. Like most of its species, it preferred to retreat rather than fight, and Dudley was quite willing to let it do so.

There was no saying when he would not suddenly find himself face to face with a tiger, or leopard, or buffalo, or elephant, with the chances that the animal would advance instead of retreating. While he felt considerable confidence in his rifle, he was averse to using it, through fear that the report would be heard by the prize for which he was looking. With the vivid memory of his recent misfortunes at the hands of the strange beings who caused such sounds, he would be sure to take the alarm and make off.

The monkeys chattered and frisked among the branches over head, as Dudley had seen

them do many times, and he only gave them passing attention. It cannot be said that it was precisely so on the part of the mischievous creatures themselves, for, while the youth was making good progress, something whizzed so close to his face that it nipped the brim of his hat, and he saw a cocoanut, in its stringy sheathing, roll several paces in advance.

Whirling about to learn who had taken this liberty with him, he discovered his insulter in the form of an unusually large monkey, perched on a branch, fifty feet above, grinning and looking so comical that Dudley could not help laughing. The looks and manner of the creature said as plainly as so many words:

“I’m the fellow that tried to crack *your* cocoanut; what are you going to do about it?”

The youth was too prudent to attempt to do anything. He did not need to be reminded that any retaliation on his part was sure to prove serious to him. He knew how likely an injury to one of the animals would be resented by them all; and, had a half-dozen loaded guns been at his command, they wouldn’t have saved him from their vengeance. So he walked on and was molested no more by these creatures.

At times birds of the most brilliant plumage

flashed like streaks of fire among the foliage. Their cries were discordant and harsh, but there were others which he did not see, whose throats warbled notes of an airy, exquisite sweetness only heard in a few favored climes. They would have charmed any one, but Dudley had heard most of them before, and he was too absorbed with the work in hand to allow his attention to be diverted by anything else.

It will be remembered that the youth was following no systematic plan, because it was useless to do so. The white elephant was as likely to be found in one place as another, and Dudley therefore simply wandered here and there as fancy prompted. It was inevitable that he should mix the points of the compass, but that was of no moment, since he had an unerring guide in the murmur of the waterfall, which he did not allow to die out. It was so faint that he knew it was a considerable distance off, but that mattered nothing, so long as the sound actually reached him.

"It won't do to go much farther," he reflected, stopping beside a rubber tree; "for it is all I can do to hear the fall from here."

He stood for some minutes speculating as to whether there was any means by which he could gain a clue as to the most likely course of a

lone elephant, but he could think of none. When Nughwa admitted that he could do nothing in that direction it was presumptuous for a youth to think he could succeed.

During the brief time that the young American remained motionless, the impression grew upon him that some kind of animal was moving among the undergrowth at the base of the trees, less than a hundred feet away. His first thought was that it was something for him to avoid, for, as has been shown, it was not only a waste of time, but dangerous for him to interfere with any of the denizens of the jungle; but, prompted by curiosity and the faint hope that never left him, he began stealing forward as guardedly as if he had already caught the glint of a tiger's eyes.

His intention was to penetrate just far enough to learn the identity of the beast, and then to withdraw before he himself was observed, and he was confident of his ability to do so, for he had made good progress in learning the ways of the jungle; but, before he caught sight of the stranger, he knew, from a slight noise made by it, that it was an elephant busily engaged in feeding.

Moving forward a little farther, with the

same noiseless tread, Dudley caught sight of the animal.

Could he believe his eyes?

There, hardly twenty paces distant, stood the white elephant, quietly making his dinner upon foliage and berries!

## CHAPTER XXV

### BREAD CAST UPON THE WATERS

**D**UDLEY MAYSON stood literally speechless. He had been alternately cheered and depressed, certain for hours that the hunt for the white elephant was doomed to failure, and then inspired by a reaction from despair, and now here was the prize standing within a stone's throw, as quietly feeding as if he knew no enemy was within a hundred miles of him.

"Thank the Lord!" exclaimed the youth, with a fervor that was genuine.

The animal's shoulder was toward him, so that the view was quartering and the beast was unaware of his presence. If not disturbed, he was likely to remain where he was for several hours.

A singular thought came to the young American. Recalling the incident by the camp fire, when the elephant showed his gratitude for his kind treatment, he asked himself:

“Does he remember me? What would he do if he knew I was so near him? I fear he is wise enough to understand my business and he would treat me as if I were Nughwa.”

But more than one important duty confronted our young friend. The first was to notify the guide, as he had agreed to do, in order that he might recapture the animal. That must be done, too, without alarming the latter. As cautiously as he had picked his way to the spot, Dudley began his withdrawal. So long as the elephant was in sight, he kept his eye on him. He continued plucking the berries and feeding, as if, as Nughwa had said, it would take several days to make up for his abstention from food. He was magnificent in size, and, aside from his peculiar attraction, would have made a notable addition to any collection. His mobile trunk kept insinuating itself here, there and everywhere among the leaves and fruitage, and the mouth beneath was continually opening like the entrance to a cavern, as the organ curled under and thrust the food into it. The enormous ears occasionally flapped, though there were no insects to annoy the *pachydermata*, and the colossal epicure fed himself as daintily as if his appetite needed nursing, and he had dismissed all fear of the only enemy he dreaded—man.

"I guess this is far enough from him," mused Dudley, when he had reached the point where he had first discovered the proximity of some animal; "he will hear the signal, but he can't have any idea of what it means."

Accordingly the youth placed the tips of his forefinger and thumb between his lips and emitted the call, repeated three times, which would tell Nughwa of the great discovery he had made, that is to say, provided the signal reached his friend, of which there could be no certainty.

"If he is as far on the other side of the falls as I am on this side, he won't hear me, and may not know what I want to tell him until night. Well, I have done all I can, and must take care I don't lose sight of the fellow."

It was self-evident that the shrill whistle had been heard by the elephant, but it did not alarm him, for, when the youth once more peeped through the foliage, he was seen browsing as contentedly as before. His posture, however, had been shifted, so that his head was turned toward Dudley, who, in his wish to feast his eyes upon the wonderful prize, stepped farther forward than was prudent.

Suddenly the elephant stopped eating, and lowered his trunk, letting the berries rattle down upon the leaves, while he assumed the

motionless attitude which indicated that he had discovered something.

Dudley was startled, for he could not guess the cause of the animal's disturbance. The youth knew he had made no noise, for he had stood like a statue for two or three minutes before the creature ceased feeding, but the heart of the American almost stopped throbbing, when he made the discovery that the elephant was looking directly at him!

That explained it. It was not the ears but the eyes of the animal that warned him of the biped so near at hand. The young man, in his profound interest had stepped into view, and the position being favorable, the elephant saw him.

There could be no doubt as to that, for, while Dudley stood puzzled and wondering, the beast charged him. With an unutterable self-disgust, the lad whirled about and ran for life.

He would have fired had he been certain of making his shot fatal, for to him the question was the supreme one of saving his own life, but he knew that a shot would only exasperate the brute and spur him to more furious exertion. The only hope was of leaping into a tree and getting beyond his reach.

None presented itself until he had fled sev-

eral paces, and then it was too late. He flung aside his gun, sprang upward, grasped a limb with both hands, and was hurriedly drawing his body aloft, when the dreaded trunk encircled his body, and he was wrenched loose as easily as a cluster of grapes is plucked from its stem.

Dudley Mayson closed his eyes and commended his soul to heaven. He felt himself sweeping dizzily through the air, and then the grasp was relaxed and he fell.

But the fall was so slight it caused no shock. He opened his amazed eyes just in time to see that he was resting on the neck of the elephant. Only by a quick throwing out of his arms and legs did he save himself from toppling to the ground. He was unable to comprehend what it all meant, until his captor took his rifle from the ground and passed it up to him!

Then the astounding truth burst upon him. The elephant was not his enemy but his friend. He remembered when the youth had fed him. That food had indeed proved bread cast upon the waters, though it did not wait many days before returning to him. It seemed so like a dream that Dudley actually patted the rubbery skin beside him to make sure it was real. There was no mistake about it.

As soon as he could pull himself together, he

speculated in vain over the meaning of the white elephant in thus placing him on his back and handing his rifle to him. Now that he had taken possession of the youth, who was meanly seeking to make him captive, what did he intend to do with him?

So far as possible, the animal showed his purpose without delay by starting up the valley in an easterly direction, moving forward with the long, swinging stride which covers the ground more rapidly than most people would suppose.

And now followed the most extraordinary experience in Dudley Mayson's life.

With his feet spread wide apart, made necessary by his spanning of the huge neck, and seated as he had often seen Nughwa ride, he found it very easy to retain his place. He even wondered why his friend ever left it for the more uncomfortable one in the howdah. It was like velvet, though he felt as if astride of a barrel, the flabby skin lapping over and suggesting a blanket loosely thrown across the support. As he became accustomed to his perch, Dudley placed his shoes against the ears where they put out from the head, while the fan-like organs branched above and shut in his feet, as if they were stirrups, the flaps of course running far backward and downward. Before long this

position became irksome and he resumed his first one. The crest of the immense brain towered and arched over in front, covered as it was with scattering spikes of coarse hair, and added to the novelty of the unique situation.

Naturally it was some time before Dudley Mayson recognized all these points and recovered sufficiently from his amazement to note with some intelligence the action of his huge friend. He understood from the first, why he was treated with such clumsy but unmistakable kindness, but sometimes a friendship becomes as embarrassing as active enmity.

How was all this to end?

The white elephant, with his young rider, continued striding along the valley, which by-and-by trended more to the northward, toward the Laos country. This fact Dudley was quick to perceive, and his apprehension increased.

Everything looked as if our young friend was a hopeless prisoner. The incident was another illustration of the predicament of the hunter, who, setting out to hunt his tiger, awoke to the fact that the tiger was hunting him. The elephant did not halt until he had traveled fifty miles farther into the northern wilderness, and even then it was unlikely he would permit the lad to leave him.

"Maybe he means to adopt me," exclaimed Dudley, giving expression to a quaint conceit, "and I shall have to live among elephants the rest of my life."

But his fears soon became too oppressive to permit anything in the nature of jesting. He was quite sure that Nughwa was too far off to hear the signal emitted some time before, and therefore nothing in the way of help was to be expected from him. As the elephant occasionally passed near enough to trees for the branches to brush the rider, he wondered whether he could not grasp one and swing himself clear. It certainly seemed feasible, but he hesitated through fear of rousing the anger of his friend, who might seize him before he could clamber beyond reach. In that event, he was not likely to show much consideration to his captive. Dudley decided not to make the attempt, at least not for some time to come.

There remained one experiment and he decided to attempt it: that was to drop to the ground and make off, provided the animal consented. There was some risk in doing so, for his elevation was considerable, and there was not much abatement in the speed.

"However it may turn out, it won't make him mad; I'll pretend I fell off."

No need of any pretense about it. When the youth, carefully balancing himself, dropped to the earth, the animal was going faster than he supposed. Despite his brace, Dudley turned over, as if he had slipped from a springboard and sprawled forward as awkwardly as a bumpkin. The elephant abruptly halted, and, while the lad was in the act of scrambling to his feet, he was seized and replaced on the back of his bulky friend, who resumed his swinging pace, as if nothing out of the common had happened.

"It's clear that *that* scheme won't work!" said the jarred and disappointed youth; "I don't like the shape things are taking."

And no wonder, but what could he do? Only his feelings had been injured by his tumble, and he was ready for any effort that promised hope, but all that he could think of was his former plan of seizing hold of the first convenient limb that offered. Several times he looked longingly to the rear, but saw no signs of his friend upon whom his hopes were fixed.

Dudley tried to find comfort in his theory of Nughwa's line of action.

"If he heard my whistle, he has had to call to Wahrida, and it has taken some time for her to join him. Then the white elephant has

traveled so fast that she could not gain much on this fellow. But, if Nughwa *didn't* hear me, he won't find out what has been done until to-night, and more than likely not even then. I'm afraid I'm in for it."

He did not forget the two Siamese with whom they had had so much trouble, and it was an interesting speculation as to what would happen in the event of their appearing on the scene. They would certainly be treated as enemies by the white elephant, who had as much reason to fear their machinations as he had to fear the designs of the professional hunter.

Twice the alarmed captive sent the signal ringing through the jungle, blowing with a vigor that it seemed would crack his cheeks. The brute paid no attention to the noise, but swung forward in his ponderous but rapid fashion, as if all this was of no concern to him. Dudley became settled in his resolve to seize the first limb that presented itself. He could think of nothing else to do and was prepared to take the chances, which might prove very serious to him.

For three hours the wonderful ride lasted, with no other halt than the brief one when the brute replaced the burden that had fallen off. As if anxious to guard against any

harm coming to his esteemed friend, the white elephant now shunned the trees whose branches were likely to scrape him from his back. Thus his good will led him to do the very thing Dudley Mayson did not wish him to do.

The youth made one or two efforts to turn the head of the animal so he would take the back track and go toward Nughwa instead of from him, but the elephant did not give the slightest heed to these attempts. His course said as plainly as so many words:

“I’m running this business, and you needn’t try to interfere.”

At the end of the time mentioned, the huge steed ascended a slight elevation, where, the country being mostly a grassy plain, he was able to look over a considerable area. His action left no doubt that he was “taking his bearings.” He was entering a region with which to a certain extent he was familiar, and he did not mean to make any mistake.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### A HALT

**T**HROUGH the hot pulsing of the jungle a thrilling sound came to the ears of Dudley Mayson. It suggested the long-defined echo of his signal, for it was the same—three tremulous whistlings which forced their way through the other myriad noises that were never silent.

It was the response of Nughwa to the call for help. He had heard the cry, and mounted on the back of Wahrida, was responding in hot haste. Filled with new hope, the lad looked long and searchingly behind him. The native was too prudent to show himself, with the certainty of discovery by the royal fugitive, but he was not far away.

The halt of the white elephant was brief. One sweeping glance over his field of vision enabled him to locate himself, and he was off again.

The situation of the young American could not have been more extraordinary. He had

started out to hunt the albino, and that strange and rare animal had actually captured him. The huge fellow was now striding through the Siamese jungles to the northward, on his return to his usual haunts in the Laos country. The young man was already many miles from home, and the distance was steadily increasing. When and how was the strange flight to end?

Dudley was still perched upon the broad, flabby neck of the enormous animal, and the long, swinging lope was as pleasant as if he were in the car on the back of Wahrida. But from the jungle to the rear had come the notice that his skilful and daring friend was hurrying after him. But for this certainty, the youth would have attempted his plan of seizing the first branch of a tree that came within reach, and taking his chances of eluding the embarrassing friendship of the white elephant.

Our young friend could not help wondering whether by any possibility, the animal suspected the real nature of the flight and pursuit. Could he have understood that answering signal of the professional elephant catcher? It seemed impossible, and yet we all know the astonishing sagacity of those creatures, which

sometimes passes far over the line of instinct and enters the realm of reason.

This particular brute could not forget his painful experience with Nughwa, whom he must have hated and would have been glad to crush, though he held him in dread. Not only that, but there were two others of his nationality who had pestered him sorely, and whom he certainly had no wish to meet again. Primarily, therefore, his object was to get beyond the reach of three men.

It must ever remain a subject of curious speculation as to what the elephant would have done with Dudley Mayson, had there been no interference with his remarkable captivity. The most reasonable theory is that of Nughwa. He would not have allowed the youth to escape him during the day. His gratitude would take this peculiar form. We remember that the youth had made one test by dropping to the ground, with the result of being promptly replaced on the back of his colossal friend. Had he attempted to scramble into a tree, the brute would have pulled him down with equal promptness, and probably, to impress him with the ingratitude he was displaying, cuffed his ears with an awkward emphasis that would have remained a vivid memory for days. Dudley's

only hope would have been to remain a meek captive until night. It would not have been difficult to lull the suspicion of the animal, and in the darkness he could have slipped away.

There always remained the last resort. He knew where to drive a bullet in order to reach the seat of life. He was sure he could penetrate the brain by firing downward from his perch. It would have pained the prisoner to do so, but he would not have hesitated when no other hope remained. It may be said in a general way that the white elephant intended to hold his prisoner indefinitely, though of necessity such intention was vague to the last degree.

The afternoon was well advanced, when Dudley was roused abruptly from his meditations by the elephant wading into a stream fully two hundred yards wide, with the evident purpose of crossing. As nearly as the youth could decide, they were still pushing to the northward.

"Now, if he gets beyond his depth, I'll be in a pretty fix; I'll have to hold on by one of his ears if they don't sink too deep, and I can slip over his back and grab his tail. If it wasn't for the trouble of taking care of my gun, I'd give him the slip, for I'm sure I can beat him at diving."

The animal carefully descended the muddy slope, which was of gentle incline, and entered the water, as if afraid of dropping into some treacherous hole, but it deepened slowly. A cloud of mosquitoes rose from the boggy soil, and, swarming about Dudley's face, drove him distracted for a few minutes. But the animal seemed to pass through the zone of pests, which ceased their persecutions as abruptly as they began.

If the white elephant was really fleeing from his enemies, he seemed to think the necessity for haste had passed. It may have been he believed he had penetrated far enough northward to throw them off the track,—a conclusion which was reasonable, so long as he was unaware that Wahrida and her master were near.

When the fugitive reached the middle of the stream, the water came half way up his sides, and the young man was relieved to see that he would escape the ducking he had feared. The elephant now paused and began amusing himself, as was his favorite custom. Filling his trunk with fluid, he spurted it into the air and over his body, to which the coolness was refreshing. While thus employed, he took pains not to wet his young friend, though he could not

succeed at all times. The twisting of his head from side to side, while vigorously using nature's hose, caused Dudley to duck and dodge to avoid the spray, which sprinkled his clothing and got into his eyes.

A half hour was thus employed, when the elephant seemed to conclude he had cooled himself and was sufficiently comfortable to resume his fording of the river. He was advancing with the solemn ponderosity of his species, and was close to the shore, the water continually shallowing, when he halted, with a suddenness which showed he had made an unpleasant discovery.

Unpleasant it was, indeed, for scarcely twenty paces away, at the top of the slope which the two were approaching, stood an immense tiger. He had emerged from the jungle, and was about to enter the water, probably with the same purpose that had caused the larger animal to tarry in the stream, when he caught sight of the latter lumbering toward him.

One or the other must give way or turn aside, or a collision was inevitable, and such a meeting would be a terrific one. Each knew the courage, strength and prowess of the other, and the fight could not go to the limit without both re-

ceiving severe wounds, which in the case of one must have been fatal.

It is impossible to say what precise motives actuated the two combatants. It is probable that there would have been a mutual giving away, and the couple would have passed by without "speaking," but for the presence of a third and disturbing factor in the situation in the person of the young American, perched on the neck of the white elephant.

In him the tiger must have recognized an enemy—one of those who delighted in hunting and slaying his kind. Perhaps the brute, terrible in his beauty and strength, had felt the sting of the strange missiles sent by the weapons that spouted fire, whose memory filled him with the burning resolve of revenge. However that may be, it was clear he intended to remain where he was and assail the youth when he came within reach of his claws. One leap would carry him from the ground to the back of the elephant, where he could quickly rend the lad to shreds.

The larger animal must have read the purpose of the other. If so, he knew that to turn to the right or left would not avail him. Wherever he emerged from the water, the tiger would await him. If he turned about or re-

treated, the other would leap into the current and follow, thereby gaining a greater advantage than was his on dry land. He was nimbler, and, avoiding the trunk, could swim around his bulky antagonist. Moreover, the youth would be brought nearer his level, and would, therefore, be more easily reached.

Meanwhile, Dudley Mayson was doing some thinking. It did not take him long to decide that a critical collision was impending, and it rested with him to say whether he was to play the part of spectator, with the certainty of becoming a victim to the appalling ferocity of the most dreaded denizen of the jungle.

He had seen more than one tiger in Siam, but never had he looked upon a more formidable specimen than that which stood upon the margin of the stream, waiting for him to come within reach of the teeth and claws that were itching to destroy him. He believed he was larger than the man-eater which he had helped to slay several days before.

"I don't see how I am going to keep out of this fight," he thought, "unless I slip off my friend's back and swim for the other shore. Even then the tiger is likely to follow me and the mix-up will be worse than ever. I have a loaded rifle in my hands, and I don't believe

I shall have a better chance to use it than now."

The brute could not have offered a better target, for he was standing with his head erect and his downy, velvety chest exposed. The intervening distance was short, and he was as motionless as a rock, though he would not long remain so.

The young American did not waste a minute. It will be seen that the situation could not have been more favorable for making a "bull's-eye." He brought his gun to his shoulder, and aimed quickly, but with the utmost care, sighting at the center of the space between the upper fore legs of the brute and just below his throat. If the ball sped true—and why should it not?—it would pass through the heart of the tiger.

And never did bullet speed more truly. Almost in the same instant that the sharp crack of the weapon sounded, the brute emitted a snarling screech, leaped directly upward, seemingly to a height of a dozen feet, and, falling on his side, rolled over and over, frantically clawing the earth and air, and working his way down the slope to the edge of the stream. When he arrived there, his struggles ceased, for he was as "dead as a coffin nail." Dudley Mayson had made a shot that Nughwa himself could not have beaten.

It was several minutes before the white elephant seemed to understand what had taken place. He stared for a minute or two at the motionless carcass, lying partly in and partly out of the water, and then, seeing that nothing more was to be feared from it, he resumed his crossing of the stream. He did not refrain now from turning several paces aside, though it was not fear, but repugnance that actuated him. As Dudley looked down at his victim, he could not help saying with justifiable pride:

"I wish Nughwa had seen that shot. He can't be far off, but I don't suppose he will dare cross until it is dark."

When the white elephant stepped out upon land and re-entered the jungle, Dudley supposed he would resume his flight and maintain it far into the night, but, instead, he began helping himself to a tiny species of nut, of which there was an abundance growing near at hand.

"He is hungry again; I wonder whether an elephant ever eats enough to make him unable to eat any more. I thought I fed him considerable the other night, but it must have been only an aggravation. I hope he will make up his mind to camp here, for, if he does, we shall be sure to hear from Nughwa before morning."

## CHAPTER XXVII

### ONCE MORE

WHEN an hour had passed and the white elephant continued feeding, Dudley Mayson was quite sure he intended to stay through the night in the vicinity. He could not feel certain, however, for he knew the species are nocturnal in their habits, and, if this one could manage to satisfy his eternal hunger, he might resume his flight and keep it up for hours at a stretch.

The halting place was so near the stream that despite the density of the jungle, the youth was able to see the flow of the water. More than once, as the animal moved about, Dudley would have been able to grasp a limb and lift himself into a tree, but he had decided not to do so, for he was content to await the coming of Nughwa, who, he was certain, was in the neighborhood.

Our young friend maintained his seat amid the aimless lurchings of the brute until the day

was near its close and another tropical night was at hand. Suddenly the elephant stopped eating, holding his trunk poised in air, in the attitude of listening.

Dudley suspected the meaning of this alarm, although he had not seen or heard anything unusual. He peered here and there among the gathering shadows, but saw nothing explanatory, but a minute later the animal, with an angry flirt of his trunk, swung around and lunged forward as a form whisked from under his body and darted like a flash to cover.

It was only a glimpse that the youth caught of the man, but he knew he was Nughwa. At the same moment an abrupt check of the giant brute, told that the hunter had scored his point. The rubber rope was fastened around the trunk of a large tree, and the yielding loop at the other end had been deftly slipped over one foot and tightened several inches above. The animal being totally unsuspecting of the presence of an enemy, the task of the latter was as easy as in the former instance.

Leaning over from the neck of the elephant Dudley saw one of the hind legs drawn back by the tense rubber rope, precisely as during the first capture. He did not hesitate to drop carefully from his seat and to dart into the wood.

His haste, however, was unnecessary, for the one that had now become a prisoner paid no heed to him.

"Hello, Nughwa, where are you?" called the happy youngster.

His friend emerged from the gloom and quietly remarked:

"I think we have him fast, but, though he has treated you so well, you had better keep out of his reach until he gets over his flurry. He must be mad clean through."

But the sequence was different from before. There were none of those savage struggles to release himself which accompanied his first bondage. With an intelligence often shown by the species, he seemed to bridge the interval during which he was free and connect his two captivities. In the former instance, he had made sufficient desperate efforts to prove that when his leg was imprisoned by that merciless thong it was impossible to free himself.

There was one tremendous pull, which was more of a test than an effort to get away, and then he stopped. Like the bewildered mariner, he had merely sounded to learn how matters stood. His passiveness was a surprise to Nughwa, who expected another series of desperate struggles, as he and his young comrade

stood at a safe distance and watched their prisoner in the gathering gloom.

“Wahrida is feeding a little way off,” said the guide, “and doesn’t think there is any need of her mixing in just yet. She will come when she is wanted.”

“How did you manage it so well, Nughwa?”

As the guide explained, there was no difficulty whatever. He had heard the first signal of Dudley, and, striking the spoor of the white elephant, never lost it. While keeping out of sight, he was able to catch a glimpse now and then of the fugitive, and he signalled to the youth in order to let him know how matters were going and to keep up his courage. Fixing in his mind the general course of the fugitive, Nughwa made a detour, which carried him across the river at some distance below. While returning to the course, he heard the shot of Dudley and easily located the couple. What followed has been told.

When the guide asked the meaning of the shot, the youth felt no little pride in relating the incident in which he took so creditable a part. Nughwa listened until the close of the glowing story and then remarked:

“He was quite a large tiger; I saw his body,

but you haven't told me how you came to be riding on the back of the white elephant."

Dudley gave the account, which you learned long ago.

"Did you ever know of anything of the kind, Nughwa?"

"No, but you know the white elephant had very good reason to feel grateful to you; I hope you will not give him the same reason again."

There was no mistaking the significance of this remark, and, had the gloom been less, the crimsoning of Dudley's face would have shown. He hastened to assure his friend that nothing of the kind should be repeated. He would have added that but for this kindness to the animal, he never would have been recaptured, but such a declaration would have been followed by the equally truthful assertion that but for Dudley's neglect in the first instance, the prize would not have been stolen from them. So our young friend was quite willing to drop that phase of the subject.

"I am glad to see he has been partly tamed," said Nughwa,— "much more than I thought. Let us gather more wood and start a fire so as to lose no time in finishing the business."

It was easy to collect all the fuel necessary and two fires were started. They were reflected

from the tawny sides of the prisoner, who shrank as far as he could from the irritating glow and heat.

"Do you intend to let him keep on his feet?"

"Yes; there's no call to make him suffer too much. It is plain he is pretty well tamed already. It won't take many more days to make him as meek as a child. He likes you, but that doesn't help us any, for he won't do as you tell him, and he must be made to obey me through fear. That's the only way to handle wild animals. Some of them, after that, may be brought to love you; the elephant is such an animal, but there are others, like the tiger or leopard, that are always treacherous, and will attack you the instant they think you are off your guard."

"It looks as if we had him fast, but what about those hunters that have been troubling us? Are we likely to see anything of them?"

"I shan't be surprised if they turn up before we get out of the country with the white elephant, but I can promise you they won't play any such trick on us as they did before."

"They may do *worse*."

"I haven't any fear of that," was the reassuring reply. "I am prepared: let them attempt anything they choose."

The two had had enough sleep to go without

it, if necessary, throughout the night, but there was no necessity of anything of the kind, and Nughwa decided to divide the darkness into watches, Dudley taking the first half and the native the remainder,—that, as every one knows, being the more trying portion.

“Do you think you can keep awake till it’s my turn?” asked the elder.

“I’ll guarantee to do so; you can’t blame a person in some circumstances for making a mistake, but, if he makes it a second time, there is no excuse.”

“And often there is none the first time; I think I could mention one or two instances. However,” he added, “you needn’t take the trouble to wake me.”

“Why not?”

“I’ll wake myself.”

Dudley knew he would do it, and all that remained for himself was to keep awake. With the memory of the consequences of his previous neglect, there was little danger of his repeating it. He simply decided that no matter what the temptation might be, he would not sit down for a moment. It was easy to lay out a short beat in the jungle, over which he would tramp to and fro until his vigil was ended. He had taken the first chance to reload his gun, and was as

ready as he could be for any emergency that was likely to arise.

With the two camp fires burning vigorously, the guide did not hesitate to stretch out upon the ground, additionally guarded as he was by the youth, who, as has been shown, had every inducement to attend faithfully to his duties. Dudley threw his rifle over his shoulder, and, before beginning his tramp, took a survey of his surroundings.

The gloomy jungle closed in on every hand, as if he were standing upon an island in a sea of darkness. The close-growing vegetation overhead shut out the dim light of the moon, but glimmering patches could be seen in the direction of the river. Between the two piles of blazing wood towered the elephantine prisoner,—a captive in his own country and domain.

He was the picture of dumb despair. All the motion perceptible was an occasional lifting of one of his hind legs, the position being such that the rope caused no strain. Often these animals, while standing, will gently swing back and forth, something like a schoolboy intent over his lesson. This peculiar habit is taken advantage of, as has been shown by the ele-

phant-catcher, who dexterously slips a noose over the foot as it is raised from the ground.

The brute was likely to keep this posture the night through and probably longer.

Dudley contemplated him awhile with a feeling of pity, not unmixed with a certain admiration.

“Poor fellow! I wonder what you think of me now. You may be grateful for that trifling amount of food which I gave you the other night, but you must know that I am leagued with the man who has made you captive, and I should be afraid to trust myself in your reach again. But you are of royal blood and we mean to put you upon the throne that belongs to you, though I’m quite sure it won’t make you any happier. You have lived in the jungle so long that a house of gold will always be a prison.”

In his sentimental mood, the youth fancied there was an expression of reproach in the mild eyes of the brute. He seemed to say:

“You and I understood each other, and I was taking you to my home in the northern wilds. Your conscience must reprove you.”

Rallying from his peculiar depression, Dudley resumed his slow pacing to and fro, determined that if another mishap came, the fault should not be his. He kept the fire burning

brightly, and was on the alert for the first appearance of danger, no matter what form it might take. The fire did not seem to draw any animals from the wood, as it often does. It was not they, however, which he held in fear, but the native hunters. Although a long distance had been traversed since morning, the situation was so similar to the previous one, that he expected another interference from them.

“Nughwa didn’t seem to fear anything of the kind, but there’s no saying what will happen in this part of the world— Hello!”

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### TAMED

**T**HE exclamation of the youth was caused by the action of Nughwa, who, without a word or the least noise, suddenly stood erect before him. He had awakened on the exact minute set for himself and was now ready to take charge of affairs. When Dudley told him nothing out of the usual order had occurred, he replied by telling his young friend to lie down and get all the sleep he could, for there was no saying when the opportunity would come to him again.

Nughwa pushed the taming process with little mercy. Knowing the feelings of Dudley, he waited until he was unconscious, and then brought means into play that would have forced a protest from his comrade, had he known of them. He not only kept the fires burning more vigorously than ever, but made feints with blazing brands that filled the prisoner with a dread akin to terror. He kept this up until day-

light, by which time the miserable fellow seemed ready to surrender unconditionally.

The treatment, not quite so heroic, was maintained through the next day and night, during which the animal was not allowed a particle of food or a swallow of water. Nughwa's heart ached for him, but he held his peace.

The second day brought a remarkable occurrence—nothing less than an attempt at rescue by another elephant. The guide was resting from his persecutions, and everything was comparatively quiet, when a trumpeting was heard from the direction of the river, and a moment later an immense bull came crashing through the jungle, the embodiment of mountainous fury. Nughwa and Dudley whisked to cover and watched proceedings.

The bulky friend seemed to have no suspicion that he was running any risk by his interference. If he caught a glimpse of the flying figures, he accepted it as proof that they were fleeing from his wrath. That which followed was extraordinary.

The captive looked at his rescuer, who, suddenly halting, looked at him, and for some minutes the two stood as if conferring in the language of the eyes. Then their trunks circled around and over each other for a minute or so,

when, without any more ado, the visitor tried to unfasten the thong around the captive's leg, he standing motionless, and no doubt praying for and expecting his freedom.

"Suppose he succeeds?" asked the anxious Dudley.

Nughwa chuckled.

"An elephant is the smartest animal in the world, but I never saw one that was able to untie a hard knot in a rubber rope. If there was any danger, I'd shoot him."

It did not take the visitor long to learn he had undertaken an impossible task. He first tried the knot around the leg, and then went to the tree. The albino gave all the aid he could, which was none at all. They unquestionably displayed considerable skill, but the fastening was not of the ordinary kind. Nughwa had baffled his captives with a hempen rope, for he knew the ingenuity of the brutes he hunted, and it was easier for him to do so when he used the elastic substance.

The friend persevered longer than would have been supposed. He made the same experiments repeatedly, but of course, with no better success than at first. The time finally came when he was compelled to see that he could do nothing for the prisoner, and he stopped and

looked around for the author of the outrage in order to vent his fury upon him.

asked in a whisper:

Nughwa, who was in hiding by his friend,

“Do you recognize him?”

“No; do you?”

“You have seen him before.”

“When and where?”

“He is one of the couple that were with the white elephant when we first saw him. He wants to see me so bad, I guess I'll show myself.”

With which the native began creeping several paces to one side. This was to protect the youth, to whom he spoke guardedly:

“Keep where you are, and don't let him see you.”

A few minutes later Nughwa rose to his feet in full view of the angry elephant, and called to him in the most insulting language of which he was master. He abused not only the bull himself, but, as he had done in other circumstances, uttered the most outrageous slurs upon his ancestors, in accordance with the belief of the native hunters of Farther India, as I have said before, that these animals understand all such expressions, and consequently are roused to greater depths of rage.

But really there was no necessity for any stimulus of that nature. The instant the bull caught sight of the man, he plunged toward him in irrestrainable wrath. Nughwa raised his rifle and aimed, but held his fire until the brute was within a dozen paces. Then, as he pressed the trigger, the leaden bullet bored its way through the skull into the brain—entering by the avenue, and in precisely the way recommended by one of the greatest authorities on elephant hunting, Sir Emerson Tennett, of Ceylon. The spot is directly above the trunk, where the bone-structure is so weak that a well-aimed ball passes through, as if the obstruction were nothing more than card board.

The bull went down like a collapsing house, killed so suddenly that he was dead by the time the immense carcass had settled on its side.

The body became a powerful factor in taming the captive. The sight of his dead friend, shot down in the act of his interference, by the man who had made the other prisoner, could not fail to terrify the latter, and to fill him with greater fear of the hunter than before. Nor could the impressive fact be absent for a minute from his waking hours; the carcass must lie where it was until the end.

"It seems too bad to leave it there all the time," said the sympathetic Dudley.

"Of course it isn't pleasant for the other, but, if you are not pleased, you may take hold of the tail and drag the body into the river."

"I guess I'll leave it where it is; but, Nughwa, you remember there were two with the white elephant; where do you suppose the other is?"

"Probably not far off. He may take the notion to try his hand at freeing our prisoner, if what he sees doesn't scare him away. If he makes any trouble, I'll drop him, too; the sight of both his dead friends will bring our fellow to his senses."

"I hope that won't be necessary."

"I haven't any wishes about it; I have loaded my gun and am ready for whatever may come. That is what your good father taught me."

Nughwa spent most of the day in taming the captive by the drastic methods already described. Although necessary, it was none the less cruel. It was a long distance to Bangkok, and the hunter was impatient to be under way. Every day counted, and annoying, if not fatal, complications threatened.

Dudley Mayson did not wish his friend to notice his weakness, but, in the course of the

afternoon, he made excuse to wander off some distance in the jungle, for the purpose of "stretching his legs," as the expression goes. Nughwa said nothing, but he was not deceived.

The young American made a point of following the course of the river, for, so long as he kept that in sight, it was impossible to go astray. The undergrowth was so dense in many places, that he was forced to make numerous detours, but his experience in the Siamese forests taught him not to lose his bearings, and he returned regularly to where he could see the gleam of the roiled current. Then, too, there was the ever present danger from the animals of the jungle which kept him watchful and alert.

This fact was impressed upon him, when, after having penetrated barely a furlong, and while a little way inland, he heard a splashing near the shore, which told him some kind of animal was near. After listening for a minute, he started toward the stream, but had taken only a few steps, when he paused. The brute, whatever it might be, had left the water, and was coming toward him.

Dudley quickly availed himself of the nearest trunk, and held himself ready. The approaching animal moved so bulkily and heavily,

that the youth thought of the third elephant, whose coming Nughwa believed quite probable.

“If it is he, I shan’t harm him, and I hope he will know enough to keep away from our camp.”

But the next moment revealed that it was not an elephant, but a rhinoceros that was drawing near. The baggy creature, whose dark hide was dripping with wetness, tramped clumsily forward, crushing the obstructions in his path, and passed within a few paces of the hunter without suspecting the fact. He was not fully grown and the horn on the end of his elevated snout was only a few inches in length.

“I don’t know where to send a bullet to bring you down,” reflected Dudley, as the rhinoceros swung past, “and, if I did, I wouldn’t fire, for there isn’t any reason for my doing so.”

Then the youth gave expression to a fantastic whim:

“I wonder whether you’re going to camp to see whether you can’t do something for the white elephant.”

He smiled at the thought, and moving to the edge of the stream, sat down in the shade. He would have returned to camp, but for the unpleasant sight that he knew awaited him. He did not wish to look upon the suffering pris-

oner. It was unavoidable, however, that he should suffer, and Nughwa was sure to press matters more strongly during the absence of his young friend. The sooner it was over the better, and the youth, therefore, stayed on the shore of the river, until the gathering darkness warned him night was near. Then he rose to his feet, and threaded his course as carefully through the jungle as before.

Reaching camp, he saw no change in the situation. Nughwa was seated with his back against a tree, contentedly smoking his pipe, hardly a dozen feet from the massive carcass of the bull. The two fires were burning strongly, and the pile of sticks placed conveniently near, showed how the Siamese had spent a part of his time.

As Nughwa heard the gentle rustling made by Dudley's feet, he raised his hand warningly. The youth stopped and asked in a whisper:

"What's the matter?"

"He's asleep; he feels bad no doubt, but is worn out."

A glance at the motionless captive showed that his eyes were closed. Hungry, thirsty and wretched, he had at last succumbed to exhaustion. Dudley sat down beside his friend and asked guardedly:

"Have you seen anything of the third elephant?"

"Yes; he has been here."

"I didn't hear your gun," said Nughwa, glancing around.

"Because I didn't fire it; the last elephant was wiser than the others. He came up so quietly that I didn't hear him until he was almost upon me. He stood a minute looking at things, and then, without giving me any attention, turned about and plunged into the jungle. He didn't fancy the look of things, and had sense enough to look for company elsewhere."

"When will you be through taming our prisoner?"

"I am through; he is tamed; we soon start for Bangkok."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### FRIENDS OR ENEMIES

DUDLEY Mayson was hardly surprised by the words of his friend, which, of course, were true. He had pressed the taming process with such vigor, that the royal monarch of the jungle was thoroughly subdued. Nothing more in that line was done during the night, and the watch was kept as before. When the youth awoke, after the sun had risen, Nughwa pointed to the white elephant.

He stood in the same position as before, and it was not until the man had directed attention to the fact that the youth saw that the rubber rope had been removed from the leg of the prisoner, as well as from the trunk of the tree. He had shifted his position sufficiently to learn he was free, but he did no more.

"Why doesn't he go off?" asked the astonished Dudley.

"Because he hasn't my permission."

Nughwa walked up beside the brute, and, ad-

dressing him in Siamese, informed him he was at liberty to go to the river and drink. Although a native of the country, it was not to be expected that he understood the words, but they were accompanied by pantomime and gestures which explained their meaning. The animal instantly struck into a rapid walk toward the stream, the two keeping him company.

He took a "long and solemn draught," and it did him a world of good. Dudley declared that the river was lowered two or three inches, and the poor fellow sighed with contentment.

But he was as hungry as he could well be. All the same, he dared not begin feeding until his master made him understand he was at liberty to do so. Then he went at it with an avidity that promised soon to bring up all arrears.

"I will let him feed the rest of the day," said Nughwa, "and all the night, too, and the next morning we will start for Bangkok."

"But surely you cannot trust him; when he finds himself out of your sight, he will make a break and that will be the last we shall see of him."

"I shall not let him get far away, and the time has come when Wahrida must do her part. I will bring her up to keep him com-

pany, and she can be depended upon to take care of him."

"If he takes it into his head to run away, how can she hinder him?"

"I will prevent it."

"How?" asked the wondering Dudley.

"She will keep near him, and we will make our home in the howdah."

The plan could not have been improved. Wahridda was signalled, and in a brief time appeared, ready for any duty that might be assigned to her. This was the first time the two elephants had met since the second captivity. The albino must have recognized an enemy in Wahridda, but he was too afraid of her master to display any resentment. He looked up at her, as she emerged from the jungle, but only for a moment, when he resumed his feeding. Wahridda was equally indifferent, but it need hardly be said that she kept her "weather eye open," and was as alert as ever. Her one pleasure in life was to win the commendation of her master, and there was nothing she would shrink from doing to gain it.

The albino was a-hungered indeed, and the only time he was not eating seemed to be when he was drinking from the river. Nughwa took a peculiar way of impressing upon him the

danger of trying any trick. He walked out of sight in one direction, made a circuit, and suddenly emerged at some unexpected point. The animal showed he was startled by these sudden appearances, which no doubt filled him with more extravagant ideas than ever of the terrible being's power.

When darkness was closing in, the friends were lifted to the back of Wahrida and clambered into the howdah. Nughwa made sure this was done under the eye of the other, who would thus know that so long as she was near, the master was equally close and ready for any whim that might seize the prisoner.

Seated in their old places, after their supper of fruit, the two talked a long time of the past and present and speculated upon the future. For the first time, a feeling of what might be called settled hope came to them. The white elephant had been captured and tamed, and there seemed no reason to doubt that he would be safely delivered to the king at Bangkok. Accidents of course were liable to take place, but none appeared probable.

It was yet early in the night, when Wahrida resumed feeding. She appeared to be the most indifferent member of the party, but kept near the captive, who was similarly employed.

He could not but know that she was an ally of the others, to whom she had given valuable aid in making him a victim to their cunning and skill. If he felt resentment—which would have been only natural—he still took care not to show it.

Finally, Dudley Mayson gave way to drowsiness, and, settling down in the most comfortable position he could assume in the howdah, glided off into the land of dreams. This was to be expected, for the strain he had felt for the last few days was lifted. The prize, which more than once seemed to be gone beyond recovery, had been regained, and he could see no reason why it should pass from their grasp again. There remained of course the vague misgiving over the action of the two hunters, who had come so near making off with the treasure, but circumstances had undergone a change. It was impossible for them to steal up in the night and repeat their trick. There was no bound elephant for them to set free. He was so completely tamed that he could be driven off only by the man who had tamed him.

Moreover, the most secure sleeping place in the circumstances was on the back of the tame elephant, and the young man passed into slumber with no more misgiving than if in his bed

at Wahta-Shat, or in the couch of his childhood on the other side of the world.

He slept soundly for several hours, when he was awakened by the violent scraping of limbs against the howdah. He started up with the belief that the structure was tumbling to the ground. But the saddle was used to rough usage, and it turned out that Wahrida was simply making a change of position, and perhaps had been a little more indifferent than usual.

"Weren't you scared, Nughwa?" asked the youth, after pulling himself together; "I thought we were to have a big tumble."

There was no reply to his question, and he repeated it still without answer. In the utter darkness, he groped about with his hands, only to find he was alone.

"I wonder if he took a dive to the ground and broke his neck," whispered our young friend, peering over the side of the howdah into the gloom. But he had hardly given expression to the thought, when he smiled at its absurdity. The possibility of the hunter falling a victim to an accident from which the lad had escaped was incredible. The next minute he saw the explanation of his comrade's absence.

Nughwa was giving the prisoner some noc-

turnal lessons in obedience and discipline. Holding a flaming torch in one hand, he moved about in front of the animal, addressing him in Siamese, and compelling him to follow and turn wheresoever the whim of his master dictated. Sometimes when the frightened brute was slow in understanding the commands, Nughwa affected anger, spoke sharply, and feinted as if about to dash the torch into his eyes. The poor captive made such frantic efforts to obey that Dudley could hardly refrain from protesting.

It was an extraordinary rehearsal. The glare from the blazing brand, falling upon the native, gave him a weird appearance, as he leaped here and there in front of the massive brute, who swung from side to side, and back and forth with a perplexity that was pitiful.

The striking feature of the performance was that from the beginning to the end, Nughwa kept within reach of the white elephant. Could the animal have thrown off the hypnotic spell which chained him, the hunter would have been as helpless as a worm, and might have been as easily crushed. Ah, if Nughwa had attempted anything of the kind a few days before!

But the veteran knew his business, and the prisoner did not know his. He was in the situation of the noble steed that meekly accepts

abuse from a wretch upon whom he ought to turn and stamp to death. He did not know his strength.

How long the lesson had been going on, Dudley could not say, but it continued a half hour further and might have lasted still longer had Nughwa not become aware that a disturbing element had suddenly entered into the business. The prisoner suddenly became lax in obeying, but grew hopelessly confused as an amateur often does, when aware that he is acting under critical eyes. The native knew that they had a spectator, and, turning his head, saw him.

Just on the edge of the circle of light thrown out by the camp fires, the head and front of a strange elephant showed. He had emerged noiselessly from the jungle, and was standing as if the rehearsal was gotten up for his entertainment.

The moment Nughwa saw him, he whirled the torch about his head several times, so as to make it burn fiercely, and bounded toward the stranger, with a series of frightful yells. The intruder, trumpeting with terror, swung around and plunged into the wood in a frenzy of panic. The native pursued him several rods, then threw aside his flambeau, and came back to Wahrida, who helped him into the howdah,

where he and his young friend, after a brief conversation, sank into sleep again and were disturbed no more.

As usual, Dudley was the last to awake. When he did so, the sun was above the horizon, and Nughwa had finished preparing a breakfast from fish and fruit, to which he invited the lad to help himself. He gladly did so, and, while so engaged, he could not help observing the white elephant, which a couple of rods distant, stood looking meekly on, his demeanor showing that he was waiting for orders.

The few preparations for resuming the journey were quickly made, and the parties were on the point of starting, when two Siamese hunters appeared in the jungle from the direction of the river. A glance showed that they were the couple who had stolen the white elephant and caused all the delay and trouble. The question which instantly came into the mind of Dudley Mayson was:

“Do they come as friends or enemies?”

## CHAPTER XXX

### CONCLUSION

**T**HE important question indeed was whether the native hunters who appeared in camp at the moment Nughwa and Dudley Mayson were about to start southward with the white elephant, were to be accepted as friends or as enemies. The youth slyly glanced at his rifle, to be sure it was ready for use, and watched the movements of the couple with the closest interest.

They came forward, and each greeted Nughwa in turn, the latter acting as if they were old friends. He showed no apprehension regarding them, and a conversation was immediately opened in Siamese, the purport of which Dudley had to await until explained to him. At the end of fifteen or twenty minutes, they turned and passed into the jungle. In the act of doing so, the native who spoke English, looked at the lad, smiled and called:

“Good bye!”

“Good bye!” said the lad in turn, with a half-military salute. They disappeared, apparently in the best of spirits.

Then Nughwa said the two had expressed their sorrow for their action toward him, and they congratulated him on the great prize he had won. The magnanimity shown by Nughwa, when he held his foe helpless over the edge of the precipice, had won the hearts of both, who were eager to show their gratitude for the unexpected mercy. Thus the elder, like the younger, was given a proof of the old truth about casting bread upon the waters.

As the world goes, the professions of the hunters might have awakened suspicion, but the guide received them without misgiving. More than that, he gave them the opportunity for which they asked. This was simply that they should make their way to Bangkok, with convenient haste, and announce Nughwa's coming with one of the noblest white elephants ever captured in the jungles of Siam. The guide would follow with the prize, who would thus be insured a fitting reception.

As proof of his complete mastery of the prisoner, Nughwa made the latter lift himself to his back, where he bestrode his neck, while Dudley kept his seat in Wahrida's howdah. She

took the lead, following the back track, crossing the river where the white elephant had made the passage, and the waterfall was reached without incident. There, as the day was sultry, and there was plenty of time, the guide decided to remain until morning. The elephants spent hours, bathing and disporting in the water, while man and boy enjoyed themselves in the cool element. Bananas, durians and mango-steens were around them in abundance, and everything wooed them to rest and indolence. Wild animals of different varieties were occasionally seen, but no collision occurred. The sight of two elephants, each with a dreaded person on his or her back, may have had its effect in keeping savage beasts at a respectful distance.

The final capture of the white elephant was in the mountainous forests northeast of Ayuthia, the ancient capital of the Siamese Empire. The nearest point would have been Parna, but Nughwa, aware of the excitement that would be caused by the appearance of the remarkable animal, fixed upon a point some twenty miles below Ayuthia, where the voyage down the Meinam would begin; and, that there should be plenty of time for the royal preparations in Bangkok, the journey was so delayed

that nearly a week was occupied in crossing the wild, broken country.

Finally, in the afternoon of one of the beautiful days, rarely seen outside of the tropical regions, Dudley Mayson caught the shimmer of water, which Nughwa told him was the famous Meinam of Siam. This river bifurcates to the north, the course of several of its branches being as yet only partly known; but they drain a vast extent of country to the north and east, and the stream itself is one of the most interesting in the world. The Meinam, whose name signifies the Mother of Waters, is deep enough in its lower part to allow the largest vessels to coast so close that birds may be heard singing among the trees, and the hum of the myriad insect world reaches the ear at night.

The current is very strong and in many places mosquitoes make life a burden. The stream overflows annually, depositing a film, which enriches the surrounding country after the manner of the Nile. With the subsidence of the overflow, the fishing season opens. Numerous picturesque villages, with their pagodas, Buddhist temples, lounging, shaven priests and the gay population on the river and in the towns, are seen in passing up and down the stream.

The rice plantations are everywhere; but, without attempting further description, let us follow the fortunes of the white elephant a brief distance farther.

The native hunters kept their promise, and the sacred animal was expected several days before he arrived. The point selected on the Meinam was about fifty miles north of Bangkok, where the current is broad and deep enough to float the American navy. Dudley Mayson was hardly less impressed than the white elephant by the preparations that had been made to receive the royal prize. The river was covered with craft of all sizes, from the puffing steamer to the long, narrow canoes, guided to and fro with surprising swiftness and skill. More than a thousand people were waiting to welcome the sacred animal.

Suddenly a volume of sound rent the air. Some one had caught sight of the white elephant approaching from the jungle, and nearly split his throat in proclaiming the thrilling tidings. All took up the glad cry, and a few minutes later, the mottled monarch, with Nughwa astride of his neck, slowly swung into full view, and the multitude went wild. He was instantly recognized as the finest white elephant that had been seen in Bangkok for many a year. The

cheers and shouts were deafening, and fully a dozen bands of music helped to make a pandemonium.

All this time, the cause of the frenzied hubbub stood looking mutely down the bank upon the frantic mob, as if dumb with amazement, for it is beyond belief that he could have the slightest glimmer of what it all meant. Nughwa grimly smiled, and Dudley Mayson stared in mute wonder. Wahrida seemed to feel no interest in the wild hullabaloo.

The strange reverence for the white elephant has existed for centuries throughout Farther India. As has been intimated elsewhere, the belief is universal that Buddha, the divine emanation from Deity, delights to dwell in this emblem of purity, and, in the possession of the sacred creature, therefore, they have Buddha himself. Everything associated with rank and majesty bears his image. The royal flags and seals, medals and moneys are marked with his image, and the King of Siam is no prouder and more jealous of any title than that of "Lord of the Celestial Elephant," and "Master of Many White Elephants," as is claimed by his majesty of Ava. The ownership of a white elephant, it is believed, insures prosperity and happiness to the people.

P. T. Barnum, the great showman, told me that his famous white elephant, referred to elsewhere, cost him \$200,000, most of which was in the form of bribes, and the largest bribe was paid to the King of Siam himself. Had this been known to his subjects, nothing could have saved the ruler from their vengeance. As it was, the beast (which after all proved to be a fraud) had to be conducted secretly at night through the back streets of Bangkok, and the escort was in danger until the capital was left far behind.

When the turmoil subsided, Nughwa dropped from the neck of the sacred animal, upon which he could never sit again, and conducted him to a splendid raft, waiting on the shore, sheltered by a chintz canopy, and festooned with exquisitely beautiful flowers. The animal somewhat timidly obeyed the command to step upon the support, for the spell of his captor was still over him. When he paused in the centre of the float, he was received by a prince of the royal blood.

The barges containing the bands and privileged persons were attached to the raft, and the royal keepers immediately placed the choicest delicacies obtainable at the disposal of the guest. A silken netting was thrown over

his body to protect it from mosquitoes, and the huge feet which for years had tramped the morasses and jungles, now rested upon a velvety carpet of surpassing richness and fabulous value. It looked indeed as if the creature was to be petted and pandered beyond bearing.

Nughwa and Dudley, with Wahrida, received no little admiring attention. The young American especially, because of his youth and race, was subjected to a gauntlet of curiosity, which at times became annoying. Nughwa removed this embarrassment, by telling the facts concerning his companion, whose father was known by report to many of the natives, and was held in high esteem, even though he was engaged in teaching a new, and, what all looked upon, a false religion, in the empire.

The voyage down the Meinam was a continual ovation. Cheering, music and feasting never ceased for the entire distance. The news seemed to run ahead, and the banks were lined with villagers, who vied with one another, and with those on the river in their noisy demonstrations of delight.

There was one little puffing steam tug, with more than fifty European residents of Bangkok, who had come up the stream to witness the novel scene. Aided by their ear-splitting whis-

tle, they "out-Heroded Herod." Fortunately, in the midst of the indescribable din, the whistle blew loose. The enthusiastic passengers rushed to the bell and pandemonium continued. The speed of the current carried the raft swiftly forward, but night came and passed, while the wild rejoicing went on. There were illuminations on the shores and no one thought of sleep, and it would not have availed him had he done so.

Bangkok, the capital of Siam, has long been called the "Venice of the East," for its streets and thoroughfares are mainly intersecting canals and branches of the river, and most of the houses are either built upon rafts, or upon piles at the sides of these waterways. The palace of the first king extends over nearly fifty acres, with a circumference almost a mile in length. The first king himself and a number of nobles and dignitaries of the highest rank met the white elephant upon whom was conferred the rank of nobility and a name too long and tremendous to be printed. When the animal landed, he was conducted over the richest carpets to the grounds of the palace, to his royal quarters, where fifty officers and slaves were set apart to attend to his wants. Established in his new home, nothing seemed lacking

to complete the happiness of the Apis of the Buddhists. The walls of his residence were painted to represent forests, with the thought of consoling him for the loss of his native jungles. His tusks were ornamented with golden rings, and an imitation diadem rested on his head. His attendants prostrated themselves before him as if he were the First King himself. When escorted to his daily bath, an immense red silken umbrella was held over him, and music and slaves accompanied him all the way. If he should fall ill, the court physician would attend him, and the priests would sprinkle the huge body with consecrated water and pray over him. When he should finally go the way of all flesh, the grandest of funerals would follow, and the whole nation would go into mourning.

Thus we part company with this particular white elephant, very much in doubt whether to congratulate or to commiserate with him over his change of fortune.

The king caused a sum of money to be paid Nughwa, equivalent to fifty thousand dollars, besides which he presented the great hunter with a golden box, containing a half dozen hairs from the white elephant's tail—a present that

is one of the most highly prized in the kingdom of Siam.

Nughwa insisted upon dividing the reward equally with Dudley Mayson. The latter would not listen to anything of the kind. His friend was so grieved, that the young American was finally persuaded with much reluctance to accept five thousand dollars, which was deposited in the Bank of Bangkok in the name of his father. Then the two once more entered the howdah on the back of Wahrida, and were safely carried to their home at Wahta-Shat. There they met the two Siamese hunters who were old acquaintances, and had called to congratulate the famous elephant-catcher. The couple were in the frenzied multitude that accompanied the animal down the Meinam, but kept carefully out of sight of Nughwa. The latter tried to press a reward upon them, but they would not permit it, declaring significantly that they were still in debt to the dusky Christian.

Nughwa showed the sincerity of his faith by devoting a large part of his fortune to the spread of the Word, and Dudley in time came to like Siam so well that he settled in Bangkok and at the present writing is a prosperous merchant. His parents, and Nughwa also, have

gone to their reward, but Fannie, the loved sister, has been happily married for a good many years, and makes her home with her brother in the "Venice of the East."

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WHEN I was sixteen years old I belonged to a composition class. It was our custom to go on the recitation seat every day with clean slates, and we were allowed ten minutes to write seventy words on any subject the teacher thought suited to our capacity. One day he gave out "What a Man Would See if He Went to Greenland." My heart was in the matter, and before the ten minutes were up I had one side of my slate filled. The teacher listened to the reading of our compositions, and when they were all over he simply said: "Some of you will make your living by writing one of these days." That gave me something to ponder upon. I did not say so out loud, but I knew that my composition was as good as the best of them. By the way, there was another thing that came in my way just then. I was reading at that time one of Mayne Reid's works which I had drawn from the library, and I pondered upon it as much as I did upon what the teacher said to me. In introducing Swartboy to his readers he made use of this expression: "No visible change was observable in Swartboy's countenance." Now, it occurred to me that if a man of his education could make such a blunder as that and still write a book, I ought to be able to do it, too. I went home that very day and began a story, "The Old Guide's Narrative," which was sent to the *New York Weekly*, and came back, respectfully declined. It was written on both sides of the sheets but I didn't know that this was against the rules. Nothing abashed, I began another, and receiving some instruction, from a friend of mine who was a clerk in a book store, I wrote it on only one side of the paper. But mind you, he didn't know what I was doing. Nobody knew it; but one

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day, after a hard Saturday's work—the other boys had been out skating on the brick-pond—I shyly broached the subject to my mother. I felt the need of some sympathy. She listened in amazement, and then said: "Why, do you think you could write a book like that?" That settled the matter, and from that day no one knew what I was up to until I sent the first four volumes of Gunboat Series to my father. Was it work? Well, yes; it was hard work, but each week I had the satisfaction of seeing the manuscript grow until the "Young Naturalist" was all complete.

—*Harry Castlemon in the Writer.*

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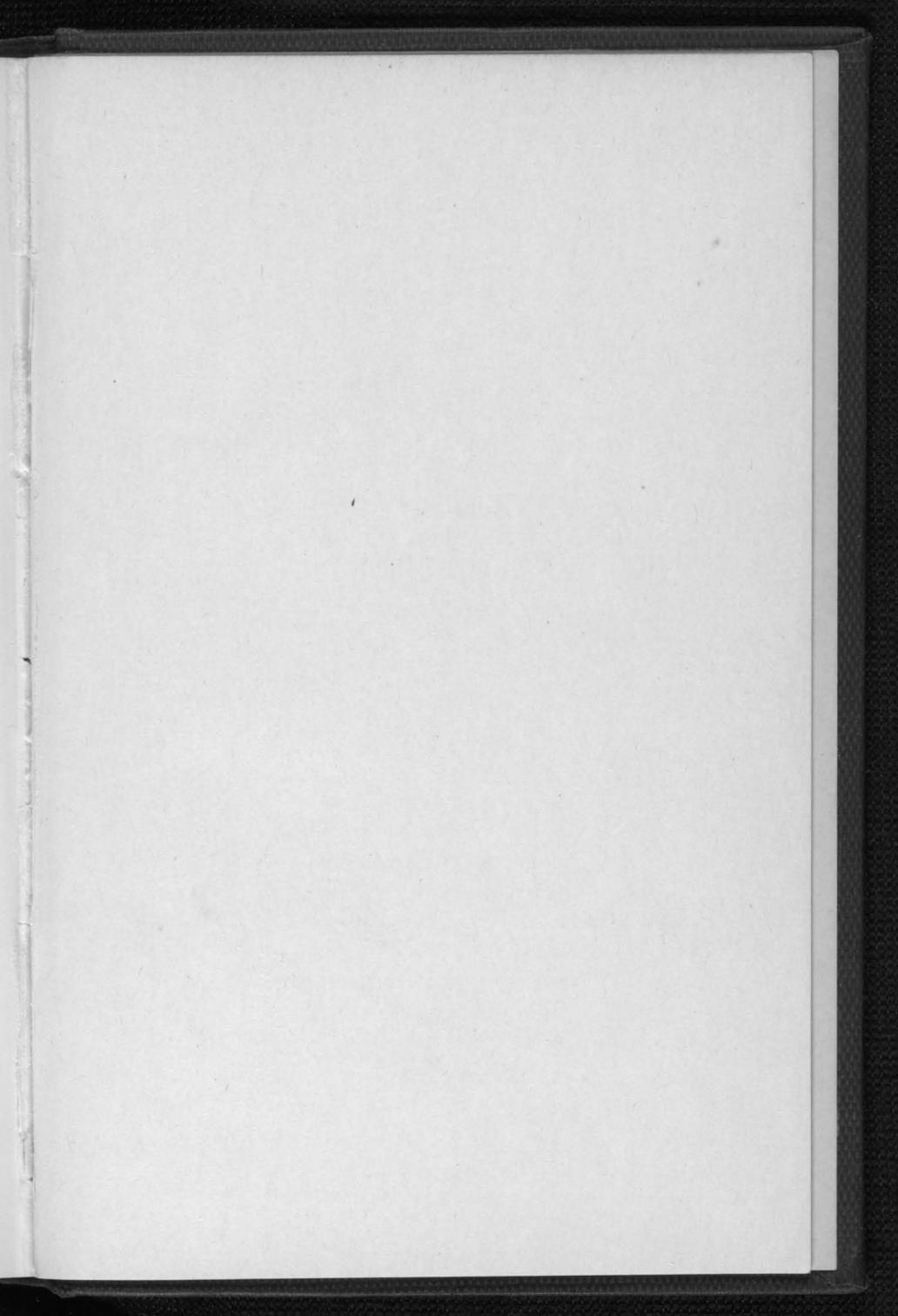
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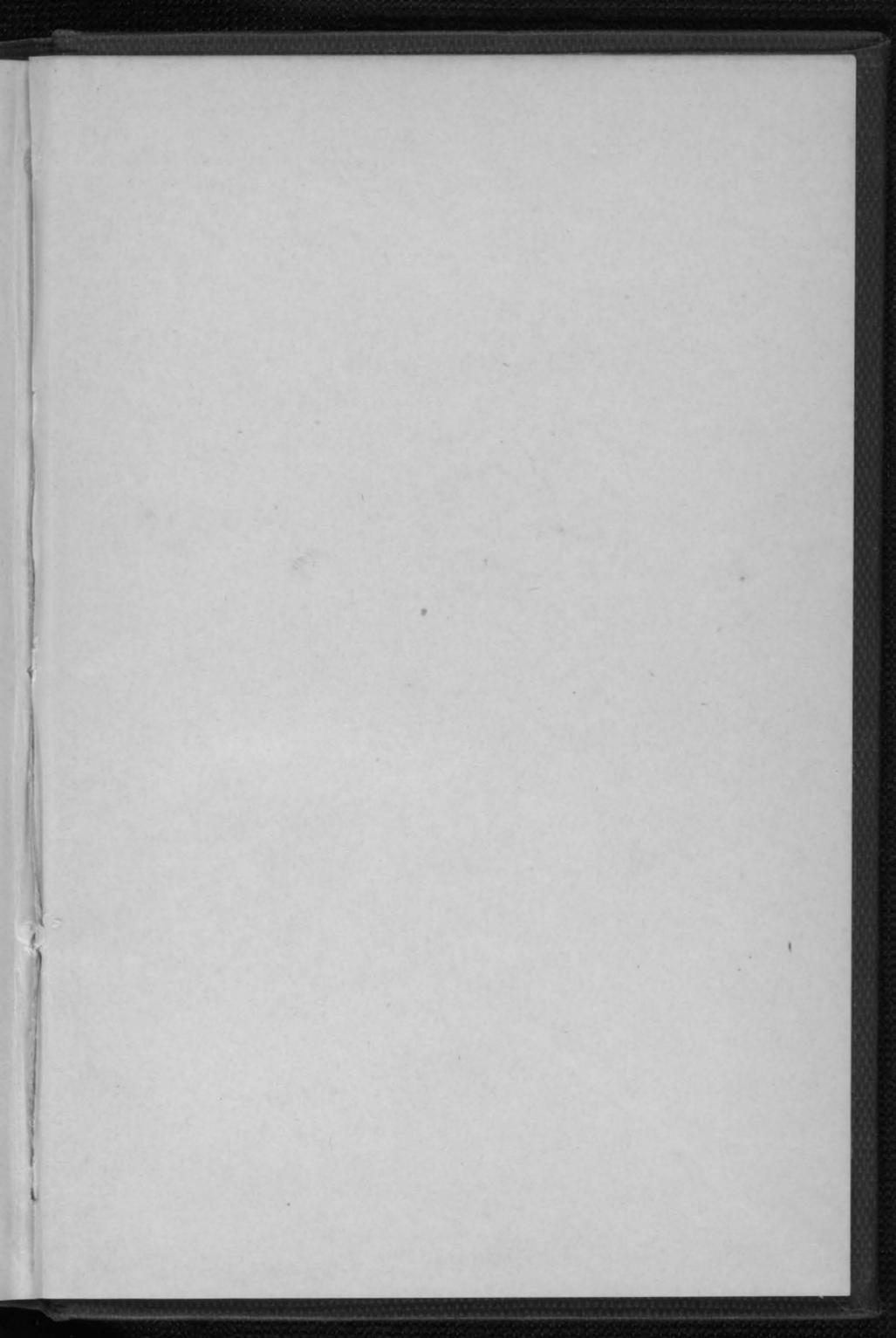
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