

The Soul of the Black Panther

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Bajore was a remote station in the province of Oudh, ruled over by a solitary deputy commissioner. Under him were native officials, among whom not the least in his own estimation was one Bheem Das, the clerk in charge of the telegraph office. To this position Bheem Das had been recently appointed, in place of Dhondo Visram, deceased—a worthy old person who had held the office for several years.

Bheem Das was a man of immense self-importance who, arriving at his jungle post in the line of promotion, regarded with supreme contempt the ways of his predecessor. Hence for some weeks life for the late Visram's assistant was not made enjoyable.

"What do I care how old Visram did things?" Bheem Das scornfully addressed his assistant. "He was a fool and you are an ass. You must alter your ways or make room for another. I am a man of advanced ideas."

Bheem Das, it must be remembered, had been educated at a college under foreign influence and prided himself greatly on having cast overboard much that was old-fashioned and superstitious.

It was one evening shortly after he had arranged matters to his satisfaction in his bungalow office that he stepped out on the veranda for a breath of air. Before him lay the compound surrounding the house of the deputy commissioner, with the main part of the village in the background. To his right and left were a few scattered huts, from which lights flickered smokily out into the darkness, and, enveloping the whole, the silent jungle, cut by the line of the telegraph.

Presently the approach of a lantern foretold a visitor. The heart of Bheem Das perceptibly quickened its strokes, for his family had not yet arrived, and in the meantime he flattered himself that his personal attractions had been remarked by the feminine portion of the community, in particular by a certain girl in an attractive red "sari," who, it seemed to him, passed by more often than was necessary on her way to and from the well. Could she have found it impossible to resist a very natural infatuation? Bheem Das thought it not unlikely, and smiled with inward



"NOISELESSLY A BLACK PANTHER CAME INTO THE ROOM."

gratification. But he was soon undeceived; a servant of the deputy commissioner delivered a government message to be dispatched immediately.

Bheem Das snatched the message with impatience, and retreating into his office, turned up the oil lamp, and sat down to his work. He had just finished it with a grunt of relief, when, glancing toward the door, his vision met what appeared to be two balls of fire gleaming in upon him with sinister intent.

Now as Bheem Das was a courageous man only when no danger was near, terror held him spellbound to the spot where he had started to his feet. Then slowly the fire balls seemed to draw closer, until, noiselessly and almost imperceptibly, a black panther crept into the room. For some moments the beast stood apparently listening to the tick-tick-tick of the electric current, when it suddenly relieved Bheem Das of its terrifying presence by leaping through the open window.

For three days the nerves of Bheem Das were, as we would say, completely unstrung. Be as advanced as you will, unless you are prepared to receive a panther with a gun, the possibility of another such visit is likely to disturb your mental balance, and Bheem Das was no sportsman. However, he was beginning to pluck up spirit again, when, toward the morning of the fourth day thereafter, a thunderstorm awoke him to a greater terror than any combat of the elements. In the darkness he again beheld those balls of fire.

For a space they seemed to remain stationary, and then as a flash of lightning illuminated the scene, he saw the little form of the panther standing at the keyboard. Above the succeeding crash of thunder, a cry from the beast rose like the wall of a banister.

With the panther between him and the door, Bheem Das gave himself up for lost. He withdrew his body into as small a compass as possible between an angle of the walls, and petitioned the gods more fervently than he had even done before. He even vowed to measure his shadow the length of the Ganges if he might escape his fate this once. Presently

feeling puffs of warm breath upon his face, he lost consciousness. When Bheem Das awoke, the burst of the monsoon had been succeeded by an interval of calm. But the immediate suggestion that he had suffered from a nightmare was contradicted by the footprints upon the floor.

In his perturbed state of mind, three courses presented themselves to avoid any more such visits. The first was to petition the deputy commissioner to destroy the beast. But against this plan he found his religious scruples overcame his advanced ideas, for who could tell but that the panther might be the incarnate spirit of his grandfather. Hence to encompass its death would be a grievous crime. Then he thought of flying from his post; but that would terminate his career in the government service; and, lastly, there was the village astrologer and magician, whose local reputation as to the possession of occult powers over animate and inanimate objects was undisputed. To seek such assistance did not quite coincide with the advanced ideas of Bheem Das; but the occasion was not one for abstract reasoning.

The learned magician listened gravely to Bheem Das' unfolding of the situation, and replied that he felt confident he would not only be able to offer an explanation of the panther's visits, but could cast a spell over the beast which would prevent a repetition of such unwelcome intrusions—provided, of course, a suitable remuneration was made, of which a preliminary fee of one rupee was required.

Bheem Das regretfully laid the coin in the magician's palm; whereupon the magician rose and retired behind a curtain. There he muttered to himself over a burning powder, the smoke from which filled the room and the throat of his client.

Presently he returned with the information that, as he suspected, he found that the spirit of the late Dhondo Visram had entered into the body of the panther, and as a consequence the animal was naturally attracted to the spot where it had previously been in control. To induce the beast to cease its visits would require the performance of certain rites by a person of great wisdom, like himself, and such would be expensive. Otherwise—and he took note of Bheem Das' uneasy expression—the panther would assuredly haunt the place, and might, if fished—

Consideration for the sensitive feelings of one in such a position here intervened, and, merely by inference, he let it be understood he would not be at all surprised to hear his client had been bodily, if not spiritually, incorporated in the panther.

Very nervously then Bheem Das desired to be informed upon what terms the magician would agree to prevent such a calamity.

"That," said he, "is not so easy to compute, because the spells are difficult to perform. But for 50 rupees, paid in advance, I can protect you against further molestation."

The exorbitance of this demand first stunned and then sharpened the wits of Bheem Das.

"You are sure it is the soul of Dhondo Visram in the panther?" he asked, "and not one of my relations?" "May my mouth be filled with dust, and the souls of all my uncles turned into swine, if I do not speak the truth," answered the magician.

"Learned sir," then said Bheem Das, "I will go and return with the amount presently."

But instead he made all speed to the bungalow of the deputy commissioner, muttering as he went along: "Since it's only old Dhondo Visram in the beast, what concern is it of mine if the panther is shot?"

And as a result of the visit of Bheem Das to the deputy commissioner, late that evening four bearers carried the body of a black panther slung upon bamboo poles into the village.

But, after all, Bheem Das was not quite happy, as the astrologer declared he had sent the soul of Dhondo Visram into a cobra, that had taken up its abode in the thatch of the telegraph bungalow—a disquieting circumstance, even though Bheem Das was a man of advanced ideas.

Nursery for the Navy.

Admiral Dewey's recent statement that the middle west furnishes most of the enlisted men of the navy is corroborated by the dispatch from Washington giving the navy department's latest tabulation. Of the present total enlisted force of 30,804 one-fifth is provided by the states of Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin and Nebraska. Pennsylvania makes a good showing with 2,745 enlisted men, holding third place in the union, New York being first with 5,548 and Massachusetts second with 1,512. It is a curious fact that those who have been brought up to the sea as a profession do not always make the best man-of-war's men. Those dwelling farthest from the sea are often the most eager for a life on the ocean wave.

Uses a Man.

Life to women, especially to young women, means love, and little else but love. Man exists to be run after, or to be run away from; to be attracted, married, deceived, divorced. In the world he serves other purposes, but in the ordinary woman's novel he lives for these alone.—Bookman.

Marked Down to \$3.75.

"I notice that a New York woman spends \$375 a day. What do you think of that?"

"Huh! Either she don't belong to my set or the printer left out a period."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Poor Sick Dolly

Poor Dolly is sick.
Call the doctor quick!
She refuses to eat a bite
If she does not get
Much better soon
I'll sit up with
her all night

Her hands are cold.
Her pulse is weak!
And she utters not a cry;
If I don't keep watch,
And take great care,
Poor Dolly will surely die



SAVING GRANDFATHER RAT.

How Whisker and Frisker Helped Him to Escape the Sharp Teeth of Dog Trip.

Grandfather Rat sat at the entrance of his hole in the cellar talking to his two favorite grandchildren, Whisker and Frisker.

"The best that I can hope for you children is that you will die young," he mumbled. "It's all right living when you are spry and have the use of all your senses, and can dodge cats and dogs and brooms and hot water and such things; but when you can't tell cheese from tripe by the smell you are liable any day to run on to rat poison. Worst of all, though, is when your eyesight begins to go. That leaves you helpless."

"But you can see, grandfather. You find your way through every hole in



THEY WERE OFF FOR THE BARN.

this great house without even scraping your sides."

Grandfather Rat rocked to and fro on his haunches and groaned pitifully.

"And there's a terrible danger at our very doors," he went on. "The family upstairs have bought a fox terrier pup, and that means death if we get in his way. I have never been afraid of a kitten, and I've gotten the best of a half-grown cat more than once, but a fox terrier, and me gone blind! We'll have to move to the barn. That pup simply haunts the cellar, and our only means of livelihood, the garbage barrel, is exposed to all his fury."

"Grandfather, dear, we will look after you and see that no danger reaches you," cried Whisker.

"We will, indeed," echoed young Frisker.

Times were changed for the Rat family. No longer did they dare to chase each other fearlessly across the cellar floor. No longer could they race gayly up the side of the garbage barrel and help themselves to the rich stores. They must bide their chances, for no one could tell when the terrible terrier might leap upon them.

One day the master of the house was heard to say:

"Trip, I've stopped up all the rat holes except this one. Now, you just lie in wait right here, and we'll clean out the whole bunch."

Then hope died in the heart of Grandfather Rat. Whisker and Frisker might still steal out to the garbage barrel when the dog was asleep, but he—must starve!

But Whisker and Frisker thought differently; and together they schemed and planned to save their beloved grandfather.

"We must leave this house, that is plain. The barn is big and safe, with grand hiding places where a dog can never get, and food is plentiful there. We must surely go to the barn."

But how to get their blind old grandfather moved safely?

Just then Frisker had a happy thought.

"We will save you, never fear, grandfather."

So he hunted and found a little stick, which he laid at the side of the hole, and Whisker watched until he saw Trip go out in the yard to play with his master.

"Now, grandfather, quick! Grip with your teeth on this stick."

Grandfather did as he was bid.

"Now, Whisker, you take one end and I'll take the other, and, grand-

father, you just run and we will lead you."

Whisk! Frisk! Scamper! They were off for the barn. Trip looked up to see a gray streak passing rapidly over the grass.

"Woof! Woof!" he barked, and was after them, but he was too late, for grandfather was still nimble on his feet. Under the barn they scuttled, just as Trip gave a vicious snap at their tails.

And so Grandfather Rat was saved for a long and peaceful old age.—Boston Globe.

FLY-CATCHING MOUSE.

Entertainment Which a Tiny Rodent Furnished in a Show-Window in Brooklyn.

One day a rather novel spectacle was offered in the window of the largest crockery and bric-a-brac establishment in Brooklyn. A small but very fat mouse, with a look of well-fed contentment, was capering about among the cut-glass dishes and parian statuettes as though in training for a trick act in a miniature circus. A few moments' observation, however, developed the fact that there was method in his apparent madness. He was catching flies for dinner. Patent fly-traps and sticky paper were nowhere compared to Mr. Mouse. Watching until an unsuspecting fly, ambled within his reach, he would capture it with a lightning-like motion. Then, sitting on his haunches, with the unfortunate buzzer in his front paws, he peeled off the wings and legs as a squirrel shucks a nut, and ate the body with infinite relish. In 15 minutes the little rascal caught and ate flies at the rate of two a minute. The whole window-seat was covered with wings and legs, which showed that he must have been at work for a long time.

LITTLE MISS I-DON'T-CARE.

I have a pretty little friend
(She lives right on this square).
And when she feels the very worst,
She'll say: "Well, I don't care!"

One day she broke her nice new doll,
And said she didn't care;
But in another minute more,
Lay sobbing in a chair.



And when she lost her pretty ring,
She hunted everywhere,
And, though her eyes were filled with tears,
She said: "Well, I don't care!"

Perhaps she had her language mixed,
Or maybe she forgot;
But when she said she didn't care,
I think she cared a lot!

—Marie Louise Ward, in Detroit Free Press.

The Rainbow.

The Indians have a lovely thought about the rainbow. They love flowers even as we do. The roses, lilies, pansies and golden-rod they hate to see leave. When they see a rainbow they fancy that in the lovely colors spanning the sky all the wild flowers, lilies, violets, etc., and the moss of the woods are still living and blossoming anew in the heavens.



TAKE

CARE!

STARE

ROAD AND FARM IMPROVEMENT

SHARPENING FENCE POSTS

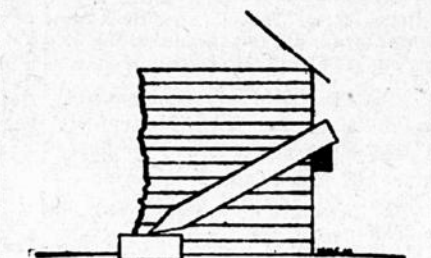
How the Task May Be Made Easy by the Use of a Tripod and Old Stump.

Though labor and time-saving devices for all sorts of work are so common, one often sees a man sharpening fence posts in the old way by holding the post with one hand and wielding the ax with the other. There are several ways in which the work can be made easy, two of which will be given. For the first plan, take three rails of equal length and fasten them together in the form of a tripod.



THE TRIPOD.

Set a block in the ground, or, better yet, use the stump of a tree which has been cut, leaving it about a foot above ground. Hollow out the middle of the stump to form a place to rest the post, and place the tripod in position before it. Place the post with its lower end on the block ready to be cut, and let the upper end lean against the tripod, resting between two of the rails. Both hands can then be used in chopping and the work



THE REST ON AN OUTBUILDING.

be quickly and easily done. Another way, suggests the Farmers' Review, is to have the block or stump near an outbuilding, where a piece of timber can be nailed on the corner in proper position to hold the post while being sharpened. This takes a little less work in preparation than the first plan, but the work must always be done in the same place, while by the other plan the tripod can be taken anywhere it is wanted. In this connection the chopping block used in splitting wood might be mentioned. Much labor may be saved by providing a sound solid block, as less blows are required on a perfectly solid foundation than when a yielding one is used. Either select stump of a tree as described for the first post sharpener, or take a knot-length cut from a log, making it about a foot long and setting it on end in the ground so that it is only about four inches above the surface. If a few flat stones are placed directly under it, it will make a still firmer foundation. This forms a block that is practically unyielding and the work is much easier by its use.

ON LOADING HAY.

Some Suggestions Which Will Help to Keep New Hay from Heating and Spoiling.

The most essential point in loading new hay, says a dealer, in Country Gentleman, is to see that it is not loaded flat—that is, with the flat sides of the bale up. When loaded this way, with the smooth sides of the bales together, no space is left for air, and as a consequence it invariably heats. A properly loaded car has the edges or rough sides of the bales together. This allows air space between the bales, and always prevents danger of heating. Do not try to load cars with the purpose of beating the railroad out of a few cents in weight. It's much better to pay in excess of the actual weight, if necessary, for the selling price of your hay will more than make up to you the excess freight expense. In putting up hay, it depends largely upon whom you ship to as to the size of the bales. If you ship to small jobbers who deal almost exclusively with the retail trade of the city, it is advisable to make the bales small, but generally the trade on the market will create a good demand for 75-pound bales as for 60-pound bales.

PREVENT GATES SAGGING.

Brace of Wire and How It Is Applied to the Gate and Main Post.

The simple arrangement shown in the cut effectually prevents a gate from sagging, or may be applied to a gate which has already sagged, to lift it up and hold it from the ground. An old gate hinge, a, with lag screw at one end is inserted in the top of post, and wire, b, attached, running out to such point in gate as is necessary to take up the strain.

Trees on Hillsides.

In the case of the man that wants to plant trees on a hillside, I would advise digging several feet around each tree and then cultivate with a hoe; or, plow a strip where you wish to set a row of trees, crosswise of the slope, leaving the middle of the row in grass to prevent washing.

NAMING RURAL HIGHWAYS.

Boards of Supervisors in Some Sections of Country Active in This Matter.

In certain sections of the country, boards of supervisors are actively promoting the naming of rural highways. In addition to sanctioning the laudable custom the county legislators are appropriating funds for the erection of road signs at the intersections of highways giving the names of the various roads. The plan is the same that has been in vogue in our leading cities for many years.

There is everything to favor the naming of rural roads and posting signs at the corners indicating the names of the intersecting highways. There is nothing against the plan so far as can be seen, other than the necessary insignificant expense of erecting and maintaining the necessary road signs.

Highways can be easily and appropriately named. Perhaps no better means could be adopted than using the names of pioneers of the particular region. Where the surnames of old settlers cannot be agreed upon, some distinctive feature of the particular highway can be pressed into service. For instance, if there is difficulty in agreeing upon the relative claims of the pioneer Brown, Jones or Smith families, some characteristic term like the "Valley Road," "Cliff Road" or "River Road" can be pressed into service. When a highway leads unmistakably through a town it might be called the "Farmington road."

Not only would the practice of officially naming highways prove to be a convenience to travelers, remarks the Prairie Farmer, but the custom would add a pleasing charm to every locality. There are so many reasons why the farmer should enjoy every convenience possible that we feel that this well-recognized city custom to this extent could be most appropriately established.

AS TO MAKING CULVERTS.

Use of Flat Stones Which Will Make a Permanent and Safe Construction.

Where flat stones are at hand, the best culvert that can be made is shown in Fig. 1. It is often necessary, how-



CULVERT FOR SMALL STREAM.

ever, to bridge a stream, across which a single flat stone will not reach.

The plan shown in Fig. 2 can then be used to advantage, says the Orange Judd Farmer. This is really an arch and can be extended even farther than



SMALL ARCH CULVERT.

shown, the only point to be observed carefully is that the side stones should all be broad and that enough earth is placed above them to hold them all in place when the weight of the team is at the center of the span. Fig. 1 needs but little earth. Fig. 2 needs a heavy ballast of earth.

THE ROAD DRAG.

Action of the Iowa Legislature Looking to the Improvement of Highways.

The following law has been passed by the Iowa general assembly, which is "the greatest compliment yet given the split-log drag."

The trustees or supervisors of roads of each township in the state of Iowa shall be authorized by this act to have the public highways under their control and supervision worked by using the split-log or other road drag. Said trustees or supervisors of roads shall have the said road drag used on the public highways under their control not less than ten times for each mile of road of said highways during any one year, and at a cost for such work not to exceed 50 cents per mile for each time so dragged. Said trustees or supervisors of roads shall see in working the public highways under this act that the preference shall be given to the person near and adjacent to the public highways throughout the different townships. This act, being of immediate importance, shall be in force from and after its publication.

ALL ABOUT THE FARM.

Don't try to expand the blacksmith's bills.

Too many farmers are depending on the native grasses in their pastures. Good tools, like good labor, may come a little higher at first; but in the end they are the cheapest an i best.

If a horse calks himself, bind it up with tar wagon grease. It will keep dirt and bacteria out and the sore will heal at once.

Round tile are the best for nearly all purposes. They are easiest to lay, strongest, and do not get out of place so easily in the ditch after being covered.

There are so many little jobs about the farm or home buildings when putty is very useful, that everyone should keep a little on hand. If packed in an oiled paper with a little kerosene upon it and put into a tin can with a close cover, it will keep a long time.