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# A BABE OF THE TITANS

By LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON CASSERLY

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

**H**E was only a day old, but there was little of infantile weakness in this sturdy babe, three feet high, standing firmly planted on his stumpy legs, as he sheltered under the body of the big cow-elephant that had given him birth. There was something almost comic in the appearance of the solemn infant with his scarcely flexible little trunk ten inches long, his round body covered with matted, woolly hair, and his wrinkled skin that seemed a bad misfit. He looked hardly more real than a pantomime imitation of a baby elephant. But he was genuine enough and

very much alive as he sucked sustenance from his mother and, young as he was, boldly disputed his right to it with two other calves, his brother and sister. Yet the latter was two and a half years old, and the former five and so big that he had to stoop to reach the maternal breasts. But this new-born Babe of the Titans showed almost from the hour of his birth a courage that marked him through his life. Already he seemed to have no fear of the huge monsters of the herd, fifty strong, feeding around him, though, indeed, of all animals elephants are perhaps the gentlest. Nature has

implanted in them an instinctive avoidance of smaller beings, probably with a view to the preservation of their young, which otherwise might so easily be crushed to death in a crowd of these great beasts.

The herd was scattered about in the jungle, resting and feeding during the hot midday hours. Some lay asleep in the tall bracken. Some tore down and crushed in their mouths long trails of succulent creepers. Others, with sweeping, scythemotions of their trunks, plucked bundles of long grass and crammed them down their gullets. A huge tusker leant his forehead near the base of his trunk against a tree almost two feet in diameter and, using his weight sagaciously, pushed steadily until the roots yielded reluctantly from the earth and the stem crashed to the ground, bringing its leafy crown within reach of the wise old bull's mouth. A smaller tusker near him used his forefoot to push down a thinner sapling. For elephants are careful never to employ their tender and sensitive trunks for such rough purposes. A cow, having knocked down a plantain tree, placed her foot on the soft, fibrous stem to burst and break it up. A younger sister close by stripped the bark off a standing tree with the four-inch-long tushes in her upper jaw which are the female elephant's equivalent to the tusks of the male. Calves of all ages, grave and sober in demeanour and lacking the joyous playfulness of the young of less stately creatures, abounded with the herd. The younger ones kept close to their mothers, whose milk was their only food for the first six months of their existence. The older calves wandered a little further away, plucking and eating grass and tender creepers, yet not altogether neglecting their mother's breasts.

The herd had halted in its wandering for the Babe's birth and the two days following it, at the lapse of which the new arrival would be expected to march with the others. For an elephant-calf's helplessness is of very short duration, and in forty-eight hours it is able to travel long distances. Great animals like these, in the numbers in which they are found in the wild state, soon exhaust the fodder in one spot and so must constantly change their feeding-ground.

The crashing of the trees brought down by individuals of the herd was almost the only sound that disturbed the silent peace of the woodland. The scene was a setting worthy of the quaint beasts, these

huge monsters that seem a strange survival from prehistoric times and have not altered much from their mastodon and mammoth ancestors of Miocene ages. The spot was an open glade in an Indian forest, a little space comparatively free from the almost impenetrable tangle of dense undergrowth and interlaced creepers elsewhere. In it the trees rose clear from the bracken and long grass and thrust their crowns through the leafy canopy overhead, each struggling for its share of the life-giving sunshine above that only filtered to the ground below in a pleasantly subdued green gloom. The trees were not the feathery palms that the untravelled imagine as filling an Indian jungle, but giant growths of sal, teak, and simal, the last-named monster, straight-columned stems with curious projecting buttresses. The great boughs were matted thick with the dark-green glossy leaves of orchids, now not in flower. Here and there were smaller trees, one covered with oval green limes, others with broad, drooping leaves and long stalks, from which the nimble fingers of marauding little brown monkeys had plucked the clusters of bananas. There was the slender, straight-stemmed udal with its grey, mottled bark concealing an inner skin that, stripped off and slit into strips, is almost unbreakable.

Some of the herd had wandered from the open glade into the denser jungle around, where the thick undergrowth and the network of creepers were impenetrable to less powerful animals. Here, between the trunks of the larger trees, rioted a luxuriant vegetation, bushes covered with white, bell-shaped flowers, others every twig of which was studded thick with sharp, curved thorns. An amazing tangle of creepers, lianas of all thicknesses, some slender as fine cords, others as stout as the hawsers of a liner, entwined, interlaced, criss-crossed, interwoven with each other, swinging from bole to bole of the trees, twisting round them, cutting deep into the bark of the larger ones or strangling the growth of the smaller—an inextricable intermingling, a snake-charmer's nightmare of writhing serpents realised in wood. Some of the creepers were good for elephants to eat, and these the curved trunks dragged down to be crunched with gusto; others so poisonous or stupefying that if they fell into a stream its surface would soon be dotted with the floating bodies of lifeless fish—and these the jungle-men know how

to make use of. There was the pani-bel—the water creeper—four-sided, with rough, corrugated bark and white pulpy interior, the wonderful plant that supplies drink in the dry forest, for a length of it chopped off will give forth in swiftly-gathering drops a cool, delicious water, refreshing and palatable.

As the noon-day heat increased, though tempered to the herd by the dense shade, the noise of breaking boughs and crashing trees grew less, then ceased, and the forest was still, save for the throaty call of a calf for its mother. For one by one the great beasts ceased to feed and rested. Some lay on the ground asleep. Others dozed on their feet, never still, swaying restlessly, shifting their weight incessantly from leg to leg, their big ears flapping. Some swung their trunks almost mechanically, slapping their ribs with them. Here and there an animal broke off a small branch and used it to beat its sides or belly to drive off a persistent grey, winged pest, about the size of a small bee, the elephant-fly, the needle-like proboscis of which pierced its huge victim's thick hide and dotted it with large drops of blood. An old tusker scratched a little pile of dust from the ground and, snuffing it up his trunk, curved the latter aloft and blew the dust on to his head and back.

The day wore on, and when the sun, invisible to them above the leafy canopy, sank lower in the sky, the elephants awoke one by one and began to feed again. The various members of the herd scattered and drifted, alone or in little groups, about the forest in search of fodder. But they never wandered far from their focus, the Babe's mother. Their keen sense of smell kept them within touch, for, when the wind is favourable, elephants can sense each other at a distance of two or three miles or more. When night came the herd rested again from a couple of hours before midnight until sunrise. And they were almost the only inhabitants of the forest that slept unafraid. Not even the bird and the monkey in the tree-tops felt safe. For the weird, wailing cry of the Giant Owl threatened the one, while the menace of the climbing snake made the other shiver in his hairy skin whenever he woke up where he huddled among his dozing kindred on the highest branches. For the dark hours were the dreaded ones for the harmless denizens of the jungle. To them night brought no rest. For them every breath of

wind, every snapping twig, was full of warning. Above the tops of the trees great birds of prey wheeled against the stars. On the ground the big felines prowled in search of food, and the lordly sambhur stag, with twitching ears and every muscle tense, gathered his powerful limbs together ready for instant flight. The sharp, clanking note of the barking deer warned all the jungle of the presence of a tiger, and the big striped cat, in a rage, answered with his harsh, braying roar. But heedless of all noises, either of menace or alarm, the elephants rested undisturbed until the sun called them to wander and feed again.

On the third day after the birth of the Babe the herd got ready to move on. The scattered individuals and groups gathered together, the calves of all ages shambled to their maternal parents, and the march to a fresh feeding-ground began. An inexpert tracker might well believe that only one elephant, instead of fifty, had passed; for the herd advanced in single file, as is the habit of their kind, each stepping into the footprints of the one preceding it. The mother of the new-born infant led the way with her offspring, followed by the other cows and calves, the males bringing up the rear. With a herd on the move the pace is always set by the females with young; for the strength and powers of the little ones must be studied, and the speed of the march must not be too fast for them. When they weary or want to be fed, the herd must halt. Were a tusker allowed to lead he would soon tire the little legs of the babies behind, and when they stopped, the mothers would stay by them, and the herd be broken up. So the selfish males are relegated to the rear of the column, a position they only abandon if there is an alarm behind them. On such an occasion they unchivalrously think merely of themselves and seek safety in flight. It is then that the wonderful mother-love shows itself, for the cow-elephants with calves instantly thrust themselves between their offspring and the danger that threatens; and the fiercest tusker is not so much to be dreaded as these mothers ready to give their lives for their young.

As the herd moved on at an easy pace to a fresh tract of forest, the bulls and unencumbered cows often diverged from the line of march and made little excursions in search of succulent food, returning soon to take their places in file again. The

character of the jungle varied as the column proceeded. In some parts the trees were fewer and the undergrowth, more exposed to the quickening action of the sun, was thicker than in the shady forest. Here and there the woodland gave place to a dense growth of the tall elephant grass, eleven or twelve feet high, its feathery plumes six feet higher still. Through such patches the long column passed unseen along narrow paths made on previous marches or by other herds.

When the sun was high in the heavens the leading cow emerged from the breathless heat of a long tract of this air-denying cover on an open space of white sand that lay beside a broad, foam-flecked river, rushing in swift course from the hills. For only a mile or two away the mountains began. From east to west they stretched. At first low, rounded, tree-clad foothills, then a medley of bare, gaunt summits, sheer precipices, appalling cliffs, rocky peaks with scarred sides rising one above the other in giant steps, towering aloft and blotting out the sky to the north—the mighty barrier of India, the Himalayas. From the far-distant white line of the everlasting snows, unseen from here so close under the hills, the water of this swift-rushing river had come. At first trickling over the faces of melting glaciers and running in musical rills down stony, shallow courses from which only the ibex and *ovis ammon* drank, then dropping in waving veils of mist-shrouded falls, hurrying down hundreds of rocky ravines among the mountains, it had gathered to sweep in swift flood through the forest on its way to the thirsty, sun-parched plains far to the south. Rolling rounded boulders and bearing along tree-trunks torn from the caving banks it rushed with resistless force. Cleaving its way through the jungle, it held on its course to the fertile fields of Bengal, to its merging with the sacred waters of the legendary Ganges and on past the walls of Calcutta to the distant sea.

As the herd of elephants came out one by one on to the white, boulder-strewn sand, they broke their formation and each made independently for the river. The three-day-old Babe lay down in momentary exhaustion, only to rise up again in alarm and call plaintively when his mother left him and waded into the swift-running stream. His brother and sister, ignoring him, followed her; and soon the whole herd, with the exception of the youngest calves,

were revelling knee-deep in the river. The curved trunks greedily sucked water to blow it down the dry throats, then, when their owners' thirst was sated, to scatter it over their hot bodies in cooling showers. The elephants delighted in their baths. Some waded into the stream until they were almost submerged. Others lay in the shallows, lazily blowing great jets over themselves. The air was full of sound, the animals expressing their satisfaction audibly, some by a gentle purring in the throat, others by a continued squeaking from the trunk. Mothers, having finished their own toilet, washed their offspring, the youngsters standing up to their knees in water and enjoying their ablutions. The older calves, scorning maternal ministrations, cleansed themselves of the dust, leaves, and dry twigs that had adhered to their skins during the march.

The Babe felt himself abandoned by all his world. He stood on the hot sand, at the very edge of this strange and terrifying new element, and lifted his voice in lamentation and self-pity, until his mother, cooled and refreshed, splashed back to him. Then in a twinkling his sorrow changed to indignation, as from her trunk she blew a stream of water over him, much to his surprise and alarm.

But worse was to come. For the route lay across the river and the herd was preparing to resume its march; so, to his horror, the Babe felt himself gently but irresistibly pushed into the water. In vain he turned and tried to dodge back, in vain he essayed to plant his little legs in the yielding sand. All his terrified endeavours to regain dry land were frustrated by his mother's trunk. The cruel parent propelled her protesting infant forward until his legs were swept from under him by the swift current. Then he suddenly found himself caught up in her trunk and supported so that his head was well above water. He became aware of his brother swimming steadily beside them and found that his sister had scrambled on to their mother's back. And thus, with one calf held up before her by her trunk, another clinging on to her shoulders and clutching her with firm little legs, the cow-elephant headed across the river at an angle to the current. About her the rest of the herd crossed in similar fashion, the older calves swimming alone, the younger ones on their mothers' backs or supported in front of them by the maternal trunks. Elephants

are unequalled among animals for their swimming powers, and this river, half a mile wide, was a trifle to these huge beasts that could keep afloat for a six hours' swim at a stretch.

When the Babe felt the sand under his feet on the far side and his mother's grip relaxed, he waded out of the water and hurried to put as much distance as possible between it and him. But his parent's clutch was on him instantly and gently held him, and it was made clear to his infantile perception that he was not to be returned to the strange element. And he stood with his kindred enjoying the warmth of the blazing sun that dried and delighted his little body. The whole herd dawdled for a time beside the river, basking in the heat; but at last the column formed up as before and the march began again. Once more the jungle closed around the Babe and hid from his view the blue sky, the wall of mountains, and the dark, foam-flecked water with the dancing bubbles gleaming iridescent in the sunshine—tall elephant-grass at first, then matted vegetation and low scrub, then the big trees of the forest again. And a mile or two from the river the march ended for a time, and the herd broke up to feed and rest at midday.

Although he did not know it, the Titan Babe's lot was cast in the great Terai Jungle, the marvellous forest that extends along the foot of the Himalayas and clothes their lower slopes, that stretches through Assam and Eastern Bengal and harbours in its gloomy recesses those giants of the animal world, the elephant, rhinoceros, bison and buffalo. He was born in the shadow of the great mountain barrier of India in the part known as the Duars—that is, near the *duars* or passes through the Himalayas from Tibet and Bhutan. Six thousand feet above him lay the latter little-known country—like Tibet, priest-ruled, governed by an incarnation, a spiritual king, the *Shaptung Rimpoché*. A few miles to the south of the spot where the herd was feeding lay Cooch Behar, and the forest and fields between it and the hills was a No Man's Land into which poured sworded raiders from Bhutan in search of women, slaves, and loot. Only once had British troops traversed it, and that was in the days of Warren Hastings. Then two companies of sepoy, under a captain of the very English name of Jones, had boldly invaded Bhutan to demand back the person of a Rajah of Cooch Behar ravished

from his own State by Bhuttia raiders. And the sepoy got him, too.

At the hour of the Babe's birth the British dominion in India that Warren Hastings had done so much to establish seemed tottering to its fall; for it was in the month of October in the year of Our Lord 1857, the Black Year, as the natives of India call it to this day. And the Sepoy Army of Bengal, faithless to its salt, had mutinied and was striving with might and main to pull down the English flag that during a hundred years it had helped to plant throughout the peninsula.

But it is a far cry from Delhi to the Duars; and the Babe recked little of aught but obtaining his fair share of his mother's milk and not being pushed aside by his brother and sister. Young as he was, he saw to it that he did. And so he waxed strong and daily grew in height and girth, if not in beauty. It vexed him that his tiny trunk was stiff and useless; but gradually it lengthened and became more flexible. It annoyed him, too, that his brother had tusks—small ones, but undeniably tusks—and even his sister could show little white tushes in her upper jaw, while he could boast of neither. Yet in his own family circle—for a herd is composed of a number of groups, the members of each of which are, as a rule, related—the tallest bull was a *muckna*—that is, a tuskless male. This fact may have consoled the Babe for his own condition, for he was too young to appreciate how the *muckna* was bullied by every tusker in the herd. The possession of tusks bestows on an elephant an advantage in a fight that no superiority in weight or height can compensate for. Only by giving way on every occasion can the unlucky bull to which an unkind Nature has denied his natural weapon and granted only the tushes of the female, contrive to exist in a herd. Among Indian elephants the *muckna* is a rarity, whereas in Ceylon a tusker is abnormal and seldom found.

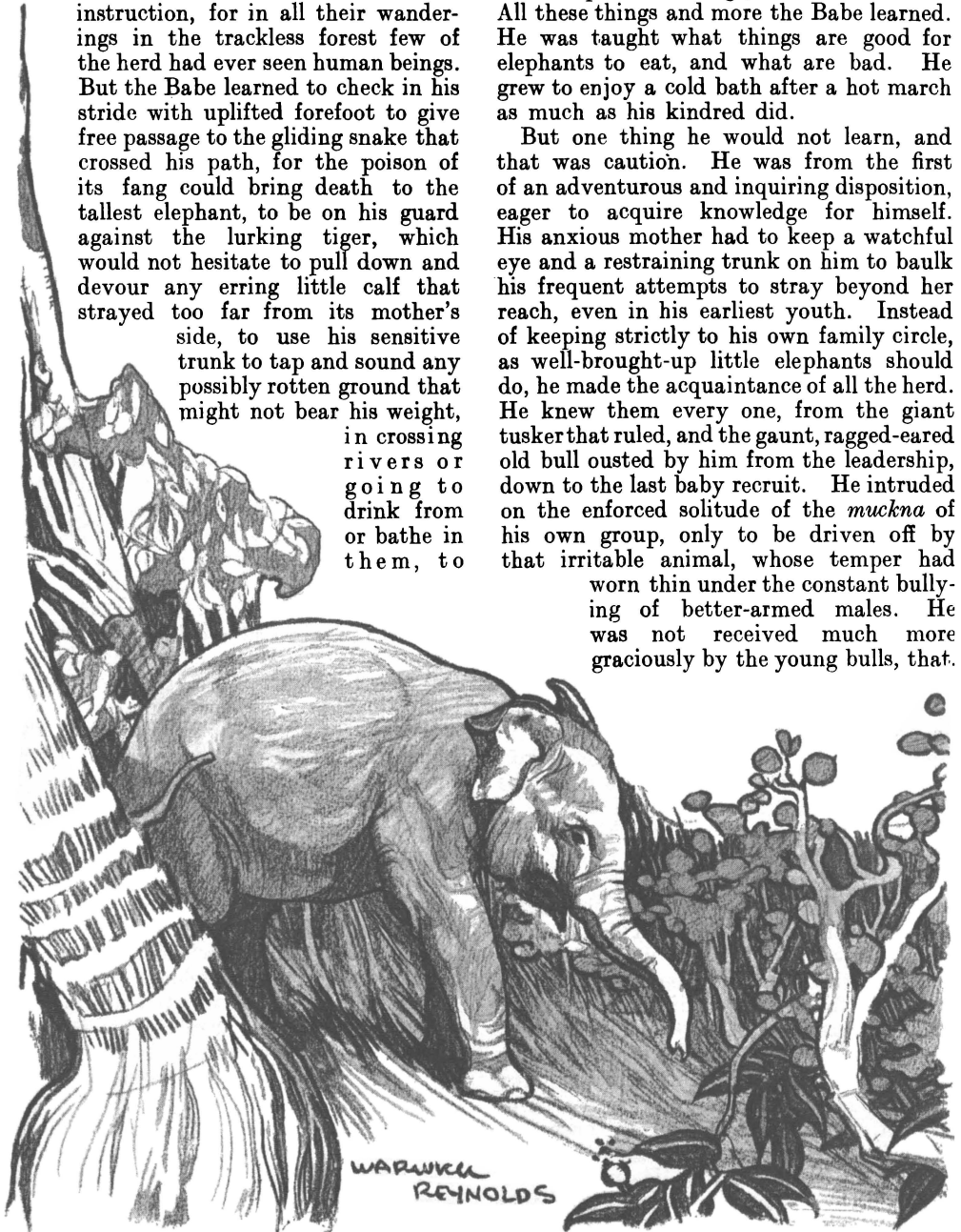
However, our Babe was not destined to stand aside in the struggle of life through want of proper equipment. Not long after his birth he had to endure the pains of teething in another sense; and from the bony sockets that run up on either side of the face to the forehead, ending nearly level with the eyes, two small tusks began to push out, solid only for a short distance from the tips. Now was he a complete and proper little elephant in all things, differing only from his elders in that the top of

his ear had not begun to turn over. He had long shed his infantile coat of woolly hair.

Now was he taught the laws of the jungle. Now did he learn to recognise and to avoid the things that could do him harm. Peril from man was not included in his instruction, for in all their wanderings in the trackless forest few of the herd had ever seen human beings. But the Babe learned to check in his stride with uplifted forefoot to give free passage to the gliding snake that crossed his path, for the poison of its fang could bring death to the tallest elephant, to be on his guard against the lurking tiger, which would not hesitate to pull down and devour any erring little calf that strayed too far from its mother's side, to use his sensitive trunk to tap and sound any possibly rotten ground that might not bear his weight, in crossing rivers or going to drink from or bathe in them, to

beware of quicksands which would grip his feet and drag him down to a choking, smothering death, to swerve aside from the seemingly harmless lump of clay hanging from a tree-bough, for it was the home of a multitude of short-tempered, winged insects with unpleasant stings, a wild-bees' hive. All these things and more the Babe learned. He was taught what things are good for elephants to eat, and what are bad. He grew to enjoy a cold bath after a hot march as much as his kindred did.

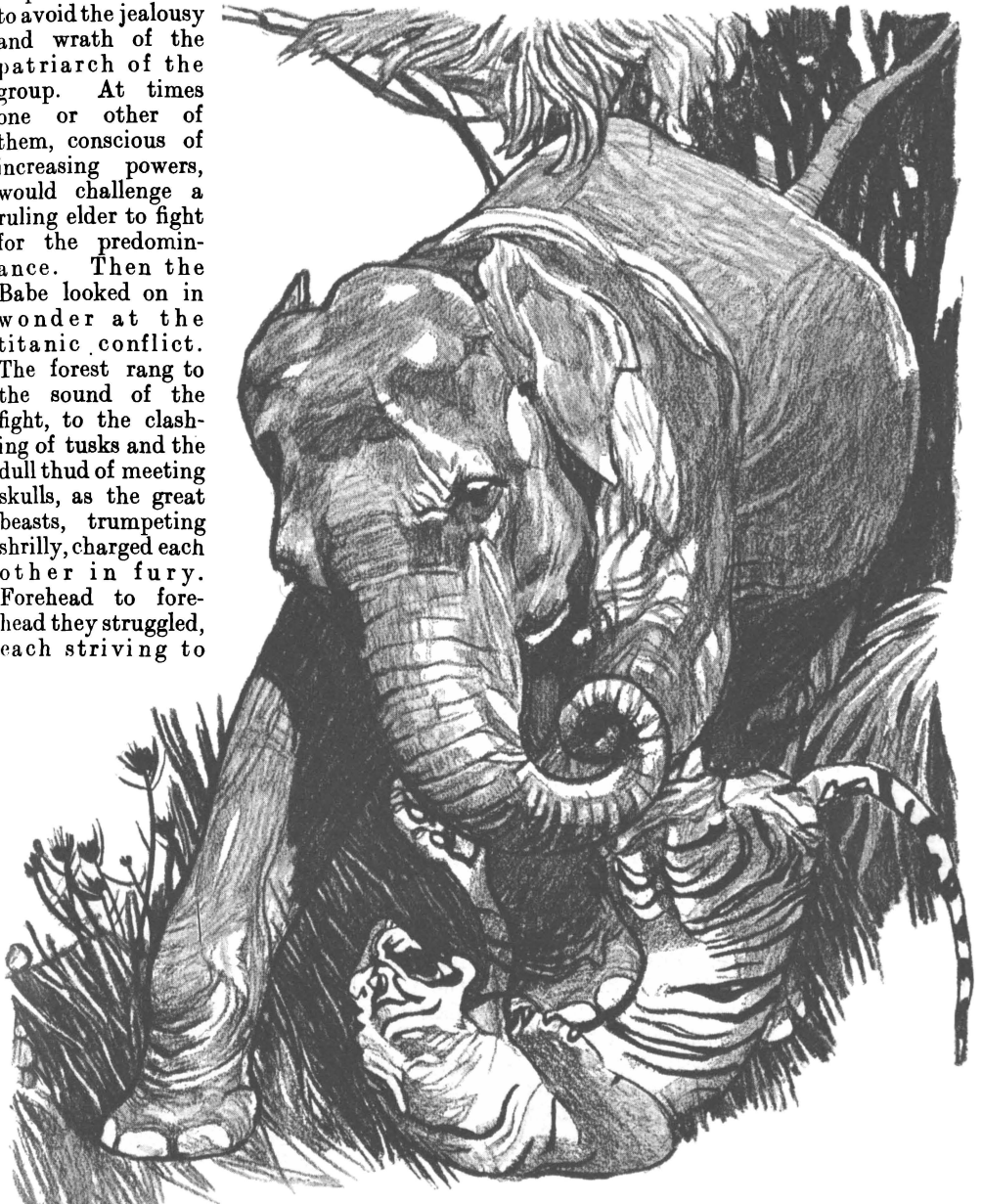
But one thing he would not learn, and that was caution. He was from the first of an adventurous and inquiring disposition, eager to acquire knowledge for himself. His anxious mother had to keep a watchful eye and a restraining trunk on him to baulk his frequent attempts to stray beyond her reach, even in his earliest youth. Instead of keeping strictly to his own family circle, as well-brought-up little elephants should do, he made the acquaintance of all the herd. He knew them every one, from the giant tusker that ruled, and the gaunt, ragged-eared old bull ousted by him from the leadership, down to the last baby recruit. He intruded on the enforced solitude of the *muckna* of his own group, only to be driven off by that irritable animal, whose temper had worn thin under the constant bullying of better-armed males. He was not received much more graciously by the young bulls, that.



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not yet come to their full strength, had to keep at a respectful distance from their respective families to avoid the jealousy and wrath of the patriarch of the group. At times one or other of them, conscious of increasing powers, would challenge a ruling elder to fight for the predominance. Then the Babe looked on in wonder at the titanic conflict. The forest rang to the sound of the fight, to the clashing of tusks and the dull thud of meeting skulls, as the great beasts, trumpeting shrilly, charged each other in fury. Forehead to forehead they struggled, each striving to

lumbered to the attack again, each endeavouring to gore his enemy with his



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force his opponent back and bear him down. Then, drawing off for a score of paces, they

tusks. The fight would continue intermittently for a day or more. One bull, temporarily worsted, would draw off sullenly, followed by his watchful antagonist,

always ready to renew the contest. Sometimes the fight would end in the death of one of the combatants. More often the defeated animal would withdraw altogether, grumbling hoarsely and continuously deep down in his throat, and plaster his bleeding wounds with earth kicked up by his toes and blown on by his trunk. Then at a safe distance he would humbly follow his group, which had shown no interest in the struggle and was equally ready to accept a new lord or welcome back its old one. "To the strong the spoils" is a law of the jungle as of the world of men. Perhaps it sank into the small brain of the Babe even at that early age.

Life went on uneventfully during the changing seasons for the herd. It ranged far in its wanderings, visiting widely-scattered parts of the forest, crossing swift-flowing rivers like the Menass, the Raidak, and the Torsa, and the sandy beds of others that, except in the rains, are dry for miles from the foot of the hills, where they sink into the earth and, lost to sight, flow underground, rising again to the surface about the level of Rajabhatkawa. During the winter elephants moved freely at all hours in thin jungle and in the hills, sometimes climbing up into Bhutan. In the hot weather they sought refuge during the noon-day hours in the deepest recesses of the evergreen parts of the jungle, avoiding the shadeless portions of the forest, where the big trees shed their leaves in summer. Sometimes they were forced to flee before the devouring fires that swept for long distances in the dry months. During the lengthy rainy season of the Duars they sheltered from the wet and cold in thick bamboo jungle. First-year calves, all born in the months of September, October, and November, were terrified by the awful storms that ushered in the monsoons. Even the oldest bulls, with the experience of a hundred years behind them, were troubled by the terrible lightning and the incessant, world-shaking crashing of the thunder, echoed and re-echoed by the mountains. And the pitiless tropic rain beat down upon their huge bodies and chilled them to the marrow of their bones. But even monsoons pass, and when the sun shone again in an unclouded sky, the elephants basked in its grateful heat and forgot the bygone months of misery.

The birth of another calf, when the Babe was in his third year, gave his mother constant occupation and relieved him from her

continual maternal vigilance. The sturdy youngster, now over four feet in height, was more able to indulge his propensity for roaming. He soon had cause to regret it. Imprudent use of his freedom led up to a tragedy.

One afternoon, when the herd had scattered to feed, the wayward Babe strayed beyond his mother's vision, engrossed as she was with her new calf. In search of food he roamed about, plucking a mouthful of palatable grass here, pulling down a trail of tender creeper there, and, without noticing it, getting farther and farther away from the others of his group. He was too occupied to be aware that a pair of cruel yellow eyes, set in a grotesque, parti-coloured face, was watching his every movement. For, cautiously stalking him from bush to bush and careful to keep down wind, a tiger moved, crouching almost belly to earth. In the part of the jungle where they were the undergrowth was dense but patchy, and the trees small, thorny, and infrequent.

Hungry though he was and plentiful the meal that the Babe's carcase would provide, yet the striped hunter made no rash move. He had good need to be cautious, for at any moment he might blunder upon a more formidable elephant than his quarry. It was necessary to shadow the calf until he was sure that none of the rest of the herd were near. His aim was to contrive, without alarming his prey, to get between it and the others, shepherd it beyond reach of help, and only then, when at a safe distance, pull it down. The tiger had played the game before. It was not the first time that he had hung round a herd and pounced on an incautious calf; and he licked his chops at the thought of the feast that this five or six hundred pounds of young elephant flesh would furnish. But a careless movement might ruin all. At any moment a wandering puff of wind from an unexpected quarter might bring his scent to the still living meal. So cautiously, craftily, he kept pace with the unconscious Babe, now lying absolutely motionless, now crawling noiselessly forward without seeming to stir twig, leaf, or blade of grass. Ears and nose alert to inform him of suspicious sound or smell, the tiger drew imperceptibly nearer to his prey. He was almost crouching for the final swift rush and the death-dealing spring, when the sudden crash of a falling tree brought down by an elephant turned him to a lifeless, immobile mass of dried leaves and



grass in flickering light and shadow. At least, that is all that the eyes of the quarry would have shown their owner, had he chanced to look in the direction of the spot where the tiger flattened himself to the ground under a tangled bush, so well did the barred pattern of his stripes and the variegated colours of his hide assimilate with his surroundings. It was a triumph of Nature's camouflage.

By a lucky chance the Babe turned and wandered slowly in the direction of the sudden sound, happening thus to put a stretch of open ground between him and his unsuspected hunter. This necessitated the tiger's making a long detour through the undergrowth to enable him to approach his quarry again without getting between him and the faint breeze that would have given him warning of danger. And the cautious stalk began again. The Babe now strayed in a circle that promised to bring him back to the herd. The ground favoured him by being more open and giving the tiger less cover to move unseen in.

But with infinite skill and patience the big cat drew near his prey again, crawling belly to earth across open patches and moving more swiftly through the concealing undergrowth. Conscious that the quarry was gradually approaching safety, he became desperate at last and a shade less careful. Suddenly a wandering puff of air brought a faint scent to the little elephant, just as he raised his trunk to tear down a leafy creeper from a thin sapling that rose out of a thick screen of tangled undergrowth. He turned and caught sight of the tiger stealing across an open spot. Instantly the striped beast "froze" to absolute rigidity. Crouching to earth, he knew himself discovered, and tried his race's old ruse of mesmerising a prey. With ears flattened to his skull and ruff bristling behind his slaving jaws, he grinned horribly, lips drawn to bare the glistening fangs, eyes fixed in a compelling, unwinking stare on his quarry. The trick had served him well many a time before and held his fascinated victim paralysed and powerless to move to escape the neck-breaking spring.

But the Babe was of sterner stuff. He swung round to face him, his little tusks directed towards his foe, as he gave the elephants' "alarm." Tapping the point of his trunk rapidly against the ground, he expelled the air through it to give vent to a strange metallic shriek that rang shrill and loud through the silent forest. He

followed this up by trumpeting, and then stood with trunk curled up, ready for action. The hungry tiger, fearing lest his prey should escape him, abandoned caution and, rushing forward, halted for a second and crouched, gathering his powerful limbs under him for the final deadly leap. Then he sprang. At the very instant that he launched himself into the air, the Babe, with an agility inconceivable in his clumsy body, hurled himself sideways and backwards and put the tangled bush by which he was standing between him and the swift-flying peril. The tiger, even in mid-air, swerved and changed the direction of his spring, landing straight in the centre of the same bush; but by a marvellous chance his head, with the momentum of the heavy body behind it in the impetus of the leap, struck fair against the thin tree rising from the tangled undergrowth, and the elastic sapling, reacting, hurled him back baffled and half stunned. A tiger, when his first spring has failed, rarely tries again. This enraged beast, however, although dazed by the blow, tried to gather himself up for a fresh attack.

But suddenly the world seemed to fall on him. A huge mass hurled itself upon him. He was dashed to earth, buffeted, beaten and crushed, as a furious cow-elephant kicked his body backward and forward between her front and hind legs. Then she knelt on him and, despite the razor-like claws that tore her and the savage jaws that sank into her flesh, she slowly crushed the life out of his carcase. Long after the last breath had left him she kicked and pounded his inanimate body, until scarcely a bone was left unbroken in it. It was the Babe's mother come in time to save him. Quitting her victim at last, she hurried to her offspring and felt him all over to assure herself of his safety, paying no heed to her own wounds. The Babe had tried to do his share in the fight, circling round the combatants and making futile little dashes in to get at the struggling tiger, only to be knocked aside by his mother's body. And now his indignation was great; for when she found him unhurt, her maternal anxiety was turned to wrath, and she hustled and buffeted him back to the scattered herd, the nearest members of which were approaching to learn the cause of the alarm signal that the Babe had given.

Shapeless and lifeless lay the battered

carcase of the tiger. High up in the blue sky floated a speck, so tiny that human eye could scarce detect it. North, south, east and west nothing else marred the serenity of the cloudless heavens. The speck was a vulture, poised on motionless wing, scanning the flattened earth beneath with its marvellous vision. Thousands of feet below it the tiger died; but almost before his slayer left him, the speck was in motion, growing larger and larger, as it planed down with incredible speed. And north, south, east and west other specks began to dot the hitherto flawless sky—more vultures hastening to the feast. In swift flight they swept on mighty pinions, and soon the air was filled with the rushing sound of wings. Above the spot where the dead tiger lay they circled. On the low trees around, the branches bending under the weight of the multitude of these loathsome birds, they settled. There was a pause. First one, then another dropped to the ground and hopped and waddled with awkward gait to the carcase; and soon there was to be seen only a struggling mass of feathered bodies, as with angry squawks the foul

scavengers fought over the feast and tore the striped body to shreds with reddened beaks. Then, sated, they sat stupefied on the ground, too gorged to fly, or, hopping a few yards, rose heavily in the air to settle on the trees again. And of the once powerful, beautiful body of the tiger only the bare bones were left for the hyenas and the little wild dogs to gnaw.

But by the miracle of mother-love his intended victim was spared to roam the forest still. Five years later the jungles in which he wandered came under the English flag, for British troops stormed the mountain passes, tore the Duars from the blood-stained and cruel rule of the Bhutanese officials, and brought peace and justice to the frontier lands. Two thousand feet on the hills above the spot where the tiger died arose the little fort of Buxa Duar to close the pass from Bhutan to Bhuttia raiders.

And, without knowing it, the Babe of the Titans became a subject of Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, afterwards to be Kaiser-i-Hind—that is, Empress of India.

