A red buffalo (syncerus nanus) story,

All hunting men at some time or another endeavour to build up some credits with wives, girl friends or family in order to be able to disappear for lengthy periods on their hunting expeditions and at the beginning of the open season one year I decided to take the wife away for a weekend in order to establish a fund of goodwill for the weeks to come.

We planned to travel to the inland town of Cela in central Angola where there were a number of reasonable lodging places and the food also was generally good. The climate at the altitude of 1500 metres was also excellent being sunny during the day and pleasantly cool in the evenings. There was also the additional advantage that there were no mosquitos or other troublesome insects to contend with in the area. All in all a very pleasant place to relax for a few days.

We had been to Cela many times before both for pleasure and business as the firm that I worked with had a branch there that I visited several times a year.

Here I must digress for a while.

In the late 1960s the hunting in the Luanda vicinity had become very poor due mainly to the greatly increased hunting pressure. Hunting to the North of Luanda in the country beyond the river Dande was somewhat dodgy due to the sporadic efforts of the FNLA terrorist group. Although I still occasionally hunted in that area I did not like going with people who did not know the area well in case we should become separated and have to individually find our way back to one of the Portuguese army camps that we used as our base for hunting.

I was therefore under some pressure to locate an area where I could take my various hunting companions for weekend hunts.

On one of my business trips to Cela I had occasion to stop by the roadside some 220 Kms from Luanda and about 25Kms above Dondo. Quite by chance at the place where I stopped I saw signs of the passage of a small herd of red buffalo and I mentally noted that perhaps this could be a place that one day would merit further investig--ation.

This thought returned to my mind whilst I was preparing for my weekend trip with the wife and I casually mentioned to her that I would be making a short stop on the road above Dondo that would take an hour or so at the most. She either was not listening or did not realise the implications so shemade no remarks of any kind.

Plans for the weekend were duly completed and as usual on these occasions we were taking along our cook and general handyman who was called Ben. He liked to come on these trips and I was always pleased to have him along as he was very useful in case of any breakdown. I must also mention, for the benefit of those people who did not know Ben, that he was an excellent tracker but inclined to get lost in the bush.

Also coming along was another servant of the family called Paulino who also was a competent tracker and not inclined to get lost. He was also much younger and stronger than Ben. He was due to be dropped off at his village and was to be picked up on our return journey.

I had not mentioned either to Ben or Paulino my exact intentions as I felt sure that they would be more than willing to go along with anything I might do.

On the chosen Saturday morning we were up early and on the road around 05.00 hrs. At that time my company issue car was a Ford Zephyr which was quite a large car although not as large as some American cars.

We stopped around seven o clock for breakfast in the small town of Dondo. In this town there were several restaurants catering for truck drivers and other travellers and at almost any hour of the day or night it was possible to get a meal of steak eggs and chips washed down with decent red wine and followed by good coffee.

Having finished our breakfast we passed by the local bakery to pick up a dozen or so rolls of bread which had just come from the oven and which we intended to eat with our lunch which we had brought frozen in a pan and was in the boot of the car.

Leaving Dondo we climbed the escarpment and took the turn south eastwards towards Quibala and Nova Lisboa. Shortly afterwards the road dipped to take us to the bridge over the river Quanza and we then proceeded a further ten kilometres before pulling in to a depression on the right hand side of the road. This hollow had been made some years earlier by the road constructors when they were digging the fill to build up the road surface. The hollow which had a firm dry surface was screened from the road by bush that had grown since the road was built and was an ideal place to park the car. The hollow would be around sixty or seventy metres wide and I parked near the centre as the skies were completely overcast and it was relatively cool.

I was already clad in my jungle green tropical shirt and trousers and all I had to do was put on my boots whilst Vicky settled down with a book. The two "boys" were also quickly ready and after explaining to Vicky what we planned to do I shouldered my .375 and off we went. I had said that we would be away for a maximum of two hours.

After about a quarter mile we came to a small stream which we easily crossed and almost immediately afterwards saw signs of red buffalo but nothing of the animals themselves. However, we had not gone much further before we saw two bush buck and several duiker. All very promising.

Up to now we had been walking through grass that varied between knee high and head height but we suddenly came upon a large area that had been burnt off about a week or ten days before and was already showing signs of new growth. Also the shrub like growth in the area was already bursting into new leaf.

We covered about a kilometre quite quickly and without seeing anything of interest and I decided to call a halt and start the return journey to the car. We had been away now for almost an hour and were probably something under three kilometres in

a direct line from the car and as we were on slightly highr ground we could probably have seen it if it had not been parked in a hollow. Between us and the car were a number of ridges and gullies and of course the stream that we passed shortly after leaving the car.

We started our return to the left of our original route and proceeded quickly whilst in the burnt area. We had almost reached an area of short grass when I saw a large buffalo calmly walking along a ridge at right angles to our course and some five hundred metres from us.

Whilst the adrenalin immediately started to flow I had no intention of chasing after the buffalo which might well have already been aware of our presence as it looked as if it had probably cut across our outward path and would almost certainly picked up our scent.

The reaction of Ben and Paulino was that it would be a crime to leave such an excellent animal to roam around and probably be shot by some unworthy individual. They further pointed out that it was almost certainly a bull with a fine set of horns.

Having convinced me of the importance of bagging this fine animal we proceeded at a trot to a point where we calculated it would have reached by that time. As I fully expected on arrival there was not the slightest sign of the buffalo and I was about to give the order for a general search for spoor when I saw movement on our right and about eighty metres away. The buffalo was stood in a small clump of bush and what we saw was the movement of its tail. Wind was very light but was in my favour and told the boys to stay whilst I started my stalk. After moving some twenty metres the buffalo stepped clear of the bush and it was obvious that it could clearly see me so I immediately put a 300 grain Silvertip behind its shoulder. It collapsed where it stood and I quickly approached it and gave it a finishing shot in the neck.

Ben and Paulino were highly delighted at the sight of the larger than usual bull which was in fine condition.

Up until now it had remained overcast and the temperature had only risen slightly as the morning progressed but now as if to approve our success the sun broke through the clouds and the temperature began to rise rapidly.

We quickly removed the intestines of the bull and I then decided that we would not skin it as that would take too much time.

Normally we would have gone back to our 4wd vehicle and brought it up as close as possible to our trophy but of course on this occasion it was not possible so we had to face transporting the bull, cut up into pieces, back to the car.

A quick glance at my watch showed that it was already eleven o clock which was the latest that we were supposed to be back at the car to proceed on our journey.

We started our journey back to the car with each of my staff carrying a complete rear leg whilst I had a front leg and my rifle to carry.

By now there was not a cloud to be seen in the sky and there was no shade between us and our destination.

If there had been any shade I expect the shade temperature would have been around 35 deg. C. but out in the open it was probably some twenty degrees higher. To add to our discomfort the humidity was also high.

When we finally got back to our starting point it was nearly 13.00 hours and we found Vicky crouched in the blazing sunshine preparing our lunch over a wood fire. I hastily removed the car to some shade no too far away and we then hung our meat in some convenient low trees whilst Ben took over the heating of our meal.

We had already had a long drink of cool water when we passed the stream but we now attacked some ice cool beer which tasted just like nectar.

I have passed over the comments that Vicky had made on our return. She had started to worry about our non appearance and had imagined almost everything excepting what had actually taken place.

When we had had our meal we had a short rest and then the three of us started back to where we had left the remains of the buffalo. This time we made a quick trip as we had a trail to follow but the sun was still high in the sky and it was very hot but a light breeze had begun to blow.

I had taken with me our linen bread bag to carry the liver and heartand also a large plastic bag for the "bandulho" (tripe) that the boys would not leave behind under any circumstances. I know that any cook reading this will be horrified at the thought of carrying fresh meat in a plastic bag for several hours in a tropical climate but they have probably never seen "bandulho" or better still had a smell of it. Quite apart from the smell it is also rather messy stuff and can be guarante--ed to coat a vehicle with gunge that refuses to be washed off.

On arrival at the buffalo we found that the vultures had arrived and were feeding off the entrails which had been mostly consumed. The valued "bandulho" and the rest of the carcass had been left covered with freshly cut brush and had not so far been discovered by the vultures.

We finished the cutting up of the carcass and divided it in to five loads. The head and a portion of the neck, we decided, would have to be abandoned and we put it up in to the fork of a small tree.

It was late in the afternoon and the sun was getting low in the sky when we again got back to the car with our loads. Vicky had some very welcome coffee waiting for us.

Not only was my bush shirt wet through with perspiration but also it had changed to a grey green colour due to the amount of salt that had exuded from my body. Despite this I had no craving for salt but took on a large amount of hot coffee.

Ben and Paulino dumped their loads and quickly drank their coffee and then started back for the last two loads of meat.

I now unloaded the boot of the car and put everything on the back seat so that I could load the buffalo meat.

Whilst I was doing this Vicky collected some wood for a fire which we would light as soon as it got dark and would serve to guide Ben and Paulino on their retunr.

They finally got back around seven o clock when it was already quite dark.
It only took a short time to finish the loading and for us to swallow the last of our hot coffee.
At this point Vicky produced the whiskey bottle and gave each of our staff a stiff tot but I turned down the offer as I was going to have to do the driving and already felt like having a good sleep.
Once we were moving it was obvious that we were rather tail heavy because even with the headlights dipped they were shining skywards. I was able to adjust them a little but they were still far too high and it was obvious that I would have to drive the two hundred kilometres home with limited illumination.
I decided not to stop and eat in Dondo as because we looked like being late in any case. Vicky was rather unwilling to forego her dinner and I must admit that I was feeling ravenous but I was afraid that I would fall asleep after a good meal. So we proceeded slowly on our way.
NormallyBen and Paulino would fall asleep as soon as they were installed comfortably in the car but on this occasion, possibly due to the whiskey, they chatted and recounted the events of the day for the entire period of our homeward journey.
Normally on a Saturday evening the road from Dondo to Lunada would be largely free of traffic but on this occasion, to add to my difficulties, an unusual number of truck drivers had decided to travel outwards from the Capital. Their reactions to my skywards pointing headlights was unaminous and they flashed their lights, blew air horns or offered verbal advice according to howthey regarded the matter.
Fortunately we came to harm and I think that we were all very relieved when I turned in to our gateway just before midnight.
With the aid of Ben and Paulino I quickly unloaded our buffalo meat and hung the large pieces in our mango tree for attention as soon as it became daylight. The smaller items and the offal was placed in the refrigerator.
As soon as it was daylight we started butchering our meat ready for distribution to friends and also for our own freezer.
By midday we had everything completed including the general clean up of the car which in daylight had looked rather messy to say the least.
I then drove the staff to their homes with their part of the meat plus the "bandulho!
When I got back Vicky had got our lunch ready and I was happy to sit down to a drink and have my meal.
Shortly afterwards I dropped in to my bed and stayed there until the evening.
So ended a weekend away from home without I am afraid gaining very much in the way of credits to count against future hunting expeditions.
However, all was not really lost because during the next eight years this area above Dondo was to become our main weekend hunting location.
A great deal of game was taken from the area and thereare many more stories to tell of our activites there.

MJS/-

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Game of the World

BY OUTSTANDING FIELD & STREAM ARTISTS

The Small Deer

BY BOB KUHN

WITH DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY WARREN PAGE

NONE of the world's game animals, unless it be the lowly rabbit, range over as much of our globe as the deer. Not one has proved itself as capable of adapting its living and feeding and breeding to as wide a variety of terrain, from the rain forests of Alaska to the peaks of New Zealand, from the jungles of India to the backyards of New York's populous Westchester County, as has the deer. None are as hard hunted by man, greatest of the predators; none are more successful in resisting that predation. And the smaller deer, the types of antlered creature that seldom if ever weigh over three hundred pounds, are most successful of all.

The greater deer—the moose, wapiti, and caribou, the hirsch, hangul, and barasingha—all these, to be presented here in this issue, ill adapt to life near the busy haunts of men, but the lesser antlered game like the mule deer and the whitetail of our continent, the fallow and the roe of Europe, the chital and the barking deer clans of Asia has each in its way learned to live and prosper near mankind.

Largest of our small deer and perhaps the least adaptable is the mule deer, the big-eared buck whose range today is much as it has always been, along the Continental backbone from Mexico north into Alberta and British Columbia nearly to the 60th parallel, and down onto the sage plains of all our Rocky Mountain states. His double-forking antlers and peculiar rubber-ball gait are seldom seen beyond our own lands, not even the lush forage of New Zealand suiting the muley.

He is a big deer, the muley, and the hunter who watches a Roman-nosed master buck dodging away through the aspens or trotting off across Utah sage and wails, "He was as big as an elk!" is not too far wrong. They are *big* deer. The heaviest I ever shot dressed out 279 pounds on the scale of the L-B Ranch along the Shoshone, perhaps weighed 350 alive; but a muley *may* weigh over 400 pounds on the hoof, as much as a cow elk, and his rocking-chair rack *may* spread too wide for a 30-inch door.

Confirmed whitetail hunters, used to the man-wise habits and the thick cover of their pet prey, often condemn the mule deer as a prime boob. Indeed he does have a bump of curiosity that time and again has him stop for a final—and often fatal—look back before he tops the ridge. But watch an old grayback pussyfoot around the hunter he has scented or sighted, and you'll respect the deer with the burro-size ears.

The mule deer has ten close cousins, but only two have major differences. The little Sitka deer of British Columbia and Southeastern Alaska, a 100-pounder easy to lure to a call, is unknown to stateside nimrods, but the much larger Columbian blacktail of the western slope of the Rockies is a prime target for hunters in Washington, Oregon, and upper California—and can be a tough target in the wet timberlands of the Northwest.

Where the muley leaves off the whitetail begins. Or perhaps it is the other way round, since in recent generations the Virginia deer or one of its subspecies has spread its range over virtually all the United States. *Odocoileus virginianus* has pushed far north into Canada and even, in the form of the Coues deer and the Texas whitetail, cuts his sharp tracks far below the Rio Grande to meet up with Central American types. The total whitetail

The evening hatch is on in Lake Huron near Presque Isle Harbor, and casters go into action

Ordinarily the cisco is just a commercial species But at certain witching hours of the day he becomes a firecracker on a fly line

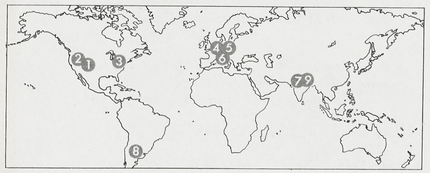
years ago this sport, now drawing thousands of anglers, was generally unknown.

For centuries the Great Lakes herring was no game fish. It was a common old standby commercial creature, netted by the millions of pounds, smoked or pickled or sold fresh by horse-and-buggy traveling hawkers for a nickel a pound when I was a boy, and in later years mushed up and peddled almost as cheaply to fur farms as fox and mink food. Yet this poor relative of the highly touted trouts could and did, when taken on a fly, outfight those aristocratic gentlemen fins down. It was a pleasantly astonishing situation when it became known—difficult to believe but true.

Of course, its name could mislead you. For this herring is not a herring at all, even though it has been called one ever since the Great Lakes region was settled. It is the cisco, about which more later on. To this day most natives of the area wouldn't know what a cisco is, so entrenched is the original misnomer.

Ebb and I, among others, had (*Continued on page* 116)

The cisco, or lake herring, has a tender mouth, so you have to lead him gently toward the net



1 MULE DEER
2 COLUMBIAN BLACKTAIL
3 WHITETAIL
4 WHITE FALLOW
5 BLACK FALLOW
6 ROEBUCK
7 CHITAL
8 PAMPAS DEER
9 BARKING DEER

The Small Deer

PAINTED BY BOB KUHN FOR THE FIELD & STREAM SERIES

GAME OF THE WORLD

1 MULE DEER
2 COLUMBIAN BLACKTAIL
3 WHITETAIL
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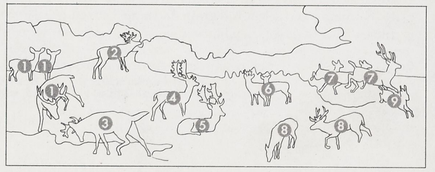

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population numbers somewhere between 4 and 5 million.

No mistaking the whitetail. The chances are that all you'll see of him is a white plume of flared tail hairs, as long as your forearm, waving jaunty disdain ahead of you as buck or doe darts into dense brush. No mistaking the whitetail buck's rack if you're lucky or smart and bag one mature enough to merit the shot. Its main beams do not fork, but sweep out and forward with the tines driving straight up, four or five on a side to make an 8- or 10-pointer by eastern count.

The whitetail comes in many sizes. The Coues deer, Florida's rare Key deer, and other southern members of the family are on the half-pint side and always have been. The Virginia deer of those states that have maintained bucks-only laws since the deer herds hit rock bottom before World War I have, in overbrowsed areas, shrunk until a fully mature buck may not make an honest 125 pounds on the hoof. The big ones come from farm woodlots or from our northern fringe of states. Maine hunters, for example, average 425 kills a year certified at over 200 pounds dressed out. Saskatchewan and Manitoba whitetails run big in body; so do those of eastern Washington. Trophy heads can come from almost anywhere. The bulk of the Boone and Crocket Club record whitetails were killed in Canada, but the best I have ever seen or shot, a 10-pointer ranking only a third of the way down the long record list, I happened onto in heavily populated New Jersey, only three hours by car from the New York skyscrapers.

Deliberately setting out for a record whitetail buck is the toughest trophy hunt we have, in some ways. Three-quarters of a million to a million whitetails are shot every year by a 4-million-man army of red-coated hunters; but the canny oldster of the trophy class is a master at hide-and-seek in any cover, so delicately alert in scent and hearing that he is a real opponent for any rifleman. And he can live in built-up, dog-infested areas that presumably couldn't harbor a chipmunk!

Deer hunting in the States is a sport for the masses—as witness the invasions of Pennsylvania, Michigan, and New York after the first hard frosts; but across the Atlantic it has traditionally been reserved for those of blood made purple either by royal lineage or by stuffed bank accounts. The hart of Scotland and the hirsch of central and eastern Europe, the great red deer, once belonged to royalty alone, but today the pressure of economics and the breakup of the ducal estates has made available to anyone with the price not only the great red stag with his coroneted rack—of which more in a later issue—but also his lesser Old World relatives like the fallow deer and the reh, or roebuck.

The park-loving fallow deer existed in England and Denmark as early as the Pleistocene period, and died off during the time of the glaciers, though persisting in northern Europe. They were reintroduced, some say, by either the Roman conquerors or probably even earlier by Phoenician traders who brought them from Mediterranean shores. A chunky, short-legged deer weighing under 200 pounds, the fallow is remarkable for his variety of coloration, from white to black, spotted to piebald, and for the strange palmation of his antler tops, which like those of the caribou are often outsized for the animal.

Royalty once had the handsome fallow driven before them by hounds and horsemen, and there exists a heroic tale of a gamekeeper, one Selwyn, who in the late 1500's leaped from his horse astride a fallow buck and stabbed it with his dagger as it veered too close to the Virgin Queen Elizabeth.

The fallow is seldom hunted today in England, but it is prime game in Norway and Sweden and in the carefully tended private acreages of Jutland and northern Europe. But by far the best fallow deer now range the fringes of New Zealand's Southern Alps.

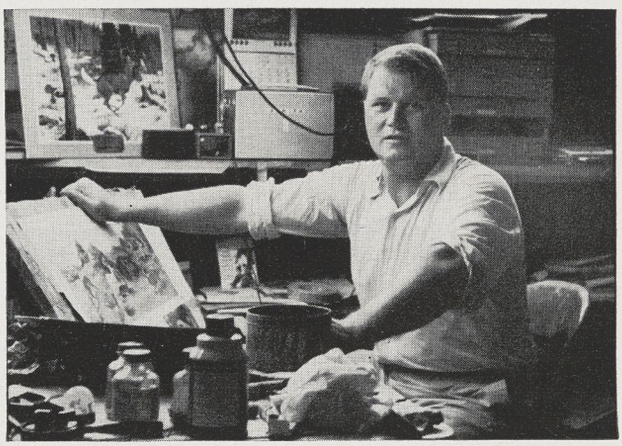
The least of the Old World deer, the reh that browses from Britain over the Austrian mountains to Persia and across Asia into Manchuria, is in its European form a tiny buck barely over two feet at the shoulders and weighing around 50 pounds.

As with the greater deer of Europe, the roe is cloaked in hunting tradition, and is carefully graded in trophy quality. Roebuck antlers are odd in that the main beam rises almost straight up like the horn of our Wyoming antelope, then sweeps back to fork into a tip and a tine. The brow tine spikes out halfway up the beam and the entire surface of the antler is rough, almost warty. At the skull this roughness flares into a knobby coronet, and among middle-Europe hunters like my friends of the Zurich Jagdclub the measure of this coronet, which may reach better than 8 inches, is as vital to trophy score as the length of the antler itself, which is seldom over 10 inches.

No hunting traditions of (*Continued on page* 78)

Meet the Artist

WHEN Bob Kuhn made up his mind to become an animal artist, he did two important things. First, he obtained the finest art education possible by attending one of the country's top-rank art schools. Second, he studied in the field and on the dissecting board every animal that he possibly could. Bob has hunted and observed big game not only throughout North America but in Africa as well. Many of his trips have been in company with Warren Page, FIELD & STREAM Shooting Editor. Today Bob is ranked the top animal illustrator in the country. Besides painting and hunting, Bob enjoys skiing and fishing. In fact, Bob would probably tell you that he enjoys fishing more than hunting. Perhaps when you have studied animals with the thoroughness and intimacy that Bob has, the desire to paint them instead of shoot them becomes compelling.



Bob Kuhn turns from his work on Small Deer of the World to pose for Field & Stream's photographer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The Small Deer of the World

(*Continued from page 75*)

either the United States or European sorts have ever developed in Central and South America. There hunting is a serious matter of meat procurement. But the rate of growth of species like the fallow and the red deer that have been introduced into Argentina suggest that the temperate southern half of our brother continent may soon become a stag lover's paradise. Now the deer hunter working southward through the jungles of Central America might run into oddball deer called brockets, little fellows standing two feet or less at the withers and carrying straight spike antlers; he might conceivably encounter the guazu, or marsh deer, of the Brazilian swamps. In the extreme south he could try for the guemal, a fork-horned 100-pounder, or might be lucky enough to see the rabbit-sized pudu of Chile.

The most important native South American deer, however, is the pampas deer. This is another 100-pounder type interesting because it lives in such open country, the high-grass plains of the Argentine cattle region, and carries a light but tall rack with three prongs to a side.

The shikar-minded traveler who visits any part of Asia, if he keeps his eyes open, may run onto a dozen strange members of the Cervidae family and its relatives. Among them will be deer without racks but with pronounced tusks growing out of the upper jaw like the Chinese water deer—remember that our own wapiti and numerous other deer types grow oversized canines either above or below—or he may find the antlerless musk deer of the Himalayas. This strange deer, furry against the cold of the high terrain stretching eastward from Gilgit and Kashmir, through Nepal and on into Siberian highlands, was once hard hunted for its heavy-scented musk glands, used as a basis for perfume.

Tiniest of the Asian deer, far smaller than the dik-dik antelope of Africa, is a real oddball called the mouse deer. Actually a chevrotain to the naturalists, this vest-pocket character might weigh 5 pounds, including his tiny tusks. He stands less than a foot tall when in his prime, and is so utterly furtive in his jungle hideouts among the rocky ghats of India that even the *chaukidars,* the fire-guards of the teak forests, seldom see him. One of the great strokes of fortune in my whole hunting life was to happen onto one of these rare fellows near Somanpalli, when I had

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OUT

a .22 Hornet rifle in hand for a supper of peafowl. I felt like a Bambi-murderer when he fell, but a panther would have nailed him if I hadn't, and besides, who else has an Indian deer that can be mounted whole and stood on the gunroom mantelpiece?

The hunter in Asia will hardly miss an encounter with the barking deer, or muntjac, however. Those he doesn't see he will hear, because this little kakar, the size of a healthy red setter, is forever barking his *"Boh! Boh!"* of alarm and spooking all the greater game. Above his wrinkled, black-lined forehead the muntjac carries his antlers, all five or six inches of them, on little hairy pedestals or pedicels that lift the tines an extra three to five inches. But however proud the antler, the kakar scuttles through the jungle like some sort of oversized rodent and seldom shows before the noisy shikari, or hunter.

The most handsome of all Asia's lesser deer is, of course, the chital, himself no slouch at eluding careless man. The chital's forest, as I found from bitter experience in the district of Chanda, is likely to be floored in foot-long teak leaves, burned crisp and crunchy by the equatorial sun. But the chital is a worthy trophy, not because of the weight of his fawn-and-white-spotted body, since that is rarely over a 125 pounds, but because of his tall 3-pronged rack. On a deer standing some 30 inches at the shoulder, that rack may sweep up a graceful 30 inches or more along the beam!

There are close relatives of the chital in the sika group of spotted deer that span Asia from the Talish Mountains by the Caspian Sea across to Manchuria and Japan, even out onto the island of Formosa. Self-sufficient and adaptable, they have been transplanted all over the world—to England, New Zealand, Hawaii, even to nearer Texas and Maryland. They are shy and clever—as are all deer.

And that is why the members of the small-deer group are so ardently sought by sportsmen the world over. They are not dangerous animals, not trophies so great as to overpower a living-room wall, nor do they offer enough meat to feed a regiment—though during the late war Col. John B. George came close to feeding a regiment with venison on, of all unlikely places, the pacific islands of New Caledonia. But the small deer, wise in man's ways, offer a universal challenge to the hunter.

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Mouflon sheep and ewe

Bharal, blue sheep

Bharal ewe

Barbary sheep, aoudad

Marco Polo sheep

Urial, gad, shapu

witness the recent records by Cook and Harry Swank. Near the British Columbia line, white sheep intergrade with the dark Stone sheep of upper British Columbia to produce the saddle, or Fannin, ram, a mix perhaps discredited as a record type but a real trophy nonetheless. *Stonei* country shades south from the Stikine and Liard drainages into central B. C., where the long-horned Stone with his pepper-and-salt coat becomes the brownish bighorn with the battering-ram head. At what point between Idaho, Colorado, and Arizona the bighorn becomes the slimmer desert sheep of the cactus-clad ranges that finger down into Mexico and Baja California matters only to biologists. For trophy hunters the break comes in the badlands of Colorado and Utah, for virtually no sheep are left in New Mexico's fastnesses except the imported bands of African aoudads.

Plumber, professor, or prince, any man may become obsessed with the sheep-hunting urge. Those forty-three men and one woman who have taken all four of the North American trophy species—and some have scored "slams" twice over—share only the need to climb ever higher for the curl-horned rams. Relatively few of us, however, have hunted the sheep of the European and Asiatic heights, though the goatish aoudad of the Sahara ranges is difficult chiefly in distance, and the mouflon of rugged Corsica and Sardinia has been replanted in alpine Europe. The broad-ranged and varied urial, or red sheep, types have been sought only by hunting-minded engineers luckily assigned in mideastern lands, or by individuals fortunate enough to be royally invited into the peaks of Persia, or, as I was, to penetrate the Salt and the Sulaiman sawtooths rearing from Baluchistan.

And fewer yet, since the foot-shikar days of James Clark and Colonel Morden, have traveled by plane, jeep, horse, yak, and finally shank's mare into the mysteries of the Hindu Kush, where the Pamirs join, past Gilgit and Baltit and through serried ranks of 20,000-foot peaks to the Sinkiang border for that greatest sheep of all, *Ovis poli.* Only two U. S. sportsmen of modern times have achieved it; two more are in transit as I write.

Greater even than the argali of Ladakh and Mongolia, far greater than the bluish bharal of Tibet, the Marco Polo ram may weigh nearly a quarter ton and carry horns of 1½ curls that have taped over sixty inches along the curve. On the roof of the world lives the master ram, the ultimate dream of all who hunt sheep.

The author landed this 10-pound striper after a half hour battle in San Francisco Bay

STRIPERS wallowed and rolled all around our ten-foot aluminum skiff just as the sun poked up over the edge of the hills around Berkeley, California, and touched the surface of San Francisco Bay with rosy light. Walt "Buzzy" Gorman turned around in the front of the boat and grinned at me. "You ready?" he asked.

"As ready as I'll ever be," I answered.

"Then get that fly stick of yours going," he said. "The wind'll be up pretty soon, and we'll have to get down to business."

Tiny anchovies ripped across the surface like bits of silver tinsel, trying desperately to swim out of the water. The bass were driving many of them onto the gently sloping beach where they flopped helplessly. I watched the action until I saw a big bulge, then a broad tail slap the surface as a striper tore into the school.

The action is fast when you cast with fresh-water gear to school bass chasing bait fish near shore

The monofilament shooting line was coiled and waiting between my feet. The shooting head was trailing listly over the side. I roll cast once to get the big, white-and-yellow streamer up to the surface. One false cast was enough, and I shot the line, leader, and fly into the frantic action on the flats. The fly turned over and landed at the edge of the swirl. My reel started to scream before I could strike. "I told you it'd work," I said to Buzzy.

"I never had a doubt about it," he answered as his light spinning rod bucked under the pressure of a good fish. "These fish would hit an old boot at a time like this. When they're tearing into anchovies, they'd. . . ." Buzzy's line was pealing off his reel in short, steady bursts. "He's heading for those rocks. Let's get this boat out of here."

I ignored him. It was impossible to get the motor going and simultaneously land the fish on the other end of my line. I heard a dull "ping" as Buzzy's monofilament parted. He grunted. (*Continued on page* 78)

Fanin, or saddleback

Dall ewe

Dall, or white, sheep

Rocky Mountain bighorn

Stone, or black, sheep

Desert bighorn

Wild Sheep of the World

By WARREN PAGE

Be it the magnificent Ovis poli or the desert bighorn, the mountain-dwelling ram is a trophy to be sought with dedication

ILLUSTRATED BY BOB KUHN

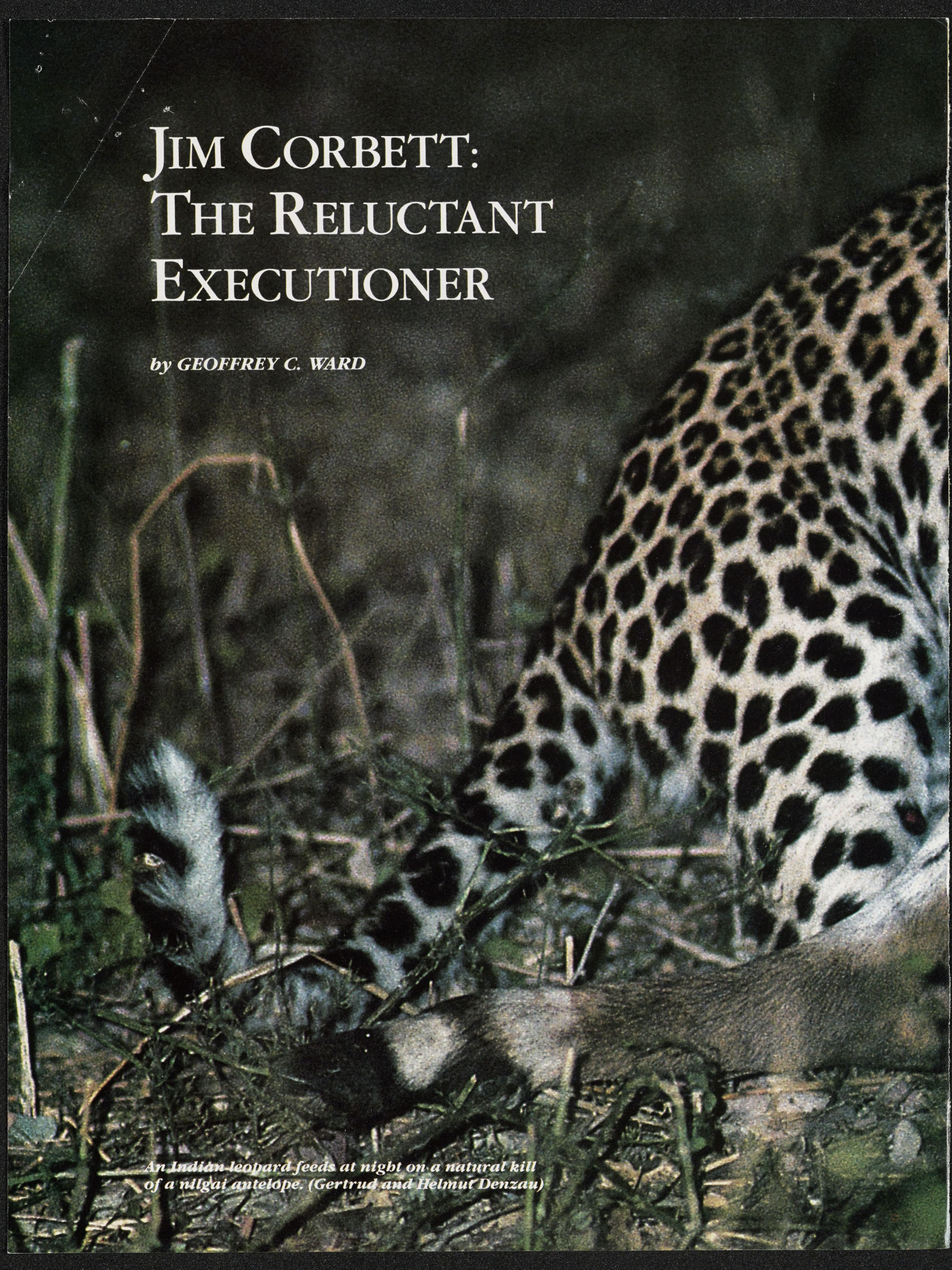
ON THE family globe or a map of the world, trace with your forefinger the mountain backbone of the northern hemisphere, from its scattered beginnings in southeastern Europe. Through the Caucasus and looping up into the mighty Himalayas, follow it over the Mongolian sweeps to Kamchatka, thence across the Bering Straits into our own Alaska Ranges and down along the Rocky Mountains. This is the spine of the northern world, the arch on which live all species of mountain sheep.

And these are the heights of the sheep hunter, that devout brand of trophy seeker who spends much of his funds and most of his energies to squirm within rifle shot of a heavy-horned ram. It makes no real difference whether he climbs for the bighorn of Alberta or battles 18,000 foot altitudes for Marco Polo (*Ovis poli*), the most magnificent of all rams—the confirmed sheep hunter is a man apart in his devotion.

Our North American trophy species are four. The white sheep, or Dall, dwells north of the 60th parallel, up into the Endicotts and on nearly every range of Alaska and the Yukon. The greatest of today's white sheep seem to graze in the rugged Chugach and in the Wrangells, as

JIM CORBETT: THE RELUCTANT EXECUTIONER

by GEOFFREY C. WARD



An Indian leopard feeds at night on a natural kill of a nilgai antelope. (Gertrud and Helmut Denzau)

JULY 1987
AUDUBON

June-Becoming-July

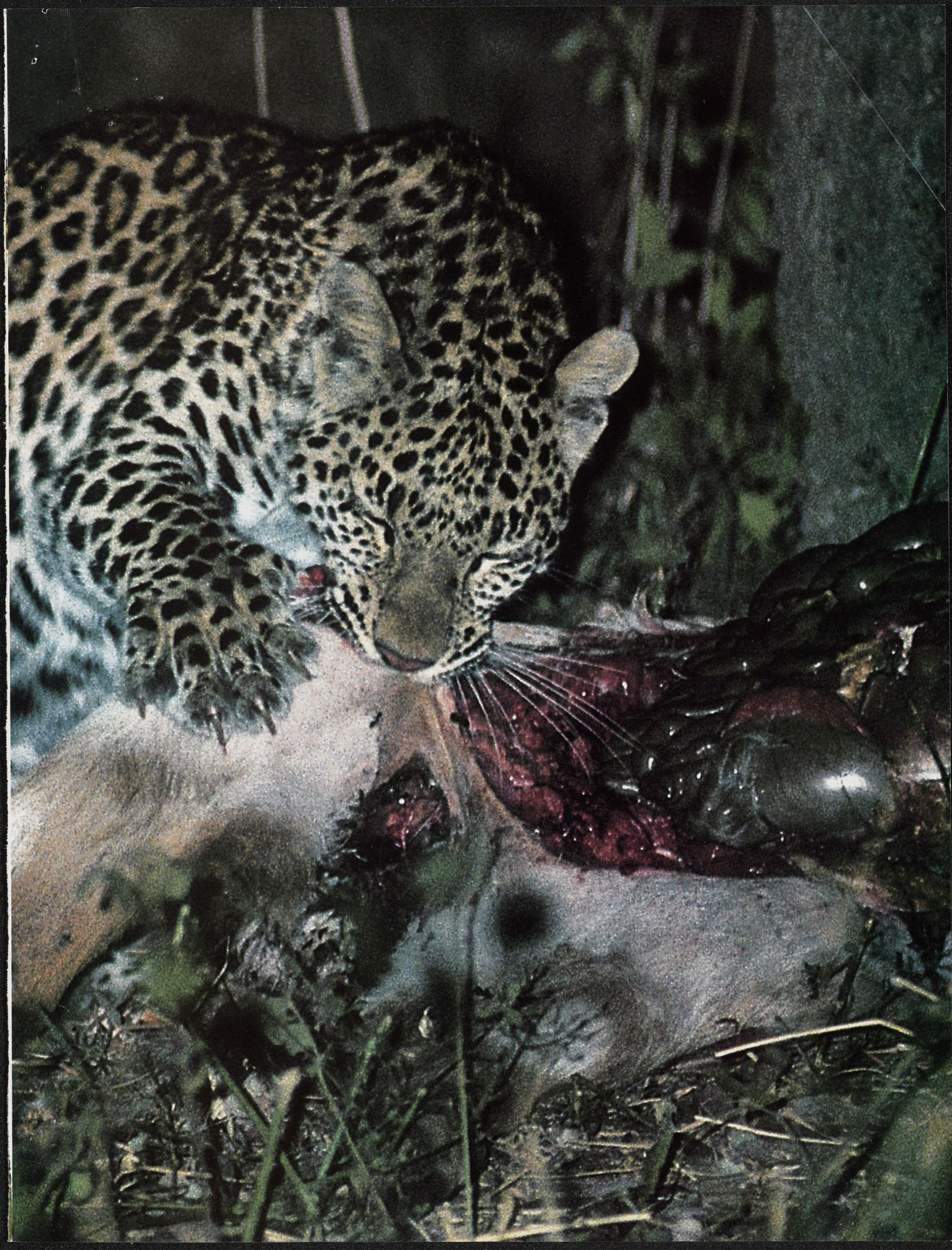
THE CALENDAR is a reminder but not a necessity. You know it is June-becoming-July, even with your eyes closed, when you smell the too-sweet milkweed blossom at the country roadside. You know what time it is by the season's clock when you hear the first harvest fly buzz to its shrilling climax and run down to a hiss and a dull drone. You listen to the oriole and the tanager and the exuberant robin at dawn and again at dusk, but seldom in the warm hours between.

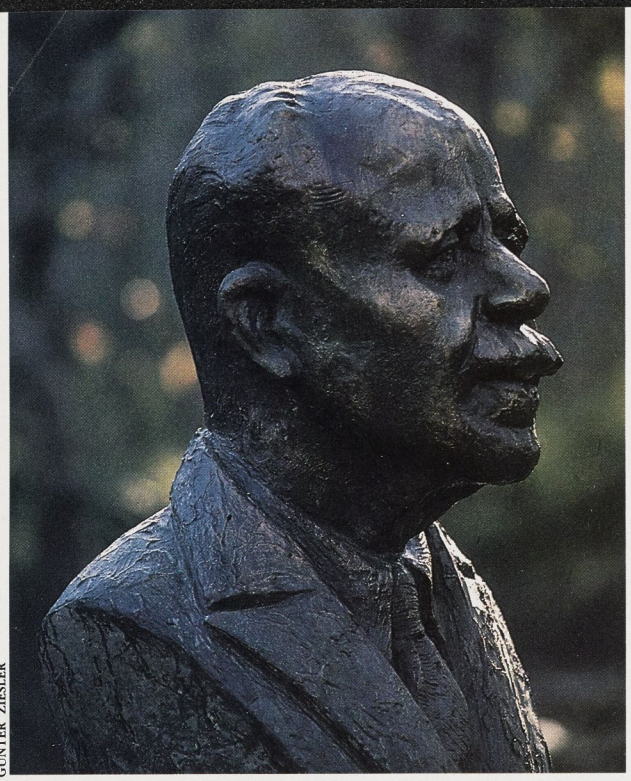
Walk the open fields before the heat of the day has settled on them and you smell the old, old tang of mint and beebalm and yarrow. Stand at the garden fence before the bees have gathered for their day's work and the spiced fragrance of old-fashioned pinks is a sweet reminder of the season. Stand there at dusk and you will know the perfume of nicotiana and the soft flight of dark moths hovering at the nectary blossoms. Linger as the first stars appear and you will be in the midst of a firefly galaxy.

It is a sensible time, in the root-sense of that word. The senses are piqued and quickened by the smells and sounds and subtle presences of early summer. It is a lively, teeming world, too busy to watch any calendar except that of the sun and the long, lingering daylight hours of summer growth and summer abundance.

Hal Borland

HAL BORLAND





GUNTER ZIESLER

A bust of Jim Corbett at the entrance to Corbett National Park.

The tiger lay on its back behind a log, paws in the air, fast asleep. The hunter crept closer, rifle raised, until he was within five feet, then fired two bullets into the animal's brain. The tiger died without moving. It had been steadily killing and eating human beings for years, one every few days. The last—a woman cutting grass in the forest—had been killed less than a week before the hunter tracked him down. This was the climax of an arduous pursuit that had gone on for several weeks up and down the steep slopes of the Himalayan foothills in the full blast of an Indian May. At the sound of the shots, a crowd of villagers hurried to the site to see for themselves that the animal that had terrorized them for so long was truly dead and to cheer the man who had risked his own life to rid them of it.

The successful hunter, a tall, slim, middle-aged Briton named Jim Corbett, might have been forgiven had he shared at least a little of their exultation. Instead, he felt depressed. "The finish," he wrote later, "had not been satisfactory, for I had killed the animal . . . in his sleep." He continued: "My personal feelings in the matter are I know of little interest to others, but it occurs to me that possibly you also might think it was not cricket, and in that case I should like to put some arguments before you that I used on myself, in the hope that you will find them more satisfactory than I did. These arguments were (a) the tiger was a man-eater that was better dead than alive, (b) therefore it made no difference whether he was awake or asleep when killed, and (c) that had I walked away when I saw his belly moving up and down [indicating that he was sleeping] I should have been morally responsible for the deaths of all the human beings he killed thereafter. All good and sound arguments, you will admit, for having acted as I did; but the regret remains that through fear of the consequences to myself or for fear of losing the only chance I might ever get, or possibly a combination of the two, I did not awaken the sleeping animal and give him a sporting chance."

THE TIGER," Jim Corbett wrote in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon,* his first and best-loved book, "is a large-hearted gentleman with boundless courage." Such courtly anthropomorphism is understandably out of fashion these days, but the same description could justly be applied to the man who wrote it. For Corbett represented within himself—as hunter and conservationist, author and outdoorsman, and loyal subject of the Crown—all the gentlemanly attributes of the British imperial system at its best. The tragedy was that, partly because he also shared that system's worst delusions, he became its victim, ending his days in sad, self-imposed exile from the land he never stopped loving.

Edward James Corbett was born in India and therefore a "Domiciled Englishman"—the scornful epithet was "country-bottled"—relegated to the lowest rank among India's white rulers, whose caste system was only slightly more yielding than that of those they ruled. Domiciled Englishmen were thought better than coolies by upper-class Britons—they were welcome, for example, on the Upper Mall in the Himalayan hill station of Naini Tal, where Corbett was born in 1875, from which Indians and beasts of burden were expressly barred—and they were thought more desirable than persons of mixed British and Indian ancestry. But they could never expect to serve in prestigious administrative posts or to climb very high in the army, even though without them and their forebears there would have been no British Raj at all.

Corbett's own father, Christopher Corbett, the Naini Tal postmaster, had helped lift the siege of Delhi during the 1857 mutiny. That sudden and bloody rebellion by Indian troops thought faithful to the British Queen had traumatized the Raj. Afterwards, the British never fully trusted their Indian subjects. Corbett and his brothers and sisters were steeped in mutiny lore: Their father's younger brother had been tied to a tree and burned alive by the rebels; their mother's father had been pulled from his horse and hacked to death. No matter how gentle and amiable Indians seemed, the children were taught, one had always to be on guard.

Christopher Corbett died suddenly when James was four, leaving his wife with a summer home above Naini Tal, a winter home fifteen miles down the mountain road at Kaladhungi, and a turbulent brood of twelve children to raise and educate on a widow's meager pension. The Corbetts were poor but proud. Appearances were kept up. Stoicism and self-sacrifice were encouraged. His mother, Corbett recalled, "though she had the courage of Joan of Arc and Nurse Clavell combined, was as gentle and timid as a dove."

He remembered his boyhood as a sort of forest idyll. Lying in bed at Kaladhungi, he listened night after night to the cries of the animals that filled the dark surrounding forests, learning first to understand and eventually to mimic nearly all of them. (As a grown man he could call a serpent eagle down out of the sky using a split reed to imitate the piercing call of a fawn in distress, and he once impersonated a leopard so persuasively that a British hunter and a leopard crept toward him simultaneously.) In the early mornings the small boy eagerly paced the sandy bed of the Baur River that ran near the

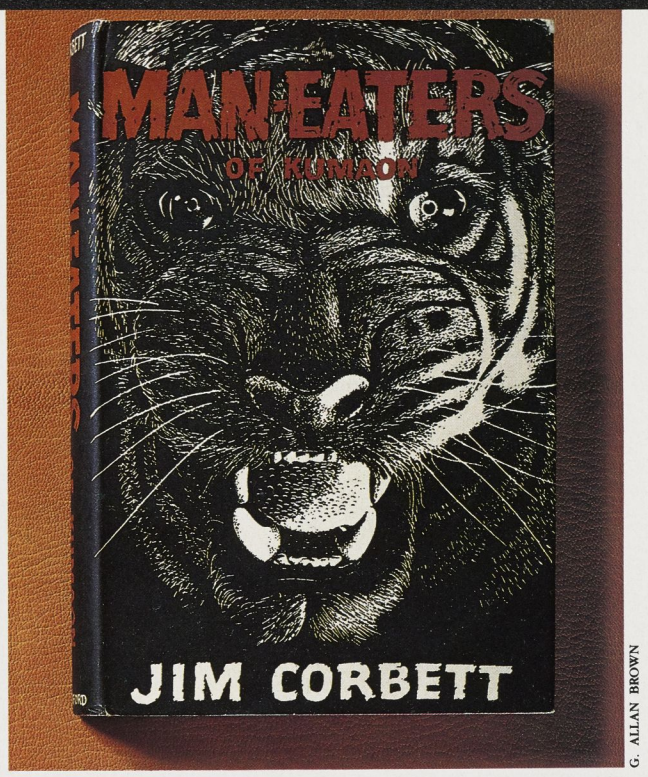
house, studying fresh tracks to discover what had happened there the night before. Corbett's uncanny understanding of the plants and animals and birds of the Kumaon Hills had virtually been bred into him.

Corbett's earliest shooting was done to fill the family larder. He had to account for every shell. "Good shooting," the same friend wrote, "was to him an obligation rather than an accomplishment." But his increasingly frequent trips into the forest may have had another meaning, too. The Corbett household must have been a tumultuous place: Years later, Corbett would confess that, as adults, neither he nor his older sister, Maggie, ever felt "happy in a crowd." By the age of nine, Corbett was spending several days at a time in the forest. An aged family gardener sometimes accompanied him, but he slept in the open, and his only real protection was an ancient muzzle-loading shotgun whose one good barrel was lashed to the stock with copper wire.

He attended school at Naini Tal, finding time between classes to shoot and prepare the skins of some 480 species of hill birds for a cousin who was preparing a field guide. Then, at seventeen, he signed on with the Indian railways, one of the few organizations hospitable to young Domiciled Englishmen. He was a fuel inspector at first, supervising the felling of timber, and then he became a transshipment inspector at Mokameh Ghat, a dusty outstation on the bank of the Ganges west of Benares. There was nothing remotely glamorous about his job, which for just over two decades consisted of seeing to it that a million tons of goods were ferried across the river from one rail line to another every year. But he did gain an extraordinary reputation for industry and fairness among the Indian laborers who worked for him, eating nothing but lentils and unleavened bread when times were lean, just as they did, and distributing eighty percent of his own annual profits among the men at Christmastime.

Nor was there anything especially adventurous about his daily life after he left the railway at thirty-nine, without ever having moved up in its hierarchy. He moved back to Naini Tal, went into the hardware and real-estate business, and did about as well as a country-born Englishman could expect. He served on the town council and presented the town with a brightly painted band shell. He was not, until very late in life, asked to join the Naini Tal Yacht Club. Even after he did join, a friend recalled, he rarely went there, being unused to "the elevated society." Winters were spent at Kaladhungi in a small bungalow at the edge of a village called Choti Haldwani, of which he and his sister Maggie became the benevolent proprietors. Corbett adjudicated family disputes among his tenants, calmed tension between Hindus and Muslims, provided improved seed; he even acted as unofficial physician, dispensing pills and unguents to sick or injured villagers. And he acted as their protector, too, building a three-mile stone wall around the village and its fields to keep deer and wild boar out of their crops and eliminating any predators that menaced their cattle and buffalo.

His India was always that of the peasant. "Simple, honest, brave, loyal, hard-working souls," he called them once, "whose daily prayer to God, and to whatever Government is in power, is to give them security of life and of property to enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labors." Modern India—urban, educated, interested in politics, and impatient with British rule—was alien to him, and always menacing.



G. ALLAN BROWN

Corbett never married, and when an intrusive interviewer once asked him why, he responded with uncharacteristic vehemence. "It has been my privilege," he said, "no, I have had the *honor,* to make a home for the best mother and sister in the world." Corbett's mother died in 1924, but Maggie remained with him until the end of his life, listening to his jungle stories and brewing the endless pots of strong tea that seem to have been the closest Jim Corbett ever came to vice.

There were thousands of other Britons scattered in small places all across India in those days, living similarly quiet lives, largely unknown beyond the villages over which they held sway. It was Corbett's shooting skill and encyclopedic knowledge of the jungle that set him apart. As early as 1906, requests began to reach him begging that he come up into the hills to track down a tiger or leopard that had begun to prey on man. Sometimes the afflicted villagers themselves petitioned him, their genuine terror evident beneath the inflated language of the scribes whose pens they hired:

Respected Sir,

We the public are in great distress. By the fear of the tiger we cannot watch our wheat crop so the deers have nearly ruined it. We cannot go into the forest for the fodder grass nor can we enter our cattles into the forest to graze... We have heard that your kind self have killed many man-eater tigers and leopards. So we the public venture to suggest that you very kindly take trouble to come to this place and shoot this tiger and save the public from this calamity. For this act of kindness the public will be highly obliged and will pray for your long life and prosperity.

COLLECTION OF MARTIN BOOTH; BELOW: GUNTER ZIESLER

In a rare picture, Jim Corbett poses with the Bachelor of Powalgarh, a tiger of "magnificent proportions"—measuring 10 feet 7 inches from nose to tip of tail—slain in 1930. Above: The Corbett house at Kaladhungi.

MORE OFTEN, LOCAL British officials did the asking, having exhausted every other remedy. But it took considerable evidence to coax Corbett into the field. He believed that any animal which had struck once or twice under special circumstances—while guarding cubs, for example, or when disturbed on a fresh kill—should be given the benefit of the doubt. It was only habitual man-eaters that interested him, and even when there was no question that an animal was guilty, he never volunteered to shoot it; as a Domiciled Englishman he would not go where he was not wanted. And he always set two conditions: All offers of a reward had to be withdrawn before he arrived, and all other hunters had to leave the forest. His reasons were at once principled and practical. "I am sure all sportsmen share my aversion to being classed as a reward-hunter," he wrote, "and are as anxious as I am to avoid being shot."

Corbett consented to hunt down a dozen man-eaters between 1906 and 1941. There is no way of estimating how many human lives his efforts saved, but the combined total of men, women, and children those twelve animals killed before he stopped them was more than 1,500. (Corbett's very first man-eater, the Champawat

tiger, alone was responsible for 436 deaths.)

The man-eating leopard of Rudraprayag, the most celebrated of all Corbett's quarries and the only one to which he devoted an entire book, officially killed 150 people between 1918 and 1926. But because it operated along the twisting mountain trail that leads up to the Hindu shrines of Kedernath and Badrinath, to which some 60,000 pilgrims made their way on foot each year, its depredations were widely publicized, both in India and abroad. For eight years, no one dared move along that road after dusk; no villager living in the nearby hills stirred from his home.

The leopard was a big male, strong enough to carry his kills up to four miles if necessary, and it had grown very bold, first taking only victims foolish enough to sleep outdoors, then banging down doors or leaping through windows to get at them, finally methodically clawing its way through the mud walls of their huts. Rewards were posted. Hundreds of special gun licenses were issued. Amateur sportsmen and local officials sat up for the leopard. Army officers were encouraged to spend their leaves tracking it. Nothing worked. The animal eluded every trap. Poisons seemed only to encourage it. Twenty other leopards were destroyed, but the man-eater remained at large and hungry, and angry questions began to be asked in the British Parliament.

Finally, A. W. Ibbotson, deputy commissioner of the district and an old hunting companion of Corbett's, persuaded him to try his hand. Corbett had been reluctant to intrude at first: "I imagined that people were falling over each other in their eagerness . . . and that in those circumstances a stranger would not be welcome." In any case, he arrived in the early autumn of 1925.

Once Corbett was on the man-eater's trail, however, his tenacity was astonishing. One of the reasons his accounts of his own adventures are so vivid and persuasive is that he never flinched from detailing his own weakness and frustration. *The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* is a chronicle of terror as well as bravery, of missed opportunities as well as jungle skills, of bad luck as well as persistence. Corbett sat over the corpse of a pregnant woman in the rain most of one night, and in the pitch blackness failed to make out the leopard as it slipped beneath him, its passage marked only by an eery, inexplicable sound, he said, "like the soft rustle of a woman's silk dress."

He spent twenty nights alone on the top of a sixty-foot tower overlooking the only bridge across a gorge, tormented by stinging ants and clinging to the tower's flat, featureless top to keep from being blown off by the stiff winds that whipped up the valley. He was rewarded for all his time and trouble by the sight of precisely one animal trotting over the bridge, an oblivious jackal.

Sleeping in a thorn enclosure, he woke to the screams of his cook, who had opened one eye to see the leopard crouched above him in a tree, ready to spring. Before Corbett could get his rifle to his shoulder, the animal bounded away. A few nights later, he was sure he'd caught the man-eater in a leg trap; he fired at the struggling animal in the darkness and succeeded only in snapping the chain that held it there. Corbett tracked it down on foot and killed it—only to find that, although it had

JOE LEMONNIER

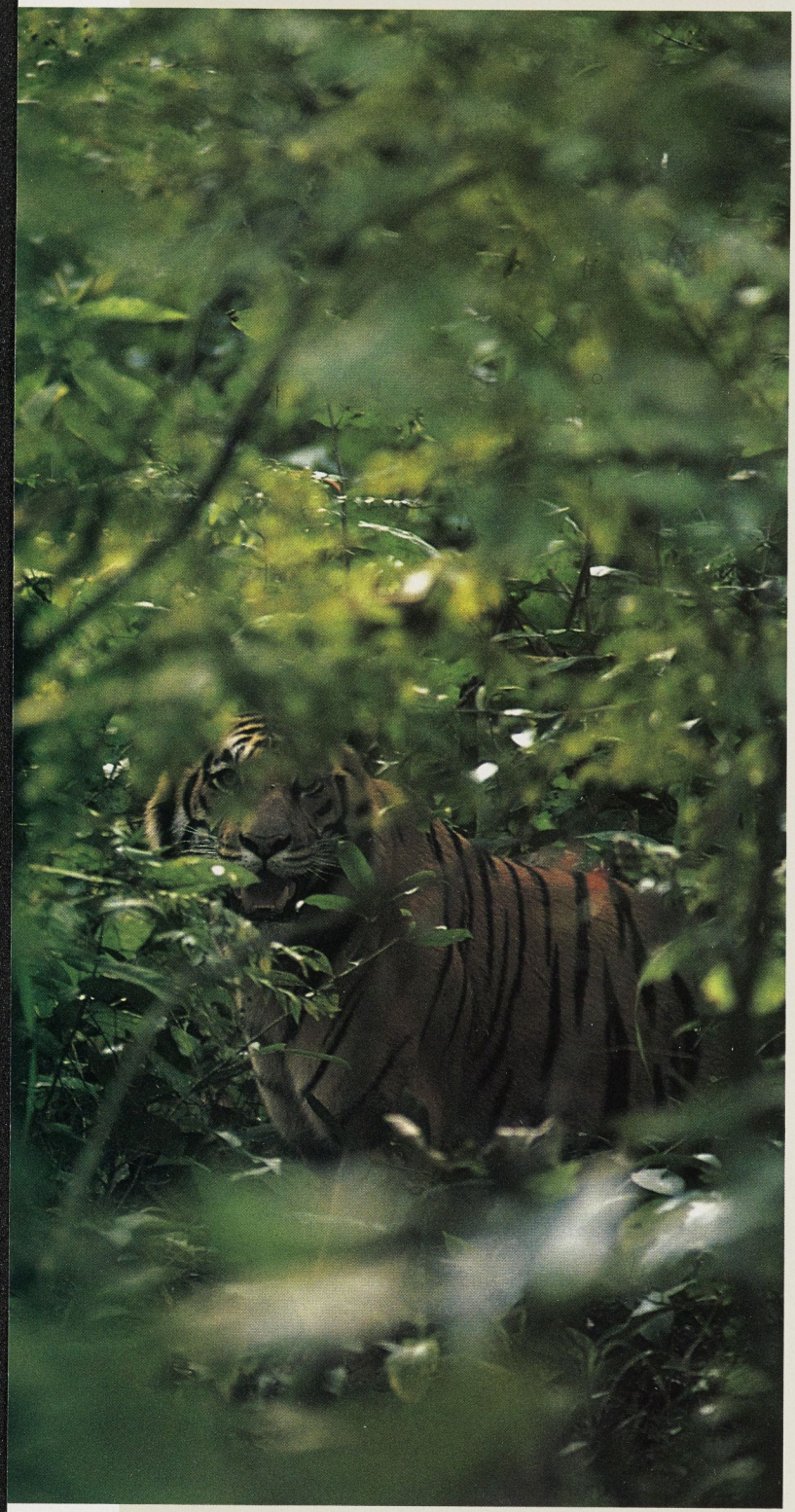
earlier stalked a human victim, it was the wrong leopard. After ten weeks of this, Corbett was near collapse from exhaustion. Ibbotson ordered him home to recuperate.

It took him nearly three months, during which the leopard killed ten more people. He tried to trap it again when he got back the following spring; and once the trap did close on the man-eater's leg, but two of its steel teeth had broken off, allowing the animal just room enough to slip out again. Corbett spent another night in a tree so fiercely lashed by the wind that he had to tie his rifle to the trunk and tear off as many branches as he could reach to cut down wind resistance. Nonetheless, he managed to call up the leopard and lure it toward him; all seemed to be progressing well, finally. Then the man-eater encountered a female leopard en route and settled down to an evening of noisy mating out of rifle range.

Still another night was spent sitting on the ground in a village courtyard only a few yards from the half-eaten body of a small boy. There was no moon, and when Corbett suddenly felt fur rub against his bare knee he was sure that the leopard had found him at last. Instead, it was a small kitten that had been locked out of its hut. He placed it inside his jacket, where it purred and fell asleep.

(Turn to page 52)

A Contemptuous Tiger's Loss of Innocence



GUNTER ZIESLER

Dhitu, a favorite tiger at Corbett National Park, before killing a laborer cost him his freedom.

CORBETT NATIONAL PARK, located in the Himalayan foothills 180 miles northeast of Delhi, is today much as Jim Corbett himself first knew it. Blue forested hills and broad grasslands are cut by clear mountain streams and alive with birds and animals. The illusion of total wilderness is broken only by the roads that run through it, and by the hortatory slogans painted here and there in bright orange on the stony hillsides: TAKE ONLY PICTURES; LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS. When, through accident or intention, its animals threaten human life nowadays, they are treated in a way that would have pleased the old sportsman.

About 11:30 in the morning of February 22, 1985, a British ornithologist named David Hunt was leading a party of eighteen birdwatchers along a dusty path in the heart of the park. Forest guard Harrak Singh walked with him, armed with an old shotgun that was loaded with buckshot and intended only to be fired into the air to discourage wild elephants from venturing too close.

Hunt had visited the park several times before and knew that no one was ever allowed to leave the paths for any reason. But, when he spotted a large and unusual owl sitting in a tree high on a slope, he and two friends decided they would climb up to see if they could get a picture. Harrak Singh's warnings were ignored.

The climb proved steep and rocky, complicated by thick tangles of lantana and bamboo. When the owl left its perch and flapped farther up the hillside, Hunt split off from his companions to try to find an easier route. His friends grew discouraged and returned to the path.

They heard a scream, then silence. Harrak Singh forced his way up the slope, shotgun in hand, until he reached the lip of a natural shelf and cautiously peered over it. The grass in front of him was smeared with bright blood. Hunt's binoculars lay nearby, their strap broken. Farther back was Hunt's sprawled body, and beyond it, melting into the forest, was the striped form of a tiger. Harrak Singh hurried down the slope to summon help.

It took several hours for a party to assemble, and another twenty minutes or so to prod eight nervous elephants, each bearing an armed forest guard, into making their ponderous way up the steep slope. By then, the body had been carefully hidden by the tiger in a clump of bamboo.

The great cat was still nearby, some thirty yards farther up the hillside, pacing back and forth and snarling. Eight shots were fired into the air. The animal would not be scared off. Finally, the elephants were drawn up into a line between the tiger and the bamboo so that the body could be recovered. Hunt's neck had been broken; the right side of his face was crushed and the eye scooped out. His left kneecap had been removed as if by a surgeon, and a small portion of his calf appeared to have been eaten.

In the excitement, no one got a very clear description of the tiger, although one member of the party did manage to snap several blurry photographs of it.

Asok Singh, the park director, was now faced with a difficult decision. Would the killer strike again? Was this a painful but isolated incident, a tragic accident caused by human heedlessness? Or was it the beginning of a deliberate career of man-eating?

The killing had taken place within the staked-out territory of a male tiger the forest guards called Dhitu, whose disdain for visitors was legend among park personnel. He was an enormous, glossy animal, weighing perhaps 500 pounds. He was so impressive and so utterly unconcerned in the presence of humans that he had become a sort of unofficial park mascot, featured on posters and T-shirts. His huge, round pug marks were found in a riverbed not far from the hillside up which David Hunt had scrambled to his death. All the available evidence seemed to indicate that Dhitu's lifelong disdain for people had finally turned him into a killer. Reluctantly, the director announced that the celebrated tiger should be shot.

FIVE DAYS LATER, Brijendra Singh arrived at Corbett Park. He is a short, sturdy outdoorsman, a member of the former royal family of the princely state of Kapurthala. Once a keen hunter, he has become a dedicated conservationist. He lives in a fashionable section of New Delhi but spends as much time as he can each year among Corbett Park's tigers, and takes with great seriousness his status as honorary wildlife warden. Almost exactly one year earlier, he had helped trap a tiger responsible for the death of one elephant-handler and the near-fatal mauling of another; the animal had been shipped to the Lucknow zoo, where it had subsequently died. Dhitu was a special favorite of his, and before the tiger was executed he wanted to be certain of its guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Brijendra Singh visited the site. The ornithologist's binoculars still lay where they had fallen from his neck at the cliff's edge. A trail of other belongings—a book of matches, Hunt's watch, several crumpled sheets of tissue—marked the trail up which he had been dragged. There was still dried blood beneath the bamboo.

That night, Brijendra Singh had a buffalo calf tied at the base of the hill. It was gone by morning, killed and hauled up the thickly grown slope. He followed the trail until he found the dead buffalo precisely where Hunt's body had been hidden. Clearly, the same tiger had hidden both kills, but there was no tiger to be seen.

The honorary wildlife warden climbed into a tree with his camera. More than three hours passed. Once he heard what sounded like the thin yowling of tiger cubs from somewhere farther up the slope. Then a striped animal appeared on the hillside above the kill. Not Dhitu, but a young tigress, her belly still loose from having recently given birth to a litter.

Brijendra Singh raised his camera and took several pictures. Later they would prove a perfect match with those taken of the animal that the shotguns of the forest guards had failed to intimidate. Her apparent fearlessness was now explained: She had been unwilling to abandon her hidden cubs.

It was now possible to reconstruct exactly what had happened on the hillside six days earlier. On that morning, the tigress had left her cubs safely secreted among the rocks higher up the slope. She had stretched out in the cool grass near the cliff's edge and there had fallen asleep. David Hunt, his eyes on the elusive owl above him, had loomed suddenly over her. Startled, frightened, she had lashed out.

Instinct had made her kill. Then it made her hide what she had killed. Finally it had made her sample that kill. But she had *only* sampled it, and there was no reason to assume she would ever repeat any part of what had now clearly been an inadvertent tragedy.

A few days after David Hunt was killed, my wife and I had a chance to see the exonerated Dhitu. We found him in a pool, up to his chin in the dark, stained water. Our elephant shook with fear as we approached, producing her own low, uneasy rumble. Though we stopped and stood less than thirty feet away from him for at least ten minutes, the tiger paid no attention to us.

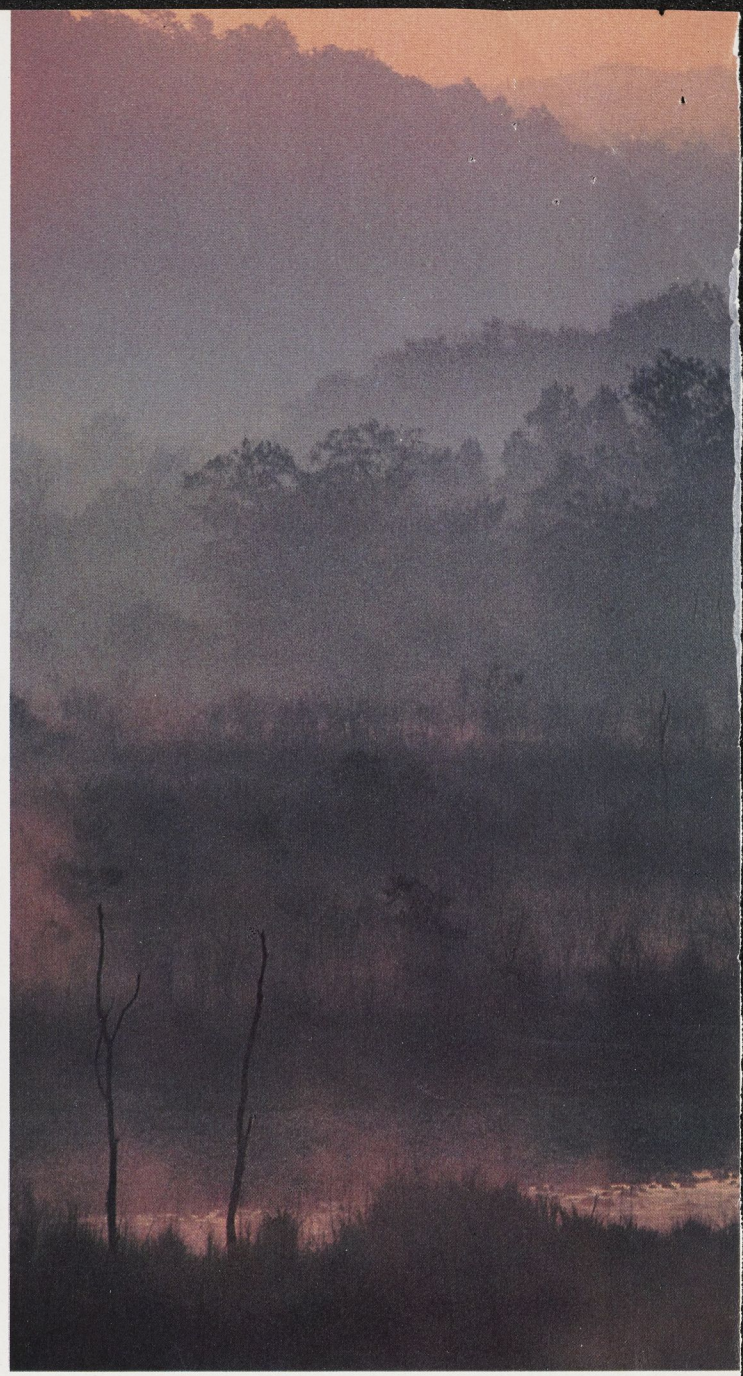
After a time he hauled himself out of the water and began, as if on cue, a repertoire of tigerish activities. He rolled onto his back, lazily examined one enormous paw, and scratched his wet shoulders on the leafy forest floor. Then he stood up and, gazing intently at us for the first time, sprayed as if to mark as his own the clearing into which we had intruded, emitting a thin, astonishingly forceful stream that flew backwards six or seven feet before hitting the ground. Finally, he lowered his massive head and swung off among the trees, going about his business.

THAT BUSINESS DID EVENTUALLY come to include killing men. Late in the afternoon of November 29, 1985, almost nine months after we left the park, a Nepalese laborer named Khan Bahadur was gathering firewood just a few yards from the Khinanoli rest house, in the heart of the forest. As Bahadur bent over, his arms already full of sticks, to retrieve one more, a tiger struck him from behind. He was dead before his load had clattered to the ground. The tiger dragged him into the undergrowth.

This time, Dhitu was clearly the culprit. His big, unmistakable pug marks—and only his—were found at the scene, and when the park director led a flotilla of ten elephants into the undergrowth a couple of hours after the attack, they found him crouching over the corpse, calmly eating. The tiger was as apparently contemptuous of human beings as ever; nothing Asok Singh and his men could think to do would drive him off his kill. Finally, he worked up enough of a thirst to go for water on his own, allowing the forest guards on elephants time to surround and recover what was left of the body.

Four days later, Brijendra Singh trapped the tiger in a steel cage. Dhitu now resides in the Kanpur zoo, where his reluctant captor has recently been to visit him. The tiger has sired two cubs since his incarceration and is "quite happy," Brijendra Singh says, "getting lots of meat."

—GEOFFREY C. WARD



Morning mist in the Ramganga River Valley of Corbett Park, where a gharial lies in wait. This long-snouted crocodile has 54 upper and 48 lower teeth, ideal for grasping fish and frogs but not large prey.

The leopard did approach the village but again encountered another leopard, a male this time, setting off a long yowling fight during which the kill was forgotten.

Finally, on the last of eleven nights spent in a big mango tree on the pilgrim road, the man-eater appeared in plain sight. A flashlight was attached to Corbett's rifle. He clicked it on, took aim, and fired. At the shot, the flashlight blinked out. But the leopard at last lay dead.

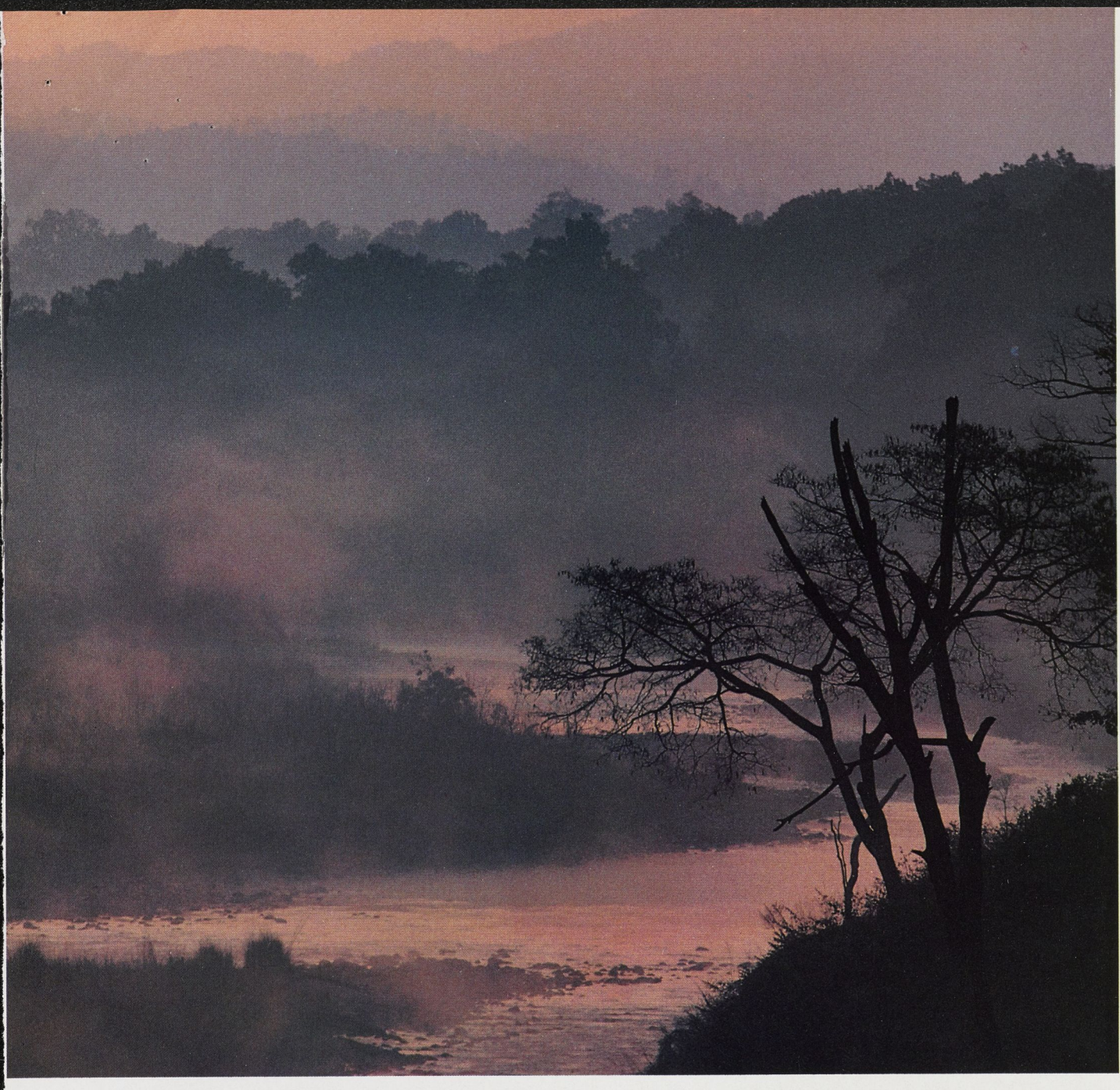
Characteristically, Corbett's initial emotion was regret. The dead leopard's "only crime, not against the laws of nature but against the laws of man," he wrote, "was that he had shed human blood with no object of terrorizing man, but only in order that he might live." His friend Ibbotson literally danced with joy at the news. Corbett asked for a pot of tea, took a hot bath, and went to sleep. Later in the day, thousands of people from the surrounding hills converged to see the leopard and offer thanks to their deliverer. Corbett was persuaded to receive them, standing tall and silent as, one by one, they filed past to pour rose and marigold petals around his feet.

LIKE THAT OTHER SOLITARY British hero, Lawrence of Arabia, Corbett seems always to have been dissatisfied even with his most dramatic triumphs, to have genuinely feared and distrusted the praise his actions won. Like Lawrence, too, he appears to have relished punishing himself. "No greater pleasure can a man know than the sudden cessation of great pain," Corbett once quoted approvingly. He had no bedroom of his own at Kaladhungi for many years, sleeping in a tent beside the house while his sister slept inside. Once on a tiger's trail, he often marched through the hills at a twenty-five-mile-a-day clip, eating nothing for up to sixty-four hours at a stretch. Such strenuous deprivation "had no injurious effect upon me," he wrote, "beyond taking a little flesh off my bones."

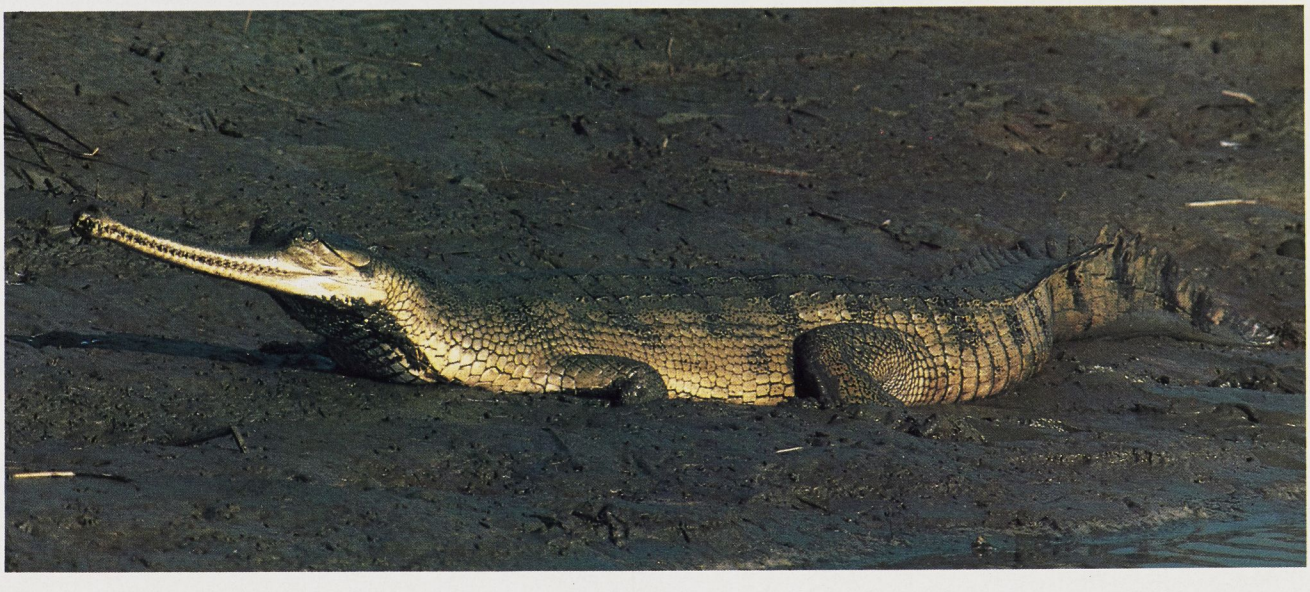
In 1929 a heavy rifle went off accidentally beside his left ear. The eardrum was pierced, the inner ear scorched. Nonetheless, when Corbett was asked to hunt down the Talla Des man-eater, a tigress responsible for another 150 deaths, he did not hesitate. The pursuit lasted several weeks, during which an abcess steadily grew within his ear, closing his left eye, immobilizing his head and neck, making every step agony. He never even slowed his pace, sitting up night after night though half-blind and almost wholly deaf (his right ear had been damaged earlier), and nearly incoherent with pain and fever. Finally, as he waited for the man-eater in the branches of still another tree, the abcess burst. "Not into my brain as I feared it would," he reported cheerily, "but out through my nose and left ear." He fainted, but he got his tigress.

News of his exploits inevitably reached the newspapers and was passed around the best clubs. The rich and well-born began to seek him out. He was asked to orchestrate elaborate shoots for important people: generals, government officials, maharajahs, the viceroy himself, Lord Linlithgow. These hunts were the antithesis of his own stealthy pursuits. Hundreds of beaters shouted their way through the forests and grasslands, and specially trained elephants delicately retrieved with their trunks the partridge and peafowl the guests and their ladies downed. Corbett professed to be astonished at all the attention he received—"I, a mere man in the street, with no official connection to Government." But, in fact, he had become the most famous sportsman in India. It cannot have been lost on him that when he was in his forest even the most socially exalted amateur had to stand in his shadow.

By the mid-1930s, Corbett had himself almost entirely abandoned hunting. A clergyman who knew him slightly claimed that his conversion came after having been sickened during a duck shoot in which three hundred birds were killed, but no such epiphany may have been necessary. It was the solitude of the jungle and what Corbett called his "knowledge of the language and habits of the



GÜNTER ZIESLER



GERTRUD AND HELMUT DENZAU

jungle folk" that had always drawn him, not the shooting. In his later years he rarely fired at anything larger than the jungle fowl that scratched along the paths near Kaladhungi; when villagers appealed to him to shoot the occasional tiger or leopard that had taken one of their stray animals, he now refused, paying compensation instead out of his own pocket.

He became fascinated with the challenge of filming tigers in the wild. A friend recalled chancing upon Corbett as he stumbled out of a thicket not far from his summer home: "He explained that he had been trying to get a picture of a tigress, but she was in bad temper and as often as he went into the thicket she drove him out. He added, however, as one who was ready to make due allowances, that she had her cubs with her." He rarely bothered to carry a rifle during these encounters, hoping instead that he might distract an angry tiger by tossing at it the small khaki pillow on which he sat. When the whir of his camera scared off his subjects he dammed a stream not far from his home so that its gurgle would disguise the camera's grinding, then sat day after day for four months in a nearby tree until he was finally able to film seven tigers there at once.

During the 1930s, too, Corbett began to speak out publicly in defense of Indian wildlife. "A country's fauna is a sacred trust," he wrote in 1931, "and I appeal to you not to betray your trust." He served on state wildlife boards, helped found a natural-history magazine, and worked to establish India's first national park in the Kumaon Hills, a park that teemed with wildlife and was named after an old hunting patron, Lord Hailey, the governor of the United Provinces. He especially enjoyed appearing before groups of schoolchildren at Naini Tal, performing a sort of one-man jungle oratorio, during which he imitated in turn the cries of each bird and animal in the forest as it heralded the approach of a tiger. For the finale he asked that the lights be turned off in the auditorium, warned those with faint hearts to leave the room, then gave the full roar of a tiger, a sound guaranteed to electrify the most blasé schoolboy.

Indian elephants at Corbett National Park.

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CORBETT WAS SIXTY-FOUR YEARS OLD when World War II began, far too old for active service. But he volunteered to recruit an Indian labor corps and later to train British officers in the techniques of jungle survival they would need if they were to win Burma back from the Japanese. The strain finally told: Corbett was ravaged by tick typhus and malaria and by pneumonia that permanently affected his lungs. His weight fell from 175 to 108 pounds, and for a time it seemed unlikely that he would ever walk again, let alone reenter his beloved forests. He spent two years out of action, and perhaps in part just to fill the empty hours began to write the book that became *Man-Eaters of Kumaon.*

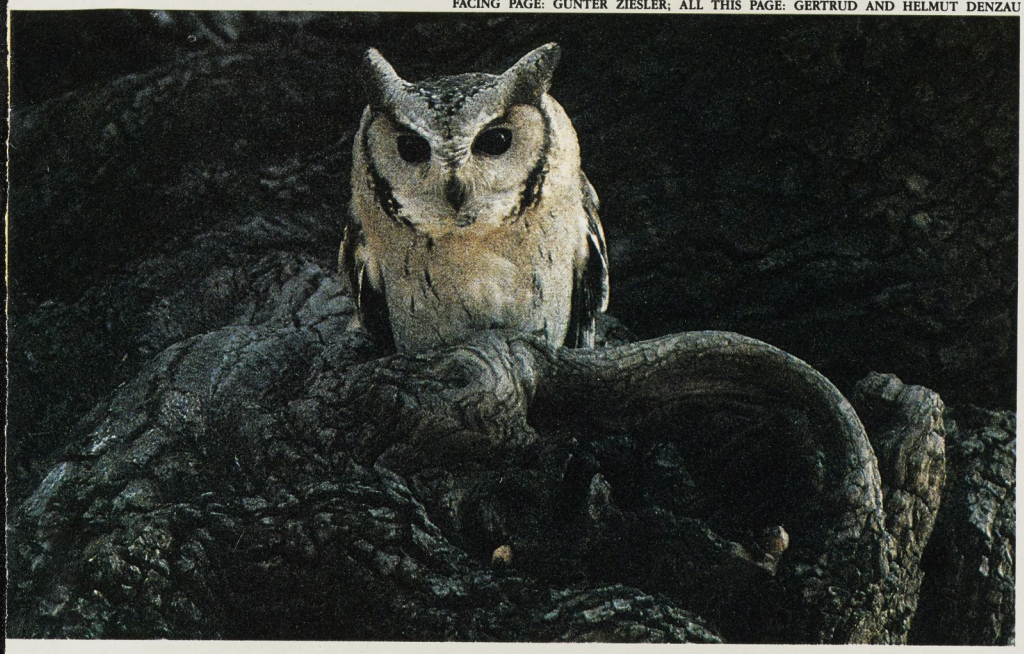
His idea was that profits from a modest sale of the book would benefit Indian soldiers blinded in the service of the Crown. Instead, it became an international best-seller, translated into at least twenty-seven languages, and almost universally admired by critics. (Edmund Wilson was a lonely dissenter; Corbett's style, he said, reminded him of "ruptured Kipling.")

Part of the power of Corbett's writing lies in the sometimes maddening faithfulness with which he recalls and re-creates the smallest details of his hunts. Above all, he wants his reader to know *just* how it was, no matter how long it takes to describe. The result is the kind of suspense that a professional writer, trained to be more selective, could not easily create.

In the chapter devoted to "The Chowgarh Tigers" in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon,* for example, he takes forty-odd pages to recount his two-year search for a tigress which, with her cub, had killed at least sixty-four people. Along the way he digresses to tell of encounters with mountain goats, a leopard, several tigers, and a bear and to confess that, in mistakenly shooting the cub rather than the mother while sitting up over a kill, he had inadvertently caused the deaths of an additional dozen human victims.

On the nineteenth straight day of stalking, he scrambles down a stony hillside, nearly every inch of which he

FACING PAGE: GUNTER ZIESLER; ALL THIS PAGE: GERTRUD AND HELMUT DENZAU



Some Birds of Corbett Park

On the facing page: common mergansers or goosanders. On this page, clockwise from top left: collared scops owl, common hawk-cuckoo or brain-fever bird, small blue kingfisher, and paradise flycatcher.

Axis deer in a forest clearing.

describes, then lands soundlessly in a sandy streambed at the foot of a tall, sheer rock. Here he describes what happened next:

> As I stepped clear of this giant slate, I looked behind me over my right shoulder and—looked straight into the tigress's face.
>
> I would like you to have a clear picture of the situation.
>
> The sandy bed behind the rock was quite flat. To the right of it was smooth slate fifteen feet high and leaning slightly outwards, to the left of it was a scoured-out steep bank also some fifteen feet high overhung by a dense tangle of thorn bushes, while at the far end was a slide similar to but a little higher than the one I had glissaded down. The sandy bed enclosed by these three natural walls was about twenty feet long and half as wide, and lying on it, with her forepaws stretched out and her hind legs well tucked under her, was the tigress. Her head, which was raised a few inches off her paws, was eight feet (measured later) from me, and on her face was a smile, similar to that one sees on the face of a dog welcoming his master home from a long absence.
>
> Two thoughts flashed through my mind: one, that it was up to me to make the first move, and the other, that the move would have to be made in such a manner as not to alarm the tigress or make her nervous.
>
> The rifle was in my right hand held diagonally across my chest [Corbett was carrying a clutch of nightjar eggs in his left, found on his way down the hill], with the safety-catch off, and in order to get it to bear on the tigress the muzzle would have to be swung round three-quarters of a circle.
>
> The movement of swinging round the rifle, with one hand, was begun very slowly and hardly perceptibly, and when a quarter of a circle had been made, the stock came in contact with my right side. It was now necessary to extend my arm, and as the stock cleared my side, the swing was very slowly continued. My arm was now at full stretch and the weight of the rifle was beginning to tell. Only a little further now for the muzzle to go, and the tigress—who had not once taken her eyes off mine—was still looking up at me with the pleased expression still on her face.
>
> How long it took the rifle to make the three-quarter circle, I am not in a position to say. To me, looking into the tigress's eyes and unable therefore to follow the movement of the barrel, it appeared that my arm was paralysed, and that the swing would never be completed. However, the movement was completed at last, and as soon as the rifle was pointing at the tiger's body, I pressed the trigger.
>
> I heard the report, exaggerated in that restricted space, and felt the jar of the recoil, and but for these tangible proofs that the rifle had gone off, I might, for all the immediate result the shot produced, have been in the grip of one of those awful nightmares in which triggers are vainly pulled of rifles that refuse to be discharged at the critical moment.
>
> For a perceptible fraction of time, the tigress remained perfectly still, and then, very slowly, her head sank on to her outstretched paws.

He had, of course, hit his quarry in the heart.

Corbett's publisher later theorized that the book's success owed a good deal to its appearance in 1944: "The end of the war was in sight. Years of massive, indiscriminate slaughter and regimentation had eroded faith in the significance of the individual. It was immensely refreshing to read of this contemporary dragon-killer, who in perfect freedom roamed the countryside cheerfully facing danger and hardship to rid the world of tigers and leopards convicted of man-eating. Sir Galahad rode again. Truth and justice had returned."

Beyond the tales of Corbett's quests, however, lies an extraordinary body of accurately observed detail about life in the Indian jungles in general and the behavior of tigers in particular. (This last, Corbett admitted, was mostly gleaned after he had given up the rifle for the camera.) Most of his independent findings have been borne out by subsequent scholars: Tigers kill with their teeth, not their paws. They do so as readily in broad daylight as they do in darkness, provided they are left undisturbed by man. A man-eater "is a tiger that has been compelled, through stress of circumstances beyond its control, to adopt a diet alien to it," and "stress is, in nine cases out of ten, wounds, and in the tenth case, old age."

He did all that he could to deflate the myth that the tiger was man's natural enemy. "The author who first used the words 'as cruel as a tiger' and 'as bloodthirsty as a tiger' when attempting to emphasize the evil character of the villain of his piece," he wrote in the opening pages of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon,* "not only showed lamentable ignorance of the animal he defamed, but coined phrases which have come into universal circulation, and which are mainly responsible for the wrong opinion of tigers held by all except the small proportion of the public who have the opportunity of forming their own opinions."

Sadly, however, the overall impact of Corbett's writing on the larger public was probably the opposite of what he intended. What we remember best from his books are the harrowing details of long nights spent sitting up over corpses; the dread of the grieving villagers huddled in their huts; the astonishing strength of even the most apparently enfeebled man-eaters, which again and again Corbett had to track down after inflicting fearful wounds. In this gory context his pleas for understanding his powerful, stealthy quarry tend to be forgotten.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE finally came in 1947. Corbett was certain it spelled disaster. The Indians were still incapable of governing themselves; that had been the central premise of the Raj and of Corbett's own beliefs. His beloved forests would now be razed or overrun; wildlife would be obliterated; Hailey Park was doomed. Finally, he was sure, once the British had gone, the Soviets would march down through his mountains to seize the subcontinent. Maggie, now seventy-two, had still more immediate fears: The Indians were sure to wreak an awful vengeance on any Britons who dared remain behind, raping and burning and killing as they had in her grandparents' time. They must flee.

The Corbetts sold their houses at Naini Tal and Kaladhungi. But where were they to go? India had been their family home for at least three generations. Corbett had only visited Britain briefly once in his life. Instead, they withdrew to the White Highlands of Kenya, where British settlers, including several of their relatives, still struggled to hold on to something of the old imperial

GUNTER ZIESLER

life. They rented a cottage in the garden of the Outspan Hotel at Nyeri. It had once been occupied by that earlier model of British sportsmanship, Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting. Here the old man spent his last years, filming lions and elephants whenever he felt strong enough, feeding the twenty-six varieties of birds that fluttered in and out of the garden, and tapping out with one finger five more books—*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* (1948), *My India* (1952), *Jungle Lore* (1953), *The Temple Tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon* (1954), and *Tree Tops* (1955)—tearing out a page and starting over whenever he made a mistake. He wrote back to India often, too, inquiring about the mustard crop at Kaladhungi, wanting reassurance that his house was being properly cared for, hinting that he might come back for a visit.

Kenya provided precious little sanctuary. The thin highlands air did not agree with Corbett. His lungs weakened steadily, but he refused even to think of moving again. "One has to live *somewhere,*" he told Maggie. The Mau Mau rebellion had begun. Maggie found a Kikuyu tribesman hidden beneath her bed one evening when her brother was away. The intruder demanded money; she refused and was knocked down as he fled.

In February 1952 Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited Kenya and requested that when they spent a night at Tree Tops—a lushly appointed game-watching hut built high in the branches of an ancient ficus tree overlooking a busy waterhole—Corbett act as their guide. The twenty hours he spent there in the company of royalty was Corbett's "day of days," he wrote, more important and more filled with meaning for the old country-bottled colonial than any of the deeds for which the rest of the world remembered him. Proximity to the princess made him gush: Her face was "as fresh as a flower, no artificial aids were needed or used to enhance the bloom of her cheeks." Her approach to Tree Tops, an uneventful walk past trumpeting elephants, he pronounced one of the "most courageous acts" he had ever witnessed. He was permitted to hold her camera and pocketbook as she climbed the ladder, and later he sat between the prince and princess at dinner.

After the royal couple had gone to bed, he spent the rest of the night as he had spent so many others, in the open, sitting motionless at the top of the ladder, rifle across his lap, watching not for a tiger or a leopard this time but for terrorists. None appeared, but that same night George VI died suddenly in London, making his daughter monarch of the retreating Empire. "When I helped her into the tree she was a princess," Corbett marveled to a friend a few days later, "and when I helped her down she was a queen."

Jim Corbett died of a heart attack on April 19, 1955, and was buried in the tiny Anglican cemetery at Nyeri, 3,500 miles from his real home.

"In the olden days," Corbett's old friend, Lord Hailey, wrote after his death, "he would have been one of the small band of Europeans whose memory has been worshiped by Indians as that of men who were in some measure also gods." Hailey's words, like so many of Corbett's own, were tinged with affectionate condescension, but certainly in India more than most places, specifics do seem to fade with time, distinctions blur, the secular somehow becomes sanctified. A young man from Kanda, a hilltop village near which Corbett shot one of his last man-eaters, has trouble now remembering just what his grandfather had told him of the shooting. Had the tiger killed three people before Corbett came, or was it six? "Carpet-sahib was god," the aged headman of another village explained to an interviewer a few years ago. "The goddess appeared to him in person."

CORBETT'S OLD HOME at Kaladhungi has been transformed into a museum by the Forest Department, and its former owner's new aura of sanctity is evident everywhere among the sparse exhibits. There are not many visitors; a new road to Naini Tal has been built, and so there is no need for most travelers to pass the garden gate as they once did. Five uniformed forest officers were therefore free to accompany me through the bungalow's three small rooms one morning last spring. Around the stained walls are hung brief passages from Corbett's writings: *Any task well accomplished gives pleasure; From November to March the climate of the Himalayan foothills has no equal; The knowledge you absorb today will be added to the knowledge you will absorb tomorrow.* Unexceptional statements, but each reverently hand-lettered as if it were sacred scripture. Corbett's posthumous sainthood may owe something to the fact that he never married; Hindu sages are traditionally celibate.

I was shown several relics, including Corbett's folding steel camp bed, a big clumsy affair which I was assured had been the platform from which he shot his tigers; his crabapple walking stick, taken down from the old gun case in which it is kept for me to hold for a moment; and a cracked white cup from which he sipped his morning tea in Kenya. The officer in charge fished into a grimy, creased envelope and brought out between thumb and forefinger a single guinea fowl feather; Corbett was said to have given it to a friend a month before he died.

There have been a lot of changes since Corbett's day. For a time it seemed his darkest fears would be confirmed. There was fierce slaughter of India's wildlife, but it has slowed in recent years. Project Tiger, the international effort to preserve the species that was launched in 1973, seems to be succeeding: There are now said to be more than 4,000 tigers in India, probably more than there were when Corbett sailed away. One of the project's most important preserves has been Corbett National Park, the same Hailey Park whose survival Corbett worried over, renamed for him after his death and now nearly twice its former size.

Trucks blare past the Kaladhungi compound these days, and tractors plow the fields that Corbett's villagers worked with bullocks. But their thatch huts are still engulfed in green wheat; mangoes still ripen in the old hunter's garden; the spotted deer still steal down out of the forest to drink in the evenings. And just at sunset one day last spring a tiger was seen sitting in the dry bed of the Baur River, not far from where Jim Corbett saw the pug marks of his first tigers a century ago.