

(continued from previous page)

many severe knocks, Rufino succeeded in dropping it with a blow on the back of its head. He leapt to the ground and quickly slit its throat with his long knife.

A clump of trees ahead proved a suitable spot for making camp, and soon there was a big fire blazing. The carcass of the pig was held over the flames to burn his hair off, after which he was cut up and roasted in proper churrasca style. Very good eating it was, too, and after the "big feast" we lay in our hammocks under the trees, with Walter interpreting for me snatches of the natives' conversation.

L YING there, with the stars twinkling through the branches overhead, the air full of a thousand mysterious noises of the night, and the embers of the fire glowing redly in the darkness, I blessed the lucky chances which were bringing me such unforgettable memories.

Jose, who was something of a raconteur, was telling a story, and his slow, deep voice compelled attention from his listeners. Now and then he broke off, and Walter recounted to me the tale as far as it went.

Two warriors were rivals for the leadership of the tribe (said Jose), for their chief was near to death, and they knew that his choice must shortly fall on one or the other of them. The elder, the chief's brother, was a ruthless fighter and a great hunter, too, for he would go alone into the jungle and return with the skin of a tiger that he had slain. The younger warrior, the chief's son, he was a brave fighter, too, and a keen hunter, although his hut was not hung with the skins of tigers that had fallen to his prowess.

"Tell me," he said to the other, "why do not I, who am as brave as you, as strong as you, and as good a hunter as you, why do not I return with the skins of tigers, as you do, to prove the sharpness of my spear, and the strength of my arm?"

"Since you are my brother's son, and I love you," answered the other, "you shall come with me, and together we shall smell out a tiger and kill him. But none must know of this, for my secret is not to be shared."

So on the night of the next full moon, having been sworn to silence, the chief's son went with his uncle to the jungle. Presently they came to an anthill in a clearing among the trees.

"This is the place," said the older Indian, "and now will I tell you the magic word. Three times must you say it, and three times walk round the anthill looking always, unflinchingly, at your shadow. Then will my secret be yours also, and we shall be known as the greatest hunters in all the tribes."

The magic word was spoken, and three times the Indians walked slowly round the anthill, looking steadfastly at their shadows. But the younger warrior could scarce restrain a great shout of fear, when, before his very eyes, his shadow took a strange, terrible shape. He was crouching . . . he was on all fours . . . he was changed into a tiger!

By his side was another tiger: his father's brother.

"Come," said the latter, "we must go into the jungle and smell out our prey. But before the light of the moon leaves the anthill, we shall return, and I will tell you the second magic word to change us back into Indians."

Together they went into the jungle, but suddenly the younger Indian who was now a tiger found himself alone. His companion had left him. Searching among the trees, he called again and again, and though many animals fled in terror at his approach, there was no answer to his cries. Making his way back to the anthill, he waited until morning came, but of the other tiger there was no sign.

So he returned to his village, stealthily, and in great fear lest the men of the tribe should discover him, and kill him for what he seemed. He came to his own hut, but when his squaw and his children saw him they ran inside and blocked up the doorway.

"Let me in! Let me in!" he called, "I am not a tiger. I am your father. See, I know you! I will do you no harm."

"No! No! No!" they cried, "you are not our father. You are tiger. Look, you have tigers' claws and tigers' teeth. You have tigers' skin and tigers' tail. You have killed our father, and will come in and kill us also."

And they called out with loud voices, bringing the young warriors running to help them. Among those who came was the chief's brother and the Indian who was now a tiger saw him and knew that he had been betrayed. He fled to the shelter of the trees, and his heart was black with anger at his uncle's treachery.

For the space of a moon and a moon he roamed the jungle, a fearsome tiger, killing his prey and devouring it, a terror to all; but always he watched the anthill every night, seeking his chance for revenge.

Then came a night when the second moon was in its fulness, and he lay in the thick scrub, watching . . . watching . . . watching. From the jungle came an Indian; it was his father's brother. He looked this way and that, but the watcher gave no sign. Then, speaking the magic word, the Indian slowly circled thrice round the anthill, and, changing into a tiger, vanished in the trees.

Still the watcher did not stir. Silent as death, he awaited the other's return.

At length he came, and the avenger crept closer to hear the word. It was spoken; again and yet again repeated; and as the tiger padded round the anthill he ceased to be a tiger, and was once more the chief's brother. The watcher, the chief's son who was still a tiger, had learned the secret, and with a great leap he fell upon the traitor with all a tiger's ferocity, biting and clawing, in his savage revenge. Then, speaking a word, he changed himself back to an Indian.

In great joy he came to his village, where he proclaimed his return, and denounced the baseness of his father's brother.

THAT was Jose's tale. It seemed to me that the chief's son had managed to talk himself out of his uncle's murder rather well, and I said as much to Walter.

"Wait a bit," he said, "you ain't heard the end of it yet. When they looked at that dead Indian's body, his throat was torn out, one of his arms was bitten off, an' his flesh was ripped to the bone in a dozen different places. An' that's mighty like what a tiger does to you if he gets the chance."

(To be continued next week)



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