

THE CHERRY PARASOL.

By OWEN HACKETT.

That scar? You see only the end of it. Fortunately by wearing a high collar I can just conceal it; but it extends from the neck (close by the jugular vein, too, my boy) down over the shoulder quite to the breastbone.

A tiger did that—a royal Bengal—and a beauty he was, I tell you. You can see the skin any day in my married sister's sitting room.

But it's a story quite worth the telling, and it has a funny side, too, that was thought quite worth repetition at the time in the English papers, though they did not get at the inside facts of the adventure.

It was the period of the hot season stagnation when we were in the consular service at Madras, you know.

The English society (including the few Americans there) were doing little else than to sleep and yawn to pass the time.

But everybody, the men especially, were galvanized into excitement when the news came that a tiger had carried off first a woman and then a child during the previous week from a station about fifteen miles in the interior at the foot of the mountains.

Time was when this would have been a sort of every-day announcement in India; but of late years these monsters had been killed off except far in the interior wilderness, and it had already become a rare event for one of these royal fellows to issue from his jungle kingdom.

At any rate, things had got to such a pass of mental torpidity that we needed only the slightest straw to grasp at for the sake of excitement.

In half an hour a hunt had been agreed upon, and servants were flying everywhere about the town to arrange the details and secure accessories, such as teams and wagons, native porters and beaters, and in the cool of the evening fifteen or twenty gentlemen sportsmen were engaged in oiling gunlocks, swabbing out rifle barrels and preparing generally for the morrow's expedition.

It was just dawn the following morning when we started—a curious cavalcade of fifty or more, in which the white faces were largely in the minority. Some were on horseback, some in carts drawn by bullocks, which, in that country, were very different from what are known as such at home.

About a mile from Madras there was a little bungalow, commanding a view of the sea, which had become a sort of house of public entertainment, popular with the better class of residents as a resort for tiffins and such little excursions as we would call picnics.

We had hardly entered the grove when a silvery feminine laugh entered our ears, coming from the direction of the native house.

The major, beside whom I was riding, perceptibly started at the sound and glanced at me. I in turn looked inquiringly at him.

"Don't you recognize the voice?" he asked.

"No, I can't say I do," I answered. "Whose is it? Surely none of mine host Singh's family have such a sweet thrill."

"I should say not, decidedly!" assented the major. "But I must be wrong if you don't recognize it—I thought it for all the world like Miss Bradford's voice."

I could not help looking quickly and keenly at the major, Miss Bradford was my sister and the major had certainly been very attentive to her during the few months of their acquaintance.

If he could recognize her voice in an Indian jungle when her brother failed to do so there must be something serious on the carpet.

I therefore had a peculiar interest in the development of the next few moments.

"It is positively cruel of you!" said another and petulant voice. "You make no allowance for my extremely sensitive organization. But I simply cannot go back over that road; the mere thought of it is killing! Hark! don't you hear something creeping out from the grove?" and there arose a shrill scream which became hysterical as it seemed to diminish as if the feminine speaker had flown into the cottage.

She had doubtless heard us breaking through the thicket, and in an instant the head of our cavalcade came in full view of the place, and there sitting calmly on a seat before the door under the overhanging boughs and looking expectantly but undismayed towards us was—my sister.

"You here!" I exclaimed, really surprised. "And Miss Blithedale, too; I need not ask that." I said, glancing at an open parasol of flaming-cherry that lay a few feet away on the ground where the fair and nervous owner had dropped it in her flight.

That parasol! In defiance of all the scientists from Ben Franklin down, Miss Blithedale must needs import from the west a sunshade of the color of which above all others reflected least the rays of that very orb.

This she imperturbably carried, a

shining mark for derisive jokes, or, perhaps as an incentive to well-born subaltern bachelors in the arena of love, she the matador and they the quarry.

"How penetrating you are!" was my sister's ironical reply. "Major, you are just in time. Miss Blithedale has just declared that she will not return to town without the escort of the whole garrison—or of Major Gallanton, perhaps."

The major looked almost pained at this allusion in the dead set that Miss Blithedale had been making at him to every one's amusement.

"And so," my sister continued briskly, "you have all your hunt for nothing! The royal quarry seems to know something about flank movements and strategy as well as your own gallant selves."

"Really, I don't understand, Miss Bradford," said the puzzled soldier. "What is all this about escorts and flank movements! Ah, Miss Blithedale," as that lady appeared, apparently nerved again to a welcome encounter with the major; "this is a most charming coincidence. But explain, please, Miss Bradford."

Then my sister narrated as follows: The two ladies in question, bored to death at the absence of the only object of interest—the men—had decided on a little expedition of their own.

They had hired one of the native "jaunting cars," as we call them, with its zebu team and native driver, and stowing a luncheon hamper in the "boot," had driven out before the noon-day heat for the "park."

Already in sight of the grove, they had been horrified to see the sudden appearance of a great tiger, who stepped out from the undergrowth beside the road, disclosing his superb proportions and brilliant coloring as he first gazed curiously towards them and then lowered his head and began to stalk after them in long strides.

Miss Blithedale uttered a terrified shriek, the driver, turning, saw the beast, and wild with fear, first whipped up his bullocks and then incontinently fled into the jungle.

Meanwhile in the same moments, my sister had been equally appalled. But Belle is a girl of pretty strong nerves, as you may know, and though white with fear, she uttered no cry but silently if wildly looked around for a weapon.

There was none, of course—but stay! the cherry parasol! She snatched it from the nerveless hands of her companion, opened it with a vicious snap, and thrust it sheer into the face of the beast, who was not four feet away.

At the same time she closed her eyes from sudden faintness but recovering instantly she looked again—and he was gone! She could just see the tail disappearing rapidly as he crawled among the leaves in dire fright.

Without an instant's hesitation my sister sprang to the "box," whipped up the slow bullocks, drove the few rods to the bungalow with Miss Blithedale clinging to her and alternately moaning and screeching, as we learned in private.

That was five hours before; Miss Blithedale had absolutely refused to return with the cowardly native driver, who had arrived before them, and my sister had laughingly vowed that in that case she would go back alone, asking no better protection than the cherry parasol.

"You have revolutionized the tiger hunt for the future, Miss Bradford," said the major, with his eyes full of admiration at the tale which my sister told so lightly and laughingly as to rob it of any trace of egotism. "Hereafter we may expect to see long lines of beaters file through the jungle armed with red umbrellas, and flaming cotton stockades about the villages."

There was some discussion as to the identity of this particular beast, but it was generally allowed to be the same we had been hunting, if for no other reason than to turn the joke against ourselves, the empty-handed nitrods.

We started back to town and jokingly made a great show of surrounding the car as a protection on every side.

But it turned out to be no joke. When half way back (the major and myself riding beside the car), there arose frightened cries ahead, and the leaders of the cavalcade came tumbling back upon us in the wildest fear.

The major and I dashed to the front. There in the middle of the road stood his kingship, glaring at the procession with blazing eyes.

We flung ourselves from our horses, unslung our rifles and—he had been creeping slowly towards us; now he sprang at me just as the major's rifle cracked.

The bullet could not stop his advance. I felt a terrible shock as the tiger fell at my feet with outstretched claws. One paw dug into my neck as he descended, and tore down over my breast deep through my clothing and into the flesh, pulling me down with terrific force upon his own body.

I sprang to my feet and saw that he lay dead.

The major's shot true to the mark, between the eyes had caught him in midair.

As he lay there the type of ferocious beauty and brute power, we all marveled that such a magnificent beast should have been frightened off by a mere parasol, even though it flamed like the fires of Aetna.

We were met at the edge of town by a piece of news that went far to explain this improbability. He had satisfied his hunger on a low caste Brahmin only an hour previous to the roadside encounter with the ladies.

The major claimed the skin, and no one thought of denying it to him. But he only wanted it to present it to Belle, and as they married the following year, he got it back again.

My sister, however, backed by all her friends, made a demand on Miss Blithedale for the cherry parasol, and she has it yet as her peculiar trophy.

Indeed, Miss B. was quite resigned to parting with it, as she at the same time procured a gray scarlet jacket that covered the noble form of Lieutenant the Honorable Algernon Blisks, H. M. Ninety-seventh Fusiliers.—St. Louis Star.

COSTLY INDIAN BASKETS.

In Such Demand That Squaws Get Orders for Life to Make Them.

There has been of late an extraordinary "boom" in Indian baskets, for the collecting of which a fad has sprung up. Some specimens have been sold for more than \$1000 apiece—baskets made by certain tribes in Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico being chiefly in demand—and speculators are actually buying up expert workers at unheard of rates, and contracting for their services for life. In this way one squaw at Carson City has disposed of her entire future output in return for a guarantee of maintenance for herself and husband in easy circumstances so long as they may live. Meanwhile she is to do nothing but make baskets for one concern.

To persons unacquainted in such matters the prices asked and paid for the baskets are amazing. A specimen worth \$1000 in the present state of the market does not look as if it had a value of that many cents. But if people will indulge in the luxury of a fad, it is reasonable that they should pay accordingly.

It is true that these baskets are often very beautifully made, and the skill shown in the weaving of them is remarkable. Quality and prices are determined mainly by the fineness of texture and the character of the design. Exclusiveness of design is also important. If a particular squaw has a pattern of her own, not successfully or commonly imitated by others, it counts for a good deal, one of her baskets possessing the same sort of value as a rare postage stamp.

The fad is useful, inasmuch as it gives profitable employment to many poor persons. In the finer grade of baskets the maidenhair fern furnishes material for the black design on white. Another plant used is the "devil's claw," plentiful in Arizona, the stem of it serving the basket maker's purpose. Willow and "squaw root" are utilized largely for the coarser parts of the white baskets.

The Indians of the southwest know how to make baskets that will hold water, and in the deserts of that part of the country the aborigines use such materials in the manufacture of water bottles, which are so shaped that their contents cannot be spilled. In the desert, water is life; when it is gone the traveler dies. Hence every precaution must be taken against losing it, and the non-spilling receptacle for liquid refreshment is a utensil of the highest practical usefulness.—Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post.

Care of the Watch.

Always wind up a watch as nearly as possible at the same time every day and do it as smoothly as possible to avoid sudden jerks. Most watches are now made keyless, but if a key has to be used it should be kept perfectly clean and free from grit or flue, says an exchange. If a watch is hung up it must have some support at the back and if laid horizontally it is well to place some soft substance under it for more general support, otherwise the action of the balance will cause a pendulous motion of the watch and cause much variation in time. The watch pocket must be kept as free from dust and nap as possible.

Knocked Into a Cocked Hat.

The expression "knocked into a cocked hat" is familiar to every one, but perhaps its origin is not so generally known. Cocked-hat was a variety of the game of bowls, in which only three pins were used, set up at the angles of a triangle. When, in bowling ten pins, all were knocked down, except the three at the corners, the set was said to be knocked into cocked-hat," whence the popular expression for depriving anything of its main body, character, or purpose.—Liverpool Post.

The vine will not grow at a greater height than 2000 feet above the sea, nor the oak above 3250 feet. The birch, however, flourishes up to nearly 7000 feet.



Four.

I've four little puppies! I count them, too, As they play on the nursery floor! And I've four pretty dolls with curly hair— It seems to me ev'rything's four!

Perhaps it's because I am four years old And my birthday's the fourth of September!

I have four big brothers who go to school, And that's all the fours I remember. —Youth's Companion.

What the Boy Should Know.

Every boy at some time or other of his life, has probably collected birds' eggs, but a collection of wishbones or "merry thoughts" is unique.

Did our young readers ever see such a collection, or think of it, or that there is a connection between birds' eggs and the wishbones or the skulls of the birds that laid the eggs, and that it is interesting to study the two together? One learns from them a good deal about elementary anatomy. In many museums collections of birds' skeletons lie beside the eggs.

A deal box, varnished, and about 15 by 18 inches and six inches deep, is a very suitable size, and will hold at least 100 eggs and as many wishbones. It must be fitted with a glass, sloping downward from the back, so as to give greater depth for the larger eggs. The eggs may be arranged in rows, marked out by wooden partitions, with trays one above the other. If the collection grows to any size a mahogany cabinet may be provided; and if such a case, with its ivory white wishbones or skulls and eggs, systematically and neatly arranged, each with its appertaining eggs, were sent to the county fair, it would certainly carry off a premium.—New York News.

Nannie and the Clock.

Don't you just hate to go to bed? I do. Nurse says, "Come, Nannie," and it don't do any good to cry or kick or scold, or anything, 'cause I've tried it, and I know.

It used to be that old clock that was to blame, 'cause every night it pointed one finger straight up and the other finger straight down and said: "One-free-six; time for little girls to go to bed." And then I had to go.

I just knew it was that naughty old clock, and I wanted to make it sorry for being so naughty. So yesterday, when Nurse went out for a walk, I pulled a chair under the mantelpiece and climbed up. It was awful hard work climbing up, and cncs I thought that chair was going to tumble over, but it didn't.

So I climbed up, and there was the naughty old clock sitting on the mantelpiece pointing one finger up and the other down, and I just knew it wanted to say: "One-free-six; time for little girls to go to bed." And it was swinging its foot and saying, "tick, tick" all the time.

And then I pulled real hard, and pulled the little door open in front of the old clock's face. And then I took hold of its foot and made it stop swinging, and I pulled its fingers and they broke right off, both of them. They did break, those naughty old fingers.

"Bad old clock," I said, "now I can't never go to bed any more. 'Cause you haven't got any more fingers to point." And I was glad, but the clock never said a word.

But Nurse came back and said it was naughty to break the clock's fingers off, and put me to bed! She said it was most 6 o'clock any way, but I don't see so, 'cause I listened hard and the clock never said: "One-free-six; time for little girls to go to bed." —Brooklyn Eagle.

An Object-Lesson.

Both of Robbie's examples in long division were wrong, and mamma sent him upstairs to his room to work them over again.

The little boy was not in a very good humor, for he wanted to play, and mamma would not allow him to go out until his lessons should be learned.

"I don't like 'rithmetic," he said to himself, impatiently, as he sat down at the study table in the back room. "I hate long division. It's such a poky thing—trying and trying, and m'v'tiplying over and over again, only to find out that your quotient figure is either too big or too little. I wish one could find out at once how often one number went into another."

Frowning, Robbie rested his chin in his hand. His slate lay before him, but he felt in no hurry to begin work. He was discouraged, and almost ready to cry. It seemed to him that he could never learn long division.

Suddenly his thoughts were diverted by a noise that sounded as if something heavy had been heaved against the back fence. The bang was accompanied by a peculiar sound as of scratching.

Robbie had heard this kind of noise frequently of late. Supposing that some big boys were playing in the back street, he rose and went to the window which overlooked the yard. Close wooden fences divided the yard, and separated it from the street.

Robbie noticed the fence and gate shaking from the effect of the shock, but he saw no boys and heard no voices.

He went back to the table and opened the arithmetic. "I wish long division was as easy as addition," he was thinking, when "Bang! Whack!" sounded against the fence once more.

"There it is again!" said Robbie, jumping to his feet and flying to the window. That was not the way ice-men and grocery boys announced themselves at the back gates. "What do you want?" called Robbie; but there was no answer.

He saw his dog, Brindle, slowly pacing from the gate to the porch, where he resisted for a moment, then arose and stood as if measuring distance in dog fashion for a spring. Directly Brindle was off on a swift gallop, which ended in a resounding bang as the dog attempted to leap over the fence.

Robbie was so much amused by this strange solution of the mystery that he broke out laughing. "Well, if this isn't the jolliest fun!" he said. "To think of a dog practicing like that—trying over and over again as if he were half human! I never supposed dogs had so much patience."

Robbie leaned out of the window, calling, "Hello, Brindle!"

The big dog looked up in a shy way, wagging his tail, as if to say, "You caught me at it!"

"Hard work, ain't it Brindle?" said Robbie, laughing. But go ahead; keep at it old fellow, and you'll jump the fence yet!" And then after a moment's thought, he said, "I guess Brindle has given me a pointer. A boy oughtn't to let a dog get ahead of him in patience. I believe I will make a run and a high jump at long division."

Looking up at the window, Brindle wrinkled his nose in a self-conscious way, as if he understood. Robbie went back to his lesson. This time he did not get up until his examples were all correctly worked.—Youth's Companion.

The Story of the Wasp.

A wasp comes into an out-house through a bit of a hole in a cracked pane of glass. He goes straight to a place on the wall where he has started his house. He has brought mud, and directly there is a hum as from a spinning wheel as he spins a section on a fresh layer. The wall of the out-house is the foundation he builds upon. He starts his house from the peak of his roof and builds downward with layer after layer of finely moulded, waxy mud. There is a pair of them. As soon as one has laid on the plaster he has brought, the other is there with more. They bring and spin so busily that the wall of their house is finished late in the morning of the third day. The house now has a gallery that runs its length from peak of roof to open door at bottom.

Some wasps make short, stubby, homely houses, of coarse, dark mud. But this earthen house that rests high up on the wall of the out-house, like a long, slender finger, is beautiful. It is made of fine clay. Its color is light and delicate. It is grooved through all its length as each cordlike layer of plaster has left its ridge.

Early on the morning of the fourth day the wall of the wasp's house is dry, and the busy pair are at work. The long gallery must be stocked with food and divided into rooms. First, each wasp brings a spider. The spiders are either dead or stunned. They are carried to the upper end of the gallery. Now, one wasp must remain within the house to keep the spiders in place, while the other goes for more. He brings another, and another, until there are six plump spiders packed away. The next trip is for plaster. He brings it; enters his house and you hear him spin. The spinning stops. Out pops the mother wasp long enough to let the spinner pass, then pops in again.

The spinner goes and comes and spins, goes and comes and spins, until his strand of plaster has become a double coil. This coil forms a close partition, except a small hole left in the middle. Now, through this hole, the mother sends up in the chamber one tiny, slender, white egg, she is careful to fasten the egg to the body of a spider. The spinner seals the hole in the partition with a stopple of plaster, and the first room is furnished and finished. Two more days, two more rooms, and this house is full and the door is closed. But more houses are to be added to this one. Day after day, week after week, the wasps are busy. When all is done there rests on the wall a beautiful cluster of six slender earthen houses. Each house is of three rooms. In each room six spiders have been packed—more than six if not full grown. In each room one egg has been laid from which the grub is hatched. The grub eats and grows until the last spider is eaten and he is big and fat. He winds himself into a soft silken web—some say winding sheet—but he is not dead. He sleeps until his form is changed and wings are grown. He breaks through the earthen wall of his room and out he comes into the light, a beautiful, shining, bronzy-black wasp—a good wasp that hurts no one so long as he is free; he cannot be crowded.—Farmers' Guide.

Close friends are seldom the ones who spend their money on you.